

August 11, 1975

TO THE LENINIST-TROTSKYIST FACTION STEERING COMMITTEE

Dear Comrades,

Attached are the following items:

1. A draft resolution entitled "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution." This was drawn up by several SWP members of the coordinating committee of the LTF, and will be discussed by the faction steering committee at a coming meeting.

2. A July 4, 1975, letter from Joe Hansen to Hugo Moreno, explaining the background to the drafting of the resolution.

3. Two letters from Hugo Moreno to Joe Hansen, dated July 16 and July 17.

4. An August 9, 1975, reply from Joe Hansen to Hugo Moreno.

5. An article from the Portuguese PRT Discussion Bulletin No. 2.

(Items #1 and #2 were sent previously in a July 21, 1975, mailing to the steering committee. They are included here for convenience in referring to the subsequent correspondence.)

Comradely,

Mary-Alice Waters

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

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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 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.

* * *

From what I can gather from the arguments presented by Mario and by Tuny here, the main difference that seems to

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have developed between us and you concerns the characterization of the MFA and what attitude to adopt toward it. Perhaps only a misunderstanding is involved. If a genuine difference has developed, then, of course, it is necessary to bring it out into the open in the clearest possible way. I hope the question can be cleared up with the least possible delay, inasmuch as it is obviously very important.

In any case, 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

Buenos Aires, July 16, 1975

My Dear Joe,

I got your July 4 letter at the end of last week. We think, as you do, that the Portuguese question is of enormous importance for the future of our International and we are very pleased over the way you are consulting with us about it. We consider this question of such importance that we added a 12- or 16-page supplement on the topic to last month's Revista de America. We were planning to publish Gus's article, the two articles by Livio, the Ligue's PB resolution on República, and a long work of mine containing a fully worked out position on the question. Unfortunately, my article, which is extremely long already, could not be printed as our printing press broke down. For that same reason Avanzada came out badly printed and off schedule since we had to take it to another printshop. The delay has its advantages -- it has given me a chance to read the horrendous article by Germain in IP. We plan to publish it and reply to it thus bringing the longer article up to date by including the latest news. In a few days a double issue of Revista de America will appear and you will know our full position. Although it is not out yet, I am having a copy of the article made so it can be speedily sent to New York. Thus, you will know our position as soon as possible. Now, to the heart of the matter:

We are essentially in agreement on the points you raised with us. I want to emphasize some of the basic points of agreement with your letter in order to avoid any mistakes. We agree 1,000 per cent on "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." WHOEVER DOES NOT AGREE WITH THIS DEFINITION HAS GONE BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF OUR INTERNATIONAL AND OUR PRINCIPLES. Almost all the other basic points of agreement flow from this one. But we have differences on the following points:

"2. The MFA government is a bourgeois institution. . ." This seems to be a confused formulation, or it means the same thing as the quote I already cited: "a bourgeois government." If this is the case it should be clearly stated. On the other hand, we also agree 1,000 per cent with the characterization, "its main tasks being to block a socialist revolution and to retain as much of the colonial empire as possible, utilizing neocolonial forms." We do not agree with the bourgeois institution formula because we think it is necessary to define it more precisely as an expression of Kerenskyism. Our formulation is "institutionalized Kerenskyism." That is, it fulfills Kerensky's role, but the agent is a group of officers. On point 3, we agree 200,000 per cent. In order to avoid confusion, we have to emphasize that we want "the withdrawal of the troops, with their arms, right now." We must raise this demand in order to combat the idea that the arms should be given to one of the guerrilla groups because it is more progressive than any other. During this year we have followed with considerable concern the position of Combate Socialista and the Ligue in Portugal on the colonial question. We have found that the

problem didn't exist for the Ligue during its election campaign and unfortunately, not for CS either; they only touch on the question three times. And, finally, to make matters even worse, we see that they raise the stupid and proimperialist demand to give arms to one of the Angolan organizations, exactly the same one the charlatan Rosa Coutinho favors and says has to be helped.

We don't agree with the way point 7 is formulated. It is one of the "outstanding issues" but not the only one. The other has to do with soviets. This is where we think the only fundamental difference between us lies. In our opinion there is no soviet process in Portugal, but there certainly are massive factory occupations and an important development of workers commissions. All reports agree on this. THIS IS FOR US THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT ABOUT THE ONGOING PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION. THIS SIGNIFIES A KIND OF DUAL POWER -- NOT THE SOVIET TYPE, ANOTHER LESS RIPE TYPE, BUT STILL DUAL POWER. The advance of this process is as important as the other and they are both intimately linked together. THE MFA AND THE CP HAVE OPENED A COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST THIS PROCESS: THIS IS THE KEY TO MANY PHENOMENA THAT ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLE IF THIS IS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. This is how we view the situation: The MFA-CP very much resembles the Largo Caballero, Companys, Negrin government in one single respect: their objective is directly counterrevolutionary on all fronts; with regard to the relationship between expressions of dual power at the factory, establishment and regimental level as well as in the area of democratic rights. At this moment the main task of revolutionists is to expose the MFA-CP role as agents of the imperialist counterrevolution in all areas, but mainly in the fields of dual power and democratic rights.

I intentionally left for last one major difference we have on a characterization. We don't agree with the first two sentences in point 4: "The MFA is the political instrument of the army hierarchy. In the government it is playing a bourgeois bonapartist role." For us the MFA represents Kerenskyism, and the government is a typical popular-front government, that is, in keeping with Trotskyist terminology, a Kerenskyist class-collaborationist government. You cannot say, as Gus did, that the biggest danger is a Pinochet-style coup and define the MFA and its government as bonapartist. Then, what kind of coup is it that might occur? Fascist or bonapartist? And what was Spínola's coup: bonapartist? Such a definition would disarm the movement. This leaves aside the fact that we don't believe such a danger exists at the moment. The main and immediate danger is the MFA-CP.

With regard to the following sentence: "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;" we also are in disagreement. But only with this part of the sentence, not the rest. For us the entire MFA is of petty-bourgeois origin, not just some individuals. We base ourselves on the social-political characterization of the army as a structure, not on

the social origins of the lower officer layer, that is, not on whether their parents were bourgeois. According to Trotsky, the lower officer layer of the army is the expression of the modern middle class and the armed forces reflect in their structure the whole of society. Because of this status the radicalized lower officer layer can play its role as the great conciliator of the classes, or as the imperialist agent of counterrevolution inside the mass movement utilizing the reformist parties. Once again -- playing its Kerenskyist role. If it were merely an instrument of the top military hierarchy and of bourgeois origin, it could not serve as the intermediary between the bourgeois parties and the reformist workers parties. That is why we agree with the last part of the sentence, except we would change government to MFA, or put in both words: for this reason "it would be a violation of principles for Trotskyists to base their attitude toward the government (and the MFA [added]) on the possibility" -- and here we would replace the remaining words with these: "that it could come to have a working-class or revolutionary orientation since as an expression of the modern imperialist middle class it is a perfidious counterrevolutionary agent of imperialism." And we would add: "this is not to say that some individuals or sectors could not move toward left positions, but, with some exceptions, these positions would also be in the service of bourgeois counter-revolution. This however, does not mean that we should not take advantage of these positions and bring pressure to bear behind them."

