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**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

14 Charles Lane, New York, N.Y. 10014

## S.U.V.—Revolutionary Answer to M.F.A.

[The following interview is reprinted from the October 16, 1975, issue of *Red Weekly*. It provides valuable information about the origins and characters of the Soldiers United Will Win (SUV). The introduction is by *Red Weekly*.]

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The anti-working class offensive launched by the Azevedo Government in Portugal is gathering strength. After the attempt to seize the worker-controlled radio stations, the arming of the police, the attempt to disband a left-wing regiment and the recalling of reactionary troops from Angola, the Government has now decided to re-enlist and re-arm ex-members of the extreme right wing as part of its projected 'intervention' force (AMI). Meanwhile the capitalist Popular Democrats (PPD) and the reformist Socialist Party of Soares are mobilising their supporters in a series of reactionary demonstrations.

The response of the Portuguese rank-and-file soldiers to these attacks has been huge. The left-wing regiments undoubtedly have a majority in Lisbon, while the revolutionary 'Soldiers United Will Win' (SUV) has also scored important gains in the North (where 2,000 soldiers in uniform headed a demonstration in Oporto on 6 October) and Centre (where 2,000 marched in Coimbra on 9 October).

The great danger, however, lies in the counter-revolutionary role being played by the Communist Party — which is

attempting to use the soldiers' demonstrations merely to strengthen its position in the Government and 'its' section of the Armed Forces Movement — and the inability of most of the organisations of the revolutionary left to take up a programme capable of mobilising the workers alongside the soldiers.

For the Revolutionary United Front, it is above all necessary to break with such infantile slogans as 'Death to Social Democracy', and 'Dissolve the Constituent Assembly' — which serve merely to repel workers from the revolutionaries — and begin the serious work of co-ordinating and centralising the workers' commissions and establishing as central demands the election of officers and the formation of soldiers' commissions.

In order to show how this work is going forward, and the confusions which still exist, we print the following interview with a militant of the SUV, which was carried out in Oporto on 23 September before the latest developments.

**Q** The SUV made its first public appearance during a press conference in Oporto, which issued the call for the 10 September demonstration. Can you tell us how the SUV originated?

**A** The first steps in this movement go back to mid-July, when the political-military crisis broke out in full force. Some soldiers, sergeants, and militia officers began to get together to exchange information about the growing counter-revolutionary activity of the officers among various units in the North. Essentially, these officers were trying to purge the soldiers and militia officers who had distinguished themselves in struggle. When this offensive broke out, it became clear that the soldiers were not organised to oppose it.

The first initiative was to draw up a complete list of all the instances of repression in order to work out how to respond.

Brigadier General Corvacho became the target of the right. He was the commander of the northern military region. The right accused him of being a Communist. In fact, he had supported the organs of 'popular power' more consistently than most of the leftist officers in the MFA (Armed Forces Movement).

For example, he had protected the Oporto Municipal Council, which is composed of rep-

resentatives of the workers' commissions, neighbourhood commissions, trade union representatives, and delegates from the regimental ADUs (Assemblies of Unit Delegates). In addition, Corvacho had set up a vigilance apparatus within the army that was linked to the workers' commissions and neighbourhood commissions; its task was to struggle against the fascist commandos of the ELP and MDLP, which are rather active in the North. [The ELP, Portuguese Liberation Army, and MDLP, Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Portugal, led by Spínola, are right-wing para-military outfits.]

Thus by taking aim at Corvacho, the reactionaries were actually taking aim at the autonomous popular organs and the struggles of the soldiers. They understood that the presence of Corvacho made this task more difficult.

The co-ordinating body that we set up enabled us to gather information; we thus became totally convinced that reaction had set up a real parallel command centre, which included secret meetings of career officers. We found out that in the course of one of these meetings (in which almost all the officers of the region had participated) it had been decided to remove Corvacho from the military

region, this had been decided by a majority of around 80 per cent.

The career officers presented this decision as coming from all the units of the North. To show their opposition to Corvacho and put pressure on the general staff, they decided to confine seven northern units to barracks while Corvacho was in Lisbon to attend a meeting of the Revolutionary Council.

We immediately reacted against their claim to be speaking in the name of the military region when 95 per cent of the forces of the region (soldiers, militia officers, and sergeants) had not been consulted in any way — and for good reason! Also, we were aware that the order consigning troops to barracks could have led to confrontations for which the soldiers would have borne the costs. Because of all this, we had to organise on a higher level.

It was around this theme that the first SUV leaflet appeared. We emphasised the fact that one of the objectives of reaction was to establish discipline in the army by concentrating its offensive in the North, which it considered as a solid base.

You have to remember that along with the purge measures a general reactionary wave was also developing; it was getting

social support from various layers of the petty bourgeoisie, the small-holding peasantry among others. These fascist attacks were hitting the CP, the revolutionary organisations, the trade unions, and the organs of 'popular power' too. In Braga, for instance, the fascists attacked the people's market, which is where the self-managed factories sell their products.

In other words, reaction was developing a real strategy on a regional scale. The reactionaries were totally determined to reintroduce iron discipline in the barracks in order to be able more easily to use the soldiers against the workers and even against their own organisations.

**Q** How did the soldiers react during this fascist wave during the summer?

**A** At the time, the reaction of various units was far from positive. For example, the soldiers of the RIB (Infantry Regiment of Braga) — whom the fascists were inciting by telling them that the communists wanted to confiscate the peasants' lands — marched behind the fascist ringleaders, sacked the headquarters of the CP, and even attacked some CP militants. I want to stress that on the one hand the recruitment of troops for this was done on a regional basis (that is, most of the soldiers are sons of the peasants in the region), and that on the other hand the training of the soldiers, including that of the militia of officers, was then strongly reactionary in character.

Nevertheless, many of these soldiers participated in the 10 September SUV demonstration in Oporto.

**Q** How do you explain this change? I can understand how the most radicalised and politicised soldiers immediately took up the struggle against reaction, but how do you explain the rapid radicalisation of these soldiers who were strongly influenced by reaction?

**A** The radicalisation took place on the basis of the soldiers' need to respond to the oppression resulting from militarist discipline and from a hierarchical system inherited from fascism, as well as the miserable living conditions. The SUV became established as a mass organisation because of its ability to express these aspirations in terms of concrete demands and to link them to the struggle against reaction.

Up to the beginning of 1975 it was the workers' commissions and neighbourhood commissions that held the initiative in struggles. In a certain sense, the soldiers were lagging behind. In large part that was due to the misleading prestige of the MFA. This was expressed, among other ways, in the myth that 'all of us, MFA officers and soldiers, are revolutionaries and have to respect discipline, for that is our strength.' This prestige was an obstacle to the movement of the soldiers for their demands.

But the soldiers began to get tired of this 'revolutionary' phraseology, which was preventing them from developing their own instruments for advancing demands and expres-

sing themselves within the army, and from putting forward their own positions on the main political questions of the day.

Thus, demands came up around pay increases and free transport. For many soldiers a single trip to see their family was enough to wipe out their pay almost completely. Also demands were raised about the quality of the food, and the differences between the food eaten by the soldiers, noncoms, and officers.

On the basis of such demands, the struggle and the methods of combat of the workers were able to penetrate the army, taking advantage of the generalised crisis of authority. The officers then began talking about 'agitation' in the army.

This type of radicalisation set the stage for challenging the MFA — and that was essential.

**Q** Why and how did this break with the MFA take place?

**A** When we soldiers raised demands, we found ourselves running up against the officers, some of whom were members of the MFA. These officers were not only frequently applying militarist discipline; they were also proving to be incapable of satisfying our demands.

All this made our task easier, and increased our audience among broad layers of soldiers in the region (in the North). This distrust was also built up around the theme: 'We have been wronged; the officers are speaking in our name, but we were never consulted.' This was important in denouncing the attempts by the right to use the soldiers against the workers and against other soldiers. These explanations were combined with propaganda about the need to respond to the conspiracies of reaction.

**Q** You have talked about the basis for the creation of the SUV. But how was the threshold crossed from a sort of coordinating body of militants exchanging information to a real mass movement?

**A** It quickly became clear that the soldiers were sensitive to the themes we were raising. But we did not offer any organisational guarantee assuring them that our movement could really take up these demands and defend them against the hierarchy. It was therefore necessary to work out some way to express this latent combativity, something that would give the soldiers confidence in their own strength and their own capacity for self-organisation.

A central demonstration in Oporto capable of tapping all the forces of the military region seemed to be the most effective way to do this. We organised the demonstration over a two-week period.

The call for the demonstration was not restricted to the barracks. We directly addressed the independent organisations of the workers, calling on them to support our movement. The response we got from these organisations indicated how much they had been hoping for this kind of initiative. They were waiting for a response to the reactionary danger, which they saw was coming closer and closer without

any apparent opposition..

The 10 September demonstration in Oporto altered this atmosphere. The response of the soldiers has broken the reactionary offensive, at least for the moment.

**Q** Had you expected such a massive response from both the soldiers and the workers?

**A** It was the biggest demonstration in Oporto since May Day 1974. The response went considerably beyond what we had hoped for. There were around 30,000 workers; many people thought it was even more than that.

There were about 1,500 soldiers. That made it the largest demonstration of soldiers in all Portugal. About thirty soldiers even came from Braga, although we had not carried on any propaganda activity in the barracks there because of organisational weaknesses. These soldiers came fifty miles to attend the demonstration; they left at 5.30 pm after they were off duty, even though they had been ordered to return to the barracks before 10.30 that night.

That was one of the greatest victories of the demonstration. Delegations came from all the barracks within a fifty or sixty mile radius of Oporto; sometimes they requisitioned military vehicles for transportation to the demonstration (that happened in Lamego, for instance, fifty miles from Oporto). Mandated delegations from Lisbon came to support us from the RALIS (the Lisbon light artillery regiment), from the military police, and from the BRT (transmission brigade). The demonstration did not have simply a regional impact; it had an effect on the whole national political situation.

Confidence among the soldiers grew rapidly after the demonstration. They came from all barracks to make contact with us and discuss the problems of organising an SUV in their own barracks. We then moved to set up a real mass organisation, capable of organising the soldiers in the barracks and enabling us to co-ordinate and distribute material there. Obviously this is only the beginning. Our weaknesses are still great and the hierarchy is already moving against us, as could have been expected.

**Q** What were the consequences of the demonstration in the barracks?

**A** At the CICA in Oporto [the regiment that has now been disbanded], where we had been unable to respond to the purge measures only a few weeks before and where the officers were very reactionary, there was a really beautiful demonstration in support of the Chilean workers on 11 September.

At 1.45 in the afternoon 300 soldiers and draftees went to get some arms from the arsenal, and assembled in the courtyard of the barracks with these arms, without authorisation. They formed up in ranks, held a minute's silence in honour of the Chilean workers, and then they shouted: 'Long live the Chilean workers!' The commander then ran up, accompanied by his officers. One of them

shouted to the soldiers: 'You are now going to go on manoeuvres.' Then, all together, the soldiers took up one of the slogans of the demonstration: 'Reactionaries out of the barracks!'

In the general headquarters of Oporto there were three separate mess halls — one for soldiers, one for noncoms, and one for officers. Three days after the demonstration, some soldiers calmly walked in and sat down to eat in the officers' mess. The next day all the soldiers occupied the officers' mess. Since that day there has been a struggle to eliminate the separate mess halls and unify them.

**Q** How do the structures that have been set up by the MFA, like the ADUs (Assemblies of Unit Delegates) relate to the 'soldiers' commissions' that the SUV is seeking to set up and stimulate?

**A** The ADU is a representative body that exists in all the barracks; it's compulsory. This body is composed as follows: 50 per cent rank-and-file soldiers, the other half noncoms, militia officers, and career noncoms and officers. The presence of the commander is compulsory. Inasmuch as these bodies are composed 50 per cent of soldiers, and inasmuch as it is often the most combative soldiers who occupy these posts (in most cases, they are not elected), the ADUs are a thorn in the side of the officers. They throw the hierarchical system out of balance.

Because of this, we are working within the ADUs. We fight within them to push forward the demands of the soldiers, and through this experience we are able to make the soldiers understand that these ADUs cannot fully carry out the task of defending the soldiers.

Many political currents had big illusions about the possibilities of the ADUs. Today the emergence of the SUV marks a widely understood break with this type of organ; the SUV is struggling for the formation of independent 'soldiers' commissions', to use the term used by the workers in the factories and neighbourhoods. These commissions must represent the will of the soldiers as expressed in general assemblies; they must be elected and recallable.

In Lisbon the links between the soldiers and the workers' commissions and neighbourhood commissions had been established, and are still maintained, through the vehicle of the ADUs. There is some ambiguity in this. But because of the combativity of the workers and the very deep crisis of the hierarchy in this region, the link-up between the independent organs of the workers and the ADUs nevertheless goes beyond the project of the MFA.

In the rest of the country, on the other hand, the ADUs have tended to become instruments for re-establishing discipline. For example, the officers have sought to get the ADUs to take disciplinary measures, and they are becoming disciplinary councils. Hence, under these circumstances, they can become channels through which to integrate the workers' commissions, neighbourhood commissions and popular assemblies, in counterposition to the independence of these bodies. It is thus very important to struggle for the creation of real independent bodies of the soldiers.

**Q** The Sixth Government has openly asserted its will to restore discipline in the army. What measures are being taken against you?

**A** When the first SUV leaflet came out, an order was given by the chief of staff, General Fabiao, calling for the seeking out and compiling of lists of SUV 'agitators'. After the demonstration a similar message, addressed to all unit commanders, called for the listing of all the participants in the Oporto demonstration. Lists are already circulating in the barracks — lists of potential 'ringleaders'.

In the face of the development of the SUV, and especially the creation of an SUV in Lisbon the Council of the Revolution immediately put the question of the SUV and the crisis in the army on the agenda. The Council of the Revolution has already indicated what its line of attack will be: the SUV divides the army and serves reaction. We know, for example, that the intelligence branch of the general staff in the North has just made investigation of SUV members its top priority. Investigation of members of the ELP and of their links with the right-wing Centre Democrats (CDS) has been dropped to second priority.

At the general headquarters in Oporto the SUV has already begun to respond to the accusation that it is divisive. We have demanded that a general assembly be held around the essential point: 'Why are they hunting down the SUV?' The answer is given in the SUV leaflet that is now being distributed: 'They are hunting down the SUV because it is a "partisan" organisation. Nevertheless, the officers can endlessly express themselves; they can organise, as has been shown in the North. If no accusation is made against them, it is simply because they are members of the party of the top brass. We also demand the right to organise, as workers in uniform.'

**Q** One of the slogans in the call for the SUV demonstration in Lisbon on 25 September is: 'Workers and soldiers, popular self-defence! Why?'

**A** The Government wants to restore discipline in the army at any price, because it is already thinking of using the army against the workers to restore order in society as a whole and stabilise capitalism.

We tell the soldiers that our own organisation, the response that we can organise against the Government's policy of re-establishing discipline in the army, is possible only if the workers are also capable of resisting on the military level. Our propaganda around self-defence puts the stress on the central role of the workers' commissions and neighbourhood commissions, and their link-up with the soldiers. This task of self-defence is one of the most pressing questions.

**Q** What are your immediate plans?

**A** For the immediate future the main thing is to set up a national structure for our movement. The SUV emerged first in the North, because the need to struggle against reaction was felt more directly in the North. The development of the SUV in the South will allow us to raise the level of the demands, to clarify our overall political positions on the question of a confrontation with the regime, and to utilise and generalise the very advanced experiences of struggle in the barracks of the Lisbon region.

## A Letter from Two Former Members of the SWP

by Murry and Myra Tanner Weiss

Members of the Socialist Workers Party  
Editors of *The Militant* and *Intercontinental Press*

Dear Comrades:

We are deeply alarmed by the position you have taken on the revolution in Portugal. The sixteen months of the revolution involve, after all, nothing less than the unfolding of the first socialist revolution in Western Europe. Moreover, during the last crucial months, Portugal has been gripped by a showdown struggle between revolution and counterrevolution. In this crisis you have placed yourselves on the wrong side. You have, it appears to us, embraced a theoretical view similar to that of Max Shachtman and James Burnham at the beginning of World War II, characterized by us as Stalinophobia. The methodology, analyses, and political conclusions of this error propel you, however unexpectedly or unwillingly, into the camp of American imperialism.

There is unquestionably an all-out effort of American capitalism—and its world allies—to crush the unfolding revolution in Portugal. The whole pack of American labor bureaucrats, their social-democratic and academic ideologists, the Socialist Party of Harrington and the “left” captives of the Democratic Party, all join in one shrill chorus to denounce and slander the Communist Party of Portugal. (See *The New York Times* ad of July 13, 1975.) They hurl charges against the Portuguese revolution of “anti-democratic violence,” Communist “aggression,” and “plots” to seize minority power in the style of Stalinist East European takeovers.

And you, with clucking tongues, tend to echo the cry about “democracy” and “minorities and majorities” in a situation in which the toiling masses of Portugal are striving to assert their will against a fascist ruling class with its black-robed servants in the Catholic hierarchy.

You mourn the demise of the Constituent Assembly. You plead the cause of “socialists” who are cheek to jowl in league with the hastily formed bourgeois parties. Just at the point when the classes in Portugal are polarizing for an impending civil war, with the SP clearly giving left cover to the fascists and imperialists, you talk of bourgeois electoral processes as if they were related to democracy. Freedom in Portugal cannot be separated from the need to break completely with bourgeois laws and procedures. Freedom is inextricably bound up with the revolution—defined by Trotsky as the “intervention of the people into the affairs of state.”

