

PCTP / MRPP.

Interview with the Secretary General of the Movement for the Reorganization of the Party of the Proletariat

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– *Question: We would like you to tell us the “why”, the “when” and the “how” of the MRPP?*

– Arnaldo MATOS: Our movement was constituted on September 18, 1970. At its origin: the awakening by the communists and the avant-garde workers of our country, on the basis of a study of the Portuguese reality, and of the failures of their struggle, of the fact that in Portugal there was no authentically communist party, no Marxist-Leninist party, and that, in fact, there had never been one.

Despite the absence of such a party, the working class had waged resolute, heroic struggles under the leadership of the various petty-bourgeois strata that had infiltrated it.

To build the party, the real communist party, one could not make a clean sweep of this experience of the working class of our country, nor of that of the proletarians of the whole world. The constitution of a real communist party raised new problems, stemming from the Portuguese situation, and which did not exist in any other country, even in Western Europe where the problems are very similar to ours.

It was therefore necessary to regroup forces and train, in the heat of the struggle, cadres capable, by interpreting Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, of applying it to the concrete reality of the Portuguese revolution, and of building the party which they lacked in their struggles and for the seizure of power. This is how, a little over four years ago, the party that is about to be founded arose.

– *Question: In what sense is it about to be founded?*

– AM: The political, ideological and organizational conditions that it was the mission of the MRPP to create are met. We had inherited a political past full of errors (in any case a rich experience): to create the party, we could not follow a method identical to that of the communists of other countries.

The method, the political, ideological and organizational principles of the working class party are defined by past historical experiences, but their application to each country depends on the concrete conditions of the time and place.

In our country, this party could not be created without fulfilling a certain number of conditions which we now define as the five essential conditions, which we have incorporated into our general program [Statutes of the MRPP].

Without the realization of these five conditions, founding the party would be a subjective, petty-bourgeois, voluntarist adventure, which would lead to a new failure. Essentially, these conditions are aimed at creating a mass base on which the party can be founded.

That is to say, it would not be enough for a small group of Communists to form a party for the Portuguese working masses to come to support it.

It was necessary to do preparatory work of propaganda and agitation of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism among the masses, so that they could distinguish for themselves what differentiated the revolutionary line from the revisionist line, that they were accustomed to accept.

This is so that we can muster sufficient support, that the party, at the time of its foundation, represents an authentic, real, necessary political force, and that this is not a pure decree of party constitution, as other opportunists, in addition to the revisionists, thought they could do it.

– *Question: Is there a twin party of the MRPP in other countries?*

– AM: Insofar as we are Marxists-Leninists-Maoists, there is more than one party identical to our Movement. But the process of party constitution that our movement has followed is entirely "sui generis", for no two countries are alike, nor two countries where the class struggle goes through the same phases, and takes the same forms at the same times.

– *Question: After the repression that has befallen your Movement since April 25, today there is a ban on it for the entire election period. We would like Arnaldo Matos to talk to us about the repression after April 25, the repression before April 25, and draw a parallel between the two.*

– AM: You are right to pose the question in this way, and it would be good on this occasion to draw attention to a fact. Within the framework of petty-bourgeois democracy, among the various types of petty-bourgeois democracy in our country, the so-called socialists, so-called communists and others believe that the repression which has now befallen our Movement, with this attempt to ban, is an accidental phenomenon, that it is a mistake of the current military dictator and his colleagues, and that once the elections for the Constituent Assembly are carried out, this measure will cease to be applied, our Movement will find the possibilities to act again legally.

This is a very dangerous illusion, which we must fight now. It is since April 25 that the authorities, in one way or another, and especially the revisionist party of Minister Barreirinhas Cunha, have raised their voices and prepared public opinion for the banning of our Movement, by spreading a number of the basest calumnies.

The measure decreed today against us is therefore not a fortuitous thing; it is a new step forward in putting into practice a counter-revolutionary tactic that the organs of power have always had in mind. We therefore know that it will continue to worsen to reach an identical point in all identical, to what happened under fascism, before April 25th.

In our opinion, the events of March 11, and the strengthening of the counter-revolution which immediately followed them, brought about a change of cycle in the Portuguese revolutionary process. The first phase is coming to an end. We are entering a new phase in which the peaceful development of the revolution is no longer possible, and during which the revolution will have to continue along other, entirely new paths.

We run a real danger to convince ourselves (in particular our militants) of the idea that we are going to know for a long time still conditions of class struggle which would allow a peaceful development of the revolution.

