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PORTUGAL

by Tariq Ali

[The following appeared as a letter to the editor signed by Tariq Ali, in the October 25, 1975, *Economic and Political Weekly*, published in Bombay.]

The points made by your correspondent on Portugal ("Playing into the Hands of the Right", September 27, pp. 1520-21) are basically correct. There are, however, some weaknesses in his text as well as some absences, the result of which is to make his article appear rather one-sided.

Now, while it is true that the Portuguese Communist party PCP) embarked on a sectarian course which isolated it from the masses and also provided the ovjective basis for the counterrevolutionary assaults on it by the Catholic Church and the Right-wing parties, it is nonetheless necessary to study the mistakes of the PCP in detail and relate them to the policies of the other working class organisations in Portugal.

Before the elections the PCP was on a right-wing line. It attacked strikes and helped to break them. The PCP Minister for Labour actually organised a mass rally against all strikes in general and the legendary Postal Workers' strike in particular. This was in line with the PCP's strategy of seeing the socialist revolution as the "music of the future". In contrast the Socialist party leadership in the same period indulged in the most fancy leftist rhetoric: they supported strikes, said they were in favor of workers' control and claimed that they would overthrow capitalism in Portugal. In brief the PCP line in the pre-election period was right-wing and upheld "law and order," whereas the SP line was the exact opposite. The election results proved to be a slap in the face of the PCP, whereas the SP got the majority of working class votes and the far-left groups collectively gained over 10 percent of the vote. Your correspondent argues that it was wrong to allow an early general election. This smacks to me of having a confused and bureaucratic attitude to the revolutionary process. It is worth remembering that for 50 years Portugal was under the jackboots of a fascist dictatorship, the overthrow of which unleashed all the latent democratic yearnings of the masses. To deny a *bourgeois* election on the grounds that the left would be defeated is sectarianism of the most infantile variety. On the contrary, allowing Soares and his allies to take governmental power would have created the most favorable conditions for winning over the masses to the idea of an alternative power and finally to socialist revolution.

This alternative workers' power exists today in an embryonic form in Portugal. It can be seen in the workers' commissions, the neighborhood committees and the recently formed rank-and-file soldiers organisation. But this is a relatively recent development and still in a process of formation and while revolutionaries have to struggle ceaselessly to generalise this soviet power, there is no question of it becoming the dominent power until it is seen by the masses as a real and living alternative. Once that happens it is then irrelevant whether the combined left has 20 percent or 30 percent of the seats in the Constituent Assembly as the struggle become transformed to win over the soviet-type bodies to revolution and thus to democratically displace the institutions of the bourgeoisie.

The SP is clearly opposed to this process. It has in its post-electoral phase moved sharply to the right and Soares represents the hopes and aspirations of the ruling social-democratic parties of capitalist Europe. The PCP after flirting in a sectarian way with putchism has changed course once again and has now a seat in the Sixth Government (a government of law and order) which is dominated by SP ministers while at the same time keeping a foot in the revolutionary camp. It vacillates between class-struggle and class-collaborationist forces. The immediate next step is for revolutionaries to win over the bulk of the workers at the base of the SP and thus isolate the leadership. In other words what is needed is an audacious struggle for a workers' united front; it is here that the sectarian course of the PCP during the summer period or rather the period of summer madnesses has been totally counterproductive. It has driven SP workers firmly behind Soares. However there is still time to reverse the process.

Portugal today is a laboratory of socialist revolution. There are a whole number of groups to the left of the PCP. The most significant non-Maoist groups have formed a Revolutionary United Front which has mobilised hundreds of thousands of workers and soldiers throughout the country. It is these groups which will ensure that there is not a repetition of Chile in Portugal. The main groups in the RUF [FUR] are the LCI (Internationalist Communist League—Portuguese section of the Fourth International), the PRP-BR (Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat-Revolutionary Brigades), the MES (Movement of the Socialist Left), the LUAR (League for Revolutionary Unity and Action) and the FSP (Socialist People's Front). The PCP was in the Front for two days, but was expelled because of its failure to define its strategy in relation to social democracy. The initiative to launch the soldiers group SUV (Soldiers United Will Win) was taken by the LCI and the MES and it has already transformed the situation in a number of regions. Soldiers have refused to

carry out reactionary instructions, even when they are ordered to do so by General Carvalho!

The main group of the Maoist left is the MRPP, which distinguishes itself from the other Maoist groups such as the MDP by its virulent sectarianism and its open alliance with the SP leadership and its public support for the burning of PCP headquarters by profascist elements. Its reasoning is simple: the main danger in Portugal is "Soviet social-imperialism" and therefore you can ally with the devil if need be to fight this danger. Except that the MRPP has allied not so much with the devil as with the Catholic Church. This is the ultimate logic of the Peking line when applied in Portugal. You end up in the camp of counterrevolution. There is no other way of looking at it. The propaganda published in the MRPP press has a startling similarity to the propaganda in the right-wing newspapers throughout Europe and it is important that EPW readers are aware of this or else criticisms of the PCP can appear as being dishonestly one-sided.

Your correspondent also mentions that the "cause of popular democratic revolutions elsewhere in Southern Europe" could be harmed. What is this strange monstrosity which goes by the name of a "popular democratic revolution." What is its class nature? What is its political form? Surely we deserve an explanation. Does your correspondent mean what exists in Eastern Europe today? Lenin forbid! In fact what is on the agenda today in Southern and other parts of capitalist Europe is *socialist* revolution, i.e., the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a proletarian dictatorship. Today we have to explain to Portuguese workers that by the dictatorship of the proletariat we do *not* mean a Stalinist model. We mean institutionalised organs of popular power such as Soviets. We mean the right of all working class tendencies to be allowed the right to exist and produce their own literature. We mean the complete freedom of cultural and artistic expression and the broadest possible debates within the workers' movement. If this does not take place, then indeed the cause of the socialist revolution will be gravely threatened. That is why winning over the masses remains the key next step in Portugal and all attempt to shortcut the problems could open the way to disaster,

Tariq Ali
London,
October 8 ,1975

EVERYTHING FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF WORKERS POWER

Resolution adopted by the LCR Central Committee

[The following resolution was adopted by majority vote at the August 30-31, 1975, Central Committee meeting of the LCR, French section of the Fourth International. It is translated from *Rouge* no. 312, September 5, 1975. The subheads are by the editors of *Rouge*.]

The situation in Portugal, which the Fourth International has characterized as prerevolutionary since March 11, has just taken a new turn. It is marked by the intensification of the fascist offensive, the prolongation of the governmental crisis and the deepening generalized crisis of power, the division of the army and the breakup of the MFA, and especially by the massive appearance of an autonomous mass movement at the August 20 demonstration in Lisbon. The impact of that demonstration is beginning to make itself felt on the reformist working-class organizations.

1. The Reactionary Offensive

The campaign unleashed by the social democratic leadership of the SP after its departure from the fourth provisional government, and the offensive launched in the army by the nine members of the Council of the Revolution who signed the Melo Antunes document, provoked a governmental crisis. This crisis was not ended by the formation of the fifth provisional government, led by General Vasco Gonçalves, any more than it will be ended by the formation of Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo's sixth provisional government.

This crisis is only the reflection of the generalized crisis of the Portuguese bourgeois state. Six successive class collaborationist governments have directed the bourgeois state, the latest team in command being a military triumvirate.

Because of the incapacity of these governments to satisfy the demands of the workers and to take measures to expropriate under workers control, monopolize foreign trade, introduce socialist planning of the economy, deepen agrarian reform and aid small farmers, the masses of workers and common people have in the most recent period intensified their movement of self organization (in the workers commissions [WC], the neighborhood commissions [NC], meaning tenants, the peoples' assemblies [PA], the peasants' associations, etc.).

The MFA demonstrated its incapacity to control this situation, going so far as to recognize these bodies in the Guide Document of the "MFA-People Alliance." The bourgeoisie thereupon passed to the attack. It used several channels to do this. At the international level, it intervened both through the pressure of American imperialism with its powerful financial and military capacities (in particular in the Portuguese dependencies of Madeira, the Azores and Timor), and through the blackmail of a threatened economic blockade by the principal European bourgeoisies (French, German and British). At the national level, it is basing itself both on the terrorist wave against the workers and revolutionary organizations that is unfolding in the North of the country, exploiting the discontent and backwardness of the small farmers, and on the policy of a "pause" advocated by the SP leadership and the sections of the military hierarchy led by Melo Antunes, which are politically close to the SP, despite their tactical differences with Mario Soares.

The goal of this latter group, as is found explicitly in the programmatic statement of the SP leadership and the document of the Nine, is to reestablish the authority of the state (that is, the bourgeois state), which has been shaky since April 25, 1974, and to call a halt to the struggles of the workers in the factories that they manage or control, and on the land that they occupy.

2. The Political Breakup of the MFA

But the political debate introduced into the army by the national discussion of the Melo Antunes document, and then of the statement of the COPCON officers, a debate that took place on the level of the unit assemblies, had an effect quite the opposite of that which had been anticipated by those who signed the document of the nine. Instead of resolidifying the army in its function as the essential pillar of the bourgeois state, according to the social democratic options presented by Melo Antunes, the army was profoundly divided in the course of its discussions. The MFA, drawing on its prestige as the "liberator" of April 25 to try to exercise a Bonapartist function in the class conflicts that have developed, maintained its unity for a long time because of its superficial unanimity. This unity was broken by the open political rupture in the MFA between its revolutionary, reformist, social democratic, liberal bourgeois and reactionary sectors. This crack in the army makes all attempts at a fascist coup impossible in the short term without risk of a civil war, and makes even a legal coup by the social democratic and liberal

bourgeois sectors of the military hierarchy extremely difficult without running the risk of a confrontation. In the medium term the very existence of the MFA is in question, threatened as it is by an imminent official split and consequently by the disappearance of its role as the pivot of an eventual stabilization process. The longer run question of a confrontation between the revolution and the counterrevolution is taking shape now and both camps will be found in the army.

3. A Maturing of the Mass Movement

The generalized crisis of bourgeois state power in Portugal is the direct product of the formidable upsurge of the mass workers and popular movement that has been shaking the country since April 25. This ascending movement, in each of its phases of radicalization (September 18, 1974; March 11, 1975; July-August 1975) has steadily cut through the corresponding attempts to blunt it, through the intermediary of the MFA and of different class collaborationist governmental solutions, be it direct as in the first four coalition governments, or be it indirect as in the last two governments where the bourgeois and workers parties maneouvered among themselves.

This prerevolutionary situation has just taken a new turn, marked by the demonstration called on August 20 by the workers commissions, the neighborhood commissions, and the popular assemblies of the Lisbon region, supported by the revolutionary organizations as a whole, and ultimately, by the Portugese Communist Party (PCP).

By its breadth and the radical character of its slogans, by the expanded participation in the march by soldiers, noncoms, and officers, the demonstration sharply revealed the existence of a capacity for autonomous activity by decisive sectors of the Portuguese proletariat. However it only capped a deep process of radicalization that has been taking place since the beginning of the summer. This process was temporarily hidden by the divisive policy of the CP and SP leaderships and also by the vacation breaks taken by many workers in July-August, often for the first time. This maturation was already reflected in the demand which was in some cases implemented by key sectors of the working class (CUF, naval construction, civil construction, textiles, metallurgy, etc.) for workers control, expropriation, reconversion of their enterprises, reflecting the need for socialist planning. It is exposed today by the expansion of the objective tendencies toward the coordination of the structures of self organization of the workers in workers commissions, neighborhood commissions and popular assemblies, accompanied by a consciousness of the necessity for organizing self defense against the fascist reaction, together with those soldiers and officers who call for socialist revolution.

All these phenomena indicate a phase of rapid working-class radicalization in Portugal that consequently tangibly improves the relationship of forces in favor of the workers to the detriment of all tendencies of the bourgeoisie combined. This radicalization is only at its beginning: it affects not only the most advanced, most active, most combative sectors, but also those that are the most decisive, without yet reaching a large majority of the working class. But in the framework of the economic crisis of Portuguese capitalism, which will not fail to provoke broad new struggles in the coming months, this hurdle that has been cleared by the vanguard of the working class in its organization, its activity and its autonomous political appearance testifies to the possibility of transforming the prerevolutionary situation into a revolutionary crisis in Portugal in the short term.

4. The Policy of the SP and CP

To be realized, this possibility must nevertheless surmount a considerable obstacle: the division introduced into the ranks of the workers movement by the policies of the SP and CP leaderships, notably since the elections to the Constituent Assembly.

The social democratic leadership of the SP is in Portugal today the Trojan Horse of American imperialism and especially of the European bourgeoisies. The fascist offensive of reactionary officers and former figures of the Salazarist regime and the offensive led by the civilian and military bourgeois sectors demanding capitalist stabilization surged forward in the wake of the SP's anticommunist campaign. The sectarian and bureaucratic orientation of the CP (especially during the July 18 and 19 "barricades") helped motivate the SP workers to rally around their leaders. In spite of this, the first signs of resistance to the procapitalist course followed by the leadership are beginning to appear in the ranks of the SP (resignations and expulsions of members and leaders of the SP).

The policy of the Stalinist leadership of the CP since April 25, and especially since its tactical turn of December 1974, is to use and channel the mass movement for the benefit of its maneuvers in seeking to win strong positions inside the bourgeois state (the leaders of the CP call this "the democratic state, on the road to socialism"). This strategy, presented as a "peaceful transition to socialism," rests above all else, for the Stalinist leaders, on the establishment of political hegemony inside of the MFA, that is at present, on a majority in the Assembly of the MFA.

This orientation has been seriously eroded by the counterattack of the reactionary and bourgeois sectors of the army on the one hand, and by the emergence of a workers vanguard, escaping the control of the CP leadership on the other. This latter development corresponds to the extension of the influence of the revolutionary organizations. Since the beginning of the summer the Stalinist leadership has navigated between the reefs of a compromise with the right wing of the army and utilization of the civilian and military mass movement to try to negotiate the best possible compromise. This meandering line has contributed not a little to isolating the CP on its right and to engendering competition on its left. It has disoriented the new and militant rank and file of the CP, which is no longer able to respond to the almost weekly changes of the leadership's line.

5. The Tactic of the United Front and Governmental Slogans

The extension and the tendency toward coordination of the workers and neighborhood commissions and the popular assemblies now provides a framework to respond to the problem of the division in the working-class ranks

caused by the policies of the reformist leaderships. An indispensable orientation toward a workers united front must today be set forth around a campaign of agitation, propoganda and concrete initiatives to call on the members and leaders of the big traditional workers parties—the SP and CP—to work for the construction and centralization of these nascent organs of workers power. Already socialist, communist, revolutionary and nonaffiliated workers find themselves side by side here in order to defend their gains, to organize self defense together with the barracks, and to increasingly assume those functions of implementing workers control and popular management that are within the purview of an embryo of state power.

An agreement between the revolutionary organizations certainly does not sweep under the rug the necessary polemics against ultraleft or opportunist deviations. Such an agreement can powerfully contribute to forcing the reformist leaders to clearly take a position before their memberships on the extension, coordination and centralization of the structures of self-organization in a national peoples' assembly of delegates of workers and neighborhood commissions, assemblies of the military units and popular assemblies. Such an accord can contribute to the birth of centralization without awaiting the approval of the reformist leaderships.

The propoganda campaign for a workers government—at this stage a government of workers organizations, since the centralization of organs of workers power is not yet a reality—should be subordinated to this priority. A workers government would immediately satisfy the demands of the workers, the common people, and the peasants; it would be based on the workers and neighborhood commissions and popular assemblies, and would be responsible to these bodies in order to realize a program of anticapitalist measures definitively dismantling the economic and political power of the bourgeoisie. In the immediate future, such a slogan has essentially a propaganda and educational function for broader and broader sectors of the proletariat in order to break them from all illusions about any form of government constructed around a patched-up MFA. Above all else, it counterposes the construction of workers state power, still embryonic, to the impaired and paralyzed power of the bourgeois state institutions, both civil (Constituent Assembly with an SP-PPD majority) and military (the army, the MFA).

The erroneous slogan of immediate dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, advanced by some far left groups and an important part of the vanguard, gravely underestimates the electoralist illusions which continue to permeate the petty bourgeoisie and important parts of the working class; it can only push these elements toward the line put forward by the SP for the defense of bourgeois institutions and against the development of the workers and neighborhood commissions and popular assemblies. Only their centralization can put this slogan [of dissolution of the Constituent Assembly—tr.] on the agenda.

A propagandistic slogan for a workers government will probably be quickly replaced by the slogan of "All Power to the Popular Assemblies" or "All Power to the National Peoples' Assembly." It is counterposed to the opportunist and rightist slogans for a "SP-CP government," whose content excludes precisely what must be encouraged at all costs and which marks the axis of the present period: that is, the appearance of favorable conditions for the coordination and centralization in the short run of the WCs, NCs, and PAs, as against all revitalization, even through the mediation of the reformist workers organizations, of the decadent structures of the disintegrating bourgeois state, such as the Constituent Assembly.

6. Defense of Workers Rights and Democracy, and Not of Bourgeois Institutions

From this point of view revolutionary communists must fight against any identification of the struggle for the greatest democratic rights and for the broadest workers democracy with the defense of democratic institutions. The greatest degree of freedom for the masses in relation to the press (freedom of expression for all workers and people's parties, currents and organizations), in demonstrations, in the unions (independence in relationship to the state apparatus, right of tendencies), etc., is indispensable to the free activity of the broad working masses in strengthening the process of self organization.

Revolutionary communist propaganda should educate the workers vanguard in this sense, in order not to push a part of the working class behind the leadership of the SP, as was provoked by the sectarian and bureaucratic policy of the CP.

But revolutionary communists must fight just as firmly against bourgeois propaganda to the effect that Portugal is under a "military dictatorship" at a time when in no country of the world do the masses have so much freedom of expression and organization.

With the greatest vigor, revolutionary communists must fight any identification of this freedom for the masses with the defense of bourgeois institutions (freedom of private property in the press, TV, factories, etc.).

Moreover the intransigent defense of freedoms for the masses, including against certain of the MFA decrees, should not be understood at the present stage of the Portuguese revolution as the central axis of revolutionary agitation. This should be centered around themes of workers control, expropriation and planning, monopoly of foreign trade, agrarian reform, self defense, arming of the working class and formation of workers militias. These tasks have to be taken over by the committees of soldiers, tenants, workers and peasants, and revolutionary communists should call on all workers parties to participate in them.

7. The Accord Between the CP and the Far Left

The signing of the agreement between the CP and the far left organizations testifies to a decisive transformation of the relationship of forces between the revolutionaries and the reformists in the working class. This obliges the Stalinist leaders to seek through the intermediary of the far left organizations an alliance with the new force of the autonomous mass movement whose effects are being felt in the street.

This agreement between the workers organizations, which it was correct to seek, is neither a Popular Front with bourgeois organizations, nor a governmental platform of class collaboration. The signing of this accord is

the product of an opportunist approach because:

a. It was not concluded on the basis of concrete objectives of struggle (self defense, self organization), which could be understood and picked up by the rank and file of the SP and which also, in conjunction with official proposals addressed to the SP leadership, constitute a formidable weapon in the construction of the united front.

Moreover the agreement does not mention any initiative towards the SP.

b. On the contrary, it endorses the essential points of the CP's orientation (support to the class collaborationist government, and a call for unity with the MFA) at a time when the MFA has deservedly been torn apart by stronger and stronger class polarizations as a result of the reactionary capitalist offensive and the workers and popular counteroffensive.

c. As a result the accord temporarily enabled the Stalinist CP leaders to get out of a bad spot, by using the autonomous organs of the workers (especially at the big August 27 demonstration) to negotiate a compromise favorable for its positions in the state apparatus of the sixth provisional government and the MFA.

It compromised the revolutionary organizations that signed it, at least for a time, since they were associated with an orientation that was barely critical of the government and with support to internal combinations in the MFA to maintain the facade of unity that was called into question by the radicalization of workers and soldiers.

Everything must be done to deepen the counteroffensive begun by the workers this summer. Trotskyist militants have to take a place in the front ranks in order to transform the prerevolutionary situation in Portugal into a revolutionary crisis and to put on the order of the day the seizure of power by the workers, led by a revolutionary party. The LCR is helping its comrades of the LCI to construct this party with all the means at its disposal.

Resolution on the Portuguese Revolution

by Nemo and Krasno

[The following resolution is translated from internal bulletin no. 35 of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International. It was presented to the LCR central committee meeting of August 28-31, 1975. Both Comrades Nemo and Krasno are members of the LCR central committee. Comrade Nemo is a member of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.]

1. THE REVOLUTIONARY UPSURGE AND THE DANGERS THAT THREATEN IT

A. The Portuguese revolutionary mass movement has unfolded in an unbroken fashion since April 1974, bringing about a relationship of forces increasingly favorable to the working class. This is especially evident in the high points of the class struggle (Sept. 28, March 11, the elections . . .). At the same time, the deepening political debacle of the bourgeoisie has led to various conflicts in the attempts to reconstruct the apparatus and power of the state: internal fights in the MFA, the breakup of the coalition government, the formation of a military triumvirate and the search for a new governmental formula are manifestations of this same open crisis.

The fundamental instability of the present situation encourages reawakened fascist and reactionary activity that makes use of the division created by the policies of the working class leaderships. Thus in attacking the mass movement, reaction can exploit the SP's campaign against the danger of an alleged "Prague coup," as well as the hostility the CP has drawn to itself by supporting the anti-democratic, anti-working class measures of the MFA. On an international scale, imperialism is stepping up measures of financial and economic isolation; is encouraging or directly underwriting separatist reactions in the Azores and Madeira; and is fueling the civil war in Timor and in Angola. Together these factors have opened up the most serious political crisis since the downfall of the dictatorship. More than ever, the struggle for the unity and independence of the working class and for a workers and peasants government is the only real way out for the Portuguese revolution.

B. The appearance and strengthening of forms of *workers democracy* (commissions and committees) constitutes one of the fundamental characteristics of the revolutionary offensive and testifies to the degree of consciousness and organization achieved by the most advanced sections of the working class. Thus a general perspective is laid out, which all the activity of the Portuguese masses fits into: toward the political and organizational centralization of the committees and commissions, moving toward the soviet state of workers councils. Nevertheless, the great disparity between the various organs of self-organization, from the point of view of their mass audience and their political composition, their still limited social scope, and their relative isolation vis-à-vis the majority of workers and peasants, rules out any perspective that they can immediately assert themselves as mass soviet organs and directly impose their political centralization as an alternative to the power of the bourgeois state apparatus (that is, a situation of dual power).

C. These organs are nevertheless already sufficiently strong and real to have caused certain bourgeois elements to demagogically support "popular power," the better *to oppose* in practice the development and independence of the organization of the masses. This is especially true of the *Guide Document of the MFA* which, proposing the "legalization" of the committees in the framework of the present regime, leads in fact to their integration in a populist-corporatist venture to reconstruct the bourgeois state: the "non-party" offensive and the placing of the various committees under the tutelage of the MFA directly threatens the workers organizations and the class independence of the existing committees; further, the reference to "popular power" and the "MFA-People" alliance helps ensure that no challenge is made to the Bonapartist "legitimacy" of the MFA or to its governmental role. The "coexistence" thus proposed between the present bourgeois political regime and a pyramid of narrowly restricted "committees" is a war instrument against the development of workers self-organization. It is in no way contradictory to the Stalinist strategy of a "democraic stage" that the CP wants to apply in Portugal.

D. Nevertheless, the difficulties facing bourgeois political rule are illustrated by a serious deepening of political differences within the military hierarchy and the MFA. For example, the Melo Antunes document expressed a political policy close to that of the SP, looking for a pause in the revolutionary process in order to come up with another solution to the same problem: the reconstruction of the bourgeois state apparatus. But these splits and internal divisions in the MFA must be clearly characterized: "the revolutionary self-criticism" of COPCON, whose vocabulary is directly borrowed from various centrist and ultraleft groups, does not in any way break *essentially* with the bourgeois populist policy of the "MFA-People" alliance. Moreover, in spite of its growing internal crisis the MFA maintains itself *as such* as the *only* institutional and political organ around which *all* the class-collaborationist governmental solutions must define themselves.

E. Nonetheless, in face of the upsurge of the mass movement after the constitution of the military triumverate, the MFA has had growing difficulties in exercizing

governmental power and in maintaining its unity. This has led the regime to a redoubling of its authoritarian moves. Along with the coopting plans of the "MFA-People alliance", we should note the new draft press law, setting up discretionary powers of political censorship, the disciplinary measures in the army, and the repeated blows against trade union rights and independence. In spite of the regime's incapacity to completely implement these diverse attacks against the democratic rights won by the masses, they remain a direct threat to the workers movement, its independence and its organizations.

2. THE DIVISION OF THE WORKING CLASS AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CP AND SP

A. The dangers bearing down on the Portuguese revolution today, far from reflecting the political backwardness of the masses or an ebb in their activity, result directly from the class collaborationist and divisive policies practiced by the CP as well as the SP.

After having accepted the measures taken by the MFA, having formed several coalition governments with the bourgeois PPD and the military hierarchy, having developed orientations aimed exclusively at class-collaboration, the workers parties, the CP and SP, have aggravated this criminal policy. They violently oppose one another concerning the means to stabilize a new instrument of bourgeois political domination and to apply the brakes to the revolutionary process.

From the beginning, the CP adopted the program of the MFA as its own. In spite of a "revolutionary" demagogy, it had a policy of permanent capitulation to the military hierarchy, coming forward as its privileged interlocutor in the workers movement. It was the most active executor of the measures taken by the regime in all areas of economic, social and politicai activity in the country (the trade union law, the Institutionalization Pact, the gagging of the Constituent Assembly, the "battle for production," unconditional support to the Triumvirate, etc. . .).

The SP followed the same policy until July, 1975, in spite of some initial resistance that quickly fizzled. The SP's break with the fifth provisional government and the CP resulted at first from a wish to restabilize the relationship of forces within the state institutions in its favor, especially in the government. Profiting from the discontent and the growing defiance of large sectors of the workers movement and of the urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, the SP leadership used the pretext of real blows against democratic rights (the República affair, etc. . .) to further its own political plans. Conscious of the impossibility of restoring a bourgeois democratic parliamentarism in Portugal, independent of the arbitration of the military hierarchy, the SP at least wanted to modify the relationship of forces in the MFA in favor of the Melo Antunes tendency and to give bourgeois democratic institutions (the Constituent Assembly, the legislature, and the municipalities) a more important place in the state apparatus.

B. The political divisions and bureaucratic conflicts between the CP and the SP reflect the special features of Stalinism and social democracy as well as their common role of defender of the bourgeois order. The consequences are heavy. The CP and SP were violently divided on how to reconstruct the bourgeois state apparatus and over the role each should play in the process (for the SP, restabilization of the coalition around an axis of the SP, the PPD, and the Antunes wing of the MFA; for the CP, privileged support to Vasco Gonçalves in the framework of a CP-MFA solution, or even of a military government. But the two counterrevolutionary workers parties are today constrained by the setbacks on both fronts to orient themselves toward one and the same solutions: the patching together of a CP-SP-MFA coalition formula (eventually involving the PPD). In this way their policies will have contributed to creating a deep division in the ranks of the working class, only to end up reviving the single viable counterrevolutionary solution today: a formula of class collaboration centered around a laboriously reunified MFA.

C. However, the actively counterrevolutionary policies of the CP and SP have contradictory effects in the relationship between the masses and the traditional leaderships.

The broadest sectors of the masses remain victims of their illusions in the CP and SP leaderships. They still see in these leaderships the genuine expression of their democratic and revolutionary aspirations. This is the way it is for numerous workers and peasants who mobilized behind the SP leadership or who broke with the CP at the time of the union elections: their actions did not express "reactionary" motivations, but reflected a genuine attempt to respond to their deteriorating economic situation and their wish to defend elementary rights against the attacks of the regime (freedom of the press, trade-union freedom, etc.). Just as deep are those illusions of workers who sincerely believe that support to the CP leadership (and behind it to the Gonçalves government and COPCON) guarantee their deep aspiration for a revolutionary solution. This contradiction between the needs and progressive aspirations of the masses and the illusions the majority retain in one or another of the traditional leaderships explains how their rivalry has led to *profound divisions* among the masses themselves. But it also creates the ground on which revolutionaries, as the only consistent defenders of class unity and independence, can prepare a break with the traitorous leaderships.

D. The cracks or political differentiations already visible in the traditional organizations (especially the SP) and the strengthening of centrist currents are a first manifestation of this contradiction. But this still takes place in a confusion which gravely limits its political scope. Thus almost all the Portuguese centrist organizations have made themselves, more or less, the spokespersons of COPCON and officers close to Otelo de Carvalho. They believe to have discovered in the plans and programs of this current in the MFA, an adequate political expression of the aspirations of the advanced sectors of the Portuguese masses toward self-organization—whereas in fact the projects of COPCON represent a mortal danger for the embryonic soviet structures which are developing today in Portugal. Until now the demonstrations organized by the centrist currents (MES, PRP, PSP, LUAR) and the committees that they influence or lead have not asserted political independence from COPCON and its plans. This political dependence in relation to COPCON has recently led the centrists, and unfortunately the LCI itself, to support the fifth government and to allow the CP leadership to break out of its isolation—the better to maneuver toward strengthening its position in the new coalition.

3. REVOLUTIONARY MARXISTS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THE WORKERS UNITED FRONT AND THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS GOVERNMENT

A. The situation created by the confrontation between the two principal Portuguese workers parties requires revolutionary Marxists to redouble their efforts to help reunify the mass movement in defense of its immediate objective needs and around political solutions independent of the bourgeoisie and military hierarchy. Such an orientation presupposes the development of a policy of united front on the level of organizational forms as well as central political perspectives.

A correct combination of democratic demands and transitional slogans is of decisive importance, given the uneven consciousness of the Portuguese masses, the obstacles erected by the policies of the CP and the SP to block the revolutionary alliance of the workers and small peasants, and the renewed threats against elementary rights won by the masses and the workers organizations.

B. Faced with economic disorganization, sabotage and unemployment, revolutionary Marxists advance a program of nationalizations and expropriations under workers control (with neither repurchase nor compensation), centralized planning and a monopoly of foreign trade.

At the same time, it is necessary to fight for an agrarian reform in the North to help ameliorate the situation of the small peasants. This alone can undermine the objective social base of the counterrevolution and rally the small peasantry to the objectives of the working class.

Finally, the central political objectives of revolutionary Marxists as well as the proposals they make to radically reorganize the economy of the country should not permit them to neglect defense of the most elementary demands of the masses, most particularly the struggles against the wage freeze and unemployment.

C. Revolutionary Marxists are in the forefront of the defense of democratic rights when they are attacked, inasmuch as workers democracy itself can develop lastingly only if the masses and their organizations are completely guaranteed the exercise of elementary democratic freedoms (freedom of the press, of assembly, of association, etc.) and of fundamental workers rights (independent and democratic unions, right to strike, etc.).

Faced with the development of a reactionary offensive in the North, revolutionary Marxists help form workers self-defense squads prepared to defend the headquarters and the press of all the workers organizations, and most particularly today, those of the CP. They seek by all means to realize the broadest agreement among workers organizations, including the SP, to carry through this task successfully.

D. Revolutionary Marxists never defend the existence of a bourgeois democratic institution like the Constituent Assembly as a principle, but with regard to the role it plays at various moments in the concrete developments of the class struggle. From this angle, the Constituent Assembly today is certainly an arena for parliamentary maneuvers of the SP and the PPD. But it also represents in the eyes of an important part of the working-class and peasant masses a concretization of the relationship of forces that was expressed in the majority vote for the workers organizations. Revolutionary Marxists do not harbor the slightest illusion in a "parliamentary road" or a semi-parliamentary road toward a workers government or socialism. But insofar as the current degree of development of organs of workers democracy and general political conditions do not permit the totally *independent* political centralization of representative *mass* committees, revolutionary Marxists struggle against *all* blows aimed at the Constituent Assembly (all the more against any attempt by the *bourgeois* government to *dissolve* it, and *a fortiori* by a military government). In fact, whatever the "left" phraseology that might accompany such blows, they can do nothing to aid the development of the mass committees themselves. On the contrary, they strengthen all the attempts of the MFA-COPCON to impose its own project of a "National Peoples' Assembly"—against not only the Constituent Assembly, but also against any perspective of soviets and an independent workers government.

E. But the essential question that will determine the future of the Portuguese revolution, the one towards which the mass mobilizations must aim, is that of a working-class solution to the present government crisis. *In this situation* the formula of a workers and peasants government must find a concrete expression that appears to the workers as an immediate possibility. Today, only the CP, SP, and Intersindical are in a position to take power and satisfy the economic, social and political needs of the mass. This perspective of an organizational and programmatic break by the workers parties from the bourgeoisie, (this means in Portugal today, with the military hierarchy, the MFA and the PPD) finds its direct reflection in the activity that revolutionary Marxists develop to create, spread, deepen, coordinate and centralize the structures of self-organization. Further, it is through supporting this process that the workers parties should put themselves foward as candidates for power. The formula of a *government of the CP, SP and Intersindical based on the committees* is today the *only* political expression of the workers united front at the highest level, that is the level of state power. This is because only the CP, SP and Intersindical really centralize the Portuguese working class, at least at the present time. The refusal of the workers leadership to take on their governmental responsibilities, to break with the bourgeoisie and the MFA or one of its components, can ultimately lead the masses that today follow these leaderships to break from them.

Revolutionary Marxists must help advance the process of self-organization and lay out a perspective of national centralization (a congress of the committees). Simultaneously this battle to create a united front framework for the working class should strive to break the relative isolation of the present organs from the broadest masses, and to surmount the divisions between the members of the various organizations and between the different levels of consciousness. It also implies a persistent struggle for total independence of the mass committees. This struggle, which is complementary to that led in the same spirit at the governmental level, has as its primary objective to break the committees from the mystifying influence of COPCON and the MFA, and to combat the attempts by the military hierarchy to integrate them into the state apparatus and put them under the tutelage of the bourgeois army.

TEXT BY NEMO AND KRASNO

September 20, 1975

[The following document is translated from internal bulletin no. 35 of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, French section of the Fourth International.]

1. REMARKS ON THE MAJORITY ORIENTATION

That a section of the Fourth signs an accord supporting a bourgeois government and its program and calling for a "front" with a bourgeois force (the MFA) poses an extremely grave problem. It is cavalier either to reduce this error to an "opportunistic slip" while denying its popular front dimension (August Central Committee), or to hasten to shift the responsbility for it onto the young LCI while emphasizing that it was "immediately denounced" by the leaders of the International (*Rouge* No. 312).

Instead, what is important is to look for *the political basis* for the present disorientation of the LCI and to really define the tasks of a policy of unity and independence for the Portuguese working class.