On August 1, 1975, *The Militant*, in an article by Gerry Foley from the *Intercontinental Press*, said:

“Spearheading a fresh attack by the Portuguese military junta on popular sovereignty and the democratic rights of the masses, the Communist party and its ultraleft allies used force on Friday and Saturday, July 18 and 19, in

trying to prevent Socialist party rallies from being held. “In Oporto on Friday the gangs mobilized by the Stalinist bureaucratic machine, along with ultraleftists, tried to barricade the city against an allegedly impending assault of reactionary putschists led by the SP.” (Our emphasis.)

The article continues, quoting approvingly *The New York Times* correspondent, Henry Giniger:

“... the barricades were quickly demolished,” *New York Times* correspondent Henry Giniger wrote in a July 19 dispatch from Lisbon: “While the Socialists were assembling some 70,000 people in a soccer stadium, the communists could rally only about 4,000 in the central square.”

And this same issue of *The Militant* publishes a photo of the head of the Socialist Party with the following caption:

“Socialist leader Mario Soares ridiculed charges that his party was planning a coup.”

These selected and loaded versions of three episodes of the July 18-19 weekend in Lisbon were projected on millions of TV screens for nearly a week. The message in this propaganda barrage was clear: (a) the CP “gangs” were barricading cars into Lisbon; (b) the Socialist Party’s “down with communism” rally drew 40,000 (Giniger said 70,000); and (c) the Communist Party could muster only 4,000. The American imperialists were elated. They began to see some hope of saving bourgeois Portugal for themselves.

And why not? They know, if *The Militant* does not, who Soares and the SP leadership are. *The New York Times*, Aug. 26, ’75, described their aims as follows:

“The main concern of the Socialists and Popular Democrats at the moment is for civil liberties. They also favor a slowdown in the rate of nationalization, help for private business, close links to Western sources of aid and encouragement of Portuguese and foreign investment. The two parties are strongly oriented to the Western democracies, particularly the Social Democratic countries which have given them material and moral support.”

From the Winter-Spring, 1975, issue of the British Trotskyist journal, *International*, we learn something of the SP’s background and current activities:

“... Formed under the dictatorship as a loosely organized grouping of the more radical section of the democratic opposition, the PSP operated primarily in exile, and had little real roots in the Portuguese working class. . . .

“The height of the PSP’s ‘leftism’ came on 28 September when its members manned the barricades along with militants from the PCP and the revolutionary left. In the period following 28 September, however, the PSP began a steady rightward march. Among the factors shaping this were a growing awareness by the PSP leaders of the

incompatibility between the further development of the mass movement and the establishment of stable bourgeois democracy; a realisation that they could not compete directly with the PCP for leadership of the mass movement . . . within the Government as the MFA ministers began to look to the PCP as the principal spokesman of the mass movement.

"This rightward turn of the PSP revealed itself in a variety of ways. The international figures it invited to visit Portugal and boost its political image changed perceptibly in hue as Francois Mitterand and Carlos Altimirano gave way to Willy Brandt and—Edward Kennedy! Then the PSP became the principal Portuguese promoter of the cold-war, (and CIA) inspired International Confederation of Free Trade Unions."

If nothing previous to, or nothing during, the events in Lisbon in July, then surely everything subsequent to that weekend exposes the "innocent" Soares and the SP leadership as precisely what the Communists labeled them—a cover for an "impending assault of reactionary putschists." Under the banner of "democracy" and "civil liberties" over 50 Communist headquarters have been sacked and burned in the north.

The Communist response to counterrevolutionary violence was reported by Henry Giniger in the Aug. 16 *N.Y. Times*:

"Alvaro Cunhal, the Secretary General of the party, called last night for unity among revolutionary forces against what he called a fascist effort to overthrow the revolution.

" . . . He had harsh words for the leaders of the Socialist party, saying that if the Socialist party was being attacked by counterrevolutionary groups, the Communists would immediately come to the Socialists' aid.

"We Communists have another policy and another morality," said the 61-year-old leader."

The *New York Post*, August 19, reported:

"The Communist-dominated central trade federation, Intersindical, called a 30-minute general strike today to protest 'escalating fascist reaction' and attacks on the Communist Party across the country. . . .

"The Socialist Party issued a statement urging its members to 'ignore, despise and fight this desperate maneuver to control workers.'"

Why does *The Militant* rush in to identify itself with the SP and its leadership who are in league with the Portuguese bourgeoisie? What *tactical* mistake—read by you from afar—can the Communist Party be charged with to justify you in siding with the "socialists" against the revolution?

Are you so quick to forget the lessons of the July days of Russia in 1917? The Bolsheviks adopted Lenin's April 4th theses. The party oriented toward a socialist revolution. This meant a separation from the people's front policy of the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. The Bolsheviks swiftly gained deep support from the workers and soldiers in the large cities. The struggle, however, swept on to the point of an irresistible, though premature, mass insurrectionary showdown. The Bolshevik party, warning against moving too fast and too far, joined with the masses to organize a timely retreat, a chance for the revolutionary processes in the provinces to catch up. The socialist revolution therefore triumphed in October.

But in July, reaction had seized the moment and it

appeared that a counterrevolutionary flood had gained the day. Lenin was in hiding. Trotsky was put in jail. The party apparatus apparently had been shattered. The red-baiting, German-spy slanders against Bolshevism were triumphant—for the moment. And where were the "democratic socialists," the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries during these July Days?

The Russian "socialists" were thick as thieves with the bourgeois party (Kadets) and the reactionary Czarist military clique preparing for either a restoration of the monarchy or a Kornilovist-fascist dictatorship. And so is the Socialist Party leadership in Portugal—if one knows anything at all about revolution and counterrevolution.

Dick Roberts, in the August issue of the *International Socialist Review*, compares the Portuguese Revolution with that of Russia in 1917. And he has everything topsy-turvy. He likens the MFA (Movimento das Forças Armadas), a military force that transformed an imperialist war into a civil war, with the Kerensky government which plotted to continue the war. He compares the MFA which toppled a fascist dictator to Kerensky who plotted, however unsuccessfully to put a dictator (Kornilov) into power. As Trotsky put it in his *History of the Russian Revolution*, Vol. II,

"The events, the documents, the testimony of the participants, and finally the confession of Kerensky himself, unanimously bear witness that the Minister-President, without the knowledge of a part of his own government, behind the back of the soviets which had given him the power, in secrecy from the party of which he considered himself a member, had entered into agreement with the highest generals of the army for a radical change in the state regime with the help of the armed forces."

Entranced with bourgeois electoral processes, and blind to the most obvious distinctions, Roberts goes on to say:

"Kerensky was thus an elected leader of a party that claimed to support socialism and to speak for the peasants, not a self-appointed military official like the leaders of the MFA."

Who elected Kerensky? Where? When? And what was the vote? In June of 1917 Kerensky couldn't even get elected to the Central Committee of the Social Revolutionaries.

And who elected the MFA to overthrow a fascist dictatorship? Yes, the MFA appointed itself to overthrow Salazar, as Castro appointed himself to overthrow Batista.

There is an analogy between the Portuguese revolution and that of Russia in 1917. Kerensky and Soares have much in common. Both aligned themselves with the liberal bourgeoisie—and both opened the door for counterrevolution.

## What Is the Character of the MFA?

According to Dick Roberts, in the I.S.R. article cited *supra*, the MFA is hailed as a revolutionary movement by the CP, the SP, the Maoists—in fact all the radicals of Portugal. The CP, according to Cunhal, signed a five-year pact with the MFA; the SP as recently as June 23, Roberts tells us, "organized a demonstration hailing the MFA's devotion to freedom." And the Maoist newspaper, the *Guardian*, says the MFA "has negotiated a daring course to the left."

But the SWP disagrees. Dick Roberts considers the Constituent Assembly to be the greatest force for freedom: "But the Constituent Assembly is the only politically representative body chosen by the workers and the masses in Portugal. The combined vote for the CP and SP and their satellite parties—a solid majority—was perhaps the highest vote for working-class parties ever registered in an imperialist nation."

Oh, but how sad! This great representative body, almost a Congress or a Parliament, is being shunted aside for—"people's assemblies," committees of workers, peasants and soldiers on which the MFA intends to rest its power. Roberts scoffs:

"These 'people's assemblies' are obviously designed to be nothing more than supporter groups for the MFA regime, controlled from the top. They are designed to give the MFA a semblance of support in the working class while at the same time enabling the junta to circumvent the Constituent Assembly. . . ."

Yes, the Socialists and Communists got over 50% of the vote for the Constituent Assembly in the elections of April 25. And the bourgeois party, the P.P.D. (Popular Democrats) got 26%. But a split developed within the Constituent Assembly. The majority of the workers, soldiers and peasants obviously wanted socialism. But the SP and the PPD wanted something else. As *Time* magazine, Aug. 11, 1975, pointed out:

"Their [the Socialists and other moderates] only hope for curbing the excesses of leftist zeal was the promised elections for the Constituent Assembly. . . ."

"Yet the moderates' victory at the polls was hollow; two weeks before the elections . . . six parties, including the Communists and Socialists, signed a document agreeing to let the M.F.A.'s Revolutionary Council serve as the country's ultimate rulers for three to five years."

Had Roberts understood Lenin's *State and Revolution* which he quotes so extensively and so erroneously, he would know that a revolution cannot abide political union with bourgeois parties that want to travel in the opposite direction. The *real* majority in the elections expressed the desire for a socialist transformation in Portugal. And that majority increasingly must be expressed as a dual power to that of the bourgeoisie. The split in the majority that came together temporarily in April has been deepening ever since.

The SWP has labeled the MFA as "bonapartist," "capitalist," "imperialist," a "military dictatorship," everything that is evil in the Marxist dictionary. Yet the first action of the MFA was to transform the imperialist war into a civil war with the overthrow of a 50-year-old fascist dictatorship.

Who led the April 1974 revolution in Portugal? Every Trotskyist knows who led the February revolution of 1917. The Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries (similar to the SP of Portugal) didn't have anything to do with the struggle to overthrow the Czarist monarchy. Even the leadership of the Bolshevik party in Russia didn't lead the February revolution. It lagged behind the events. It was the cadres of factory workers of Vyborg who in five days of struggle on the streets split the ranks of the old Czarist army, winning over sections to their side. It was the Vyborgtsi cadres who were trained and educated by Lenin and who had passed through the 1905 revolution, the counterrevolution, the tests of war and insurrection.

Is there any question that the MFA, a group of lower army officers, born out of the smashup of the top officer corp of the old army, destroyed the Salazar dictatorship? Is there any question that the MFA stopped the imperialist wars that Portuguese imperialism was conducting in its colonial possessions?

Let us look a little deeper into the origin of the MFA and the April revolution—by citation of the imperialists themselves. In the *New York Times Magazine*, July 13, 1975, John Paton Davies, now living in Spain, speaks of the origin of the MFA as follows:

". . . Why are the three biggest powers so concerned? Because Portugal is going through a revolution, and not a superficial one, either, a change of Colonel Tweedledum or General Tweedledee, but a political-social-economic upheaval that could end up making Portugal the first Communist-ruled nation in Western Europe—and a Moscow-oriented one at that.

"It began as a military coup engineered by several hundred lieutenants, captains and majors embittered by their colonial war experience in Africa. For years, they and their men had been neglected, cheated and, they felt, exploited by the Government and the capitalists in Lisbon. In their angry resentment, they came to think in terms of social revolution, and were even influenced by the ideology of the very African liberation movements they were fighting. They resolved to throw out the 'Fascist dictatorship' at home, stop the war, give Mozambique and Angola to the liberation groups and democratize and develop their own country. This was a considerable undertaking; the authoritarian regime they intended to overthrow had been entrenched in power for almost 50 years.

"Undaunted, the junior officers secretly formed the Armed Forces Movement . . . The M.F.A. was remarkably democratic in organization and operation, run by committees rather than led by one man. While Marxist in coloration, it was not regimented by a prescribed body of doctrine. Its members were absorbed in achieving their immediate goal, the overthrow of the Salazar-Caetano regime, and in this enterprise they enlisted some key senior officers, including the monocled General Oponio de Spínola. With the success of their coup of April 25, 1974, Spínola was made head of the Junta of National Salvation and, shortly thereafter, President of the Republic. But the general was conservative; with like-minded elements in the armed forces and civilian life he attempted to check the pace of socialization and decolonization being pushed by radicals within the MFA, with the aggressive collaboration of the Portuguese Communist party.

"In the heightening conflict, the conservatives lost, and Spínola was forced to resign. Then, last March, he was drawn into an unbelievably clumsy rightist plot, culminating in his flight from the country, a further strengthening of the variegated leftists in the armed forces and the institutionalization of the armed forces' governing role."

The MFA apparently started out as an extremely courageous group of young officers and soldiers, won to the revolutionary cause, who enlisted aid in their audacious undertaking from some "senior officers." Certainly the MFA was not, as Roberts described it, a mere "split in the ruling class." And ever since the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship, events have shown a polarizing of forces—within the MFA, within the government, and in the population as a whole.

The imperialist "democrats" of England express their view of the Portuguese revolution as a "country falling downstairs." They cite the step by step developments following the coup as the undermining of democracy. It is worthwhile to follow their schedule to see this polarization process. Here is the account of *The Economist*, July, 1975:

"1. July 9, 1974. The centre-right prime minister of Portugal's first provisional government, Senhor Palma Carlos, and four moderate ministers resigned. They disagreed with their Socialist and Communist coalition partners over the economic policy and timetable for elections; they also supported President Spínola's proposal for a pre-independence referendum in the African territories. The radicals then put Colonel Vasco Gonçalves, a pro-Communist, in the prime ministership, and made then-Major Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho head of the country's new internal security force, Copcon.

"2. In early September 10 per cent of the navy's officers lost their posts in Portugal's first major purge of moderates in the armed forces; more purges have taken place, in all three services, since then.

"3. September 18th. The Portuguese Nationalist party was banned for alleged "fascist" connections. Three other parties were banned later—the Progressives, the Liberals and the Christian Democrats—and the Centre Democrats were left as the only significant right-of-centre party in this April's election.

"4. September 28th. President Spínola tried to hold a mass rally of Portugal's non-marxists. When armed groups of Communists and soldiers said they would prevent the rally taking place, President Spínola first tried to arrest some leading army radicals, and then gave way, cancelled the demonstration and resigned from the presidency. General Costa Gomes, an ambivalent moderate, took over.

"5. November 4th. Communist and extreme left-wing demonstrators sacked the Lisbon offices of the Centre Democratic party and began a campaign of intimidation that reached its climax in an all-night siege of the Centre Democrats' congress in January.

"6. January 20, 1975. The AFM [the MFA in the American press] gave its approval—against the wishes of the two non-Communist parties in the government, the Socialists and Popular Democrats—to a new trade union law which put the Communist-controlled organisation in sole control of the country's labour movement.

"7. March 11th. A paratroup regiment and two small aircraft attempted a counter-coup so ineffectual that they may have been deliberately provoked into trying it. It was easily suppressed, and President Spínola, accused of being responsible, fled abroad. There followed widespread sackings of moderates in the armed forces; a reorganisation of the government giving more power to the Communists; and the creation of a Supreme Revolutionary Council, dominated by radicals, to guide the revolution.

"8. April 11th. The democratic parties were made to sign a "pact" with the AFM under threat of being banned. This said that the AFM would continue to take all major decisions until 1978 or 1980. It also laid down the main lines of Portugal's constitution—even though, on April 25th, an election for the constituent assembly that was supposed to draft the constitution gave the Socialists 38 per cent of the vote, the Popular Democrats 26 per cent and the Centre Democrats 7 per cent. The Communist and their

allies got only 18 per cent.

"9. May 19th. The Socialist newspaper *Republica* was taken over by Communist printers, then closed down by the army. The *Republica* dispute, together with the seizure of the Roman Catholics' Radio Renascença, became a test case for the disappearing freedom of the Portuguese press, and the Socialists threatened to leave the government unless they got their paper back.

"10. July 7th. The AFM voted to bypass the political parties by setting up a series of 'people's committees' controlled from above, and the government gave *Republica* to the Communist printers. The Socialists thereupon resigned from the government on July 11th.

"11. July 17th. The Popular Democrats resigned and the AFM dissolves the government."

One may not know from so far who these revolutionists in the MFA are and what their evolution has been. And one cannot anticipate therefore what they will do next. But one can react to what they have done—that is, hail their revolutionary acts. One is reminded with what joy we witnessed Castro's victorious fight against Batista, although not one of us could predict that he would go on to throw out the imperialists and socialize Cuba, effecting the first incursion of proletarian revolution in the Western hemisphere. In destroying Batista, Castro had begun a process that necessarily impelled him to socialism—if he remained a revolutionary. And he did.

Unable to see any revolutionary content in the MFA, insisting on its "bourgeois" character, *The Militant* closes its eyes to the real separation of the classes—the MFA, CP and their allies on the one side and the SP and bourgeois parties on the other with the counterrevolutionists filling up the pores—and calls on the workers to re-unite with the bourgeois parties in the Constituent Assembly, a moment of popular frontism that the dynamics of the revolution have already passed beyond.

In the July 21, 1975, issue of *The Militant*, Gerry Foley said:

"The most pathetic illusion of those elements on the left drawn into supporting the military and the CP against the SP is that such a scheme will bring 'working-class unity.' In fact, it is founded on a denial of the political rights of a majority of the workers, that is, ganging up on the SP through an alliance of the CP, the left-centrist, and ultraleft groups with the bourgeois military caudillos. Its objective is to strip all workers of every political, trade-union, and human right. The peace it will bring in the struggle between the workers parties can only be a peace of the grave."

