

July 21, 1975

TO THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION COORDINATORS

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed you will find the first draft of a resolution entitled "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution." Also enclosed is a copy of a letter from Joe Hansen to Comrade Moreno which explains the background to the drafting of this resolution, and its character.

At the present time the resolution is being discussed within the leadership of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction, but we thought that the document in its draft form would be helpful to comrades in preparing presentations on Portugal for the current pre-convention discussion in the SWP.

A great deal of material has been appearing weekly in Intercontinental Press, giving comprehensive news and analysis of the events in Portugal. Comrades should be reading and following this material closely. In addition, a number of articles have appeared in the Militant and ISR, especially the article by Gus Horowitz in the June ISR based on the report adopted by the SWP National Committee plenum and the article by Doug Jenness in the July 18 Militant, "How CP distorts lessons of Russian revolution to support Portuguese Junta."

The IMT's analysis of events in Portugal is available in (1) the resolution adopted by the United Secretariat Majority, "Prerevolutionary Situation Ripens in Portugal," published in Inprecor, No. 29, June 19, 1975; (2) the article by Ernest Mandel on the República affair published in the June 23, 1975 issue of Intercontinental Press, and the letter to Joe Hansen from Comrades Mandel, Maitan and Frank that accompanied this article (see LTF mailing June 17, 1975); (3) an article by Daniel Bensaid on the República affair, translated from Rouge and printed in the IMG's Red Weekly, June 12, 1975; and (4) a statement by the political bureau of the Portuguese LCI, "For the Generalization of Workers Councils," published in Inprecor, No. 30, July 3, 1975. Copies of the last two items are enclosed.

Finally, you will find enclosed a list of some relevant articles from the writings of Trotsky that comrades will find it useful to reread in preparing the discussion on the problems of the Portuguese revolution.

Comradely,

Ed Shaw

First Draft

The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution

1. Bourgeois Calculations in the April 25 Coup

The April 25, 1974, military coup that toppled the Caetano dictatorship was an outcome of the conclusion drawn by Portuguese finance capital that neither their colonial empire nor the working class in their own country could be dominated any longer primarily by repressive means.

The Portuguese imperialists had at first resisted turning to neocolonial means to save their empire. As rulers of the weakest of the imperialist powers both economically and politically, they sought to evade the cost of fostering and maintaining a neocolonial bourgeoisie. Moreover, their state apparatus appeared to have a tight grip on society. Thus, the Portuguese imperialists hoped to achieve by determination and ruthlessness what other imperialists with vastly greater resources chose not to attempt, or failed to achieve.

However, after more than a decade of savage war against the peoples in the colonies, the Portuguese imperialists found that the sword was incapable of cutting off the sources of the colonial revolution, which continued to mount. Even terror on the massive scale practised in northern Angola was not sufficient to destroy the nationalist movements, in particular since they received support, and in some instances bases, from the surrounding politically independent Black states.

Although the Portuguese imperialists managed for a time to contain the nationalist movements in the economically important colonies, this was insufficient to accomplish their objectives. They finally realized that they did not have the resources to sustain a large-scale military occupation of the colonies without undermining the bases of capitalist stability in the mother country itself. Nor could they get the necessary support from stronger imperialist powers to make up for their weakness.

Nonetheless, the sectors of the Portuguese ruling class who came to see the need for a change in policy faced grave difficulties in carrying it out. The regime had rested on corporatist repression for nearly half a century. Not only were substantial repressive forces such as the secret police and the riot police strongly intertwined with the regime but the economic interests of a swollen layer of backward petty capitalists and

latifundists were bound up with the maintenance of this special repressive system. Furthermore, the Portuguese imperialists had waited too long to shift to neocolonialism; they faced well-organized mass nationalist movements deeply rooted in the populations of many colonies including Angola, the key piece of the empire. These movements were already substantial. With their long tradition of struggle, they could not be co-opted cheaply. Nor could the colonial masses, after long years of massive struggles and enormous sacrifices and suffering, be easily demobilized by small concessions.

So, Portuguese imperialism, which has always had an extraordinarily weak base, engaged in perhaps the most daring gamble in the 500 years of Lusitanian expansionism. It moved to reorganize its forms of political and social control by violent means, by a military uprising against an entrenched layer of the state and political apparatus. It moved to disarm and neutralize a section of the ruling class itself by purging a considerable number of previously sacrosanct authorities. This not only disabled the police forces for a time, it was a violent shock to the habits of obedience instilled in the masses by almost fifty years of dictatorship.

The Portuguese capitalists did not embark on such an adventure without taking into account certain favorable conditions. Although they had failed to stop the rising radicalization among the workers and the youth, a powerful, organized mass movement had not yet formed in Portugal. Likewise, although the imperialist army had failed to crush the nationalist movements in the colonies and had suffered some defeats as well as significant losses, it had not been broken or decisively defeated.

The most favorable condition was the absence of a mass revolutionary Marxist movement in either Portugal or the colonies. The mass movement was dominated by dependable reformist elements. As it turned out, the assessment made by the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie of the reliability of the reformist workers parties, particularly the Communist party proved to be accurate. What Portugal's rulers underestimated was the power and extent of the mass upsurge that would be touched off both in Portugal and the colonies by the fall of Salazarism. They failed to gauge correctly the hopes this would inspire among the masses that they could finally gain their democratic right to think, to discuss, to make their own decisions, and to struggle to change their economic and social conditions and determine their own fate.

2. The Armed Forces Movement -- a Bourgeois Instrument

The instrument on which the imperialist bourgeoisie relied to remove the Caetano regime and to carry out the needed political reorganization, the Armed Forces Movement (AFM), was formed out of the bourgeois military hierarchy. It began as a movement among professional officers seeking to defend the status of graduates of the military academies against the influx of ordinary university graduates who were given commissions as part of the expansion of the armed forces required to fight the colonial war.

The AFM, in essence, is the political arm of the military hierarchy. That is what it has always aspired to be, and this is what the present leadership intends it to be. Following the March 11, 1975, attempted coup, some of the cleverist military demagogues such as Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho have tried to picture things as if a political difference existed between the top military commanders who associated themselves with the April 25 overturn, Spínola in particular, and the "revolutionary movement" itself. This line was intended to explain away the obvious splits in the AFM represented by the September 28 and March 11 events.

In any such conspiratorial movement there are bound to be various layers of officers and various degrees of commitment, with the lowest officers, who take the greatest risks, generally being the most radical in speech and the most determined in action. Likewise, at the lowest levels the AFM has co-opted many radicalized young officers just as it had co-opted radicalized civilian groups. However, the AFM has always striven to make itself as representative of the military command as possible; and since the April 25 overturn it has continued to bring in officers on the basis of the positions they hold in the military hierarchy rather than on the basis of their political convictions.

As a conspiratorial opposition movement, this military grouping attracted officers influenced by various political currents hostile to the Salazarist regime. In response to the logic and the pressures of the struggle against the old dictatorship, as well as the pressure of the masses following April 25, there was a tendency toward radicalization, in the lower echelons of the AFM in particular. This tendency was reinforced by the attempted right-wing coups on September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975.

In these cases, conservative elements in the armed forces, fearing that the democratic ferment was getting out of hand and that the process of reform was going too far, tried to force a retreat by violent means. If successful, this "restoration of order" would have meant a purge of important sections of the AFM now regarded as "un-

reliable" by the conservatives. At the same time, in each case, the masses mobilized to defend the military regime, which they identified with their new-found democratic rights and the perspective of socialism. These coup attempts further compromised the already discredited Portuguese capitalist class and shifted the balance of forces in favor of the working masses. As a result, the process of radicalization accelerated at the lower levels of the AFM, and the leading circles correspondingly adopted more "socialist" and "anti-imperialist" verbiage.

