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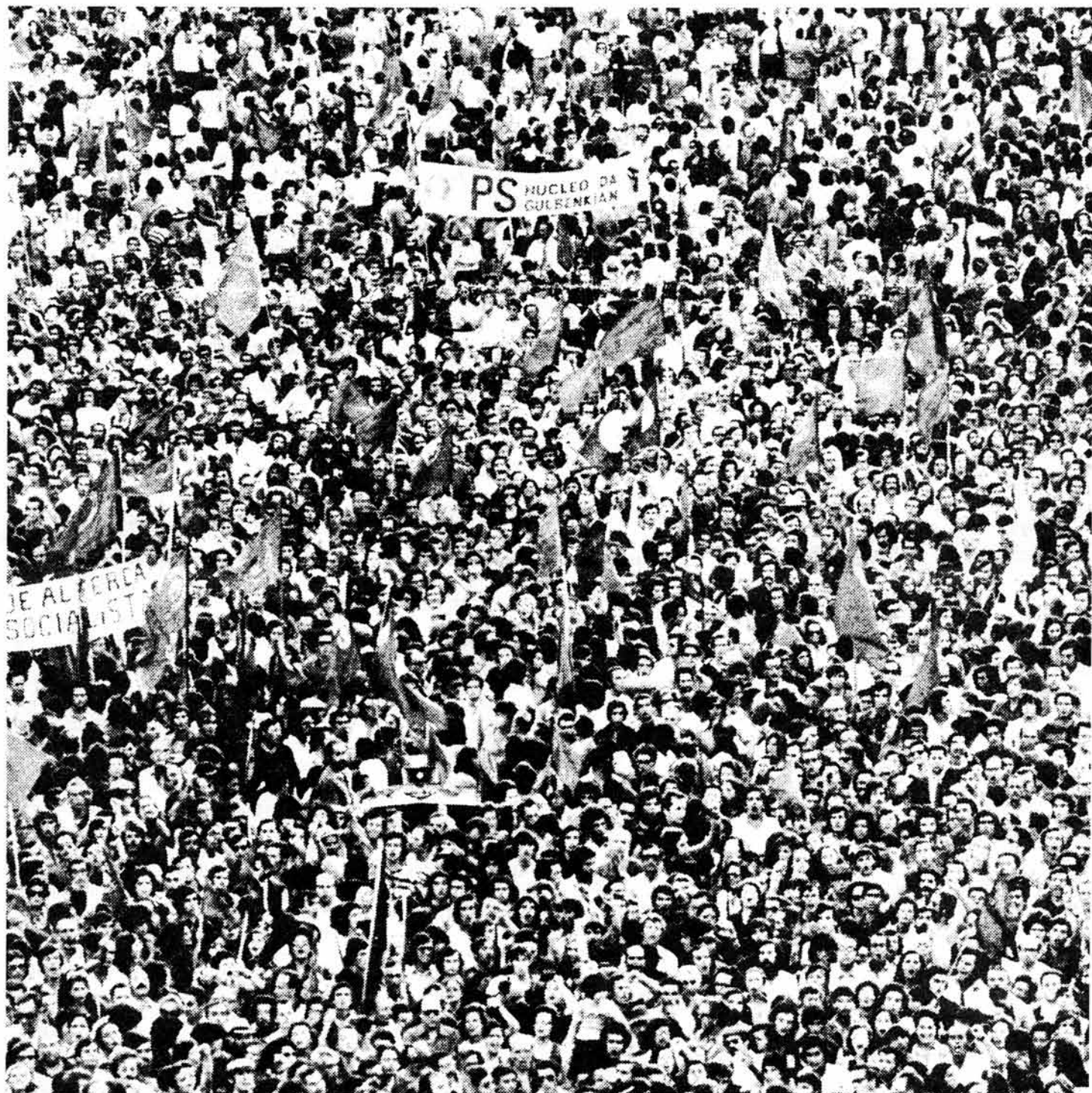
the Americas

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Informations Ouvrières

**By Gerry Foley, Joseph Hansen, and George Novack**

## ***For a Correct Political Course in Portugal***

## Hugo Blanco Banned; Fascist Bowed In

The State Department has denied Peruvian peasant leader Hugo Blanco a visa that would have enabled him to enter the United States in response to invitations from a number of universities to speak on the topic of political repression in Latin America. Dusting off the McCarran-Walter Act, a piece of witch-hunting legislation frequently used during the 1950s, the White House contends that Blanco's political views render him "ineligible" to enter the country.