1. From "confusions" about the MFA to illusions in COPCON

According to Comrade Mandel, the Guide Document of the MFA constitutes "a policy of integration *counterposed* to the genuine autonomy of the mass movement in relationship to *bourgeois* state institutions." Here at least the essential thing is identified: the class *nature of this plan,* its direct link to the reconstruction of the bourgeois state apparatus. But until this tardy clarification, the press of the majority sections speculated on a kind of double nature of the MFA's plan. Michaloux (*Rouge* 309) affirmed that the Guide Document *"also* sought to coopt" (self-organization) but concluded by saying: "*The essential thing, however,* is that with all its ambiguities and its compromises, in the present political situation in Portugal, the Guide Document appears to workers as a general expression of their aspirations and indeed as *an encouragement* to realize them as quickly as possible." This formula could only encourage gambling one more time on the "dynamic" rather than denouncing *with the greatest clarity* the fundamentally *bourgeois populist* character of the document and the dangers that it represents to the workers parties and the independence of the mass organs. Holding the same illusions, the only thing Krivine found to reproach the Guide Document with was being "confused to be sure" (*Le Monde,* August 2) (here is a *class* characterization for you!). The progressive character of the Guide Document was nevertheless more clearly implied by the fact that the struggle against this plan was presented as the real stake in the SP's attempt *"to block the revolutionary process."* In this conception, far from focusing on the problem of class *independence* of the committees, the principal point of cleavage with the MFA plan, seen as "confusedly" progressive, was a simple question of tardiness in putting it into action! Without criticizing anything in the Guide Document, the leaflet "Where is Portugal Going?" reproached Carvalho with "postponing to a rather distant future the convocation of the National Peoples' Assembly" and considered it necessary to call for it to be "convened immediately." This could hardly aid the Portuguese comrades to distinguish the perspective of building soviets from a bourgeois corporatist plan!

This systematic confusion on the class character of the program of the MFA was amplified when the analysis of its internal cleavages was made. Instead of seeing the opposition of two plans for reconstruction of the bourgeois state (one semiparliamentary, the other populist-corporatist), Krivine, for example, stated that "in a deformed way the MFA reproduces class conflicts." This enabled Michaloux to characterize only the "Antunes wing" as "probourgeois" while dodging all class characterization of the "radical elements" (*Rouge* 310). As for Robs, he indicated that "in the development of these committees," these elements are "confusedly looking for the foundation of a *new power*" (*Rouge* 309). This formula avoids having to clearly characterize this "new" power as bourgeois, the better to foster belief that the "left wing" of the MFA might be converted to soviets.

The LCI comrades have at least been consistent in the error: recognizing the COPCON document as "a valid basis on which to work for the elaboration of a revolutionary program," they also did not see any reason not to salute the Guide Document as opening "a way forward for the revolutionary process." How can they be reproached for this when the leaders of the LCR themselves are incapable of going beyond the "confusion" of the MFA or its "left wing" to lay bare the class nature of their plans? Moreover, what good is it to discover today the real worth of the Guide Document if one continues the same ambiguities of characterization and judgement with regard to COPCON? Mandel is totally silent on this point in his remarks on the "unity accord." Was this simply so that Michaloux could characterize the"self-criticism" of COPCON as a "revolutionary orientation?"

2. The basis of the "concessions to the CP leadership"

Comrade Mandel emphasizes that the pact signed by the LCI is incorrect in that "the absence of initiatives towards the SP . . . leads to endorsing the sectarian policy of the

PCP and preventing an audacious policy of united front." Well spoken. But this derives directly from the errors made by the majority concerning the analysis of the respective counterrevolutionary responsibilities of the leadership of the CP and that of the SP.

A. In the first place all the majority's analyses have tended to *minimize* the actively counterrevolutionary role of the CP and *the major responsibility* it bears for the present division of the working class due to its absolutely unconditional support to all the antidemocratic and anti-working class measures of the MFA and the military regime. To speak of the "sectarian and bureaucratic policy of the CP" or even to say that its problem is that of "remaining at the stage of advanced democracy, preserving the essential power of the bourgeoisie" (August 1975 leaflet) hides the *important* thing under the guise of criticism: that from April 1974 to August 1975 the CP has been *the most active and direct* agent of the various attempts at restoration of the bourgeois order (antistrike practices, the "battle for production," repressive measures of the MFA, repressive probes vis-à-vis the unions and committees.

These "silences" vis-à-vis the CP gave a very particular meaning to Krivine's call to "choose one's camp": if the SP "blocks the revolutionary process" while the CP is only guilty of "manipulation and bureaucratization" or of "simply adapting to the rise of the Portuguese revolution" (August 1975 leaflet), wasn't it logical to support the CP, the MFA and a "to be sure confused" program against the SP, "the principal support of reaction?" The LCI did nothing more than this!

B. Further, the majority never wanted to clearly distinguish the obviously probourgeois political objectives of the SP leaders, for a semiparliamentary reconstruction of the state apparatus, from the deep *progressive aspirations* on the basis of which the broad masses could turn away from the CP or the MFA to mobilize behind the SP: elementary economic demands of the workers and peasants, struggle for the defense of democratic conquests, aspirations for democracy and independence for the unions, growing discontent vis-à-vis the plans of the MFA . . . In this regard one must have an unbelievable political scorn for the masses to speak of an "overheated crowd" or of a "human dust cloud." How can we work effectively to detach the masses from their illusions in the leadership of the SP if we don't begin by seeing their heterogeneity or if we treat them as a collection of all that is backward or reactionary? Then, how not to be fatally driven to "endorse the sectarian policy of the CP?" Michaloux can strongly denounce "the fact that the leaders of the CP tried to transform a necessary mobilization against reaction into a maneuver to isolate the SP (*Rouge* 310). But how could the LCI avoid supporting such an operation when, a little earlier, Krivine did not hesitate to write: "The SP has chosen another way (than that of joining the base committees), which does not astonish us, following also the tradition of its 'fraternal parties.'"

"It is not a Prague coup that lies in wait for Portugal, but a *Santiago coup.*"

A singular shortcut between the "tradition" of the social democratic parties and Chilean fascism. Can this caricature-in-embryo of the thesis of social fascism help the LCI to understand the necessity of the "audacious policy of the united front" that is dictated by the working class character of the SP and its ties with the masses, *in spite of and contrary to* the policy of the SP leadership?

C. Finally, the totally uncritial attitude of *Rouge* vis-à-vis the "far left" demonstrations of the recent period directly opened the way to a policy that has just been capped with the signing of the "unity accord." From this point of view Michaloux didn't know how correct he was when he saluted the demonstrations of 16 and 18 July as "stamping these days of governmental crisis with the *seal of the future*" (*Rouge* no. 310). This is because the public appearance of a certain number of representative workers commissions prevented him from seeing two decisive facts: above all, the dramatic *isolation* of these demonstrations vis-à-vis the broad working class and peasant masses; the fact that this gap was even more *aggravated* by the grossly incorrect orientation the centrist organizations gave to these demonstrations: the call for "popular power" and for the National Peoples' Assembly without any differentiation (except for the LCI) vis-à-vis the plans of the MFA and COPCON; the totally irresponsible slogan of "dissolution of the Constituent Assembly"; the propagandist and ultimatistic character of the slogan of "dictatorship of the proletariat," which could neither correct the "confused" attitude vis-à-vis the MFA and the military government nor build a bridge toward the working class and peasant masses. *Rouge* did not say one word about all these aspects that were directly *contrary* to the battle for the *independence* (especially vis-à-vis the MFA) and for the *unity* of the working class.

But is it today any more responsible to say that the August 20 demonstration revealed "the dynamic of the mass response to the reactionary offensive" (Mandel) while totally sweeping under the rug the fact that it was carried out predominantly under the influence of centrist slogans ("dissolution of the Constituent Assembly!") or Maoist slogans ("Down with the two imperialisms!") and with its principal axis being direct support to COPCON?

3. An irresponsible definition of political tasks

A. Even through the question of central power is posed in an *immediate* way in Portugal and constitutes the *key* to the whole political situation, the majority resolution outlines only the *propagandistic* perspective of a "government of the workers organizations" in which once again the components are not named. This *total absence of a concrete and immediate response* to the governmental question was justified by doubtful arguments such as: even in a situation of open political crisis an agitational slogan is not always indispensable . . . . In any case this vacuum will surely be filled *in the short run* by the rapid centralization of the structures of self-organization so that the governmental slogan will "probably be quickly replaced by that of 'all power to the Peoples Assembly' or 'all power to the National Peoples Assembly'." Unfortunately, this does not have much to do with the concrete situation in Portugal:

The majority, while abandoning the positions explained in Robs' edit ("All power to the committees"), sees, nevertheless no contradiction in predicting the immediate centralization of the committees, and demanding *from now on* that the government of workers organizations be

"*responsible* to the committees" while the majority itself has to recognize that these committees are still only prefigurations of centralized soviets that will come much later: "This radicalization is *only at its beginnings*: It has only affected the most advanced sectors, the most active, the most combative, but also the most decisive, *without yet reaching a large majority of the class.*"

One can add that their effective centralization—on condition that it take place in an *independent* way and respects *workers democracy*—would help to reduce the distance that separates the present committees from real mass structures of the united front; but even this *would not yet be sufficient to establish a situation of "dual power."* This demands both that the broad masses see the committees as their own and that these committees be in a position to compete directly with the bourgeois state on the fully political level.

Now, if the present tendency toward self organization of the Portuguese masses proceeds fundamentally from the same process of political emancipation as that of the time of the Russian Revolution, it has its own particularities that distinguish the two experiences. In Russia "the dictatorship of the workers and soldiers was a fact dating from February 27" (*History of the Russian Revolution*, p. 331, French edition), that is to say, *from the first day* of the downfall of the tsarist monarchy. In Portugal the revolutionary upheval of 1974 was able to make an almost clean sweep of the Salazarist institutions but it still left *the totality of political power* in the hands of the general staff of the Portuguese army and of the MFA. In a situation of extreme tension between the classes, diverse attempts at reconstruction of the state apparatus followed one another: attempts of the MFA-COPCON to coopt the first organs of self organization, the constitution of a new coalition government with the support of the CP and the SP that, like the preceding ones, was directed against the revolutionary movement of workers, peasants and soldiers.

While calling for a "National Peoples' Assembly" as if it were a miracle solution, the majority completely neglects *the problems that are key to the situation*: the necessity of the clearest and sharpest battle for the *total independence* of the committees vis-à-vis the various military "protectors"; the necessity of breaking the government vise. Thus the majority defines as the *political priority* "calling on the militants and the leaders of the big transitional parties—the CP and the SP—to work for the construction and the centralization of these growing organs of workers power." But this task in no way exhausts the immediate objectives of a united front policy: the unity and independence of the class today demands a break with the bourgeoisie *at all levels* and, in the center, *the formation of a workers government independent of the bourgeoisie, the military hierarchy and the MFA.* (In fact, only the comprehension of this necessity can enable those workers who are today taking part in the committees to free themselves of the influence of MFA-COPCON, and unify their combat with that of the broadest masses to truly open the way to independent political development of the committees.)

B. On the other hand, the majority believes it obligatory to reject the opportunist and rightist slogan of a "CP-SP government" because this could find its legitimacy only in the Constituent Assembly and that would sow illusions and lead to defending a bourgeois parliamentary institution at the expense of "popular power," etc. . .

This demagogic argument reveals first of all a lack of comprehension of the political rationale for a governmental slogan: it is necessary to demand of the CP and SP that they engage in a battle for an independent government not because they are a majority in the Constituent Assembly *but because they are a majority in the working class*, which in its large majority retains illusions in the traditional leaderships. It was this *internal* relationship of forces in the workers movement that enabled the workers parties to reproduce it at an electoral level throughout the country. While this is not really the essential thing, it enables us to demolish one of the favorite arguments used by the working class leaderships to justify the maintenance of their collaborative pacts: the necessity of attaining an electoral majority.

On the other hand, according to the majority, the CP-SP slogan would contribute to "the revival of the dying structures of a disintegrating bourgeois state, like the Constituent Assembly." This at least hasty assertion poses two distinct problems: the situation that would be opened up by the actual constitution of a CP-SP government; the attitude of revolutionary Marxists vis-à-vis the Contituent Assembly *in the present situation.*

On the first point, it should be emphasized that an effective break of the CP and of the SP with the present coalition, that is to say, with the MFA and the military hierarchy (and with the PPD), would, in the most immediate fashion, put on the order of the day all the questions, all the tasks of the socialist revolution in Portugal. To take only one example, a political break with the military hierarchy would itself objectively pose within a very short term the problem of creating a social division in the army and of the constitution by the workers movement of its own military apparatus (militias, etc.) Thus, the formation of an independent CP-SP government would not only go against all the collaborationist politics of the leaders but would also raise problems that would prevent it from being *stabilized* on a bourgeois parliamentary level, and which could only be truly resolved on the terrain of *soviet democracy.*

Furthermore the general counterposition between "bourgeois parliamentarism" and "workers democracy" in no way settles the problem of the concrete attitude of revolutionary Marxists vis-à-vis a bourgeois democratic institution like the Constituent Assembly *at each concrete moment* of development in the class struggle. From this point of view the soviet perspective is in no way contradictory (on the contrary) *with the present necessity of the most vigilant defense against all political assaults* (from the institutionalization pact to the threat of dissolution) by the MFA or COPCON against the Constituent Assembly, even though they draw support from those currents dazzled by the promise of a "National Peoples' Assembly." On this point the majority has belatedly recognized that the slogan of "dissolution" was wrong and could only divide the working class and isolate it from the peasantry. But this in no way resolved the problem of the *active attitude* to take vis-à-vis past or future attacks against the Constituent Assembly.

It is useful to remember what the policy of the Russian revolutionaries was on this point: "But the Bolsheviks

also, although finding no way out on the road of formal democracy, had not yet renounced the idea of the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, they could not do this without abandoning revolutionary realism. Whether the future course of events would create the conditions for a complete victory of the proletariat, could not with absolute certainty be forseen. [But outside of the dictatorship of the soviets, and up until this dictatorship, the Constituent Assembly was to be the highest conquest of the revolution.] Exactly as the Bolsheviks defended the compromisist soviets and the democratic municipalities against Kornilov, so they were ready to defend the Constituent Assembly against the attempts of the bourgeoisie." (Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution,* Sphere edition, pp. 328-29, Vol II. The sentence in brackets does not appear in the English translation.)

"A revolutionary party can turn its back to a parliament only if it has set itself the *immediate* task of overturning the existing regime." (ibid., p. 324, our emphasis).

These considerations of method sufficiently clarify what today ought to be the necessary combination of tasks of defense of the Constituent Assembly against all the bourgeois attacks and the active struggle to break the workers movement from the bourgeoisie at all levels. It is only in this way that revolutionary Marxists will work effectively for the development of the Portuguese revolution and for surpassing bourgeois democracy.

C. According to the majority resolution, Portugal is supposed to be the "most democratic" country in the world. This strange "observation only serves to justify one political option: for the majority, the democratic tasks of the Portuguese revolution are in fact supposed to be *accomplished* and it will be necessary to center agitation in the prioritized and almost exclusive way, on socialist demands. This purist conception of the program leads in fact to nimbly *skirting around* a burning question: the permanent attacks that the various succeeding governments in Portugal perpetuate against the first democratic conquests of the masses and the exercise of the most elementary working-class rights; the absolute obligation of revolutionary Marxists to place themselves in *the front ranks* of the defense of these democratic aquisitions. (*This does not in any way prevent the parallel development today of all the transitional slogans, just the contrary!*)

The refusal of the majority to recognize the immediate importance of the defense of democratic rights is based on a sadly mechanistic argument that such an orientation would imply that the revolutionary movement would lose momentum and be driven on the defensive. But this reveals a lack of understanding of the contradictions of a period of *rising revolution.* While the tendency towards self organization of the working class coexists with the obstacle of the bourgeois state apparatus, the two antagonistic classes are pushed toward extreme political solutions: the proletariat looks for the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat, the bourgeoisie looks for all the ways to parry the upsurge of the mass movement.

Also, the various plans of the military triumvirate, like those of the new coalition government today, have as a declared objective limiting the exercise of democratic rights (press, organization in the army . . .) and proletarian rights (strike, independent and democratic trade unions). That these attacks have not for the moment had the effects expected by the government does not allow the communist vanguard to ignore the serious threat they constitute: for example, the anti-strike law of August 1974, the most reactionary in western Europe with the exception of Franco's Spain, has hung over the head of the working class like a sword of Damocles. To pass over this fact in silence, to ignore this law because it has not been applied in all its dimensions, amounts once again to going easy on the present government, the MFA and the military hierarchy. The struggle against this law and more generally against all the antidemocratic and anti-working class measures and decrees taken by the regime constitutes one of the fundamental axes of the denunciation of the class character of the Portuguese regime and its successive governments.

II. EXPLANATORY SELF CRITICISMS OF OUR CC RESOLUTION

A. This resolution advanced the slogan of a CP-SP government *"based on the committees."* This was a poor attempt to relate in a "synthetic" slogan the wish to support the self-organization movement and the immediate necessity of breaking *governmental* ties with the bourgeoisie. This formula appeared confusing in the present stage in that it seemed to make the effective centralization of the committees a *prerequisite* for the demand that the *CP and the SP break with the MFA and the PPD.*

It therefore seems more clear to say that it is necessary immediately and jointly to develop agitation around the following two axes:

- *For the strengthening, extension, and independence of the committees of workers, peasants and soldiers!* (While outlining a *propaganda perspective for their* centralization in the future).
- *For the immediate break with the coalition government. For a CP-SP government independent of the bourgeoisie, of the military hierarchy and of the MFA!* (while explaining the immediate tasks of such a government).

B. Further, the internationalist slogans (Out of Nato! Unconditional withdrawal of Portuguese and of foreign troops from Angola!) not brought out in the resolution, are certainly of the highest importance.

THE TRAGIC DIVISION OF THE WORKING CLASS

by Matti
July 21, 1975

[The following is the text of an editorial written for publication in *Rouge,* #310, July 25, 1975. It was rejected by the editorial board. The text has been translated from Internal Bulletin #35 of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, (LCR), French Section of the Fourth International. The editorial that appeared in the July 25 issue of *Rouge,* signed by P. Robs, is printed in SWP Internal Information Bulletin No. 1 in 1975, p. 20, entitled "Portugal: The Revolution at a Turning Point."]

* * *

"Social Democracy must be politically discredited in the eyes of the masses. But this cannot be achieved by means of insults. The masses trust only their own collective experiences. They must be given the opportunity during the preparatory period of the revolution to compare in action the communist policies with those of the Social Democrats," wrote Leon Trotsky on May 25, 1930, about the Spanish revolution. [Leon Trotsky, *The Spanish Revolution, 1931-39* Pathfinder Press, p.62.]

Today in Portugal, the Socialist Party of Mario Soares has made headway against the Communist party of Alvaro Cunhal. Tens of thousands of demonstrators in Porto and Lisbon followed the instructions of the social democratic leaders to confront the Stalinists and the MFA military men who still follow them. Shamelessly basing themselves on the most backward elements of the petty bourgeoisie, on the deceived majority of the working class, and on the Maoist opportunists, the SP leadership was able to make the CP retreat from its positions, even though only a few years ago under the dictatorship this CP was one of the most heroic and prestigious combatants against fascism. The combination of the forces of reaction, the international campaign of support by the bourgeoisie to Mario Soares, the nascent popular opposition to the MFA, the confused aspirations of the masses for self organization, the divisions and sectarianism of the Maoist "far-left," have revealed the weakness of the CP's orientation of supporting only the power of the MFA.

In supporting the military men in power to the detriment of the independent development of the mass movement, the CP leaders have undermined their own positions. In launching antisocialist offensives after a majority of the working class had voted for the SP, in refusing a systematic united front policy, in denouncing all the nascent forms of workers democracy as sowing division and even of serving counterrevolution, the Stalinist leaders have been—temporarily(?)—isolated. Instead of being able to easily unmask the criminal betrayals of Mario Soares and exposing the real function of the social democracy to the masses who follow it, the Stalinist leaders have given a truly wretched image to "communism": they have responded to the escalation of the SP with a counterescalation, counterposing division to division.

In such a context, the weakened right has begun to raise its head: the plotters of the extreme right have undertaken provocations and incidents, the bourgeoisie of the PPD has employed a "left" language to better add to the confusion, the clerical reactionaries have tried to frighten the smallholders of the North, the most lucid elements of the MFA have tried again to reverse the majority, the European bourgeoisie have tightened the strings of the stockmarket, in order to strangle the small Portuguese farmers and workers little by little. The army is holding on to the power and can at any time designate a military government having all-powerful control of the machinery of the bourgeois state.

In supporting the MFA unconditionally, while putting the brakes on strikes, the development of the committees, and the coordination of the structures of self-organization, the CP bears the full responsibility for the setback that it has suffered.

But the setback of the CP is not that of the working class, anymore than the success of the flabby Mario Soares is a defeat for the working class. The working class, the most important and decisive force numerically and politically, and the only force that is revolutionary to the end, is disoriented by the policy of the two main parties, but it has not experienced any kind of a setback. Through the workers commissions and coordination of delegates that is developing, the necessary class unity and independence is going to clear a path for itself. Even though these structures of self organization are profoundly heterogeneous, uneven, divided, of different origin and experience, they represent the key framework for a united front of the SP and CP, in complete opposition to the policies of the SP and CP leadership. To press the development and centralization of these committees is not only not contrary to the demand for a government only of workers organizations, without any representative of the bourgeoisie, but rounds out this demand. In demanding that the SP and CP cease to tragically divide the working class, in demanding that they both break with bourgeois representatives whoever they are, we enable the masses to see through experience what Soares and Cunhal really want: the former prefers alliance with the PPD, the European bourgeiosies, and American imperialism rather than workers unity and the power of the committees; the latter prefers the power of the MFA to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Since the SP and CP are still the majority parties in the working class, revolutionary Marxists must not cease unmasking these leaderships and denouncing their policies, counterposing the program of the working class and the demand for its unity and independence.

TEXT ON THE SITUATION IN PORTUGAL

by Matti
August 6, 1975

[The following text is translated from Internal Bulletin #35 of the LCR, French Section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

Beginning July 20, 1975, after the SP left the government and the new crisis opened up in Portugal, was it necessary to advance the "immediate convocation of a national popular assembly" and "all power to the committees of workers and soldiers," as the only central slogan of power, as the editorial in no. 310 *Rouge* did?

The answer to this question is clearly no! Not as the only slogan of power.

Careful! Revolutionary Marxists in Portugal should at the present time, in all circumstances, propagandize for the committees, for their development and their centralization. *The central slogan of the working class is, certainly, that of "soviets,"* of committees, of the "national assembly of delegates elected by the committees" (an expression that deliberately does not encompass the national peoples (sic) assembly of the MFA). This slogan of "soviets" or committees should be popularized and put forward tirelessly. It is necessary to seek to put it into practice and to initiate it on every occasion. It is necessary to put in the forefront the most unified committees. It is necessary to popularize those committees in enterprises where forms of self-organization are functioning well and in particular where correct slogans are being raised.

But to call for a "national assembly of delegates of the workers commissions" does not resolve the immediate question of the government, nor does it mean an immediate struggle for power against the triumvirate. The broad masses can follow this perspective only in experimentally making their own way, aided by the indispensable work of clarification by the R-M's [revolutionary marxists]. "The assembly of delegates of the workers commissions" means assembling the divided forces of the class, the struggle for its unity and independence. Forces must be gathered in active, living, numerous, experienced, unitary committees to assure the victory of the proletarian revolution. The struggle to assemble these forces prepares the struggle for "the national assembly of delegates of the workers commissions" to become a real organ of power. The questions that must be resolved, given the weakness of the r-m's are very precise: how to assemble the largest working class forces in these committees? How to struggle and overcome the tragic division in the working class? How to confront a government which is solely in the hands of a military triumvirate? How to demonstrate the betrayal of the CP and SP leaderships to the tens of thousands of workers who follow them? How, in practice, to prevent these committees from remaining marginal, heterogeneous, without centralization or common experience, origin, or political composition? Here are the real questions to which mere propaganda for soviets was not a sufficient answer in the midsummer of '75 in Lisbon and Porto.

If these questions are not answered, if interrelated slogans are not formulated, responding to the objective concerns of the masses, there will not be one inch of progress toward this "national assembly of committees."

It is therefore necessary to turn to the policies of the two main workers parties, the CP and SP. It is necessary to confront the continued and juridically reinforced regime of the "military triumvirate" and of the military government it is going to name. It is necessary to confront the bourgeois reaction that is lifting its head and that today makes its principal target the communists linked with the USSR, as it did yesterday in Portugal or as it will do tomorrow in France. Finally it is necessary to measure concretely the weakness of the revolutionary Marxist pole! The immediate task *is not to seize power, but to conquer the masses!* If we reject formulating the slogan of the government of the workers organizations—SP, CP and Intersindical—if we do not fight actively for these leaderships to stop dividing the class for the benefit of a policy of class collaboration, if we do not denounce the fact that the leadership of the SP prefers to play the game of the PPD and CDS rather than that of the workers committees and of unity with the CP, if we do not denounce the fact that the CP prefers the dictatorship of a "triumvirate" rather than the dictatorship of the proletariat, then we have no way to make the slogan "all power to the soviets" more concrete.

If we do not denounce these leaderships to the point of making them pay for their betrayal in practice, by a united front policy, we will not overcome the obstacles that block the strengthening of the committees, and thus their *real* power, and we will leave the door open to all sorts of reactionary maneuvers.

But how do we denounce these two leaderships when they had the majority of votes in the last elections, when they share the influence in the unions, in all the state positions maintained by the MFA? How do we make the tens of thousands of workers who follow the SP or the CP understand than through impotent incantations, that they need to unite against the real class enemy that is profiting from their division?

It is by saying that "the leadership of the SP has chosen its camp" (as did the main *Taupe Rouge* distributed in Paris between July 25 and 30)? Everyone—in the ranks of the Fourth International—knows that the SP has chosen "the camp of the bourgeoisie"; this is not something new for the social democrats, neither for Mario Soares the Portuguese, nor for Mitterrand the Frenchman: both are from the Second International which is all-powerful in

Europe. We know that the Portuguese SP plays the role of agents of U.S. imperialism and of the German social democracy in power. We know that the social democrats can be the assassins of the working class, that Jules Moch created the CRS and tomorrow Mitterrand will order them to shoot. *We* know this, *but the masses do not.* That's why the SP was able to strengthen itself considerably in the Portuguese working class, became its strongest party, won the majority in the union elections in the banks, steel, chemicals, and hotels. That's why it made progress even after leaving the government, why it was able to assemble tens of thousands of demonstrators—not only from the extreme right, alas, but also tens of thousands of workers—assuring that its meeting in Lisbon would take place in spite of the fact that the CP demanded it be banned, comparing these workers with the silent majority of Spinola. The development of the SP in less than one year merits a clear understanding: it is a traditional current of the working class that, in 1975, in Portugal, after forty years of the black night of fascism, was able to seduce the majority of this class. Once again, the working class movement, in a period of upsurge, *first* strengthens its big international currents, even if they are weakly represented at the beginning, such as the SP on April 25, 1974, (or such as the French SP, four years after May 1968). The CP was the second party to benefit from this strengthening, though it had been the only long-time heroic fighter against the fascist dictatorship and though it had conquered a monopoly of the leadership of Intersindical from the beginning.

The phenomenon of the Portuguese SP clarifies the analysis of the function of European social democracy and can enable us to make some prognoses about Italy and Spain tomorrow.

But there are some extremely precise dictates that flow from this: we cannot imitate in any way the policy of the Stalinists who lumped the SP together with reaction, instead of launching a call for unity (not only towards the ranks, of course, but towards the leadership). If we did we would be led into the big error of placing ourselves "at the side of the CP against the SP" and, carrying this out to the end, being the only ones to mount the barricades in Porto to prevent the SP meeting from being held. (If the SP really is in "the other camp" it would be necessary to do it). We would have been the only ones on these barricades, because no one else was there: with their class instinct, the workers themselves did not place the SP in the "other camp," and did not go along with what their leadership explained to them. If indeed things are clear in the eyes of the big mass of workers, if indeed they understand that "the SP *is* the reaction" (as Hoffman argued in the only Political Bureau-Parisian Federation discussion that we had, at the end of July), if the big majority of the conscious workers are "behind the CP," then there is good reason to be very pessimistic about the workers' combativity: because "the great mass of the workers" in this critical period did not follow the orders of the CP against the SP, neither in Porto nor in Lisbon. (As for the "far left," it in fact was divided between the two "camps," the Maoists marching behind the SP!) After having called for barricades in Porto, the CP turned tail the next day in Lisbon, and allowed the SP assembly to take place. Thus the tragic attempt of the CP to erect barricades against another workers party failed. The communist workers, disavowing their own leaders, reacted in favor of unity and refused to fight against the socialist workers. In the same way, the socialist workers will soon refuse the anticommunist appeals of their leadership. R-M's should support this position and should not think that the SP is definitively unmasked in the eyes of the masses. We should no longer label them in our pamphlets as having passed over "to the other camp." Otherwise all possiblities of talking today to socialist workers to bring them the message of unity will be diminished. We are no more "on the side" of the CP than "on the side" of the SP. *We are on the side of workers' unity against their two leaderships.*

Thus the editorial in *Rouge* is, to say the least, confused. It says, "in launching a political offensive against the MFA and the CP, but in reality also against the growing threat of workers power asserting itself in the factories, the barracks and the poor neighborhoods—the SP is becoming the main prop of the reaction that is against raising its head." [IIB No. 1 in 1975, p. 20]. If one reads carefully, one sees that the mighty threat is in the background, beyond the MFA and the CP, whereas reaction is lifting its head behind the SP which is its main prop. The class camps are quite well defined! Not only does this "credit" the CP but it adopts intact a position that not even the CP leaders have been able to take, one that they have softened and that they will perhaps be forced to abandon in order not to pay too heavy a price for the isolation that is resulting from it. "Class against class." This formula can serve to unify communists and socialists, but it has been utilized to counterpose the communist workers to the social democratic workers as if these latter belong to a different class.

Could the irony (of our previous debates) push the *Rouge* editorial to explain that the SP has become a bourgeois party? Of even that it has never been a workers party? If the LCI did not vote SP-CP on April 25, was this for tactical reasons or principled ones (a class vote)? The resolution of the USec, [see *Intercontinental Press*, August 4, 1975, pp. 1136-42.] however, is clear at the level of analyzing the SP; from it flows a formula for voting that was not explicitly stated in order not to weigh down too heavily on the lively debates in the LCI, but that clearly was a call to vote both CP and SP.

On the one hand, would the *Rouge* editorial have given credit to the CP as did the main *Taupe Rouge* of the Paris region, which is astonishingly "delicate" vis-à-vis the Stalinists, presenting them as a leadership "hesitating" between revolution and counterrevolution. It reads, "at the present time the CP is continually hesitating between two roads. It will not be able to zig zag like this for a long time, between support to the workers struggles and the forms of organization with which they have endowed themselves, and the sad 'rollup your sleeves' line of Maurice Thorez." No, the CP is not a "centrist party" nor a "bureaucratic centrist" one that will be capable of "empirically making the revolution." The CP is a Stalinist party of old stock, unless we fall into a *national* viewpoint in analyzing the workers movement (which would consist of believing that the crisis of Stalinism is such that one can no longer speak of a "Stalinist" bloc, nor even of Stalinism, and that the PCFM PSC, PCI, and PCP have different national strategies). It is not in the tradition of our movement to make such gross journalistic errors. The CP is counterrevolutionary; it serves the interests of the soviet bureaucracy. If the bourgeoisie makes a big attack on it, it is because of its international ties—for the same reason that Poniatows-

ki is furthering an anticommunist campaign in France. Let us repeat: the CP and SP do not have the same function; they are not "twin stars"; they do not have an "overall reformist platform"; and one cannot analyze their policies only with national consideration.

It is necessary, then, to fight for the unity of the SP and CP, *and not only "from below." No! It is also necessary to unmask the leaders. Because all the articles, the Rouge* editorial, the *Rouge* articles, *Taupe Rouge*, the LCR's free column editorial in *Le Monde* speak loud and clear for the need to unify "the workers, especially Communists and Socialists, through the committees." But they never speak of the organizations. Could these have disappeared? Will they be bypassed in the movement toward soviets? Weren't there from 20-40,000 people in the successive demonstrations of the SP and CP as against 8-10,000 of the workers committees? Are not the CP and SP the only form of national political centralization of the working class? Does anyone know of any other presently existing form of national centralization? The committees are diverse: pretrade union, paratrade union, antitrade union, ad hoc vigilance committees, leftist committees of minority action, tenants' committees, factory committees with not very well-defined functions—comanagement, strike committees. From north to south, and among the peasants of the Alentejo, in every case the committee has a particular nature according to who is organized in it: Maoists, MES, LUAR, FSP, LCI, PRP-BR, PSP, and PCP. . . . Already there is a gap in political life between north and south and again according to the two principal urban zones. There is little in common between the workers of TAP and those cabinet makers and carpenters that the LCI influences in Porto. . . Pages and pages, or even a book, would not be sufficient to describe all the committees. But only a few lines are necessary to establish that nothing yet centralizes the working class if it is not its parties, even taking account of the heterogeneity of their rank and file. One cannot, all the same, fall into the classic and naive ultraleft error of calling for a "united front" *from below*, addressing ourselves only to the socialist and communist "workers"!!! The problems cannot be dodged. In the *Le Monde* column, the LCR says that "the Trotskyists of the LCI along with other revolutionary forces like the MES" are leading the decisive battles. But the column does not even mention the problem that the MES analyzes the SP as a bourgeois party and consequently will not only fail to understand the policy of the united front but will even reject it. . . !

Let us recall the ABC's. Calling on the SP and the CP to take power does not strengthen the two leaderships in the eyes of the masses. On the contrary! It does not reinforce the parliamentary illusions of the masses. Just the opposite! Say clearly to the Communist and Socialist workers, *"These leaderships must unite against reaction, they must join together to demand minimum wages, guaranteed employment, and democratic rights, they should govern for and with the working class, basing themselves on the committees of workers and their coordination, they should nationalize the big factories, undertake agrarian reform and plan economic recovery on a socialist basis."* Then we can be understood by both groups, and thus make them demand that the leaderships in which they still have confidence apply this correct policy. The workers will experiment even when neither of their leaderships want to. These leaderships fear this like the plague. They are ready for all sorts of other alliances rather than this—with the PPD, on the other hand, and the MFA on the other.

It is easy to show that the two principal workers parties are the ones who have the most responsibility in the present crisis given the results of the last election and their capacity for mobilization. It's easy to show, therefore, that they should have state power.