However, the AFM has remained no less a bourgeois leadership. And its objective has continued to be to modernize and strengthen Portuguese capitalism -- not to overturn it. It simply found itself obliged to rely heavily on demagogy to persuade the Portuguese workers to help out capitalism in its hour of need. It is also using "socialist" phrasemongering to put capitalist needs in a better light as a first step toward restoring the dominance of bourgeois ideology and of bourgeois "law and order" and repression.

One example of the demagogy of the AFM is its use of bourgeois nationalism. Since the April 25 coup, the ruling military group has carried on a campaign designed to restore the hold of Portuguese nationalism, which had been largely discredited through its use by Salazar. In order to accomplish this, it has posed as a national liberation movement borrowing the anti-imperialist themes of the rebel movements in the colonies. In the same way, it has tried to borrow the repressive features of the colonial bonapartist regimes and the Stalinist regimes, which, since they are identified to some extent with revolution and progressive struggles, are not so discredited as the repressive devices of the old regime.

The AFM is the essential political instrument of the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie. Since the April 25 overturn it has been the real government of Portugal and the empire, using the various provisional cabinets as a means of presenting a civilian facade and assuring the support of the mass reformist workers parties for its rule. During this time, it has presided over, and maintained a capitalist imperialist system, consistently taking the side of the bourgeoisie against the workers in economic conflicts. It has made only such concessions to the mass movement as were inescapable if popular support were to be retained and its position held against both the more conservative bourgeois elements anxious to halt the reforms at any cost and the more combative elements in the workers movement threatening to push them out of control.

At every stage, the AFM has striven to maintain as much control over the colonies as possible without endangering the conversion to neocolonialist methods. There have been differences over the amount of concessions

that had to be given. An example is the reported dispute between Spínola and the present leaders of the AFM over withdrawal from Mozambique. The Portuguese imperialists have also been forced to make more concessions than they originally intended.

However, the essential continuity in the policy objectives of the imperialist bourgeoisie has been maintained by its present political representative, the AFM. This is shown, among other things, by the maintenance and reinforcement of the Portuguese military intervention in Angola and the attempts by the AFM, including its supposed "radical" wing, to regain political support in Portugal for keeping troops in the economically and strategically more important colonies. The fact that the AFM has used "socialist" and "anti-imperialist" demagoguery in its attempt to persuade the Portuguese masses to accept continued military intervention in the colonies and continued sending of troops there is indicative both of its methods and its objectives.

The AFM is a classical bonapartist government, bourgeois in its objectives, petty-bourgeois in its demagoguery.

3. The Upsurge of the Masses and the Struggle for Democratic Rights

Because of the sudden collapse of the repressive regime and the extreme political and organizational weaknesses of both the capitalists and the workers, the fundamental classes in Portugal, the political and social situation has remained very fluid.

The old regime fell completely discredited. To a large extent, the bourgeoisie and bourgeois ideas shared in its disgrace. In vast ferment, the masses began to express themselves for the first time in forty-eight years, to examine forbidden ideas, to take hope in their ability to change their conditions. As the best known opposition group, the Communist party had the most prestige. But all the opposition groups, all the left parties and groups were taken seriously by the masses. All tendencies and groups received substantial press coverage. There was an unprecedented equality for tendencies on the left, an unprecedented openness to revolutionary ideas on the part of the masses. The ferment of revolutionary ideas spread irresistibly, threatening to dissolve even the discipline of the armed forces, the last prop of capitalist order.

The workers in the factories and the poor masses in the neighborhoods organized spontaneously. Hated bosses and strike-breaking goons were purged. Unused housing was seized. The workers asserted the right to hold meetings and organize assemblies in the plants. The factories became centers of political discussion and activity.

Democratic factory committees sprung up in most of

the big plants. They were elected by general assemblies involving all the workers. In a leap the workers went beyond the craft-union fragmentation imposed by corporatism toward embryonic forms of industrial unions organized on an active democratic basis.

As the radicalization deepened, landless peasants began to seize the land of latifundists and agricultural workers began organizing unions and demanding equality with other workers.

Every issue around which the international radicalization has developed suddenly emerged with a magnified impact. Before the overturn, the feminist struggle had focused around the "Three Marias" case. The prosecution of these three authors was dropped immediately after the fall of the Caetano regime. Two of them became the center of a burgeoning movement. They were called on to offer guidance to women in poor neighborhoods, factories, and peasant villages as well as young feminists in urban intellectual and student milieus. This movement quickly raised demands that went beyond what the military were prepared to grant and it entered into conflict with the military regime. Since April 25, the feminist movement has become a significant and continuing factor in the democratic ferment.

The movement among university and high-school students against authoritarianism in the schools and against restricted access to education assumed powerful momentum, along with actions by students from the colonies. High-school students became its most dynamic sector. They entered into struggle against the new military "saviors" themselves and won victories.

It was essentially the continuation and deepening of this ferment that split the AFM and led the more conservative elements to make desperate, suicidal attempts to carry out right-wing coups in order to halt this process. Conversely, when democratic rights appeared to be dangerously threatened the masses have mobilized on a huge scale. This democratic ferment remains the central political process in Portugal. The future of the mass movement depends on the way the present democratic gains are defended by the mass organizations of the working class and peasantry, utilized in struggles to better their conditions of life, and emphasized in educating the masses and promoting their self-confidence, and in developing revolutionary cadres.

The fight to defend democratic rights in the factory and in society as a whole and to advance the principle of popular sovereignty constitutes the decisive axis of struggle today in Portugal. With their deceptive schemes of a "direct democracy" subordinated to a military regime, the demagogues seek to divert the working class and the peasantry from seeing this reality and organizing accordingly.

A major obstacle to the struggle for democratic rights and popular sovereignty is represented by the leaderships of the mass reformist workers parties and their satellites, since all of them favor subordinating the workers movement to an unelected military regime. However, there is a strong sentiment among the working class as a whole for a united front in defense of democratic rights, which the mass reformist parties cannot ignore. Furthermore, they have already been obliged, in different ways, to defend certain democratic rights at certain times for their own specific interests as bureaucratic workers organizations. The fight to defend democratic rights and popular sovereignty, as the driving force of the revolutionary process in Portugal today, also brings out the contradictions of the reformist parties most sharply and poses the need for a working-class united front in the strongest way.

4. The Stalinists Support the Bourgeois Order

During the first phase of the new regime, the Communist party and its petty-bourgeois front, the Movimento Democratico Portugues (MDP--Portuguese Democratic Movement) played a crucial political role in upholding the military government. It was the only political force not compromised with the old regime that had an effective apparatus, and this machine became in effect the mass apparatus of the new regime. It was the only current in the working class that acted like a mass party despite its small size--it took up issues of concern to the masses. This helped it to move to the center of the stage with extraordinary speed while other currents were trying to assess the situation or were preoccupied with sectarian considerations. It was the forces of the Communist party that dominated the giant May 1 demonstrations and rallies in the wake of the downfall of the Caetano government on April 25 and that turned them into demonstrations of support and adulation for the military. It was this apparatus that enabled General Spínola to build his bonapartist image and thus to move swiftly toward restoring a strong bourgeois authority, which would have crushed the Communist party itself among others.

The political influence of the Communist party hinges on maintaining its working-class base, and, in a situation where the bourgeoisie has been unable to stabilize its political dominance, the Stalinist leaders face great dangers as well as great opportunities for expanding their bureaucratic apparatus. Thus, both in the case of the September 28 and March 11 coups, they were obliged to give the go ahead for mass mobilizations that, although politically and organizationally limited, had revolutionary aspects.

Nonetheless, the fundamental aim of the Communist

party goes counter to the revolution. Its objective, as clearly shown in the period after April 25, is to serve as a transmission belt in the workers movement for the bourgeois regime, as the mass organizer for the AFM. It prefers a military government with a populist facade to a parliamentary regime. The Stalinists believe that a government of this type offers better possibilities for carrying out the necessary minimal reforms while maintaining firm control over the masses and preventing them from "going too fast too far" as the Stalinists claim they did in Chile.

