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THE PRP, THE ISGB AND THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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I. INTRODUCTION

Since October, 1975, there have developed serious differences between the ISUS and the ISGB in analysing the events of the Portuguese revolution, and in relating to the leading revolutionary group in Portugal, the PRP.

The positions of the ISGB have been put forward in numerous articles in their newspaper, Socialist Worker, in 11 articles in their magazine, International Socialism, and in two pamphlets, Portugal at the Crossroads, and The Lessons of the 25th November.

The purpose of this document is not to recount this material. It is readily available to all IS members. The point instead is to defend several of the positions taken by the ISGB, in light of various charges made against them, including in the EC document, "In Defense of the PRP - a Reply to the British IS."

The main points of the British IS position on Portugal are nearly all to be found in two pamphlets: Portugal at the Crossroads, by Tony Cliff, and also by Tony Cliff and Chris Harmon, An Open Letter to the Portuguese Revolution. These pamphlets deal with all the chief questions of the Portuguese revolution - the army, the relationship to Africa, the political parties and so on. The main purpose of the pamphlets was to argue for building a mass revolutionary workers party.

Cliff clearly identifies the PRP as the best of the Portuguese left, and the group in the best position to build such a party. He also recognizes, however, the dangers facing the Portuguese left, including the weaknesses shared by the PRP. These are a tendency to adapt to the prevailing 'apartyism', that is the hostility to political organizations in Portugal. Also, the tendency to rely on and look to the left military, in the absence of a mass workers party.

Cliff argues that above all else the PRP must redouble its

efforts to build the party, and that whatever the past benefits of 'apartyism', it has now outlived its usefulness. He argues that the PRP must root itself in the working class, in the factories and workers commissions.

Further, Cliff warns against the dangers of a right wing coup, and he argues against agitating for insurrection prematurely, that is, in advance of the construction of a revolutionary workers party and workers soviets. He writes that the immediate task of the PRP the working class to defend itself in the event of such a coup, and that a successful defense can move the revolution forward, and provide the basis for building a mass revolutionary workers party.

In fact, exactly what Cliff predicted happened, though it took both the PRP and the ISUS by surprise (See Workers Power #137). Nevertheless, the precise meaning of the events of November 25 is now contested. In particular, the ISUS EC argued that the pamphlet The Lessons of the 25th November is wrong, though now it seems that the EC finds fault in Portugal at the Crossroads as well.

Since November 25, new disputes have arisen concerning the strategy for building the revolutionary party in Portugal, but we believe the heart of the dispute is still to be found in the analysis of the 25th November. We believe that the lessons of the 25th November is that the PRP showed serious weakness in its strategy for building the party, the very weaknesses warned of in Portugal at the Crossroads. We believe that the ISUS EC, in failing to face up to these lessons, has adapted to the politics of the PRP, and consequently, has continued to misunderstand the course of the Portuguese revolution.

Since November 25, of course, the situation in Portugal has drastically changed. The Portuguese working class, until this point, was on the offensive. The right wing coup put it on the defensive. The ISGB, then, argued that there was still time to build a revolutionary party, that the working class was still strong and undefeated. The PRP, however, would have to drastically change its course. It would have to recognize that, with the class now on the defensive, the struggles for partial, economic demands would take precedence, including fighting in the unions. And, the PRP, if it was to build itself, would have to use its paper, and begin by vastly improving it. It should run candidates in the parliamentary elections. And, it would have to recruit large numbers of workers.

The EC document, "In Defense of the PRP - A Reply to the British IS" argues each of these points. It also makes charges

ranging from the ISGB's alleged failure to do its international work properly to attempting to start a faction fight in the PRP. It imagines UDP supporters in the closets. The EC also makes various charges that are only spoken, or reserved for the heat of conventions.

We will try to stick to the main points, however especially those that relate to the question of party and class, building the revolutionary party. These are 1) the question of the insurrection, 2) the PRP's strategy on the party (and its paper), 3) the struggle for economic and partial demands, and 4) the elections.