We are also worried about what Tuny and Mario may have said. Although we can find an explanation in the memorandum of one of my very hypothetical contributions that was sent to Mario and Aldo. But it was made very clear to them that this was not to be used for anything and that we only wanted to give them an incentive to send us documents. This memorandum, along with telephoned comments by Mario, was known to Tuny. It may be that all of this has caused confusion. . . .

I personally have not made one telephone call nor written one letter. I have limited myself solely to writing the article, and now I am thinking of polemicizing directly with Germain. On the other hand, I think you are right; if we don't have a clear and definite principled position on Portugal, the dissolution of the faction and the call for the formation of another faction is justified. Germain's line is POUMism of the worst kind and must be fought without quarter. But, in all frankness, we must be precise on the significance of the factory occupations, the soldiers committees and the workers commissions. Is there or is there not a duality of power? Should they be encouraged or not? Are they, or are they not the greatest gain of the workers movement and the Portuguese masses, along with the constituent assembly and democratic rights? With regard to these we believe we have to defend to the death freedom of association. But we have to just as fiercely defend the existence and development of the Intersindical and the industrial unions. Taken in isolation from defense of the Intersindical and the industrial unions, the demand could be used only by reaction. This does not mean that we should refuse

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to unite with no matter whom to fight for freedom of association, and only for that. But as Trotskyists we are for the Intersindical and the already existing industrial unions unto the death. Just as we are also against their bureaucratized Stalinist leaderships.

I think there is sufficient common ground for arriving at a faction program on Portugal.

[Handwritten marginal note:] Ah! I forgot. Your document has not arrived. Please make an effort because we need it urgently. I repeat, I think there is ground for a principled agreement. If you think so too, let me know so we can go on to concretize it. It would be a great pleasure. With the same abrazo as always,

Hugo

Buenos Aires, July 17, 1975

Dear Joe,

After the compañero left who was to deliver my letter replying to you I reread it and came to the conclusion that it was not sufficiently clear. I am afraid we may have given the impression that we are eager for a conciliation with you, underplaying differences and seeking a united front against the majority without paying sufficient attention to questions of principle. I say this because Mary-Alice's observation that we are not a united front against anyone and are in a principled faction formed on a clear program seems correct to me. The next faction meeting should provide a political-organizational example for the entire world Trotskyist movement. We should continue united if we are truly in agreement on a principled program on the Portuguese revolution. If not, it would be best to separate, more fraternally than ever, in order to facilitate coming together again after reality shows who was right. One part of this example should be a clear definition of the differences and separation of those that would justify a break -- the principled ones -- from those that do not justify a break

It has occurred to me that we probably do have differences which we consider principled on points you do not mention. My observations on this aspect in my last letter do not now seem sufficiently clear to me. They deserve further elaboration.

You do not mention, nor develop in any of your points, the specifically working-class or state-power tasks. Is it because you think these are obvious? We shall clarify these points because they are not so obvious to us.

In your basic points you do not say a single word about the great conquests won by the Portuguese workers movement or about the embryonic forms of dual power. The Portuguese mass movement has won much more than just democratic rights and a Constituent Assembly. It has won industrial unions and the Intersyndical and very much more than that; the extremely important and widespread embryos of dual power: the workers commissions; factory, business establishment and house occupations, as well as soldiers committees and assemblies with their purging of officers. What is involved is knowing whether the reports and articles by Gerry Foley, all Trotskyist commentators, and the world press are correct regarding the occupation of business enterprises, the existence of workers commissions, and -- what is decisive -- the soldier assemblies and committees, the purging of officers. Do these exist or not? If not, and if they haven't attained the size stated by the reports already mentioned, you have to begin with a discussion as to the facts. Did the Trotskyist soldier exaggerate or lie to Gerry Foley? If so, why did Foley not say so, adding new facts to indicate the falsifications or exaggerations? Until the contrary is proven these are the facts and they allow one and only one interpretation: we have entered a stage in which the mass movement has attained its greatest victory -- the birth of autonomous, independent dual power that cannot be reconciled with the capitalist and imperialist regime. Our world movement paid with 25 years of disasters for not recognizing, when it occurred, that a dual power regime had arisen in Bolivia. The same thing might occur today if we don't realize in time that this is what we have had in Portugal since March 11. Defining

the situation this way does not mean that the dual power is exactly like that in Russia, Bolivia or Spain at the beginning of the Civil War. It is more embryonic and does not have Soviet characteristics, but it exists. Trotsky warned us against fetishism regarding soviet forms and pointed to the manifestation of dual power in other forms. Thanks to him we were the only ones to point out at the time that there was dual power in Bolivia, even though it was expressed through union organizations and their worker militias. These militias, which at one point constituted the only armed forces in the country, provided the key. Today in Portugal if we consider the armed forces and the workers in the factories in their totality, there is no doubt that there is atomized but widespread dual power which expresses itself everywhere, and not as a sporadic and episodic phenomenon.

If Gerry Foley's reports and articles are accurate by even one-third or one-fourth, there is necessarily a series of principled positions which you do not mention in your letter. We have some doubts about why. We have the impression that you don't give the phenomena the importance they deserve, that the only thing about the Portuguese revolution that interests you are the democratic conquests, and you ignore those that are specifically working class and related to revolutionary power. One example comes to mind. Gerry Foley has given us an exact definition of the Republica operation as an MFA-Stalinist "provocation." But he does not make clear or properly analyze the character of the "provocation." IP makes matters worse by publishing an article by Trotsky on freedom of the press which has nothing to do with the current Portuguese situation, but with a semi-colonial country like Mexico with a Bonapartist "sui generis" government. You have compared the Portuguese revolution to the Russian revolution, but when the moment arrives to make a comparison in connection with a concrete political event, you resort to a country that has never gone through the process of a working-class revolution in action as is happening in Portugal and as was the case with Russia in its time. Why didn't you quote what Trotsky said about freedom of the press during the Russian revolution? Why didn't you explain why the Stalinists campaigned for the government to take control of the reactionary press in Mexico and why, on the other hand, they occupied the official socialist daily in Portugal? The reason is very clear: Stalinism has utilized the dual power method now in vogue in Portugal -- occupation of business establishments -- to carry out a reactionary, antidemocratic maneuver. If we don't explain the combination of these two elements of the "provocation" and pick out only one -- the counterrevolutionary, antidemocratic objective of the MFA-CP, nobody will understand anything, or at best will understand very little. The Stalinists could not occupy the newspaper plants in Mexico because the period did not permit it since there were no embryos of dual power. Therefore the MFA-Stalinist provocation is more like the persecution of the Bolshevik opposition press by the Soviet majority. And outlawing the Maoists is "parallel" (to use your words) to what the Mensheviks-Social Revolutionaries-Cadets, headed by Kerensky, did against the Bolsheviks. But in defending themselves against these provocations by the Soviet majority the Bolsheviks were very careful to emphasize that the Soviets were the greatest conquest of the Russian workers movement and they kept up the struggle to win the leadership of them. You will give rise to religious-type confusions if you fight only for "democratic rights" as if you were in a normal bourgeois country. That is, unless you make it clear that today in