It is easy to explain that an SP-CP government is not contradictory with the development of the committees and their centralization. On the contrary it is necessary precisely to force the two parties to agree to collaborate in the construction of the committees, to overcome the practical obstacles of the mode of representation, in the date and ways of electing delegates, etc . . . The committees should become a broad democratic forum where each party without exception and with all possibilities for expression will be put to the test and judged by the broad masses. We will then counterpose concretely the workers' united front to the practice of coalition with the bourgeois forces of the PPD or the "irremovable" delegates of the MFA. Only this united front policy can win for the working class the indispensable confidence of the oppressed masses of the country. This is combined with pitilessly denouncing the maneuvers of reaction, organizing the self defense of the headquarters of *all* the workers organizations as well as the right for *all* workers organizations to express themselves through the press, or to *freely* hold meetings, while pressing the purge of the administration, police, army, of all the fascist elements, while denouncing both the blackmail of economic boycott by the European bourgeoisies (thus, of Soares friends) as well as the sectarian, "third period" type tone of *Pravda.*

Only by following this clear political policy to impose class unity on its principal organizations will the r-m's be able to increase their weight and win the confidence of the masses. The battle for proletarian unity cannot be victorious without a battle for the unity of those organizations which divide it, and a defeat of their leaderships.

The differences since Internal Bulletin #32

Comrades Hoffman and Charlie also commit a very bad error in asserting [in Internal Bulletin #32] that "any governmental formula that is equivocal or could be interpreted in parliamentary or semi-parliamentary terms, will play the game of the class enemy," or that "a slogan of a government of the workers parties" would have a "defeatist character." What nonsense! If one adds to it what our two writers say: "dual power of the antagonistic classes in Portugal is expressed essentially right inside the MFA," this borders on folly! Thus the essential thing of this element of "dual power," the representation of the working class, is found "essentially" inside the MFA. We could direct our authors to a few elementary texts which describe what it is that determines a situation of "dual power." Such a "surprising" and "new" point of view will be noted in the record! Happily such talk puts these comrades into a super-minority in our ranks; all the same they cannot push their eclecticism so far as to vote for the resolution of the USec that affirms that "none of the parts of the MFA has any organic tie with the workers movement." Unless of course the comrades develop their

imagination to the point of neglecting this aspect of the question as being secondary and thinking that dual power of the working class expresses itself "essentially" independently of . . . the class itself! In their document in Internal Bulletin #32, the comrades abandon a class point of view to take the superficial point of view of a journalist: thus they call for power . . . for the "left" of the MFA . . . without workers parties . . . without regard for any election or any "parliamentary or semi-parliamentary" formula! They offer *"critical support without equivocation to the revolutionary wing of the MFA"* in order to push it *"toward a pitiless purge"* and *"in the process,"* a purge of the army based on *"the revolutionary mobilization of the workers and soldiers"* and heading towards its *"self dissolution"* in favor *"of an organism of popular power of the type of a Congress of Soviets."* Nothing can match this! Either the authors of this text have written too quickly, without studying the situation in Portugal, and that is serious, or else they are preparing to defend this position and the revisionism that flows from it in our ranks, in which case the divergence is almost inestimable. Asking the "revolutionary wing" (What is that? Who constitutes it? Where have you seen it appear, break with the rule of unanimity, or develop organic links with the workers movement?) to "pitilessly purge" (the country?)—and "in the process" the army! Counting on this "revolutionary wing," giving it our confidence to "organize the mobilization of the workers and soldiers"! (It's really a little "revolutionary party," this revolutionary wing being supported "without equivocation," since the Hoffmann-Charlie text does not once mention the tasks of the LCI and does not raise for even one second the modest question of the construction of a revolutionary party!) Not only this, but also counting on it to go toward its own "self-dissolution!" (What understanding of the mass movement, of the socialist revolution, of the conquests of the Fourth International, is one ready to discover in this "left" or "progressive" or "revolutionary" wing of the MFA, that in addition to creating soviets will, after having accomplished its work, dissolve itself in face of "popular"power—sic—of the congress of Soviets "type"?) All this without organic ties to the workers movement! Better yet: all this completely against the two principal parties which still have the confidence of the majority of the working class? Now that a "triumvirate" leads . . . can the question be posed to the two comrades Hoffmann and Charlie? Which is the revolutioary wing? Should Otelo "Che" Carvalho be asked to "purge", to chase away "the workers parties," to "construct soviets," and then to modestly dissolve himself? And if Carvalho—very anti-communist by reputation—votes with Costa Gomes and changes the majority in the MFA, will all these beautiful plans be modified? Will the "defeatist" question of a slogan of a government of the workers parties have to be posed then? Or else should we go beyond this "equivocal" formula because it has some "parliamentary implications" while immediately constructing and coordinating soviets? The question will remain: how to win the masses to this cause?

From their point of view, Hoffmann-Charlie are right to conclude: "the struggle between the classes in Portugal will not be a replay of a Chilean, Peruvian or Cuban model, but will take—has already taken—complex, astonishing, hardly classical forms." Listening to them, it is actually a "new" road, a "Portuguese road," a quite special *national* road that lies ahead for Portugal; but this is a road that, classically, does not lead to socialism! Shunning the classics so as not to be "dogmatists," Hoffmann and Charlie will have lost a good opportunity to understand the real, concrete questions of the Portuguese revolution. Their methodological error is to refuse to start from the questions, "Where is the working class? Who organizes it? What do the working class organizations look like?" Hoffmann and Charlie never posed the question of working class unity, so zealous were they to put "such hope" in the "most radical wing" of the MFA (cf. document in bulletin 32, page 5, last column). Instead of speaking of the "left" and "right" of the MFA—a bourgeois political geography that doesn't bestow any class character on the given subject, Hoffmann and Charlie would have done better not to trust *Le Monde* or to place their hopes in the factual, conjunctural picture of things, but rather to look for some illumination in the "dogmatic" conquests of the Trotskyist movement.

The absence of a revolutionary party does not permit us to "hope" for a substitute, such as the left of the MFA. This party must be built, the masses must be won. And for this we must face up to concrete problems: what stance vis-à-vis the triumvirate? This question cannot be shirked! We cannot refrain from stating our position while the debate over this is bubbling among the Portuguese masses: for or against? Did the comrades, intoxicated by its "physical" composition, absolutely forget that it is necessary to say, "Down with the triumvirate. Down with the military government. Three men will not govern for and in place of the working class. The millions of workers to power. After Caetano, no 'strong man,' no Bonaparte will decide the fate of the working class in place of the class itself." Because, according to Hoffmann and Charlie, where does dual power essentially express itself? In the Council of the Revolution? In the 240 members Assembly of the MFA? In the "3" of the provisional triumverate? If anything expresses itself through the disintegration of the bourgeois army, it is the class struggle, not the "right" and the "left." Tomorrow in case of civil war, the working class will have to count on its own forces. If there is not a determined, independent, and armed pole on the side of the working class, few MFA men will break *concretely* with the institution of the army (the three services, the COPCON, the PSP, the GNR, the ranks, the officers) in order to turn over weapons to the workers' militias, to control weapons stocks, to paralyze the high command that holds the heavy and decisive material. The only thing that counts is pressing for the working class to organize itself: the split of the MFA will be a useful consequence of this, but a *secondary one*; it will be neither the motor force nor the substitute.

Dozens of speculative "theories" circulated in Chile among those who thought that the army would break "horizonally" or "vertically," between the "left" and the "right," the "base" of the army and the officers. But in the last analysis what counts as the minumum guarantee for the possible victory of the proletariat is to not suspend the proletariat's action for a hypothetical analysis, and to not wait for a miracle in part of the army which the working class, in its vanguard or its majority cannot or is not prepared or moved to provide. *The Portuguese army is weakened and divided. The MFA will soon be, also, because its fate is tied to that of this army; but this will not be realized completely until armed workers militias arise*

that will constitute the embryo of another army, the workers army, which will totally break from and replace the former. This development can be expected only from the working class and it is miseducating to demand that a Carvalho or a self proclaimed "left" achieve it: it is not the "left" that should "carry out the purges" but the committees of workers who should fight to impose *democratic demands* and thus guarantee them against the fascist reaction.

The question of the Constituent Assembly

"Can the Spanish Revolution be expected to skip the parliamentary stage? Theoretically, this is not excluded. It is conceivable that the revolutionary movement will, in a comparatively short time, attain such strength that it will leave the ruling classes neither the time nor the place for parliamentarism. Nevertheless, such a perspective is rather improbable. The Spanish proletariat, in spite of its combativeness, still recognizes no revolutionary party as its own, and has no experience with soviet organization. And besides this, there is no unity among the sparse communist ranks. There is no clear program of action that everyone accepts. Nevertheless, the question of the Cortes is already on the order of the day. Under these conditions, it must be assumed that the revolution will have to pass through a parliamentary stage." (Leon Trotsky, *The Spanish Revolution*, pp .78-79)

"To counterpose the slogan of the dictatorship of the proletariat to the problems and slogans of revolutionary democracy . . . would be the most sterile and miserable doctrinairism." (ibid.)

The masses are not ready today to demand all power to the Constituent Assembly: they show their hostility to this Constituent Assembly.

It was necessary, before April 25, 1975, when the workers and peasants were preparing to exercise the right to vote that they had won at last, to fight actively against the "institutionalization pact" of the MFA, that aimed at dispossessing the future assembly of its powers. This pact aimed at making the MFA independent of the mass mobilization that followed March 11, and at strengthening its power against the workers parties. It was necessary to fight for the sovereignty of the Constituent that was to be elected and for the workers parties to be its majority (vote CP-SP). At that time, the question of the Constituent had a priority place. But now this place has quickly become secondary.

This is because three months later, the Constituent, muzzled and discredited, is powerless and estranged from the mass movement. In a revolutionary period, time goes by doubly fast. Experience after experience, from May 1 to the *Republica* affair, to the departure of the SP, to the "Action Plan" to the "Guide to Action" and to the triumvirate; the masses have been active, without the power of this elected Constituent Assembly making itself felt for one moment. The demonstrations of the workers committees have drawn the general conclusions, in stressing slogans *against* this assembly that has been rendered powerless by the capitulation and sectarianism of the SP and CP themselves—that is, by the very two principal parties that had been elected and represented in an *earlier* phase of the revolutionary process.

To unify the working class and strengthen around it the frightened elements of the peasantry and the petit bourgeoisie, it is necessary to fight for a government of the SP and CP, for democratic rights, *against* the reactionary decrees of the MFA. *But at the present stage, it is not the Constituent that appears in the eyes of the masses as having the least credibility for achieving these objectives.*

What would we win by going against the stream on this point? Hardly an illustration of the argument (evident and ascertainable to everyone) of the decisive responsibilities of the *two* majority workers parties to govern. It is a hopeless task to *restore* a powerless and obsolete institution. But on the other hand, it is necessary—in advance—to set a new objective, one that would *be achieved* by the action of the masses, inasmuch as they are on the offensive and not demoralized by the division of the SP and CP: "a national assembly of delegates of all the workers and peasants committees," convened on the basis of an agreement between the two main parties that would be reassociated in the same government! By contrast, if the workers movement undergoes some setbacks, even partial ones, then the question of the Constituent must be revived.

To write confusedly, as did the LCR in its *Le Monde* column, that it is not necessary "to defer to the vestiges of bourgeois legality, that, in the end, brought a Pinochet to Chile" is full of mystifications. First of all, it is not the "bourgeois legality" that brought a Pinochet to Chile. Secondly, in Chile, it is correct to fight for democratic demands against the Pinochet dictatorship that has destroyed them all. Finally, in Portugal, the "vestiges" of bourgeois legality are either very recent or nonexistent. Since the fall of Caetano, then of Spinola, what legal democratic guarantees are there? With exceptions, the MFA has not made or allowed any but reactionary decrees. These is a real juridicial arsenal that hangs over the masses like a sword of Damocles. *If these multiple decrees have not been applied, it is because of the political activity of the masses, of their high degree of mobilization.* But it is necessary not to content ourselves with smug and naive self-congratulations about a *state of being.* We must fight correctly to translate it into a new legality, to destroy the emergency decree-laws, the "pact" and everything that goes with it! This is a battle that will protect the actions of the workers and soldiers against the various forms of reaction and repression, that will unify them against all threats of a military dictatorship, that will enable them to measure concretely all the precise political obstacles that still keep them from power, that will lead them to concretely oppose an already divided and significantly discredited MFA.

Against the attacks on the CP headquarters, against the sabotage attempts of the extreme right, against the economic disorganization of the trusts, against the threatening talk of clerical reaction and the small proprietors of the North, against that of the generals, the right wing officers who are beginning to reorganize and to threaten, the conquest of all elementary democratic rights must be put on the agenda.

It is even necessary, in the committees, that their coordination of struggles to organized step by step to rally all the workers, to unify them in face of reaction.

Parallel with this, to knit together the most hesitant, backward elements of the working class around its vanguard, we must not in any way cease leading the battle

for elementary economic demands (minimum wages, right to jobs, etc.).

These last aspects are often omitted in our editorials, as if they were outside the present requirements for the conquest of power. No, no and again no! *To make the Portuguese worker, who is today uneasy and disappointed by the quarrels of the CP and SP, understand that nationalizations are necessary, while not forgetting to specify that expropriations must be demanded, and indeed that indemnities not be advanced as the MFA discreetly did, we must more than ever begin with immediate wage demands.* We should not make ultraleft speeches to them—as in the *Rouge* editorial—that put nothing on the agenda but the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Portuguese workers have not been won to the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, far from it; probably, the majority are afraid of it, very afraid. They can be won quickly to foresee the necessity of it, but they must be shown in practice that no other path is possible. As to the peasants, they will only rally round after having exhausted all other options.

It is these economic and democratic battles that will hasten the development of the committees and their capacity to rally the majority of the class and win the confidence of other layers of the people, as is indispensable to victory in case of a civil war. Without these battles it will not be possible to win the working-class masses to the necessity of the committees.

This is because today, these committees are still heterogenous, divided, with very different experiences and origins. The remarkable experiences of self organization of the workers can be discribed at length, but only *descibed.* In Chile also, there are some exceptional descriptions about the activity of the "industrial cordons" and the "community commandos," but what centralization was there? *How can the central weight of the social democrats and Stalinists be overcome?*

There is no possible policy of immediate centralization unless a party, having a clear program, proceeds as the active agent of it. We must avoid thinking the moon is made of green cheese, and thinking that the MFA will effect the necessary centralization . . . substituting itself for a revolutionary party. The plan of the MFA is transparent. Comrade Krivine, and through him the LCR, did not clarify anything in his free column in *Le Monde* in speaking of "admittedly confused plans of the MFA, aiming at the legalization of the stuctures of self organization which the workers and soldiers have created for themselves."

First of all, these structures existed and developed long *before* the MFA made its plans about it, and before it aimed at "legalizing" them once and for all. This plan should have been denounced as being doomed to defeat. What preoccupies the MFA is transparent: to try to harness and control the committees while still assuring its own power from on high.

What a derisive move. It perfectly shows that the MFA is not ready to "dissolve itself" after having constructed soviets, as Hoffmann and Charlie would have us believe! It will be necessary, it is already necessary, that the nascent committees, the living ones, denounce this clause, not only as a small "restriction," but as a new attempt by the MFA to gag the future National Assembly after having gagged the Constituent!

Nor should we "hope," in an opportunist way, that the CP will pump life into the committees. It is superfluous to note this? Our discussions in France have certainly taught us that a Stalinist party is clearly and completely counterrevolutionary: a counterrevolutionary party may perhaps be induced to penetrate some pre-soviet structures to control them and to try to lead them astray. But we must clearly analyze the reasons that push such a CP, in order not to lose its footing in the working class, to participate in such structures of self organization when they develop. We should implacably bear down on the contradictions that result in the CP's ranks from this.

That's why it's astonishing to see this stupefying little phrase in the central Parisien *Taupe Rouge:* "constituted at the initiative of the revolutionary militants or of the CP, these committees today regroup numerous workers . . ." To speak of "revolutionary militants" while not citing organizations (the *Taupe* does not speak once of the LCI, nor of the necessity of constructing a revolutionary party), to mention only the CP as taking "the initiative for the committees," is a little too much. Where? When? The CP was not the initiator of the committees. It has systematically advanced the Intersindical against the commissions of workers and it only penetrated into the neighborhood commissions after they developed. And if it is led, in the strict framework of the MFA plans, to participate in these committees, or even to create some in order to keep control, it is at least opportunistic to present it as being at their initiative. The French CP had a certain way of "penetrating" the high school committees, for example, during the Debray law struggle, and has a still more curious way of claiming credit for taking the initiative for them. Read in *Avante* the texts on how the "right of tendency" (in the unions) is a "counterrevolutionary right." Or read where the CP makes an amalgam of the SP, the PPD and some "leftists," and lambasts them for wanting to divide the unions by defending the right of tendency. This gives a small idea of the "democratic" conceptions with which the CP participates in the committees, at least the CP leadership. In the CP ranks, it is often different and we must make use of this.

BRIEF COMMENTARY AFTER THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE DEBATE: ON THE GOVERNMENTAL QUESTION. LET'S NOT BE REDUCED TO PROPAGANDA

by Matti
September 11, 1975

[The following is translated from Internal Bulletin #35 of the LCR, French Section of the Fourth International.]

* * *

1) It was imprecise to write, as I did, that there can be no "real political centralization of the committees without the conscious action of a revolutionary party." The word "real" is not sufficiently exact: situations of dual power can develop in the absence of a revolutionary party but it must be said that such a situation cannot be capped with the proletariat taking power and the destruction of the bourgeois state except through the action of a revolutionary party. *The existence of a revolutionary party is not a condition for defining a situation as revolutionary*

2) What is the concrete, immediate function of a governmental slogan? It is a response to the *present* situation in the framework of the governmental crisis of the bourgeois state, *that is to say, in the framework of a power which should soon be bypassed, destroyed by the new future power, which will emerge from the workers committees.* The two levels must not be confounded through imprecise and useless formulas of the type, "A government based on the committees," or "control by the committees." The future power of the committees will not have the task of "controlling" the government but of posing itself against it, of substituting its own authority for that of the government. It is not a matter for an SP CP government, anymore than for an MFA or COPCON government, to call for the creation of soviets or committees "from above." These committees multiply at the base, imposing the united front and realizing it towards and against the policy of both the SP and CP leaderships, especially through the actions of revolutionary Marxists who advance further in the construction of the revolutionary party. The construction of these committees—truly united and massive, not of the "broad vanguard"—is the product of a battle for the united front, which is facilitated through agitation in favor of a SP-CP government that excludes the PPD and the MFA. At a moment when a sixth class collaborationist PPD-SP-CP government is being constituted under the aegis of the MFA, it is certainly necessary to advance the slogans, "Out with the MFA!" "Out with the PPD!" It is equally necessary to define the tasks for this government composed only of workers organizations: to struggle against the reaction, against sabotage, provocations and economic blockade, while arming the workers committees and expropriating big capital. Does the SP want to disarm civilians? We demand the opposite, the arming of the workers. Does the CP want to maintain the unity of the MFA and the army? We press on the contrary for its disintegration and the replacement of a workers army. Is the standard of living of the workers and peasants threatened? The government must satisfy their economic demands, and to that end pursue nationalizations without compensation or repurchase! Does the MFA want once more to reestablish censorship over information on what is happening in the army? Does it want to fight all antimilitarist agitation? The government must oppose these reactionary decrees, defend freedom of the press, defend the rights of expression and organization of the soldiers! To justify their refusal to accomplish these tasks, the SP and CP leaders will pretend they cannot fulfill them because of the PPD, because of the MFA, because of the blockade by the European bourgeoisies, because of this and that. Then it is necessary to say to them again, "break with these people," and to use this more than ever for the development of the committees, in order to accomplish those tasks that correspond to the objective needs of the masses.

3) Our contortions on the governmental slogan border on the ridiculous. Let's not speak of the LCI (it shares the analyses of the MES, PRP, and the LUAR that the SP is a bourgeois party, cries "death to social democracy," refused to vote for the SP last April 25, advances the slogan of dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, signed the document supporting COPCON that exalts the "unity of the MFA," expels the CP from the "front" because it proposed unity with the SP!). Nor let us speak of the PRT (sympathetic to the international minority . . . which approved the signing of the agreement endorsing the reformist CP plan of a popular front). Let us examine the successive positions of the LCR. On June 30, the Central Committee approved the resolution of the United Secretariat that recommended a CP-SP-Intersindical government. On July 30 Rops signed an editorial—I was the only one opposed to it at the time—false from top to bottom; it demanded "all power to the national peoples assembly." On August 30 the CC explained that Rops' slogan was wrong and that *at the present stage* the slogan of *"a government of the workers organizations"* should be advanced. The CC recognized by that same act that a governmental slogan is necessary, that it is impossible not to have one, that one could not demand power for

coordinated committees that don't yet exist. But what are these "workers organizations"? A mystery! It appears that this is not the "CP and SP." It is no longer a "government of the committees" (absurd, since the resolution says there is not yet centralization of the committees). What, then is it? "SP-CP-far left?" Puech says no (happily, because whatever far left was in it would be a hostage to a policy of class collaboration). "SP-CP-committees?" This would mix up a government of the past with a power of the future, the worst form of confusion and betrayal of the movement of the working class for its own unity and its independence!

Unless, say others, it is necessary to "maintain some ambiguity. . . ." That takes the cake! To maintain ambiguity in the eve of a revolutionary situation can only disarm revolutionary Marxists! Just try, in a Lisbon factory, to call for an ambiguous *"government of the workers organizations,"* without 100 or 1000 voices posing the question to you, "Which ones?" The August CC resolution, while pronouncing itself for an *indispensable* policy of workers united front, while correctly characterizing the SP as a workers party points in a direction . . . that it does not follow to the end. Also—and what a confession this is—the resolution speaks of a *"propagandist"* governmental formula of "the workers organizations." What a mess! Everything that the CC proposes to us for responding to the question of power, a fundamental question, is posed in terms of *propaganda.* Can the r-m's [revolutionary Marxists] in Portugal today respond to the *present* governmental crisis only in terms of propaganda?! Can they escape from or avoid the *immediate concrete* questions? The resolution is contradictory. It explains that the committes are not *yet* an alternative while refusing to respond to the problems that are *still* posed. It proposes, and itself acknowledges this naively, right in the midst of a prerevolutionary period, on the eve of the revolution, only a *propagandist* formula . . . for the government! This is the ultimate contradiction because the resolution takes the trouble of pointing out that *"the government of workers organizations"* is a response to precisely *the present stage;* thus, it ends up making *propaganda today* for a formula . . . different from that which will have to be advanced *tomorrow!* Let them understand it who can. In any case, this cannot be clear in the field, either to the vanguard or to the masses of *Rouge* followers. We isolate ourselves in the "revolutionary front of the PRP, MES, LUAR, LCI" by advocating an audacious policy of workers united front toward the CP and SP (which these groups don't want to hear of) but we don't have the merit of offering them a clear and coherent alternative.

That's why insults and peremptory imprecations ("the slogan of SP-CP is opportunist and rightist") do not take the place of arguments, especially on the part of those who confess to not having any other response than that of propaganda. . . .

4) The MFA is today, as yesterday, in power. It holds the reins of the state apparatus and defends the interests of the bourgeoisie. After a sudden jolt due to a governmental crisis that lasted two months, the different influences that extend through the MFA (right Spinolists, bourgeois liberals, social democrats, pro-Stalinist Gonçalvists, prorevolutionary centrists) are linked by a rule accepted by all: to maintain the unity of the MFA, of the army, order, hierarchy, and discipline. As *Revolution!* [newspaper of a French far left group] explained a bit late, *"the latest events will have had the merit of showing the revolutionary left that it should count only on the mobilization of the masses and its own forces and not on the protection that a part of the MFA could offer it."* Yes indeed! It is the worker who must win the soldier and not vice versa. What a confession (valid for the PSU [United Socialist Party], the MES, and the PRP) that a lot of energy and time have been lost in speculation about the inside cliques of the MFA: they are all still there, in the MFA, Otelo, Gonçalves, Coutinho, Costa Gomes, Correia, Contreiras, Lourenço, etc. . . The captains and soldiers who have just been expelled individually from the MFA Assembly were the victims of the rules of functioning and of manipulation (cf. the document of Saulnier-Matti) which they had hoped to use to win the majority. *It was foreseeable.* The document of some COPCON officers (those linked to the PRP?) defended the unity of the MFA. Ineluctably this unity was turned against these officers. Today, they do not have any other solutions than to acknowledge themselves as a minority, to *no longer be a part of the MFA* that they have contributed to keeping alive for 18 months, to lose their illusions about reforming the army from inside (Captain Matos Gomes) and to join the autonomous organizations of soldiers and sailors that have formed to fight *against the MFA.* The program of the MFA was written by Melo Antunes 18 months ago. Melo Antunes is in the majority today. It is only a surprise to those who dreamed of basing themselves on a "left wing" of the MFA to take power, while asking that it purge the country and construct soviets! Five months ago, the officers who were called leftist voted decrees repressing all antimilitarist activity. Today the MFA is rewriting these same censorship decrees and undertaking to get the army back under control in "the freest country of the world" (as the resolution of the CC says emphatically). The struggle for the disintegration of the bourgeois army can only be carried out today, as yesterday, against the MFA. It is necessary today to support the soldiers who demonstrated, as in Porto, demanding their democratic rights of organization and expression *against the repression.* It is necessary to support those soldiers who must appear masked in order to protect themselves and to permit them to act openly again. The radicalizing officers must be convinced to renounce their illusions about national independence, popular power, politics "outside the parties," (like Captain Matos Gomès who has lost his illusions about the MFA but not its ideology), and so on. This must be done in order that they place confidence in the working class, in the construction of militias, in the birth of *another* army, and that they abandon the last of their paternalistic illusions inherited from the MFA. "Out with the MFA!" That is the slogan (whatever be the next "left wings" that will appear inside of it). Control of the stocks of weapons, arming of the workers committees! Freedom of organization and expression for the soldiers and sailors! Down with the military hierarchy, for the election of officers!

5) The CC resolution explains that the CP has changed its line "almost weekly." Either this is wrong or confused. The CP, on the contrary, has continuously retained the *same* line, which is to penetrate the bourgeois state apparatus and to base itself on the army led by the MFA

and not on the mass movement. This line of subordination of the mass movement to support and underwrite the MFA will fail fatally, and because of it the CP will lose more and more ground inside the army instead of winning it! The CP line is counterrevolutionary. All those who today "credit" the CP, or go as far as to talk about its "bureaucratic centrism" must be reminded of this. It is evident in other respects that the CP is paying dearly for this line, being forced into weekly *tactical* contortions in the face of a powerful social democracy and workers struggles; but it is necessary to be more categorical on this point than the resolution is.

6) Finally let us note that the majority resolution does not emphasize enough the irresistible rise of the working class in the last 18 months. It has not suffered any serious setback, in spite of multiple blows by its traitorous leaders who have alternated between a policy of class collaboration and division of the class. But the great weakness of the working class, in spite of its combativity and the rapid maturation taking place inside it, is that it has not produced the subjective element, the revolutionary party that is indispensable to victory. The "revolutionary front of the PRP, MES, LUAR, LCI," is disastrously confused and weak politically. The LCI, which itself is 200 militants and 300 sympathizers strong, is divided into four tendencies; alas, it has published only one number of its paper in three months, along with 43 internal bulletins. It has not avoided either opportunism vis-à-vis the CP and COPCON, or sectarianism vis-á-vis the ("bourgeois") SP, or confused governmental slogans, or a false line in the area of mass work (picking up the "Deuxième Souffle" line and a belief in a "student coalition" movement, understanding of the FSMR as vanguardist *and* unitary, etc . . . .). The UDP Maoists are in their majority right sectarians and manipulators on a democratic line of national independence. The "revolutionary left" is very divided and politically very weak. This is an element of analysis that must be taken into account to better understand the necessary rigor for revolutionary Marxists to have with regard to the Portuguese revolution, in order to lay out the tasks to be accomplished to concretely advance toward dual power. The question for the r-m's is not yet to take power, but it is to win the masses against their reformist leaderships. Nothing is yet lost, and it is possible with a clear line by the LCI.

7) Neither the CC resolution, nor the majority texts mark themselves off clearly from the Hoffmann-Charlie text and all of its implications, and opportunist and rightist dangers.

8) Let us note the conception of the Portugal committees voted unanimously by the CC. These are conceived as broad *non-exclusive* committees. This breaks a bit belatedly with our past practices. (The PSU has asked us for a balance sheet of the Chile committees before working with us. . .) *Revolution!* which is not mistaken about the new line, attacks us publicly on our new—and this time correct—conception of mass committees.

Matti, September 11, 1975

P.S. Some speakers in the debates in the General Assembly launched into terrorist imprecations on the basis of this or that passage taken completely out of context, such as those who cite the passage where I explain that for such and such a reason, "the conquest of democratic rights is on the agenda." To cite *only this* would border on swindle and manipulation vis-à-vis the comrades who have not read the entire text. But this is not a swindle, it is weakness, some of these comrades being too ill-equipped to polemicize with our *real* positions. It is easier for them to do it when our positions are truncated and simplified; this is more convenient for winning easy majorities without principle. Those who in this way are able to win the sympathy of the majority of comrades, who have but little experience with the realities of Portugal, are committing a very grave error. Shameful slanders, and systematic lining up of people and insults do not make solid majorities.

Nevertheless they should be told that it is not *only* democratic rights that are to be won with the methods of proletarian struggle but also that workers militias must be constructed—*without rightist illusions in the MFA!* It is necessary to demand expropriations, workers control, autonomous centralization of the committees (through the national "peoples" assembly—sic—of the MFA), etc. . . . All this is enumerated, explained and emphasized several times in each of my texts. If I insist, on one occasion—on August 6—on democratic rights it is because of articles, like the Rops editorial, that ignore, fail to recognize, or totally deny the role of democratic demands! A final point: there are also those here and there who reproach us, stating that we "underestimate" the development of the committees. *This is wrong. It's a little too much!* For more than a year the development of the committees has been emphasized in the course of numerous discussions. At the time, some comrades who were denying or underestimating this ended up, for example, opposing the proposition, made in *October '74* at the meeting of the European political bureaus, to organize *a European campaign of solidarity with the Portuguese workers struggles and against NATO.* So those who yesterday underestimated the Portuguese revolution wake up today and accuse others of their own faults! *Yes, the committees are developing,* all the more reason to scientifically study their nature, their potential strength and their still too big weakness.

A last word on the defense of the "SP's right of expression." This is another object of stupid polemics in some General Assemblies. By way of comparison, here is what Comrade Mandel wrote in *Intercontinental Press* under the title, "A Conflict between Two Principles?" "As we do not yet have a workers state in Portugal, but still a bourgeois state, with strong power in the hands of an officer corps, which, whatever may be its political divisions, is socially tied, in its majority to defending the bourgeois order, the defense of freedom of the press for the Socialist Party as a working-class party (be it with a reformist and class-collaborationist leadership) is all the more important for us." [I.P., June 23, 1975, p. 869, col. 2.]

LESSONS OF THE DEFEAT

The following article appeared in the December 4, 1975, issue of *Red Weekly*.

The events involving the paratroops and military police in Lisbon last week have imposed a grave defeat on the Portuguese revolution. Today the right-wing commando regiment patrols the streets; the left newspapers are suppressed; for the first time since 25 April 1974 the Government has been able to impose a curfew in Lisbon.

This severe defeat comes only days after the reactionary Sixth Provisional Government of Azevedo literally went on strike because no-one would recognise its authority. What caused this abrupt ruling class victory – its most significant triumph to date? Was Lisbon an heroic uprising crushed by reaction? What is the depth of the defeat? These are the questions which must be answered to understand the new situation in Portugal today.

We must be clear first of all that what occurred in Lisbon was not an uprising of the workers. On the contrary, not one significant section of the Portuguese working class took part in the 'revolt'. Nor was it a last ditch struggle against fascist reaction. In fact, the preceding weeks had seen the anti-working classs offensive of the Sixth Provisional Government rolled back by repeated mass mobilisations.

No authority

The attempt to take over the radio stations had failed; the blowing up of the transmitters of Radio Renascenca had aroused mass opposition going far beyond the revolutionary left and the Communist Party; the Government had been forced to abandon the attempt to set up the AMI special intervention force; the construction workers' strike and the 16 November demonstration organised by the CP and the Lisbon workers commissions had left Azevedo with no authority – in fact, the Government had basically ceased to function.

Transformed

In Spain, meanwhile, a revolutionary process was beginning to unfold which in a few months could have brought the Portuguese revolution support which would have transformed the situation.

These were the really significant developments preceding last week's events. Developments such as the sacking of Carvalho were tiny in comparison. **What occurred in Lisbon therefore was not a heroic uprising but an insane adventure – something which would have been a farce had it not had such tragic consequences for the Portuguese working class.**

There is not the slightest doubt where the responsibility for this act lies. Even if the actual pretext for the revolt was a government provocation – which appears likely – **the act which brought this severe defeat on the Portuguese working class was a product not of the capitalists, the fascists, or the Socialist Party but was prepared and carried through as a result of the line of petty-bourgeois left officers in the army and ultra-left organisations such as the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP) and the Movement of the Socialist Left (MES).**

For weeks now, as *Red Weekly* has pointed out, these organisations have been calling for an immediate insurrection. We need only look at some of their statements:

- 'It is now time for the revolutionary forces and the workers to pose the problem of an insurrection' (Declaration of the PRP, 30 September).
- 'Armed insurrection is the sole way by which popular power can continue to a advance' (Press conference given by Francisco Marquez, leading member of the PRP, 7 November).
- 'Only a national insurrection on the basis of armed power represents at the present time a way out of the contradictions of the revolutionary process in Portugal' (Declaration of the PRP, 10 November).

Insurrection

Now these organisations have had their insurrection, and the balance sheet of this line is only too clear – as right-wing troops patrol the streets of Lisbon; the left press is closed; the revolutionaries in the army are purged; left domination of the arsenals has been ended; and 30,000 guns in the main arsenal have been transferred from the control of the workers and soldiers to the right wing and fascists.

How deep is the defeat which has been imposed on the Portuguese workers by the events of last week? Two things stand out. Firstly, the political initiative is with the right. Secondly, and in a longer term sense more crucially, those whose line led to this outbreak have done one thing which the capitalists, the army hierarchy, and the Socialist Party could never have achieved – *they have transferred military supremacy in Lisbon into the hands of the right wing.*

Crucial

Previously the bourgeoisie were faced with the crucial reality that if the right wing in Portugal had attempted a coup, then Lisbon and the entire south of the country would have been taken by the workers and left-wing troops. An attempted coup would have been a fight not against civilians but against the overwhelming bulk of the troops in Lisbon, including the best equipped regiments of the army, and with those soldiers supported by hundreds of thousands of workers – many tens of thousands of them armed. Such an attempt would have meant full scale civil war, with no guarantee whatever that the capitalists would win.