At almost the same time the State Department gave VIP treatment to Giorgio Almirante, a leader of the neofascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI—Italian Social Movement).

Almirante not only had no difficulty at all in entering the United States. He was given an impressive reception in Washington, meeting in the Executive Office Building with two staff members of Ford's National Security Council. He also met with several members of Congress.

According to a report in the October 5 *New York Times*, Almirante "said that he had reported on the threat of Communism in Italy in the meeting in the Executive Office Building. . . . He added that Mr. Clift [one of the Security Council staff members] had 'expressed esteem for our type of mission and appreciated the information we brought him.'"

"Not one of the people we talked to asked us whether we were Fascists," Almirante said. "Witch-hunts toward people like us do not exist in the United States. . . ."

Blanco's views are the polar opposite of Almirante's. But that is no reason to deny Americans the right to hear them.

The contrasting treatment given by Kissinger to the Peruvian revolutionist and the Italian fascist shows that McCarthyism

translation of the speech Blanco would have given if he had been allowed into the country. The speech was telephoned in advance to the U.S. Committee for Justice to Latin American Political Prisoners (USLA), sponsor of the scheduled tour.

Meanwhile, Blanco's case received front-page coverage in a Southern Black newspaper, the *Atlanta Voice*, and in the University of Wisconsin *Daily Cardinal*.

Protests from prominent civil libertarians and organizations continue to be directed at Kissinger's office. Among the messages were the following:

"It is my firm belief that part of America's strength lies in the opportunity for people to hear diverse opinions. I urge you to grant the requested visa to Mr. Blanco so that Americans may hear his thoughts."—

## The Book Burners in South Africa

Despite attempts to negotiate a "détente" with the heads of some African states, the apartheid regime in South Africa has not loosened its grip at home. In addition to launching a new wave of repression against political dissidents, the Vorster regime has continued its ultrareactionary campaign to suppress "subversive" literature, films, and phonograph records.

The celebrated Afrikaans poet Breyten Breytenbach was arrested August 19 when he returned to the country after ten years of exile. A few days later Rev. James Polley, a tutor at the University of Cape Town, was also arrested, along with several student leaders. These included Karel Tip, head of the National Union of South African Students.

All were imprisoned under the notorious "Terrorism Act." This act, passed in 1967, gives authorities the power to arrest persons without warrant and detain them indefinitely without trial. Prisoners are also denied access to lawyers or the right to contact their families. Among other recent victims of the Terrorism Act were Rev. Zephania Kameeta of the Paulinum Theological Seminary in Otjimbingwe, Namibia (South-West Africa), and Raymond Suttner, a lecturer at the University of Natal in Durban.

The regime in Pretoria lives in fear not only of "terrorist" poets, priests, and

Rudy Perpich, lieutenant governor, State of Minnesota.

"We, the members of Local 1304 USWA urge that Hugo Blanco's request for a visa . . . be granted immediately. To do otherwise would constitute a gross infringement on everyone's right to hear all points of view. . . ."—Local 1304, United Steelworkers of America.

"As a publisher whose books include Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's *Candle in the Wind*, I am concerned about the implications of possible denial of Blanco's visa application. . . . In some cases authors and publishers can correspond at length, but there it is obvious that discussions in person are the most valuable—as I am sure you, who travel often for such discussions, will agree. . . ."—John Ervin, Jr., director, University of Minnesota Press.

"I am increasingly concerned by the inappropriate application of the [immigration] law to individuals who have espoused political views which oppose the positions of their governments. . . . [It] also serves to deprive our own citizens of an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the range of opinion existent in other nations."—Bella S. Abzug, member of Congress. □

academics, but of a broad range of "terrorist" ideas also.