Portugal we, the Trotskyists, support unto the death the occupation of all bourgeois enterprises including the newspapers, their control by the workers commissions, the expansion and centralization of these commissions, and the immediate expulsion of the MFA-CP-SP bureaucrats from their posts in the occupied or nationalized enterprises. In the case of Republica we support its right to be published freely because this is a provocation by the MFA-CP government and we explain that this provocation consists of using revolutionary forms and methods common to the entire Portuguese proletariat for counterrevolutionary purposes -- to close down the opposition press. If we don't do it this way it will be hard for us to distinguish our support for the return of Republica from the counterrevolutionary context in which the SP carries on its campaign. That is, they are against all the worker occupations anywhere in the country, against the anarchy provoked by the workers movement, for order and production in the establishments, for the return of the occupied and nationalized enterprises to their owners. This is the only analysis that can provide us with a correct and not an abstract and general policy. In the Republica case the big enemy is the MFA with its troops stationed at the door of the plant. We should have and could have proposed an agreement during the Socialist demonstrations in which we should have participated. That proposal should have been that a temporary agreement be made between the Socialists and the workers commissions in Republica and all other printing plants that we all join together to oppose any attempt at intervention or mediation by the government and its troops. This would have exposed both the parties since Rego, the Republica editor, just like the CP, used all his influence to get the MFA to intervene. That is, we should have been the worker and popular vanguard in the struggle for the return of Republica to the Socialist party. But in our way of carrying on the struggle we would have stood out as those defending the method of factory occupation and the workers commissions, tending to make it clear that the big enemy and the big danger was the MFA government and its agent, the CP, which tried to use the conflict for its counterrevolutionary policy of curtailing democratic rights. The other side of the same campaign would have been to fight all attempts by the Socialist leadership to transform its mobilization in support of democratic rights into a counterrevolutionary petty-bourgeois mobilization against the workers commissions and the occupations.

The tactical openings could have been these or others. I only bring them up to point out the existence of dual power and the changes we are obliged to make in the formulation of our line and our slogans because of the existence of this phenomenon. To this end the following points should be combined with yours in order to have a principled position on Portugal:

First: The rise of serious embryos of dual power since March 11 oblige us to modify the entire structure of our slogans and our line. The most important aspect of our activity should be to defend, expand and centralize these embryos, defeating the counterrevolutionary maneuvers of the MFA-CP-SP to liquidate them or assimilate them into the bourgeois state power.

Second: The Portuguese masses know the names of the forms taken by these embryos. They are the worker and neighborhood commissions, the occupation of business establishments and houses, and the soldiers assemblies and committees. Our major task is to develop and attempt to centralize these revolutionary organs and procedures.

Third: The dual power that already exists has, for the moment, not taken on the form of organizing and developing soviets. The MFA-CP is meeting with relative success in its maneuvers to completely deprive these dual power embryos of the character of revolutionary power. Their maneuver is to accept them in order to assimilate them into the bourgeois state apparatus. The maneuvers consist of the following: place MFA bureaucrats in the nationalized or occupied enterprises; accept workers control only when it is formally subject to the government; accept some discussion in the soldiers assemblies and the existence of soldiers committees while demanding that they recognize military discipline. Finally, it looks like the MFA-CP is leaning toward a maneuver of greater scope -- since it has proven very difficult to control the atomized and spontaneous dual power that exists in every corner of the country -- the fomenting of parodies of soviet-popular organizations much broader than the workers commissions and soldiers committees so they can more easily control the latter and dissolve them into the broader ones.

Fourth: Against these maneuvers our slogan must be: Kick out the MFA and government bureaucrats from the nationalized and occupied enterprises. We should raise a similar slogan in the army: kick out of the assemblies all officers who do not accept the discipline of the assemblies and soldiers committees and who do not publicly break with the discipline of the MFA and the government.

Fifth: If the working class and the soldiers go into the rank-and-file organizations called for and promoted by the MFA-CP, it is our obligation to go along in order to fight the MFA-CP-SP's counterrevolutionary policies. Our policies are not intended as commentaries solely to be read in newspapers, but should be brought directly to the rank and file in these organizations, no matter who promotes them, if that is where the workers and soldiers are to be found.

Sixth: The Portuguese armed forces are in deep crisis. It is our duty to accelerate this crisis until the army structure is reduced to dust. To this end we must expose the MFA as the main support to the imperialist and capitalist character of the armed forces. But this would be of little use if we did not develop the embryos of soldiers' power and bring about unity between the workers and soldiers so they can arm themselves. We have to advance audacious slogans that are understood by everyone in order to develop arming of the workers. One of these is to establish direct links between the workers in the factories and the soldiers. In the factories and barracks we should raise the demand that the soldiers work at least several days a week in all the factories and enterprises near their zone in order to increase their present miserable income. This demand would enable us to establish immediate contacts with the regiments since every workers commission conscious of this need will search for ways to obtain work for the soldiers and give them material aid. It must be shown by deeds that the embryos of workers power can begin to do what the bourgeois state is incapable of doing for the soldiers. On the other hand, the soldiers must be asked to use their arms and their barracks to train the workers in the use of arms or to keep them militarily prepared. This could wind up with the proposal that the arms be kept in the custody of mixed worker and soldier commissions.

Seventh: One of the most important modifications in our tactics because of the new revolutionary situation concerns the reformist

parties and the united front. Now that the task of developing and centralizing the existing elements of dual power is raised to a much higher plane -- offensive and not defensive -- our united-front tactic toward the reformist parties becomes secondary. Our position on the reformist parties becomes essentially one of denouncing their role as agents of the counterrevolutionary MFA. This urgent task should not be an obstacle to taking tactical advantage of the differences between the Socialist party and the MFA-CP in order to reach agreements with the SP and the Maoists in defending democratic rights and demonstrating to the mass movement that the main immediate enemy is the MFA-CP governmental combination. But this tactical utilization and these limited agreements should go hand in hand with a systematic denunciation of the role of the Socialist party itself as the agent of imperialism and the sworn enemy of the embryos of dual power, like the petty-bourgeois ultraleftism of Maoism.

Eighth: Another important change concerns the Constituent Assembly and democratic rights. We must be the defenders of these more than ever, attacking the pact and proposing that the mass movement break with the pact, combining this with the defense of the present Constituent Assembly or proposing that another be called that is absolutely free and sovereign. But this intransigent struggle for democratic rights in general -- not just for the working class -- has to be combined with the proposition that only a revolution by the workers and soldiers commissions can guarantee a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly and complete freedom for all Portuguese. We must link and combine the democratic slogans with those for workers power. We can say the same thing about national self-determination for the Portuguese colonies and the neocolonial maneuvers. Without ceasing for one minute to struggle for the withdrawal of the troops and arms, we must point out that the only final guarantee for these democratic tasks is workers power.