Today that situation has radically changed. As yet the Communist Party probably retains

its apparatus in the army. But military domination in Lisbon and the rest of the country is in the hands of the right – and in many cases the ultra-right. With the disbanding of the left-wing regiments and the taking back of the arsenals, the workers are deprived of the obvious means of access to weapons - in particular, to heavy arms.

Whether even the CP will be able to hold its positions inside the army against the purge which will follow is doubtful. Certainly the SUV and the massive revolutionary presence in the army is largely finished. Attempts to disarm the workers will proceed apace. For the first time since 25 April, clear military supremacy has passed into the hands of the right and the bourgeoisie has the chance to create a semi-stable state apparatus.

Grave

But the gravity of the defeat that has been suffered does not mean that the Portuguese masses are now finished. Fortunately last week's adventure in Lisbon coincided not with a retreat of the working class but with an advance of the mass movement. It is this upsurge which can limit the scope of the defeat.

There is no doubt that there will be repression against the vanguard. Inside the army the left will be purged. The worker-controlled newspaper *Republica* must be gravely threatened. For the first time there may even be an attempt to repress some vanguard workers' struggles.

As yet, however, the mobilisation of the workers is too large, and the repressive forces of the army too small, for any direct attack aimed against the mass of the working class. **The right-wing army operation in Lisbon started with only 800 soldiers of the commando regiment. At its height the number of soldiers involved was only 1,600.**

Since the failure of the 'revolt' right-wing regiments have been moved into Lisbon, but they still only number 5–6,000. This is sufficient to arrest left-wingers and suppress newspapers, but it is totally inadequate to crush the mobilisations of hundreds of thousands of workers seen in the metal workers' or the construction workers' strikes and in the CP and workers commissions demonstrations. The right still needs time to construct a *mass* repressive force capable of taking on the workers and rooting out the final elements of all opposition in the army.

The small size of the repressive forces, however, also vividly demonstrates what is today the vital problem in Portugal. The left-wing soldiers were utterly defeated in Lisbon for political and not military reasons. Certainly the 800 troops of the Amadora commandos are a crack fighting regiment, but they were totally outnumbered and would have been incapable of defeating the paratroopers and military police in a serious battle. Furthermore none of the units involved in the 'revolt' made anything other than the feeblest attempts to fight.

Ultra-left

The reason was political – that the left-wing regiments believed the ultra-left political groups when they said that the Lisbon workers would flock to support an insurrection. But not one section of workers supported their adventure. It was this which utterly demoralised the soldiers and meant that the tiny number of pro-Government forces won such a speedy victory.

It is also *politics* which is necessary to recover from the defeat. The basic power and organisation of the masses is not crushed.

Certainly we must expect some decline in the size of the vanguard, some lessening of the influence of the workers commissions, some retreat from the centralisation of organs of popular power, a strengthening of the CP at the expense of the revolutionaries, of the SP at the expense of the CP, and of the PPD and the CDS at the expense of the SP. These are the inevitable consequences of a defeat. But three vital factors still work in favour of the revolution.

Repressive

Firstly, hundreds of thousands of workers daily feel the effects of the economic crisis. The Government still cannot repress them. A mobilisation around demands to safeguard the living conditions and employment of the workers can reunify the masses and begin to turn the tide against the Government. It is more construction workers' and metal workers' strikes, not new military adventures, which are needed.

Secondly, the repressive power of the state is still weak. The Government does not dare repress the masses and has only dared to arrest a small number of those involved in the struggle. A massive campaign of defence against all the democratic rights threatened – against the state of emergency, against the press closures, for the release of those arrested, to defend *Republica*, against the purges in the army – can both defend those under attack and once more find links to the masses.

Spain

The struggle to release Major Diniz de Almeida (of the left-wing RALIS regiment) and all the others held in the Cusoias prison near Oporto; to lift the censorship; and to stop the disarming of civilians – these must be the first tasks. Through this combination of struggles for the immediate needs of the masses, the vanguard can overcome its isolation, and the workers' commissions and other organs of workers' democracy can be strengthened and centralised.

Thirdly, the situation in Spain works entirely in favour of the Portuguese revolution. The demonstrations for the release of prisoners in Madrid, Barcelona and San Sebastian are the first sign of what is to come. An upheaval in Spain can alter everything in Portugal. It would deprive the right of their military support in the north, the fascists of their main bases, the right of its political initiative. To gain time through the defensive struggle in order to receive the gigantic reinforcement which Spain will mean is now a vital task.

If Portuguese revolutionaries and the working class can today undertake these defensive tasks, then all is very far from being lost. The Portuguese revolution has escaped from this defeat with far less repression and other harmful consequences than many other revolutions have passed through.

Finished

But one thing in Portugal is clear. The infantile adventurist line of the PRP-BR, the MES and the other ultra-lefts is finished for ever. In the first onrush of the Portuguese revolution these absurd politics had some success. Now they have brought down a severe defeat on the working class.

Many individual militants of the PRP and other ultra-left organisations, and even of the junior officers, can doubtless still be won to a revolutionary line. All must be protected from the repression. But we do not think that the Portuguese workers will forget the crime which has been committed against them.

As *organisations* the ultra-left should be condemned to the dustbin. The task is defeat the repression, create a united front of the workers organisations, revive the mass movement, and build the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI) – Portuguese organisation of the Fourth International.

NEVER PLAY AT INSURRECTION
An Open Letter to the International Socialists on Portugal

The following article appeared in the December 4, 1975, issue of *Red Weekly*.

Over the past few months we have on several occasions criticised both the International Socialists and the organisation in Portugal with which you have established fraternal links – the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat–Revolutionary Brigades (PRP-BR) This has been part of a vitally necessary discussion on the revolutionary left about developments in the Iberian Peninsula.

Now, however, events have taken a qualitative turn. What occurred in Lisbon last week necessitates more than a fraternal polemic.

What occurred in Lisbon was not a desperate rearguard action against a ferocious right-wing assault. On the contrary, until then the political situation was evolving entirely against the capitalists.

The mobilisations around the construction workers'strike and the CP/workers commissions' demonstration on 16 November were amongst the most powerful in the whole period since 25 April 1974. The Government was on the brink of falling. The pretext for the events – the dismissal of Carvalho as the military governor of Lisbon – did not strengthen the Government's position because no-one would have obeyed his successor anyway; indeed, the struggle against Lourenco would have further undermined the authority of the whole officer corps.

No, what occurred in Lisbon was an insane adventure carried through by ultra-left political groups and left wing officers, which received no support from any section of the masses and has imposed a very severe defeat on the Portuguese revolution. Overnight the whole political, and even more the military situation in Portugal has moved against the working class. This concerns the IS in particular

'It is now time for the revolutionary forces and the workers to pose the question of an insurrection.' *PRP Declaration* 30 September.

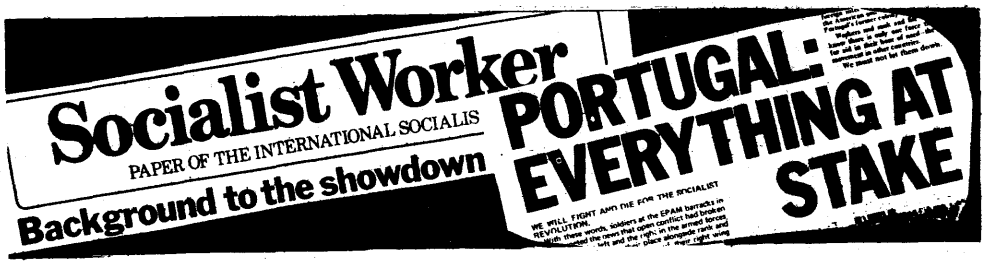
because the PRP with its 'immediate insurrection' line was responsible perhaps more than any other organisation for imposing this bitter defeat on the Portuguese revolution.

We fully recognise the valuable solidarity work which the IS has done on Portugal. We do not for one moment doubt the *personal* dedication and bravery of the members of the PRP and their devotion to the cause of the working class. But this cannot hide the fact that the *line* of this organisation has played a major role in imposing the heaviest defeat to date on the Portuguese revolution.

The IS have not only supported this organisation politically and financially in the past, but according to last week's issue of *Socialist Worker*, you actually propose to continue this policy and distribute vast quantities of the PRP's manifesto and other material. We will of course join with you in any moves against the repression of the PRP or any other organisation of the left in Portugal; but it is also necessary to point out the disastrous nature of your relations with this organisation and the political consequences which this entails.

Throughout the entire period of the Portuguese revolution the PRP has spread the most dangerous illusions in the nature of the left-wing officers in Portugal. This is well summed up in the PRP paper *Revolucao's* description of Carvalho: 'We underline the courage of this soldier, who is always ready to advance without fear' (8 May 1975). We only need remind you of Carvalho's role in attempting to break strikes, his flirtation with the Melo Antunes group, his implication in the military occupation of the radio stations and so on to show what nonsense that is.

In the end Carvalho – to his credit – refused to go along with the line of Azevedo; but his main role has been to provide a left cover for the Armed Forces Movement.



In the recent period, however, the line of the PRP had become even more dangerous with the adoption of a *short term* orientation towards an armed uprising. On 30 September it issued a declaration stating: 'It is now time for the revolutionary forces and the workers to pose the question of an insurrection' (*Diario de Lisboa*, 30 September). It continued this line throughout October and November – stating at a press-conference on 10 November: 'Only a national insurrection on the basis of armed power represents at the present time a way out of the contradictions of the revolutionary process in Portugal' (*Révolution*, 14 November).

This was based on a so-called analysis that: 'The organisation of the masses has already attained a level sufficient to inherit power' (press conference given by Francisco Marquez, a leader of the PRP, 7 November – quoted in *Révolution*, 14 November) – which leaves out such 'little' facts as the question of the Socialist Party, the domination of the workers' movement by the Communist Party the fact that even in the Lisbon area a really systematic centralisation of the organs of workers' democracy does not exist, the fact that even in such a major city as Oporto the revolutionaries are in a tiny minority, etc.

Under such circumstances it is only too clear what everyone understood by the appeal of the PRP and the MES (Movement of the Socialist Left) quoted in last week's *Socialist Worker:* 'The time has come to give a lesson to the bourgeoisie. Against the Sixth Provisional Government. Against the counter revolutionary council. Long live the armed working class. Long live the socialist revolution.'

Given this insurrectionist line, and the undoubted fact that the PRP and the MES have a real influence in certain regiments (indeed, scientifically speaking the line of the PRP could be said to represent a certain stratum of lower officers) what occurred in Lisbon last week was easily foreseeable. It does not matter particularly whether what was involved was a government provocation, a pre-arranged plan, or anything else. Even if – as is most likely – it was a provocation, the immediate insurrectionist line of the PRP, the MES and the leftist officers with which they were allied meant that they would inevitably fall into the trap.

Of course the IS leadership may claim that all this has nothing to do with them. After all, didn't they caution against a premature insurrectionist line – for example in Cliff's open letters to the PRP printed in *Socialist Worker?*

'Only a national insurrection on the basis of armed power represents at the present time a way out of the contradictions of the revolutionary process in Portugal.' *PRP Declaration* **10 November.**

Unfortunately, however, the problem of the PRP's line on insurrection wasn't just some spot on an otherwise healthy sun, but flowed inexorably from its whole politics. A glaring example of this was the PRP's line on the Socialist Party – characterising it not as a reformist party of the working class, but as a party of the ruling class or even as a party of fascist reaction.

Grancisco Marquez, a leading member of the PRP, said at the press conference on 7 November: 'Social democracy represents simply the shortest road to fascism' and 'an alliance of the Socialist Party and the PPD is openly preparing the victory of fascism'. Of course, if this were true, then obviously the only course would be towards an armed uprising in the short term – after all, even a defeated insurrection would be much better than allowing the workers to be passively crushed as they were by Hitler in Germany. In fact, however, it was manifest nonsense.

Furthermore this nonsense has now been carried over into *Socialist Worker* itself. The last issue describes the Socialists in Portugal as 'playing the same so-called "moderate" role played by the Christian

'An alliance of the Socialist Party and the PPD is openly preparing the victory of fascism.' *Francisco Marquez* **– a leader of the PRP – 7 November.**

Democrat leaders in Chile two years ago'. But the Christian Democrats *supported* the Pinochet coup. In Portugal, when the real Pinochet makes his move, he will be just as careful to smash Soares and the Socialist Party as he will be to kill the revolutionary left and the CP. Anyone with a grain of sense understands that against this they will be fighting alongside the SP, and probably even Soares, against the Portuguese Pinochet. The PRP and now the IS leadership make the same mistake as the Stalinists in the Third Period in Germany – to confuse the counter-revolution of Ebert, Schiedeman and the Social Democrats (aimed at smashing a workers revolution to install a bourgeois democracy with the existence of workers organisation) with the counter revolution of Hitler (which not merely smashed bourgeois democracy but the workers organisations as well).

This adoption of completely confused positions by *Socialist Worker* is characteristic of the whole way in which the IS leadership has increasingly dealt with the situation in Portugal. In fact, some of the reporting in *Socialist Worker* has been utterly grotesque: for example, the claim that the left-wing demonstration of 20 August had 150,000 people on it when the real maximum was 60,000; or that the SUV demonstration in Lisbon at the end of September had 85,000 people on it with 100,000 at the rally at the end, and with 12,000 soldiers – 'one fifth of the whole Portuguese army' – taking part, when the real figures were 40,000 on the demonstration with 4,000 soldiers.

This type of thing cannot be brushed aside as a trifling matter of no real consequence. Everyone knows the temptation when reporting any demonstration to add a couple of thousand to the numbers. But to exaggerate the size by 100 per cent, or even give treble the real figures, **is totally insane in a revolution when a realistic estimate of the relation of forces is vital.** Whether you think you have 4,000 soldiers actively behind you or on the contrary 'a fifth of the entire army' makes a vital difference to your activity. By carrying such reports *Socialist Worker* only succeeds in spreading utter confusion. For example, an ecstatic report of the 20 August demonstration was headed 'Portugal – the turning point' which singularly fails to explain why a few days later the Fifth Government was succeeded by the reactionary administration of Azevedo. Similarly, last week's criminal adventure in Lisbon was greeted with the banner 'Portugal: Everything at Stake'. The only thing that can be said on that is – thank goodness it wasn't true! If *everything* was at stake then presumably not merely is everything lost – and with ridiculous ease – but the consciousness of the Portuguese workers is so low that at the decisive moment not one single section of the masses acted.

Fortunately the Portuguese working class is far from being so backward. The IS leadership must have known that what was involved, far from being *the* decisive test, was an adventure perpetrated by the PRP, MES etc. and a handful of their supporters. To use Trotsky's famous phrase, what happened in Lisbon was an attempt to rape the working class having failed to persuade it. The tragedy is that it will not merely be the militants of the PRP, MES etc but the mass of the Portuguese workers who will have to pay the price for this insane adventure.

Socialist Worker and the IS leadership have also followed the PRP in their ridiculous estimates of the degree to which the domination of the reformist parties over the working class has been broken. Tony Cliff even goes so far as to claim in his pamphlet (page 19) that the Socialist Party has no base in the working class – which fails to explain how the SP has still won union elections in Lisbon despite its general loss of working class support there; while in Oporto and the North the *majority* of the workers support the Socialist Party.

More recently, however, the IS leadership has begun to extend this type of idiocy even to the Communist Party. In the October issue of *International Socialism* (No. 83) Chris Harman informs us that 'while the Communists retain some [sic] influence in the workers movement', nevertheless 'with the SUV the revolutionary left has emerged as a major contender in the national struggle for

'While the Communists retain some influence in the working class'.....'With the SUV the revolutionary left has emerged as a major contender in the national struggle for power.' *International Socialism No. 83*

power'. Instead of the reality – that the Communist Party in particular, and the Socialist Party to a certain extent, enjoy the support of the mass of the workers while the revolutionaries as yet command only the support of a vanguard – the entire situation becomes stood on its head. The result of such an analysis is complete political disorientation – with the revolutionaries, rather than using the important vanguard they do influence to win the masses from the CP and the SP, instead seeking to act as 'a major contender in the national struggle for power'. This succeeds only in discrediting and isolating the vanguard and imposing major defeats on the revolution.

What confronts IS militants in relation to Portugal is clear. Develop the solidarity work. Campaign against the repression of the PRP and the other left organisations. **But demand an end to the nonsensical line on Portugal carried in your press and publications. End your absurd relationship with the PRP.**

The situation in Portugal and the Iberian peninsula is too important for such behaviour. Your association with the PRP – an organisation which has helped to impose a severe defeat on the Portuguese revolution – not merely endorses a disastrous line for the situation in Portugal but discredits the entire revolutionary left internationally.

SOCIAL DEMOCRACY AND FASCISM

The following three articles by Alan Jones appeared in the January 1, January 8, and January 15, 1976, issues of *Red Weekly*.

In the last issue of *Red Weekly* we spent a considerable amount of space establishing the facts on the Lisbon events of 25–26 November. This was necessary both to avoid any charge that we wanted to avoid certain questions, and to get rid of the pseudo explanation of the PRP and the IS that the Communist Party started a rebellion and then sold it out.

The real development of events is clear. The Azevedo Government staged a provocation which at least militarily had been prepared beforehand. A section of the extreme left of the army, unfortunately operating at least partially to a pre-decided plan, fell into this provocation and staged a disastrous adventure. But the PRP, while it had been politically supporting and projecting officers indisputably involved in the events right up to the eve of 25 November, did not organisationally initiate their action.

Class Forces

However all this is relatively unimportant, and we dealt with it at such length in our last issue only because it is here that comrade Harman starts the debate. Historic events are not a function of who starts them – fires the first shot or seizes the first air base – but of the class forces and political line involved. The Lisbon events, like all important turning points, reveal with sharp clarity the real relations and alignments of forces between the classes. They provide a litmus test, therefore, of the various political lines in the situation. The question to which we addressed ourselves in our **Open Letter to IS on Portugal,** and to which we return here, is not whether the PRP *organisationally* initiated events, but whether its political line was such that even if the events of 25 November hadn't happened the disaster would merely have had another starting point.

Ultra-dangerous

A first starting point for an examination of the line of the PRP is the question of social democracy and fascism. Comrade Harman claims that we attack the PRP for ultra-dangerous confusions on social democracy and fascism when in fact all they do is remind people of the fact that social democracy prepares the way for fascism – something which Trotsky pointed out in his writings on Germany.

Here, unfortunately, comrade Harman is simply playing games on a deadly serious question. As comrade Harman must know, Trotsky was concerned to emphasise not merely the historical truth that social democracy prepares the way for fascism, but the absolutely crucial *qualitative difference* between social democracy and fascism. Furthermore, we attacked the PRP not for asserting historic truths about social democracy paving the way for fascism *but for its systematic and disastrous confusion and lumping together of fascism and social democracy.* We can demonstrate this in some detail.

First, however, we must stress that this point is not merely semantic but of *crucial* importance for the practical activity of revolutionaries. Certainly social democrats are capable of quite extraordinary violence – in 1918–19 the leadership of the German SPD organised the killing of *tens of thousands* of German workers. But the social democrats carried out this violence to defend the bourgeois democratic state against a workers' revolution, and within the state they *preserved* the organisations of the working class: the same SPD leadership which killed Luxemburg and Liebknecht presided over a threefold increase in the membership of the German unions.

In comparison with this level of violence, Hitler actually killed less people in the first period of his power – but the difference was that Hitler the fascist smashed the very bourgeois democratic state form and organisations of the working class on which the SPD had based itself.

To deal with these different types of reaction very different responses are required by revolutionaries. If we are confronted with a move to a fascist coup, a coup aimed to crush the organisation of the masses, then certain things follow. Firstly, *armed* resistance must be prepared without fail. Mere general strikes etc will not achieve anything against a fascist coup, and at all costs the proletariat must not be defeated without a struggle – as Trotsky said, a dozen defeated bloody proletarian insurrections would not be such a terrible blow to the masses as a surrender to fascism without struggle.

Resistance

Secondly, however, because the offensive of the fascists is against the masses and their organisations, the masses will rapidly be able to understand the necessity for resistance – while the vanguard can of course commit tactical errors of ultra-leftism, the essential dynamic is to push the vanguard and masses together and in any case, as already noted, the danger of premature acts is a thousand times less than the danger of passivity.

Faced with social democratic repression, which aims not to smash the masses but to crush the vanguard, entirely different tasks flow. The danger is precisely of isolation from the masses. Because the repression is against the vanguard and not the masses, there is no constant pressure for the masses themselves to feel threatened and therefore support the vanguard. Under such circumstances the classic tactic of the bourgeoisie is to carry out a provocation which separates the vanguard decisively from the masses, and therefore allows it to be crushed separately.

Provocations

The task of that vanguard is evidently to avoid this – to avoid walking into provocations and isolated adventures, and to implant itself more firmly in the masses and on this basis lead the struggle against the social democrats. Unfortunately, however, the PRP took exactly the opposite course. It completely confused the question of repression aimed

against the vanguard by the social democrats, which was a very real threat, and that of a fascist reaction – which with the existing relation of forces in Portugal was absolutely not a threat. In consequence the PRP headed full tilt for an adventure.

The disastrously wrong line of the PRP began to take its concrete form in August with sections of the Manifesto of the Revolutionary United Front (FUR) – which the PRP, unlike other groups in the FUR, never criticised. This Manifesto analysed the existence of 'social democratic putschists' in the army – which might not have been too bad if it had been clearly understood as a reference to elements aiming to use violence to crush the vanguard. However, instead of distinguishing between these elements, who clearly dominate the Antunes group, the SP and the Azevedo Government, the PRP *confused* them with the fascists – referring in the Manifesto, for example, to 'the entire right, both fascists and social democrats'.

From then on the PRP consistently confused the social democrats' attempts to destroy the vanguard with the fascists' attempts to destroy the mass organisations. It forecast the development of 'an authoritarian regime that will assume fascist forms and that will rapidly resort to blood bath and terror in order that "peace and discipline" may reign' (*Revolucao*, 7 November).

It concluded: 'What separates the "socialism" of the social democrats from the fascists is only a question of form. And as the two have need of each other to avoid that which is allergic to both of them – the dictatorship of the proletariat – they ally. Who is the enemy? The holy alliance and fascism. Yes, it is the holy alliance between social democracy and fascism. It is this which permits them both to allow the maintenance of capitalism' ('The Danger comes from the Social Democracy' in *Revolucao*, 7 November).

Continued

This line was then fully continued even after 25 November. As Isabel Do Carmo explained clearly: 'We believe that the social democratic power which is hegemonic at this moment, that is to say the SP and the PPD, will convert itself rapidly into fascism' (Interview in *Jornal Novo*, 12 December).

With such perspectives the PRP oriented logically towards a violent clash and insurrection. It announced: 'The PRP-BR, which did not let itself be disarmed by Caetano or Spinola, is not afraid of the flabby and veiled violence of the Social Democrats' (PRP article in *Jornal de Noticias*, 25 September).

This ridiculous bravado was coupled with a clear line on how to deal with the situation. As Isabel Do Carmo put it in a press conference on 10 November: 'For us, at this moment, there is no solution except armed insurrection.' This line was made exceedingly concrete. In the article in *Jornal de Noticias* already cited, the PRP hailed the diversion of weapons to the workers not as a means of developing self-defence but because: 'The opposition group, specifically Captain Clemente, said that it was necessary to seek new forms of struggle to keep the country from being dominated by social democrats.'

Escalation

From this point onwards the PRP systematically featured the material of the Clemente group without in any way differentiating itself politically from their central line. This culminated on 21 November with the printing on the front page of *Revolucao* of the Manifesto of Clemente and other officers, which stated: 'We are now seeing a desperate reactionary escalation; the parties and officers of the Sixth Government are joining in attempts to crush the powerful popular offensive.' It advanced as the solution the PRP's slogan of a 'regime of revolutionary unity'. Four days later it was Clemente who was faded off the TV screens by the Government when he appeared to announce the insurrection.

Did the PRP organisationally initiate what took place on 25 November? We accept their word, comrade Harman's word, and the obvious evidence that they didn't. But is that the really significant thing on which we must concentrate?

Wasn't it really that the whole political line – correctly summarised in *Socialist Worker* on 6 December: 'The revolutionary left groups, the PRP and the MES, had been arguing that an armed insurrection was necessary to avoid the danger of another Chile' – was false from begining to end? That there was no danger of a Chile type coup to crush the mass organisations but a deadly danger of a 'social democratic coup' to provoke, isolate and crush the vanguard? That the PRP totally confused the relation of social democracy and fascism? That the line of the PRP walked right into the trap, and to the degree that it influenced Clemente et al it *contributed to* their disastrous orientation?

Finally, of course, we could deal with how the PRP intends to combat the danger of 'social democratic hegemony converting itself rapidly into fascism'. Its response so far has been to establish, with the MES, the 'Commando of Revolutionary Anti-Fascist Unity'.

Guidelines

This, as we reported in our last issue, has a basis which states: 'The CURAF will accomplish its mission by providing guidelines for the soldiers and workers, co-ordinating the action of the patriotic forces at a national level.' We could ask comrade Harman what he thinks of the need for 'unity of the patriotic forces', but we feel that even he won't go so far as to support that. Unfortunately, however, this is merely a culminating point, the flip side of its ultra-leftism, of the line of the PRP.

In our next issue we will deal with the other aspect of the PRP's insurrectionist line – its analysis of the CP and of the relation of forces in Portugal.

WINNING THE MASSES

In the course of their relations with the PRP the International Socialists have put forward a number of criticisms of that organisation. In *Portugal – The Way Ahead*, partially reprinted as an 'Open Letter' in *Socialist Worker* of 11 October, Tony Cliff warned of the dangers of a premature insurrection. In an analysis of the defeat of 25 November, printed in *Socialist Worker* on 6 December, Cliff and Harman stressed the need for the PRP to win over the masses.

Unfortunately both these criticisms, which are undoubtedly correct, give the impression that it is simply a question of merely changing certain points within a generally correct line. In the last issue of *Red Weekly* however, we showed that the short term insurrectionist line of the PRP was an *inevitable* product of its disastrous confusion of social democratic reaction with fascism. The PRP's 'underestimation' of the need to win over the masses was not that it didn't produce a regular enough newspaper or pay enough attention to recruiting, but that it had a *political* line which would *prevent* it from winning over the masses and achieving the *real* conditions for insurrection.

Councils

The first major example of this was

the orientation given by the PRP to the CRTSMs (Councils of Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors). On this issue the IS leadership has written more nonsense than on practically anything else – both absurdly exaggerating their influence, and suggesting that in Portugal the PRP was the only organisation to campaign for workers councils. What has not been so reported, however, is either the wrong line of the CRTSMs, or flowing from this, the collapse of the 'movement' even where initial successes were gained.

The classic case is the Lisnave shipyard. Here there was a meeting of 4,000 workers, called under the influence of the PRP, which supported the CRTSMs demonstration of 17 June and elected its own council.

This was undoubtedly a major success, which could have been a springboard to great things. But the line which the PRP got adopted was for action for 'a non-party revolutionary government and socialist revolution'. Cliff limply attempts to justify this line in his pamphlet, writing: 'During the general elections to the Constituent Assembly there is no doubt that many militants got fed up with the different and numerous political organisations competing for working class votes. Apartidarism (non-partyism) corresponded to the feelings of much of the advanced section of the class' (p19).

Poor advanced workers, you see fed up with all this political argument and wanting to get on, with the aid of the PRP, to the serious job (evidently not involving political parties) of making the revolution.

However the PRP actually went still further. In the PRP's scheme of things the one place where political parties were represented was on the National Secretariat of the committees. The first congress of the 'pro-council committees', however, decided to *exclude* the Socialist Party even from the National Secretariat – not exactly a small thing as the SP, despite Cliff and Harman's claims, has the support of the majority of the workers in the North and a substantial minority indeed in the South.

This decision to exclude the Socialist Party was by itself absolutely sufficient to ensure that the CRTSMs could never develop to create real workers councils. The 'non-partyism' ensured they could never go beyond being the front of a sect. Both because politics very much involves parties and because those workers most committed to building workers councils were not prepared to abandon their political organisations, the PRP's 'councils', far from rising above parties, merely became the periphery of *one* party the PRP.

Strength

This is exactly how they are seen in Portugal. Instead of 'its' rank and file movement, the PRP had 'its' workers councils. And the strength of the CRTSMs developed in inverse ratio to the real emergence of workers councils. Today, in Lisnave as everywhere else, there is not one single meaningful organisation of the CRTSM type in existence.

While, to be fair, it is necessary to point out that the PRP's practice in some areas was considerably better than its theory, and it did contribute to the establishment of some *real* workers organs, nevertheless its line on non-partyism and on the SP is an insuperable barrier to winning the masses.

If the line of the PRP on the CRTSMs was an obstacle to the building of organisations of the masses *inside* the working class, its political line was also disastrously incapable of winning over the masses in a still broader sense – of winning the 'intermediate strata' of society to the side of the working class.

This latter point is of course one of the classic conditions which must be achieved to create a revolution. It is *not* sufficient to seize power that even the majority of the working class is won. It is *also* necessary, as Lenin and Trotsky continually pointed out, both that the ruling class power itself be in deep crisis and that all significant intermediate strata be either won over or neutralised.

Bolsheviks

The exact combination in which these conditions are satisfied in any revolution of course differs. In Russia for example, the Bolsheviks in October 1917, while they had a majority in the working class, were very far from having a majority of the population. But they could take power because of the extreme weakness of the ruling class and the particular situation of the peasants who comprised the mass of society – i.e., while the mass of the peasants *voted* for the Social Revolutionaries, they were extremely disillusioned with them, were absolutely unwilling to mobilise in support of them or the Constituent Assembly, and under these conditions were at worst neutralised and at best could rapidly be won to the Bolsheviks.

In Portugal, however, despite the very deep crisis of the ruling class power, the task of winning over the working class and winning or neutralising the other layers of the masses has absolutely not been achieved. Nothing like the majority of the working class has been won by the revolutionaries, and the winning over or neutralising of intermediate strata has not been achieved.

The latter might seem relatively unimportant in a massively proletarianised country like Britain, but in Portugal a quarter of the population are directly employed in agriculture – with a large number in the north being land-owning peasants; the vast majority even of the workers are employed in small enterprises; and as in every under-developed economy, there is a very high proportion both of classic petit-bourgeois and of many intermediate strata.

Reformists

Outside Lisbon and the south, where an important shift in the relation of forces *has* occurred, the masses are not merely not won over but are not even neutralised. The majority of workers follow the reformists, and in the north large masses have been actively mobilised *against* the forces of revolution. To break the majority of the workers from reformism and at least neutralise the huge peasant and petit-bourgeois layers is absolutely indispensable before there can be any *serious* talk of insurrection.

In fighting to win over or neutralise the massive intermediate strata in Portugal, the PRP had one element of a correct line – economic demands on agriculture. A second decisive element, councils, it had only in an extraordinarily distorted form which had no chance of success.

Unfortunate

Unfortunately, however, a correct line even on these two things would not by itself have been at all sufficient to deal with the tasks to be accomplished. The mass mobilisations against the forces of revolution during the summer – and it was these and not the manoeuvres of the army which were the real element in strengthening bourgeois power in Portugal – were carried out not for or against workers councils or economic demands, but under cover of 'defending democracy'.

The reasons for this are obvious. Forty years of fascist rule does not decrease illusions in bourgeois democracy but on the contrary vastly increases them. Anyone in Portugal who convinces the masses that they intend to install a dictatorship over them will never make a revolution – particularly under conditions where both the international nature of Stalinism and its practice in the trade unions and towns of the north convince people that one self proclaimed supporter of socialism, the CP, doesn't care about even bourgeois, let alone proletarian, democracy.

Of course, during the summer large numbers of workers in the south found out that many of these demonstrations were not about defending democracy at all, but were about attacking the development of working class power – which is why the SP's demonstrations in Lisbon shrank dramatically. But for a vital period in the summer even large numbers of workers were confused on this question, and even today very large layers of the petit-bourgeoisie, peasants, workers in small enterprises, etc. continue to support the SP and can be still mobilised under the banner of 'defending democracy'. No mere programme of economic demands will overcome this.

Dual task

Under these circumstances revolutionaries were and are faced with a very difficult dual task. First, they have to advance centrally a line for building soviet

type organisations – organs of workers' as opposed to bourgeois democracy. Secondly, they have to understand the very deep illusions which already exist in *bourgeois* democracy.

The link between the two tasks is of course showing both that only councils can meet the social needs of the masses, and that these councils create a *greater* democracy of the masses than any bourgeois system. Without *combining* these tasks no revolution can be made in Portugal.

How did the PRP deal with this crucial task in winning over the masses? In its usual ultra-left fashion. This line began to take concrete form with the election, which the PRP boycotted, declaring that those who 'play the electoral game' are 'objectively turning themselves also into counter-revolutionaries' (Manifesto of the PRP, 10 March 1975).

The reason for this was apparently that: 'The attitude adopted by these organisations (which claim to be anti-reformist and anti-revisionist, and thus anti-electoralist) in participating in these "elections" can only be understood if we realise that many of them completely lack any concrete analysis of the situation in Portugal. Because of this, and by pretending to have scientific analyses, they also support the strengthening of bourgeois democracy' (Ibid).

Highest

Unfortunately, as was only to be expected, the masses paid no attention to this. Ninety two per cent of the electorate participated in the Constituent Assembly poll – probably the highest poll ever recorded in Europe. From this anyone with sense would have concluded that no matter what the state of the revolutionaries, even the mass of the workers had definitely not broken with bourgeois electoralist illusions.

Instead of correcting its error, however, the PRP deepened it. If bourgeois electoralism couldn't be got rid of by convincing, then perhaps its results could be got rid of by decree. The PRP decided to demand the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly – a line which was trumpeted all over the pages of *Socialist Worker.*

Nothing more likely to cut off the revolutionaries from the masses and throw large sections of the workers and the entire population of the north into the hands of reaction could be imagined. It was a classic case of attempting to rape the masses having failed to convince them. It was a line for starting a civil war with an absolute guarantee of losing it.

To take up comrade Harman's criticism: the problem with the PRP isn't that its paper doesn't come out regularly enough – the problem is what's in it when it does come out!

In next week's final article we will deal with the PRP, the Communist Party, and the 'lefts' of the Armed Forces Movement.