II. THE ARMED INSURRECTION

The period in Portugal from August through November, 1975, was one of permanent crisis. The Sixth Provisional Government was in full retreat. The masses were increasingly insurrectionary. The army was in disarray; the rank and file soldiers and sailors were on the verge of a full scale revolt. Yet, there existed no revolutionary party.

It was against this background that the questions of the party, the insurrection, and Blanquism were raised.

In Portugal at the Crossroads, Cliff wrote:

'of the urgent need to organize workers and soldiers councils. The councils must be widespread, organized across the whole working class and not only its vanguard. The PRP-BR deserves real credit for urging the formation of REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors (CRTSMs). The CRTSMs demonstration of June 17 of some 40,000 people was very fine. But this was only the vanguard - ie workers, soldiers, and sailors who should be in the revolutionary party. The real councils must organize for more people with far greater unevenness in their levels of consciousness. (p. 44)

Cliff also argued for arming the workers and creating workers militias. He made the case for building a united front to "defend workers organizations from reaction." Most importantly, he repeated the central role of the revolutionary party:

"For the working class to take and hold power a revolutionary party is necessary."

"...many non-party institutions can play a part in the revolutionary process, workers councils in particular can play an almost indispensable part, but without a revolutionary workers party, the working class, as a class, cannot rule."

It was in this context that Cliff warned of the dangers of Blanquism, or of substituting a military force for the working class, in the absence of a revolutionary party.

In Lenin's words:

"military conspiracy is Blanquism is it is organized not by a party of a definite class, if the organizers have not analysed the political moment in general and the international situation in particular, and if the party has not on its side the sympathy of the majority of the people, as proved by objective facts..."

Why raise the danger? First, the military was clearly a leading force in Portugal. On numerous occasions sections of the military moved the revolution forward. Second, in the months before November, the rank and file of the army was increasingly insurrectionary. The revolutionary soldiers and sailors had moved far to the left of the advanced workers.

And finally, in the PRP itself, there was confusion on the question of the party, on the role of the military and on other important related questions. The PRP's program read:

"The existence of a large party organization is not a necessary condition for socialist revolution. Nor is it necessary for the mass organizations of the working class. Historical experience has shown that neither the Soviet revolution nor the Cuban revolution needed large parties in order to organize people and seize power. In the case of Cuba, neither a large nor small party was needed. The Bolshevik party had three thousand members when the October revolution took place." / It had 240,000. BW_/ (From the Draft Program of the PRP-BR published in Revolucao, September 9, 1975. Translated by the People's Translation Service.)

There was clearly confusion in the PRP-BR, and it was in part in response to this confusion that the ISUS EC itself was forced to write in January, 1976, "Soviets and a revolutionary party

(are the)essential ingredients for prolétarian rule...without a revolutionary party to lead the insurrection to smash the state, the counterrevolution will triumph." (NC document January 1976)

Still the ISUS EC insists that no such confusion existed, that it has no differences on the question of the party with the PRP and that it is "ridiculous" to warn revolutionaries not to mobilize for armed insurrection without a mass party. (EC document p. 13).

Of course it was not "ridiculous" at all, and Cliff was quite correct to warn the PRP not to agitate for an armed insurrection when there was no mass revolutionary workers party and when there were no soviets to defend the insurrection. Furthermore, Cliff warned that since soviets did not exist, and since the great mass of the working class had not yet clearly been broken from reformism - that is the Communist Party - that the right wing would attempt to provoke a coup to smash the revolution.

"The right will do its utmost to provoke a premature rising without workers councils. It would welcome a revolutionary coup based on the actions of the left wing regiments - if the workers did not move and build councils." (Socialist Worker 10/11/75)

And again:

"With the massive power of the SUV and FUR, and with the right doing its best to provoke the proletariat, it may be very tempting to launch a proletarian revolution without the two key weapons for the seizure of power - the Soviet and a mass revolutionary party." (draft of open letter).