Ninth: We should also change our line with regard to the Intersyndical. For us Trotskyists it is a matter of principle at this moment to be active in the Intersyndical and the industrial unions in spite of their Stalinist leadership and in spite of the bourgeois MFA government's regulations in its favor and its attempt to form a union organization that serves its own ends. It is also a question of principle to fight inside the Intersyndical and the unions against any state regulation over the democratic right to free unionization and against the Stalinist bureaucracy that leads it. But this does not mean to fight against the Stalinist bureaucracy only from within the union, but also to fight against it inside the workers commissions. These have to be prevented from becoming a part of the Stalinist union apparatus and bureaucracy and thus being incorporated into the counter-revolution of the MFA in the government. Independence of the workers commissions from the union apparatus. Clean the Stalinists out of the workers commissions, where they use the pretext of forming a single industrial union organization in order to push forward the MFA government's superexploitation plan for the working class. Let the workers commissions be subordinate only to assemblies of their compañeros in the factory and not to any other self-declared workers organizations, whether parties or central unions. Today in every collision between unions and commissions we Trotskyists have already taken sides: for the commissions against the union.

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Tenth: We must put an end to abstractions about the workers and farmers government. The counterrevolutionary utopia, at this moment, of an SP-CP-Intersyndical government should no longer appear in our propaganda. We must point out the only possible perspective that reality poses for us: OUR BASIC SLOGAN FOR THE STAGE THAT OPENED ON MARCH 11 MUST BE: DEVELOPMENT AND CENTRALIZATION OF THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS AND SOLDIERS COMMITTEES SO THEY CAN TAKE POWER IN A GREAT NATIONAL CONGRESS AND GUARANTEE A FREE AND SOVEREIGN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.

The purpose of this slogan is to "patiently educate," very, but very, patiently. But it is the only true one, the only principled one at this time. Comparison with the Russian Revolution again is called for. It was the main slogan of the Bolsheviks from February to October. For us it became the main demand in March, that is, when the buds of dual power appeared. But it is propagandistic; for the moment we cannot demand, "Down with the MFA government!" But a ferocious campaign must be undertaken against this government in preparation for the latter slogan which we will have to raise in the short term if the revolution continues to go forward.

Eleventh: Only the Trotskyist party can consistently propagandize for these tasks and slogans. There can and should be many united fronts with factions and tendencies in other parties and in the army that have been affected by the situation and that go along with the mass movement. But these united fronts can only be organized and fostered by Trotskyists, the only ones who understand that what we have in Portugal today are buds of dual power; what this means, and what is the only correct line: develop them up to the liquidation of the bourgeois forces and bourgeois power.

I beg you to keep in mind, Joe, that I have gone so deeply into these slogans in order to concretely show you what I am thinking. The important thing is whether we are in agreement on the general analysis and perspectives. As always, I anxiously await your reply. For my part, if possible, I am going to Portugal next week to see the reality with my own eyes. It's possible that I'll change because journalistic reports never totally reflect reality. We shall see.

With my most fraternal regards, as always,

Hugo

AUGUST 9, 1975 LETTER FROM JOSEPH HANSEN

August 9, 1975

Dear Hugo,

Let me begin by noting the sequence of letters so as to eliminate what may be some accidental misunderstandings.

I wrote you a letter dated July 4, indicating in a highly condensed way the main points in a document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" that was sent to you at the same time as the letter. The document is proposed for discussion, possible amendments or substitution, and a vote at the coming meeting of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction. The document is what is important -- not the accompanying letter briefly explaining its nature and purpose.

You wrote me a letter dated July 16 in reply to mine of July 4. In a postscript you mentioned that you had not yet received the document. That was already clear to me, because your reply did not deal with the document, but with the points noted in the most abstract way in my letter.

We immediately sent you another copy of the document. In the hope that this second copy would reach you quickly, if you had not received the first one in the meantime, I postponed answering your letter. I knew that once you got the document and studied it, you would direct your attention to that.

However, you sent me another letter dated July 17, which I received July 26. Your July 17 letter modified your letter of July 16 in the sense of your concluding that there might be more serious differences over the Portuguese situation and what course to follow than you had thought at first.

But you give no indication in your July 17 letter of having as yet received the document that we propose for discussion and adoption by the LTF. My impression, therefore, is that your July 17 letter constitutes an extension of your July 16 letter. Both your July 16 and July 17 letters constitute a reply to my letter of July 4 without your having as yet read the document. It may be that you still have not received a copy.

Consequently I remain in the dark as to your opinion of the document. I do not know whether you agree or disagree with its line, and -- if you disagree -- what the exact points of difference are and how deep you consider them to be.

Nonetheless, in your letter of July 17 you raise a number of questions on which you fear we may have dif-

ferences and which you think ought to be clarified. You raise them because I did not mention them in my letter of July 4, and this omission leads you to think that we have disregarded them. When you read the document, you may, of course, alter your opinion even though some of the points you have advanced are not included in the document. Meanwhile, it would no doubt be best for me to take up these questions and indicate what I, at least, think about them. I will try to follow the sequence of your letter.

1. The existence of soviets and dual power.

In the reports published in Intercontinental Press, the commissions, committees, and assemblies organized by the workers and by some of the soldiers and sailors have been characterized as incipient forms of soviets. The reports have stressed that these formations have not yet developed beyond an incipient stage.

We have not been able to gain solid evidence concerning their extent. If they actually existed to such a degree as to constitute more than incipient dual power, the fact would hardly go unobserved and uncommented on in the press. The absence of reports is significant, I think. Compare, for instance, the enormous publicity received by the People's Assembly in Bolivia during its short existence in 1971.

Even more in question is the independent role played by these incipient soviets. With the possible exception of isolated instances, they are dominated by political forces standing in opposition to the development of the revolution; that is, the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and above all the MFA.

As a result, what occupies public attention is the political struggle -- both the struggle among these forces and the struggle against them, whether it emanates from the extreme right or from genuine revolutionists.

This situation, of course, is to be explained mainly by the absence of a mass revolutionary party.

The potential of these incipient soviets is a different matter. The development of the incipient soviets into real soviets is crucial in the Portuguese revolution, as everyone who agrees with the Transitional Program understands. We assumed agreement on this in drawing up the document, since previous LTF declarations have affirmed the validity of the Transitional Program and its projection of the line of march toward soviet power.

The problem that confronts our comrades in Portugal is how to realize the potential of the incipient soviets. That can be achieved only through a correct political

course. It is this political course that is of immediate concern.