And later in the article Foley said:

"Moreover, even if the MFA were a revolutionary workers leadership, such control as outlined in the plan would not be justifiable, since it would still be necessary to guarantee complete independence of the workers' economic organizations from the state."

Then it is possible the MFA is not a bourgeois dictatorship. It might be, as its actions would seem to indicate, a revolutionary workers leadership. Then why should that leadership guarantee independence from itself? The guessing game is also played with the "organs of people's power." Just as we have a bourgeois MFA that may be a revolutionary workers' force, so we have soviets that are "so-called" or may be "real." Again Foley in *The Militant* of Aug. 8:



"The fundamental rights of suffrage and popular sovereignty have already been undermined in the name of 'organs of people's power' that are far from representing any real alternative power recognized by the workers."

But the "organs of people's power" are the workers—and the peasants and soldiers. The MFA did what any Bolshevik would do in a country that has lived under fascism for 50 years. It called on the workers, soldiers, and peasants to organize themselves for political power. If the workers respond, surely they will be an "alternative power."

Foley wants to have it "right" whatever takes place, however. He goes on to say:

"Since the days of the Constituent Assembly seem numbered and its end has apparently been brought even closer by the establishment of the all-powerful triumvirate, the 'organs of people's power' used as a pretext by the military rulers may, however, become an important arena of struggle. The fact that the SP and CP are now entering such formations and fostering them has already given them more political reality. If the military proves unable to control the mass mobilizations, even the rigidly controlled structures authorized by the MFA may become the scene of political struggle and thus develop toward real soviets."

This kind of sulking and floundering is impossible to believe. Don't we know that the most important task in Portugal is precisely the organization of soviets? Don't we know that the MFA, in calling on the workers to form committees, in counterposing such organizational forms to the "Constituent Assembly," the bourgeois electoral trap, regardless of any secondary mistakes they might have made, is doing precisely what the Trotskyists should urge be done as the most important guarantee of a successful fulfillment of the revolution?

The MFA is also looked upon with skepticism and distrust by the Trotskyists in Europe. But nowhere, there, have we read that the MFA is to be characterized as a bonapartist, bourgeois, imperialist state. They ask the MFA to show more proof of being truly revolutionary—they ask for fully developed soviets. This cautious "wait-and-see" analysis is expressed by Comrade Livio Maitan, May 25 issue of *Bandiera Rossa*, fortnightly newspaper of Gruppi Comunisti Rivoluzionari:

"There is no doubt that in many respects the MFA is a new phenomenon and should not be characterized hastily. It is an officer's movement that arose from the experience of a military defeat in a colonial war. In the international and domestic climate that prevailed after 1968, it took a direction different from, if not diametrically opposite to, other movements that have also emerged as a reflection of a defeat. It is clear that since September 28, and still more since March 11, the MFA has experienced a certain radicalization. As a result of this, it is no longer crystallized around the projected course that seemed to have been adopted after April 24, 1974, that is a coalition government, preparation for a transition to a 'normal' system of bourgeois democracy, 'rationalization' of Portuguese capitalism and its integration into the Common Market, and so on."

In July the direction of the MFA became more explicitly defined by its announcement of a program for the socialist revolution in economic, social and political areas. This is seen in its "guide document." (See the full document in the *Intercontinental Press*, July 21, 1975.) In the Trotskyist French weekly, *Rouge*, July 18, Charles Michaloux, also

highly critical of the MFA, notes however its leftward development:

"The MFA Assembly meeting July 8 thus faced a crisis that was already under way. The 'guide document' adopted by the delegates formalized an already existing situation so as to better control it. The tone of the document is clearly more firm than that of the plan of June 21. The economic measures it envisages tend toward the extension of the nationalizations, agrarian reform, and workers control. The 'pluralist society' has disappeared, to be replaced by 'committees of workers and neighborhood residents combined with the assemblies of delegates of military units (ADUs) within Local and Regional People's Assemblies, with the perspective of convening a National People's Assembly to establish a regime of the working masses,' in which 'all bodies will be elected and subject to recall by a show of hands.'

"The 'guide document' incorporates and thereby encourages the development of the self-organization of the workers. . . .

" . . . The essential thing, however, is that despite all its ambiguities and compromises, in the present situation in Portugal, the 'guide document' appears to the workers as a general expression of their aspirations and therefore as an encouragement to achieving them as quickly as possible.

"The bourgeoisie has not failed to note this. Its parties, the PPD and the CDS, and the bosses' confederation, the CIP, as well as its bishops have denounced the MFA with one voice—and not only the MFA's 'guide document.' There is no more bowing and scraping, no more polite civility toward this regime, which has revealed its incapacity to hold the line against the rise of militancy. Now it's war. They are not saying so yet, but in any case it has begun. . . ."

In the light of these developments—as well as in the inner logic of the development of the revolution—how can the SWP continue to flounder on a correct class analysis of the MFA?

Perhaps we can find an answer to this question by taking a look at the position taken by the SWP on the CP of Portugal.

### Is the Communist Party of Portugal "Stalinist"?

It is a bit embarrassing to have to ask Trotskyists the question, what is Stalinism? Apparently the SWP has forgotten what Trotsky taught so well, especially in his great work, *In Defense of Marxism*. Stalinism is *not* Communist Parties that are organizations of workers with revolutionary aspirations. Stalinism is not even the Soviet bureaucracy which is privileged and satisfied with the status quo if only the imperialists would leave it in peace. Stalinism is the conciliationist theory and practice of that bureaucracy with capitalism.

The workers of Russia understood this when they died by the millions to preserve what they had won in their revolution. The Yugoslav Communists were next to demonstrate that Stalinist theory and practice could be put aside for a victory against the Nazi invaders and then their own ruling class. The Chinese Communists, despite a Stalinist ideology clung to even today, fought their invaders and led a fourth of the world's population out of capitalist misery. And most recently, the Communists of Vietnam have won their fight. True, the struggle would have been far less costly without Stalinism, with a clear,

scientific, and revolutionary theory. But the objective need for world socialism is expressed precisely in the fact that with all the mistakes that were made and will be made the revolution can still triumph.

*The Militant* condemns some "ultraleft" groups in Portugal for uniting with the Communist Party in action. Gerry Foley, in the Aug. 1 issue, glibly explains their error:

"Some of the ultraleft groups that claim to be anti-Stalinist have been hard put to explain this convergence. In order to get around the difficulty, they have tried to claim that the Portuguese CP is not a typical Stalinist party because of its tradition in the resistance to Salazarism and the swamping of its disciplined cadres by a mass of still un-Stalinized recent recruits.

"There is no basis in fact, however, for such apologetic 'theories.' How can the Portuguese CP be an exception in the Stalinist camp when the Kremlin has backed it to the hilt in its sectarian course, when the Soviet press and the most servile Stalinist parties such as the American CP have echoed its campaign against the Socialist party?"

What do we have here? Guilt by association? Then maybe the "ultralefts" are right and the Communists of Portugal are not Stalinist because the large Communist Parties of Italy and France, gripped by their own disastrous class collaboration politics with capitalist and "socialist" democrats have attacked the CPP for taking a revolutionary road. Communist Party leader, Alvaro Cunhal, answered these attacks in an interview published in the *New York Times Magazine*, July 13:

*Fallaci*: . . . don't you realize the harm you're doing to the European left and particularly to your Communist comrades in other countries? Just consider the Spanish Communist party. . . .

*Cunhal*: . . . Oh! How sorry I am, how afflicted, navre! . . . I weep for all European Communists, I reproach myself, I curse myself. I suffer on their behalf! Yes, I know their complaints. They're the ones they repeat to me whenever they come here. "Why do you prevent the Christian Democrat party taking part in the election?" and so on and so on and amen. What Christian Democrat party? All there existed was a tiny party that had been formed a bare four weeks earlier, with a fascist at its head. A fascist who should have been in prison since Sept. 28, in fact, because he had already betrayed the Armed Forces Movement with Spínola. A young reactionary party that didn't even have a Catholic base and that had already attempted conspiracy. . . .

*Fallaci*: . . . The Italian Communist party was striving for the historical compromise and you. . . .

*Cunhal*: Oh, how sad to think they've suffered so much because of me! Oh, how mortified I feel! They had that possibility, and I spoiled it for them! You know what I think? If a Communist party can suffer damage by events taking place in another country, if it has to bear the consequences, then it means that. . . .

*Fallaci*: . . . but the Italian Communist party, notwithstanding, can summon up seven million votes, whereas you didn't get even 700,000. Have you ever meditated this fact? Have you never considered the advisability of making the choice Togliatti made, of inserting yourself in the so-called bourgeois democracy?

*Cunhal*: No, no, no, no, no and no! We've already obtained much more this way. Today there are no more private banks in Portugal and all the fundamental sectors have been nationalized; agricultural reform is on the way, capitalism is destroyed and monopolies are about to be destroyed. And all this is irreversible! So my answer to the Communists in Western countries, to their complaints is: We don't await the results of elections to change things and destroy the past. Our way is a revolution and has nothing in common with your systems.

\* \* \*

Bravo! These are great words. They breathe clarity and revolutionary independence from reformism and people's front Stalinism. If only Comrade Foley could understand them!

In *Time* magazine, Aug. 11, we learn something of the history of the Portuguese Communists. It might help to evaluate them—to understand what kind of revolutionists they are:

"Even today, party members are reluctant to discuss their underground activities. 'After all,' says Party Chief Alvaro Cunhal, 61, 'we may have to go back underground some day.' His deputy, Octavio Pato, claims that good organization has at least partly been the answer: 'There were big cells and small cells, a structure that was relatively centralized. The overwhelming majority of the Central Committee was inside Portugal, and that is one of the reasons the party managed to survive.' Indeed, according to Antonio Dias Lourenco, editor of the Communist weekly *Avante*, the party emerged from hiding with no fewer than 15,000 paid-up members. . . .

"Party Boss Cunhal spent 13 years behind bars, eight of them in solitary. He became something of a legend, even among non-Communists, for his daring 1960 escape with nine other prisoners from Lisbon's infamous Peniche Prison, which sits on a rocky promontory overlooking the Atlantic. . . .

"The Communist Party's strongest following has traditionally been in the impoverished Alentejo region south of the Tagus River, an area of huge farms owned by absentee landlords. There, tenant sharecroppers and migrant workers barely subsisted producing cork, olives, a few pigs and some wheat. Laborers frequently went hungry in the midst of unworked estates that had been turned into private hunting preserves.

"The Communists were also able to capitalize on worker dissatisfaction in Lisbon and other big cities. The old regime advertised Portugal to foreign investors as 'a land of cheap labor.' The Communists worked persistently within the framework of the legal labor syndicates. By the time of the revolution, they controlled the Bank Workers Union, the Metallurgical Workers Union, the Shop Workers Union and several other major organizations. Their strength was such that in the months prior to the ouster of the old regime they were able to call out 100,000 workers in wildcat strikes and send thousands of students into the streets—thus setting the stage for the climactic military coup that ended half a century of right-wing dictatorship. Nonetheless, for all their heroism and staying power, the Communists were able to garner only 12.5% of the vote in last April's election—leaving them still very much a minority party!"

Essentially *The Militant* charges the Communist Party of Portugal with two crimes: It is sectarian and it suppresses the democratic rights of the Portuguese people. Let us deal briefly with each.

A sectarian course in Portugal could be described in three areas: 1) A refusal to work in the reactionary trade unions under Salazar; 2) A failure to struggle within the bourgeois parliamentary institutions; and 3) Failing to effect a Leninist tactic of the united front against reaction. Has the CPP followed such a course?

The CPP has toiled for decades in the most reactionary trade union movement under the Salazar dictatorship. It rose to leadership of this movement due to this Leninist struggle in the underground and in the revolution. And it was the mobilization of these trade union masses in Lisbon that defeated the Spínola coup of September 28.

The CPP fought in the electoral field and won 18% of the April vote. When we consider that the Bolshevik Party gained only 25% of the vote for the Constituent Assembly in Russia after the October revolution, this achievement of the CPP is hardly a record of sectarianism.

And on the third count, the Communists have proved less sectarian than the SWP. It aligned itself firmly with the revolutionary movement in the army—the MFA. And, as cited earlier in this paper, it has offered full support to the Socialists should their headquarters be attacked and called on all radicals to unite for the struggle against fascist restoration. The Communist Party of Germany, at the crucial time, failed to make such a plea to the Social Democrats.

No one would claim that the Communists of Portugal are incapable of making mistakes. Everyone is. But the main lines along which they have moved are not of a sectarian nature. There is good reason for the victory against fascism, the nationalizations that have taken place, the formation of soviets—the mobilization of the revolutionary classes for power. The Communists deserve the major credit for these advances. And we have every reason to hope that, whatever weaknesses exist in their theoretical arsenal, they will continue their course toward socialism.

And now we come to the second charge the SWP has thrown at the Communists; that they have been guilty of brutally suppressing democratic rights in Portugal. Here one is prompted to say—you must be joking! Every day in recent months the democratic rights of the Communists have been under attack. The more conservative section of Portugal—the north—has witnessed the burning of CPP headquarters. Lynch mobs have attacked its members. The full weight of reaction is driving to crush the revolution and the CPP is the main target. And where is your precious SP? We have already cited its strike-breaking statement against the workers' protest of fascist attacks. The SP leadership, crying over confiscation of its press, is giving the counterrevolution the ideological screen it needs to hide its dirty work.

Yes, the SP's paper *Republica* was taken over. And so was the radio of the Catholics. Ernest Mandel has explained in some detail that the printing workers, mostly non CPP members, were engaged in an economic struggle with their employers. Workers throughout the country have taken steps to control their jobs as part of the process of nationalization. Factories have been seized. Things like that happen in a revolution. Mandel expressed the thought

that the seizure of *Republica* was an error, that it played into the hands of the reactionaries. Be that as it may, what has this to do with the red-baiting smear that the CPP violently suppresses civil liberties?

The SWP has developed a whole schematic view on the question of democracy. It is most articulately expressed by Joseph Hansen in an article in *The Militant* of Aug. 15 entitled "Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?"

"The source of their [Portuguese militants] error lies at bottom in believing that socialism simply abolishes bourgeois democracy instead of expanding it qualitatively, that is extending it into the economic structure and thereby liquidating one of the features that distinguishes capitalism—totalitarian command on the level of production."

The main cry of Russian Menshevism was that the Bolsheviks simply wanted to "abolish" bourgeois democracy instead of expanding it "qualitatively" in stages. That is, the Mensheviks argued, bourgeois democracy would be extended from the political structure into the economic, ending totalitarian command of production by the capitalists. The Mensheviks repeated this cry while the bourgeoisie was busy "extending" the imperialist war, harnessing production for the war, postponing land reform, and mobilizing the counterrevolution. Of course, the Russian bourgeoisie was, in fact, against bourgeois democracy. And there is a parallel in Portugal.

"Good militants" in Portugal aren't faced with the problem of abolishing bourgeois democracy. They are faced with the question of creating it or creating a socialist democracy. Bourgeois democracy in Portugal today exists only because of a proletarian revolution. The bourgeoisie was content to tolerate Salazar for fifty years. It was and is too weak to support a bourgeois democracy. It is ready to sack this amount of freedom if it can only get things back to "normal." The "organs of people's power," the committees of workers, soldiers, and peasants can and, we hope, will constitute themselves as the direct rulers of Portugal.

To put the matter simply—you can't have bourgeois democracy with the bourgeoisie. And the capitalists must be eliminated if any freedom is to live in Portugal. Bourgeois democratic rights which the workers wrenched from the capitalists with their blood—the rights to free speech, freedom of assembly, freedom to organize unions and political parties, etc., can be secured only if the capitalist class is abolished.

But rather than lecture Comrade Hansen about matters he should be familiar with, we would like to cite the Portuguese Communist leader Cunhal whose view is essentially Marxist-Leninist, and, yes, Trotskyist. We quote from the interview previously cited, published in the *New York Times Magazine*:

"But we Communists don't accept the rules of the election game! You err in taking this concept as your starting point. No, no, no: I care nothing for elections. Nothing! Ha, ha! If you believe it's all a question of the percentage of votes obtained by one party or the other, you're laboring under a gross delusion: If you think the Socialist party with its 40 per cent and the Popular party with its 27 per cent constitute the majority, you're the victim of a misunderstanding! They aren't the majority. . . .

". . . If you believe the Constituent Assembly will be transformed into a Parliament, you're making a ridiculous

mistake. No, indeed! The Constituent Assembly will certainly not form a legislative organ; it will certainly not become a chamber of deputies. I promise you. It will be a Constituent Assembly and nothing more, with a limited importance, nothing more. It will meet within a well-determined political framework, well-conditioned by the agreement signed with the M.F.A. by the force that is not represented by the M.F.A. Because it's the M.F.A. that launched the revolution on April 25, not the Socialist party. . . .

" . . . We Communists had indeed told the army men that the P.P.D. shouldn't have been included, that the country couldn't be led towards Socialism by means of an extensive democratic coalition. But they insisted on lumping together Socialists, Communists, Social Democrats and the various trends within the Armed Forces Movement . . . We had warned them the elections constituted a danger, that they were premature, that if no measures were taken we'd lose them, that one can't mix the passive vote with militancy. But we were able to prevent only the regional elections. They insisted on holding the one for the Constituent Assembly. . . .