In view of the prerevolutionary situation in Portugal and the extreme weakness of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, such a solution recommends itself all the more to the Stalinists. A military regime, moreover, seems to offer greater guarantees to American imperialism that mass mobilizations will be kept within limits that will not endanger the status quo on a world scale. To the Stalinists it thus seems to offer a way of achieving their objectives without provoking intervention by Washington or endangering the detente.

As a result of the Communist party acting as the transmission belt and labor policeman of the military regime in Portugal, its popular support has lagged far behind the gains in bureaucratic influence it has achieved as a result of the strength of its machine and its privileged relationship with the AFM. Thus, the Portuguese Stalinists have become dependent on the bourgeois government remaining in power to preserve their posts in the provisional cabinet that serves as a facade for the military, as well as to preserve their positions in the labor movement. This situation has led them to take more and more openly antidemocratic positions and finally to join with the AFM in a drive to eliminate freedom of the press and union democracy, and to suppress the left groups that do not subordinate themselves to the military.

Wall Street in particular has taken advantage of these attacks on democratic rights to make publicity gains at the expense of the Portuguese Stalinists and Moscow and to issue warnings about what will happen if the Stalinists go "too far." However, the seemingly aggressive moves of the Portuguese Stalinists have been fully supported by the Kremlin and represent no departure from the policy of detente toward American imperialism. That policy requires Stalinist parties to engage in actions that can prove suicidal. It is part of the overhead cost of the Kremlin's class-collaborationist line.

Although the Stalinists' objective is to consolidate their position as the indispensable auxiliary of the military and thus to prevent any challenge to their position from political rivals, their course is objectively making them more and more the captive of the bourgeois military regime. At the same time, by playing the role of an

auxiliary repressive force for a regime that cannot solve the economic and social problems of the Portuguese masses and is determined to make the workers pay the price of the deepening economic crisis, the Communist party is preparing the way for a resurgence of reactionary anti-Communism on a massive scale, not only among the petty-bourgeois strata but in large sections of the working class itself.

Acting on behalf of a bourgeois regime and against the development of the Portuguese revolution, the CP is helping to pave the way for restoration of one of the fundamental props of bourgeois rule--the fear among the masses that socialism means an end to their democratic rights and subjugation to a tyrannical machine.

Although the Communist party grew in the space of a year from a small nucleus to a mass party and has not yet had time to thoroughly indoctrinate the flood of new recruits, there has been no sign of political differentiation within it. No currents have appeared in opposition to the Stalinist leadership.

The ranks have been rallied behind the leadership through indoctrination of a fanatical sectarian spirit. The promise of material advancement for large layers of recruits through the party machine and the alliance with the military rulers also helps to harden this sectarian attitude and to reinforce the position of the leadership. The Portuguese CP is thus a thoroughly Stalinized party, distinguished among its sister parties only by its high degree of dogmatism and slavish adherence to the directives of Moscow.

5. The Left-Centrist Satellites of the Communist Party

Left-centrist groups have had a certain influence in Portugal, especially among the youth and the intellectuals but also among militant workers. The two parties of this type that participated in the April 25, 1975, elections, the MES (Movimento da Esquerda Socialista--Movement of the Socialist Left) and the FSP (Frente Socialista Popular--People's Socialist Front) won more than 2 percent of the vote between them, over half the vote of all the parties to the left of the Communist party.

Of these two groups the MES is the most serious. It had broken from the Stalinist-dominated popular front some time before the April 25, 1974, overturn and has tried to develop a theoretical alternative to Stalinism. The FSP is a crudely opportunistic formation. It began as a faction in the Socialist party that was disgruntled over the number of posts granted it in the leadership. The faction leaders decided in early 1975 to set up shop as peddlers of a more extreme version of the MES line. One of their selling points was radical Catholic connections. This group calls the SP a bourgeois party. The MES implies this but has

not made it explicit. The FSP subordinates itself completely to the military, while the MES position is more ambiguous. The FSP signed the pact-program. The MES did not, but said it had nothing in principle against doing so. Both groups identify with the Latin American guerrillaist groups and attract a following at least partially through ultraleftist phrasemongering.

There are two groups that characterize themselves as armed organizations and that engaged in guerrilla warfare against the Caetano regime, the Partido Revolucionario do Proletariado-Brigadas Revolucionarias (PRB-BR--Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat-Revolutionary Brigades) and the Liga de Unidade e Accao Revolucionaria (LUAR--League for Revolutionary Unity and Action).

All of these left-centrist groups have an essentially anarchist orientation, although this is most pronounced on the part of the groups that have actually developed around guerrillaist actions and not simply around identification with foreign guerrillaist groups. There are various shades of difference. The MES tends to identify most clearly with Rater-Kommunismus, that is, the ultraleft critics of Lenin in the Third International who made a fetish out of the soviet form and who called for soviets under all conditions in an abstract and romanticized way instead of taking up the concrete political task of leading the workers to break from the bourgeois and reformist parties. This is simply a new form of anarchism masquerading in "Marxist" and "Leninist" clothing. The LUAR comes closest to representing the ideological continuity of historic anarcho-syndicalism. But these are merely nuances. All of them have essentially the same anarchist orientation and contradictions, and all of them echo the CP line of supporting a military dictatorship with a populist facade.

The MES was in a relatively strong position vis-a-vis the Communist party in the labor movement prior to the April 25, 1974, coup. However, its groups were built in the anarcho-syndicalist tradition. What they call their "rank-and-filist" orientation did not reveal its weaknesses so clearly under conditions of repression when workers struggles were scattered and the initiatives of small groups of fighters had more impact. However, its ineffectiveness became glaring when the workers movement reached massive proportions and had to face the political problems posed by a bourgeois government using concessions and demagoguery rather than outright repression to contain workers struggles. As a result, the MES groups in the union movement suffered severe setbacks.

In particular, because of the emphasis of this group on "rank and filism" and initiatives from below, general political questions, such as the attitude to be taken toward a bourgeois government supported by the mass reformist workers parties and how to project a working-class alterna-

tive to it, were obscured. The need to propose a working-class governmental alternative to the AFM was lost in the vague concept of the masses organizing themselves. Concretely, this resulted in the acute contradiction of MES activists participating in strikes that were denounced as "reactionary provocations" by the government while the MES itself gave political support to this same government. Ultimately this line boiled down to the simplistic formula that the AFM had to "fuse with the people's movement."

What this evolution demonstrates is the inability of anarchists to solve the real political problems facing the working-class movement, the problems of breaking the political hold of a demagogic bourgeois government and reformist mass parties. In this, the failure of the MES is analogous to the failure of the anarchists during the Spanish civil war. The fact that this anarchist orientation is covered up with implicit and explicit references to "soviets" does not mean that these groups are moving toward Leninism. To the contrary, following their own petty-bourgeois centrist course, they have been tending to approximate the ultraleft misinterpretation of the experience of the Russian revolution first advanced by such figures as Anton Pannekoek.

As a result of its anarchist confusion, as well as opportunism, the MES has failed to see the democratic principles involved in the conflict between the Socialist party and the military government and has in effect adopted only a souped-up version of the CP's antidemocratic campaign. Despite its denunciation of the CP's "reformism" and "conciliationism," it has become an auxiliary of Portuguese Stalinism, and serves as an advance patrol in the Stalinists' campaign against the SP.

The most extreme expression of this anarchist confusion is to be found in the Partido Revolucionario do Proletariado -- Brigadas Revolucionarias, which was built on a program of urban guerrilla warfare against the Caetano regime. This group has created a phantom organization of "soviets," the "Committees of Workers, Soldiers, and Sailors," and has called on the military security forces, the COPCON, to abolish the political parties and the Constituent Assembly and turn power over to this nonexistent "people's power." Rarely has ultraleft braggadocio been carried to such aberrant conclusions. This ultraleft group has been used as a tool by a group of military officers seeking to abolish political democracy and consolidate a thoroughgoing military dictatorship.