The Bolsheviks, for instance, did not win the Russian revolution simply by proclaiming the virtues of soviets per se. Lenin, as you will recall, was at one point prepared to seek to mobilize the masses through factory committees instead of the soviets, which, although they existed on a huge scale, were dominated by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. In the concrete circumstances, Trotsky considered Lenin's view to be mistaken. However, what should be noted is that Lenin, much as he was for soviets, made no fetish of the form.

In any case, the Bolsheviks won their majority in the soviets through their political slogans and the actions they engaged in to show that they really meant what they advocated. The main slogans, as you well know, were summarized in the formula, Peace, Land, Bread.

The example of the Bolsheviks on this plane of struggle is worth recalling in considering the key political problems facing us in Portugal today. On the political level what fulcrum will best help us to apply leverage favoring the development of soviets and the struggle for soviet power?

To find the correct answer it is not sufficient to repeat general formulas or to make general appeals for the formation of soviets. And it is an evasion of the question to magnify what exists; that is, to assume that the present commissions, committees, and assemblies have already developed into genuine soviets. The only fruitful approach is to seek a standpoint in the actual political struggle.

2. Role of the democratic conquests.

It appears to me that the main axis of the Trotskyist political course must be defense of the democratic conquests. The best defense of those conquests lies in battling to extend them. (In considering this question, I am leaving aside the role of immediate and transitional demands. My assumption is that there is no disagreement in the LTF on their importance.)

The role played by the democratic conquests must be considered against the background of almost half a century of brutal totalitarianism. When the Salazarist regime finally caved in, the masses entered the scene. What they wanted was to sweep away every vestige of the old regime. They wanted the opposite of that regime -- complete democracy. And of course they view democracy in a quite practical way. It assures exercise of their right to gain a better standard of living and to form a society offering increasing opportunities and

abundance.

One of the most notable proofs of this determination was that the majority of the toiling masses knew the correct name for what they sought -- socialism. They considered socialism to represent the opposite of totalitarianism. This was after decades of intensive anticommunist propaganda dinned into them through every avenue available to Salazarism, ranging from the tightly controlled communications media to the services of a well-organized Catholic hierarchy.

On top of that, the masses began moving in a most direct way; that is, into the streets in huge demonstrations. Their practice conformed to their views. They began to organize in ways intended to help gain what they wanted; hence the appearance of organizational forms that we consider to be incipient soviets. By the tens of thousands they flooded into the unions, the Socialist party, the Communist party. They were willing to give a hearing to any group, no matter how small, that appeared to voice their desires or to offer a plausible road to realize them. That was the political mood of the masses.

In this situation, I think that the following three basic facts are incontestable:

1. The masses in Portugal want the opposite of totalitarianism. They want complete democracy.
2. To achieve this, they began organizing on their own.
3. They turned for political leadership to the parties or groups that claimed to represent socialism.

In the light of these facts, we must next consider all the political forces that stand in the way of the masses achieving the socialism they want. Aside from the ultra-lefts and other muddleheads, these forces are consciously operating in behalf of Portuguese capitalism. Their aim is to divert the masses from achieving a socialist victory.

Consequently, at the present phase of the Portuguese revolution, everything we do should be calculated in accordance with two basic objectives: (1) to help impel the masses forward on the course they themselves have selected; and (2) to do everything possible to expose and to counteract the political forces seeking to divert them from that course.

It is the duty of our comrades in Portugal to work out the tactical side. The general framework for this is clearly indicated in the Transitional Program. In the concrete situation in Portugal, appeals to the masses should be couched in terms of mobilization through their commissions, committees, and assemblies -- possibly

their unions, too.

For instance, I would have expected that our comrades, in defending the Constituent Assembly in which the two mass workers parties hold a substantial majority, would do everything they could to impel mass mobilizations. Appeals for action in defense of the Constituent Assembly would necessarily be accompanied by the demand that the leaders of these parties break their pact with the MFA and set up a workers and peasants government. That line would certainly have helped inspire the extension of the incipient soviets.

I cite this only as an example. The case of the Constituent Assembly may already have become moot in the fast-moving situation. In other words, the leaders of both the class-collaborationist mass workers parties may have succeeded in their efforts to help the MFA liquidate the Constituent Assembly where they held a mandate to form a workers and peasants government.

Such a course of defending and extending the democratic conquests of the masses has nothing to do with the situation in a "normal bourgeois country," to use your phrase. It applies to the present prerevolutionary situation in Portugal.

3. Republica and Trotsky's position on freedom of the press.

The closure of Republica offers another instructive example. Our view of its importance did not derive from any tendency on our part to convert the defense of democratic rights into such an absolute as to "give rise to religious-type confusions" but from the fact that it offered a most important opening for advancing the proletarian revolution in Portugal.

If our comrades had had sufficient forces to bring the incipient soviets into action in defense of freedom of the press as exemplified in the Republica affair, the outcome would have greatly stepped up the tempo of the revolution, perhaps opening a new stage in its development.

Our forces were too small to decisively affect the outcome. That did not relieve them of the necessity to take a correct position. In fact, it made it all the more imperative to move with political accuracy. They were confronted with the following choices:

1. To support the action of the Stalinists, who served as cat's-paws for the MFA.

2. To stand aside, taking no position. Watered-down variants included minimizing the importance of the closure of Republica, assessing it as a passing incident, or deploring it as a "mistake."

3. To participate in the demonstrations against the closure, while differentiating themselves politically from the leaders of the Socialist party.

The first position would have amounted to supporting a reactionary policy of the MFA aimed against the revolution. The second position would have amounted to abstention; i. e., withdrawing from politics, at least on this issue. This would have been equivalent to shamefaced support of the MFA and the Stalinists. The third position would have given our comrades the opportunity to influence and win over workers who are against totalitarianism in any form and who are strongly inclined to defend, strengthen, and extend the democratic rights they have already won.

To reach a correct political decision in the Republica case, our comrades obviously had to consider the problem from a general standpoint; namely, a correct calculation of the role played by the democratic conquests as a whole in the development of the Portuguese revolution.

In our opinion, the fate of the democratic conquests constitutes a key issue that has remained in the forefront of the political struggle in Portugal from the beginning. Proof of it can be seen in the entire series of instances similar to the Republica case on which all political currents have been compelled to say yes or no and to act accordingly.

That was the context for our publication of Trotsky's article, which you deplore. You write: "IP makes matters worse by publishing an article by Trotsky on freedom of the press which has nothing to do with the current Portuguese situation, but with a semicolonial country like Mexico with a Bonapartist 'sui generis' government."

But such narrow limitations cannot reasonably be placed on Trotsky's statement of principles in this question. Trotsky did not include any specification justifying a judgment of that kind; he did not say that the principles he was enunciating were limited to semicolonial countries with Bonapartist governments of a certain kind, although he would surely have done so if he had had that in mind. And the statement was not taken by anyone at the time as applying only to Mexico under Cardenas. Trotsky was reaffirming the general Bolshevik position on freedom of the press and the working class. He was reaffirming that position in opposition to Stalinism, and in opposition to those who argue that Stalinism, in suppressing freedom of the press or in favoring suppressing it, is only continuing the theory and practice of Bolshevism. Trotsky was also trying to educate our own movement on this question, not only in Mexico but internationally.