According to a report in the October 5 *New York Times*, 17,000 books, recordings, magazines, and films have been banned by "one of the most strict censorships in the non-Communist world." In 1973, the most recent year for which figures are available, only 282 of 1,283 full-length feature films were approved unconditionally by the Publications Control Board. Many movies, such as *The Wilby Conspiracy*, which gives an unflattering view of the racist regime's repressive apparatus, are simply not imported.

Official policy dictates that no explanation need be given for condemning books to the growing "index of objectionable literature." Included on the banned list are such subversive items as the sound tracks of *Hair* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The wide-ranging Publication and Entertainment Acts of 1963 ban anything found "undesirable" by the board, and new regulations make it impossible for the ruling to be appealed to the courts.

According to Pretoria's Minister of Information Connie Mulder, censorship is needed to defend the nation's moral standards. "It is our duty towards our people to maintain those time-proven values, to resist the attacks of our time," he said in a recent statement.

The mounting "attacks of our time" will

COVER PHOTO: Socialist party demonstration in Lisbon July 19.

is far from dead in Washington. The ultrareactionary senator from Wisconsin was buried long ago, but his soul goes marching on.

Meetings to protest the exclusion of Blanco are being scheduled throughout the country. Three have already been held.

In Chicago, Milwaukee, and Madison, Wisconsin, sizable audiences turned out to hear speakers from a broad range of organizations demand that Blanco be granted a visa. Those present heard a



not slacken, however. Freedom-loving people throughout the world will continue to raise their voices against the South African regime's "time-proven values" of brutal racist oppression, demanding freedom for all South African political prisoners and an end to the regime's repressive laws and inhuman system of apartheid. □

## Vietnamese Refugees: Washington Lied to Us

The White House has acceded to demands by more than 1,600 Vietnamese refugees to be repatriated. These refugees, most of whom are being held in compounds on Guam, are expected to leave for Vietnam on a cargo ship that was seized in South Vietnam during the U.S.-organized evacuation of refugees when Saigon was liberated.

According to R.V. Keeley, an official of the Interagency Task Force on Indochina Refugees, Washington made the decision at the "insistent requests of the repatriates." Their "requests" were made in the form of demonstrations, pickets, and protests, including an action on Guam in August in which two buildings were burned down.

"The Vietnamese who want to go home," correspondent Richard Halloran said in the October 6 *New York Times*, "seem to fall into two main categories—those who fled in the panic and confusion of the last days of the war because they feared Communist reprisals and those who got caught up in the chaotic exodus by accident."

Halloran cited some examples. "Huynh Thi Thao and her 8-year-old niece are among the 240 women and children who left home without intending to. . . she said she was in Vung Tau when a rocket attack started and fled in a sampan. . . its passengers were picked up by the United States Seventh Fleet."

Another example: "Mr. Tong, who was a loadmaster of cargo planes, said that when he fled during a rocket attack on Tan Son Nhut Air Base, at Saigon, he thought the plane was going to another place in Vietnam, but it flew to U Tapao, an American base in Thailand."

How many hundreds of Vietnamese babies had even less say in their "escape" from Vietnam? How many were in fact kidnapped by Washington to suit its need for anti-Communist propaganda?

The acknowledged leader of the refugees on Guam, Tran Ngoc Thach, said: "I want to go back to Vietnam because all the propaganda before said the Communists would make revenge on us, but now I see it is not true. I have listened to the broadcasts and read the newspapers and found out that it is not true. I understand the Government in Saigon is very generous and is ready to forgive everybody." □

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## Worldwide Anger Over Executions in Spain

By Judy White

A wave of protest spread throughout the world following Franco's execution of five political prisoners September 27. The actions included a two-day general strike in Euzkadi (the Basque Country), a boycott of Spanish goods by European trade-union organizations, mass demonstrations, and protests by a number of governments. In face of the outcry, Franco ordered a mass rally at which the old fascist denounced the protests as part of a "leftist Masonic conspiracy."