THE PRP, THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AND THE AFM

In the last issue of *Red Weekly* we showed that the line of the PRP was incapable of uniting the working class or waging a serious struggle for workers councils; that it could not win over the sections of the working class which support the Socialist Party or deal with the intermediate strata, above all the peasants of the north, who must be at least neutralised for the working class to take power in Portugal. We will conclude our analysis of the line of the PRP by looking at its equally wrong line in relation to the workers who follow the Communist Party and the relation of forces between the revolutionaries and the CP.

The first point which has to be grasped is the PRP's extraordinary illusions in the Communist Party. Its practice completely contradicts IS's claim – for example, by Cliff in his pamphlet – that: 'The PRP is very clear in grasping the nature of the Communist Party ..... it recognises that although the Communist Party has a base in the class it is a reformist party that cannot be pressurised into revolutionary actions' (p.19).

The nonsense of this claim was shown very clearly in the PRP's governmental slogan – for a Government of Revolutionary Unity. Such a slogan evidently implied more than a government of the PRP or of the revolutionary left, which would have been little more than a joke.

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However, if we turn from the editorial point to the one of substance we find that, far from distorting the IS's

the orientation given by the PRP to the CRTSMs (Councils of Revolutionary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors). On this issue the IS leadership has written more nonsense than on practically anything else – both absurdly exaggerating their influence, and suggesting that in Portugal the PRP was the only organisation to campaign for workers councils. What has not been so reported, however, is either the wrong line of the CRTSMs, or flowing from this, the collapse of the 'movement' even where initial successes were gained.

The classic case is the Lisnave shipyard. Here there was a meeting of 4,000 workers, called under the influence of the PRP, which supported the CRTSMs demonstration of 17 June and elected its own council.

This was undoubtedly a major success, which could have been a springboard to great things. But the line which the PRP got adopted was for action for 'a non-party revolutionary government and socialist revolution'. Cliff limply attempts to justify this line in his pamphlet, writing: 'During the general elections to the Constituent Assembly there is no doubt that many militants got fed up with the different and numerous political organisations competing for working class votes. Apartidarism (non-partyism) corresponded to the feelings of much of the advanced section of the class' (p19).

Poor advanced workers, you see fed up with all this political argument and wanting to get on, with the aid of the PRP, to the serious job (evidently not involving political parties) of making the revolution.

However the PRP actually went still further. In the PRP's scheme of things the one place where political parties were represented was on the National Secretariat of the committees. The first congress of the 'pro-council committees', however, decided to *exclude* the Socialist Party even from the National Secretariat – not exactly a small thing as the SP, despite Cliff and Harman's claims, has the support of the majority of the workers in the North and a substantial minority indeed in the South.

This decision to exclude the Socialist Party was by itself absolutely sufficient to ensure that the CRTSMs could never develop to create real workers councils. The 'non-partyism' ensured they could never go beyond being the front of a sect. Both because politics very much involves parties and because those workers most committed to building workers councils were not prepared to abandon their political organisations, the PRP's 'councils', far from rising above parties, merely became the periphery of *one* party the PRP.

Strength

This is exactly how they are seen in Portugal. Instead of 'its' rank and file movement, the PRP had 'its' workers councils. And the strength of the CRTSMs developed in inverse ratio to the real emergence of workers councils. Today, in Lisnave as everywhere else, there is not one single meaningful organisation of the CRTSM type in existence.

While, to be fair, it is necessary to point out that the PRP's practice in some areas was considerably better than its theory, and it did contribute to the establishment of some *real* workers organs, nevertheless its line on non-partyism and on the SP is an insuperable barrier to winning the masses.

If the line of the PRP on the CRTSMs was an obstacle to the building of organisations of the masses *inside* the working class, its political line was also disastrously incapable of winning over the masses in a still broader sense – of winning the 'intermediate strata' of society to the side of the working class.

This latter point is of course one of the classic conditions which must be achieved to create a revolution. It is *not* sufficient to seize power that even the majority of the working class is won. It is *also* necessary, as Lenin and Trotsky continually pointed out, both that the ruling class power itself be in deep crisis and that all significant intermediate strata be either won over or neutralised.

Bolsheviks

The exact combination in which these conditions are satisfied in any revolution of course differs. In Russia for example, the Bolsheviks in October 1917, while they had a majority in the working class, were very far from having a majority of the population. But they could take power because of the extreme weakness of the ruling class and the particular situation of the peasants who comprised the mass of society – i.e., while the mass of the peasants *voted* for the Social Revolutionaries, they were extremely disillusioned with them, were absolutely unwilling to mobilise in support of them or the Constituent Assembly, and under these conditions were at worst neutralised and at best could rapidly be won to the Bolsheviks.

In Portugal, however, despite the very deep crisis of the ruling class power, the task of winning over the working class and winning or neutralising the other layers of the masses has absolutely not been achieved. Nothing like the majority of the working class has been won by the revolutionaries, and the winning over or neutralising of intermediate strata has not been achieved.

The latter might seem relatively unimportant in a massively proletarianised country like Britain, but in Portugal a quarter of the population are directly employed in agriculture – with a large number in the north being land-owning peasants; the vast majority even of the workers are employed in small enterprises; and as in every under-developed economy, there is a very high proportion both of classic petit-bourgeois and of many intermediate strata.

Reformists

Outside Lisbon and the south, where an important shift in the relation of forces *has* occurred, the masses are not merely not won over but are not even neutralised. The majority of workers follow the reformists, and in the north large masses have been actively mobilised *against* the forces of revolution. To break the majority of the workers from reformism and at least neutralise the huge peasant and petit-bourgeois layers is absolutely indispensable before there can be any *serious* talk of insurrection.

In fighting to win over or neutralise the massive intermediate strata in Portugal, the PRP had one element of a correct line – economic demands on agriculture. A second decisive element, councils, it had only in an extraordinarily distorted form which had no chance of success.

Unfortunate

Unfortunately, however, a correct line even on these two things would not by itself have been at all sufficient to deal with the tasks to be accomplished. The mass mobilisations against the forces of revolution during the summer – and it was these and not the manoeuvres of the army which were the real element in strengthening bourgeois power in Portugal – were carried out not for or against workers councils or economic demands, but under cover of 'defending democracy'

The reasons for this are obvious. Forty years of fascist rule does not decrease illusions in bourgeois democracy but on the contrary vastly increases them. Anyone in Portugal who convinces the masses that they intend to install a dictatorship over them will never make a revolution – particularly under conditions where both the international nature of Stalinism and its practice in the trade unions and towns of the north convince people that one self proclaimed supporter of socialism, the CP, doesn't care about even bourgeois, let alone proletarian, democracy.

Of course, during the summer large numbers of workers in the south found out that many of these demonstrations were not about defending democracy at all, but were about attacking the development of working class power – which is why the SP's demonstrations in Lisbon shrank dramatically. But for a vital period in the summer even large numbers of workers were confused on this question, and even today very large layers of the petit-bourgeoisie, peasants, workers in small enterprises, etc. continue to support the SP and can be still mobilised under the banner of 'defending democracy'. No mere programme of economic demands will overcome this.

Dual task

Under these circumstances revolutionaries were and are faced with a very difficult dual task. First, they have to advance centrally a line for building soviet

type organisations – organs of workers' as opposed to bourgeois democracy. Secondly, they have to understand the very deep illusions which already exist in *bourgeois* democracy.

The link between the two tasks is of course showing both that only councils can meet the social needs of the masses, and that these councils create a *greater* democracy of the masses than any bourgeois system. Without *combining* these tasks no revolution can be made in Portugal.

How did the PRP deal with this crucial task in winning over the masses? In its usual ultra-left fashion. This line began to take concrete form with the election, which the PRP boycotted, declaring that those who 'play the electoral game' are 'objectively turning themselves also into counter-revolutionaries' (Manifesto of the PRP, 10 March 1975).

The reason for this was apparently that: 'The attitude adopted by these organisations (which claim to be anti-reformist and anti-revisionist, and thus anti-electoralist) in participating in these "elections" can only be understood if we realise that many of them completely lack any concrete analysis of the situation in Portugal. Because of this, and by pretending to have scientific analyses, they also support the strengthening of bourgeois democracy' (Ibid).

Highest

Unfortunately, as was only to be expected, the masses paid no attention to this. Ninety two per cent of the electorate participated in the Constituent Assembly poll – probably the highest poll ever recorded in Europe. From this anyone with sense would have concluded that no matter what the state of the revolutionaries, even the mass of the workers had definitely not broken with bourgeois electoralist illusions.

Instead of correcting its error, however, the PRP deepened it. If bourgeois electoralism couldn't be got rid of by convincing, then perhaps its results could be got rid of by decree. The PRP decided to demand the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly – a line which was trumpeted all over the pages of *Socialist Worker*.

Nothing more likely to cut off the revolutionaries from the masses and throw large sections of the workers and the entire population of the north into the hands of reaction could be imagined. It was a classic case of attempting to rape the masses having failed to convince them. It was a line for starting a civil war with an absolute guarantee of losing it.

To take up comrade Harman's criticism: the problem with the PRP isn't that its paper doesn't come out regularly enough – the problem is what's in it when it does come out!

In next week's final article we will deal with the PRP, the Communist Party, and the 'lefts' of the Armed Forces Movement.

THE PRP, THE COMMUNIST PARTY, AND THE AFM

In the last issue of *Red Weekly* we showed that the line of the PRP was incapable of uniting the working class or waging a serious struggle for workers councils; that it could not win over the sections of the working class which support the Socialist Party or deal with the intermediate strata, above all the peasants of the north, who must be at least neutralised for the working class to take power in Portugal. We will conclude our analysis of the line of the PRP by looking at its equally wrong line in relation to the workers who follow the Communist Party and the relation of forces between the revolutionaries and the CP.

The first point which has to be grasped is the PRP's extraordinary illusions in the Communist Party. Its practice completely contradicts IS's claim – for example, by Cliff in his pamphlet – that: 'The PRP is very clear in grasping the nature of the Communist Party ..... it recognises that although the Communist Party has a base in the class it is a reformist party that cannot be pressurised into revolutionary actions' (p.19).

The nonsense of this claim was shown very clearly in the PRP's governmental slogan – for a Government of Revolutionary Unity. Such a slogan evidently implied more than a government of the PRP or of the revolutionary left, which would have been little more than a joke.

Equally, however, it clearly did not refer to a government of the parties of the working class – because the participation of the Socialist Party was specifically excluded by the whole line of the PRP. In reality it was a formula for a revolutionary left-Communist Party government.

Francisco Temudo, a leader of the Internationalist Communist League (LCI) – Portuguese sympathising organisation of the Fourth International – explained the meaning of this line very clearly in an interview conducted before the events of 25 November: 'These illusions about the possibility of an immediate insurrection – which predominate in the PRP and the MES (Left Socialist Movement) - flow from the extreme decomposition of the state apparatus, especially in the military field. This creates the illusion that it is possible to take power now – and not only to take power, but to apply a revolutionary programme, to win broad sections of the population to the revolutionary process, and so maintain the revolutionary forces in power.

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'There is of course an amazing contradiction here. No-one believes that the FUR (Revolutionary United Front) by itself could constitute a government of revolutionary unity, so these groups agree on the necessity of what they call a 'reformist component' – that is the Communist Party. In other words, incredible as it may seem, they expect a reformist party to go along with them to take power, and form a government applying a revolutionary programme' (*Red Weekly*, 27 November).

So the PRP, far from 'being very clear in grasping the nature of the Communist Party', had the worst of all illusions – that the Communist Party would be capable of, or could be forced (no doubt by insurrection) into being part of a *revolutionary* government! No wonder that when they were visited by members of the Fifth Division the PRP could have thought that the CP was involved in an insurrection!

But if we turn to the position of the IS we find a rather different situation. The IS, to its credit, has *not* entertained such illusions on the Portuguese Communist Party, and has *not* suggested that it could be forced into being part of a revolutionary government. Unfortunately, however, this doesn't mean that the IS were any clearer on the relation of forces in Portugal; on the contrary, they were even more confused.

We can see this most clearly by looking at comrade Harman's one justified complaint against *Red Weekly's* initial article on the PRP (4 December). It is unfortunately true that in editing this article two lines of comrade Harman's article in the November *International Socialism*, which were in fact separated by a considerable portion of text, got put together. This was done unintentionally, but a scrupulously accurate presentation of opponents' positions should be a hallmark of polemics, so comrade Harman is quite justified in complaining and we take the opportunity to apologise for the error.

However, if we turn from the editorial point to the one of substance we find that, far from distorting the IS's

position, we were actually too kind to it. No editing error can obscure the fact that Harman did write of the CP as having 'some influence in the workers movement' and having 'understood that it can use its hold over certain workers committees as a Trojan horse for regaining some of the initiative in the armed forces' – phrases which clearly suggest that the CP was on the verge of losing control of the working class. And this is consistent with his bizarre statement that: 'With the SUV the revolutionary left has emerged as a major contender in the national struggle for power'.

Even after 25 November, *Socialist Worker* spelt out quite clearly what its analysis of the relation of forces was: 'The revolutionary left groups, the PRP and the MES, had been arguing that an insurrection was necessary to avoid the danger of another Chile. But they expected it only after some weeks of building support for it in the factories' (*Socialist Worker*, 6 December).

You couldn't have a clearer statement of the IS's understanding of the relation of forces than that! Apparently the revolutionaries were in such a position that they were only weeks away from winning the workers from reformism and launching the insurrection! It is clear that we didn't distort the IS analysis at all – we were, if anything, too kind to it.

But just let us suppose for a moment that Harman was right in his letter – that we did slander the IS and that they really did understand that the revolutionaries enjoyed the support only of the vanguard of the working class. What would follow then?

What would follow is that the PRP and the IS were proposing an insurrection in the short term, in 'some weeks' under conditions where the revolutionaries only enjoyed the support of the vanguard and the masses continued to be dominated by reformism!

A more substitutionist putschist scheme is hard to imagine.

So we suggest, comrade Harman, that you admit what is the truth – that you and the PRP made a disastrous error on the relation of forces. To adopt the alternative line will only get you into even deeper water.

The PRP's errors on the relation of forces were further compounded, however, by its extraordinary illusions in the left army officers in general, and Otelo de Carvalho in particular. The Manifesto of the PRP of 10 March spelt out their view clearly: 'The proletariat will have to count, apart from the revolutionary organisations and the soldiers and sailors, on these progressive officers (and it is they who have the weapons) in their struggle against the bourgeoisie and reactionaries for the Socialist Revolution in Portugal'.

First and foremost amongst those 'who had the weapons' and whom the working class had to rely on was of course Otelo de Carvalho. Indeed, the PRP went out of its way to state: 'We underline the courage of this soldier who is always ready to advance without fear' (*Revolucao*, 8 May).

This line on Carvalho was carried right into the autumn. Thus the 12 September issue of *Revolucao* carried an 'Open Letter to Comrade Otelo'. This announced: 'Comrade Otelo, it is necessary to struggle for the formation of a revolutionary army and that we progressives must make the true socialist revolution. With the true progressives of the MFA. We must understand that the working class must take power and it must do it as rapidly as possible because tomorrow it will be too late'.

The line of the PRP in relation to other 'true progressives of the MFA', notably the Clemente group, has already been dealt with.

The result of these illusions – both in the officers and in the general relation of forces in Portugal – was that by the beginning of November the line of the PRP on the army was virtually insane. On 10 November, PRP leader Isabel do Carmo stated at a press conference: 'As all history shows, the bourgeoisie unleashes a civil war every time it wants to defend its interests. Fortunately the forces of the right possess no army in Portugal. To get one they must resort to mercenaries based in Spain or to the armies of the United States or NATO'.

The PRP Manifesto 'Against Civil War, Armed Insurrection', issued on 14 November, similarly claimed: 'The Social Democrats and the right in general have no army in Portugal. If they want to stage a confrontation with the proletariat, they will have to resort to mercenaries hired in Spain or simply invaders from NATO and the USA'. Try telling that to the Military Police, or the RALIS or the paratroopers today!

With this final conclusion on the army, together with its confusion of social democracy and fascism, and its wrong conclusion on the relation of forces in the country, the PRP clearly adopted a short-term orientation to insurrection. We will quote only a few statements bearing this out:
– 'It is now time for the revolutionary forces and the workers to pose the problem of an insurrection' (declaration of the PRP, 30 September).
– 'Armed insurrection is the sole way by which popular power can continue to advance ..... the organisation of the masses has already attained a level sufficient to inherit power' (press conference given by Francisco Marquez, a leading member of the PRP, 7 November).
– 'The insurrection is not an unrealisable project. Far from being a utopia it is the only practical possibility to avoid fascism and to finish once and for all with reaction organised and infiltrated at the level of political and military power. It is the *only* way to avoid a prolonged civil war. It is the *only* way to avoid the intervention of imperialism. It is the *only* way to avoid the future degradation of the economy and of the social, political and military situation' (*Revolucao*, 7 November).

Anyone influenced by such a line was bound to get caught up in an adventure. Even if the PRP did not itself draw the appropriate organisational conclusions, it was likely that someone else would try it. This was doubly inevitable when not merely the PRP but a whole ultra-left current, based primarily in the lower sections of the officers, was on this line.

Finally, on 25 November, someone made the experiment and the *real* relation of forces in Portuguese society reasserted itself with a bang.

Aberrant

The PRP unfortunately didn't recognise the reality of the situation even then. In what must surely be one of the most tragically aberrant communiques of all time, it announced: 'Thousands of soldiers in liaison with the organisations of the revolutionary left, among them the Revolutionary Brigades, still resist the right wing coup. In particular the entire region to the south of Tagus remains a free zone'.

This statement was put out at 10 p.m. on 26 November – after all significant resistance had been crushed and the Amadora commandos were merely carrying out mopping up operations.

The lessons of this are clear. The errors of the PRP were not warts on an otherwise correct line, but were products of a disastrously wrong analysis of the situation in Portugal. The events of 25–26 November revealed that with bitter clarity. Unfortunately since then neither the PRP nor the IS has drawn the appropriate conclusions.

RELEASE CARVALHO

The following article is reprinted from the January 29, 1976, issue of *Red Weekly.*

'25 April is in prison' – this is the accurate assessment made in Portugal of the arrest last week of General Otelo de Carvalho for alleged involvement in the military events of 25 November in Lisbon. The fact that the Azevedo Government now feels confident enough, two months after the event, to arrest the man who was the most popular left-wing general shows the change which is taking place in the political situation in Portugal.

Carvalho's career in the last eighteen months exactly mirrors the rise and fall of the left wing of the Portuguese army. Renowned as a brilliant organiser, it was Carvalho who prepared and led the military operation of the 25 April 1974 coup to topple the dictator Caetano. Following that he became head of the newly created internal security force, Copcon.

Initially intended for use against rightist followers of Spinola on the one hand and strikers on the other, the troops of Copcon, through contact with the workers, soon became the most left-wing soldiers of the entire army. Carvalho himself became increasingly associated with the Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat (PRP), and later with the Communist Party. His followers were undoubtedly publicly involved in the 25 November events.

CONFUSED

'Otelo', as he was universally known, remained hopelessly confused to the end. He advocated at various times workers councils without parties, an alliance between the revolutionary left and the 'Group of Nine' officers led by Melo Antunes, and a whole series of similar idiotic schemes. In the early days of the revolution he was prepared to use troops against strikers to enforce the Communist Party inspired 'battle for production'.

But despite all this, Carvalho, in no matter how confused a way, saw himself as on the side of the working class against capitalism. Furthermore, his politics were objectively not those of an aspiring capitalist dictator but a confused part of the workers movement. Of the leading circles of the Armed Forces Movement, it was Carvalho and Admiral Rosa Coutinho who refused to follow the reactionary path of Azevedo and the majority of the AFM.

Despite all political differences there is not the slightest doubt that among the tasks of the Portuguese working class is the securing of the release of Carvalho, Denis Almeida of the Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment, and the other left-wing military prisoners.

PORTUGAL: WHAT PROSPECTS ARE THERE FOR THE WORKING CLASS AFTER THE EVENTS OF NOVEMBER 25

The following article appeared in issue No. 33, January 1976, of *Class Struggle,* a French-English bilingual magazine published by Lutte Ouvrière.

As time goes by, it is becoming more and more obvious that 25 November 1975 brought on a significant turn of events and marked the beginning of a new period in the development of the situation in Portugal.

Ten days before these events, the Azevedo government had been forced to give in all the way to the demands of the building workers who were besieging the Constituent Assembly. On 16 November last, the biggest demonstration since the first of May 1974 took place in Lisbon. It had been called for by the workers' committees, the soldiers' organization SUV («Soldiers United Will Win»), the Communist Party, the unions, and the revolutionary organizations. More than 100,000 people demanded that the government resign.

But the initiative changed hands after the rebellion of the Tancos paratroopers. Today, the extreme left alone goes out into the streets, and in limited numbers too, to demand that the soldiers jailed since 25 November be freed. Whereas not so long ago some people were explaining that the Portuguese state machine had been «purged» and more or less dismantled, the repressive bodies inherited from the Salazar and Caetano period are now re-appearing in broad daylight. The freeing of the PIDE agents, the sinister political police from the dictatorship period, is being spoken of more and more openly. The government no longer hesitates to use the National Republican Guard in tasks of repression, or stands up for it when it opens fire on unarmed demonstrators, as was the case on the first of January 1976 at Porto.

On the governmental level, the events of 25 November also changed a lot of things. The Azevedo government has survived—at least up until the time these lines were written. Yet, on the eve of the Tancos paratroopers' rebellion, it had looked very much like this government was about to fall. Though at the present time a new cabinet reshuffle is being laboriously negotiated in Lisbon—as it has become a tradition—it is out of the question that the Communist Party can hope to keep more than the minor portfolio it has had since the beginning of the sixth provisional government. This is quite different to what it might have expected during the first half of November.

But the actual composition of the future Portuguese government is a matter of secondary importance for the workers. Their lot will be not at all changed by the fact that more or fewer so-called Communist ministers preside over their exploitation. The key question in Portugal is that concerning the prospects of the working class after the events of 25 November. This question cannot be answered unless we determine how these events were a failure for the workers and how important this failure was.

First of all, can we actually speak of a defeat of the working class? The question is raised because the workers at no moment participated in the events of 25 November. These events only brought different elements of the army into conflict. But among these elements, the Tancos paratroopers—who were defeated—were the allies of the working class anyway. And the defeat of the paratroopers constitutes a step backwards for the working class, the importance of which must be determined.

WHAT WAS AT STAKE ON 25 NOVEMBER?

The initial cause behind the Tancos paratroopers' rebellion was the government's decision to relieve General Carvalho of his functions as commander of the Lisbon military region.

If we only judge the Tancos rebellion in terms of its point of departure, it seems merely to be one episode among many in a struggle that had for months been opposing two camps in Portugal. On the one hand were those in favor of military Bonapartism supported by the reformist workers' parties (Carvalho was—unofficially— the most likely candidate to this Bonapartist role).On the other were those in favor of the establishment of a bourgeois parliamentary system.

It is more than obvious that the confrontations between these two bourgeois political lines, both equally dangerous in terms of the interests of the workers, did not concern the working class at all. It was not for the working class to intervene in an attempt to keep Carvalho in place. His reputation as a «progressive general» and the support given to him by the Communist Party—and the majority of the leftists—did not make him a representative of working class interests.

With the exception of some officers, the soldiers who tried to oppose the dismissal of Carvalho did not do so to defend bourgeois policies. Like many workers, they were merely the victims of their illusions about the so-called «left-wing» generals. What they especially wanted to do, was to use their established right to have officers of their own choosing.

After all, encouraged by the example of the partial victory won a month earlier through the mutiny of the Porto soldiers, the Tancos paratroopers could also hope to force the government into negotiating a compromise.

But once the rebellion was started, the stake was no longer what post General Carvalho was to occupy. In fact, Carvalho did his best to keep out of the events and avoided making any gesture which might have people believe that he endorsed the rebels' action. What was at stake was the problem of discipline within the army. The government intended to make the events of 25

November the starting point of a campaign to regain control over the troops. All the senior officers and bourgeois politicians had been long demanding this, but nobody had dared to take any real steps in that direction.

The opportunity was there for the taking. Though all the conflicting tendencies at the army top level had declared themselves in favor of re-establishing discipline in the army, up until then nothing very concrete had been done to this effect. This was partly because it was difficult to predict how the soldiers and the workers would react, and partly because no one wanted to pay the price for re-establishing discipline. That is, they feared that they would loose their support among the junior and lower-ranking officers. But once the Tancos paratroopers had moved into an insurrectional situation, the officers in whose name they had rebelled—starting with Carvalho—could not but abandon them and allow the commanding officers to whom they were opposed to discipline them. Otherwise, they ran the risk of starting up a civil war.

Once the rebellion of these elements had been repressed, came the signal to begin the process of disciplining the whole army. This process was all the more easy in that the isolation in which the Tancos paratroopers had found themselves could hardly encourage other units to try to resist the attempts at re-establishing military discipline.

THE WORKING CLASS ON THE EVE OF 25 NOVEMBER

On 25 November, the Portuguese working class found itself scarcely capable of intervening, given that it was deeply divided by the struggle which had been going on for months between the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. In fact, the two big reformist workers' parties had each tied their destiny to one of the conflicting bourgeois political lines. The Communist Party realized that the only chance it had of taking part in the government was if the army agreed to this. Thus it supported the generals who were in favor of military Bonapartism. The Socialist Party, especially since the April 1975 elections which had shown its electoral influence, stood for a parliamentary solution.

After the Socialist Party's departure from the government on 10 July 1975—which carried the debate into the ranks of the AFM where a tendency in favor of its ideas developed—the Communist Party and the Socialist Party each found themselves behind one of the tendencies in the army. The Communist Party was behind that represented by men like Gonçalves or Carvalho, and the Socialist Party found itself behind the one headed by Melo Antunes.

Though the politics of the two big reformist workers' parties were both essentially aimed at managing the affairs of the bourgeoisie, obviously neither of them could openly admit it to its rank-and-file. The Communist Party hid its opportunist politics behind leftist slogans and attitudes and took on a sectarian stance toward the Socialist Party. This was borne out by the *Republica* affair and the call to build barricades to prevent Socialist militants from demonstrating. As for the Socialist Party, it tried to portray itself as the great defender of civil liberties and as having aims contrary to those of the Communist Party. To oppose Communist Party militants to Socialist Party militants —the latter accusing the former of wanting a totalitarian dictatorship, and the former accusing the latter of being the agents of reaction—was obviously not the best way to forge the unity of the working class and to prepare it to the struggles to come.

In such a political situation, the only way of attaining these two aims would have been to propose an action program for the working class as a whole. Such a program would have needed to cover the common aspirations of Socialist and Communist workers as well. Obviously, nobody could count on either the Communist Party or the Socialist Party to put forward such a program. They were both too interested in maintaining the division in the ranks of the working class. But that should precisely have been the role of the revolutionary extreme left which had clearly won a certain influence during 1975 within some layers of the working class.

Unfortunately, most of the extreme-left groups showed themselves incapable of developing such a political line. Instead of fighting to overcome the division in the working class resulting from the politics of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party, they towed along behind the politics of either party and the tendencies within the AFM supported by these parties. As for those who tried to develop such a political line, their influence was too weak to change the situation in any significant way.

Thus, after the Tancos paratroopers' rebellion, the workers scarcely budged while the army was progressively disciplined.

According to the Socialists, the paratroopers' rebellion was an attempted putsch by the Communist Party and the extreme left to transform Portugal into a «People's Democracy.» Thus, those workers who followed the Socialist Party and who more or less believed the latter's version of the events, could only wish to see the rebellion fail.

No matter how much the militants of the Communist Party may have wanted to help out the rebellious soldiers, they received no such instructions from their party. After all, the party was willing to support Carvalho, but not to support soldiers who, urged on by their illusions concerning Carvalho, had just gone beyond the bounds of legality, placing themselves in an insurrectional situation.

SHOULD THE WORKING CLASS HAVE INTERVENED?

It was vital for the working class not to leave the Tancos paratroopers isolated. These soldiers, who were rejecting military discipline and who were demanding the right to choose their own officers and to discuss orders, were the best allies the workers could have.

The Portuguese bourgeoisie knew all of this only too well. Its politicians and generals had been very preoccupied for some months about the means of restoring discipline in the army because they wanted to have at their disposal a workable instrument of repression against the people.

So long as this discipline was not restored, the Portuguese working class practically did not need to fear a coup from the right.

Thus the workers should have supported the Tancos paratroopers, not because they rebelled to defend Carvalho, but independently of that. They should have done so just like, in other circumstances, they might have had to defend soldiers rebelling against attempts by Carvalho to restore discipline to his own ends.

This does not mean, of course, that the Portuguese workers should have joined the Tancos rebellion. This rebellion was clearly an adventurist act, as well as a politically false one—in terms of its aim to keep Carvalho in his post. The events which followed were to sufficiently demonstrate this. The Portuguese working class was in no position to seize power. It was not the act of a few hundred soldiers that could suddenly have created the conditions for seizing power. The actual non-intervention of the working class demonstrated this point better than anything else.

But by going out into the street and demonstrating, and by expressing in all ways their support for the action of the soldiers who were rejecting the re-establishment of discipline, even a minority of the Portuguese workers could have forced the government to negotiate, like a month earlier in Porto.

In fact, it was not so much because of the strength of the forces opposing them that the paratroopers surrendered. These forces were not very numerous. The only forces of repression on which the government could seriously count at the time—the Amadora commandos—were not very big in number. The Tancos paratroopers surrendered because of the total lack of prospects before them and because of their isolation.

The working class's intervention undoubtedly would not have enabled them to win. But it would have provided them with some other way out, than pure and simple surrender to the government. It would have shown all the soldiers who were determined to fight to preserve the right to engage in politics within the army and to discuss the orders they received, that they could count on the working class if the need arose. But instead of that, the opposite was proven.

WHY DID THE WORKING CLASS NOT INTERVENE?

Fatalistic people might be tempted to say that the Portuguese working class did not intervene in these events simply because it could not do so, due to its low level of consciousness and combativeness.

They would not be entirely wrong. The ease with which the government regained control on the army unfortunately showed how vain was the trumpet-blowing of those who explained—just before the events—that the situation in Portugal was ripe for the seizure of power by the working class.

Between April 1974 and November 1975, the Portuguese working class did of course take advantage of the new legal possibilities given it by the overthrow of Caetano. It organized itself—on the union and political level. It became involved in politics. And no working class during the last twenty years in Western Europe has ever found itself more concretely concerned with the problem of socialist revolution than the Portuguese working class. But the problem was not yet to seize power and exert it. The problem of its seizing power on a short-term basis could have been raised only if the working class had already had a whole network of organs of proletarian power at its disposal—factory committees, local committees, or soviets. It could have been raised only if it had also had a revolutionary leadership, a party, capable of opening the prospect of socialist revolution. Such was not the case in November 1975, as events have shown.

However, prior to 25 November, many revolutionary groups had a lot of illusions over this aspect of the problem. They took more or less representative workers' committees for soviets, or the existence of some soldiers' committees for a proof that the army stood for socialist revolution. Because they had so often put forward «exemplary» actions and forms of organization, they ended up taking «exemplary» committees for actual organs of workers' power.

The Portuguese extreme left no doubt had won some influence over a fraction of the working class—thousands or perhaps tens of thousands of workers. This was far from being negligible. But this also was far from being the proof that the level of consciousness of the whole of the Portuguese working class was such that it found itself on the eve of the seizure of power.

But even at its own level of consciousness the Portuguese working class could have intervened. If tens of thousands of workers had come down into the streets and had stood between the Tancos paratroopers and the Amadora commandos, the course of events could have been radically changed. Though the fraction of the working class influenced by revolutionary groups was small, it could have prevented the scale from weighing too heavily to the wrong side. But the revolutionary groups also found themselves disarmed—politically speaking—in front of these events, and no one with enough weight called the workers to support the Tancos paratroopers.

WHAT NEXT?

Today, only those who are blind do not see that the events of 25 November and afterwards constitute a set-back for workers. Of course, the working class has not been defeated in a battle. Its troops and organnizations are still intact. But it has lost the material and moral help meant by the active sympathy of most soldiers toward it. It has perhaps lost some illusions—which can only be a good thing—but it does not have any more prospects than before 25 November. One sure thing is that many workers, and especially those who had put their hopes in the extreme left, must have felt demoralized by these events because they were given no prospects.

This unfavorable change in the relationship of forces is further evidenced by the reactions of the people on the other side, that is to say, the representatives of the bourgeoisie. Azevedo's government has enforced its austerity policies and the army staff recently cynically justified the Porto shooting.

Does this mean that the set-back which has followed the events of 25 November marks the end of any kind of hope about the possibility of a revolutionary situation developing in Portugal? Does this mean that the effects of this defeat will continue to be felt over a long period? Of course not. The development of a revolutionary crisis is in no way a linear process. It would not be the first time that a temporary set-back of the working class prepares a new offensive.

Now, whatever the extent of time separating us from a new upsurge of the Portuguese working class—whether it will take months or years—one thing is sure: everything will depend on the militants and the workers with a political experience of the last tumultuous two years and on their capacity to draw the appropriate conclusions.

There are perhaps a few thousand of them who have become convinced that the only solution for the working class, in the face of all the bourgeois politicians who say they are left and all the generals who say they are progressive, is to maintain in all circumstances its political and organizational independence. If such is the case, this is a considerable asset for the struggles to come.

PORTUGAL: THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IMPLIES THE FIGHT FOR WORKERS' DEMOCRACY

The following article appeared in issue No. 31, October 1975, of *Class Struggle,* a French-English bilingual magazine published by Lutte Ouvrière.

Over the last eighteen months the Portuguese officers have been upsetting the traditional view people have of the army in power. Up until then, the army was considered to be made of men of decision. They were seen as the natural enemies of «too much talk and no action.» But social circumstances play a more crucial role than the military uniforms There have been six governments in less than a year and a half. The Portuguese army seems to be getting its inspiration from the French Fourth Republic.

The latest of these governments is no exception to the rule. After Admiral Azevedo had been appointed Prime Minister, it took two weeks to publish the list of ministers in his government. These two weeks were spent laboriously negotiating and considering all sorts of clever governmental combinations. And as far selecting Secretaries of State, this is not yet over.

We do not need to know who these are to know who won the test of strength launched by the Socialist Party last July. The Socialist Party had its ministers resign and called for dismissal of Vasco Gonçalves. But the Socialist Party did not just win because Goncalves was dismissed. Its victory is clear enough given the number of seats it got in the cabinet. It got four. The PPD, its ally during the July crisis, got two. The Communist Party, however, had to be satisfied with one seat, and an appropriate one at that: «social amenities.»

But it is also significant that the new minister of Information is an ally of the Socialist Party who had also resigned in July. He is the person who will have to settle the Republica affair (the pro-Socialist daily) which had been used to spark off the crisis. He will also have to settle the conflict over the Catholic radio Renaissance which had become the Catholic right-wing's hobby horse. Significant, too, is the return of major Melo Antunes to External Affairs (this ministry deals with the various imperialist powers). Melo Antunes is himself the leader of the so-called «moderate» fraction, that is to say, the right wing of the AFM.