You argue further: "You have compared the Portuguese revolution to the Russian revolution, but when the

moment arrives to make a comparison in connection with a concrete political event, you resort to a country that has never gone through the process of a working-class revolution in action as is happening in Portugal and as was the case with Russia in its time. Why didn't you quote what Trotsky said about freedom of the press during the Russian revolution?"

We did not "resort to a country that has never gone through the process of a working-class revolution in action . . ." We resorted to Trotsky, the leader of a working-class revolution and an authority on the positions of the Fourth International. We resorted to him for a statement on the general position of the Bolshevik movement -- our movement -- on "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class." (Trotsky chose that general title, not us.)

We did not quote what Trotsky said on this question in his History of the Russian Revolution because we wanted to present his final thinking on the question. Moreover, the 1938 article is superior because Trotsky explains the Bolshevik position -- the position of the Fourth International -- at greater length and, in my opinion, more clearly.

The argument that Trotsky said one thing in the History in 1932 and the very opposite in Clave six years later does not stand up at all. The main points in the two statements match each other, as can easily be seen if you study both statements in their entirety.

To me one of the most striking parallels is Trotsky's affirmation in the History and again in Clave that when a revolution assumes the character of a civil war, then the rules of civil war apply and these rules govern the functioning of the press. Freedom of the press is superseded by the needs of the class struggle. But this is only a temporary situation, as Trotsky makes very clear in his Clave article. After the civil war is won, freedom of the press is maintained for all tendencies that have not taken up arms against the workers state and that agree to accept the new situation even if they disagree with it.

If someone were to maintain that civil war has been raging for some time in Portugal, that the rules of civil war therefore apply, and that this justifies suppressing freedom of the press as well as other democratic rights, then it appears to me that such a person in all consistency would have to argue that the beleaguered power is a workers state, or at least a workers and peasants government.

I do not know of any Trotskyists who maintain that proletarian power has been established in Portugal, although some seem to be leaning toward the view that the left wing of the MFA, in collaboration with the Stalinists, may well go as far as establishing a deformed workers state in Portugal.

If we agree that whatever may happen in the future

the present fact is that the MFA government is bourgeois, then it is obvious that the case considered by Trotsky in the History and in Clave does not apply. The restrictions on democracy now being imposed in Portugal have nothing to do with the temporary restrictions a proletarian government is justified in taking in the face of an armed attempt to bring it down. The restrictions are the product of a bourgeois political course aimed at blocking the revolution and ultimately paving the way for restoration of a totalitarian form of capitalist rule in Portugal.

But let me continue with your objections concerning publication of Trotsky's article.

You ask: "Why didn't you explain why the Stalinists campaigned for the government to take control of the reactionary press in Mexico and why, on the other hand, they occupied the socialist daily in Portugal?"

First of all, a small correction. Republica was not the "official" socialist daily. The official organ is Portugal Socialista, which is still being published. Republica was a commercial newspaper whose editorial policy reflected the views of the Socialist party leadership. Because of this fact, the Stalinists contended that the closure had nothing to do with the exercise of democratic rights by a working-class party. According to them, the occupation of Republica was only part and parcel of the wave of occupations of privately owned enterprises. They appealed to the right of workers to occupy such enterprises, including newspapers. Some persons who ought to have known better were taken in by this slock demagogy.

But all this can be left aside in our discussion, since we are agreed on the substance of the question -- the democratic rights of a working-class party were violated in Portugal. To continue:

We did not consider it necessary to go into the difference between the Stalinist course in Mexico, which Cardenas vetoed, and the Stalinist course in Portugal, which the MFA approved. In essence the politics of the Stalinists was the same in both countries. In both Mexico and Portugal what was involved at bottom was: (a) The consistent Stalinist policy of violating and curtailing democratic rights. (b) The consistent Trotskyist policy of defending and expanding democratic rights.

Immense confusion reigned over the Republica case, including among the ranks of the Trotskyists internationally. As a step toward clearing up this confusion, a statement authoritatively presenting the position of the Fourth International was required. Trotsky's article, indicating where the Fourth International stood in its founding period on the question of freedom of the press and the working class seemed to us to constitute a good beginning. Naturally, we considered it only a beginning

marking out the main lines to be followed on this issue.

I find it difficult to grasp the rest of your argumentation concerning the Republica case in which you try to find a parallel between the provocations of the Compromisers against the Bolsheviks in the period before the Bolsheviks won a majority in the soviets and the provocations of the CP in the Republica case. I agree with some of the things you say; but which of the forces involved in the closure of Republica can be considered analogous to the Bolsheviks? Certainly the Social Democrats must be excluded, as you indicate. So that leaves as analogous only the utilization by the Portuguese Compromisers of the incipient soviets for counterrevolutionary aims. However, the analogy limps in view of the fact that Republica was not the newspaper of a Portuguese Bolshevik party, but only of a sector of the Portuguese Compromisers.

It appears to me that more fruitful results can be obtained by considering the aims of the Portuguese Compromisers rather than the techniques they employed to advance them; that is, utilization of the incipient soviets, the unions, and other formations.

I am sure that you will agree that they aim at conducting the "battle for production" in behalf of Portuguese capitalism. They aim at placing iron controls on the workers commissions, committees, assemblies, and unions the better to mobilize them in behalf of production. They seek to reduce democratic rights so as to be in position to gag the revolutionary opposition when it becomes a serious threat. The Stalinists seek to preempt the role of serving as a tool of the MFA. (This is where their role in the closure of Republica comes in.) And in all this, their main objective is to block the formation of a leadership capable of assuring victory in the struggle of the masses for socialism.

The political analogy between the Russian Compromisers of 1917 and the Portuguese popular frontists of 1974-75 now leaps out. The analogy between the two sets of class collaborationists is a deadly one.

4. Tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists.

In the final part of your letter of July 17, you list eleven points that ought to be "combined," as you see it, with the points mentioned in my letter of July 4 "in order to have a principled position on Portugal."

This raises once again the problem I referred to earlier. What about the document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution"? What is your opinion of that? Have you received it? And how should I respond to your eleven points not knowing your reaction to the document?

There are two additional considerations:

1. The document itself was not intended to be a rounded presentation. It was written on the assumption of common agreement in the LTF on a whole series of questions outlined in the Transitional Program. These include such items as recognition of the importance of soviets and the significance of the appearance of dual power in the development of a revolution. The document was intended only to outline the key political issues as they have emerged up to this point in the development of the Portuguese revolution -- the issues on which it is imperative for the Trotskyist movement to take a correct stand.

We considered it obvious that the document would require amplification, particularly in the form of explanatory articles. The background has to be recalled; estimates of the various turning points have to be summarized and checked in the light of subsequent events; the applicability of the Transitional Program has to be shown in concrete terms.

2. The document does not include a section dealing with the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists, an omission that was deliberate.