Here we should once again refer to what actually happened on November 25. The right wing did in fact provoke several left wing regiments. The CP acted as an accomplice, first moving troops into action, then holding others back, but using all its power and influence to keep the workers from moving. The soldiers that did go out, looked behind them, and they saw no workers, and as predicted (and as might be expected) they returned to the barracks.

The right wing then moved to build and then consolidate a successful coup.

Naturally, this resulted in the complete defeat of the left wing movement in the army, but this too had been predicted. On October 25, Cliff wrote, "The unevenness (between the workers and

the soldiers) cannot go on forever. If the workers will not rise to the level of the revolutionary soldiers, there is a great danger that the soldiers level of consciousness will go down to the level of the workers." (10/25/75 SW).

There is another point that should be introduced here. The PRP did not understand the strength of reformism in the Portuguese working class, and consequently vastly underestimated the ability of the CP to hold back the masses of workers and soldiers. In fact, the PRP's position that the CP was weak and incapable of decisively influencing the masses was well known. It was because of this that Cliff, once again, wrote:

"The revolutionary left will find that it is impossible to solve the crisis because the CP, however much it has lost its ability to mobilize, is still strong enough to prevent workers from moving in a revolutionary direction." (SW 10/25/75).

The PRP and the ISUS, apparently, disagreed, and still disagree on this. In fact, the EC document states that Cliff's warnings on these subjects were "worthless," and no doubt some EC supporters will think that this whole discussion is worthless. That's certainly their right. But for the Portuguese revolution, these distinctions (including these warnings) were important: the mistakes proved very costly indeed.

Finally, we repeat, all this is not brought up for nothing. No, the PRP was not Blanquist; it did not attempt a military coup in November. But that is not the point. The problem is that confusion on the role of the party, plus not understanding the distinction between propagandizing for insurrection and agitating for it, prevented the PRP from adopting a strategy that could have any chance of success. That means a strategy based on organizing to defend the revolution in the event of a right wing coup, or warning the workers of the CPs strength and duplicity, and so on.

One last point. The ISUS EC continues to protest that there was, and is, no such confusion. Yet, how can we help but suspect that the Workers' Power headlines (Nov. 28, 1975) "All Power to the Portuguese Workers" not only reflected the confusion of the PRP, but was a clear indication that this confusion had infected the ISUS.

III. THE PRP, THE UNIONS, AND WORKERS' COMMISSIONS

The EC document argues that the PRP consistently works in the

unions, that it contests for power in the workers' commissions, and that it does not ignore economic demands, etc. In addition, it says that any criticism of the PRP in this regard is "factually ridiculous."

In ISJ #87, "Portugal, the Last Three Months," Cliff writes that the PRP has not shown "any clear radical change or direction towards the industrial struggle towards active participation in trade union affairs, and towards fighting for the leadership of the workers' commissions."

He offered the following as evidence of this:

1) In five issues of the PRP paper, Revolucao, out of 72 pages, only 6½ dealt with industrial struggles, covering six strikes in all. This was assopposed to 15 pages devoted to the military.

2) Setnave was once strongly influenced by the PRP. On December 16, 1975, voting took place on a program of action for the workers' commission. Proposal A., put forward by the CRTSM (backed by the PRP and others) got only 142 votes. This was against 862 votes for the CP, 240 votes for the PS/MRPP program, 240 votes for the UDP program, and 18 votes for the LCI.

3) When a new workers' commission was elected for Setnave on January 7, 1976, the CP gained 32 seats, the PRP 1, FEC-ML 1, and UDP 1. This was a crushing defeat for the PRP. The main cause was simple: the PRP called on the workers to vote for the best militants without paying attention to party affiliation, while the CP, in its plant newsletter put forward an unofficial slate. The PRP did not even present a list of whom it thought the best militants were.