This summer, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party had been openly locked in a power struggle to see who would have the most weight in the state organs of power. Thus a victory in points can be awarded to the Socialist Party. But the fundamental problem must be seen from the point of view of the Portuguese working class, and this is the one which interests us. And this is obviously not to know whether the Communist Party or the Socialist Party got the most portfolios. The fundamental problem is to determine the consequences this summer's political crisis will have on the level of consciousness and mobilization of the working class.

At the top, everyone is trying to look the part now. The governmental coalition has been patched up on the basis of the new relation of forces. But no one knows for how long. What traces have been left by the struggle which for ten months openly opposed the Communist Party and the Socialist Party? Has this struggle helped to arm the working class for the battles which await it? Or has this struggle helped to divide the working class?

The question is worth considering. The policy of unity at any cost, of unity for unity's sake, has never been one to raise the level of consciousness of the working class. All the same, all these conflicts and polemical battles are not, by definition, a good thing.

The Portuguese Communist Party accused the Socialist Party of playing into the hands of the reactionary forces. On the whole, these criticisms were entirely justified. The party of Mario Soares is certainly not a revolutionary party, whatever Soares might declare about the need to «destroy capitalism» in Portugal. He used this expression in an interview with The Times. In the same interview he said Willy Brandt's example was the one he would follow. Soares has never really considered putting an end to the capitalist social order. His only aim is to faithfully manage the affairs of the Portuguese bourgeoisie. He is not even prepared to follow the most radical wing of the AFM. The latter would be prepared to attack the particular interests of some of the bourgeoisie. They would do so, however, only to defend the general interests of the bourgeoisie. The Socialist Party only wants to manage the bourgeoisie's affairs and of course, with the latter's consent. Its political ideal is a parliamentary system like that existing in Western capitalist countries. In such a system it could manage the bourgeoisie's affairs and its electoral influence would put it in a position of major importance.

Moreover, it was its success in last spring's elections which led it to fight to extend its influence in the government. And in doing so, it did not show the slightest concern whether its politics might enable the reactionary and clerical right wing to raise its head for the first time since the fall of Caetano. But it was even quite prepared to use the right wing to reach its ends.

But was the politics of the Portuguese Communist Party really so different to that of the Socialist Party? The Communist Party has no more intention than the Socialist Party of transforming the existing social order in Portugal. It too wants to manage the affairs of the Portuguese bourgeoisie. And the only real difference between it and Soares's party was that it put itself in the tow of the AFM. Soares's party on the other hand, stands for a British- or French-styled parliamentary government. The Com-

munist party leaves the workers no other alternative but to place their trust in Vasco Gonçalves and Costa Gomes.

The only time the Communist Party has taken a radical stand towards the Socialist Party was in the Republica affair. This is also true of the CP's attempts to forcibly oppose the Socialists' demonstrations last July. But that does not prove that they are revolutionary. It just shows how sectarian they are. That was not the way to combat the Socialist Party's opportunism. It was just a leftist camouflage for its own opportunism. Such politics can do nothing to raise the level of consciousness of the working class. It can only divide and demoralize it.

The Portuguese Socialist Party, like all Social-Democratic parties, is defending the interests of the bourgeoisie. This is a fact. But the majority of working people, including the majority of the working class trust this party. This is just as important a fact. The Communist Party cannot hope to win over workers influenced by the Socialist Party if it attacks the Socialist or Socialist-oriented press. The CP will not win them over either by trying to put up barricades to prevent Socialist workers from going to demonstrate against Vasco Gonçalves.

A correct political line was necessary to break the majority of the working class away from the Socialist Party. This did not mean politics aimed at satisfying the sectarian tendencies of the Communist militants, but politics aimed at winning over the militants and sympathizers of the Socialist Party. Such politics would have enable them to become aware of the real interests defended by Soares and his friends and to understand who was really defending the workers' interests. A revolutionary party would have defended such politics. Such was the politics of the Bolsheviks between February and October 1917. It was aimed at tearing the majority of the Russian workers, soldiers, and peasants away from the influence of the reformists.

And it was not by launching the working class vanguard in an attack against the Menshevik printing shops and their demonstrations that the Bolshevik Party finally triumphed. On the contrary, they triumphed because they continually offered their support to the reformist parties on the condition that the latter decide to break with the bourgeoisie. To all of the trends standing for socialism they continually proposed a program defending the interests of the workers, soldiers, and peasants. They were the staunchest defenders of the united front of the working class against the reactionary forces. That is how the Bolsheviks enabled the masses to see for themselves and to realize that the revolutionaries were the only sincere defenders of their interests.

The uncompromising political struggle of the Bolsheviks against all the reformist trends during this time did not lead them to attack the latter's means of expression. On the contrary, it was the Mensheviks and the Revolutionary Socialists who tried to silence the Bolshevik press. Throughout 1917, Lenin and Trotsky's party was the most uncompromising of fighters for working-class democracy. It was the tragic necessities of the civil war which led the Bolshevik leaders to limit the means of expression of their political opponents. But they only did so under the pressure of events. They realized that each infringement of their opponents' means of expression was at the same time a recognition of the weakness of the proletarian camp, and, as such, a step backwards.

The Bolsheviks' defense of working-class democracy throughout 1917 was not a matter of tactics. On the contrary, it was one of the fundamental aspects of their politics. For revolutionary socialists worthy of the name, the socialist revolution cannot be conceived of without working-class democracy.

The socialist revolution is not the seizure of power by the revolutionary party. It is the seizure of power by the working class. And this class can only learn to discern its own interests, deal with its own affairs and prepare to manage the whole of society within the framework of working-class democracy.

And working-class democracy does not mean freedom of expression just for the revolutionary party and those who agree with it. It means and must mean freedom of expression for all trends in the working-class movement. This includes those which reflect the pressure of bourgeois ideology in the working class and those who «objectively» defend the interests of the bourgeoisie. And it is not the role of a party or a trend of the working-class movement to distribute vouchers granting the right to speak. It is up to the working class to choose amongst all the existing tendencies those in which it will place its trust.

If an organization begins to want to limit the means of expression of other trends in the working-class movement, that is to say the rights of the working class, then it cannot just be excused as a revolutionary organization which has fallen into error. It may want to do this simply because opposing trends are «objectively» playing into the hands of the reactionary forces, as the Stalinists might put it. But such an organization is not a revolutionary one and defends interests other than those of the working class. And this is indeed the case of the Portuguese Communist Party.

The political situation in Portugal necessitated a particularly strict respect for these principles. This is because of the extreme importance of the working-class vanguard's task here. They had to win over to their politics the country's working class and all its working people.

Nowadays the leftist milieu is talking a lot about the Portuguese «revolution.» But we must get the meaning of words clear, if we do not want to live on illusions. Taking the definition given by the dictionary, one can say the putsch of 25 April was a revolution. The dictionary defines any brutal upheaval as a revolution. But by a Marxist definition, it could certainly not be called a revolution. In Portugal, not only are we most certainly not on the eve of October 1917, but February has not even taken place. Caetano's dictatorship was not overthrown by the working population. It was a military putsch. This obviously does not have the same significance and does not lead to the same result.

The urban population enthusiastically welcomed the fall of the detested dictatorship. The 1974 May Day demonstrations proved this. The rural population was far more discreet, especially the small land-owners in the Northern regions. But even if the Portuguese peasantry had demonstrated the same enthusiasm as the urban working class, this would not have proved that the working people of Portugal was ready to take the road toward socialist revolution.

Two things are needed for a revolutionary crisis to take place. On the one hand, the ruling classes must be incapable of governing. On the other, the oppressed people must become aware of the need to transform the existing social order and to take their destiny into their own hands. Bourgeois power is definitely in a crisis in Portugal. This crisis has afforded a great opportunity for the working class to come to awareness and get organized. But the majority of the working people are certainly not envisaging to solve this power crisis by seizing power themselves.

In Russia in February 1917 it was the urban working class, supported by the peasants in uniform, who overthrew Czarism. This conscious entry of workers onto the political scene did not immediately disperse all reformist illusions. But overnight it created a whole network of soviets, workers' councils, and organs of power of the masses which were a direct challenge to the bourgeois government.

In Portugal it was the army which overthrew Caetano's regime. This fact has helped to mask the role of this army—at least in the beginning. It has also helped to sow illusions about the officers of the AFM, by making them appear to the workers as their defenders. The politics and the divi-

sions within the AFM tend to discredit the latter. Here and there workers' committees organized by vanguard militants are appearing. But these are only embryonic forms of organization which the majority of the working class is still a long way away from recognizing.

A revolutionary party with a lucid analysis of this situation would have taken particular care to forge the unity of the working class as well as the unity between the working class and all working people. This would have been done by defending a program corresponding to the interests of working people as a whole.

The collapse of the Salazar-Caetano regime and the subsequent power crisis have perhaps made it possible for a socialist revolution to happen in the future. But this possibility will only become a reality if the working class vanguard has the right politics. It will only become so if this vanguard does not oppose the majority of the workers influenced by Soares but is able to win their sympathy and trust. To do so, it must be the most uncompromising defender of the rights of all the workers and of all the organizations of the working class. In a word, it must cement the united front of all trends in the working class movement in the fight against the reactionary forces and in the defense of working-class freedom.

For the socialist revolution to be possible, it is necessary for the working class to win the sympathy of the peasantry, including the small landowners in the North. It must also win over the urban petty bourgeoisie. For the socialist revolution cannot be made against the wishes of the majority of a people. And to win their sympathy, it would have been necessary to defend a program taking into account the problems and the interests of these small farmers and petty-bourgeois people. For example, this program should have included land reform, cheap loans to small landowning farmers, and the guarantee that they could buy the necessary equipment and fertilizers at a reasonable price. They should have been guaranteed a decent sale price for their crop and a tax system which would not crush small farmers, handicraftsmen, and shopkeepers. In other words, what was necessary was an entirely different politics to that consisting in an unmitigated support for the politics of the AFM. It was not the right politics to participate in the government and thus make it seem as though the politics of the AFM was that of the working class.

Obviously a revolutionary party would not have fulfilled its role either by an unconditional alignment on the AFM. This role consists not only in preparing the workers to exercise power, but also in arming them morally and politically—and this is even more important that materially—against any attempt by the army to put them back into line.

The Portuguese army has not changed its class nature because it overthrew Caetano's dictatorship. This has not transformed its officers, who got their training in the colonial wars, from the slaughterers of the peoples of Angola and Mozambique into loyal defenders of the working classes. The Portuguese army has fundamentally remained the same: a tool of the bourgeoisie. The change merely resides in the fact that in the last years of the dictatorship, a trend formed itself within the ranks of the army, among the young officers, whose aim was to modernize the country both economically and politically. They were prepared, if need be, to use radical means; but this raised a number of problems. And as we have seen in recent months, it has also created a lot of disagreement within the ranks of the officers themselves. And nothing is changed by the fact that these last few months political trends representing aspirations different to those of the officers have appeared inside the army at rank and file level. The class nature of the army remains the same even though at the present time it is today practically incapable of playing a repressive role.

There is no reason why the Portuguese working class should oppose the destruction of the last vestiges of feudalism, the establishment of civil liberties, and the attempt to shake off underdevelopment. It would have been stupid for a revolutionary party just to condemn the bourgeois nature of the AFM.

In order to combat the illusions the workers have about the AFM, it would have been necessary to defend the policy of a united front. This would have included support for all measures defending the interests of working people, for example land reform and the nationalization of the banks. It would also have included the firm condemning of all steps taken against working people, such as limits on the right to strike.

Far from adopting such a policy, the Portuguese Communist Party rode on the coattails of the AFM for months—not from deep political conviction, but merely because it regarded the AFM as the only guarantee of Communist participation in the government.

It was the AFM which enabled the Portuguese Communist Party to switch so suddenly from clandestinity to a position in the government in April 1974, and to play a more important part in Portugal's political life than should have been the case according to its numerical influence. The reason for this is that the AFM, which needed the backing of the working class in order to carry out its development project, could only gain it through the Communist Party's support on account of its influence on the more combative workers. The AFM's officers had realized that the important point was not the number of votes the CP might get in an election, but its influence on the working class, that is, on the class which controlled the production apparatus. We cannot but thoroughly agree with the AFM on this point . . .

But because it was coming to power after half a century of clandestinity, the Portuguese Communist Party had little in common with the French CP, for instance, or the Italian CP, both of which have for long been actively engaged in class collaboration. Although they had been trained along the same Stalinist lines, the leaders of the Portuguese Communist Party had not been selected because of their local government activities, in union apparatuses protected by the law, or in the parliamentary system. On the contrary, they had been selected by years of clandestine struggle in the face of severe repression. Moreover those leaders turned out not to be numerous enough to cope with the considerable flow of working-class militants who joined the CP after April 1974.

These specific characteristics of the Portuguese Communist Party may well explain—at least partly—its specific sensitiveness to criticisms and pressures coming from its left. Thus in the very first weeks which followed Caetano's fall, the CP turned out to be leading a number of actions supporting workers' demands, whereas, logically, its participation in the government should have required its preventing the strikes from spreading. Such a sensitiveness on its left led the Portuguese Communist Party to conceal its opportunism toward the AFM behind a leftist façade.

As regards those leftist sectarian stands, it is hard to tell which were rank and file initiatives taken up by the leaders and which were deliberate moves on their part. For instance, Cunhal would apparently rather have done without the Republica affair, which served as a starting point for the Socialists' campaign. Still, at the beginning of July 1975, the Portuguese Communist Party launched an extremely aggressive policy against the Socialist Party and attempted to prevent Socialist-led demonstrations. Such a policy is not unlike that of social-fascism adopted by several CP's, and in particular by the German CP, in the early thirties, at a time when Stalin's followers proclaimed that social-democracy was more of a danger for the working class than fascism.

The Communist Party was the only real party under the dictatorship. After Caetano's fall, it was the only one to have trained militants and cadres. It thus occupied a number of posts which did not necessarily reflect its true influence in the unions, the municipalities, and the administration. Today, the Socialist Party would like to do away with this state of affairs. Another reason for the hostility of Socialist militants toward the Communists is that the Communist Party established its militants using the traditional methods of Stalinism.

The Communist Party was approaching the problem of power with its own methods, that is by trying to infiltrate as much as possible the state apparatus set up by the AFM. But the Socialist Party had precisely the same aims in mind. To the SP, this meant fighting for a parliamentary regime which would entitle it to a number of ministerial jobs proportional to its electoral influence.

The political crisis that Portugal experienced last summer is far from over as can be gathered from the statements made by the leaders of the Communist Party and the leaders of the Socialist Party concerning Azevedo's sending the army, and then the police, to occupy the radio stations. This crisis was in fact the outcome of the struggle between the Socialist Party, trying to isolate a right-wing movement within the AFM—and finally succeeding in doing so—, and the radical wing of the AFM, supported by the Communist Party. It was a struggle between two conceptions of what would be the best regime for the Portuguese bourgeoisie, but it also was a bitter struggle for power.

All this merely shows that reformists are fearful only where it concerns the proletarian revolution : they then pretend to be pacifists and conciliators, in order to disarm it more efficiently. But when the question is whether they will be in power to take care of the interests of the bourgeoisie, they are quite capable of fighting one another doggedly and violently; they will even run the risk of putting into action reactionary social forces that might sweep them off the political scene. Both the policy of the Communist Party, tying the working class to the AFM, and that of the Socialist Party, which allowed the right to raise its head again, may well have doomed the future of democracy.

The danger is certainly not an immediate one. The possibility of a reactionary coup —such as the one which took place in Chile a couple of years ago—is not very likely. The army is too divided, the soldiers are too politicized, too much on the watch for any general to seriously envisage cracking down on the working class and seizing power, with any chance of success, at least in the present situation.

The Portuguese army is unlikely to be a good repressive force. Some of its captains have deserted, like captain Fernandes, taking away 1,000 automatic rifles which he claimed to have distributed to «the revolutionary vanguard of the Portuguese working class.» In the past few days, the soldiers have demonstrated several times, chanting «ban the reactionaries from the barracks» and «soldiers are on the side of the people.» Those willing to use it in repressive tasks would first have to crack down on it. Azevedo has just been made aware of it : the troops he had sent to take control of the radio stations occupied by their staff, fraternized with the workers. He had to send them back to their barracks and send the police, a more reliable force.

Restoring discipline inside the armed forces is an official aim in the Azevedo government's program; and this government includes members of the Socialist and Communist parties. But it obviously is a long-term task. If the various trends presently at loggerheads inside the AFM cannot but be favorable to such a measure, because the present situation is simply impossible for any bourgeois army, their dissensions and their rivalries will slow down the process. For whoever regains control of the army might seize power as well and thus get rid of his rivals.

The situation gives the working class a respite. But it is vital that this respite be thoroughly exploited by the vanguard of the working class. This vanguard undoubtedly does exist—although not as a single revolutionary party as yet. The contradictions in the policy of the Communist Party, which associate the traditional race for ministerial jobs and some leftist stands, are a proof of its existence. They show that Portugal's extreme left does have an influence today, however restricted.

That a section of the working class and the soldiers do not feel they are represented by the framework set up by the Socialist and the Communist Parties has been made clear in a number of demonstrations since 20 August; the most recent one being the lightning mobilization which took place when Azevedo decided to have the radio stations occupied. This section of the population may not be very numerous, but it cannot be overlooked. It is moreover the task of the extreme-left revolutionaries to win it over to a correct policy.

But the attitude to be adopted by the extreme left should not aim to urge the Communist Party to take such or such a leftist step; nor should it consist in signing with the CP texts which boil down to backing its policies, as was the case a few weeks ago. The issue at stake is for the extreme left to turn its back on leftism and opportunism in order to support an autonomous policy of the working class with regard to the various trends of the radical petty bourgeoisie. This does not amount to a sectarian policy, but on the contrary to a policy of united front with the Socialist and Communist Parties and their militants, as imposed by the present situation in Portugal. This is also the only policy which at the same time makes it possible to prepare the working class for the issues to come and open up the prospect of the building of a genuine revolutionary party.

In view of this, a heavy responsibility lies on the shoulders of Trotskyist militants in Portugal; as it is clear that such a party can only be built on the basis of the Trotskyist program. No doubt a lot, if not everything, remains to be done. But the Portuguese working class has learnt a lot in the past few months. Events and life are a vast school, and things could evolve very fast.

The world bourgeoisie may well soon have to realize that the most ferocious of dictatorships cannot be a remedy for proletarian revolution, for dictatorships get worn out, dictators die and succession crises do not always show up the expected winner. Caetano's neighbor, Franco the Executioner, certainly understood this very well: he is trying to stave fate off while still alive, with series of death sentences.

But all this is of no avail. Repression may be stepped up, torrents of blood may be shed, thousands of men may be killed, you cannot kill revolution. «I was, I am, I will be,» such were the words Rosa Luxembourg wrote about revolution a few days before she was assassinated. Indeed, tomorrow in Portugal, perhaps, or in Spain, or elsewhere in the world, the revolution will be victorious.

THE OCI, THE LIGUE COMMUNISTE, AND PORTUGAL

The following article appeared in issue No. 31, October 1975, of *Class Struggle,* a French-English bilingual magazine published by Lutte Ouvrière.

The events in Portugal represent a major issue from the point of view of the proletariat. All the extreme-left organizations in France, including the Trotskyist organizations—which interest us here—are giving their analysis of the situation in Portugal and are trying to define policies for the working class.

Policies set down by organizations acting in France of course do not influence the course of events in Portugal. But they do indicate the policies these organizations would carry out in France in the event of a resurgence of working-class militancy. It is for this reason that it seems to us necessary to discuss certain aspects of the policies of two of the main organizations which, like us, call themselves Trotskyist; namely, the Ligue Communiste and the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI).

A REVOLUTIONARY SITUATION ?

In the July 23 issue of *Informations Ouvrières,* the OCI boasts of having been the only one to recognize the fact that «on the 25th of April 1974 the proletarian revolution began in Portugal.» This is not just a statement «for the record» since, in the same issue, *Informations Ouvrières* talks about the 25th of April 1974 in these terms :

The Caetano-Salazar dictatorship collapsed under the double strain of the coup d'état organized by the military and the mass activity in the working class which took upon itself, a few hours after the coup d'état broke out, the destruction of the Salazarist-corporatist institutions of the bourgeois state. By destroying the corporatist institutions, which was not at all a goal of the military, the workers dismantled the bourgeois state apparatus and brought about the beginning of the proletarian revolution in Portugal.

According to the OCI, the mass movement itself was not a result of the AFM's coup d'état; but conversely, the coup d'état was the Portuguese bourgeoisie's last desperate attempt to contain the working-class movement.

Obviously this was putting the cart before the horse and considering accomplished what still remained to be achieved. After the 25th of April, not only was the working class not ready to dismantle the state apparatus. It was putting all its faith in one of the main pillars of that state apparatus, the army. It was even generous enough to put its faith in men like Spinola, who had occupied top positions at the head of the Salazarist state.

The Ligue Communiste's interpretation of 25 April 1974 was more careful in the sense that it did give the credit for Caetano's overthrow to the AFM. But this did not prevent it from talking of the «February» of the Portuguese workers, and of the «destruction of the fascist state apparatus in the strict sense of the term» which was «above all due to the initiative of the masses and the working class» (LCR declaration of June 1974).

The discussion on this question is not merely an academic one. Revolutionary policies are those which consist in putting forward and defending objectives which correspond of the level of consciousness and maturity of the proletariat. These objectives must be such that workers feel it necessary to struggle to achieve them. And in struggling to achieve them they raise their own level of political awareness. Having illusions about the role and the actual intervention of the working class; or granting the working class a degree of awareness and organization above its real level; or fixing objectives which do not correspond to its actual level of maturity—all this does not speed up but retards the process of political awareness.

How could it have been possible to put forward a correct political line on the basis of the idea that the working class had already destroyed the state apparatus, when in fact it had many illusions about one of the essential elements making up the state apparatus—the army?

It is necessary to say a few words here about the LCR and OCI positions on this question. For not only would their positions have been unable to enlighten the working class about the role of the state apparatus, but on the contrary would have reinforced these illusions.

At the time, they both put forward the idea of a «purge» of the state apparatus. Of course they did not talk about the state apparatus in general—Marxism *oblige*—but about the army, i.e., one of the parts making up this state apparatus.

A year ago, the 4 October 1974 issue of *Rouge* put forward as one of the essential objectives for an anti-fascist front «a complete purge within the armed forces of right-wing reactionary elements, Spinolists, and anti-communists—which are a potential reserve for a fascist putsch.» This was to prevent Portugal from becoming another Chile.

It was indeed necessary to set down policies on the radical petty-bourgeois current within the army that the AFM represented in its initial stages. And to support those AFM objectives that corresponded to the aspirations of workers and peasants. But it was wrong to propose as an objective to workers the purging of all or part of the state apparatus. This was spreading serious illusions. The bourgeois state cannot be purged, neither totally nor in its constituent elements. It must be destroyed. As long as it remains in place, under whatever form, the danger of a Chile-type coup d'état remains ever-present. The working class could never obtain a good bourgeois army by purging the army of its bad elements.

These policies of the Ligue and the OCI, which were likely to foster illusions about the army and therefore the bourgeois state went hand in hand with a lack of a political line on the AFM. That is, a political line taking into account the hopes raised among the working masses by the objectives that the AFM set itself.

The OCI simply stated that the AFM's power was in fact a military dictatorship—which was basically incontestable—and considered that the question was settled by this general statement. It was then a natural conclusion that everything coming from the military was bad.

But apparently the OCI never thought to ask itself how workers could understand a political interpretation that put an «equal» sign between two opposed currents within the army. On the one hand, those who said they were in favor of democratic changes in the country and who had called the two major working-class parties into the government. And on the other hand the reactionary current.

In the Portuguese army, and within the officer corps divided by different political currents, the AFM represented—at least initially—a petty-bourgeois radical current which had bourgeois democratic objectives corresponding to the aspirations of broad sections of the population. Objectively speaking, this current of opinion could not completely fulfil its own aims, for reasons linked to its social nature. It could not avoid betraying its own ideals in one way or another. The workers' and farmers' hopes for the AFM were founded on illusions.

But the working class could not overcome its illusions without going through an experience of its own. Work needed to be done in this direction. It was necessary to support those aims of the AFM which corresponded to the hopes of the working masses. The working class should have been mobilized around these aims so that workers could realize from their own experience the contradiction between the aims put forward by the AFM and what it really did in practice.

In a period when vast sections of the population put their faith in the AFM because it proposed to fulfil aims corresponding to their hopes, to oppose the AFM's policies as a whole would have been to cut all ties with the masses.

Those AFM objectives that were justifiable, for example land reform, should have been supported. It should have been stated loud and clear that whenever the AFM takes another step toward satisfying democratic claims, it has workers' support against reactionary forces. But at the same time it should have been made clear that the best way to bring about the fulfilment of these aims was that workers and poor farmers organize themselves to make sure these demands were met, in spite of all those who put obstacles in the way. With the AFM if the AFM was willing, otherwise, independently.

A united front policy like this, a support for certain aspects of the AFM's policies along these lines, and this sort of solidarity against reactionary forces are in no way contradictory with the need to help workers lose their illusions about the AFM. It is the only way to bring this about.

SOCIALIST PARTY, COMMUNIST PARTY AND UNITED FRONT

One of the main dangers in the present situation in Portugal is that the vanguard of the working class and its most advanced sections might cut themselves off from the large mass of workers. For a revolutionary organization to fix political objectives according to the ideas of the most advanced minority would be irresponsible adventurism. And it would be the same thing to urge this minority into confrontations which the majority of workers would simply look at without flinching, or even with hostility toward their comrades.

A political line must be set down which corresponds to the hopes of Socialist and Communist workers. Appropriate aims must be proposed to the Socialist Party and the Communist Party and all working-class organizations. This is the basis of a United Front policy.

The OCI and the Ligue both say they are in favor of such a policy. But what is there behind these declarations of principle ?

The United Front policy is the only one which responds to the necessities of the situation, which demands that the working class close its ranks to defend its gains and prepare its solutions. Agitation around this policy is also the best way to show workers that if the major working-class parties, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party, do not agree (between themselves), and that if they devote a large part of their activities to fighting one another, it is not because one of them is defending workers' interests and the other not. It is in fact because each of them is defending a different variation of bourgeois solutions to the present crisis of power.

Of course this means that revolutionary organizations must refuse to enter the two parties' game and to approve one's policies rather than the other's. It is true that a certain distinction can be made in the composition and the following of the two parties. It can be said for example that the Communist Party has a wider following in the most active vanguard of the working class, while the Socialist Party has a wider audience, taking in as well sectors of backward workers who are less politically conscious. But the policies of the leaderships of both parties are equally criminal.

To very differing degrees —and this difference must be stressed—the Ligue and the OCI both speak in favor of one of the two parties. The Ligue's preference for the Communist Party is very subtle and reveals itself above all in the greater vigor of its attacks on the Socialist Party. The «*Republica* affair» is significant in this respect. But the Ligue's first reaction was to make its position clear on the anti-Communist campaign begun by the Socialist Party over the affair. But it did not say a word about the position clear with the same rigor on the essence of the problem. Nor did it make its profound danger to the revolutionary process presented by attacks against workers' democracy and against complete freedom of expression and reunion within the working class. The Communist Party had made itself the champion of these attacks.

The Ligue defined its position in the end and took a stand against the occupation of *Republica.*

On the other hand, revolutionaries must struggle against Stalinists who oppose the existence of tendencies within the union

organization, even if the Socialist Party leads the same struggle for entirely different reasons. It is obviously not the role of revolutionaries to endorse in any way the Communist Party's policy on union organization. This means also that revolutionaries will not recognize the trade union federation which is a directing body set up by the Communist Party to exert power over all the union organizations, but which was never elected by anyone and of course is not revocable.

In the case of the OCI, we see a deliberate policy of undisguised, shameless support of the Socialist Party. To a reader who charged *Informations Ouvrières* with «identifying Soares with the revolution,» *Informations Ouvrières* replied:

To observe that the radicalization of the masses is taking place via the Socialist Party does not mean adopting the program or the policies of the Portuguese Socialist Party leadership. But it would be blindness not to see that the Portuguese Socialist Party today is engaged in a struggle over the burning issues of the revolution; a struggle which corresponds to the basic interests of the proletariat (workers' democracy in the unions, municipal elections, respect of the constituent assembly, freedom of the press etc.) (*Informations Ouvrières*, 10 September.)

This minor verbal reservation is meaningless in the light of what follows . . .

We will come back later to the OCI's support for the Socialist Party on the essential point, i.e., on the struggle for a bourgeois parliament. At least the OCI does not even cover up ambiguities in this matter. It declared during its Paris meeting:

For reasons of its own, the Social-Democrats are trying to restore the framework of parliamentary bourgeois democracy, and by so doing are opening up possibilities for the proletariat.

The OCI's support for the Socialist Party covers all domains. During the *Republica* affair, the OCI was right to take a stand on the PCP's and Portuguese leftists' attitude to workers' democracy. But it did not back up this stand by dissociating itself from the anti-Communist campaign launched by the Socialist Party at the time. On the contrary, it associated itself with the campaign, and in fact made this its hobby-horse for weeks.

To say that the OCI supports the Socialist Party in its quarrel with the Communist Party is an understatement. Its support is unconditional.

It gives the Socialist Party awards, it justifies its policies in main orientations as well as in most of its concrete positions.

The masses voted for the Socialist Party because the Communist Party breaks strikes. The masses voted for the Socialist Party against the Communist Party, a direct agent of the counter-revolution!

This is how the OCI analyses the election results.

In the same way, and without the slightest hint of criticism of the Socialist Party's motives, the OCI applauded the departure of Socialist ministers from the Gonçalves government as «a correct action from the point of view of the workers' interests.» But it was more discreet about the same Socialist Party's return to the Azevedo government . . .

Coat-tailing the Socialist Party in such a shameless way obviously has nothing revolutionary about it. It does nothing to educate workers and in no way helps the Socialist Party's working-class base to understand that its leadership's policies are reactionary. In fact, there lies the problem. For the OCI, Soares's policies are not reactionary. They objectively «correspond to the interests of the working class.»

It is obvious too that if an organization which calls itself revolutionary expresses such admiration for Soares, then its stand in favor of the United Front—even if this has been one of its hobbies for a long time—is a hollow one.

What Communist Party militant would want to get involved in a United Front organized on the basis of Socialist Party positions?

THE UNITED FRONT AND ITS PROGRAM

In the resolution which it adopted on 30 and 31 August, the Ligue Communiste made the following statement about its United Front program:

For the United Front, it is indispensable to center its activities around a campaign of agitation, propaganda, and concrete measures aimed at calling upon militants and leaders of the major traditional workers' parties—Socialist Party and Portuguese Communist Party—to work toward the construction and centralization of emerging forms of workers' power. In these bodies, Socialist, Communist, revolutionary, and non-affiliated workers are already defending their conquests and organizing their own self-defense in liaison with the barracks. They are taking on more and more of the functions of workers' control and administration by the people. These functions stem from a primitive form of state power.

It is true that the perspective of the United Front is the seizing of power by the proletariat, through organizations representing the working class as a whole and despite the diversity of currents existing within it. Every concrete proposal by the United Front must be conditioned by this prospect, and must further workers' awareness and understanding of the necessity of taking power. But these proposals must take into account the level of awareness already reached by the working class.

In the above paragraph, the Ligue puts forward, as a concrete basis of the United Front, the adoption of revolutionary policies by the other workers' organizations—including the major reformist parties. This is simply being in reality against the United Front while proclaiming the necessity for it.

Of course it is possible, by means of a modified United Front policy, to make the reformist organizations go much further than they would like to. This is after all one of the main aims of the United Front. Except that it is impossible to convince these reformist organizations by correct ideas. They can only be pushed along, by putting forward policies that seem correct to their rank and file, i.e., to the majority of Socialist and Communist workers. This is why we must know what we are putting forward as concrete proposals. The necessity for a «centralization of the emerging forms of workers' power» is certainly not admitted by a crushing majority of the working class, who look toward the constituent assembly, the parties, and the AFM.

Proposing that committees be centralized in the form of «emerging forms of workers' power,» when workers are still far from being represented on these committees even at a local level, is not really working effectively toward such a centralization. Either it is empty rhetoric or, if the proposal is followed up, the centralization would be completely artificial. If the mass of workers cannot exert pressure and control over them, these «centralizing bodies» would be simply closed-off areas for confrontations between the groups taking part. At least until such time as each group considers it preferable to create its own «coordination center,» in competition with its neighbour's.

Of course this does not mean that it is not correct and indispensable to try and reinforce and centralize these «emerging

organs of power,» and attempt to show workers that therein lies the foundation of workers' political power. But this is simply revolutionary organizations' propaganda and policies. The work still has to be done. It is once again putting the cart before the horse to presume that the idea is so firmly implanted in workers' heads that they will impose it on reformist organizations which as we know full well, are hostile to it.

Tomorrow, the reformist and Stalinist parties will no doubt be inside those Workers' Councils, whereas today they are against their creation. This is in the nature of things. In 1918, the reformist, chauvinist German Social-Democrat Party hurried in to occupy the first seats in the Workers' Councils. But at least these councils must exist ! At least workers must understand the necessity for them. It is precisely because the Portuguese working class, despite the rapid rise in its level of awareness, has not yet reached this point, that it is incorrect to talk of a revolutionary situation.

For this reason, proposals for a United Front, which can from now on be imposed on the reformist organizations, must include steps in this direction. For example, it is completely justified to put forward as one of the objectives of the United Front the defense of all forms of workers' democracy. This includes the defense of workers committees. Above all such committees should multiply at present, and gather as many workers as possible. It is equally justified to propose that these committees have the means to defend themselves. And that they be able to organize around them, under their control, workers' militias based on factories and localities.

The defense of workers' living conditions, the sliding scale of wages, and the refusal of unemployment by the sharing out of work, are also completely justified claims in the eyes of all workers. It is also justified and necessary to propose to farmers that they fight together for the satisfaction of a number of their fundamental claims, in such a way that they are led away from the influence of the church. It is justified and necessary as well for workers' organizations to arm the working class against a coup d'état from wherever it may come.

All these points and many others can form the basis of concrete proposals for a United Front because they correspond to the workers' level of consciousness.