Details on the general strike were scant, owing to strict censorship. However, a *New York Times* dispatch datelined September 30 reported that "the second day of a general strike protesting the executions had even bigger participation than yesterday, when 100,000 responded." The *Washington Post* quoted Basque sources in Madrid as claiming that more than 100,000 persons struck in San Sebastián and its industrial belt, while 20,000 did not report for work in Bilbao.

*Le Monde* reported that most stores and businesses remained shut throughout Euzkadi and workers held prolonged assemblies in the factories to discuss what to do.

On the evening of September 29 a requiem mass in Zarauz for executed ETA<sup>1</sup> member Juan Paredes drew 5,000 of the town's 15,000 inhabitants.

The following day fifty prominent priests from the region were to hold a mass for all five victims in San Sebastián. When police denied permission for the memorial, thousands of persons demonstrated in the streets throughout the city.

The same day a memorial mass for Paredes in Barcelona was broken up by rightists. When the officiating priest left the church with two of Paredes's attorneys, the three were beaten up by rightists as the police looked on. The priest and one of the lawyers had to be hospitalized.

In an unprecedented action, the champion Spanish soccer team Atlético de Bilbao refused to play as an expression of solidarity with the general strike. Another team followed suit.

The general strike was preceded by what the September 30 *Le Monde* described as "impressive silent demonstrations" in many Basque cities September 28. More than 1,500 persons demonstrated in Azpe-

tia, and a silent march in Bilbao was attacked by the Civil Guard, who shot and seriously wounded twelve persons.

### International Protests

Internationally, the most widespread protests took place in France.

Between seven and eight thousand persons answered the call of the LCR, OCR, and PSU<sup>2</sup> to demonstrate in Paris September 27, *Le Monde* reported. These groups were joined by trade unionists from the CGT, CFDT, and FEN.<sup>3</sup> Fifty-seven persons were arrested in the demonstration, which lasted twelve hours and was punctuated with burning and looting.

In the days following the executions, demonstrations—many accompanied by violence and arrests—occurred in virtually every city and many towns of the country. The protesters numbered in the tens of thousands.

The Communist party, Socialist party, PSU, Left Radicals, CGT, CFDT, and FEN called national actions for September 29. *Le Monde* reported that in most cities of France large, peaceful demonstrations took place. However, tens of thousands of peaceful marchers in Paris were attacked by police using tear gas during the protest there.

The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, with fifty-three million members, and the International Federation of Transport Workers called for actions on October 2 by the organized working class. A wave of boycotts and work stoppages was the response.

Scandinavian unions banned Spanish goods and services for up to seventy-two hours.

Air traffic with Spain was also boycotted by workers in Britain, Italy, France, and Belgium.

Port workers in Britain and the Netherlands refused to load or unload Spanish ships, and train service linking Spain with

France and Switzerland was suspended.

Protest work stoppages occurred in Athens, Rome, France, and West Germany.

The September 30 issue of *Le Monde* reported street demonstrations in the following places:

- In all major cities of Switzerland, with the largest in Geneva, where 5,000 persons demonstrated. Police attacked the protest, leaving sixty wounded and six imprisoned.

- In Italy, 50,000; Belgium, 2,000; Stockholm, 10,000; Norway, 1,000; Britain, 500; Salonika, several thousand; Athens, several hundred; New York; Colombia; and East and West Germany.

Accounts from other sources reported that actions also took place in:

- Venezuela, where demonstrations continued for three consecutive days and involved thousands.

- Mexico, where thousands were expected to turn out for a march October 3.

- Vienna, where 1,000 marched.

- Ankara and two Argentine cities, where Spanish government offices were targets of bomb attacks.

The London-based human rights organization Amnesty International issued a report September 30 stating that Basque prisoners have been tortured "on a massive scale." The group called on the Spanish government to investigate the findings and put an end to a "veritable rampage of repression, intimidation and torture."

The report from a July fact-finding trip was based on the direct testimony of forty-five Basques and stated that at least 250 prisoners had been systematically tortured between April 25 and July 25.

Thomas Jones, an attorney from Washington, D.C., and Burkhard Wisser, a West German philosophy professor, prepared the report, which listed as torture methods severe beatings, cigarette burns, near drownings, deprivation of sleep, and psychological stress created by mock executions, sexual threats, and threats to relatives.