6. The Confusionist Role of the Maoists

Up to now, a sizeable section of the youth and the workers looking for an alternative to the left of the Communist party have been attracted to various Maoist groups, which have tended to coalesce into the following four groups: The Uniao Democratico do Povo (UDP); the Frente Eleitoral dos Comunistas (Marxista-Leninista), or the FEC(ml),

the Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado (MRPP), and the Alianca Operaria Camponesa (AOC).

The USP was the dominant force in the factory council at the Lisnave shipyards in Lisbon from the fall of 1974 until the spring of 1975.

The FEC(ml) has been the organizer of the Grupos de Accao Antifascista (GAAF) in Oporto, which have specialized in attacks on meetings and headquarters of the right-wing bourgeois party, the Centro Democratico Social (CDS).

The AOC has played a leading role in the chemical workers union and is in very close alliance with the Socialist party.

The MRPP has functioned as a tight cult operating under different initials in its various fronts of work. In every area, this group follows the theatrical tactic of trying to raise the red flag the highest, shout the loudest, and assume the most provocative stances. It has achieved no broad influence but has assembled a dedicated following that is probably larger than that of any of the other Maoist groups.

These Maoist groups differ in many respects, the sharpest dividing line being between the AOC, which is more like a right-centrist ally of the SP, and the others, which are generally ultraleftist in their poses. However, they all have one salient trait in common--sectarianism, which is exemplified in their common slogan, "neither fascism, nor social fascism--people's democracy." The Maoists have proved incapable of understanding the real process of the development of political consciousness among the workers and have arbitrarily counterposed their own schemas to this process.

In the case of the UDP, this was expressed in an attempt to counterpose factory committees to the trade unions, which resulted in important sections of militant workers becoming isolated, in the factory committees becoming seriously weakened, and in the Maoists losing their positions.

In the case of the FEC(ml), it resulted in a small group conducting a private war against the CDS and the repressive forces of the bourgeois state.

In the case of the MRPP, its strident ultraleft posturing aroused the hostility of large sections of the workers and the toiling masses toward the groups to the left of the Communist party in general.

In the case of AOC, it resulted in reinforcing sectarian attitudes toward the Communist party among the ranks of the other mass workers party, the Socialist party, thus helping to impede the mass workers organizations from developing united-front actions.

Thus the political program and conduct of the Maoist groups have contributed nothing to developing a revolutionary alternative in Portugal. Without exception, these groups have induced confusion among the militant soldiers and sailors, youth and workers influenced by them and led them toward isolation from the class. They have helped to reinforce the hold of the reformist mass parties over the working class and to create conditions for a crackdown by the government and the Stalinist bureaucrats on the workers and youth who do not accept the AFM's arbitrary rule and the Stalinists' program of class collaboration. Along with the anarchist centrists, the Maoists bear a major responsibility for the grip retained by the class collaborationist SP and CP leaderships over the radicalized youth and the working class and thus for the continuation and deepening of the crisis of revolutionary leadership in Portugal.

7. Social Democratic Rivalry for Favored Position With the AFM

The Socialist party has become the main rival of the Communist party for mass influence among the workers and radicalized petty bourgeoisie. The Social Democrats, like the Communist party leaders, have a reformist perspective, which is expressed in subordination to the ruling military group. However, the SP differs from the CP in its methods of organization and political control. It is not a disciplined or homogeneous party. It seeks to control the working class by political and electoral means rather than by building a disciplined machine. Because of its relatively loose organization and its political heterogeneity, it is much less suited than the Communist party to serve as a transmission belt for the military regime.

The SP requires the forms of parliamentary democracy as a means of developing its influence, competing with the machine of the Communist party, and in fact communicating with its supporters, if not even its members. It is as a result of this need that the SP has come into conflict with the operational plan of the Communist party and the military junta. This conflict has been developing since about a month after the fall of Caetano when the military regime began to move toward cracking down on the radical ferment. Leaders of the SP have repeatedly spoken out in opposition to the moves of the military regime and have defended victims of the repression belonging to the groups standing to the left of the reformist parties. Another reason for this defense of the left groups attacked by the regime, which up till now have generally been Maoists, is to gain a certain left cover by association with non-Social Democratic left forces not allied with Moscow. Nonetheless, the result of this conflict between the two mass reformist parties has been to block repression of revolutionary ideas and consolidation of a more stable bourgeois regime.

The Socialist party has more and more become the rallying ground for forces in the workers movement that refuse to bow to the Stalinists. With the increasing isolation

and decline of the Maoists as a credible alternative to the CP, this tendency will increase even among the most revolutionary-minded youth and workers. Like the Communist party, the Socialist party expanded in one year from a small nucleus to a mass party. In the fundamental sense, it is a Social Democratic party, that is, a reformist workers party that claims to represent socialism but whose perspectives are tied in the last analysis to the ability of its own monopoly capitalism to grant concessions to the workers. It does not strive to abolish capitalism and establish a socialist system; and it is not tied to a bureaucratic caste in any country where capitalism has been abolished.

However, the Portuguese Socialist party has developed in a way different from that of the Social Democratic parties in the other imperialist countries of Europe. It is essentially a new formation born long after the experience of the betrayal of the Second International and the split that followed the Russian revolution. It is not yet based on a big trade-union bureaucracy.

The initial nucleus drew together a number of strands of the non-Stalinist left opposition to the Salazarist dictatorship, all of which were deeply antagonized by the sectarianism and dogmatism of the CP led by Alvaro Cunhal. Some of these elements, most notably Mario Soares, sought the support of the Socialist parties in Western Europe and the "democratic" capitalist countries. Some of them, again like Soares, came out of the old bourgeois liberal milieu. Others, again like Soares, served an apprenticeship in the Communist party. A section of the SP leadership comes from the liberal Stalinists who left the Communist party after 1968, most notably the leader of the SP's trade-union work, Marcelo Curto. Another contribution to the initial nucleus was made by ultraleft youth involved in terrorist actions against the old regime. Many radicalized Catholics were also attracted to the initial nucleus. The original group included young intellectuals and activists influenced by the international youth radicalization who were critical of reformism but without a well-defined or consistent political perspective. These elements sought a broad arena of activity and were repelled by the Stalinism of the Communist party and its satellites and the Maoists.

This heterogeneity has increased during the growth of the Socialist party into a mass organization. The ideological and organizational looseness of the SP made it a gathering place for workers who were radicalizing but who were not ready to commit themselves to the political and organizational conformity demanded by the CP. It attracted in particular workers and intellectuals who feared the totalitarian features of Stalinism, and militant layers of workers who were repelled by the CP's policing the labor movement on behalf of the military regime.

This heterogeneous combination included, as was to be expected, elements affected by reactionary anti-Com-

munist and anti-Leninist prejudices. Moreover, in the conflict with a Communist party seeking to use totalitarian methods in support of military rule, strong currents in such a combination were bound to seek support from the European Socialist parties and even the "democratic" capitalist governments.

However, the facts do not support the claim of the CP and its ultraleft satellites that the SP has become a rallying ground for rightist bourgeois opposition to the regime.

The reality is that as the gathering place of a broad range of forces representing the majority of the Portuguese workers and radicalized petty bourgeoisie, the Socialist party has become the political axis of the radicalization in Portugal. If this coalition of forces is driven to the right in its conflict with the CP and the military junta, the working class will be profoundly divided and weakened, and the conditions will be created for the restoration of an openly antiworking-class government in Portugal. Thus, the sectarian campaign the CP unleashed against the SP following the latter's electoral victory can at some stage prove suicidal for the Stalinists themselves. It in fact represents a deadly danger to the working class as a whole. In this campaign the CP is motivated by determination to defend the bureaucratic positions it has gained as a result of its role as mass organizer for the military junta as well as by Moscow's calculation that a regime like the AFM fits in best with its current diplomatic needs in the detente with Washington. This campaign of slander and demagoguery against the SP goes counter to the interests of the revolution and must be characterized as reactionary.