THE QUESTION OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

After fifty years of dictatorship, the desire for democracy and civil liberties is deeply embedded in the consciousness of the working class. At the present level of consciousness of the majority of the Portuguese proletariat these civil liberties are concretely represented by the Constituent Assembly. It is wishful thinking to believe that the Portuguese revolution has reached a degree of maturity enabling it to skip the parliamentary phase. It is all the more ridiculous since the working class has not even yet doted itself with bodies which could become the future organs of its state power. And even if workers councils already existed, this would still not solve the question of the Constituent Assembly. For even if the great majority of the working class were represented in soviet-type bodies, this would not necessarily be the case for the peasantry. We know only too well that things have developed much more slowly in the country. The working class must not disregard the rural population's democratic aspirations which, for the present, are represented by the Constituent Assembly.

But we have not even got that far yet. A large part of the working class itself is looking toward the Constituent Assembly. The Socialist Party is reflecting real desires, including desires of workers, when it defends the rights of the Constituent Assembly. This brings it into conflict with the AFM and the Communist Party. So it is perfectly stupid to call for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, as do certain Maoist groups. And it is also wrong to refuse to defend the Constituent Assembly, as does the Ligue in the above mentioned resolution of 30–31 August.

It goes without saying that the revolutionaries will fight any attempt by reactionary forces to forcibly remove the Constituent Assembly. And as long as quite a number of workers and the majority of the peasantry place their hopes in this institution, the revolutionaries will obviously never fight against it, even if it be «a dying structure of the bourgeois state in ruins» (as the Ligue so aptly put it).

What must be done in this case is to demonstrate in concrete terms and through everyday experiences what the Constituent Assembly actually is.

The OCI, however, takes a totally electoralist stance with respect to the Constituent Assembly. They see it as the expression of the peoples' sovereignty and adopt the most outdated electoralist slogans. What is worse, they try to find a place for Trotsky in all this. They keep on saying that Trotsky never said that bourgeois democratic slogans and those of the proletarian revolution were in opposition to one another.

This is true. Trotsky never did. There are times when the revolutionary proletariat must adopt bourgeois democratic slogans. But one of the reasons for this is to beat the bourgeois liberal and reformist organizations on their own ground. The aim is to show that to put these democratic slogans into effect would require the organization and decisive action of the workers—and this is precisely what all these bourgeois liberals and reformists do *not* want to see.

Yes, we are in favor of a Constituent Assembly. But what we have to show is that the Socialist Party's flirting with the PPD and reactionary forces will lead to the burial of the Constituent Assembly. We should not be supporting the Socialist Party and proclaiming that we are doing so because the Socialist Party is for the Constituent Assembly !

We have to show those workers and peasants who trust the rules of bourgeois democracy that only by being organized and armed can they conquer and safeguard these rules. «Workers and peasants, if you want representative organizations, if you want your votes to be respected, then get organized and get armed.» Only such language can lead the working class from the parliamentary stage to the stage where it can do without a parliament. Only such language can prevent the peasants from considering the workers as enemies who stand in the way of their democratic aspirations. These are the words which will prevent the peasants from supporting the reactionary parties which are now saying that they are staunch supporters of the Constituent Assembly.

A GOVERNMENT OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The consummation of the OCI's political stance is, as summarized in the 10 September issue of *Informations Ouvrières:*

A Socialist Party-Communist Party government without bourgeois ministers or members of the AFM, presided by Mario Soares. This would be the easiest road for working people to follow. They would expect such a government to satisfy their legitimate demands.

A policy of demanding the major parties of the working class to take the head of a system of workers committees would have a lot of sense—if such committees did exist throughout the whole country and if the majority of the working class was represented in them. Because this would force such parties to show that they have no desire to or are incapable of exercising power in the name of the working class.

But demanding that these parties exercise power at the head of a state which, with or without the PPD, would be a bourgeois state, is the game of a mediator—and a paltry one at that. This is because the Socialist Party and the Communist Party have no need of a mediator to serve the bourgeoisie at the head of its state.

And who would ensure that this government «satisfies the legitimate demands» of the workers? To this, the OCI replies in all its wisdom: the Constituent Assembly «the expression of the people's sovéreignty.» If «parliamentary cretinism» means anything, then it means just that !

As for the Ligue, they reject the slogan «a government of the Communist Party and the Socialist Party,» in particular in their resolution of 30–31 August. But in the same text—and this idea comes back more than once, so it cannot merely be that it is poorly expressed, the Ligue talks of

. . . a propaganda campaign in favor of a workers' government—at this stage a government of the working-class organizations because the centralization of the organs of workers' power has not yet been achieved—which satisfies immediately the demands of the workers, the peasants, and the people, which is supported by the workers' committees, the moradores commissions and people's assemblies, and which is responsible to them for carrying out a program of anti-capitalist measures . . .

A propaganda campaign demonstrating the need for a workers' government is of course indispensable . . . But what then does «at this stage, the workers' government would be a government of the working-class organizations» mean? Such a government at the present time would be a Communist Party-Socialist Party government. Of course, the Ligue adds that such a government would be responsible to the committees. But this does not mean much, precisely because «the centralization of the organs of workers' power» has not been achieved, and precisely because these committees are not yet representative of the working class !

Under these circumstances what meaning can a Communist Party-Socialist Party government have, taking into consideration the present level of consciousness of the majority of the workers? Can it mean that these two parties should eliminate the AFM and govern alone? How could they do so? And supported by whom?

«At this stage» the working class has not yet doted itself with the means of keeping watch over the political power. And most of the working class is not yet aware of the need to do so. So, «at this stage» a Communist Party-Socialist Party government, supposing it were possible, would not be a workers' government but a bourgeois government. Under the present circumstances, to demand a government of the working masses, boils down to one of two things : it is either an empty phrase unrelated to the real level of consciousness of the workers, or a shameful way in which to demand a Communist Party-Socialist Party government within the framework of a bourgeois parliamentary system.

Thus we can see that these problems demonstrate how abstract Trotskyist formulas can hide many different things. Though we use by and large the same vocabulary, important differences—even fundamental ones—separate our politics from that of the Ligue and the OCI.

FROM CUBA TO PORTUGAL: THE UNITED SECRETARIAT AND THE CLASSICAL MODEL OF THE REVOLUTION

The following article appeared in issue No. 31, October 1975, of *Class Struggle,* a French-English bilingual magazine published by Lutte Ouvrière.

An important discussion about the events in Portugal has been going on recently within the organization which calls itself the «United Secretariat of the Fourth International.» As far as we can know from what has been made public of this discussion, Ernest Mandel Pierre Frank, and Livio Maitan disagree with the leaders of the American Socialist Workers' Party.

In addition to the concrete questions raised about Portugal, those people who claim to be an international revolutionary leadership, are talking of nothing less than the role of the proletariat in the socialist revolution.

Frank, Maitan, and Mandel signed a long statement «In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution,» published in *Intercontinental Press* of 8 September 1975. *Intercontinental Press* is edited in the United States by Joseph Hansen, leader of the SWP. Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, themselves contributing editors of this weekly publication, severely condemn the positions put forward in this review on the question of Portugal.

In this issue of *Class Struggle,* we publish an analysis of the positions of the Ligue Communiste (French section of the Fourth International, United Secretariat). These are the positions held by Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, as opposed to those held by the SWP. The SWP is in favor of the systematic support of Mario Soares and the Socialist Party. This attitude is very close to that of the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste, a French Trotskyist group led by Pierre Lambert, and which we analyse too, in another article. So we will not deal here with the positions of these groups on Portugal. The point is more simply to consider the complete reversal of the position of the main leaders of the United Secretariat on Portugal.

Is the majority of the United Secretariat not breaking with its policies of the past thirty years, by putting the emphasis on the need for the working class to organize democratically and independently in types of workers' councils? Is it not a break with old policies to insist that the workers have to take power by themselves through such structures and to urge them not to trust the Armed Forces Movement nor any of its factions—however socialist or revolutionary some officers may sound? Is the majority of the United Secretariat not breaking for good with thirty years of past policies?

Of course, we can find piles of official statements by the leaders of the United Secretariat, recalling the necessity for the working class to be democratically organized in workers' councils and to seize and exercize power. But they were only words for speeches and Congress resolutions. Trotskyism *oblige.*

In reality, they have labelled the governments of Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, and Cuba as «workers' states,» though no workers' councils ever arose in those countries. Moreover, nowhere did the working class, as an independent force, take part in the setting up of those states. The United Secretariat successively supported (and more or less unconditionally) Tito, Mao Tze Tung, Castro, Ho Chi Minh . . . and quite a few more self-proclaimed socialist leaders and nationalist movements of the Third World. The United Secretariat never endeavoured to oppose such nationalists. They never attempted to organize the working class on an independent basis—or at least simply to put forward this principle. In fact, for thirty years, their policies have consisted in trying to influence the petty-bourgeois leaders and radical movements, instead of organizing the working class into an independent political force. Such policies turned into a caricature when Pablo—then the most glorious among the leaders and ideologists of the Fourth International—wrote to Castro a series of letters containing a mixture of flattery and political advice, or when he simply became a political adviser of Ben Bella, the Algerian dictator who preceeded Boumedienne.

The members of the United Secretariat are aware of the complete reversal of their position on Portugal. In their discussion with the SWP on this question, they felt the necessity to draw a parallel with what happened in Cuba.

How can you claim today that the proletarian revolution cannot succeed in Portugal so long as the working class, democratically organized in councils, has not taken power. How can you say that now, whereas yesterday you supported Castro unconditionally and decided that his regime had set up a workers' state in Cuba, without the working class organizing or expressing itself on an independent basis? How come the conditions claimed to be necessary in Portugal were negligeable in Cuba?

Frank, Maitan, and Mandel know it: this is an outright contradiction. Consequently they try to give an answer to it in advance. But they do not deal frankly with the question.

So how do they answer it? In a very simple way: by using the traditional explanation of opportunists to excuse their contradictions, that is, by claiming that the situation was not the same. This is how the world revolution has drifted from its way along «deformed» tracks.

Again and again we have insisted that the cases of Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam,

and Cuba would remain exceptional, that the detour of world revolution through the phenomenon of deformed revolutions would be temporary, that as the crisis of the world imperialist system continued to deepen and the worldwide relationship of forces continued to shift against the bourgeoisie it was only a question of time before the world revolution would again hit the imperialist countries, and that the more this occured the more the industrial proletariat would play the leading role in the revolutionary process both in the imperialist countries and in an increasing number of semicolonial countries, and the more the world revolutionary process would return to its «classical» pattern: the pattern of the self-organization of the toiling masses, the pattern of soviet democracy. We have further insisted that these «underformed» revolutions will be able to triumph only under revolutionary Marxist leaderships, through the emergence of genuine mass revolutionary parties of the working class.

The United Secretariat leaders take liberties with their own history. They claim that they have always said that such «deformed workers' states» would remain exceptional. Certainly, they have always said so, but in order to fit in with their own opportunistic practice based on the Trotskyist theory they stand for.

But they have always acted as if they expected such cases to turn up everywhere. For twenty-five years, the United Secretariat has supported all the movements affiliated to Mao, Castro, or Ho Chi Minh throughout the Third World. The best example is that of Latin America, where, for some years, the Fourth International had turned into an agency for Castroist propaganda: they would champion peasant guerilla warfare (though unable themselves to organize it and carry it), and raised Che Guevara to the rank of a great political leader. Everywhere, they tried to appear as the best and most faithful disciples of Castro. And now they say that they have always considered Cuba as an exception! What strange double-dealing! But where does it all start?

These revolutions were unable sufficiently (if at all) to act as stimulants for the international revolution, despite the fact that it was possible for them to act in such a way in the given world situation.

But at the time of the Tricontinental Conference in Cuba, or at the time of the famous declaration of La Havana, they told us that we were witnessing a major event and a major statement for the development of the revolution in Latin America and throughout the Third World—and even for the whole world. And as they saw it, the international preoccupations of Castro were a proof of the proletarian nature of the regime.

More recently they explained their support for the Vietnamese revolution in terms of the role that the latter was supposed to play as a stimulus for the world revolution. Our position was naturally to support the Vietnamese people because they were under the attacks of imperialism. Not because of the so-called proletarian nature of their revolution.

Mandel, Frank, and Maitan have a short memory and they are very bold in the choice of their arguments.

All revolutions in the twentieth century have given rise to unforeseen developments. Nobody had ever heard of soviets before they were created by the Russian revolution of 1905. (Similarities with the Paris Commune were discovered only later, after much discussion and experience.) Workers' control was a product of the revolution of 1917. The Spanish revolution of 1936 created committees of militias. Since the great defeats of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s (caused by reformism and Stalinism) unusual forms of proletarian revolutions have occured—a result of the combination of the inventiveness of the proletarian masses and the inadequacies of the subjective factor, that is, the lack of an adequate level of class consciousness and revolutionary leadership. This has given rise to a new phenomenon: deformed popular social revolutions, such as the Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions.

Soviets, workers' control, committees of militias were more or less developed forms of organization and power for the working class. The «deformed popular social revolutions» of Yugoslavia, China, Cuba, and Vietnam are noteworthy examples of the total absence of any kind of working-class organization or power. They are, in fact, quite the opposite of this.

But Frank, Mandel, and Maitan are not particularly worried about that: the victorious revolutions of China, Cuba, and Yugoslavia are a negation of all forms of working-class organization and power. But revolutions have always given rise to «unforeseen developments.» Therefore we are faced with a new form of proletarian revolution. This specious reasoning is typical of Mandel's writings.

The United Secretariat leaders squarely base their arguments on such commonplaces as «there is a little bit of the unforeseen in every new event,» or «history makes a lot of detours,» and carefully avoid the analysis of the social nature of the revolution, that is, the exact role played by the working class. They have no trouble saying one thing about Portugal and the opposite about Cuba. Circumstances have changed, that is all!

Their present politics concerning Portugal is very close in many regards to that of revolutionary Marxists, regardless of the numerous criticisms—minor and major ones—which could be made of them. Nevertheless, their present attitude is spoiled by the positions they maintain in regard to Cuba, Yugoslavia, China, and Vietnam, and the excuses they still give for having abandoned (in fact if not in words) genuine proletarian politics for such a long period.

It shows that they are not moved by the belief in a deep-rooted principle when they put forward such policies for Portugal. It shows also that it is not because they basically acknowledge that the proletariat, organized on a democratic basis, is the only class able to carry out the socialist revolution.

It is only a matter of circumstances that today they now find themselves in agreement with the main lines of a genuine working-class policy. And this carries no guarantee for the future. For circumstances may change, and once again so will the policies of Frank, Mandel, and Maitan.

Having analyzed the situation in Portugal, and in particular the situation within the army, they say:

It is therefore overwhelmingly likely that the Portuguese revolution will follow the classical pattern and will triumph only through the conquest of power by the proletariat organized in soviets and led by revolutionary Marxists and not at all through the leadership of the MFA.

In this statement, the leaders of the United Secretariat display the limits and the fragility of their present conclusions. And the way they bring up the question of the Portuguese revolution shows that they would not reject the idea that the Portuguese revolution might be victorious under the leadership of the AFM, given that today it is only «more than likely» that it will not be so. Would it not be sufficient, for instance, that the situation changes in the country or in the army?

At the present time, in their discussion with the SWP, they are emphasizing the following:

The problem at issue is to assure the maximum of autonomous democratic self-organization and self-defense of the proletariat for that future test of strength.

Because they are now faced with the example of Portugal, this organization has come around to discovering the need for an independent policy for the working class. And this observation is obviously painful, as is borne out by all this discussion. For thirty years, nowhere in the world have they acted consistently, on the basis of an independent revolutionary policy. And this is not because they have lacked the means, but because they have thrown in the towel. And this organization claims to be an International, that is an international revolutionary leadership for the working class ! They group together and influence thousands, maybe tens of thousands of militants throughout the world. In the eyes of the world revolutionary left, they are the official affiliation with Trotsky's Fourth International. They have means and facilities which no other Trotskyist grouping enjoys. And the balance-sheet of the past thirty years shows that in no country have they been able to set up a leadership representing the interests of the proletariat in opposition to the petty-bourgeois leaderships And this was due to their refusal to do so. It was due to a political choice they had made.

And today this organization keeps on whitewashing, ratifying, and theorizing their renunciations of the past thirty years, while claiming the need for an independent proletarian politics. Obviously this means that their present position is only the result of circumstances. This means that in the event of a revolutionary upsurge in any country in the world, this organization gives no guarantee that it would really put forward an independent revolutionary policy for the proletariat. There is no guarantee that it would not—as it has always done—coattail other social forces: students, peasants, all sorts of petty-bourgeois elements, Communist Parties of a kind and «red» or «radical» armies.

Is such an organization entitled to proclaim itself an International leadership? Here is an organization with thirty years of failure behind it. At best, such a leadership is useless, at worst, on its own scale, it serves other interests than those of the working class.

It is not because of its numerical and organizational weakness that this international organization is not an International, it is because of its political failure. Their drawing of the balance-sheet of the past thirty years shows up this failure, though they do so quite unwillingly and quite unconsciously.

The Fourth International has ceased to exist, because it has no political existence. It has to be completely rebuilt from tip to toe.

THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION IN DANGER

[The following is a resolution adopted by the Central Committee of the German Spartacusbund. The Spartacusbund is an organization which has evolved from a split in the German section of the Fourth International in 1969. It is not part of any international Trotskyist current. The translation into English is by the Spartacusbund.]

Thesis 1: THE CHARACTER OF THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

Once again the capitalist chain is breaking at its weakest point. Without having the chance of serious resistance, in Portugal one of Western Europe's most reactionary regimes collapsed like a house of cards. The regime had been unable to solve even one single crucial problem. Essentially the wars waged in order to maintain the rule over their colonies undermined the Portuguese society. The victories of the national liberation movements forced the bourgeoisie to inflate its army and to militarize the entire life of the society. But the moment when the Portuguese imperialism could no longer bear the burden of the colonial war, and the crisis of the whole Portuguese society more and more demanded a solution, a petty bourgeois movement of army officers started an initiative to overthrow the government. Their aim was to end that war (which they have—as Angola shows—not really managed so far), to clean up the old regime's state apparatus in order to realize the long overdue reforms. But they did not succeed in hampering the masses from struggling for their own rights: on the contrary, the officer's revolt opened the flood-gates. In opposition to their appeal to stay quietly at home—"law and order is the citizen's first duty"—thousands of men and women filled the streets fraternizing with the soldiers, purging the colonial administration and firms, enforcing the liquidation of the special courts and the release of the political prisoners, fighting successfully for their democratic rights

Thus the working class has taken the initiative from the officers' movement and raised its own claims. However, the working class could not restrict its own struggle to the achievement of democratic rights. Once having taken up the struggle, it had to expand its initiatives for the nationalization of the big industries, the planned management of the economy under its own control, and the building of workers' soviets and militia. From the early days of the overthrow of the Caetano regime, the Portuguese working class has taken up a struggle for partial and transitional demands, which necessarily faces it with the task of conquering state power. On this road there can be no "democratic stage" whatsoever. The putsch of April 25th marked the beginning of the socialist revolution, the outcome of which can only be the total victory of the working class or its defeat by the bourgeoisie. The struggle in Portugal is a signal for Europe, whatever the result will be, crossing the borderlines and strongly influencing the further development of the class struggle. It has become the beginning of the European revolution.

Thesis 2: THE BONAPARTISM OF THE MFA

The inability of the old bourgeois regime to put an end to the colonial war was the direct expression of its inner rottenness. It had to leave this task to the petty bourgeoisie that had been worn out more and more by the war, high taxes and domestic repressive measures. Under this pressure the officers' movement was built as an expression of a limited petty bourgeois radicalization. It realized that the colonial war constituted the main obstacle for the necessary reforms, and at the moment when the situation became more and more explosive, it decided to wage a putsch. It could be sure of the support of one faction of the bourgeoisie, which was interested in obtaining closer ties with the European Economic Community and putting forward the idea of a neocolonial solution of the war problem. The bourgeoisie was not capable of putting an end to the colonial war through its traditional bourgeois rule; it could not manage to realize the necessary restructuring of the Portuguese economy under a coherent political leadership. It had to bet on the bonapartist project of the MFA.

Due to the crisis of the bourgeois army, which has its roots in the results of the colonial war and the crisis of the petty bourgeoisie, the MFA is an eminently uncertain instrument of bourgeois rule. This crisis within the Portuguese army was the main reason why the MFA in the course of decisive clashes like on September 28, 1974, or on March 11, 1975, could not yet wage a frontal attack to openly suppress the labour movement. So far the MFA again and again was forced to partially retreat for a moment before the initiatives of the working class. The growing pressure led to inner decomposition and the building of factions inside the MFA. The left wing follows a project to channel the radicalization of the masses by trying to put the soviet-type organs under its control and thus to achieve their integration into the bourgeois state. On the other side the social democratic Antunes wing and the tendency of Gonçalves (which is under the control of the CP) are against such a maneuver, because they consider it too dangerous to keep it under control. They express in the clearest fashion that the officers corps of every bourgeois army represents the century-old tradition of repression of the people, that the selection of the officers, their training and education is aimed at nothing

but transforming them into sworn enemies of the independence of the masses.

Therefore the revolution can only succeed against the MFA: The MFA is neither guarantee nor motor of the revolution. It is the duty of the revolutionaries to win the common soldiers and revolutionary officers for the struggle at the side of the working class, this can only mean that they organize in soldiers' soviets and on that basis break with the MFA.

Thesis 3: THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

At the moment of the putsch on April 25, the Stalinist CP with its 5000 members had been the only party with relatively deep roots in the working class. The CP used its credibility among the workers in order to keep their struggle inside the framework of bourgeois rule. On that basis it occupied the positions in the bourgeois state apparatus which had been cleaned of the reactionaries by the workers. At once the CP took its "stand loyally and consequently" on the side of the MFA and gave it unconditional support. In defending the interests of capital the CP had to oppose the workers in several struggles, denouncing them as "fascists" and "reactionaries," confronting them with the whole power of the trade union apparatus under its control, and not hesitating to even put forward military actions. Thus—weakening the positions of the working class—the CP had paved the way for the reactionary would-be coup of Spinola, the mobilization of the so-called silent majority. The impact of this attack—which also threatened the positions of the CP in the state apparatus—and the energetic response of the working class against Spinola's plans led to a verification of the CP's tactic. Where it could not openly confront the struggles of the workers it tried to take the lead in order to strangle them. Far from marking the beginning of a deformed struggle for the socialist revolution, this "left turn" of the CP had no other sense but to hold and strengthen the CP's position in the bourgeois state under the changed constellation of forces, and thus to safeguard this state apparatus itself against the workers' struggles. The results of the April elections (13 percent CP, and MDP/CDE [Movimento Democrático Português-Comissão Democrática Eleitoral—Portuguese Democratic Movement-Democratic Election Committee]) as well as the openly reactionary purges, mainly by petty bourgeois mobs, against the CP locals made clear that this would only be possible as an unconditional pillar of the Gonçalves wing inside the MFA. This project of a "left military dictatorship" which at that time the CP even publicly wrote on its banners (Cunhal-statement, Gonçalves-campaign) has nothing to do with a "deformed revolution," utilizing the bayonets of the MFA as a substitute for the missing Red Army. Just the same the positions of the CP in the bourgeois state apparatus and in the Intersindical of the Gonçalves era must not be confused as outposts of a future bureaucratically deformed workers' state. These positions of the CP, including its bureaucratic methods, must be characterized as what they are: attainments of a counterrevolutionary party of the working class, which utilizes them in order to strangle the autonomous movement of the workers, steals from the workers control over their own revolution, and this unnoticed, transforms it into a counterrevolution.

The CP has shown that Stalinist policy does not simply mean right-wing policy. If necessary from the point of view of defending its own positions of power, Stalinism is as well able to produce ultraleft turns. In any case the CP defends its positions which it has obtained as a result of the workers' struggles with all means of the state apparatus against any further demands of the workers. This only makes understanding the fact that the sectarian bureaucratic defense campaign of the CP against the anticommunist mobilizations of the SP/PPD were only possible as a campaign of the CP for the Fifth Government. The short-lived common front of the CP and the centrist organizations on the basis of the COPCON document and the declaration of the government of Goncalves illustrate for what purpose the CP from time to time seeks to keep connection with the vanguard workers, or better, with their centrist leaders. It must be clear that the whole process of the Portuguese revolution so far has proven without any doubt, that the vacillations of the CP are in no way of a centrist nature, i.e., vacillations between reform and revolution (which means that the nature of the CP policy is counterrevolutionary). The policy of the CP in the first place is not determined directly by the pressure of its working class base (which without any doubt is subjectively revolutionary and from time to time fights in close contact with the centrist workers), but from the counterrevolutionary intention of the Stalinist party bureaucracy, i.e., the pressure of the bourgeoisie against the independent struggles of the working class. The pressure of the working class becomes a factor for the CP mainly through the reaction of its bourgeois ally; the specific unstable form of the bonapartist rule under the impact of the class battle provides the foundation for the vacillating policy of the CP. This fundamental characterization implies that "left turns" of the CP, for themselves have never represented a progess (not even "deformed") of the revolution, but merely have enlarged the chance for the revolutionary forces to break the counterrevolutionary barrier, which the CP constitutes, by means of a concentrated united front tactic. In case the extreme left was not able to take this chance—as was the case in the ideological bloc of the centrists with the CP—the only outcome was a strengthening of the reaction (see the Sixth Government). On the other hand, every open approachment of the CP to the bourgeoisie has done immense damage to the revolution. Precisely on that line lies the basis of a rapprochment between the CP and the SP: open measures against the vanguard workers and the achievements of the CP's support for the Sixth Government.

When the CP today—as the inability of the Sixth Government in its present form to achieve a stabilization of the bourgeois state against the conquest of the working class becomes more and more obvious—puts its left foot among the vanguard workers again, the principle aim of this maneuver is to strengthen its lessened base in the government by campaigning for the ancient Gonçalves variant. The solidarity of the CP with the SUV demonstrators after long hesitation (Cicap) on the side of the CP, clearly went by the demand for Corvacho's (Corvacho: CP Commander of the Oporto region) and Gonçalves' comeback. The chances of a CP split at present are shown by the centrists who could succeed in blocking these actions.

The social democratic SP, today the largest party, had only a few hundred members in the day of the revolt, and was without real influence on the working class. During his period as Foreign Secretary, SP leader Soares succeeded in carrying the hopes of millions in Portugal to end the colonial war and turn to the Common Market. Through this policy they hoped to get similar progress and an economic boom like the imperialist centres of the Common Market had achieved in their eyes, and where over one quarter of the Portuguese workers lived as emigrant workers. The success of the SP results from two movements in the masses. First, a phenomenon of relatively small scale: Struggling workers, who are faced with the opposition of the CP, are joining the less "rigid" SP; they are repelled by certain methods of the CP (e.g., occupation of mayoral seats, Intersindical) and join that party that proclaims it is struggling for "democratic socialism" and carries red flags too. Of a quantitatively greater importance are those masses who do not belong to the vanguard of revolution, who have only in the course of the revolution begun to develop a political consciousness, and who do not belong to the core of the industrial proletariat, but to social layers on the periphery of the working class, the agricultural and urban petty bourgeoisie. The votes for the SP in the Constituent Assembly elections were still an expression of this fact: The working class majority who had voted for either the SP or CP had by this vote expressed their desire for "socialism" which of course does not mean that they agree to the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship. If the counterrevolutionary character of the SP policy is, of course, due to the character of social democracy, the fact that the SP could succeed in winning over large parts of the working class—who had not yet realized the importance of the soviets and the dangers of parliamentarism for the socialist revolution—for their reactionary mobilizing in this form and force as it happened after the 1st of May 1975, is mainly due to the CP policy. The SP could demagogically put its fingers on its weak points.

Thus the SP could use the bureaucratic methods of the CP and their amalgamation with the Gonçalves wing in the MFA in order to take measures against the workers' vanguard (the *Republica* and Renasçenca affairs, developing soviets) in the name of the struggle against the "Stalinist oppression" and the "military dictatorship of the MFA." In doing this they gave room to the openly counterrevolutionary elements who immediately gathered around their political slogans and used the opportunity to push forward the reactionary and fascist mobilizing of the petty bourgeoisie against the working class.

How correct it was not to take the reactionary policy of the SP leaders for the illusions of their supporters among the workers at this stage, was soon shown in a differentiation among the Socialist party base after the formation of the Sixth Provisional Government, Azevedo-Antunes, that meant nothing else but a provisional victory of the bourgeoisie over a paralyzed and deeply split working class. While this government has been formed under the leadership of Soares and company, in order to restore peace and order in the army and in the workshops by open attacks on the achievements of the working class, large parts of the Socialist party-influenced workers begin to withdraw their active support of this government—under the impression of a gradual new rise of the struggle. The governmental attempt to restrict the liberty of the press at the cost of the soldiers was repudiated nearly unanimously by all workshops and regiments—except the reactionary ones. In early October the workers in the printing office of the Socialist party organ *A Luta*—supporters of the party line—refused to print the Socialist party call against a pretended impending revolt from the left; the Socialist party demonstrations against the extreme left and for the support of the sixth government are becoming more and more demonstrations of "ties and collars," and are far below in their number of participants compared to the Socialist party demonstrations in the summer of this year. The main responsibility for the mobilizing of reactionary masses is more and more being taken by the PPD whose demonstrations and campaigns against the extreme left and the revolutionary soldiers of the SUV are fatally reminding of the "empty pot" demonstrations of the Chile reactionaries before the coup.

The experiences of these workers—who by no means belong to the vanguard of the revolution, but all the same are partially cooperating with workers' or tenants' committees or have even organized some by themselves (c.f. Thesis 4, congress of the labour committees in Covilha)—with the Socialist party in government are leading at least to a neutralization of large parts among the SP base. A correct united front policy against the attacks of the reaction could obtain a real isolation of the Socialist party leaders (c.f. Thesis 6).

Is the extreme left revolutionary?

Since the April revolt many organizations of the "extreme left" could gain broad influence in the proletarian vanguard. They express the progressive workers' aspirations for a break with the old system and for a seizure of state power by the working class. But they have been unable so far to develop tactics to overcome the split in the working class. Without a clear independent position they supported in some way or other the CP—mostly after March 11, 1975, when they had been dazzled by the "tough line" of the CP. Under the pressure of the SP-anti-communist campaign they hoped in the left wing of the MFA for the defense of the revolutionary achievements of the working class and the deepening of the revolutionary process. In doing this they are isolating themselves and those workers who they lead from those workers who can be mobilized by the Socialist party for the bourgeois democracy because they reject the MFA intervention into the struggle of the proletariat. The central mistake of the centrists is that they want to expand the developing soviets mostly through the propaganda for "poder popular" [peoples power], instead of helping the masses who are influenced by the refomists, with concrete united front tactics to come to a better understanding of the soviets as organs of the proletarian state power; by this policy they lock themselves out of every tactical approach to the masses who are influenced by the CP or the SP. The centrists formed a propaganda block with the CP for a short time whereby they supported Cunhal's bourgeois

policy. After the exclusion of the CP they formed with the FUR a centristic party without policy. On the principle of abstract evaluations and the propagandistic demand "poder popular" they cannot organize united actions of the working class—CP and SP included—against the economic crisis and the reaction; thereby the developing soviets cannot be centralized and consolidated. While the FUR is projecting the CP policy—the MDP is still a member of the FUR—the SP is ranked among the fascists and the beginning differentiation of its base is simply ignored.

The LCI (International Communist League, sympathizing with the "United Secretariat of the 4th International") absolutely does make no exception. They are not able to develop tactics to help the masses to overcome their parliamentary-democratic illusions, and to make experience with their traitorous leaders. The activity of the LCI to win the hegemony in the so-called "new mass vanguard" locks it the way to a revolutionary understanding of the united front tactic; the theory of the "new mass vanguard" is leading to a political adaption to the centrism of the so-called "extreme Left" which is characterized by the illusions about CP and MFA, unable to find an approach to the SP workers and by ultra-left adventures (e.g. the demand of immediate dissolution of the Constituent Assembly). The LCI is correctly advocating the expansion of the developing soviets, but has not understood that there is a difference between the present workers' and tenants' committees—in which mainly the most progressive workers have organized themselves—and real soviet as the highest form of the united front. That is why they do not see that as today the main task for the revolutionary process to grow on a more profound level, and to lead large strata of the working class into the struggle against the crisis and attacks of Fascist gangs.

The PRT (Revolutionary Workers' Party, also sympathizing section of the "United Secretariat" but politically belonging to the minority tendency of the American Socialist Workers party) was able to develop essentially more correct tactics towards the politically backward strata of the working class. Nevertheless they have an all the more disastrous evaluation of the MFA as a "very special bonapartism": "to balance and block the advance of the masses but sometimes also the centralization of the masses and carrying out of their demands"(!).

The Lambertist OCI with their conception of the "strategic united front" sides with the Socialist party. The "strategic united front" leads to an adaption to the consciousness of the politically backward masses, instead of trying everything to lift it. Their hysterical Stalinophobia, their exposure of the character of Stalinism leads them at the same time to an idealizing of social democracy which for them is exclusively the field for radicalization of the masses. Not only that the problem to win the progressive workers over to their side is not existing for them, even more: with their demand of a "workers' government" under Soares based on the national assembly the OCI is objectively on the wrong side of the barricades. With their open support to the Sixth Government as a progress com[illegible]ed to the Gonçalves government Lambertism is played out for keeps.

The AOC [Aliança Operária Camponesa—Workers and Peasants Alliance] and MRPP [Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado—Movement to Reorganize the Proletarian Party] who follow the Maoist line had to show their character which is counterrevolutionary through and through. At present they fight for a bourgeois rule in the interest of the Chinese bureaucracy by openly propagating the bourgeois parliamentarism under Soares and his wing in the MFA in order to prevent the so-called "social fascist dictatorship of the Cunhal clique."

Thesis 4: DEVELOPMENT OF DUAL POWER AND SOVIET RULE

Immediately after having overthown the Caetano regime the workers built instruments for their own struggle in order to realize, beyond the political differences, the united front of workers in their struggle against the oppressors and to organize their active democracy which is a vital condition for the proceeding of the revolution. As such instruments function the "labour commissions" in the factories, the tenants' commissions in the quarters or the vigilance commissions against the reactionaries. The vanguard also tried to centralize these elements of developing self organization and to consolidate them as organs of dual power being able to organize the working class power in order to destroy the bourgeois rule, to crush their state apparatus and to replace it by the rule of the working class. In this situation it would have been the task of the revolutionary party on the base of its experience and understanding of the inner forces of the revolutionary process to analyze the level of the struggle to fix the next tasks and to show the proletarian vanguard an approach to the backward workers. But the absence of this revolutionary party led to an isolation of the vanguard within the developing soviets formed by itself. Recognizing the necessity of direct struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat today is a prerequisite that these comrades, considering the high level of their own experience, directly or indirectly make in the soviets.