A total of eighteen governments had withdrawn their official representatives from Spain as of October 5. The latest to do so were Canada, Switzerland, Austria, Luxembourg, Finland, and Hungary.

Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme announced that the Social Democratic party would send \$46,000 to opposition groupings in Spain to help end the rule of "satanic murderers."

1. Euzkadi ta Azkatasuna (Basque Nation and Freedom).

2. Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire (Revolutionary Communist League), Organisation Communiste Révolution (Communist Organization Revolution), Parti Socialiste Unifié (United Socialist party).

3. Confédération Générale du Travail (General Confederation of Labor), Confédération Française et Démocratique du Travail (French Democratic Confederation of Labor), Fédération de l'Éducation Nationale (National Education Federation).



The Common Market suspended trade negotiations with the Franco government.

Mexican President Luis Echeverría ordered all unofficial Spanish government offices in Mexico closed, as well as those of the Spanish tourism and news agencies. Mexico has not had diplomatic relations with Spain since the end of the Spanish Civil War. Suspensions were also ordered of all plane flights and financial operations between the two countries.

The Ankara city government ordered all electricity and water cut off from the Spanish embassy for one week.

The Franco dictatorship responded quickly to the wave of demonstrations.

The protests from abroad were "an intolerable aggression against Spanish sovereignty," Premier Carlos Arias Navarro said on national television September 30.

The Franco government is not afraid of isolation, Arias continued, asserting that it would continue to act "with the serene and firm certainty of meeting its inescapable obligations without being intimidated."

To back up these assertions, a mass rally was called for the following day in Madrid. The occasion was the thirty-ninth anniversary of Franco's assumption of the title of chief of state.

United Press International described how the celebration was built:

"The streets of the main Spanish cities are full of leaflets criticizing the Western governments and announcing rallies similar to the one planned for Madrid in other, provincial localities. One of the leaflets says:

"Spaniards: Once more world Communism is trying to enslave Spain. Everyone must come to the rally. Long live Spain."

The xenophobic appeal met with some response:

"In isolated incidents occurring in several Spanish cities, rightists stoned consulates and offices of foreign firms," UPI reported.

More than 100,000 persons turned out to hear the general denounce "Communist terrorist subversions."

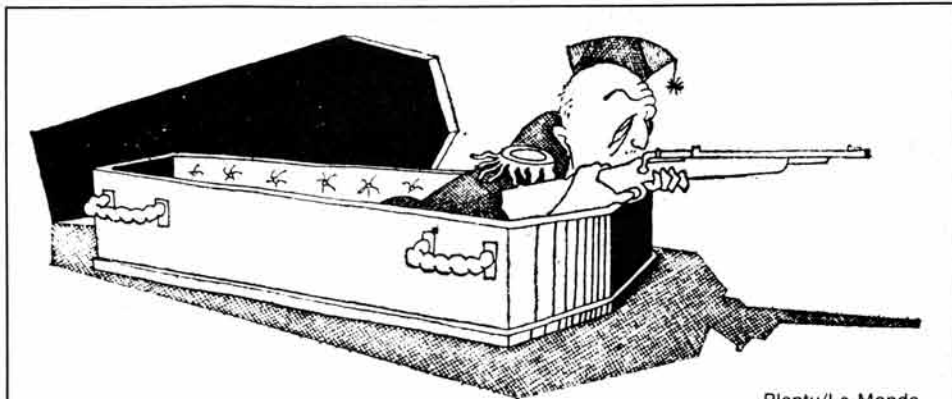
A dispatch from Madrid in the October 2 *New York Times* described the event:

"His hands trembled and his diction was hard to understand. But the crowd massed in Oriente Square chanted 'Franco! Franco!' and called him back for three more appearances.

"A large number of people had been brought in from the provinces, government employes and other workers had been given the day off, schools were closed and organizations of veterans and other rightists were out in force to lead the crowd in patriotic chants and in the outstretched Fascist salute.

"There were similar demonstrations in other cities."