And therefore a confrontation between the program of the revolutionary proletariat and the different programs of the bourgeoisie. This phase, in our view, is coming to an end. We must take new measures to consolidate our positions, fortify our underground, and prepare ourselves for a revolutionary confrontation of another type, violent and no longer peaceful.

This means that we are about to enter a phase in which the repression that will fall on our Movement, on the working class and on the people, will resume the forms that it took under fascism before April 25. .

The Cavaignacs will appear, if they do not already exist. The conditions for their intervention against the people will soon be met. If, during the time of the Marcelist-Salazarist clique, all sorts of provocations were committed against the people, this is beginning to happen again, and will happen more and more.

– *Question: Your dispute, let's call it that, with the PCP carries, we believe, a heavy historical charge, in particular that of your own historical past. We wonder if you hadn't started out as an orthodox communist formation, which then evolved in another direction. Concretely, how did this difference evolve, how could it develop to the point that you are today in open war, and what are the forms that this open war takes?*

– AM: Within our Movement, the militants who have had any experience in the revisionist party, or who have sailed in its waters, can be counted on the fingers of two hands. However, if there is not a historical charge in the sense in which you understand it, in the personal, individual sense, there is, without a doubt, a class historical charge, insofar as it is in opposition to revisionism, in the open criticism of revisionism, and in the conduct of a struggle against its positions, which the Marxist-Leninists stood out, came to the conclusion of the historical necessity of creating the party that did not exist, and undertook to organize the revolutionary ranks to constitute it.

There is therefore no historical charge, in the emotional sense of the term, between us and them. There is an intense class struggle, insofar as, without isolating and crushing them as a party and as a bourgeois current, we will never be able to unite the working class around Marxism-Leninism and advance for the conquest of power.

This is why we attack every day, ruthlessly, all the incorrect positions, which are the essence of the positions of the revisionist party.

– *Question: Where does the money come from? A controversial point is that of the origin of the funds of your Movement. You began by selling Luta Popular at 1 escudo, and you have a very important propaganda machine. The most varied accusations have been made against*

you, and broadcast from different sides, among them the accusation of receiving foreign money. We ask you the question opposite, what is the origin of the funds of your Movement?

– AM: The funds for our Movement come entirely from the popular masses. We are therefore an extremely poor party, in the image of the people and the working class. We have enormous difficulties to overcome in order to carry out the propaganda that the people demand of us. : Our principle, our philosophical position, on this question, is simple: the people need propaganda to make the revolution, it is therefore they who will make this propaganda possible.

Not one more statement will be made if the people do not want to finance it. The closer the people get to us, the more they support us, and the more we increase our propaganda. But our difficulties are enormous.

What happens however is that with a tenth of the money that the revisionist party currently has, for example, we do ten times more propaganda than it manages to do. The explanation of this in, let's say, financial terms, is that we are absolutely frugal.

A permanent member of our Movement earns what is strictly necessary so as not to starve. Our activists do not waste money, and it is these cost-saving practices that allow us to always be at the service of the masses, by making the necessary propaganda.

Conversely, the parties of the bourgeoisie (from the revisionist party to the fascist CDS) know that they cannot deceive the people with their propaganda, except by packaging it in a very attractive way, as is done for soap or shaving cream. So they incur enormous expenses that we would be unable to afford, assuming that we had the same objectives, the same methods, and if we had to lie as they are obliged to do.

To tell the truth, we can write on a wall with a piece of charcoal, they who must give their lie at least the force of a prejudice, they are obliged to spend floods of money.

This story of subsidies coming from outside the masses is now a very old story. Let's take this opportunity to clarify it. There was, and still is, a review called *O Tempo e O Modo* . It is in connection with this journal that this shameful slander on the subsidies germinated.

Initially, a European association, called European Association for Cultural Freedom; this association has a delegation in our country, the Portuguese Association for Cultural Freedom.

In the 1960s, a gentleman by the name of Claude Julien published a book in France on American imperialism, in which he listed the associations which received funds from the CIA. The American Senate took a stand on this list, confirming that some of these associations were really financed by the USA, but some others were not.

Among the first is the European Association for Cultural Freedom, financed by the Ford Foundation, itself financed by the CIA. This association financed, for its part, the Portuguese Association for Cultural Freedom, whose the headquarters were in Lisbon, at the Moraes editions, where the *O Tempo e O Modo* of that time was also published, which also belonged to these associates.