"Ah, but at this point I must explain to you what's happening in Portugal, what we have here. There's a revolution happening, you know? There's a revolutionary process afoot, you know? Even if it is proceeding side by side with a bourgeois democratic process that sometimes coincides with the aims of the revolutionary process and sometimes contradicts them. The solution of our problems lies in the dynamics of revolution, whereas the bourgeois democratic process wants to entrust it to the old electoral concepts, invoking legality, a juridical situation and seeking to protect it with the laws of a previous regime. It refers to laws that must be respected. But in the revolutionary process, laws are made, not respected. Do you see? The revolution doesn't respect old laws; it makes new ones. . . .

" . . . To me, democracy means getting rid of capitalism, of trusts. And I'll add: In Portugal, henceforth, there exists no possibility for a democracy such as the kind you have in Western Europe. By 'henceforth' I mean 'no longer.' Of course, if on April 24 we had been told, 'You'll have a political set-up like the one in France or in Italy or in England,' we'd have exclaimed: 'How wonderful, what a relief!' But things went differently; the way events moved opened other prospects to us, and you can't expect a people's wishes to limit themselves or crystallize. In other words: Your Western democracy is no longer enough for us. Your coexistence of democratic freedoms and monopolistic power no longer interests us. We wouldn't attain it even if we could. Because we don't want to. We don't want a democracy like yours. We don't even want a Socialism,

or, rather, a dream of Socialism, like yours. Is that clear?

"In this country we need thorough, radical transformation at the social and the economic level. There are two choices before us: either a monopoly with a strong reactionary government or the end of monopolies with a strong Communist democracy."

It is ironic that the "Stalinist" Cunhal has a deeper grasp of the theory of permanent revolution than the "Troskyist" Hansen. But it should not be surprising for Cunhal of the CPP is linked to the working class of Portugal which is experiencing the realization of bourgeois democracy in a relentless struggle with the bourgeoisie through the socialist revolution.

### In Conclusion

In the *New York Post*, Columnist Clayton Fritchey, July 11, 1975, said, "Senator Buckley [Conservative Republican from New York] warns that Portugal confronts the U.S. 'with the most profound crisis since the end of World War II.'"

The conservative Senator is quite correct. At the end of World War II actual power was in the hands of the Communists and Socialist parties. Bourgeois parties had actually fled the scene in utter disgrace for their years of collaboration of capitulation to Hitler and Mussolini. What saved capitalism in Western Europe in 1945? It was the Stalinist monolith. In exchange for diplomatic arrangements with Western imperialism, the Kremlin delivered the Communist Parties of France and Italy as left wing partners of bourgeois forces in new people's front formations. Communist workers in both Communist parties still speak bitterly of how they missed the boat. The problem for the imperialists today is: Can the Communist parties still be controlled by the Kremlin—or Peking?

In a direct struggle with the revolution, imperialism alone is feeble. The only salvation for capitalism is through its labor bureaucracy, the Social Democracy, and the conservative Soviet bureaucracy. Now, in 1975, thirty years after the Second World War, the issue is posed: Can the workers free themselves from the traitorous supporters of "democratic" imperialism and hurl back the fascist counterrevolution in Western Europe? There is every possibility for this brilliant prospect. And it begins in Portugal. Let us embrace it and fight for it everywhere with all our might.

Fraternally,  
Murry Weiss  
Myra Tanner Weiss  
August 30, 1975

## A Letter from Pierre Frank to Two Former Members of the SWP

October 6th 1975

Dear comrades Murry and Myra Tanner Weiss,

I have read your letter to the SWP of August 30 on Portugal, which has been circulated to the members of the NC and organisers of the SWP, and I take it as an opportunity to find contact with you. I surmise that you have by now read the article "On defense of the Portuguese revolution" of August 10, by Mandel, Maitan and myself (Intercontinental Press, September 8).

It is obvious that these two texts have a common estimation of the problems of the Portuguese revolution as "the first socialist revolution in Western Europe." Both agree too that under the banner of "democracy" and "civil liberties" has taken place and is still carried a struggle against the revolution, that "the most important task in Portugal is precisely the organisation of Soviets" and that Trotskyists have the duty to sustain and further the present existing committees in order that they develop in full fledged soviets. There is also full agreement, it seems, in your and our criticism of the line taken by the SWP, of their whole schematic view of the question of democracy, of their support almost uncritical of the SP and of the Constituent Assembly against the present workers committees, of their identification between democratic rights of the masses (which of course we defend in all conditions) and bourgeois democracy which fundamentally is a system of bourgeois rule, where the working class has been able to acquire some rights only through hard struggles, acquiring and extending them first by violating the existing laws. You are correct when you write to the SWP that "[their] methodology, analyses and political conclusions . . . propel you, however unexpectedly or unwittingly, into the camp of American imperialism." Your words there are even stronger than ours.

Such a field of agreement in the general analysis and the main tasks of the Fourth International in Portugal will make, I am sure, easier to discuss our differences concerning the estimation of the MFA and the policies of the Portuguese CP. You use many quotations of serious bourgeois newspapers as the *New York Times*. But, as a matter of fact, the bourgeois press, even the most serious one, in the period preceding the offensive of the bourgeoisie and during it, has systematically distorted many positions of the MFA and the CP in order to build a scarecrow, to present Portugal threatened by a "Communist" and "military" dictatorship. Besides, I think that the most recent events of the last few weeks will help to clear the matter even better than our own arguments.

It was not wrong to make some comparison with the Cuban revolution, which has taught us once more, if necessary, that life is richer than theory and that it should help us to enrich our theory, not to think by labels as is presently doing the SWP. But there is a big gap between Castro (linked to the Che) and the MFA as a whole. The MFA was not a revolutionary body with a confused line,

no more—let me add—than a "tool of Portuguese finance capital" as we could hear in a session of the United Secretariat. It was an organisation of officers united to stop the Portuguese imperialist wars in Africa because these wars were hopeless. Its range went from officers with a confused socialist orientation to very bourgeois minded ones, democratic or of a gaullist type. Besides, even an important part of Portuguese bourgeoisie wanted to stop these wars. The MFA (with the collaboration of Spínola) brought down the Caetano regime. This triggered off, unexpectedly for most of the officers the revolutionary upsurge of the masses, which then developed much quicker than even we expected after 48 years of fascism. In the course of events, divisions occurred in the MFA. One of the most important persons in it, major Antunes, had a similar policy to the SP's, perhaps a bit shrewder. After March 11, he wanted to stop the revolution. He intervened in the MFA, at the same time as Soares left the government, and one cannot doubt that the two moves were coordinated. Now, with the new government, there are, as some people in Portugal say, "many MFA;" in other words the disintegration of this body is on the march, as could be expected from the start. Of course there are officers who are progressing more to the left with the mass vanguard, like this captain who "stole" a thousand guns to give them for workers' militias. Amongst them are those who have understood that a victory of the reaction would mean the loss of their own life. There is not even today a clear cut division among officers—the part of which will go with the masses depends largely on the strength of the revolution, of its capacity to fight for power.

Concerning the Portuguese CP, it is necessary to start with the aim it had from the beginning in order to understand its policies and its variations since the fall of Caetano. In April 1974, the Portuguese CP sought a similar development to the one the French and Italian CPs expected after the last war, but which did not take place, the one also that the Spanish CP expects in Spain after the fall of Franco. It wanted to establish in Portugal an "enlarged democracy," that means mainly some nationalisations within a bourgeois system in which the monopolies would be kept in check. There the CP would have a firm control of the masses and the foreign policy, whilst not breaking formally with NATO, would be of a gaullist type suitable to the Kremlin. Useless to tell you the fallacy of such a policy. But, whilst in France and Italy after the war the CPs succeeded to break the revolutionary upsurge and in spite of that to maintain a firm control on the masses, the Portuguese CP started soon to have some trouble because part of the masses, and not a small or insignificant part, went out of its control. It sought then to reestablish the situation thanks to a part of the MFA which had similar views about the future of Portugal, i.e., to make of it in an orderly process a country independent of multinational monopolies, of imperialism. (Many

officers had been influenced during their stay in the former Portuguese colonies by the ideology of the Frelimo, the MPLA, etc.). So the CP supported officers like Goncalves, and it tried to use all bureaucratic means at its disposal to establish its authority in as many fields as possible. It also adjusted its phraseology concerning the workers' and other committees. The CP acted all the more in this way that it was much disappointed by the results of the elections and had to make a "left" turn. Its bureaucratic methods created much hostility in the masses. When Soares thought that because of that the ground was propitious, he took the offensive with "democracy" as a banner. The press has given much place to the attacks against CP's and other organisations headquarters, and no one should underestimate the danger it constitutes. But at the same time the CP lost—and that was much worse for it—the control of over 35 trade unions, because of the hostility against its bureaucratic methods, partly to the SP, but partly also to the extreme left. Besides bureaucratic methods, the CP occasionally used some "third period" vocabulary ("social-fascists").

It is because of its difficulties and isolation that the CP leadership appealed to the far left, including our own organisation, not acting of course on "orders" of the Kremlin. But whilst using left language, the CP has again accepted to enter in the government, even on an inferior status, because it remains on its fundamental line, that of an "enlarged democracy" for Portugal. So, in no way can we say that the CP deserves the major credit for the advances of the Portuguese revolution. It tries to adapt to it, it may go in the future further than it wants to go. But, in the meantime, its eclectic line—one step to the left, a few ones to the right—is now adding to its troubles, because in spite of all the confusion that exists in the far left, the latter is today a real factor in Portuguese politics. The CP does not possess such an apparatus with which it could control the masses. Many people have come to it who expect from it to carry the revolution to the end. It will depend largely of us that its difficulties are solved not in its favour as a reformist or a centrist organisation, but in a revolutionary way towards a workers' state.

We are following the Portuguese situation as closely as possible, informing of what takes place through *Inprecor*, *Rouge*, etc., and we are trying to strengthen as much as possible our Portuguese comrades. In spite of errors in formulations they are doing a good job, nor only for the development and the centralisation of the Workers' committees, but also for the politisation and organisation of soldiers, as witnessed by the demonstrations that took place recently in Porto and Lisbon.

What is the most perturbing problem for our movement—and your letter itself shows that it is also your main concern—is the line followed by the SWP. There are the unqualifiable articles by Foley which are still printed by *IP* and *The Militant*. There is in it the wrong political

line on the Portuguese revolution. But there is more than that. You have mentioned some "Stalinophobia" which is dangerous in the United States more than anywhere else. But, there is another feature of the policy of the SWP which is no less dangerous. It is what I called at our last World Congress their obsession of ultraleftism. We have to fight the latter ideologically and we are doing it. But we have to fight it not only ideologically, and there the problem is not a simple one in the present conditions of mass upsurge in large parts of Europe. This mass upsurge is not and cannot be an even one. Some layers, small at first, bigger with time, are marching quicker than others. In spite of all of our efforts, parts of them are used by ultraleft groups, though they are not congenital ultralefts. This is a phenomenon of every revolutionary period. The line of the SWP is to condemn and ignore these currents and to align itself on the average workers. But, besides the arbitrariness in defining the "average" which is unavoidably nearer to the tail than to the head, such a policy leaves completely the field to the ultraleft groups and thereby leaves the most advanced layers, the people who progress politically "too quickly" and are without an understanding of a revolutionary strategy, to the attacks of the bourgeoisie, by isolating them from the bulk of the working class. It seems that, in this matter, the SWP has forgotten the lessons of the "July days," which Trotsky explained so well.

And, crowning the whole, there are what you have rightly raised, i.e., the false views contained in comrade J. Hansen's article on "democracy." This article piles up mistake upon mistake from a theoretical point of view and this error has brought the SWP to see in the attempt of a counter-revolutionary move (which has happily not gone as far as Noske's in 1918-1919, because Soares could found [sic] generals but no soldiers up to now to do the dirty work) a progressive step of the revolution.

A leading member of the SWP said at its last Convention that the Portuguese question was an "acid test." It is the only sentence on which I agree with him. The mistakes made by the SWP do not obviously help the Fourth International as a whole. But at least it does not hinder too much our work in Europe where such views are practically inexistent. But they can become fatal for the SWP itself in the future. I hope that your intervention, though you are no more formally members of the SWP, will have some good repercussions in it, and that it will help the interventions of the United Secretariat, which try to stop a big theoretical revision with the disastrous political consequences it would unavoidably imply for the SWP.

If you have any remark or suggestion on our article or on my letter, I would be very pleased to read them.

Yours fraternally,

Pierre Frank

Copy to the United Secretariat and the SWP.

## A Discussion on Portugal

Internationalist Tendency Newsletter,  
July 30, 1975

[Concerning the following interview a September 30, 1975 letter from Jeff Beneke of the IT(NF) coordination committee, to the SWP national office indicates: "While most of the material contained in the interview was obtained by John (Barzman) in discussion with Ernest in Canada, some of it was supplied through other sources. It was based on written notes and from memory and was not taken verbatim from tape. Furthermore, it was not edited by Ernest. For all of these reasons, we did not credit by name any single comrade with responsibility."]

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The following interview with a leader of the international revolutionary Marxist movement was held in late July, 1975. It raises many issues, which underlines the need for a thorough discussion. The SWP leadership is presently conducting a campaign to get the membership to line up immediately against the IMT on the spurious grounds that the IMT "capitulates to Stalinism and the MFA." This campaign is reminiscent of the sudden drive to get an endorsement of the Feldman and Johnson article on Vietnam, although, in this case, we don't even have the benefit of that kind of controversial exchange. No documents have been circulated by the IMT except some general articles in *Inprecor*. The full extent and nature of the differences inside the LTF are still unknown. A full discussion will be needed when the different positions have been adequately documented. In fact, such a discussion will be unavoidable, despite the parody of a discussion now taking place inside the SWP.

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*Q. What are the main changes in the situation which have affected the tactics of the revolutionary Marxists in Portugal?*

A. The revolutionary process in Portugal can broadly be divided into three phases.

The first lasted from the anti-Caetano coup of April 25, 1974, until about November, 1974. At that time, the Fourth International may have underestimated the depth of the revolutionary process which was unfolding. However, I think that on the balance, this was not so. During that period, the MFA still had solid ties with a stable officer corps in the army. The rise of workers struggles was still slow. During that period, the Communist Party (PCP) had a very hard popular front type position. They actively and virulently opposed strikes. The Socialist Party (SP) could afford the luxury of taking a more liberal position with little risk, or, in the words of the CP at that time, "it was covering the left adventurism of the far left". The MFA had a substantial credit and margin of maneuver.

The second stage lasted from December 1974 until May

Day 1975. There was a qualitative deepening of the revolutionary process, and of the autonomy of the workers vanguard in relation to the apparatus of the reformist organizations. There also was a qualitative deepening of the self-organization of the working class, and even of some layers of soldiers. The bourgeoisie more or less lost control over the army, meaning that the army could no longer be relied upon as a coherent and ready tool of repression. The unity of the MFA broke down. It began to mirror all tendencies in society at large. This breakdown culminated in the attempted coup by Spínola on March 11.

In retrospective, the attempt may look stupid. The bourgeoisie panicked in the face of its loss of control, attempted a preventive coup, and wasted its trump cards too soon. But the response of the masses could not be that easily foreseen by the bourgeoisie—nor could it be by our comrades. The reaction of the soldiers was to be decisive, and whole provincial garrisons stood by, waiting to see what would happen in Porto and Lisbon. But there, the immediate response by the far left and CP and SP base, which included barricades etc, won over the soldiers and turned the tide. Our comrades took important initiatives in the struggle in Porto. The result of this whole episode was a radical change in the relationship between the far left and the base of the CP. There was a united front in action. Our comrades were invited by CPers to address demonstrations.

The elections to the Constituent Assembly, on April 25, reflected these changes, although of course in a deformed fashion—that is, deformed by the still important weight of money in the election campaign, and by the role of capitalist institutions such as the Church, etc. The election figures were unique in Europe in giving working class parties an unprecedented 60 percent of the vote, and this after forty years of dictatorship. Figures in Germany and Spain for comparable periods were in the 40 percent. The results were also unique in the new relationship of forces between the CP (which got 15 percent) and the far left (which got 5 percent) which they reflected. The CP had lost a quarter of its electoral base to the far left in the course of a few months.

At that point, a third stage opened. Some say it began even a little before the elections—the CP knew the outcome in advance. The Communist Party refused to place itself between the hammer and the anvil. The growing influence of the far left threatened it with losing its base in the big factories, which would have created a desperate situation for the CP. On the other hand, on the field of the parliamentary road, the SP was obviously stronger. The CP had to make a choice, and obviously made the most intelligent choice from the point of view of its own interests. It chose to harden its position toward the SP and be more flexible toward working class struggles, while sticking very closely to the MFA in order to maintain its grip on the trade unions and reestablish an electoral base. The mistake of the CP was to believe that the situation as

it existed immediately after the elections could be stabilized in that state. In fact, it was already too explosive. The CP remains in a difficult position, but it is maintaining the course which it adopted at the time of the elections.

*Q. How would you characterize the present situation?*

A. The essence of the situation is that we are fundamentally in the midst of a prerevolutionary rise on the verge of a revolutionary situation. There are embryos of organs of dual power appearing; the repressive apparatus of the bourgeoisie is tremendously weakened. However, the rapid and deeper working class radicalization is still limited to the workers vanguard which remains a minority of perhaps 100 to 300,000 workers out of a total population of 7 million—the size of the vanguard in Portugal is still much broader today than anywhere else in Europe. This is the classical situation for a bourgeois response of the German type (i.e. 1919), that is a strategy of reestablishing its hold on the situation through institutionalization of a Constituent Assembly. An immediate and massive repression is completely impossible and excluded. There is no one to implement it. This is the basis of our differences with the SWP leadership. There can be no immediate repression and military dictatorship because the soldiers are too undisciplined to implement it, and the leadership of the MFA is subjectively incapable of carrying it out. Nonetheless, on the medium term, there could be a putsch of the type of the Kapp putsch in Germany in 1920 after a section of the vanguard had been previously defeated or neutralized.