These examples are but a few among many. There are also the reports of the ISUS members, including Joan's account of the November construction workers' strike where "...the PRP stood helplessly by watching the mobilizations, doing little, in an obvious way, to intervene."

There is Diane's report that the PRP's strategy was "to bypass the trade union leadership and structure."

Milt comments on returning for a visit to Portugal in January, 1976:

"The unions which the PRP refuses to work in either because they are supposed to be useessror because they are controlled by other parties, are acting on the issue of the cost of living."

The EC also attempts to denigrate the ISGB's strategy of involvement in economic struggles as unsuited to revolutionary periods: "It is true (and the ISGB does not seem to recognize) that in a revolution, the 'partial' demands of an economic struggle often grow rapidly into more advanced general or political demands."

Yet, in The Lessons of the 25th November, the ISGB position was clearly stated:

"If revolutionaries know how to relate to these economic struggles, it will be easy to push them to the point at which the political issues are raised - the role of the police, the role of the purged army, the role of the government...the need for class action against it and for corresponding actions of struggle and power."

The EC document says that it is "nonsense" to claim that when the PRP is in fact involved in economic struggles, all it does is raise state power, rather than calling for united responses around partial demands.

But Diane reports:

"Demands raised in different workplaces. Sorofame (Feb. 24). 'End Capitalist Exploitation.' 'End Neo-Colonialism, Discuss in Order to Unite.' "

And:

"Lisnave (in regard to the elections): 'Against Capitalism - Against the Bourgeoisie - Unity of Revolutionaries, Against the Elections - Socialist Revolution, Unite, Organize, and Arm for the Socialist Revolution.' "

And Wendy reports:

"The question of struggle around economic demands is clearly one they have little political conception of but they relate to in a spontaneous manner. Everyone agreed that it was important to fight the wage freeze, but it does not seem they have gotten any national direction."

"The most political response was 'if we fight around economic demands we are fighting for a better life for the workers, yet Portugal is a poor country. Would it not be creating illusions among the workers to say that

socialist revolution will bring a better life.'"

Candy:

"Everyone saw economic struggles as critical but more as agreement with me when I would initiate a discussion on it"

The ISGB made the point that the way to recoup the losses of November was for the PRP to "propel /the fight for wage improvements/ to unite the strength of the workers around partial economic demands in order to raise the combativity of the working class" (Lessons of the 25th November, p. 5)

The point is that despite the EC claims to the contrary, there is much evidence, from both the ISGB and in the files of the ISUS, that the PRP did not fully appreciate the importance of the economic struggle. This is especially true in the new circumstances following the defeat in November. And, it certainly did not understand the urgency of turning to those struggles.

In conclusion, it should be repeated that even in a revolution, there is and can be no wall between economic and political struggles. Here are the words of Rosa Luxemburg:

"The movement does not go in one direction, from an economic to a political struggle, but also in the opposite direction. Every important political mass action, after reaching its peak, results in a series of economic mass strikes. And this rule applies not only to the individual mass strike, but to the revolution as a whole..."

In a word, the economic struggle is the factor that advances the movement from one political focal point to another. The political struggle periodically fertilises the group for the economic struggle. Cause and effect interchange every second." (Rosa Luxemburg, Ausegewählte und Schrifte, as quoted in Portugal at the Crossroads, p.8)

IV. THE ELECTIONS

Elections can be an important arena for revolutionary socialists. They provide a platform, and a place for revolutionary propaganda. They can be one way of pointing to an alternative to the reformist leadership in the working class. The Bolshevik Party often stood

candidates in elections, and Lenin was clear in opposing abstention in elections as a principle.

The ISUS and the ISGB, of course, both start from Lenin's position on elections. And it was from this vantage, that the ISGB raised its criticism of the PRP, when last spring it became clear that the PRP intended to advocate abstention in the parliamentary elections.