Was part of *O Tempo e O Modo* then almost all the main leaders today in government, with the exception of Barreirinhas Cunhal. When Claude Julien's book denounced these CIA connections with various cultural associations, all that was good inside *O Tempo e O*

Modo undertook an exemplary struggle to expel possibly suspect individuals from to have received funds from the Portuguese Association for Cultural Freedom.

Among those who had been able to "benefit" from the aid of the CIA were some interesting characters: for example the writer José Cardoso Pires, deputy director of the *Diario de Lisboa* , and Fernando Lapes Grasa himself for the records that he had done in common with Giacometti, and a whole series of other personalities who, knowingly or not, were also financed.

The healthy fraction among the editors of *O Tempo e O Modo* also drove out the revisionist and socialist clique, which had hitherto received funds of this nature, and took over the management of the journal. What was their astonishment when they subsequently saw the newspaper *Avante* , whose militants had so long benefited from subsidies, accusing *O Tempo e O Modo* of being financed by the CIA. This is the exemplary history of the subsidies.



– *Question: On the international scene, does the MRPP receive any support, or at least can it count on a certain solidarity?*

– AM: The struggle of our Movement is in solidarity with that of all genuine Marxist-Leninist parties, in solidarity with the working class of all oppressed peoples and nations. This solidarity is objective and cannot fail to exist between all those who struggle anywhere in the world. But if you want to talk about economic solidarity ties, we don't have any with foreign organizations. Neither are there links of organized political solidarity.

We do not maintain official relations with any foreign communist parties. We only establish with them fraternal relations of exchange of material and experiences, and of study.

– *Question: For example, which foreign parties have you exchanged correspondence with?*

– AM: In general, we haven't even met any of these parties. Above all, we rely on our own strengths. But whenever these parties ask to meet with us, as has happened since April 25, we receive them cordially and fraternally; but it is not for our Movement or the Portuguese working class to determine whether or not they are the authentic revolutionary vanguard of their respective countries.

This is the case for a certain number of European, South American and even African Marxist-Leninist parties, for which the problem of the political leadership of their working class and their people is not yet resolved.

Neither do we maintain any relationship with the Communist Party of China, nor with the Party of Labor of Albania. We are content to learn from their experience as much as we can, through the propaganda they broadcast to all the peoples of the world.

– *Question: What are, at present, the relations of the MRPP with the liberation movements of the former Portuguese colonies?*

– AM: Our relations are currently in a “low” phase. On April 25, the only party leading a consistent struggle against imperialism, colonialism and war in our country was the MRPP. , some of whom today have leadership roles in these movements.

This represented a modest contribution on our part in supporting the struggle of the brotherly peoples of the colonies; the greatest help we can give them is to mobilize our people to support their fight, and to fight against all the racist, chauvinist, colonialist and neo-colonialist ideas that the opportunist parties were trying to bring into the head of the masses in our own country.

Today the interests of the peoples of the colonies are very concrete and very real interests. In the current circumstances, our Movement not being a government party, it is mainly up to them to look after their own interests.

Establishing bonds of fraternity, whatever they are, with our Movement can come up against, from their point of view, various difficulties.

We believe that this must have been the reason why their attitude has changed since April 25, some of these colonial liberation movements clearly supporting the revisionist party (not the case of FRELIMO), something they do not had never done before, considering it a treacherous party to the struggle of their own peoples.

– *Question: From an economic point of view, how does Arnaldo Matos see the consequences for Portugal of the fall of the colonial empire?*

–AM: There are two economies. From the point of view of the economy of the bourgeoisie, of the dominant economy in our country, this fact represented, without a doubt, a deep blow, a blow that will determine the aggravation of the crisis of the system of exploitation that exists in our country. Especially since this crisis is not only that of Portuguese capitalism, but that of world imperialism and social-imperialism.

The imperialist countries which dominate our country will therefore pass on their own difficulties to our people, the latter coming to irremediably increase the difficulties of the bourgeois economy in our country.

It is therefore a profound blow for this economy, for the political domination of the ruling class. From the point of view of the revolution, this situation only accelerates its development, by aggravating the fundamental contradictions.

For the working class and the people, the fall of the colonial empire was therefore a very good thing: it launched our people on the quest for an emancipation which until now they had been forced to refuse to the brotherly peoples of the settlements. This opened his eyes and taught him, through experience, that he can only liberate himself by daring to resort to arms, and turn them against his current exploiters.