The development of anti-Communist and anti-Leninist sentiments among the Socialist party rank and file can best be fought by revolutionists showing in practice that they defend the democratic rights of the masses, and are battling to extend them to the barracks, the factories, unions, and any popular committees. Among other things, this involves exposing the demagoguery of the Stalinists and combating their campaign of slander against the Socialist party.

8. The Road to Power and the Role of the Constituent Assembly

The revolutionary process has not reached the point where clear forms of workers power have begun to emerge. Thus, dual power does not yet exist in Portugal. What has appeared is sporadic and scattered mass initiatives and forms of workers control that can point the way toward the kinds of mass workers action capable in fact of giving rise to dual power.

However, before this can occur, key political struggles must be won. The fundamental one is to bring the workers to break from subordination to the Armed Forces Movement

and to assert their right to put a workers and peasants government in power.

The fight at the present time centers on the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties have a substantial absolute majority and which is the only national body thus far elected by the populace. Closely linked to this is the crucial struggle for democratic rights and democratic control in the armed forces. The various "direct democracy" schemes floated by the demagogues of the AFM are intended to divert the workers from insisting on the concrete expression of popular sovereignty through the Constituent Assembly; that is, by establishing a workers and peasants government. In the same way, the alleged "democratization" of the AFM, and the setting up of "revolutionary councils" under AFM tutelage are designed to divert the ranks of the army from demanding their democratic right to organize independently and to engage in political activity.

The ultraleftist schemas of "revolutionary councils" projected in opposition to the Constituent Assembly play into the hands of the military demagogues. This line of the centrist anarchist groups of opposing the only existing elected political representation of the working masses in the name of phantom "soviets" and in return for vague promises from demagogic military officers amounts to criminal confusionism if not outright betrayal of the working class.

The capitulation of the anarchist centrists to bourgeois military "saviors" is also expressed in their demand that the regime use its troops to back groups in the colonies that they consider to be the most "progressive" of those vying for power. This demand is helping the imperialist regime to roll back the sentiment among the masses for bringing all the troops home from the colonies. It thus plays a reactionary role. It also promotes the AFM's policy of restoring the armed forces as an effective instrument of repression.

The factory councils that appeared in the period following the fall of the Caetano dictatorship were a response to the need for an economic organization representing all the workers in an enterprise, a special need created by the fragmentation of the economic organizations of the workers under the Salazarist regime. These bodies have remained within the general trade-union framework and have not functioned as soviets. They have not taken political initiatives; they have not assumed control over factories or industrial concentrations; they have not drawn into struggle the most oppressed layers of the masses; they are not seen by the workers as a center of power parallel to or competing with the government. The existing neighborhood committees represent even less a nucleus of workers councils that could lead to workers power.

The most advanced revolutionary-democratic forms of organization that have yet appeared in Portugal are the assemblies and committees of soldiers and sailors that have sprung up in various units at certain times. However, these have not become standing committees on any substantial scale except in the navy, which is not the politically decisive branch of the armed forces.

Parallel with its mounting attack on the Constituent Assembly in the name of "direct democracy" and the "revolutionary process," the AFM has become less and less regarded by the masses of workers and peasants as offering hope for a way out of their difficulties. This decline in the prestige of the military is most marked among the peasantry, since only a revolutionary agrarian policy can begin to solve the problems facing the poor peasants in Portugal. The technical level of agriculture needs to be raised, landlordism abolished in the south, and government-subsidized aid projects established for the poor peasants in the north.

The failure of the AFM government in the countryside provides an index of its conservative nature. On the one hand, the continuing backwardness of agriculture has meant a continual rise in food prices for the urban workers. On the other hand, the failure to offer any hope of improvement in the lot of the peasants has turned this stratum toward reactionary "saviors." The recent "independence" demonstrations in the Azores are a clear example of this.

The deceit in the AFM demagogy about "direct democracy" is shown perhaps most clearly by the reactionary opposition of the military government to struggles for democratic rights in the high schools, an opposition reaffirmed in the June 21 policy statement of the Conselho da Revolucao (Council of the Revolution). Massive struggles for democratic rights by high-school students have shown this section of the population to be one of the most militant and most highly politicized in the country, and one of the least influenced by the military and the reformists. The June 21 statement points to a new attack by the military on this mass movement, which is struggling for real direct democracy and not "participation" under the rod of military tutors

Thus, there are five axes of the revolutionary process in Portugal at the present stage.

(a) The struggle for immediate withdrawal of all troops from the colonies.

(b) The struggle for democratic rights of soldiers within the armed forces.

(c) The struggle for democratic rights and democratic decision-making in every area of social life. The strength of the struggle for democracy in the armed forces and withdrawal of the troops from the colonies is derived from this general democratic ferment, which remains the most power-

ful progressive force in Portuguese society.

(d) The struggle for effective workers organizations. The Portuguese workers are still at an early stage of organization. They have not yet developed adequate means to defend their most elementary interests as workers. In this situation, propaganda and agitation for industrial unions and a united democratic union structure combines closely with other revolutionary tasks and forms an essential component in developing a concrete revolutionary answer to the concerns of the masses of workers.

The fight for workers control in the present conditions also fits in with these tasks, and the workers have already asserted control in many instances to protect their specific interests, in the face of government assaults, employer sabotage, and mounting unemployment and inflation. Workers control is necessary to defend jobs, to prevent the flight of capital, to fight inflation, and to administer a sliding scale of wages and hours. However, workers control cannot serve its purpose unless the workers make clear that they do not accept responsibility for the functioning of the economy until they have real political power over it.

Because of the demagogy of the military regime and the Communist party--demagogy that has been reinforced by the anarchist predilections of the left-centrists groups--the danger is that a facade of "workers control" may be used by the government to induce the workers to accept austerity. If such a tactic is successful, it will result in profound demobilization and demoralization of the working class.

An example of how the government and the reformists have used the theme of "workers control" for demagogic purposes was provided by the closing of the newspaper Republica. In this test case, a brazen attack on freedom of the press and the right of expression of the largest party in the working class was justified by claiming that a small group of Stalinist-influenced printing workers had the right to impose political censorship over a daily paper disliked by the government and the Communist party.

The greatest danger to the organization of the workers on the economic level is the attempt by the military regime and its Stalinist supporters to impose the tutelage of the bourgeois state over the unions. The so-called Trade-Union Unity law, imposing Intersindical as the only legal national federation, was precisely an attempt by the military junta and the Communist party to subordinate the unions to the bourgeois state, to convert the unions into a transmission belt for the policy of the bourgeois government in the working class.

(e) The struggle for popular sovereignty and a workers and peasants government. On the political level, the

workers in their great majority look for leadership from three sources: the Socialist party, the Communist party, and Intersindical, the trade-union federation. The Socialist party has the largest following and is the most attractive at the moment to the majority of the working class. The Communist party and Intersindical are the strongest organizations of the working class and are looked to for leadership in action such as the resistance to the coup attempts in September 1974 and March 1975. At present no alternative to these mass organizations has credibility among large layers of workers. Nor can any alternative develop until the masses have learned in practice the limitations of the leadership offered by these organizations.

The only politically representative body chosen by the workers and the masses in Portugal is the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties hold an absolute majority. The fight for popular sovereignty, democracy, and a workers and peasants government cannot be waged without defending the Constituent Assembly against attempts by the Communist party and the military junta to undermine its authority and destroy its sovereignty.