We consider that the primary responsibility in determining the tasks of the Portuguese movement lies with the Portuguese Trotskyist leaders themselves in agreement with their ranks. If an outline of the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyist movement is to be added to the document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," this should be done in consultation with at least those Portuguese Trotskyist leaders who are not opposed to collaborating with the LTF in a matter of such importance to them.

If collaboration proves to be excluded because of the factional situation in the Fourth International, then it might be necessary for the LTF to consider what tasks -- at least in broad terms -- ought to be proposed for the Portuguese Trotskyist movement.

However, the necessary prerequisite for that would be a critical appraisal of the development of the Portuguese Trotskyist movement up to this point, including, of course, the responsibilities of the Trotskyists in other countries who may have influenced it.

This explains the cautious attitude we have taken in this question and why the document as yet does not contain a section dealing with the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists.

The eleven points you list include proposed tasks for the Portuguese Trotskyists. I would like to defer taking them up until you have read the document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution." In the light of that document you might want to modify your proposals. (Or, of course, modify the document.) Also, I would

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like to know what the Portuguese Trotskyists consider to be their concrete tasks and what their reasoning is on the relationship between those tasks and the general political course that the developments up to now in Portugal appear to impose on the Trotskyist movement.

Finally, it would be very advantageous if we could get together soon to discuss these questions. I hope that this can be arranged.

With warmest regards,
Joe

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

TRANSLATION

From: Internal Discussion Bulletin No. 2, Partido Revolucionario dos Trabalhadores, Portugal.

INTRODUCTION

This Discussion Bulletin is divided into two parts.

The first part is a letter from Moreno directly taken from a report given to the National Committee. It should be pointed out that, as he himself states, this is only a set of working hypotheses that we have to study. In this context it is part of a fraternal discussion which attempts to make a contribution, bringing in new analytical ways to determine the class nature and role of the MFA and arrive at revolutionary Marxist positions on these questions, as well as the tasks posed in the light of the conclusions drawn.

The second part is an analytical document elaborated after receiving Moreno's letter. It should also be noted that this does not constitute a finished analysis of the question and even less the "last word." Just the opposite, it is considered as the opening of a discussion that we have to begin here and now.

* * *

MORENO'S REPORT ON PORTUGAL TO THE NATIONAL COMMITTEE

Let's go on to Portugal which is very, very important.

We shall begin an exchange of opinions as J. and M. asked. M. says he agrees with J.'s memorandum, which I don't know if you have all studied. In principle, we have many serious doubts about this memorandum which M. supports. It strikes me as a classical analysis; however, each revolution has its own specific characteristics. In the Spanish Civil War, for example, the organizations that took the place of soviets were the anti-fascist committees. On paper they were Popular Front organs which included even the bourgeois parties. Nonetheless, due to the special character of the Spanish Revolution--which Trotsky was the only person in the entire world to understand because he was truly great--these organizations, which on paper were Popular Front organs called Anti-Fascist Committees, were organs of power, Soviets. This is what the Spanish soviets were called.

With regard to Portugal, we think there are some specific characteristics to that revolutionary process.

Everything we say about this is, above all, of a hypothetical nature. We will present different hypotheses because the Portuguese reality has to be carefully studied and well understood.

First: The Portuguese Revolution is halfway along the road between the type of revolution characterized by the Russian and the Bolivian revolutions, and we could add, the Spanish Revolution. What is the characteristic of these three revolutions? That in each case their February revolutions from the very beginning confronted defeated armies. The Russian Revolution confronted an army defeated by another imperialist power. The Bolivian revolutionary process, unique in the world, the most exceptional, the most perfect revolution to date, confronted an army that had been defeated by the workers movement; this is unique. During the Spanish Revolution a similar situation existed in the cities; but the Spanish Revolution did not completely defeat the army, just the opposite, the army wound up defeating the revolution. But it was partially this way in Spain. But in Bolivia it was done with perfection: in three days the army disappeared, the working class gobbled it up; this is unique. That's why it is similar to the Russian Revolution. They both faced defeated armies. Or the German Revolution, which did not go any further afterward: in Germany also the army had been defeated by another imperialist power..

We think Portugal fits in with this kind of revolution. Even through this is a very broad generalization, if we did not point it out we would begin by failing to understand the specific nature of the Portuguese revolution. The Portuguese Revolution is half-way between the Bolivian and the Russian, closer to the Bolivian than the Russian. The army is defeated, smashed, overrun and destroyed by the colonial revolution, not by the Portuguese workers and peasants. This is very important. The army is defeated, destroyed. We say this because if this point is not made very clear we will not be able to focus properly on the question of the Armed Forces Movement.

Since we have to keep this short, I'm not going to take the time to quote from the document though there are some evident contradictions in it.

Companero J.'s document makes the MFA out to be an organization that replaces a bourgeois party in the government. This is where our big doubts begin. That the army as a whole, the navy and the air force, are bourgeois organs and that they are governing in Portugal, yes. We also agree that there is a contradiction between the MFA and the armed forces, that the MFA governs in the name of the armed forces. But it is doubtful we have very serious doubts, that the MFA is today the organ of the bourgeoisie and not a more complex phenomenon.

What are these doubts? First at the last IEC meeting we already pointed out to companeros in the leadership of our International (to companero Mandel, to Hansen, to all) that we were on the verge of a dangerous analysis a very, very dangerous one, of the Portuguese Revolution. It was the following: To judge everything on the basis of a polarization. Everything is

either proletarian, or everything is bourgeois. What distinguishes a great revolution is that it puts the petty bourgeoisie into motion. The outcomes can be bourgeois or proletarian, but there are three classes in action, three classes intervene in the great revolutionary process: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie and the proletariat. We say this because this eagerness to see everything as either proletarian or bourgeois (in the final analysis petty-bourgeois means bourgeois) was not the line taken by the Bolsheviks toward the Socialist Revolutionaries in Russia which was a clearly petty-bourgeois party.
 is hypothetical. One: Portugal doesn't have a tradition like Russia's, or like that of many of our countries. (For example, Mexico has the best revolutionary tradition in Latin America--leaving aside Cuba which has today replaced Mexico--with its great 1910 revolution which was almost a permanent revolution. It is of fundamental importance to study the Mexican revolutionary process because of its worldwide significance, not just what it means for Latin America.) In Portugal, it is just the opposite, these last forty or fifty years closed off all possibility for political experience, the classes had no chance to build their political organs, neither the petty bourgeoisie nor the proletariat. They have had to build their political organs just now, on a forced march. The Socialist Party and the CP are maintained by international influences: The SP as a reformist current linked to imperialism and the CP as a reformist current linked to Stalinism in Moscow. But the classes themselves, inside of Portugal, have not been allowed to have the experience that could be crystalized in the superstructure. And so there is the possibility that this great, essentially petty-bourgeois movement (it was not a workers revolution that overthrew Caetano, it is essentially petty-bourgeois), appears at the beginning to be somewhat like the Cuban question--because of the petty-bourgeois influence. Or like some other petty-bourgeois movements. It was not an accident that it started on the military plane, in the army, all this is typically petty-bourgeois. The entire petty bourgeoisie has tipped toward the left, pushed by sectors of the bourgeoisie. So, given the inexistence of a Socialist Revolutionary-type party (which can't be built in a day--it took 100 years to be formed in Russia) it is the MFA that expresses this petty bourgeois ambiguity. The MFA was engendered by this revolution which is also petty-bourgeois in so far as its class character is concerned. And because of this it has distinct wings, distinct currents, which assume a clear political character. This is one possibility, that the MFA is a military variant of the Socialist Revolutionary Party within which all currents are included.