The proletarian vanguard and the centrist organizations misunderstand the soviets as instruments of the struggle for the most advanced workers instead of understanding them as united front organs including the whole working class, which can only develop to real organs of dual power in the course of struggle. This misunderstanding leads the less advanced workers to be repelled back into the arms of their treacherous leaders. The proletarian vanguard did not yet succeed in broadening the base of the elementary soviets, in broadening the soviet movement and in overcoming the working class split in the collective action. The existing soviets will only win real authority in the masses, if they involve as many workers as possible, regardless of their party membership. As united front organs of the proletariat such soviets can only rise from the struggle for the most urgent problems of the working class in which the different parties and members propose certain solutions and actions which will be proved later in the common struggle. Thus the workers, today succumbing to reformist hopes, can be won for the revolution induced by their own experiences to break with their illusions and their reformistic leadership. At present the urgent problems of the working class are the complete political break with the MFA in connection with the unconditional military self-defense through workers' militias, the resolute common struggle against the economic crisis and the defensive struggle against the counterre-

volutionary and fascist reaction (ELP [Exército de Libertação Portuguesa—Portuguese Liberation Army], Spinola's gangs, partially repatriated from Angola, resurgence of the PIDE [Polica Internacional e de Defesa do Estado—International State Security Police]) and the democratic military bonapartism of the Sixth Government of Azevedo/Antunes, and on this base the consolidation and centralization of all existing embryonic soviets to united front organs (cf. thesis 5,7). "In this struggle for democracy, not in words, but in action" (Trotsky) setting clear tasks and demanding correct united front actions the CP and SP workers must and can be involved.

This was the reason why the CP and SP found this summer all kind of arguments to keep their members clear of the developing soviets. They had no difficulty in doing so as long as the extreme left without resistance submitted to the soviet model of the left MFA wing after the soviets had been put under MFA control and disagreeable organizations supported by the workers or claiming to speak on their behalf should not have been admitted from the outset. That is why revolutionaries have to fight for the soviets complete independence from the MFA. Today, the SP leaders feel constrained to speak as official representatives even in the assemblies of those "workers commissions" composed of its own members and followers, and to comment on the demands of these commissions (this does not mean at all that the SP suddenly argues for soviets; cooperating in the embryonic soviets the SP intends to strangle them and attacks them frontally). So it happened in Covilha where the first national congress of "workers commissions" initiated by the social chauvinistic MRPP took place. Only five of the (roughly) one hundred represented "commissions" were under firm control of the MRPP. In the industrial region of Vila Nova de Gaia exist about 150 (tenants') commissions but only a fifth accepting the slogan "poder popular" are allowed to cooperate with a newspaper in the quarter edited by the extreme left. These examples show that the main task of today is getting away from the pure propagandism of the extreme left and pushing forward the cooperation and concentration of the embryonic soviets on the base of actions. Significantly the FUR centrists boycotted the Covilha congress although each working class party was allowed to speak.

Thesis 5: STRUGGLE FOR WORKING CLASS UNITY AND AGAINST THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT

At present the revolutionary workers are a small vanguard unable to set themselves immediately the actual task of conquering power. Because of the fatal split within the working class it is the central task to win the masses. For that purpose the labouring masses must break, using their own experiences, with their reformist illusions nourished by CP and SP. This way cannot be shortened by appealing to one part of the MFA, its left wing, to overthrow the bourgeoisie. This can only be the action of the workers themselves. The indispensable struggle for working class unity does not at all suspend the revolutionaries along with the working class vanguard to provide the military defence and, if necessary, resolutely to take action against the petty bourgeois masses gathering around the SP, but now first of all around the PPD and the fascist gangs, and led by them. The constitution of the Sixth Government temporarily pushed the working class back on the defensive. The bourgeoisie is using its advantage in order to hit the whole working class by concentrated and isolated attacks on single positions of the proletariat. The absolute necessity to strengthen the vanguard militarily cannot be separated from the other absolute necessity to defend the achievements obtained in the previous struggles on a large base, e.g. as defence of the achievements of the whole working class (and not as once achieved bastions of "poder popular" which it should become in the centrists minds). This is the only way how unity in action can be established, how ground can be gained upon the reactionaries. Only in this way the embryonic soviets will expand to dual power and only thus the arming of the vanguard will extend towards the building of workers' militia. Practicing this sort of united front policy, including also the necessity of offering united front alliances to CP and SP leaders, the vanguard and its organizations will get the chance, due to a realistic evaluation of the balance of power, to take self-consciously the initiative and to be armed really towards the danger of planned provocations plotted by the reaction today menacing the working class acutely. The existence of this working class vanguard is the dead pledge of the revolution. The bourgeoisie can only consolidate its rule fundamentally by crushing this proletarian vanguard.

Thesis 6: UNITED FRONT AGAINST THE REACTION

The struggle against the economic crisis and the defence against the attacks of the reaction have to be the centre of the class struggle. The workers must oppose the capitalists' sabotage and the disability of all cabinets to improve the social economic situation of the working class only a bit in their own struggle for planned economy under their control organized by a national council of workers', tenants' and soldiers' committees. The various attempts in some branches to coordinate the struggle against unemployment and the economic disaster increased by the Sixth Government, and to concentrate the control of the several hundred factories, should be extended on national scale. It would be a serious mistake to make light of the impudent attacks of fascist gangs who continue banding together under the more or less open protection of the government. Precisely attacking the working class institutions they intend to split the masses, to play off one part against another and to create an atmosphere of chaos, thus preparing a fascist coup. The Sixth Government, trying to undermine the achievements of the working class by exact repression measures, does not pursue principally a different purpose. It is feasible to build a large defensive front against the counterrevolution in order to defend the achievements of the working class. The struggle against the crisis, for the control of production, and for a public plan cannot be separated from the struggle for complete independence of the working class and its organizations from the bourgeois state: unlimited freedom of public meeting, freedom of press and freedom to unionise; the right to elect and dismiss officials and judges, full democratic rights for the soldiers in the army, right of general soldiers' assemblies in the units to elect their

officers, immediate set-up of an armed workers militia.

It will not be sufficient to oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat or the embryonic soviets to those workers still trusting in the Constituent Assembly. After having made disappointing experiences with the CP and MFA they will easily misunderstand this procedure as another cunning way how the "communists" want to "rule" the workers. In order to free them from their bourgeois-democratic hopes nourished by the SP the revolutionaries have to induce these workers fighting against the crisis and for workers' democracy to opposition to the policy of the SP leaders so as to be able to break fundamentally with all these illusions. In this way also those workers can be won confident of the CP and its "strong" measures, for good reasons being convinced that "democratic" demagogy only serves the reaction. Only this policy in connection with the struggle for partial and transitional demands can guarantee the embryonic soviets to advance from real united front organs to organs of dual power and prepares directly the only solution of the revolutionary situation for the working class: the revolutionary government of the working class, the dictatorship of the proletariat. Only on the basis of this united front policy can the petty bourgeois middle classes not yet come to the hand of fascism be won through a correct alliance policy or at least be neutralized. Only when the split in the working class will be overcome in this way is there the chance to win the agricultural labourers, the poor and middle peasants, as allies. The problems in the country can only be solved by the initiative of the working class—controlling the banks, the production of fertilizers and agricultural implements, and so on, forming united commissions of workers and farmers that have to decide on credits on easy terms for the poor peasants. Despite that there is no agricultural problem as an independent one and as an unsolved task of the bourgeois revoution in Portugal, this does not mean at any rate that the forming of an alliance between proletariat and peasantry will not occur as a task.

Unremittingly the revolutionaries have to demand the complete independence of all organizations that base themselves on the working class; that means to renounce the agreement with the MFA and to refuse to enter into a governmental coalition with the open representatives of the bourgeoisie. This will soon show that both Cunhal's and Soares' "democracy" or "socialism" will not follow the will of the masses and their action but will prefer the bayonetts and tanks of the MFA. According to the fact that the Constituent Assembly has not solved any problem by now and will not solve any in the future, but, on the contrary, is speaking out against the struggle and achievements of the workers and soldiers on every occasion, but while still many workers have illusions about the character of the Constituent Assembly, the revolutionaries have to call on all workers and their organizations to form workers councils as organs in the struggle for an active democracy that defends the elementary interests of the masses and who are built wholly democratically. Only to the extent of winning the workers on this base for the united struggle for the expropriation of the bourgeoisie, the systematic direction of the economy under workers' control, the self-defense and armament of the working class by the forming of workers' militias, are these workers given the chance to learn that the Constituent Assembly is not any "democratic" organ that could be charged with the solution to the crucial problems but is an organ of bourgeois democracy to oppress the working class. That is why the revolutionaries have to try in their turn to force the Constituent Assembly to declare itself unmistakably on the soviets and the workers' struggle, to their demands against the capitalists, and the menacing danger caused by the political reaction. In doing this they have strictly to avoid the impression that they would call on the Constituent Assembly to seize power. If they did it, they would only be responsible for counterrevolutionary measures. The revolutionaries are faced with the task of convincing the proletarian vanguard, who are openly demanding the immediate dissolution of the Constituent Assembly, that this cannot be the work of a small minority among the workers. For today this would mean nothing else but to put the MFA in charge of carrying this out and to be responsible for the MFA's actions in the future. It is now necessary to provide the base for this policy, to tackle the problem of the formation of dual power.

Thesis 7: THE REVOLUTIONARY TACTICS IN RESPECT TO A POTENTIAL CIVIL WAR

If the bourgeoisie should succeed (cf. Thesis 5) in provoking an armed conflict, the revolutionaries could by no means support the left MFA plus the CP against the SP with the Constituent Assembly or even the other way round politically. Both are only different strongholds of the counterrevolution. But this does not mean for the revolutionaries to remain indifferent in the military sense. As long as they are too weak to fight directly for the overthrow of the bourgeois rule they will be—in being completely politically independent and independent in organization—on that side which fights against the more immediately dangerous enemy of the working class. To apply the "Spanish tactics" of 1936-37 to Portugal today would doubtless mean for the revolutionaries to fight side by side with the workers' vanguard and the workers' committees. At the same time they must not hesitate to propagate the necessity to overthrow as soon as possible the bourgeois direction, on which side they are fighting militarily.

In the case of such an untimely open confrontation between both sides, the demand of completely political independence of the working class and their organizations comes to its most acute point. In order to diminish the danger of a destruction of the workers' vanguard, which is increased by the isolation and confusion of the centrist organizations, it is by no means enough to demand the military strengthening and structuring of this resolute minority alone. On the contrary, it has to be said that this necessary task could be adequately put through, if the vanguard begins to form the independence of the proletariat from their traiterous leaders, the CP and SP, in the course of their struggle for the united front. Only in this struggle will the vanguard be able to put aside their own illusions in the CP and MFA, and rely no longer on the arms of the COPCON in the defense of the achievements, but on their own arms and the armament of the working class in militias. The question of armament is, like the question of civil war, not a military one—although in the civil war the military factor is more important. The

workers' vanguard can only rise to the height of their political and military tasks by showing the class a way to the joint struggle against the reaction and against their traiterous leaders who chain them to the bourgeoisie.

FOR THE UNITED FRONT OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST REACTION AND FASCISTS!

FOR THE EXPANSION AND UNITY OF ALL WORKERS' AND TENANTS' COMMITTEES!

ACCORDING TO UNITED FRONT TACTICS ON THE BASE OF A COMMON STRUGGLE!

AGAINST ECONOMIC CRISIS AND REACTIONARY AND FASCIST RAIDS!

FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE WORKING CLASS AGAINST THE SIXTH GOVERNMENT!

ARMAMENT OF THE WORKERS, FORMING A WORKERS' MILITIA!

NO ILLUSIONS ABOUT THE LEFT MFA!

FOR THE UNITY OF THE WORKERS' AND SOLDIERS' COMMITTEES!

FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL!

FOR THE VICTORY OF THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION, BEGINNING OF THE EUROPEAN SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

14 October 1975

PORTUGAL MOVES ON TO REVOLUTION

The following two articles by John Docherty appeared in the October 1 and October 15, 1975, issues of *Socialist Press,* published by the Workers Socialist League. The WSL was formed after a tendency led by Alan Thornett was expelled from Healy's Workers Revolutionary Party.

On every available inch of wall space in Lisbon at the moment can be read the political views of just about every possible shade of opinion within the working class and socialist movement. The posters, the leaflets, the newspapers, and the impassioned debates that surround them, deal with issues of daily concern for the Portuguese working class.

As the Portuguese workers have opened a breach for the development of a new stage in the European revolution, an understanding of their problems and achievements is of fundamental importance for those who will certainly soon follow them.

Even in the most priest-ridden parts of Northern Portugal, lengthy discussions can be heard on the merits of different sections of working class leadership. You can buy there as anywhere else all the classic works of Marxism which have been kept from the Portuguese people during generations of fascist rule, and for which there is now an enormous appetite.

In the southern agricultural areas, peasants occupying the estates of landlords who have now fled will tell you with considerable conviction how they will deal with the possible return of their former oppressors.

In each tiny event of day-to-day life in Portugal today you can see the effects of the living dynamic of a revolutionary struggle and the sharpest struggle for leadership in the working class.

If you go to buy a stamp in the new Post Office in central Oporto, you are liable to have to wait until the counter clerks have finished a noisy argument about the relative merits of the CP and SP candidates in their forthcoming union elections. Outside, two teenage Maoists have drawn a large crowd, who are certainly interested in the policies being put forward to fight against a return to fascism and foreign intervention.

DUBIOUS

The crowd seems mostly to be made up of supporters of the Socialist Party, but they are dubious about the assertion that their first enemy is something known as 'Soviet social imperialism'.

To see these things happening in Portugal and to understand what they represent in a fast-moving political process is to confront a situation that throws into question every assumption and tests every principle derived from more peaceful and slow-moving times and places.

In the developing reality of the Portuguese revolution, not only is every organisation of the workers' movement rent with the most bitter debate, but every betrayal and every turning back is illuminated with a clarity that throws it into the sharpest possible relief.

Nowhere in the world today can you see Stalinists who are more fervently tied to the defence of the bourgeois order than in Portugal today. In Portugal the traitorous role of social democracy can be seen most clearly, as it allies with and opens the door for every form of oppression and reaction.

There also, the centrists and confusionists of the workers movement reveal most clearly where their policies lead. In no other circumstances could the sectarians repeat more empty phrases or flail their arms more uselessly in the empty air.

The purpose of this article and others that will follow is not to give a rounded analysis of all the aspects of this stage in the development of the Portuguese revolution, but to say something about what has been learnt from a number of recent visits to Portugal by members of the WSL, and in particular to indicate some of the main forces that are vying there for the leadership of the working class.

In this article we shall take up the position of the Socialist Party and describe some other important recent developments.

One point which should be made at the outset is to emphasise the extent to which the capitalist news media in this country has distorted and lied about the strength of the forces opposed to the revolution.

On the basis of such reports, we had expected to find on arrival in Portugal reactionary mobs on the march everywhere, with workers' organisations cowed and afraid to operate, their offices destroyed.

STRENGTH

Such an impression is quite wrong. In Lisbon itself evidence of the strength and confidence of the working class can be seen on every hand, with big meetings of workers an almost nightly occurance, and occupations, large meetings of soldiers and socialist organisations taking place all the time.

Even outside the big cities, it is not the case that the forces of reaction predominate. Although there have been right-wing riots organised in such towns as Leiria and Braga, there is no sign that the workers' organisations have been driven out.

At least one of the buildings which the world press claimed was burnt to the ground at Leiria, the

head-quarters of the pro-Stalinist MDP, can be seen standing in one of the main squares to this day without so much as a broken window. In all of these towns, offices of such left-wing organisations as the MES and the LCI can be seen in operation, Maoists give out their leaflets in the street and there are the same discussions on the same political issues that take place in Lisbon.

It is of course true that the peasants of the North are discontented with thee effects on prices of the recent bountiful vine harvest and with the failure of the various governments set up since the overthrow of fascism to deal with their grievances. However, the agricultural labourers in the recently occupied and nationalised big estates in the south display quite a different attitude.

On Wednesday 17th. September for example, there was a general strike throughout the two provinces of Alentejo, which covers a large proportion of Southern Portugal, and include the towns of Evora and Beja. On that day, virtually unreported in the British press, a significant section of the agricultural workforce expressed their hatred of all the vestiges of the old fascist-landlord regime that still remain, and their determination to defend the gains which the revolution has already brought them.

STANDSTILL

Travelling around the area it was clear that not a workshop was operating, not a field being tilled, and those few offices and shops that opened in the early morning soon closed their doors. In Evora there was an enormous demonstration in support of the agricultural reforms where there was open talk of the need to kill off the few landlords still to be found in the area.

A particular issue around which this display of the joint power of the urban and rural proletariat centred concerned the right to ownership of 103 cattle and 39 pigs from an occupied estate in Portalegere, close to the Spanish border.

The various efforts of a group of armed landlords to get back what they claimed to be their property has filled the Portuguese press for a number of weeks now, and in some ways what has happened has been symptomatic of the forces operating in the revolution as a whole. At first the farmworkers looked to the local military commander to protect their rights to the newly-won animals, and were horrified when the military decision was to restore the animals to the former landlords.

Eventually, the bitter determination of the farmworkers, indicated not least by the 17th. September strike, forced the handing back of the cattle and pigs to the occupying farmworkers. However this may still not yet be the end of the story.

To describe the widespread and fervent support for the continued progress of the revolution is not of course to deny that the possibility of counter-revolution remains an ever present reality. In Lisbon one can see significant focus for such a movement in the 'retornados' back from the former colonial possessions who hang around in discontented groups on street corners, and who have adopted some of the methods of a movement they fear and misunderstand in order to draw attention to their grievances.

Thus they have hijacked buses to block a bridge across the River Tagus and have occupied the Bank of Angola, demanding that their worthless Angolan currency be changed into Portuguese denominations. Leaflets handed out to passers-by during these events called for an end to decolonisation and the return of Spinola.

However much the 'retornados' place their confidence in such unworkable solutions as these, there can be no defence of their conditions by turning back the clock.

JOBS

Whatever efforts are made by the extreme right to emerge from the shadows by mobilising ex-colonials in alliance with the economically insecure peasants of the North, jobs will only be found for these people and a place in Portuguese society if there is a struggle for a government of the working class and peasantry based on the independent organs of workers' power.

The beginnings of such developments of independent workers' organisations can be seen on every hand in the big cities and in the agricultural regions of the South. In their form and purpose such bodies vary a great deal. In some cases their function is to set up a system of workers' management in an enterprise that has been taken away from an employer who has fled. Elsewhere, workers committees organise tenants, including those who have occupied empty properties.

These committees could be smashed or they could become the basis of a new society. Their direction will depend on the extent to which a leadership can be built within them that will develop them to challenge the bourgeois state and its instruments.

We spoke to the director of one section of the state TV system. He told us that of course there was a workers committee in his reorganised enterprise, though in theory this only existed to be consulted about management decisions. The committee, he thought, already exercised more power than it had on paper since its views were always a decisive influence. What happened next would of course depend on the strength of the working class as a whole, and on the overall political situation.

What is essential for the development and unification of such organs is to break them from the Armed Forces Movement and from supporting the present leaders of the working class, who will fight tooth and nail against any strengthening of the independent power of the class. If the position of the social democrats and the Stalinists in Portugal is not so deeply rooted by history as in other European countries, they show just as much ability to divert and betray the workers.

Both Stalinists and social democrats in Portugal work particularly closely in the international movement of which they are a part. Stalinist Cunhal relies heavily on the Soviet leadership whose faithful servant he has always been, and Soares desperately needs the kind of support he gains from his frequent visits to see his counterparts in Britain, Germany, Sweden and elsewhere.

Nor are these of course the only international contacts of Soares. He may deny that he has received financial subventions from the CIA, but such charges are widely believed in Portugal, and he has not been able to brush off the accusations of recent contacts with Spinola.

In any case was it not the hypocritical campaign of the SP leadership against the fourth government that provoked the reactionary violence of July and August? Whose interests did these serve other than those of capitalism and imperialism? In any case Soares talks at length to such bitterly anti-working class leaders as President Giscard of France, and advocates support for NATO and the EEC.

The SP is now working closely with the right-wing section of the Armed Forces Movement, and with

them they dominate the new sixth provisional government.

"SOCIALIST"

Yet how is it that, despite all this, Soares is compelled to make statements about the need for a thoroughgoing socialist transformation in Portugal and to maintain that he is opposed to social democracy? The answer to this was made obvious in discussions we had with Socialist Party members in Lisbon on the night of the formation of the sixth government.

The politics of rank and file members of the SP was miles from the pro-capitalism of everything done by Soares. SP members were not happy about the undemocratic practices of the PCP, but they nevertheless considered themselves Marxists, and wanted the nationalisation of the foreign monopolies and the remaining sections of big domestic industry.

The statements of Soares have to take account of feelings of this kind to outflank the only openly pro-capitalist party left in Portugal now, the PPD who are busy proclaiming their adherence to what they call 'social democracy'. The practice of the SP leadership however, clearly belies any of their 'revolutionary pretentions'.

The way in which the leadership of the SP is closely tied to the defence of capitalist private property comes out clearly in their policies in the *Republica* affair.

It is certainly the duty of every socialist to support the rights of different sections of the workers' movement to express their point of view. However it was not in defence of such a principle that Soares ran his campaign against [illegible] workers, nor on such a [illegible] with the support of all the [illegible] capitalist papers in Western [illegible]. His was a defence of the rights of the proprietor over his workers, of a fake 'democracy' and a so-called pluralism in which capitalist rule could continue to predominate.

There were many deliberate false impressions created by the hypocrisy of Soares and his associates on this issue. For instance, in the parallel take-over of the reactionary pro-clerical radio station Renascença the issue of workers' democracy did not arise so the workers' take-over was completely justified.

The workers at *Republica* did not demand complete control of the editorial policy of the paper. but at first simply a statement to the effect that the paper supported the line of the Socialist Party with which those who printed it were not in agreement.

CENTRISTS

Their take-over was *not* part of a "Communist plot" as it was portrayed both by Soares and by sections of the left. It was under the leadership of centrists of the PRP and UDP whose general view can be found in the editorial columns of the paper that now appears.

The greatest danger of all in the take-over perhaps was the illusions of the workers involved that the capitalist state and the Armed Forces Movement would necessarily be on their side. These issues have largely been by-passed by events, however. There are still plenty of papers that reflect the views of the Socialist Party leadership, and they can be bought any day of the week on the streets of Lisbon or Oporto.

As for *Republica* itself it is now in financial difficulties with the withdrawal of a government subsidy. In recent weeks the paper has been appealing for people to come to work on it for nothing. The collapse of the paper now might win the applause of the hypocrites in the leadership of the SP. It would certainly in no way be a victory for workers' democracy.

The real basis of the 'democratic' pretentions of Soares was revealed with the formation of the new government on 19th. September. After continual attacks on Vasco Goncalves and his fifth government on the grounds that it was elected by nobody and responsible only to a clique of officers the Socialist Party has now *joined* a government, in league with the openly pro-capitalist PPD, which has again been elected by nobody and which rests simply on a different faction of the AFM.

This arrangement has inevitably produced dissention within the ranks of the SP, and also within the CP where the claim to have taken a minor portfolio simply to make the government slightly less reactionary than it actually is, rings very hollow indeed.

In the next article we will deal with the role of Stalinism in Portugal and with those groups who claim to provide an alternative to its counter-revolutionary role.

PROBLEMS OF THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

Each day now there are fresh reports of the further intensification of the revolutionary crisis in Portugal. Constantly there are new manifestations of the audacity and confidence of militant workers. revolutionary rank and file soldiers, and well-organised sections of farm labourers, as each in turn come into conflict with the capitalist state and with all those who continue to maintain and support it. The compelling dynamic of the revolutionary process tests at each new turn all those who claim to speak for the interests of the masses.

It is hardly surprising that the issues raised by the great events in Portugal have provoked the most furious debates and splits within workers organisations in every part of the world. There have even been some pale reflections of this within the higher reaches of the international Stalinist and social democratic bureaucracies.

This is because the social convulsion now sweeping Portugal open the possibility for the first time for decades in Europe of the masses taking things into their own hands. This has a resounding effect on the balance of political calculations and class forces in every part of the world. Developments on the streets of Lisbon and Oporto, in the ship-

yards of Lisnave, the barracks of Coimbra or the fields of Alentejo are of no mere passing interest. They will soon be spilling out into all of Europe. The victories and defeats of the Portuguese masses are our victories and defeats also, and the issues they raise are of immediate and pressing importance to the workers in every part of the world.

SOARES

In a previous article we dealt with the lying hypocrisy of the leaders of the Portuguese Socialist Party. The warm reception accorded to the counter-revolutionary Soares by the Labour leaders fresh from their efforts to reduce the living standards of the British working class at Blackpool the other week is a clear confirmation of the real direction of the meaning of the 'Marxist' phrases that continue to come from the SP leaders. Recent reports indicate that there are fewer workers to be found on their demonstrations, but there can be no doubt that they continue to exercise a hold over important sections of the Portuguese working class.

One major explanation for this situation is the role of the Portuguese Communist Party. This organisation emerged from the fascist period with a record of struggle against the dictatorship, and with the active support of major sections of workers, notably from among the heavy industries around Lisbon and the agricultural areas of the South.

In the early period after the coup the Communist Party had two main policies: to win as many positions as possible within the bourgeois state apparatus, the army, the press etc., and to hold back any challenge to capitalism arising from the militancy of the working class. As they took over the machinery of local government in the North, and stood foursquare with every twist and turn in the policies of the Armed Forces Movement and its successive governments, they became identified by the peasants of the North with the inability of the new regime to develop policies to serve their interests.

As the CP denounced one strike movement after another, they began to lose their control over sections of militant workers who have looked increasingly towards the various organisations to the left of them.

All of this brought about the increasing isolation of the CP during August, culminating in the overthrow of their champion Vasco Goncalves and his fifth provisional government.

ELECTIONS

CP General Secretary, Cuhnal, a most consistent supporter of every form of Stalinist class collaboration in the past has been forced to make statements about the unimportance of electoral arithmetic and the need for 'revolutionary vigilance' by the working class. This has inevitably produced a great flurrying in the Stalinist dovecots of France and Italy, where electoral arithmetic is the only form of politics ever considered, and in Spain where alliance with neo-fascists appears to be quite acceptable.

For the Stalinists also it was thus a significant step to sign a document on 25th August together with various 'left' organisations including even the 'Trotskyists' of the LCI. This "unity" was in support of the 'COPCON document' largely drafted by the centrists of the PRP (the group linked to the British IS) and included even some criticisms of the CP itself.

We heard that at the meeting where the agreement was discussed, the CP representatives said nothing about what policies should be put into the document. They just signed it. Their purposes was to try to break out of their isolation.

From the point of view of the CP, however, this tactic suffered an important set-back when the fifth provisional government was overthrown. In the weeks that followed the rank and file members of the CP were clearly looking for a determined policy.

Thus at the meeting held at the Campo Pacqueno in Lisbon on 16th September and the big demonstration two days later, despite valiant efforts by the marshalls, it was impossible to get the ordinary members and supporters to shout slogans with any enthusiasm in support of the bourgeois politicians.

The CP policy of opposing all strikes has also clearly had to be changed, as can be seen for their organisation of the one-day walk-out in Alentejo on 17th September, and their support for the steel workers earlier this month.

These actions have been designed to reconcile the ordinary followers of the CP with the continued association of their party with the new sixth provisional government, which is clearly universally unpopular among militant workers, and likely to become more so as it moves in against any of the initiatives of rank and file soldiers with the kind of talk of the need to restore 'law and order' that is familiar throughout the world.

ATTACKS

The CP leaders even while members of the government are forced politically to attack it. But however different they appear, however much they adapt to the aspirations of the masses who still follow them, the CP will certainly continue to go to any possible length to deliver the working class hand and foot to the capitalist class and its state.

In the complex and fast changing political situation, it is inevitable that groups to the left of the CP will grow. At this stage, there can be seen the development of a whole series of centrist organisations, in some cases commanding fairly large followings in the working class. The main political essence of these groups is their inability to distinguish between the role of the various social classes in the revolutionary process, resulting in their subordination of the political independence of the working class, and their incapability of mobilising the class. on a revolutionary programme. But now many of their policies are being tried and tested we can assess how this is working out.

MAOISTS

The results of the reactionary 'social fascist' policies of the Maoists can be seen daily. The view of the tiny 'official' pro-Chinese CPC-ML (who are also known as the AOC) is that the CP of Cunhal is a greater threat to the Portuguese working class than American imperialism. Such a conception leads them to direct virtually all their propaganda against the CP, and to even join the reactionary anti-communist demonstrations in the North.

The MRPP (Revolutionary Movement for a Proletarian Party) group seems to have a similar view of the world, but they have played some part in the organising of soldiers, especially against going off to the colonial wars, and have won a few positions in the unions from the CP. They create an illusion of strength by the number of enormous red and yellow paintings they have managed to get up in Lisbon and elsewhere, mostly dating from their campaign to release their leader Arnaldo Matos from prison earlier this year.

PICTURES

Something of their style can be gathered from the pictures they put up showing Matos, with what can only be described as a beatific look on his face, leading an anonymous looking section of the masses

into a garish Hollywood sunrise. These hardworking sectarians continue to build up their membership, and they managed to mount a rally of 5,000 on the same night as the CP in Central Lisbon on 16th September. It is unlikely, however, that they will have much further influence on events, and they are being outpaced by a number of other Maoist groups.

The most important of the other self-appointed 'Marxist-Leninists' are the UDP (Popular Democratic Union), who are said by the others to be 'lackies of Cunhal' because they refuse to place the struggle against alleged 'social fascism' at the top of their agenda. With some of the prestige of the Chinese revolution behind them, they have mangged to gain some support among committees of soldiers.

Their organisation, however, shows all the classic tendencies of a petty bourgeois centrist formation, moving in to support the famous COPCON document, and then pulling out just as suddenly when the implications of alliance with the CP became obvious.

A number of other centrist groupings were among the other signatories of the 25th August accord. The MES (Left Socialist Movement) is the most right wing of these. It unites left-wing Catholics, sections of the legal opposition from the old regime and disaffected members of the mass organisations into as well-intentioned a group of semi-liberals as you could hope to meet, and is likely to become increasingly ineffectual as time goes on.

"DIRECT ACTION"

The LUAR also consists of well-intentioned people who specialise in various forms of 'direct action'. Under fascism, this used to include plane hi-jacking, but recently there have been such activities as opening shoe shops abandoned by their owners and taking part in land occupations. Any directly political role for this organisation is only a remote possibility.

The best-known of the centrist groupings is the PRP-BR (Proletarian Revolutionary Party (Red Brigades) which works closely with the British International Socialists. This is a particularly important and dangerous body because it has some support in the army and elsewhere and combines an apparently incurable romanticism with an inability to distinguish between the class forces at work in the revolutionary situation that confronts it. They have support among sections of the Armed Forces Movement and in practice work closely with the Stalinists, whose counter-revolutionary politics they appear incapable of confronting.

The first thing that strikes the visitor to the offices of the PRP in Lisbon is that their book-stall contains no works of serious Marxist theory, though there is plenty about colonial warfare such as Che Guevara and Amicar Cabral. On being asked about this, they assure you that they have no need of the theories of such outdated writers as Lenin and Trotsky. The result of this now is clear in their practice. The vacuous phrases of the left COPCON document and the 25th August accord are normally attributed to them, and one can see the disastrous results of their disdain for questions of theory from what is set out there.

Other consequences follow also. Their main political propaganda seems to be directed against the Socialist Party which they say is 'compromised with fascism'. As a result they are precluded from any serious contact with rank and file members of the SP and are driven increasingly into the arms of the Stalinists. In their blind romanticism they claim that in their alliances with the CP it is *they* and not the CP who are in charge.

"LEFT STALINIST"

For example, we were assured that although it was true that Vasco Goncalves is a Stalinist, he is a very *'left'* Stalinist! Even more alarming are the constant references to 'Comrade Otelo' (de Carvalho), and the assurances that 'he has never betrayed the revolution' given to us at a time when he was actively preparing a coup in association with right-wing chief of staff Fabiao.

If the situation facing the working class were not so serious such confusion would simply be laughable. The PRP was recently delivered a large consignment of arms from some of its friends in the Armed Forces Movement, and though these may well be needed by workers at a later stage, it is difficult to have any confidence that the PRP will know which way to shoot.

It is possible that many workers looking for a revolutionary lead will be attracted to their militancy and their romanticism. Without a serious effort to understand the forces currently pitted against them, and to win over the workers who currently follow the CP or SP, the PRP is clearly in no position to lead such workers to the socialist revolution.

Of course the basic questions can only be explained by the Trotskyist movement. It is impossible in the space of this article to go into the policies of all those claiming this mantle in Portugal. The movement is very new, only being established about 1968, and there are at least four organisations, reflecting the well-known international divisions.

SMALLEST

The two smallest groups in Portugal are supporters of the international tendencies associated with Lambert's 'Committee for the Construction of the Fourth International', and Healy's 'International Committee'. Lambert's followers, as elsewhere, seem content to burrow into the inmost recesses of the social democracy, from which they will perhaps emerge at soem time in the future to declare their policies.

Healy's group has a well-produced paper which appears at long intervals and confines itself to general statements about the need for a workers' government and the building of a revolutionary party. To judge from the *Workers Press* of 20th September, the only policies it considers necessary to put forward at this point in Portugal are the immediate introduction of a Soviet Socialist Republic and the building of a revolutionary party. Such a perspective, in line with the British WRP's sectarian demand of "Bring down the Labour Government", will clearly offer nothing to the Portuguese working class, and it is unlikely that much more can come of a group with such conceptions.

The two different factions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International have separate organisations operating in Portugal. The Mandelite majority group, known as the LCI (International Communist League) have shown that they bear all the obvious marks of the Pabloite beast by their signing of the 25th August accord against all the elementary principles of Trotskyism. Whatever efforts are now made by Mandel and others to dissociate themselves from this logical outcome of their own policies, there is no doubt that this capitulation to Stalinism reflects the continued and living reality of the split in the world movement in 1953.

The Hansenite minority in Portugal also have a group which acts quite independently, called the PRT (Revolutionary Party of Workers). They seem to have taken up a number of wrong positions in relation to the Armed Forces Movement and other issues, but correctly attacked the 25th August unity accord and tried to

intervene in the movement that was built up around it with policies aimed at a break with the bourgeoisie.

PRINCIPLE

For our part we will continue to intervene in the developing situation in Portugal on the basis of the principle of Trotsky's Transitional Programme and aim to bring the problems facing the workers there before the working class movement internationally. It is only the basis for a struggle for the re-building of the Fourth International that it will be possible to develop the kind of leadership for which the situation in Portugal now cries out. For this we will have to simultaneously return to fundamental principles and be able to apply them to the new and profound problems being raised by the situation.