*Q. There is some confusion on the facts in the Republica affair. Could you give some details on the matter?*

A. We have to distinguish very carefully between the specific origins of the affair and the objective role which it is now playing. There is no longer any question about the facts. They have been established. There was a debate between Soares and Cunhal, which was re-transmitted on the whole European television network, and they had no dispute on the facts.

The take-over was initiated by the workers in the printshop. There is no question about that. They were little politicized. In their eyes, what they were doing was an attempt to break the monopoly of the management over the contents of the paper. The paper is privately owned by one man, who is an SP supporter, and that is why it carries the SP line. The workers wanted workers control over their product. They did not take into account the political role that the paper had to play as an SP press. It was a tactical mistake, but a tactical mistake by the workers of the printshop.

The workers' initiative had two results. One, it deeply divided the working class. The working class base of the SP is a real one (especially in more backward areas, or in the North, where it has a majority). Many SP workers reacted viscerally. The CP answer was stupid. Instead of taking steps to stifle the reformist maneuverings on this response, it played right into the hands of Soares. Second, the affair was almost instantly used by the Portuguese and international bourgeoisie against the workers movement as a whole. It was the basis for a counter-offensive designed to restore "order" in the factories against the rowdies symbolized by the Republica workers.

Indeed, the major problem of the bourgeoisie in Portugal, and the central issue at stake in the present showdown is whether the depth of the workers control experiments, what the capitalists call chaos and anarchy, and which is already unprecedented, will be further extended, or smashed. In many factories, workers have themselves instituted the thirty hour week; they work half-days when they so decide; and the books have been opened. Many workers control struggles have been spontaneously waged against factory closures as a result of the economic catastrophe, or because the capitalists claimed to be making no profits. There is a massive flight of capital away from Portugal. This incites the workers to further struggles, and precludes a lessening of the unemployment situation. In order to restore the capitalist economy of Portugal, massive foreign aid is necessary. But European capital is now able to take a harder line, and demands guarantees that order and discipline will be restored in the factories by a government with authority to do so. In this sense, the Republica affair was a God-sent gift for the Portuguese and international bourgeoisie, because it allowed their counter-offensive to be launched in the name of defense of a "socialist" enterprise, and of democratic rights. This was perfect for the bourgeoisie.

*Q. What kind of response do you think should have been made?*

A. The F.I.'s instincts in the situation were right. It was a situation where you had a conflict between a boss (who was SP-backed) and the workers' committee. Seeing this, the MFA initially said it was neutral, and sent soldiers to guard the press while it reached a decision on what to do. So, temporarily, no one was in control. The MFA made its decision in favor of re-opening the paper under SP control. But the affair had been clarified in the workers vanguard in Lisbon, and the MFA had to withdraw its troops. At that point, the workers re-occupied the Republica building and dared the MFA to throw them out. The MFA could not do so, because the soldiers would have hesitated or refused, it would have led to a split in the ranks of the few loyal army units, and the last residues of bourgeois military authority would have been squandered.

The present situation is that the workers have announced that the manager, Rego, is free to return to the building and his post. This is contrary to the SWP report. But Rego has refused to return to his post in Republica saying he would only return if the government showed enough authority to throw the workers out of his building. So the issue is not freedom of the press, but whether or not the workers will be thrown out.

The situation is bad. It could have been avoided easily with the type of intervention which the LCI made. The UDP which had the biggest following among the printshop workers should have answered back with proposals of its own, aimed at dividing the base of the SP itself. Good proposals would have been to: 1) state that we are not against the SP having a press, but the workers who are producing it should get to give their views in two columns every day, so they could express their disagreement with the policy of the owner; 2) they should have answered the lies in the international press about totalitarianism in Portugal. Portugal is still the freest country in the world today. Soares and the SP appear on TV every night. There is absolutely no censorship either of the domestic or international press. The SP should have been told that if



they couldn't get the Republica workers to print their paper, there was no objection to the SP starting a new printshop, getting help from their friends abroad, bringing in new machines across the wide open borders.

The above measures would have ended the affair. But the leaders of the CP are bureaucratic and incapable of such leadership of the mass movement. They entered instead into an obscure polemic of the third period type on bourgeois democracy versus proletarian dictatorship which is not understood by the working class, and the SP made some gains. The SP demonstrations in Porto and Lisbon were respectively 80 and 50,000. The CP's answer was to try to blockade the streets. They asked the LCI, the UDP, and others in the far left, to help them make a public appeal for barricades. This was refused. It nonetheless indicates the relationship of forces between the CP and far left.

*Q. Why do you think the CP is following its present course?*

A. Cunhal has even made overtures to our comrades for a united front, so the question is real. The SWP leadership's interpretation doesn't hold up. To believe that a CP such as the Portuguese CP, which has just spent forty years underground, whose top leader Cunhal has spent fifteen years in jail, and in the period following the massacre of the CP in Chile, would be ready to commit suicide is foolish. The CP's self-preservation instincts are stronger than its popular frontist ideas. The CP is ready to do anything to avoid being executed and herded into concentration camps. The same reaction could be seen among CPers in Germany in 1933. We categorically exclude that an experience like that of Chile could be repeated in Portugal.

*Q. What about the MFA?*

A. Discussions with MFA leaders show that they are convinced that if a right-wing coup succeeds in Portugal, they will be tortured and executed with their families, within twenty four hours. Bourgeois vengeance after the affronts they are receiving, and the panic they are experiencing, will be terrible. Just look at the Spanish civil war. To say that the MFA is a representative of finance capital and the advanced wing of the bourgeois counter-offensive is grotesque. Portugal is on the verge of dual power. These officers (today admirals and generals) were subordinate officers before 74. They promoted themselves after the coup. The army under Salazar was the only place in Portugal where the petty-bourgeoisie could find some upward mobility. These officers are the children of the working petty-bourgeoisie. They are not proletarian revolutionaries, but neither are they linked to the big bourgeoisie. They are the "last resort of the bourgeoisie" only in the same sense that Kerensky was, but they are not "tools of finance capital", etc. To say otherwise would be to debase the meaning of words, and lose all precision and credibility. These officers are constantly clamoring for "Socialist Revolution", "Abolish Capitalism", and they have sent a delegation to Cuba officially assigned to learn "how to make a socialist revolution". Labels must have some connection with reality.

*Q. What is the way out of the present situation?*

A. The fundamental line of our Portuguese comrades is correct. The only chance to save the situation is to multiply the organs of dual power. The more is done in this direction while the bourgeoisie still cannot use overt repression, the closer to the point of no return we will have come. These organs are of two kinds: 1) councils arising out of workers control; and 2) arming of the masses for self-defense.

A united front of the MES and the LCI (Portuguese sympathizing organization of the F.I.) has been achieved whose purpose is to organize the setting up of these revolutionary councils. The first conference of the coordination of self-organization groups summoned in this fashion took place in Porto, and represented 40,000 people in plants, neighborhoods, etc. The CP has adopted our slogan in favor of workers control, but it is still hesitating on the question of workers councils. However, its base is going along even with the councils. A series of factory and neighborhood commissions have begun to arm themselves, and some soldiers are backing them. For example, an officer asked one of our comrades to come and agitate the soldiers of his unit, after he had read a book by Trotsky. We began with an organization of twenty five members, now we have hundreds. It's a race against time since we are still very weak. But the only possible way to victory is the fastest and widest possible extension of self-organization and self-defense until it is irreversible. Otherwise the scenario is clear: power shifts away from the factories and the streets to the Constituent Assembly, the new government reestablishes order and isolates the vanguard, and then a military coup comes unopposed to finish the repression.

Soares is a social-democrat, but his anti-communist and anti-anarchist hysteria is playing the same role today as the CP was in 1974. The spearhead of bourgeois reaction. But the social-democrats are of only temporary use to the bourgeoisie. They also will be repressed afterwards. The latest demonstrations show how serious this danger is. They show that the SP is losing control of the situation; the SP cannot be in favor of burning Marxist books and CP headquarters. Maybe this will shock the SP base into thinking twice about what it is doing. CPers have been beaten up; our comrades were spared. SPers must be warned that they are digging their own grave. On the other hand, the far right may have reappeared too fast and too early for their best interest, and this may cause a backlash. But Soares is now the spokesperson of all those national and international forces who want to end the present drift to the left and establish a firm rule of bourgeois democracy.

*Q. What is the position of the LTF?*

A. There is a debate inside the LTF with 4 and possibly 5 positions.

The Morenista wing (Argentine PST and Portuguese PRT) says that the process in Portugal is very particular because it is the first time since Germany in 1918 that there is no bourgeois army at hand, but only scattered pieces of a defeated army which should be looked upon as the soldiers soviets were in Russia in 1917. This is exaggerated. The army is still standing with its discipline, and the MFA is not an elected body even though it is true that its composition changes from meeting to meeting because officers are replaced by others, and there have

been more and more soldiers present—but they are appointed by their officers. We favor the building of soldiers' committees rather than a widening of the MFA. The PST approved the MFA's call for workers councils. We, on the other hand, object to the failure of the call to specify how they will [be] elected, and that established political parties have their place in them. The PST has the same position as the PPR.

The Liga Comunista (LC) of Spain supports our central slogans and axis, but wants a parallel and simultaneous emphasis on calling for all power to the Constituent Assembly. They see no contradiction between these two positions because they say that in a revolutionary situation, the bourgeoisie cannot give power to a Constituent Assembly in which working class parties hold a majority. But this line of reasoning is false as Germany in 1918 demonstrates rather graphically. The LC position is still closer to that of the IMT. Its only common point with that of the SWP is a common Stalinophobia. However, even this is unstable because right now, the Spanish CP is attacking the Portuguese CP, and the LC might be embarrassed defending the same line as the CP.

Some other European LTFers have an incoherent position between the others. They say that there is a deep revolutionary situation which the F.I. has criminally underestimated; that we must call for Soviets now, but focus our fire against the CP. They say nothing about the SP and the reactionary demonstrations.

The SWP leadership is not entirely clear. The ultras say there is no revolutionary situation, not even a pre-revolutionary one. The only choice is between bourgeois democracy and military dictatorship. Therefore they are led to 100 percent support for Soares against the MFA who are seeking such a dictatorship. This position ignores reality. They argue that of course they are for Soviets but now is years too early. The debate with this position is over objective reality. Gerry Foley twice stated in *I.P.* that the debate in Portugal was between the Constituent Assembly and a military dictatorship, a position which is only comprehensible and logical if there is no pre-revolutionary situation. Others in the SWP are more flexible, a little more aware of reality. They agree there is a pre-revolutionary situation of sorts and that it is therefore incorrect to say "All Power to the Constituent Assembly"; that there is no immediate threat of a military dictatorship. But they insist that the MFA is an instrument of the bourgeoisie, and that the Republica affair was part of a slow erosion of democratic rights. It is a flexible position but it holds in common with the other a DELIRIOUS STALINOPHOBIA: "the CP is spearheading the counter-revolution", but no comment on the burning of CP headquarters. The SWP leadership will probably pull back a little. No one in Portugal is following their line, so it could be easy to find some scapegoats who could be blamed for wrong information. At any rate, Portugal will definitely be a key political debate in the future.

*Q. What are the different Maoist organizations?*

A. They can be broken down into three groups.

First there are the raving sectarian Maoist currents (comparable to the NCLC in the USA). These have been ruthlessly eliminated by reality. MRPP refused to go on the barricades on March 11 because they said one should support neither the fascist-military coup nor the social-

fascist CP counter-coup. The only thing that saved them from oblivion was their arrest. They would have become insignificant. Their defense is made difficult by their physical attacks on CPers and their clamoring for the elimination of CPers.

Then there are a series of Maoist organizations who are more or less close to the SP. The official one recognized by Peking, the PCP-ML is the smallest and plays no role except that it sometimes tries to push the SP to the right. The UDP is the most serious and is moving away from this orbit. They are in the leadership in several big factories in Lisbon, and got a deputy elected to the Constituent Assembly. After the elections they underwent a crisis because some wanted to maintain the ultra-sectarian position against the CP. The Republica affair traumatized them and explains the crisis, because their own base was involved in the plant take-over, and since the CP was backing the workers, it became hard to keep on saying the CP was the main enemy. Since then, they have somewhat re-examined their position and they walked out of the Constituent Assembly along with the CP when a right-wing social democrat staged a provocation. Further, they didn't join the SP demonstrations, and tend to become sectarian toward the SP. Unfortunately, of all the Maoist groups, it is the most sterile on the question of workers control. Especially their leadership says that workers councils are a Trotskyist shibboleth and anarchist garbage. The MRPP is for workers control by contrast. This poses a problem for the LCI because it only recently oriented to the UDP base. The LCI would like to extend its united front with the MES to include the UDP.

Finally, there are the Maoist spontaneist organizations. They have a rather floating position. We were close to them in the beginning; they have a good position on self-representation and workers control. But there is a danger which they share in common with the PRP, i.e. their hostility to political parties. At this time, they are the only civilian spokespeople for the positions of the MFA center. This incidentally shows the isolation of the MFA. It made a stupid mistake in calling on people to abstain in the elections (over 95 percent voted), when it was their first chance to vote freely after 40 years of dictatorship. Their fiasco was a shock and they reoriented toward direct democracy, and speeches against political parties by these groups encourage them in a manipulative direction. The LUAR and PPR tend in the same direction. The PPR is tied to IS and Stalinophobia.

*Q. What is the LCI doing?*

A. The LCI has made a major breakthrough. It started from a tiny and very new group, and now it has several hundred members. But they are still poorly organized. During the elections, 1,500 to 2,000 contacts came around them and the PRT, but the opportunity to consolidate this periphery was not adequately used. There were internal problems which have now been resolved. The organization is impressive, their candidates were overwhelmingly workers and they had impressive meetings. Nothing like this has happened before outside of Paris in the best days. In the four districts where they ran, they got 1 percent of the vote. Compare this with the showing of the Trotskyists during the Spanish revolution in the 1930s. They have made progress in developing united front alliances and have consolidated their work in factories and among soldiers. They have opened headquarters everywhere.

## Report from Chicago

August 12, 1975

[The following "Report from Chicago, August 12, 1975" is reprinted from the *Internationalist Tendency Newsletter* dated August 15, 1975. This report gives a summary of the views on the Portuguese developments of a leading member of the Internationalist Tendency (New Faction).]

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Last week, the Chicago comrades of the new faction held a meeting to discuss Portugal. Here and there, some full members of the SWP will drop a word to us about the reports given in the branch. But apparently, the leadership would rather not have a contradictory debate. So we had our own discussion to prepare our future participation. Cde. Jeff gave a report that went over the background to the Caetano overthrow and the evolution of the situation since the elections. It's worth summarizing.

He noted first that the debate over Portugal was an extension of the debate over the European Perspectives Document (EPD). A number of striking developments clearly confirm the correctness of the approach of the EPD and the inadequacy of the LTF's method. While neither side saw Portugal as typical of Europe, one of Cde. Waters' chief criticisms of the EPD was that it lumped together such widely divergent countries as Sweden and Portugal. In fact, the pattern foreseen by the EPD is clearly evident in Portugal.

The emergence of advanced layers in the course of the struggle has been along new mass vanguard lines, i.e. tens of thousand of workers, soldiers, and students, willing to act independently and militantly outside the control of the CP and SP leaderships, and ideologically influenced by the more advanced sectors of the colonial revolution, the European vanguard, and anti-bureaucratic aspirations. The LTF denied the existence of this layer; or categorized it as a conglomerate of opponents; or treated it as a sectoral mass to be reached at the level of its sectoral interests. This position, applied to Portugal has led to a tail-endist, rightist, relation to the SP and CP. Refusing to recognize the existence of this layer as a broad vanguard, the SWP leadership naturally opposes any initiatives by this layer which would be independent of the CP and SP. The SWP leadership opposes giving expression to it on a national level where it could alter the monopoly of representation of the working class held by the SP and CP. The difference was reflected most clearly in the governmental formula proposed for the elections in April. While the SWP leadership favored a call for a "SP-CP-Intersindical Government", the IMT favored an algebraic formula that would leave the far-left the opportunity to be represented at a national level: "For a government of the workers' organizations"; or else the specific formula "CP-SP-workers commissions government".

The IMT-LTF debate over the EPD also found a pragmatic test on a number of other points. The LTF had

objected to the "catastrophism" of the EPD. But Portugal confirms, at least partially, that decisive battles would unfold rapidly. The SWP leadership had reproached the IMT with making workers control into a panacea. Portuguese workers have extended workers control so widely that it has become a central feature of the upsurge. In fact, restoration of order in the factories is the major issue at stake in the current press campaign of the international bourgeoisie. Further, the EPD has posed the achievement of dual power as the strategic objective, while the LTF counterposed the building of a mass revolutionary party first. In fact, the Portuguese situation demonstrates the possibility of dual power as an immediate perspective. The problems of building the revolutionary party, i.e., the party that will lead the working class organs to smash and replace the bourgeois state, is intricately connected to the extension and consolidation of dual power, and the role of the Trotskyist nucleus in that process. Such was the problematic of the EPD.