Following the rally, groups of rightists roamed the streets of Madrid, demonstrat-



Plantu/Le Monde

## Washington and Moscow Keep a Low Profile

The voices of Washington and Moscow were notably absent from the protests.

Gerald Ford expressed "regret" at the "cycle of violence" in Spain. The *New York Times* reported October 5, "Mr. Kissinger made it clear to reporters privately . . . that whatever the United States might think about the Franco regime's actions, maintaining access to the Spanish bases was a high priority matter for the United States. . . ."

The executions occurred one week before Kissinger and Franco reached agreement on terms for Washington's continued use of military bases in Spain.

The September 30 issue of *Le Monde* reported Moscow's response to the executions:

"The news, given by Tass on the morning of Saturday, September 27, was presented as something that 'has been reported,' and was accompanied only by dispatches on the protests in Western Europe. On Saturday and Monday the Soviet press published brief reports on the inside pages. No commentary clarifying the position of the USSR accompanied them. *Pravda* did not even mention the executions in its weekend three-column round-up of foreign political events."

ing against foreign embassies and attacking individuals believed to have foreign connections.

But the rightist mobilizations are not primarily directed against foreigners. Like the repressive crackdown of the last few months, their prime target is the domestic critics of the Franco regime.

Ascensión Lopesino Alvarez, a fifty-year-old woman, was one victim of the post-rally frenzy. When she shouted that a roaming group of rightists was "a disturbance of public order," they turned and beat her up, the October 6 *New York Times* reported.

And that was not all. Alvarez was rescued by two policemen who then arrested her. She was ordered held without bail for violating the "antiterrorism" law, one provision of which makes it a crime to defend or encourage Communism, separatism, anarchism, or violence. She was fined \$1,700 and ordered to put up an additional \$500 to cover other fines that might be imposed.

Moreover, there are mounting fears that fifteen to twenty Basques arrested in recent weeks, along with the noted feminist writer and doctor Eva Forest, may be brought rapidly to trial despite official denials.

Among the Basques are two top ETA leaders, José Mugica Arregui and Ignacio

Pérez Boetegui. Forest, Mugica, and Boetegui have all been accused of involvement in the December 1973 assassination of Spanish Premier Luis Carrero Blanco.

Under the "antiterrorism" law, which would apply in their trials, the military can arbitrarily set the time of the proceedings once the prisoners have been officially indicted. Defense attorneys then have four hours to read the charges against their clients and prepare their case. If convicted of acts of terrorism leading to death of public officials, the defendants are automatically sentenced to death. No judicial appeal is permitted. This is the law that was used to convict the five prisoners executed September 27.

As Edwin McDowell commented in the October 2 issue of the *Wall Street Journal*:

"The immediate targets of the crackdown are extremist Basque separatists and urban guerrillas who have killed some 15 policemen and 30 civilians this year. But the vigor of the anti-terrorist campaign, and the scope of the law which decrees punishment even for those guilty of showing 'sympathy' for separatists, terrorist groups or illegal political organizations, suggests that the broader target may be to discourage anyone who might harbor thoughts of a Portuguese-style revolution in this part of Iberia." □

## The MFA Tries to Stabilize Its Military Base

By Gerry Foley

After ordering a military occupation of the Lisbon radio and television stations on September 29, the MFA government headed by Premier Pinheiro de Azevedo stepped up its purge of "unreliable elements" in the military.

On October 3, the recently installed commander of the Northern Military Region, Gen. Pires Veloso, ordered the main transport regiment in Oporto shut down. The following day, a 120-man elite commando unit seized the barracks and expelled all the military personnel who remained there.

The closing down of the transport regiment resembled a military coup, according to an October 4 dispatch from *New York Times* correspondent Flora Lewis: "... one commando shouted, 'Nobody move if you don't want trouble!'" The regiment's 700 weapons were confiscated and distributed to "more reliable forces."