The PRP, as far as we know, has no principled position on elections. But, according to Workers Power #159, May 10, 1976 and Diane E (in conversations with PRP members) said the decision not to run in the parliamentary elections was based on the following reasons: 1) The PRP did not have the resources to launch a campaign; 2) in any event, the elections, with the advances of the right, would be the mechanism for re-establishing fascism; 3) standing candidates would indeed increase sectarianism in the workers movement; 4) the PRP would be banned once it criticised the government; 6) it needed more time to devote to leading economic struggles and 7) since the PRP was small, the electoral intervention would simply have exposed its weakness.

Various other explanations have been advanced as well. Nevertheless, the ISGB chose to criticise the PRP's decision and in "Portugal: the Last Three Months," IS #87, Cliff writes:

"Parliament can be used as a platform without falling into parliamentary illusions. Right now it is vital for revolutionaries to participate actively in the election campaign. Abstentionism is the last thing the workers will fall for. The higher the left vote, the more confident the workers will be in the next battle, beyond their electoral one. If the revolutionaries do not put their candidates forward, the reformist CP will have a clear field for the workers' attention."

The PRP stood no candidates and appealed to the workers to boycott the elections. They put out anti-electoral propaganda, including the now famous stickers of the man pissing in the wind.

In the elections, however, some 90% of the working class population turned out to vote, in what was a near record turnout for an election --- outside the 'workers states' anyway. The workers clearly rejected abstentionism, and this should hardly seem surprising. After all, there had been little opportunity to vote in any form in the preceding forty years. And unfortunately, the

the Maoist UDP was the only revolutionary alternative on the ballot, received 2% or so of the vote.

It seems impossible to say that the PRP had not severely misjudged the mood of the workers. It also seems difficult to imagine that no resources were available. Diane reports that the PRP was not in fact involved in any economic issues at the time. Anyway, hadn't we been told that the PRP had been "shaped from a small underground revolutionary group to a revolutionary workers party?" (Workers Power, April 26, 1976. Certainly a revolutionary workers party would have the resources.

The Carvalho campaign, it will be said, was altogether different. And, in most ways it was. In this campaign, the PRP actually took the lead. It began organizing before the other groups were even involved. In fact, the PRP seems to have a special relationship with Carvalho.

This effort was an important shift outward for the PRP, and more importantly, its success provided a great boost for the morale of the Portuguese workers movement. Carvalho got 16% of the total vote, reducing the CP's vote to just under 8%. The right wing victor, Eanes of course, polled 61%.

How then, could anyone find fault with this intervention? And how could the ISGB suggest as an alternative a campaign for the PRP leader, Isabel do Carmo?

The answer is simple: it comes down to a matter of perspective, and how building the party fits into that perspective. To begin with, it is widely known that Otelo has his shortcomings, political and otherwise. Yet the PRP had nearly no criticisms of him in their press. And this was despite the fact that he had played virtually no role in the key events of November, 1975. Needless to say, it is a hallmark of revolutionaries that no political bonds can be built with uncritical support.

It also must be remembered that in the end, popular support is no substitute for revolutionary organization. Yes, it was important to win large numbers of CP votes. It will be another thing, however, to break those workers from their organization. The truth is that CP members will only change their political allegiances when they can see a credible alternative, that is another party, that fights in the factories and unions.

Therefore, despite the success of the Carvalho campaign it is impossible for revolutionaries not to feel a certain ambivalence.

Perhaps it is true that a do Carmo campaign would have gone for nothing. Still the Carvalho campaign seems to be just another example (no matter how successful) of the tendency of the PRP to subordinate itself to the "mass movement"

The election showed that there remains in Portugal something of a mass base for the revolutionary left. And, it has given rise to the GDUPs, a movement which the EC seems to place great hopes. These organizations, however, seem at best murky (Joel compares them to the Students for a Democratic Society, SDS), and little is known about their programs and leadership.

The conclusion that must be drawn is that there is no evidence that the Carvalho campaign strengthened the organization of the PRP.