– *Question: Would you like to say a word about what you think about the nationalization of banks and insurance?*

– AM: The fundamental demands for the nationalization of banks accompanied by the creation of a single bank, the nationalization of insurance and of all companies which play an important role, or which are of national interest, are included in our programme.

But nationalization as it unfolds is not one that interests the working class and the people. We cannot speak of nationalization without asking the question of power, and without knowing which class is nationalizing.

Since the power that currently exists is the power of the bourgeoisie, these nationalizations are purely bourgeois. These are not popular nationalizations, and they have all the appearance of nationalizations of poverty.

Our country is a country dominated by foreign imperialism, mainly American. But imperialist capital has not been nationalized. It has not been and, given the current system of domination by imperialism, it could not be, because when nationalizations take place, especially in the case of Portugal, it is a bit like nationalize a bag that would look full, and which in the end would be empty.

However, there are two kinds of nationalizations. Ours, which can only be achieved by the workers and peasants in power. And theirs, nationalization of deficit sectors, bankrupt, which does not allow them real, effective control over what is main in this case: American imperialism, which is not affected, as they say, by any of these nationalizations.

This kind of nationalization is not what interests the people, especially since the working class has no control, even at the level of the enterprise, over nationalized capital. She is always left out. It is the state of the bosses that nationalizes.

From the point of view of theory, it is a question that Marx himself, although he does not live in our time, had envisaged and foreseen, when (unless I am mistaken in Book II of Capital) he recalls that the The State does not cease to be that of the capitalists by the mere fact that individual private property ceases to exist. He admits, from the theoretical point of view, that there can be a collective class private property.

And this is what the bourgeoisie is trying to create, here, now, under the political impetus of the revisionist party in particular: the latter is trying to lay the material foundations of a state bourgeoisie, of a new type, as it exists in the Soviet Union, to base on it the essence of its social-fascist dictatorship.

– *Question: Still in the context of reflection on the economy: Minister Mélo Antunes was somewhat the forerunner of a shift from Portugal to “Third World” countries. Do you want to add anything on this topic?*

– AM: The political thought of Minister Mélo Antunes, grappling with the question of the turn towards the third world, presents the following curiosity: as for us, we maintain that the Portuguese people must establish, on an equal footing and in agreement with the principles of peaceful coexistence, of relations with all the peoples of the world, and in particular with the peoples exploited, like ours, by imperialism and social-imperialism.

But in the mind of Minister Mélo Antunes, the turn towards the Third World is a bit of a turn towards a “third way”. It is not strictly speaking looking for the main allies, among other peoples and nations, it is looking for a third way to save capital.

Moreover, its Emergency Economic Program is the exact image of this “third way”. It is not possible, in the present conditions of the crisis of the imperialist system, to adopt a capitalist program as he proposes, while calling on the countries of the Third World to “remedy” the difficulties of the Portuguese people.

This petty-bourgeois illusion of Minister Mélo Antunes and his colleagues is doomed to complete failure, however good the intentions of these people, which are not called into question here.

In conclusion, therefore, we believe that correct relations must be established with the peoples of the Third World, who are very important allies for the Portuguese people. But it is not by calling on them to bear our own difficulties that things will progress.

– *Question: On the one hand Francoist Spain, on the other NATO.... Because of this, there is much talk of a probable "coup à la Pinochet". Do you agree with this analysis?*

– AM: The conditions for the establishment of a fascist dictatorship, of the Pinochet type in Chile, exist in our country, although, the situation being very different, the formal characteristics of a fascist dictatorship in Portugal could not be identical to those of Chile.

But the essence of such a dictatorship is always the same, and the conditions for it to be established exist, following the intense dispute for hegemony over our country where the imperialist bloc and the bloc social-imperialist.

It is obvious that to the extent that the social-imperialists and the imperialists try to redivide our country among themselves, this struggle will intensify: in this context, it is quite possible that the imperialist interests threatened will come to foment a whole series of fascist coups, including the establishment of a Pinochet-type dictatorship. This is all the more possible since it is the army that holds power. It is a military dictatorship that currently exists in our country.

The possibility that this dictatorship, pushing aside the fig leaf represented by the coalition parties, will turn into an open military dictatorship is a real possibility; it can happen at short notice, and it's still something that the petty bourgeois don't want to see.