The struggle for a workers and peasant government focuses at present on the Constituent Assembly. The sharpest issues are defense of the Constituent Assembly, the demand that it represent the interests of the toiling masses who elected it, and repudiation by the workers parties of the pact-program, which signified capitulation to the military junta. By signing this agreement with the military regime, the leaders of the mass workers parties betrayed their responsibility to represent the workers who support them. In the Constituent Assembly, the Socialist party stands in the most contradictory position, since it claims to represent the majority of workers as well as to have been mandated by the majority of the population. Moreover, the leaders of the Socialist party came into conflict with the military government ostensibly in defense of popular sovereignty and the democratic rights of the masses. But they continue to abide by the decrees of the military rulers. The Socialist party leaders are also more vulnerable to pressure from the rank and file and from the populace than the Communist party.

Incipient organs of workers power will arise out of united mass struggles of the working class, as they have in every previous revolutionary upsurge. In Portugal, the way cannot be cleared for such struggles without beginning

by contesting the self-assumed right of the military government to rule. Acceptance of this pretension is not only the strongest force in maintaining subordination of the workers to a bourgeois leadership and the biggest impediment to their organization; it is also the main obstacle to the mass working-class organizations engaging in united-front actions.

Concretely, what defending the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly involves is calling upon the Communist and Socialist parties, as the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese workers and the majority of the Portuguese people, to establish a new government by exercising their majority in the Constituent Assembly and appealing to the masses and the rank and file of the armed forces to mobilize in support of it. These are also the main political forces in Intersindical, which should remain independent of any government, even a workers and peasants government, as the direct defender of the economic interests of the workers.

Making this demand on the two mass parties of the working class is an essential part of the process of advancing a socialist governmental alternative to the military regime and in exposing the incapacity of these parties to provide such an alternative.

As the disillusionment of the masses with the military regime deepens, and the economic crisis grows worse, the threat of a reactionary coup will become increasingly grave. At the same time, the MFA will lose its capacity and its determination to resist a rightist onslaught. Since its power is based specifically on the bourgeois army, it views arming the masses as a deadly threat. Furthermore, as the regime becomes more and more discredited, the masses will become increasingly reluctant to mobilize under its auspices, since this would continue to subordinate them to a regime over which they have no control, and which seems less and less inclined to defend their interests. The masses can be mobilized more easily in defense of the Constituent Assembly, which they regard to some extent as their own and which they can hope to control and compel to defend their interests. Thus, propaganda and agitation for mobilizing and arming the masses against the rightist hangmen can be carried out most successfully in combination with defending the sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly.

July 1, 1975

COPY

COPY

COPY

July 4, 1975

Dear Hugo,

I hope you received the draft of the statement "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," which we drew up for discussion in the leadership of the LTF.

What led us to draw up this statement was the fact that it became obvious, particularly in the weeks following the closing down of República on May 20, that the analyses of the Portuguese situation made by the different currents in the Fourth International were so much at variance as to lead to conflicting political positions.

Thus at the United Secretariat meeting in May, representatives of the LTF were unable to present a common position. The IMT likewise appeared to be divided, although they succeeded in papering over the divisions. At the same time, the OCI, which refused to participate in the reunification in 1963 and which maintained a hostile attitude toward the United Secretariat up until recently, has taken a public position paralleling ours on at least two issues in the Portuguese revolution -- the importance of the struggle for democratic rights and the characterization of the MFA as a bourgeois government whose real objective is to maintain capitalism in Portugal.

In our opinion the differences that have appeared on this question constitute a grave danger to the unity of the international. This is because the differences are of a political nature and therefore of unavoidable sharpness. In the case of República, for instance, they determine where one stands in demonstrations and counterdemonstrations...for or against? The differences can thus lead to comrades participating on opposing sides and finding themselves confronting each other in physical clashes. Moreover, it is impossible to stand aloof, since that would mean either being caught between the two sides, with blows raining from both quarters, or abstaining; that is, retiring from politics, at least on that issue.

The immediate problem is to determine the key issues and to clarify what position the Trotskyist movement should take on them. Because of this we have not attempted to present a rounded analysis of the Portuguese revolution, its origin, where it stands today, and what the perspectives are. A document of that kind may soon be required. However, for the time being, what is called for is a discussion among leaders who have been following the events in detail and who are therefore in position to decide without having to undertake a preliminary study. Therefore, we have sought to make the document succinct, adding only such details as to make the points reasonably clear to leading comrades who have a general but not detailed knowledge of the events in Portugal.

The positions that ought to be adopted can be stated in a highly condensed way, in my opinion, about as follows:

1. Portugal is an imperialist power.
2. The MFA government is a bourgeois institution, its main tasks being to block a socialist revolution and to retain as much

2/

of the colonial empire as possible, utilizing neocolonial forms.

3. The Portuguese army remains imperialist in character. Its deployment in countries like Angola is intended to facilitate a neocolonialist outcome. Consequently its withdrawal should be one of the central demands advanced by the revolutionary movement.

4. The MFA is the political instrument of the army hierarchy. In the government it is playing a bourgeois bonapartist role. Individual members of the MFA may be of petty-bourgeois origin, and under certain circumstances, one or two, or possibly more, could come over to the camp of the revolution; but it would be a violation of principles for Trotskyists to base their attitude toward the government on the possibility of such shifts by individuals.

5. Both the Socialist and Communist parties are reformist formations that are vying in displaying loyalty to the MFA. Both of them are seeking to derail the revolution in Portugal.

6. A number of ultraleft formations are likewise playing the role of blocking the development of the revolution whether consciously or not.

7. The outstanding issue following the downfall of Salazarism has been the defense and extension of democratic rights.

8. This struggle takes shape around specific items such as freedom of the press (República), freedom of association (union organization), freedom to strike (MFA and CP strikebreaking), freedom of the people to choose a representative government (the Constituent Assembly).

9. The development of soviets could well take place around defense of democratic rights and swiftly develop into something much broader. But this has not yet occurred except in an isolated embryonic way.

10. One of the main immediate dangers is the perspective projected by the MFA of liquidating the Constituent Assembly, eliminating political parties, and subjecting the working class to its direct control by bringing the unions and similar organizations under state domination....

* * *

After the document has been discussed and agreed-upon changes have been made, we would propose its adoption as the political stand of the LTF on the key issues of the Portuguese revolution as they stand at this point.

With warmest greetings,

Comradely,

/s/ Joe

From Red Weekly, June 12, 1975

INTRODUCTION

The most recent assembly of the Armed Forces Movement, meeting to discuss the next steps forward in Portugal, issued a call to 'reinforce the direct relations of the AFM with all the structures of popular participation, with a view to consolidating the alliance of the AFM and the people and overcoming partisan divisions in the common struggle of the battle for production and effective construction of socialism.'

But what the statement failed to specify was the relationship between these 'structures of popular participation' and the capitalist state - - and on which it was intended that the government should be based. This has led to a situation of continuing political crisis reflecting the ongoing struggle for dominance between capital and labour.

On the one hand, the Socialist Party, whose leadership is firmly committed to the defence of capitalism, has seized on a dispute at the newspaper Republica to raise a hue and cry about the 'Communist threat' to democracy and to warn against the threat of a 'new dictatorship'. Faced with a threat from the SP to withdraw from the cabinet unless its demands were met, the AFM finally backed down. DANIEL BENSARD looks at what was really going on at Republica ... and explains how a revolutionary socialist policy could have exposed the SP's claim to be defending press freedom and resolved the situation in the interests of the whole working class movement. . .

THE REPUBLICA AFFAIR

by David Bensaid

The Republica affair has provided the excuse for a two-fold campaign by the Socialist Party to sway public opinion. In Portugal itself, in the name of 'freedom', it has organised mass demonstrations on a scale which would have been totally beyond it a few months ago. 'We would have got even more votes if the elections had taken place now', exults SP leader Mario Soares. At an international level the indignant chorus of democrats has conveniently pushed into the background Gerald Ford's more or less open threats against Portugal.