Finally, it should be noted that the EC document claims that a "propagandistic electoral campaign in the midst of a revolution, where everything you do is immediately measured as your ability to organize mass forces and show real power, would be a disaster." (p. 15) This statement would preclude revolutionaries from taking part in elections altogether. For no party of the extreme left could use a campaign to "show real power."

The most important point is that the EC seems to completely misunderstand the situation in Portugal last April, in fact it seems unable to distinguish one situation from the next.

Yes, abstractly, Portugal is still in the midst of a revolution. But the point is that in April, the right wing was firmly in control of events, and growing stronger. The working class was clearly on the defensive. Tactics that might have been commonplace in October, would be unheard of in April. Insurrection, for example, was not on. What then, is the meaning of the EC's use of the words "in the midst of a revolution?" Of course, a propagandistic campaign has its place even "in the midst of a revolution!" If, it is used to build the party.

V. BUILDING THE PARTY

The EC document describes the PRP's strategy for building the revolutionary party as follows:

The PRP has shown in practice, a clear and definite strategy for the creation of such a party. It is unlikely that this strategy was fully worked out, written down in a document at the beginning of the revolution, etc. The PRP was not born with developed views on the need for workers'

councils as the basis for proletarian state power.

"The PRP as a party in the process of formation has been shaped by the working class in the course of revolution. But the PRP's strategy for building a party has nonetheless developed quite clearly at the same time it has struggles to advance the interests of the mass workers movement.

"The role of the PRP in successive phases of this revolution has been to provide leadership to the vanguard of workers, primarily non-party workers, through broad formations, fronts and non-party formations. It was only these independent initiatives that could eventually reach and win over revolutionary CP workers. "

There are really two questions here: First is the PRP strategy to build a genuine mass revolutionary workers party, and is this in fact "clear and definite?" And second, is this strategy successful?

It is of course clear that the PRP works to develop broad movements, and there have been many examples of these from the CRTSMs to the Carvalho campaign. It is not at all clear, however, that in these broad movements the PRP works to build the party, at least not in the sense that we understand the party.

I have shown in the sections dealing with the insurrections, the unions, and the elections that the PRP does not understand either why it is necessary to build a mass revolutionary workers party, nor how to do it. There are many other examples at which I could have looked - the PRP's work in the CRTSMs, which the PRP "dropped" in favor of the MFA/popular power alliance, and in its approach to the CLARP.

There is one last point, however, that must be raised. It is the question of the PRP's paper, Revolucao. On this, of course, the EC document reports agreement with the ISGB criticisms. I do not believe this, however. In fact, the EC document simply dismisses the issue of the paper as a secondary point.

Therefore to repeat what Cliff wrote first in Portugal at the Crossroads:

"The party and its leadership must keep in continuous touch with the masses. The only real revolutionary politics is the principled open politics that avoids falling for "tricks" that dupe the masses. So the party

press must play a central role in the party's work, by giving local committee members of the party and the mass of its supporters a clear idea of the politics of the party. It was so with the Bolsheviks. At the beginning of July, 1917, 41 newspapers and journals were published by the Bolshevik party, 27 in Russian, and the remainder in the languages of the various minorities...The word, including the written word is of such central importance in a revolution. There was no better period in Lenin's life in which he wrote more or better than the months of February October. (p. 47)

And again, in the Open Letter to Portuguese REvolutionaries:

"Within the class itself, the levels of the reformist ideas have to be fought every day. Within the advanced layer of the workers, the ideas of the half reformist parties (including the half reformist parties within the FUR) and of the Maoist sects have to be fought. They cannot be fought without an organization of all those who are willing to fight. They cannot be fought if the reiteration of ideas of the revolutionary party always takes second place to the more "immediate" and "practical" problems. That is why at the height of the German revolution of 1918-1919 Rosa Luxemburg devoted herself to work on the paper Die Rote Fahne. She knew that without a paper there could not be a fight against reformism where it really mattered, in the depths of the class."