Second variant: It could be the beginning, for example, of a politicalization process, of the creation of Councils. (I am going to give a very interesting example in support of this second variant.) It could be the process of Soviet formation, or a kind of soviets, of committees that lead, that has not been started by the workers nor the peasant movement, but, because of the nature of the revolutionary process itself, has been started

by the army; the institution most battered by the process of the colonial revolution. So the MFA is the superstructural expression of the beginning of the formation of the soviets in the army. Why do we say this? Because the Russian soviets started in the same way in 1905; the Mensheviks, the opportunists, agreed to them. They were the ones that had the majority and they began to build soviets from top to bottom. So maybe this is what the armed forces leadership is doing, without even knowing it. Why? If you read the report it says that within the navy, the most left sector, there are already rank-and-file committees with 300 to 500 members--a very large number--which means there are already rank-and-file sailor assemblies.

They say the MFA will co-opt ~~these~~ committees, but this is a very interesting question. If there are sailor assemblies all over, and they all support the MFA, but are still built in the form of committees, they are already soviets, whoever they support. They may support an opportunist leadership, but as a social phenomenon the springing up of soldier and sailor committees is an explosive thing, whoever may lead them. We do not know if this is the case, there may be another variant.

To repeat: The MFA may be a petty-bourgeois movement which the armed forces allows to rule. In this sense it is a bourgeois government, but full of contradictions because the petty bourgeoisie is moving to the left.

Second Variant: It may be something much broader than the petty bourgeoisie; it may be the beginning of an organization of the mass movement with characteristics of soviet organization. (It could be a combination of the two, or maybe it has not yet defined itself.) It would then reflect the proletarian composition of the soldiers. If this is the case, the traditional approach is dangerous and sectarian (the MFA is going toward a Popular Front government, etc., etc.), is dangerous and sectarian. And they will adopt a Popular Front policy. The problem is, how do we face up to this Popular Front danger? If it is a petty-bourgeois movement that reflects the revolutionary process and is moving toward the left, or if it is a soviet process; we cannot send them to the devil and tell them we will have nothing to do with them because they are going toward a Popular Front. We have to struggle within this process, and understand that there are differentiations inside the Armed Forces Movement itself.

J. intuitively got some of this because he suggests that we should do work in the armed forces. I have some doubts whether this may not be the main area for our work, or one of the main areas.

What do we have to do then? Follow a non-sectarian line. For example, two hypothetical variants (hypothetical because nothing can replace the reality): The MFA has said it wants

to rule for 3 to 5 years. We have told them, "No, go to the devil, we want a workers government." There are two variants: Suppose that we, as good Marxists, decide it is a soviet, that it is the beginning of a soviet: They ask us, "Are you willing to let us rule for 5 years?" Instead of replying, "Go to the devil, you are the government of the bourgeoisie," if it is really a [soviet] movement, we say "Alright, but not for 3 to 5 years, for life." With three conditions.

First condition: That rank-and-file committees make all decisions, committees that include all the sailors and soldiers of the MFA. If it is only a movement composed of a hundred-odd officers, we say, "No." If it is a movement which includes all the soldiers and sailors and they choose their delegates who choose a leadership, that is, if it is a soviet organization, we say, "Yes." This is the first condition: If they are just a hundred-odd, no; if the 70-or 80-thousand soldiers and sailors vote, yes, we agree that they rule. But not for 3 or 5 years. We propose 20, 25, 50, until socialism arrives.

Second condition: They share power 50-50. We propose that only the soldiers and sailors do the electing, but that factory delegates also be included. Second important element: soldiers and sailor delegates and factory representation. Taking up what they themselves say, because the MFA says that these steps are needed so that the working class can be the vanguard.

Third condition: For the expropriation of capitalism, nationalize foreign trade, nationalize all the land and industry and draw up an economic plan to be decided on by the workers and the people in general.

This is a different way to reply. Now it becomes they who have to tell us, "No." Not we who tell them, "No." And the masses that follow them, which we believe to be a broad, overwhelming majority--we believe that more follow the MFA than the CP and SP--will see that we are in no way at all negativists. Just the opposite.

The soldiers will say, if we propose that they should take the lead through their committees, even though they are MFA committees, the soldiers will say, "The Trotskyists' proposal is very positive; they [aren't against the MFA either,] the only thing they want is that the MFA be broadened to include the soldier sectors instead of being just a hundred-odd officers." What will the soldiers say? Will they say we are sectarians? No, at most they will say, "They overly defend our participation," but not, "They are the village idiots of the Portuguese Revolution."

Suppose it is a petty-bourgeois party, a petty-bourgeois movement. In this case, too, our reply must not be sectarian. We would then have to use the famous Leninist-Trotskyist formulation of a "Workers and Farmers Government." So, if they say to us, "We want to govern," we must reply also: "Excellent. But we are going to support them (we will not enter the govern-

ment) if they form a government with the Communist Party, the Socialist Party, throw all the bourgeois parties out of the government, go on to expropriate all industry, nationalize foreign trade, nationalize the land and draw up an economic plan that will guarantee a minimum income to every single Portuguese, whether they work or not. We will not be left looking like sectarians here, either. At the most they will say: "They are a little one-sided, they are leftists, but we won't close the door in their face." Is it clear, companeros?

These are the points we are going to write companero J. about, and we think it is important that all of us here begin to discuss the matter because a basic question is at stake concerning Portugal. We have to study the situation.

* * *

In passing, we want to touch on Spain. Neither of the two Trotskyist tendencies in Spain, neither the one with us, nor the one with the majority, has a clear program for the Constituent Assembly, of struggle for transitional demands, nor any kind of program like that. Neither the one nor the other. What we see there is a sectarian mishmash. It's not an accident that, according to the report you have read, that they are now discussing unity. We can't see any big programmatic differences between the groups except on the question of terrorism and guerillaism. If they do come to an agreement against terrorism and guerrillaism it will be to latch on to a new religion; the insurrectional general strike. (It seems they are already in agreement, the problem is where the Papacy is to be located, in the East or in the West.) A big agreement on insurrectional general strike, instead of guerrillaism. If they come to agreement on the new dogma, it's possible that the programmatic conditions are already given. Instead of being, as before, armed struggle and guerrillaism, we will see a great deal of, and in a long-winded way, insurrectional general strike, insurrectional general strike, insurrectional general strike.

4/4/75

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