We believe that the banning of our movement and a series of counter-revolutionary measures taken recently are an important step towards the establishment of such a type of dictatorship, perhaps even without having to wait long month.

However, we also believe that the revolution is developing in its turn, as the counter-revolution has more firmness and cohesion, and as the alternative offered to the Portuguese people is both the seizure of power by the working class than the establishment of a Pinochet.

The conditions are a little difficult, but the working class can become aware, and if it is well led by the Marxist-Leninists, it is the alternative of seizing power that will be the most real.

– *Question: Within the framework that has just been outlined, it seems to us that we could come back to a certain story, badly told, of Chile in our country.*

– AM: There is indeed a badly told history of Chile, that is to say a history told according to certain class points of view. Each class has its own way of seeing history, and therefore of seeing the history of Chile. In our country, Chile is seen as a story that ended on Pinochet because of the “leftists”.

And it is this scarecrow of "leftism", without any other qualification, that is brandished before the working class and the people so that they kneel down, that they accept the scabs that the imperialists and the big capitalists have 'intend to throw them...

From our point of view, there is a different way of telling this story: it is necessary to speak of the conciliation, of the betrayal of the petty-bourgeois parties, of the betrayal of all the philistines, which led to the ideological disarmament of the class workers and the people (disarmament which is even more dangerous than military disarmament).

This is, from our point of view, the real story of Chile. But we don't need to go all the way to Chile. Just remember 1910, and the establishment of the fascist dictatorship in 1926. The petty-bourgeois democracy dithered as much as it could, and one fine day, deceiving the masses, it helped to establish a dictatorship fascist, coming later to complain that it was the working class that let it take hold. It is better to have our eyes fixed on our own history than on that of other peoples.

– *Question: In your opinion, are the conditions for the outbreak of a civil war currently in place?*

– AM: All the conditions for a civil war to break out are met in our country. In general this does not start when the working class is prepared for it and expects it. The civil war has two aspects: the revolution and the counter-revolution, which takes the initiative to try to burn the ground, before the revolution develops.

But the conditions brought together here are among the best, because Portugal is a "sui generis" case: dominated by American and European imperialism, in the 1960s, by virtue of the law of unequal development of capitalist countries, we witnessed to a domination of European imperialism over the American, which exacerbated the disputes between the two imperialisms.

The appearance in Portugal of a third sector of imperialism, Soviet revisionist social-imperialism, saw the growth of a fierce struggle between vultures to share the prey. But, even without this fact, all the conditions are met for civil war to break out.

Each of the sectors of imperialism dominates a sector of the state apparatus, of the military apparatus, and controls a political clientele at the level of the state apparatus. These interests

are all represented, to the point that, on all important questions, they do not fail to make their views known.

Hence it is that today, in our country, no political question of importance is settled unless, within the army, the three sectors include "tanks", rifles, machine guns and the grenades they may have to use, and which ones they may be dealing with. This obviously creates conditions conducive to a civil war.

At the same time, moreover, and it is this element which is fundamental in the case of our country, a part of the working class, endowed with great revolutionary energy, and having opened its eyes, particularly during the past months since April 25, is determined to bring the revolution to an end, and not to stay halfway.

However, the sector of the people who still have parliamentary illusions, illusions about the established democracy, is still large. If the working class does not rally this still deceived sector, it will be impossible for the revolution to develop impetuously and take the path of armed struggle.

But the objective conditions of this rallying will develop: the economic catastrophe is imminent, and the bourgeoisie will not be able to extricate itself from there by the only sweet canticles that it makes us hear.

The Secretary General of the MRPP ended by sending a message to all militants, to the working class and to the Portuguese people.

– AM: I would like to address my message to the working class and the people to ask them to meditate deeply on the particularities of the current Portuguese political situation.

Their destiny is in their hands, it is neither through rumors nor through slander that political questions are resolved, that is what it is necessary to become aware of. The working class, and the communists at its head, must approach reality with a scientific method, and observe things with the intention of solving them and moving forward.

If the sector of the people who still have illusions keep them for a long time, and if they allow themselves to be deceived by the demagogy of the opportunist, philistine and traitor parties, our situation will worsen and become more and more difficult. If, on the contrary, his consciousness develops rapidly, and this essentially depends on our work, the delivery may be painful, but it will be a happy delivery.

To unite and mobilize all the forces to destroy the power that oppresses the working class and the people, this is the objective that my party has set itself, in a situation where the crisis has reached such a degree of sharpness that it is impossible to bring her back.