The revolutionary paper must be central to building a revolutionary party. It is difficult to imagine a revolutionary party which does not have such a paper. This is doubly true of a small party, in particular a small party whose strategy is to build and work in broad formations. Working in broad formations must never be counterposed to building the party. And without a paper, how does a small group recruit as well as influence larger numbers of workers. Also how does a small group go into these broader formations without losing its politics and principles?

The fact that the PRP does not take its paper seriously, is tied to their failure to fully understand the importance of the paper in building the party. And, this too, is an adaptation to 'apartyism.' The other parties, have their newspapers, especially the CP. How does the PRP expect to win over the best CP militants without using its paper to combat the ideas of the CP?

Apartyism cannot be used as an excuse of not to push the party

paper in the larger formations and to aggressively push the party program forward. Apartyism cannot be that strong in the Portuguese working class for how does one explain the fact that the CP is growing?

I can only conclude by agreeing with Cliff when he wrote in an open letter to the Portuguese revolution that "building the revolutionary party - not at some indefinite point in the future - but now is a life a death question." I do not believe the EC document in any way proves that this has been, or is being done. We have seen no evidence of serious growth either in terms of size or influence by the PRP.

I do hope that the situation will improve, that the EC will be proved correct in its predictions that the party can be built from the GDUPs, and that this November will be decisive. I am not optimistic. I have heard these promises before.

CONCLUSION

Finally, there are several things which must be added to these points. The EC document says that the PRP "...has established a degree of influence and leadership among revolutionary workers which no section of the extreme left in Europe has approached." In addition to other similarly high blown assertions. To back this up, however, the EC offers no evidence, no membership figures, no lists of trade union posts held, no positions in workers commissions. There is nothing on strikes led, factory bulletins produced, Nothing on copies of Revolucao sold and sold to whom. Needless to say, there are no comparisons with any actual groups made.

(Another example is on page 3 of the EC document which charges that "up to now our opportunity to influence the revolutionary left in Europe on the question in Portugal, to expand the influence of IS politics through the lessons of the Portuguese revolution has been lost. And we believe this failure is largely due to the wrong political attitude adopted by the British IS towards the Portuguese revolution in the last year." Again, the EC offers no proof. However, we do know the Organization of the Communist Left in Spain thought the Lessons of the 25th of November was the finest analysis of the events of last November, had it translated into Spanish and distributed.)

This method, unfortunately, runs through the entire document, in fact through the ISUS Portugal work as a whole, top to bottom. It serves no purpose either to members of the ISUS or to the PRP. The truth is that the PRP remains a small party, indeed a very

small party. No amount of empty praise will help the PRP through these these difficulties. Neither will it train the members of the ISUS in the real lessons of the Portuguese revolution.

At the same time, the EC document criticizes those who would criticise the PRP. The EC even criticises those who are skeptical about what the EC says about the PRP. In fact, the document uses the word criticise itself in quotation marks. What is the meaning of this? Is the EC operating under some new principle of international solidarity, or fraternal relations? If so, this principle should be elaborated, for we know of no example in the history of the movement, when revolutionaries took up the position of uncritical support of other revolutionaries, whether in the midst of a revolution or not. Certainly Lenin didn't do this. And neither did Luxemburg or Trotsky.

Finally the EC document boasts that because of its views (as opposed to the ISGB's) "...we have been well informed about the events in Portugal and the actual dynamics of the revolution." Surely, the EC misunderstands the feelings of the membership on this question, and the meaning of the vote at the convention which demanded discussion and debate on Portugal.

The truth is that the ISUS (and in any event the membership) has been poorly informed. Until this NC there has not been one single serious document produced by the EC despite its many claims, and its various charges against the ISGB. The ISGB, on the other hand has consistently produced a thorough account of events in Portugal as they have unfolded. They have presented a clear, often detailed analysis of the primary questions. And overwhelmingly they have been proven correct.