But in the case of Portugal, the inadequacies of the LTF approach to party-building in Europe have intersected with specific deformations of the SWP leadership. This has qualitatively worsened their perception of the situation. We still find the weakness of the conjunctural analysis and foresight characteristic of the LTF's documents on Europe. Also present are the dogmatic distribution of labels with the ready-made analyses for all times and all places: MFA-equals-army-equals-bourgeoisie; Portugal today-equals-first phase of upsurge in backward European country-equals-Spain in 1931, etc. However, two particular deformations of the SWP leadership have superimposed themselves to the more routine distortions of European reality: Stalinophobia, and the theory of workers democracy as an extension of bourgeois democracy. The question of Stalinism has been raised before in the F.I. But the debate was never resolved by either side into a universal synthetic approach. The debate over democracy has barely begun with the critique of the PST's line in Argentina. Thus, the debate remains extremely complex both at the level of understanding the Portuguese events, at the level of determining the tactics of party building, and at the level of clarifying the underlying theoretical differences.

The reporter then indicated the main features of the background to the anti-Caetano coup. For the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the fundamental perspectives problem was to move from a protective although highly concentrated economy, heavily dependent on the African colonies, to a modern economy capable of competing on the European market. The urgency of the transition arose from the dead-end of the Caetano regime, and growing external pressure from U.S. and European capital. In the last nine months of the old regime, the crisis became acute: sudden breakthrough of Frelimo in Northern Mozambique; first urban unrest in Angola; establishment of a National Assembly in Guineau-Bissau; a still atomized strike wave in

Portugal; and a stubborn hardening of the Caetano regime. Spinola's book posed the problem for the bourgeoisie, i.e how to get rid of the dictatorship, safeguard some interests in the colonies, modernize the infrastructure of Portugal, all without any mass bourgeois parties or traditions of parliamentarism. The attempt to make a low-key, controlled transition, which was symbolized by Spinola, has failed.

Within the army itself, the MFA developed among subordinate officers of petty-bourgeois origins. It contained a wing which reflected the radicalization of petty-bourgeois layers whose anti-monopoly aspirations interfered with the project of the bourgeoisie. The unforeseen depth of the mass upsurge which had been brewing for a while further upset these plans. After the April 25 coup by the MFA, Spinola accepted a bloc with the MFA but found himself increasingly hamstrung. Two of the five police branches were dissolved; the top military hierarchy and the administration were purged; additional nationalizations were imposed under workers control through factory occupations; the maneuverability of the remaining bourgeois state apparatus was increasingly limited by the soldiers' sympathy for the mass movement.

The working class self-confidence was developed in the course of resisting three attempted Spinolist coups: in July 74, an attempt to institute a presidential regime under Spinola; in September 74, an attempted march on Lisbon by the "silent majority"; on March 11, 1975, an attempted revolt by Spinolist army units. The result was a prerevolutionary situation characterized by a weak bourgeois government, increasing paralysis of the state apparatus, continuing radicalization of the masses, and the appearance of workers, tenants and soldiers committees.

The bourgeoisie's only hope to reverse that process was a division in the working-class which would allow the stabilization of the situation through a government based on the authority of the Constituent Assembly (C.A.), and gradual selective repression of the far left. The options open to it include: the use of an international blockade to aggravate the economic crisis (as in Chile); activating the far right (Portuguese Liberation Army-ELP-exiles, former Salazar supporters and elements of the Church); wooing a wing of the MFA (Costa Gomes being the obvious candidate); to play on a SP-PPD majority in the C.A.

The discussion then took up some specific problems. How could the working class movement undercut the base of reactionary sectors? What was the role of land reform and women's liberation in the process? Comrades felt a need for more data on these questions.

It was noted that some sectors of the IMT did not feature any criticism of the actions of the Republica printers. However, the whole I.P. polemic was entirely beside the point. In fact, the line of Joe Hansen's article "Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?" was considered as the most serious deviation so far. Comrades tried to isolate some of the points of the Novackian democratic system which allow the slipping over into a revisionist conception of the state and democracy. There is no abstract principle of free speech for the bourgeoisie always except in civil war, not to speak of free speech for fascists. Workers democracy is not an "extension of bourgeois democracy to the economic field". It implies the destruction of bourgeois democracy in the political sphere, and its replacement by workers democracy in both the political and economic

spheres. The confusion between bourgeois democracy (democratic institutions of bourgeois rule) and democratic rights is a dangerous deviation already evidenced in Argentina by the PST. The lumping together of India and the Soviet Union under the label of "totalitarian" is potentially dangerous even if there are disclaimers about the different social base of the two systems.

While the rights of the SP, as a working class party should be defended if they are threatened, defense of democratic rights of the working class in Portugal today, also and perhaps mainly implies defense of the rights of workers to occupy their factories, protect themselves with arms, and a fight against reactionary attacks on the headquarters of their organizations. As for the democratic rights of the bourgeoisie, the Catholic Radio Renascença, the purged Salazarists, and other elements implicated in the old regime or the Spinolist coups, they are purely conditional and should be examined in the concrete. The SWP's emphasis on institutionalization of the bourgeois *parliamentary democratic rights*, rather than the *workers control "democratic" rights*, fits in with bourgeois plans to take decision-making out of the streets and factories and into the corridors of the Constituent Assembly.

The nature of the SP mobilizations was analyzed. The working class base, and the elements of SP party patriotism and anti-Stalinism in the demonstrations is undeniable. They confirm the the need for a proletarian united front policy, appeals to the SP against reaction, and the possibility of a left-wing or split in the SP. However, the main thrust of these demonstrations was not seen as being "Against the MFA, For the Democratic Rights of the Working Class". Therefore, the line of "CP Break with MFA and Join the SP mobilizations for Democratic Rights" was seen as totally irrelevant. The main thrust of the SP demonstrations has been anti-CP and anti-Goncalves, with pledges of loyalty to Costa Gomes and a reformed MFA. An important demand has been that the workers commissions dominated by the CP and far left be disarmed. The perspective seems to be an SP-PPD government based on the C.A., with the promise that friendly European states would then help overcome the crisis, and the government would have the authority to restore order. It is no wonder that the SP has been *outflanked on the right*, despite IP's praise of the dynamic of mass action in the streets for democracy.

There was some discussion of the value of labels with relation to a characterization of the MFA. As a frame of reference, it was agreed that the MFA was administering a bourgeois state, and that the MFA Supreme Council of the Revolution and troika were bourgeois governments. The MFA itself which occupies the seats of the troika and some of the seats of the official government, was seen by some as petty-bourgeois, others as bourgeois; both agreed there was no fundamental break with a bourgeois program by the MFA as such. Beyond these labels, it was recognized that the MFA did undergo a process of radicalization, and that its divisions do reflect currents inside the working class as well as bourgeois currents; that it has played a bonapartist role between the working class and the bourgeoisie. The MFA perceives its role as maintaining the unity of the democratic officers movement. In actuality this unity preserves the possibility of eventually revitalizing the military hierarchy and making the army once again into an effective instrument of repression. Thus the

demand that revolutionary-minded officers break with the MFA and join working class organizations was approved. However, the MFA is already too divided to carry through the bourgeoisie's plans. The bourgeoisie still uses it to gain time to prepare an alternative.

There was a lot of discussion on the Portuguese CP. Its traditional popular front strategy was discarded since the thrust of the mass movement is against the national capitalist monopolies which backed Salazar. Thus, instead of an alliance with the "progressive national bourgeoisie", it is pursuing an alliance with the democratic-army-petty bourgeoisie, and inviting foreign imperialist investments. The SP was a necessary component of this alliance, but its size threatened the CP's control of the trade unions and electoral vote. So the CP had to switch from its original strikebreaking role to sectarian moves against the SP, and a real left turn. It supports workers control and is considering entering the workers councils. In addition to close ties with Moscow, the CP is also characterized by a long experience of underground work, the rather unusual existence of an armed wing of the party (A.R.A), and responsibility for leading the Intersindicale. The latter factor could explain both the turn to support for workers control, and a possible pressure to moderate anti-SP rhetoric.

Some comrades felt the IMT should make it clear that the CP is not a revolutionary party—even if only for the benefit of the SWP—that even if it entered the workers councils it would be to subordinate them to bourgeois power as the Mensheviks did in the Soviets of 1917. There was speculation on the effects of the Helsinki conference and a possible right turn of the CP.

As for the LCI, it was noted that it had not signed the MFA Pact; that it stood for the right of political parties as such to participate in the councils; that it tried to leaflet the SP rallies and did not participate in CP's anti-SP barricades; and that it had so far not called for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. Its current line on Portuguese troops in Angola is not known. Previously it had called for their immediate withdrawal. The fundamental orientation to a proletarian united front to extend the workers, tenants, and soldiers councils, was supported.

The discussion concluded with a recommendation to further study the complex situation in Portugal and follow the SWP discussion very closely. The present line of the SWP leadership is a recent one, which has been introduced with incredible speed and virulence after a period of praising the LCI. We should watch carefully for the formulations used in justifying this line.

## The Republica Affair

### Was Tun on the side of the MFA and the Stalinists against Freedom of the Press in Portugal

By Siegfried Kreisler, Heidelberg

[The following document was submitted to the internal discussion bulletin of the GIM, German section of the Fourth International.]

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The lead article in *Was Tun*, no. 79, "Portugal: The Uproar over Republica," signed by H.D./W.W. takes a position on fundamental questions of the Trotskyist program. This being the case, a thorough discussion in the leadership bodies was called for. But, in accordance with what has now become common practice, this did not happen. Instead, most members of the leadership had to read about the line in the newspaper. And this is then also reflected in the line itself. In the following we will attempt to prove that the GIM has been damaged by this article.

In this article the following assertions are made:

1. In the closing of *Republica* it was "not a question of the freedom of *the masses* being threatened, rather the freedom of *the few*," that is, "the freedom to agitate against the struggles of workers and their organizations. . . ; the freedom to poison the open atmosphere of discussion, mass experience, and independent activity of the masses with lies and manipulations" (IIB no. 1 in 1975, pp. 31-32).\*

2. What was fundamentally involved was a labor dispute: "The workers were reacting to threatening lay-offs and unemployment" (ibid., p. 32).

3. The printers' political differences with the editorial board occurred "in addition." The editors "were specially pushing into the foreground of the newspaper sharp attacks against other workers' parties, above all against the PCP" (ibid.).

For all these reasons, in the opinion of the authors of the article, the occupation of the socialist newspaper *Republica* by the troops of the military government and the closing of the newspaper were justified.

This position is based on contrived "facts," is self-contradictory, and in contradiction to the program of the Fourth International.

Let us start with the facts. The assertion that it was a question of a labor conflict is supported by maintaining that the workers reacted to threatening lay-offs. We would be grateful to the authors if they could tell us the source of this report. It cannot be found anywhere except in *Unsere Zeit* [newspaper of the German CP], which considers no lie too bold for covering up the machinations of its Stalinist sister party in Portugal. All the statements of the printing

workers and the printers' union show quite clearly that it was exclusively a question of the political line of the paper, which did not suit the printers and the CP-dominated printers' union. The printers became unemployed as a result of the occupation of the newspaper with government troops, who exploited the action of the Stalinist-led printers' union. Hence it was in no way a matter of a normal labor conflict about economic questions.

Having straightened out the facts, we can move on to the questions of principle.

#### Is the closing of Republica a blow just (?) to the capitalists?

First of all, it must be said that *Republica* was the principal medium through which the Socialist Party brought its views to the masses, even if it was not an official party newspaper. Thus the banning of the paper hit very directly against the party which at the present has the broadest base in the working class and the masses, as was made clear by—among other things—the elections which took place a few months ago. In this respect, the closing is the equivalent of a massive restriction on freedom of opinion for a whole wing of the workers' movement, namely the social democratic wing.

Our conflict with the MFA and the Stalinists is therefore on the question of whether we are for the right of the social democracy to express their opinions freely without any limitations and repression. In our view the answer is a clear yes! We Trotskyists are for the right of all currents in the workers' movement to bring their views to the masses. We are even for the right of openly bourgeois currents to express their views in their own papers.

Why? Because we believe that the working class and its revolutionary wing can only profit from the greatest possible freedom of the press, discussion, etc. We are not afraid of this exchange of opinions, on the contrary we consider it to be useful and necessary for the education of the working class. We agree with Trotsky who answered supporters of a ban on the reactionary press by saying:

"In reality, only the greatest freedom of speech, of the press, and of association can create conditions for the advance of the revolutionary movement of the working class.

"In reality, it is essential to wage a relentless struggle against the reactionary press. But workers cannot let the repressive fist of the bourgeois state substitute for the struggle that they must wage through their own organizations and their press." ("Freedom of the Press and the Working Class," *Intercontinental Press*, June 9, 1975, p. 800.)

Every limitation on a democratic right is thus a blow against the working class's freedom of movement under capitalism.

\*The titles and the by-lines of the two *Was Tun* articles in this bulletin were inadvertently reversed. The article referred to here mistakenly bears the title "Soviets in Lisbon?" by Franz Sprechler.

"For the bourgeoisie, democratic rights are not essential to preserve their class rule; in fact, in today's world, democratic rights stand in the way of maintaining their rule—which is why we see such an erosion of democracy in the 'free' world. For the working class democratic rights are precious assets in the struggle for social emancipation." ("The Reopening of *Republica*—a Significant Victory," *IP*, June 16, 1975, p. 802.)

Even when the repression is not aimed directly against the workers' movement at the outset, it is potentially affected, because every form of state repression creates a precedent that the bourgeois state employs to create the instruments it can use to suppress the workers' movement.

Nowhere is this clearer than in Portugal today.

### Background of the *Republica* affair

The long-term goal of the MFA is to obtain absolute control over the state and over public life as a whole. It must accomplish this quickly, if things are not to slip from its grasp. Their major problem is to contain the mass mobilizations unleashed by the fall of Caetano, and to achieve a step by step depoliticization of public life. At present, this is only possible with great difficulty. The MFA has to adapt to the general radicalization and not infrequently even to race to the head of it.

The MFA's major partner in achieving its ends is at present the Communist Party. The CP brings the necessary prerequisites to this alliance: a) strong influence in the organized workers' movement by virtue of occupying leadership positions in the trade unions, b) an efficient party apparatus which can serve as a transmission belt for exercising influence on public life, and c) the kind of bureaucratic homogeneity which makes it possible for the leadership to direct the membership without any "unnecessary" questions being asked.

How these factors work together within the CP's role can be seen in the example of the *strikes* that have taken place recently, very much against the will of the MFA. In each case the MFA employed the CP as a strikebreaker, a role that it played brilliantly. The CP used a) its weight in the trade union leadership to end the strikes; it used b) its influence in the mass media to defame the strikes and isolate them (take for example the postal workers' strike that the CP branded as a "fascist provocation") and it c) directed its rank and file to develop regular strike-breaking activities.

At the moment the SP leadership cannot promise all of this, although it commands more sympathy among the people and a broader base, and even though they would gladly replace the CP as the military's favored errand boy.

The MFA's medium-term goal is to push back the political parties. This is summed up in their polemic against "party squabbling." They have already taken a whole number of steps in this direction. We should note the following:

a) the pact with the parties made this spring, assuring the MFA a long-term leading role in the government regardless of the outcome of the elections.

b) the introduction of the unified trade-union federation, providing institutional assurance for the CP bureaucrats' control over the trade unions.

c) the theory of creating direct rank and file organizations of the MFA, in which political currents and parties

would have no role, and which would incorrectly be called "soviets."

d) actions against various Maoists, their press, headquarters, demonstrations, etc.

e) the June 21 communique of the MFA council, announcing a new law which envisions "quick and decisive intervention" against journalists who "intentionally distort the news" and present a "damaging picture" of Portugal.

f) finally, the closing of the newspaper *Republica*, the only Socialist Party daily.

At present, the MFA is not able to achieve all of this alone, utilizing its own strength. It needs the help of the CP which is, of course, happy to be able to play its real role as the agent of the imperialist bourgeoisie in the workers' movement so brilliantly. However, the better and the more successfully the CP plays its role, the sooner it will itself come under the gun. When its services are no longer needed, it will share the fate of its Chilean sister.

### What kind of socialism do we want—and how will we achieve it?

It is clear that we have a deepgoing difference with the authors of the *Was Tun* article about the form of society we Trotskyists are fighting for and how we plan to achieve it. The authors counterpose the "freedom [of press] of the few," that is of the capitalists, which is allegedly being abolished by the bourgeois regime, to the "freedom of the masses," which is allegedly defended by the imperialist Portuguese government, if we are to believe our *Was Tun* authors.

Such a distinction is totally out of order when dealing with general democratic rights like freedom of the press and speech, freedom of assembly, and freedom of association. Where do you draw the line between what is "permissible" to say and what not. And who is to decide that? the "party"? the government? What danger is there in allowing the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois parties to freely express their opinions? Do we think that the masses are so susceptible to their arguments, and if so, will the problem be solved by forbidding freedom of speech?

We disagree 100 percent. We want to encourage the working class to keep the bourgeoisie from forming governments, from retaining the means of production as their private property, and from encroaching upon the democratic rights of the masses. We do not wish to keep them from forming their own parties, from having their own parties, running in elections, etc.

In contrast, our authors justify the banning of the newspaper *Republica* on the grounds that what is at issue here is the freedom of the bourgeois press "to agitate against the struggles of workers and their organizations. . . ; to poison the open atmosphere of discussion, mass experience, and independent activity of the masses with lies and manipulations."

H.D./W.W. obviously don't feel that they are up to such a public exchange of ideas and think they must resort to bans. But then they must answer the following question: esteemed comrades, *why don't you demand the banning of the CP newspapers?* It can be very easily shown that the CP newspapers have agitated "against the struggles of workers and their organizations" much more viciously,

have manipulated on a far more massive scale, etc. Will you be on the side of the MFA when it undertakes to ban CP newspapers?