Aside from this campaign to sway public opinion, the Republica affair poses a real and basic problem: the attitude of the workers' movement towards the means of information. But to look at it at all seriously, we must first clear up two points of fact which have been deliberately obscured in the discussion around this affair.

Firstly, Republica is not the official paper of the Socialist Party, and is not part of the militant press of the workers' movement. It is a private newspaper whose opinions today are to a great extent influenced by the Socialist Party -- that is all. This little difference has certain consequences which we will go into.

Workers commission

Furthermore, contrary to what the Socialist Party would have us believe, it was not the Communist Party which prevented the publication of the paper. It was the decision of the workers' commission, in which the influence of the CP is contested by a Maoist group, the Popular Democratic Union (UDP). One has only to note the embarrassment of the CP over the affair, and to see who has really benefited, to understand that it was not a question of the CP leadership pulling the strings.

What explanation of the conflict has been given by the workers of the Republica workers' commission? Their first argument is that it was an industrial dispute: the financial situation of the paper was getting worse, sales were falling, and their jobs were at risk. To exercise control over management decisions, they decided to elect a commission with one delegate for every 15 workers (two editorial staff, four printers, three clerical staff, two from despatch, and one messenger). But here this question overlaps with another: the workers' commission blamed the content of the newspaper for its falling sales.

This version is supported by the media-workers' and printers' unions. The former took up in its motion the theme of an industrial dispute: 'That is why the workers of Republica decided to exercise greater control over the newspaper in order to assure the non-party character of its contents and their own right to work.' They even add that the battle at Republica must be seen in the context of the battle for production, to safeguard a small undertaking.

The Socialist Party, however, has organised its campaign around the theme of 'press freedom'. But what is this 'freedom of the press' at present? Freedom of information? Not exactly. Rather, it is the freedom of the owners to maintain their hold over the means of information and communication.

Nationalise the media

That is why the struggle of the Republica workers could have fitted in so well with the general interests of the Portuguese working class. Thus we, as revolutionary communists, demand first of all the immediate

Republica Affair, page two

nationalization without compensation of the paper-mills, the printing works and manufacturers of printing materials, the radio and TV networks, and the news agencies. By itself that wouldn't resolve the problem of a critical and democratic information service. But it is necessary pre-condition if the workers' and cultural organisations, the different local or labour groupings, are to have access to the means of communication to exchange their experiences and proposals; if they are to have at their disposal the necessary means to conduct the great collective debate which will be required for any democratic elaboration of an entire economic plan.

To nationalise the means of communication means only to remove them from the control of private interests. It does not mean State control of all information. This or that organisation, this or that union, this or that university or cultural grouping can keep its press on the basis of a national re-allocation of the existing facilities.

In this light the workers of a printing company or a newspaper cannot set themselves up as censors in the name of the whole working class of which they are only a small fraction. Workers' control over the organs of information cannot justify the right of censorship, but only the right of counter-information. Thus instead of blocking publication or cutting out articles, the workers of Republica co-ordinating commission should have demanded the simultaneous publication of

their own views whenever they thought that news coverage was biased. They should also have posed publicly the question of real freedom of information and put democracy on their side.

That is our point of view -- a friendly criticism, a difference of positions 'inside the workers' movement on a difficult question.

Post-electoral offensive

But the fight waged by the Portuguese Socialist Party is something else entirely. It has used the Republica affair to extend its post-electoral offensive: to call into question the municipal councils set up after 25 April 1974, and to challenge the trade union leaderships elected by a show of hands.

On the ground of democratic freedoms and their defence we can see that the SP and the CP are in fact two sides of the same coin. It did not take the Republica affair to set the alarm bells ringing. We condemned at the time the decrees of June 1974 which completely restricted the freedom of the press (by introducing virtual censorship) and those of September which limited the right to strike. We condemned the banning and the repression of the Maoist groups.

The CP and SP ministers were rather less concerned with democracy when they accepted these decrees and put them into practice without a word of complaint.

FOR THE GENERALIZATION OF WORKERS COUNCILS

The economic situation is getting worse all the time. Last January, official statistics claimed that more than 200,000 were unemployed. Today the figure 300,000 is accepted in government circles. Portuguese industry, based around exports, has been hit full force by the international recession. The major industries, textiles and clothing, which employ about 200,000 workers and export 90 percent of their production, have been hard hit by a drastic reduction in orders.

Both the structural weaknesses of Portuguese industry and bourgeois economic sabotage compound the effects of the international recession. The deficit in the trade balance is growing because of the agricultural crisis, food products are high on the list of imports. The repercussions of this trade deficit on the balance of payments are especially great because the traditional compensating factors are no longer operative: the income provided by money sent back by immigrant workers and by tourism.

In face of the aggravation of this crisis and of the political maturation of the working class, the tensions within the MFA (Armed Forces Movement) reflect in a deformed way the growing polarization between the two fundamental classes of Portuguese society. The resolution of June 21 published by the Council of the Revolution itself expresses the deep crisis of leadership racking the MFA. The basic project seems to go in the direction of centralizing power even further and of consolidating the state apparatus, which implies more assertive control over the organs of self-organization of workers and soldiers (the reaction against the soldiers committees is indicative of this.) Nevertheless, the formulations of the text leave the door open for initiatives that, under the cover of control over the instruments of self-organization, nonetheless move in the direction of links between soldiers and workers. All the ambiguity of the present situation is reflected in this phenomenon. Any new step forward in the revolutionary upsurge would put severe strains on the increasingly fragile unity of the MFA.

Workers struggles are continuing, although there has been some slowdown in their pace. Essentially, they are developing around demands related to employment guarantees and responses to layoffs, factory closings, and lockouts. Nevertheless sentiment about the insufficiency of occupations, workers' restarting of production, and the demand for nationalizations is on the rise among the workers.

More and more, these initiatives and demands appear as insufficient in themselves to deal with the economic crisis. And the "battle for production," placed in the center of the propaganda of the Communist party, the Intersindical (the trade-union federation and the MFA since May 1, has only a limited grip on the working class, which is increasingly asking itself such questions as: Production for whom? Production for what and how? How are the nationalized companies (60 percent of all companies) to be managed? Whowill decide on a central economic plan and how will the workers be able to define the objective of the plan and control its application?

While the working class is exhibiting some hesitation in moving to a higher stage of struggle, at the same time these questions are being discussed among rank-and-file workers. They can be summed up in the formula: "battle for production" or "battle for power"?

Even more significant are the instances of initiatives of self-defense that have occurred during the past two weeks. First, many workers commissions are insisting on the necessity of dealing with fascist sabotage. In many communiques the workers are putting the emphasis on the urgency of making military instruction available to all worker militants. Second, an effective linkup between the soldiers and the workers commissions and neighborhood committees is developing. Some workers commissions are receiving military instruction in some barracks. Some soldiers are training militants of the tenant commissions and workers commissions. These initiatives are not yet very extensive, but they nonetheless mark a change in the relations between the soldiers and the instruments of self-organization of the toiling masses.

This is particularly important in that reaction is now trying to take advantage of the crisis situation to launch harassment operations against the headquarters of workers organizations and against the militants of these organizations. In the North, for example, Communist party militants in Viseu were attacked by reactionary gangs. In Sao Joao de Madeira (near Porto) a demonstration of about 1,000 people was organized to demand the release of a fascist employer, a member of the far-right ELP (Portuguese Liberation Army). The church is trying to gather together a part of the forces of reaction and is organizing a big assembly in Lisbon for June 29. Reaction is increasingly preparing for a confrontation with the regime.

The leadership of the Socialist party, under the cover of a campaign for "socialism with freedom," is taking many initiatives to defend bourgeois parliamentary

democracy (against workers democracy based on workers and soldiers councils), to maintain private property and combat "anarchy" in the factories, and to support "order in the army" (against self-organization of the soldiers,).