Moreover, if we take a closer look at why the military regime and the Stalinists felt *Republica* was a thorn in their side, the reason is quite easy to see: it was the critical reporting of the CP's actions which the SP published for its own partisan reasons. In the last issues before the closing there was: a list of 70 people, almost all of them well-known opponents of the Salazar dictatorship who the CP wanted to purge from the television stations; a report on the opposition in the metal workers union which opposed the CP's proposal to lengthen the work week; and a report on a strike wave that started at the beginning of May.

We Trotskyists are for the freedom of the bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, Stalinist and social democratic press to spread lies, agitate against the workers, etc. We are not afraid of this. And above all we deny every capitalist government the right to limit any democratic right of anyone. We grant the bourgeois state no right what so ever to take repressive measures, not even against the reactionary press.

There is a further problem involved in the *Republica* affair. The *Was Tun* authors celebrate the occupation of the editorial offices by the printers as a step toward workers' control of the press. However, here they overlook one small detail: if this action is to set a precedent it means that the party that controls the printers' union can paralyze and take over practically every newspaper in the country, and any differing political opinion can be suppressed. This sort of "workers control" is more reminiscent of Stalinism than the Trotskyist program.

What about the thousands of workers who support the SP and regard *Republica* as their newspaper. Sixty thousand of them took to the streets in Lisbon to defend "their" paper. Don't they have a right to freedom of opinion and freedom of information?

Of course, there is a fundamental difference between freedom of the press under capitalism and freedom of the press under socialism. Freedom of the press in the bourgeois democracies must remain largely an empty formality because the press—like almost everything in capitalism—works on the profit principle and so only big capital can use this right to the fullest extent, while the press that is independent of the bourgeoisie has to live a marginal existence. To this are added measures of direct political and economic repression against the workers' press as soon as the bourgeoisie senses a serious threat from this quarter and the relationship of forces allows it. Then they begin to do away with even the formal rights.

Under socialism, on the other hand, the actual weight of the working class will also be reflected in the press. A workers' state in a highly industrialized country of Western Europe or North America will have sufficient

resources to make it possible for every political current to participate in public discussion of all political questions in accordance with its actual social bases.

### "But the Bolsheviks . . ."

It is not beyond the realm of possibility that the *Was Tun* authors and the comrades who agree with their views will fall back on the argument that the Bolsheviks and even Trotsky himself used repressive measures against the bourgeois and Menshevik press.

On this the following can be said: With the USSR what was involved was a workers' state. We in no way dispute the right of a workers' state to use repressive measures for the purpose of self-defense. But these can only be *emergency measures* in extremely critical situations. This was the case in the USSR at the time of Lenin and Trotsky. The newspapers and the parties of the bourgeoisie, the Social Revolutionaries, and the Mensheviks were only banned when they called for an *armed uprising* against the Soviet republic and the civil war began. *But the ban on the bourgeois and the petty bourgeois press was not the program of the Bolsheviks*, just as the civil war was not part of their program.

Thus it was wrong in every respect to refer to the measures of self-defense taken by the young Soviet Republic in discussing freedom of the press in Portugal.

The position taken by the authors of the *Was Tun* lead article is so dangerous because it does not recognize that the attack on freedom of the press by the military regime and the Stalinists is not so much directed against the Portuguese SP, which shares the CP's perspectives, but against the right of the working class as a whole to organize against the policies of the military regime and to counterpose itself to the regime.

What would have been necessary here in West Germany would have been a clear position in favor of the right of all political currents to express their opinions freely. Only that would have put us in a position to counter the renewed demagoguery from the right to the effect that socialism is once again revealing its totalitarian nature, while they themselves defend freedom of the press. These are, unfortunately, arguments that still fall on fertile ground among broad layers of the masses, in view of the monstrous dictatorships which present themselves as "socialism." And how will the GIM present itself to the social democratic workers, if it tells them that within the GIM's concept of socialism, there will be no place for their views and their press.

The result is clear: The newspaper of the GIM, by parroting Stalinist arguments, has brought Trotskyism into disrepute—not in the eyes of the left (which is certainly pleased) but in the eyes of the politically approachable workers.

Mannheim, July 10, 1975



## To All Revolutionary Militants Attending Tonight's Vanguard Forum:

[The following leaflet was distributed outside the Vanguard Forum sponsored by the LSA/LSO in Toronto on August 13.]

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The Revolutionary Marxist Group (Sympathizing Organization of the Fourth International) would like to make known the following:

Portugal today is on the verge of civil war. The issue of this civil war will be which class will rule in Portugal—the proletariat or the bourgeoisie. The reactionary mobilizations in the north of Portugal of which we read every day in the bourgeois press are the opening moves of Portuguese and international reaction aimed at smashing the thrust towards socialist revolution by the Portuguese proletariat and its allies. Their objective is no less than to drown this revolution in blood.

This counter-revolutionary drive is being undertaken under the cover of the hypocritical cries for “democracy” of the Portuguese Socialist Party’s (S.P.) leadership. These mobilizations have been directed not only against the headquarters and militants of the Portuguese C.P. but against all other working class organizations such as trade unions, leagues of landless peasants, organizations of the far left, etc.

Also leading these actions are the Portuguese Catholic Church whose priests and officials have been whipping up mobs of enraged petty bourgeois with the cries of Christians Against the Red Menace.

Despite the fact that this reactionary offensive has been rhetorically directed against the present Armed Forces Movement (A.F.M)—Portuguese Communist Party (P.C.P.) backed government (which is in fact hardly a government at all), it also has the support of what is by now probably a majority of the A.F.M. Also supporting these actions are of course all the major imperialist powers and Portuguese fascism. Despite claims to the contrary in the August 15th issue of the Militant (the organ of the US S.W.P.) neither Mario Soares nor any other member of the dominant leadership of the S.P. has denounced these mobilizations. This leadership has done nothing to stop them or thwart them! They have of course, also *not* called for the workers united front against the reaction which alone can prevent the Portuguese revolution from being drowned in blood!

The Stalinist leadership of the P.C.P. and unfortunately honest C.P. militants have become the direct butt of this reactionary offensive. But it is clear that, because of their undemocratic, sectarian and class collaborationist policy to date, this Stalinist leadership bears a great part of the responsibility for the mortal danger to the working class of Portugal and the world that this reactionary offensive represents.

The views and positions you will hear at tonight’s Vanguard Forum have the function of providing left cover for the policies of Mario Soares and the leadership of the Portuguese S.P. As we have pointed out above, the S.P. leadership has been one of the most important political forces that lies behind this reactionary offensive. Let us not forget that many attempts at Proletarian revolution have been drowned in blood with the Social Democratic cries for “democracy” providing the camouflage. We call on all militants and sympathizers of the L.S.A./L.S.O. and all other revolutionaries to reject the mistaken and disastrous course being charted by the L.S.A./L.S.O. and the S.W.P. leadership. It is our duty now to defend the Portuguese revolution and not to contribute towards its defeat!

The views and positions on the Portuguese Revolution being put forward tonight from the platform of the Vanguard Forum *do not* reflect the positions adopted by majority vote in the authoritative bodies of the Fourth International and the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (L.C.I.), the Portuguese organization of the F.I. In fact, the positions being put forward from the platform tonight stand directly counterposed on every major question to the adopted positions of the F.I. and the L.C.I.

The views you will hear tonight represent only those of the L.S.A./L.S.O and the U.S. Socialist Workers Party (S.W.P.).

All of the programmatic positions of the authoritative leadership bodies of the Fourth International and the Portuguese L.C.I. and the analysis which underlies them have been published in INPRECOR, fortnightly organ of the United Secretariat of the F.I. All of this material is available at the book table of the Revolutionary Marxist Group inside the hall. Read the authoritative voice of the Fourth International in the pages of INPRECOR!

\* Down with the reactionary offensive of the Portuguese and International Reaction!

\* All united in workers commissions, tenants commissions, united assemblies, and people’s assemblies for the construction of a National People’s Assembly, organ of workers power! For a workers government!

\* Against capital and reaction, proletarian unity! Vigilance!

\* Forward to the Socialist Revolution!

Long Live the Fourth International!

Long Live the World Socialist Revolution!

**Revolutionary Marxist Group, Sympathizing  
Organization of the Fourth International.**

## LCI Internal Circular Concerning the August 25 Unity Accord

[The following internal circular of the LCI was distributed internationally by the bureau of the United Secretariat, along with a note that the text had been received by telephone and therefore might contain an error in one or another formulation. Public statements and documents concerning the accord are printed in the September 18, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*.]

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Advised only an hour before of the meeting with various organizations and a group of left MFA officers, the two comrades of the secretariat of the executive committee who participated in the meeting expended every effort to have a discussion beforehand with the greatest possible number of comrades in the leadership about the position to take in the meeting, to which the LCI had been invited and which they believed from the beginning they had to attend.

The justification for the position of the secretariat of the executive committee proceeds from an irrefutable principle, that the political content and formulations of the text of the accord should be viewed in the framework of the current dynamic of the political conjuncture, in the light of a generalized, combined offensive by the reactionary right and the social democracy.

Taking that into account, we do not consider the document opposed to our political principles. Nevertheless, we cannot disregard the danger presented by the concessions we were forced to make in order to make our participation in the accord possible.

We affirm and reaffirm that the essence of COPCON's working proposal was to permit the creation of a left, even revolutionary, alliance in the barracks to break the social democratic offensive. In the document which was approved by the Central Committee it was said that this working proposal would allow us to modify our relations with the other organizations of the revolutionary left. That was what enables us to state that it is correct to consider this document a valid working basis for developing a revolutionary political program. As for the document, "Lines of programmatic action and tasks of transition" (of the provisional government), we have to make much broader criticisms, especially with respect to its references to and the statement about power structures in general and about the MFA and the armed forces in particular.

But we believe that the third point of the text of the accord is restrictive insofar as the "lines of programmatic action . . ." are concerned, to the extent of asserting that it will cease to play a role when the conditions of unity for replacing it are established. Which really means as soon as the present crisis develops in a way favoring the forces of the left (which will also be the way of resolving the crisis).

The third point states that the document "Lines of programmatic action . . ." constitutes the guide document for the government as long as the necessary conditions to form a government of revolutionary unity are not present, and should be considered as a basis for the new government or a government like the present one. This is in order to permit the survival of the present government, which is the focus of the current offensive of the right and the social democracy, which intend to replace it with another government; but also because, at the same time, although the accord does not refer to the fifth class-collaborationist government, it affirms the necessity of replacing it as soon as possible by a government of revolutionary unity.

This concession requires, at the least, an energetic, independent campaign against the provisional government as a government incapable of satisfying the demands of the masses and crushing the reactionary capitalist offensive, and for replacing it with a revolutionary government possessing a real anticapitalist program and capable of developing and being controlled by rank-and-file workers organs.

It is more or less confused to include autonomous workers organizations, revolutionary political parties and the MFA at the same time, in the sense that they are organizations expressing different, and in the case of the MFA divergent, functions and characteristics. But the fundamental question is allowing the MFA to be integrated into such a front. It is a serious political error to grant that the MFA, in spite of the fact that today it is almost totally paralyzed, should be integrated or can be integrated into a front that declares a revolutionary dynamic from now on. In spite of that, the workers' mistakes and illusions in the MFA will not cease to grow.

In any case, there is no doubt that in the present political situation the accord among the various organizations can take on no other dynamic than that of a response to the current offensive of the right and the social democracy. Only a stabilization, however episodic, of the current situation can create the conditions in which the dynamic of these actions could even partially come to mean class collaboration. Faced with the choice between these compromises that were certainly inconvenient but not against our essential political principles, and which allow us to participate in the current mass mobilization that will even politically escape Stalinist control, and being marginal or relatively remote from these mobilizations without having a means of responding such as the UDP at our disposal, we chose the first option.

On the level of independent action it is necessary to take clear positions with regard to the fifth provisional government and its program, to the COPCON officers' proposal, to the PCP and to the MFA.

## LCI Communique on the colonialist refugees from Angola

Lisbon, August 8, 1975

On August 5 an assembly was held with the apparent aim of resolving the problems of the hundreds or thousands of colonists who are refugees from Angola and Mozambique.

With the pretext of drafting a memorandum of demands, the organizers transformed the plenary into a real demonstration against decolonization in general. They pushed through motions of support and confidence in Colonel Jaime Neves, a colonel the progressive soldiers and officers of Amadora had purged on the basis of the reactionary positions he had taken against the People's Assembly of Amadora. He demanded the return to Luanda of Silva Cardoso, the same person who under the cover of a false neutrality permitted the arming of the FNLA and UNITA, shut his eyes to the repeated massacres of workers in Luanda's working-class neighborhoods, permitted the reorganization of the PIDEs and other assassins in mercenary bands at the service of the imperialist and neocolonialist reactionaries, etc. On the other hand, the responsibility shared by national and international capitalism for the current situation in Angola and, above all, for the very situation of the refugees was not denounced.

In sum, the August 5 plenary and the "silent" demonstration planned for today are a reactionary maneuver despite appearances, one more piece in the generalized offensive of domestic and international capitalist reaction in Portugal and in Angola.

The placing of more thousands of refugees in a situation of high unemployment will surely be taken advantage of in an attempt to channel their discontent for reactionary aims and actions.

If it is essential to create housing and employment for the uprooted persons, it is no less necessary for the working class to prevent the capitalist reactionaries, the fascist organizations, and the terrorist gangs of the bourgeoisie from trying to take advantage of the refugees' discontent to augment their stream of anti-working-class actions.

Attacks on the headquarters of the workers parties,

beatings of working-class and revolutionary militants, a step-up of actions of the reactionary separatist and proimperialist movement of the Azores, instituting a reign of terror in Angola, etc., are parts of the same plan that the national and international bourgeoisie is about to reach agreement on for the first time since April 25.

And it must be said that if the bourgeois leadership of the Socialist party is directly responsible for this situation, the bureaucratic leadership of the PCP—with the deep divisions it has sown in the workers movement, thus weakening the workers' unity in struggle—is doing nothing to stop the bourgeoisie from using broad layers of the petty bourgeoisie and the workers themselves against the historic and immediate interests of the proletariat.

The advantage that the bourgeoisie is trying to take of the question of the refugees must be denounced without any concessions.

Housing and employment for the refugees must be demanded. But those responsible for these maneuvers, who remain in the shadows, must be quickly abandoned and imprisoned.

Above all, we must have a revolutionary policy with regard to the situation in Angola. We must combat the hesitations of the government and the MFA, which have objectively provided cover for the strengthening of the FNLA and UNITA and, consequently, for the neocolonialist maneuvers that have given cover for imperialist political and military penetration of Angola.

We demand that Silva Cardoso leave Angola immediately. Disarm the FNLA and UNITA as well as the mercenary gangs of the capitalists immediately.

We demand that the Angolan government be turned over to the MPLA immediately.

We demand the arming of the Angolan workers, the UNTA [União Nacional dos Trabalhadores de Angola—National Union of Angola Workers], and the Neighborhood People's Commissions.

LIGA COMUNISTA INTERNACIONALISTA

## Against the Rise of Reaction in Portugal: Power to the Workers!

La Gauche, July 17, 1975

The military coup of April 25, 1974, overthrew quite a number of schemas: a colonial army, defeated in a war of liberation, overthrows a fascist regime in the imperialist country and creates a political movement. The latter, *the MFA* [Movimento das Forças Armadas—Armed Forces Movement], *proceeds under the impact of the class struggle to purge the state apparatus, and to declare itself in support of socialism, of the self-organization of the people, and even sometimes for the arming of the people.*

Yet, the MFA has also broken strikes, repressed leftist organizations, and enacted antistike laws. What does this mean?

This ambiguous role of the MFA (as the ultimate obstacle to workers power and socialism but also as the armed obstacle to capitalist restoration) has succeeded in covering up the real political battle that is going to unfold in the Iberian Peninsula. An international counterrevolutionary coalition, uniting the European bourgeoisie and American imperialism is preparing a “restoration” that under present conditions will be violent and bloody.

### A SECOND CHILE LOOMS ON THE HORIZON!

Unfortunately—and not for the first time!—this offensive is being prepared under the cover of (capitalist) “democracy,” with the direct aid of the EUROPEAN SOCIAL DEMOCRACY.

As far back as Germany of 1918-19, it was under slogans of “freedom of the press” (for *Vorwärts, which had been occupied by workers*) and through the struggle for a constituent assembly that the German social democracy liquidated (peacefully) the workers and soldiers councils, in order to better crush later on the revolutionary vanguard led by Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht.

Soares does not necessarily have to play the role of the executioner Noske: he has only to divide and confuse the workers and popular movement, and to choke off from within the emerging PROLETARIAN DEMOCRACY, so that the counterrevolution can later crush the workers movement, including the SP.

It is obvious that the *Republica* conflict was chosen as a battering ram against the working-class offensive. The incident was neither an “ordinary labor conflict” (as the Communist parties call it), nor the “symbol of freedom” (as the Socialist parties call it). It is used by the entire counterrevolutionary camp to divide the workers movement and to serve as a precedent for ending the occupations of businesses and the emerging dual power.

The Portuguese Communist party, and the Gonçalves current of the MFA that supports it, are singularly disarmed by the CP’s neoreformist strategy. Nevertheless,

having learned from the lesson of Chile, the CP understands the reactionary threat and is toughening its language and sometimes its action. But its reformist strategy sees into the very branch on which the party is trying to sit. What is tumultuously coming onto the stage is the alternative of WORKERS POWER or CAPITALIST POWER.

Today the CP’s “military” reformism (replacing its parliamentary reformism of yesterday) pushes it into mass mobilizations, which are at once channeled toward support for the MFA and held within the framework of the capitalist regime.

But if the social and political class polarization continues, the MFA—now the complete master of the political game due to its Bonapartist role “above classes and parties”—will inevitably lose its power, as much to the right, where the bourgeoisie is openly launching its offensive, as to the left, where the working class and the soldiers are increasingly giving organizational form to their political independence.

This is where a historic opportunity and practical possibilities are opening up for the proletarian and socialist revolution. The recent plan of the “MFA-people” calls for the generalized establishment of committees of the masses (with the aim of maintaining and expanding the social base of the MFA in the barracks, the factories, and the neighborhoods). This appeal furnishes the basis for the entire toiling population to organize and arm itself in councils of workers, peasants, neighborhood councils and soldiers councils, INDEPENDENT of the capitalist state apparatus.

This is the only way to prevent a bloody coup d’etat and to overthrow the capitalist system, through going beyond the reformist plan of the MFA and the PCP.

And this is the only reason why this plan has been so ferociously and unanimously opposed by the bourgeoisie and the social democracy. At the same time it is a powerful factor in unifying the revolutionary vanguard. Already our comrades of the LCI [Liga Comunista Internacionalista—Internationalist Communist league, a sympathizing group of the Fourth International] have established a united front with the left socialists of the MES [Movimento de Esquerda Socialista—Movement of the Socialist Left], which popularizes and initiates the establishment, generalization, and coordination of such councils. This is the way to construct the new revolutionary party of the working class, the indispensable instrument for going from dual power to WORKERS POWER, to SELF-MANAGEMENT SOCIALISM.

## Portugal: Towards Workers Councils

La Gauche, July 17, 1975

Reaction is raising its head in Portugal; just after the SP left the government, thousands of reactionaries demonstrated in Aveiro in favor of the ultraconservative bishops seizing Radio Renascença. The station is now occupied by the workers and supervised by the soldiers.

The week before, there were already other right-wing demonstrations—especially in the north, in Madeira and in the Azores. The reaction is trying to exploit to the maximum the division of the workers movement, due mainly to the Social-Democrats' attack against the democratic way in which the workers and soldiers are organizing, in the factories, in the neighborhoods, in the country and in the barracks.

"Not anarchy but order," they shouted at Aveiro. Soares himself took the same tone. The most recent events in Portugal cannot be understood without taking into consideration that throughout the country, in the factories, the countryside and the barracks, committees have been formed to take charge of the problems of the sector. What disturbs the Portuguese and international bourgeoisie the most is the tendency in the last few weeks for these committees to be coordinated on a regional or even national scale. The national demonstration of 10,000 metallurgists in Lisbon at the beginning of the month could only exacerbate this hatred of the bourgeoisie and the Social Democrats for these committees.

### Cooptation

The "socialists" left the government when it appeared that the MFA, extolling the creation of a "national popular assembly elected by the ranks," would not help the SP leadership to break up these committees.

Does this mean that the MFA wants to set up a socialist democracy based on workers' councils. Or are the latest directives of the MFA rather an attempt at "Bonapartist cooptation"? The MFA document in fact indicates, for example, that the committees which will work within these structures of "MFA-people alliance" must be recognized by the MFA. The MFA will decide whether the committee may "participate"; *the MFA wants to set up a screening system*. The document also says that the "national popular assembly" will not be the highest body but rather that will be the (military) Council of the Revolution.

In other words: the "Popular Assembly," screened by the MFA, will be a *consultative* body of the MFA leadership. The document also indicates that the parties as such will not be represented in the committees, whereas the viewpoint of revolutionaries is that it is necessary for the different workers parties to participate in the united committees so as to put forth their positions in a broad and free debate, concluded by the decisions of workers democracy. The document also gives notice that *defense* and internal security will remain the prerogatives of the MFA. So it isn't a question of arming the proletariat in order to smash the counter-revolutionary schemes!

According to the MFA, the popular assembly and the committees will also have the task of winning the "*battle for production*." Already in May and June the MFA—actively supported by the CP and the Intersyndicale—had tried to launch something of this type, but it was a total failure: the workers recognized that a boss is still a boss and that capitalism is still capitalism, and that their revolutionary mobilizations had not yet eliminated the exploitation of labor.

### The MFA Divides

The division in the ranks of the MFA is less and less a secret to the outside world; the contradictions of the Movement reflect more and more the polarization of classes in Portuguese society and their different political goals. There are roughly three tendencies in the MFA—and the influence of each is reflected to a greater or lesser degree in the "directives" of the recent documents of the MFA.

The current of Carvalho (head of the Copcon—the internal security forces) is the most ardent defender of a state structure without parties; it wants a sort of "Third-Worldist" liberation movement made up of base structures and primarily controlled by the MFA. The authoritarian character of a Carvalho can be seen in his behavior toward striking telephone workers, among others. . .

Carvalho wants a progressive military government which "dismantles" the influence of the PCP and disciplines the workers.

The rightist current, led by Melo Antunes (Minister of Foreign Affairs) supports this scheme for decreasing the influence of the PCP and setting up a bourgeois democracy in order to eliminate the prerevolutionary situation.

The third tendency, which is in the majority for now, mainly influenced by the PCP, wants to structure these committees to counterbalance the Constituent Assembly dominated by the SP.

The CP mainly counts on the neighborhood committees (*moradores*), where it plays an important role, to be the main weight in the "national popular assembly." Moreover, the PCP prefers the MFA supervising the coordination of committees to a coordination emanating from the committees themselves, which would develop very quickly into dual power on a national scale and would put the overthrow of capitalism on the order of the day.

### Committees Everywhere

The radicalization of the Portuguese masses has been marked, especially since January 1975, by the formation of workers committees and *moradores* (neighborhood committees). Until about May, these committees were mainly concerned with the problems of their factory or neighborhood, but in May-June, the question of coordination was posed in some of them.

An example of this nascent coordination: at the end of June, at Poutinha, an assembly took place with delegates from fifteen workers committees and twenty-four *moradores* plus representatives of the first engineers' regiment of Poutinha. This assembly adopted a resolution which spoke of "the creation of autonomous organs of popular power which should become the embryo of a new state in the service of the workers." In the large city of Porto the first assembly of the committees of this city took place; the delegates were elected by 25,000 city residents; this assembly posed the question of the arming of the workers and called for *national coordination* of the independent committees.

The problem of arming is obviously of prime importance; a combative working class lacking arms is always threatened by an armed enemy as was seen in Chile.

Different workers committees and *moradores* are demanding arms and military training, and certain soldiers and officers are ready to participate, as at Poutinha for example, and as in certain barracks where the members of the committees come to train on the weekends. When the Council of the Revolution decides that arms will remain the army's affair, the leadership of the MFA plays the game of the reaction. Only the armed people is invincible!

Last weekend there was a coordinating meeting of the workers committees and the *moradores* of Lisbon and the surrounding area. The meeting decided to call for a large demonstration for a workers government and for creation of a national popular assembly. The soldiers of RAL 1 (Light Artillery Regiment No. 1) decided to support this call.

### Soares and Republica

This context clarifies the behavior of the SP in the *Republica* conflict. Soares wanted to kill two birds with one stone: on the one hand, to strengthen the cohesion of the party, and on the other hand to wage an "exemplary" campaign against workplace occupations.

Let's look at the SP's statement. The Secretary of State, Campinos, a member of the SP, declared: "The situation is serious, there is no longer any authority in Lisbon. A group of adventurist officers has taken power while in the army the hierarchy is no longer respected." Another socialist leader spoke of the "power which should assert itself and the danger of chaos" (note the resemblance to the slogans of the reactionary demonstrators of Aveiro). Soares himself demanded that the army expel the *Republica* workers, as a precondition without which no solution was possible!

In addition, the SP, consistent with itself, considers the recognition of the committees as a step towards dictatorship.

By attacking the *Republica* workers, Soares lays the blame on all workers who occupy their workplace. The

main aim is now to break up the committees. Need one still wonder if Soares is indeed the tool of the NATO strategists and if his resignation from the government was meant to increase the isolation of the MFA and prepares the ground for the nationwide and international reactionary offensive?

The PPD, the main bourgeois party, last week called in a document for an end to the purging of fascist elements in the industries, demanded "just damages" for expropriations and demanded that the confidence of the financiers and private enterprise be restored; it also demanded an end to the nationalizations. There is the ally par excellence of the SP!

### Victory or Defeat

It is necessary to realize that counter-revolution is on the march. The international bourgeoisie, seized with panic, is keeping its weather eye open. Its reaction could be in proportion to its fear and its class hatred!

Only the self-organization and arming of the working class can prepare the Portuguese masses for the confrontation and can prevent it from turning into a defeat.

All the rest—such as having confidence in the MFA or in the Constituent Assembly—is only an illusion: as revolutionaries, we must work actively for this arming, as we take part in these committees of workers, soldiers and in the *moradores*; the army-people alliance will create a new state only if a part of the army participates in this arming and prepares itself to participate actively alongside the workers in the future confrontations, if revolutionary ideas are spread through the intermediary of the soldiers' committees and if the decomposition of the bourgeois army continues so as to take from the capitalists the last tool they can rely on.

Our comrades of the LCI are working actively to establish united fronts for the defense of the independent organs of workers power. They have among other things created a united front with the MES (left socialists) for a campaign of generalization and coordination of the committees.

"It is necessary to push for a government which breaks with the policy of class-collaboration, which without indemnity and under workers control nationalizes all the large businesses, which establishes a monopoly of foreign trade and creates a state bank, which disarms the reactionaries, outlaws their organizations, which broadens workers control and the elected committees throughout the whole economic system, and which, through central planning, at last guarantees democratic rights to all workers and soldiers." That is what our comrades of the LCI called for in a recent statement. It is time in Portugal for soviets such as they existed in 1905 in St. Petersburg and in 1917 and in the first years of the Russian Revolution.

**Communication from the United  
Secretariat Bureau on  
Portugal Solidarity Campaign**

received September 16, 1975

FROM: United Secretariat Bureau  
TO: Political Bureaus of sections and sympathizing  
organizations  
SUBJECT: Solidarity campaign for Portugal  
Brussels, September 9, 1975

Comrades,

1. There has been some difficulty in organizing the campaign of solidarity with the Portuguese workers on an international scale. The hesitations of various organizations about the methods and political bases of the campaign and the problems inherent in establishing contacts among various European organizations have forced some delays in launching a first international initiative.

2. On September 7 in Rome the French LCR and Lotta Continua launched an appeal for an international day of solidarity on September 27.

3. For information, and in order to avoid confusion, here are some facts about the establishment of the solidarity movement:

On June 11 in Lisbon a first appeal was launched by Lotta Continua, Manifesto, some West German organizations (Kommunistische Bund, etc.), and some Portuguese organizations for a campaign of solidarity. Lotta Continua claims that the Fourth International signed this appeal; in fact, although we knew about this text, we did not sign it. The "collective" of June 11 organized a big meeting and a demonstration in Lisbon on August 11. In some countries (West Germany, Austria), organizations that had signed this appeal have already made contact with the sections to set up solidarity demonstrations for September 27.

Inasmuch as this appeal had been launched in a restricted fashion and as it was necessary to develop the broadest campaign possible, the LCR contacted Lotta Continua. LC agreed to issue a new appeal that they felt could be signed by all the organizations that participated in the first initiative of June 11 and, obviously, by many others as well.

Thus, the present campaign is taking place on the basis of the attached text and not on the basis of the initial appeal of June 11.

4. All the sections should contact the various organizations of the "revolutionary left" in the various countries, the youth organizations of the CP and SP or the regional parties and federations, trade-union sections, and various other organizations (in Britain, for example, we are contacting the Institute for Workers Control, the Russell Tribunal, etc.) to ask them to sign this text. In addition, if

the trade-union leaders of the Socialist left, etc. can support this appeal, we must also try to get signatures from them.

A concentrated effort has to be made immediately toward all the organizations that might quickly support this appeal, because the deadline for centralization of the signatures is Saturday, September 13. All the sections should telephone Paris, to Alain Krivine, between 9:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (the number is 728 59 22) to report the results of their contacts so that the appeal, with all the signatures, can be published in the press on Monday, September 15.

5. For September 27 we must organize demonstrations or, if that is not possible, solidarity pickets in front of embassies, meetings, etc.

All news about the preparation of these demonstrations—once the means are decided on with the organizations that sign the appeal in each country—should be sent to the Portuguese embassy in the country concerned, because that will enable us to get the news published in the Portuguese press. If no organization agrees to sign the appeal in a country, the section should take the initiative alone.

Also, immediately after the demonstrations, telephone reports must be called in to Paris, at the same number given above.

6. Before the demonstrations, the major organizations signing the appeal will meet in Paris to prepare for September 27 and to work out the continuation of the campaign.

For the moment, Lotta Continua is showing some resistance to the establishment of a permanent committee on Portugal on a European scale. But following the results of September 27, there is a real possibility of moving to a new stage.

7. In the various countries, according to the concrete possibilities and conditions, the sections should plan on contacting other organizations (among others in the framework of this appeal) and setting up committees as we did during the Chile campaign. The LCR in France has contacted the PSU (attached, for information, is the text of the LCR-PSU appeal) and is discussing launching such committees. Whatever the results of these discussions, the LCR is prepared to launch support committees.

An initial balance-sheet of the situation after September 27 will be made during the meeting of the European political bureaus on October 11 and 12.

Revolutionary Greetings,  
Duret, for the US Bureau

## JOINT DECLARATION OF THE PSU AND THE LCR

(This is the text of the agreement signed in France, to initiate the French part of the International campaign, in solidarity with the Portuguese revolution.)

The PSU and the LCR have met together to examine the development of the situation in Portugal. They salute the united relations that exist today among various revolutionary organizations and the Portuguese Communist Party, independently of the judgments they may make of the content of the agreement reached.

In face of national and international reaction, which is increasingly threatening the Portuguese revolution, the PSU and the LCR desire that nonexclusive unity in action of all the forces of the workers movement be realized in France in order to develop a vast campaign of solidarity with the Portuguese people in the struggle for socialism. One of the major obstacles the working class is encountering in its march toward socialism is the division of its organizations: The leadership of the Portuguese Socialist Party, faithful to European Social Democracy, is trying to block the ongoing revolutionary process. This division has

been fueled by the sectarian and bureaucratic policy of the leadership of the CP. Out of the Portuguese revolutionary process there are now emerging hundreds of popular committees of soldiers, workers, and peasants through which a new power, the power of the workers, is beginning to assert itself. It is through the development and coordination of these committees that the socialist society can be constructed.

It is in this framework of workers democracy that the unity of all the parties and organizations of the working class for the victory of socialism must be realized.

The LCR and the PSU desire that all the French workers organizations address themselves to the Portuguese workers organizations to work out together what forms may be taken by the support of the French workers for the Portuguese revolution.

Parti Socialiste Unifié  
Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire  
Paris, August 29, 1975

### TEXT OF THE APPEAL SIGNED BY THE LCR & LOTTA CONTINUA

To soldiers, working people, revolutionary forces, and progressives!

The Portuguese revolutionary process has reached a decisive point. The imperialist system, victim of the general crisis of its mode of rule in the world, cannot tolerate the advance of the revolution to victory in Portugal. It cannot tolerate the system of capitalist exploitation and the power of the bourgeoisie being destroyed in Portugal, for that would mean a heavy defeat for imperialism, after the defeats inflicted by the extraordinary victory of the peoples of Indochina.

In the present phase, all the principal contradictions of the domination of imperialism are concentrating in Europe and in the Mediterranean zone. That is why the development of the revolution in Portugal—which has its roots in particular in the liberation struggle of the peoples of the colonies—finds the possibility of victory in the crisis that is racking this system of division and domination of the world, which assured stability in the West after the war.

Portugal poses the struggle for the right of peoples to decide their own destiny free of any economic, political, or military interference from the imperialist powers as one of primary importance in Europe.

It is only in the workers struggles and in the deepening of the class struggle in Europe that the Portuguese revolution can find decisive support against any attempt at the normalization that the bourgeoisie, national and international, wants to impose.

We also ask that internationalist solidarity with Portugal be developed along with the broadest possible mobilizations against all imperialist maneuvers in Angola. The struggle for total liberation and for the victory of

the only revolutionary and national force in Angola, the MPLA, must be developed parallel with the internationalist commitment in support of the revolutionary struggle of the Portuguese people.

We also call upon all workers, soldiers, sailors, and revolutionary officers to make an effort to develop as rapidly as possible a broad mobilization throughout Europe in support of the organs of popular power.

We cannot wait any longer! Portugal will not be the Chile of Europe!

—Against the imperialist encirclement and against the economic, diplomatic, political, and military sabotage of Portugal; against NATO; against the provocations of the national and international bourgeoisie, which are trying to block the Portuguese revolutionary process; against the attacks on worker militants and organizations.

—For total support to the working class, to the proletariat, the soldiers, sailors, and revolutionary officers in the struggle against capitalism for people's power, proletarian democracy.

—For support to the workers committees, soldiers committees, tenants committees, and peasant committees, bases of the future workers power.

—At the side of the Angolan people and its fighters of the MPLA in their offensive against the imperialist forces.

—The signing organizations call on the workers, youth, and soldiers to participate in the international week of solidarity with the Portuguese revolution, September 21-28 (anniversary of the victory of the Portuguese revolutionary workers and soldiers against the first revenge attempt by the bourgeoisie led by Spínola) and to make Saturday, September 27, an international day of demonstrations in all the countries of Europe.