During the June 28 demonstration, which was presented as a demonstration in support of the Council of the Revolution, a reactionary tone was dominant, especially in that the demonstration was joined by the PPM (the monarchist party), the PPD (Popular Democratic party), the CDS (Social Democratic Center), and the Maoists of the Portuguese Communist party (Marxist-Leninist).

In face of these Social Democratic maneuvers, the Communist party, while proclaiming the necessity of unity, is setting the "battle for production" as the objective for which the workers should fight in order to attain this unity. A "battle" that involves challenging the mobilizations and demands of the workers!

There is a deep sentiment for unity within the working class, a result of the victory of March 11. This sentiment is expressed both in the emergence and strengthening of organs of workers self-organization (neighborhood commissions, tenants commissions, workers commissions, etc.) and in the trade unions, where the workers are manifesting their will to reach real agreement, after discussion, on the various problems that confront them.

In face of the division that the bureaucratic apparatuses can stimulate within the working class, in face of the necessity for taking a step forward to respond to the fundamental economic and social problems that are posed for the Portuguese toiling masses today, and in face of the reactionary conspiracy, our comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International) are waging a systematic campaign for the unity in action of all the organizations and representative organs of the workers and for the generalization and centralization of organs of democratic and proletarian power. The LCI is waging this campaign in a united front with other organizations, such as the Movimento Esquerda Socialista (Left Socialist Movement), LUAR, etc. We are publishing below a call for the "building and generalization of workers councils" issued by the LCI on June 17. A coming issue of INPRECOR will publish large excerpts from an LCI manifesto presenting the essential positions of revolutionaries on the way to combat the crisis and struggle for socialism.

Forward to the building and generalization of workers councils! Create and unify armed self-defense pickets in the unions, neighborhoods, and factories!

L. The political situation is rapidly increasing in tension. Along with an offensive by the reactionary forces of the FLNA and UNITA, capitalist reaction is once again launching its attacks: bombs, explosives, attacks on the headquarters of workers organizations, especially in the interior of the country, reactionary demonstrations in the Azores and the Madeira Islands. The methods of reaction are provocation, terror, economic sabotage, massive layoffs, and systematic attacks on the buying power of the workers.

The theft of arms from the Santa Margarida barracks is an important step in the offensive of reaction. Nevertheless, the workers are organizing their response with a determination even more assertive than that which permitted the crushing of the attempted coups of September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975: armed self-defense detachments and antifascist vigilance committees in contact with the workers and tenants commissions are springing up and becoming generalized.

But at the same time, the government and the MFA are not putting forward the fundamental means that would enable reaction to be swept away: dissolution and disarming of the fascist gangs, arrest and public trial of counterrevolutionaries, arming of the unions and the Intersindical (the trade-union federation) and workers and tenants commissions.

2. The present impasse cannot go on for long. The workers, basing themselves on their mass organizations, can take their destiny into their own hands! The revolution will advance toward the power of the workers and their representative organs - councils of elected delegates in the factories, neighborhoods, and villages - only if the basic steps to beat reactionary resistance, put an end to unemployment and poverty, and crush reaction and its parties are taken right now.

We will advance down this road by struggling for:

* the generalization and unification of all the popular vigilance committees linked to armed self-defense pickets in the unions and factories and directed by local coordinating bodies of the workers and tenants commissions

* the immediate convocation of zonal assemblies centralizing and pressing forward the creation of delegates councils in all factories, impelling forward the strengthening of workers commissions charged with exerting workers control over the work pace, orders, and stocks, with holding general assemblies for controlling all administrative activities (as at CUF, where the workers

have demanded nationalization), and finally, with proposing to the tenants commissions the setting of prices and controlling of prices of food, transport, and rent.

*the application of a radical agrarian reform giving the produce of the land to those who till it, unifying the common struggle of the workers of the countryside and the cities against capitalist exploitation, for the socialist revolution.

3. These are the measures that must be applied immediately. In many factories the workers have already taken initiatives in this direction. That is the road of struggle against capitalist reaction and for socialism.

In order to go forward, today more than ever it is necessary to form a solid united front of all the workers organizations. All workers, all revolutionaries, all militants struggling for socialism, those of the Communist party, the Socialist party, and all the revolutionary organizations, must unite in representative bodies of workers against capital and reaction. To crush the gangs of the PPD and the CDS, to prevent new reactionary provocations, to defend the workers and their struggles, to defeat economic sabotage and imperialist pressure, it is not enough simply to assert the will for unity. We must participate massively in the workers and tenants commissions, in the zonal assemblies, in the village councils, in the popular vigilance committees.

4. But in order for these measures to be extended throughout the country and be really applied, it is necessary to go beyond the hesitations of this fourth provisional government. Stumbling from crisis to crisis, it is ever more incapable of dealing with the unemployment (which now affects more than 200,000 workers), the reactionary offensive, or the imperialist pressure.

It is necessary to impose a government that breaks with the policy of class collaboration, nationalizes without compensation and under workers control the big commercial, industrial, and agricultural companies, establishes a monopoly of foreign trade and creates a single state bank, disarms the reactionaries, dissolves their organizations, and bans their activities, generalizes workers control throughout the system of production and exchange and throughout the whole economy on the basis of a central plan, and definitively guarantees the democratic rights of the workers and soldiers.

This government of workers organizations must be controlled by the workers and by trade-union, neighborhood, and factory assemblies and must be responsible to the workers councils, elected in the workplaces and neighborhoods.

This government will have to be based on the workers, on their demands, decisions, and permanent mobilization. It will have to be based on representative committees of soldiers, sailors, and airmen that press the purge of fascists to its conclusion, organize general assemblies within which all officers are elected, and guarantee the right of propaganda and assembly to all political and trade-union currents.

5. From this point on, for the workers and popular movement the present crisis represents much more than a government crisis. It is thus urgent to elect workers commissions or delegates councils that can structure the workers offensive, prepare the zonal assemblies, organize self-defense, and coordinate the tenants commissions with the assemblies and elected committees of soldiers and sailors.

It will be around these bodies that the workers will have to gather in determined fashion in order to:

*apply workers democracy, decide the future, and choose representatives;

*prepare a real national workers assembly uniting all the organizations of workers and peasants, whether in or out of uniform, and struggling for socialism.

It is necessary to prepare for decisive struggles!

For the socialist revolution, for socialism based on workers and soldiers councils, on international solidarity with the struggle of the Spanish workers and revolutionaries and of the former Portuguese colonies, for the building of a revolutionary workers party, proletarian leadership of the anticapitalist mass movement!

FORWARD TO THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION!

FOR THE SOCIALIST UNITED STATES OF EUROPE!

The following articles by Trotsky will be useful to comrades as background material to the debate over Portugal:

Writings of Leon Trotsky (1930)

"The Slogan of a National Assembly in China," p. 159

"Problems of the Italian Revolution," p. 220

The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany

"Workers Control of Production," p. 77

"Factory Councils and Workers Control of Production,"
p. 85

The Spanish Revolution

"Tasks of Spanish Communists," p. 55

"Soviets and the Constituent Cortes," p. 66

"The Revolution in Spain"

a) The Program of Revolution, p. 76

b) Communism, Anarchosyndicalism, Social Democracy, p. 81

c) The Revolutionary Junta and the Party, p. 85

"The Spanish Revolution and the Dangers Threatening It"

a) The Parliamentary Cretinism of the Reformists and the Antiparliamentary Cretinism of the Anarchists, p. 115

b) What Kind of Revolution is Ahead in Spain, p. 119

c) The Problem of Permanent Revolution, p. 121

d) What is the Growing Over of the Revolution, p. 122

e) The Struggle for the Masses and the Workers Juntas, p. 127

f) The Problems of Tempo of the Spanish Revolution, p. 129