This repressive move was accompanied by a political offensive. The Central Region commander, Gen. Franco Charais, one of the signers of the manifesto of the Nine, the "moderate" group of officers headed by Melo Antunes, gave a news conference October 3 in Coimbra, issuing what was obviously intended to be a major political statement:

"The present political-military situation of our revolution, as I see it, is not brilliant. In order to advance with a guarantee of achieving the two great objectives of this revolution—national independence and a socialist society—what is needed, as the president of the republic told journalists yesterday in Moscow, is discipline, order, and respect for authority. The key to achieving these prerequisites are the MFA [Movimento das Forças Armadas—Armed Forces Movement] and the mass media."

Charais seemed to sum up the political plan of the crackdown pretty clearly. The target was (1) the military, (2) the mass media. The fact that the president, Gen. Costa Gomes, was in the Soviet bloc when the offensive was launched was almost certainly not accidental. There was no better place from which to issue an appeal for "discipline" and "order."

The operation was to be carried out in the name of the "People-MFA Alliance" and of the socialist revolution.

"For the Portuguese revolution to continue forward on the road to achieving its great objectives, I think the MFA is fundamental. In the present political stage in this country, it is the only force that can

make it possible to obtain the necessary social base to combat the forces of counterrevolution.

"Our civilian and military revolutionists will have to realize as soon as possible that the Terreiro do Paço and Rossio [squares in downtown Lisbon] full of demonstrators are quite small compared with the Beiras [provinces in central Portugal] and that the People-MFA link that the military police regiment has been building in the Calçada de Ajuda in Lisbon is tiny compared with what the detachment in Guarda [a district in Beira Alta] has to do in the 600 villages in its zone.

"This is the reality. The attacks on the MFA... are constant. Leaflets inciting to indiscipline, trying to separate officers from privates, have become frequent. Organizations are arising that claim to be nonpartisan and try to appeal to the just aspirations of our soldiers and call them out to street demonstrations against the decisions of the higher bodies of the MFA. Behind these organizations, although they try to hide themselves in clandestinity, we can see dissident officers of the MFA and political parties."

### MFA Makes Use of SP

Charais was trying to identify the opposition to the crackdown with a rearguard action by the supporters of Vasco Gonçalves and the Communist party. But he also wanted to excommunicate any left groups that did not accept the authority of the MFA:

"Revolutionists turn up who want other kinds of revolution than the one led by the MFA. But our soldiers and the Portuguese people cannot forget that under fascism, movements did not appear in the armed forces that would have made it possible to speed up decolonization and the fall of the outdated and corrupt regime, as well as the democratization of the armed forces. The only thing that appeared was the MFA. Many potential revolutionists preferred to desert and emigrate. Our soldiers and our people also know, or sense, that many revolutionists will once again have the 'class conditions' to emigrate and experience the suffering of our people from a distance, where they can safely pursue their revolutionary tasks in the street.

"In this context, the mass media will have to decide quickly whether they are with the revolution or the counterrevolution

or with some other revolution that is not the one of the MFA. And they will have to act clearly in accordance with the decision they make, since an important factor in their activity is the discipline, unity, cohesion, and political consciousness of the armed forces."

This has been the standard argument since the MFA regime was first established under Spínola. The MFA is the revolutionary paterfamilias. To left groups that play by its rules, it is an indulgent father, but to those that do not subordinate themselves to the MFA, stern discipline will be applied.

It was ironic that this argument was now being used against the CP and its new left satellites. At the time of the April 25 Constituent Assembly elections and until recently, this theme was harped upon by the Stalinists and the ultraleft to belittle the idea that the MFA should respect the "bourgeois ballot box."

The MFA was supposed to have a "revolutionary legitimacy" above elections, because it had brought down the old regime. Even *Le Monde*, the most prestigious bourgeois liberal paper of the French republic, waved aside the SP's protests against the MFA's arbitrary exercise of power, invoking this "revolutionary mandate."

Charais also invoked the theme of the "MFA above parties" but in a way different from that of the supporters of the "direct democracy" scheme: "The conflict among the parties has been producing a breakdown in democratic coexistence that is shown in the attacks on the headquarters of progressive parties, in the manifestations of ultraleftism, and in clashes between crowds."

The implication was that if the MFA were allowed to play its role as the arbiter determining the "rhythms" of the revolutionary process, it could prevent such conflicts.

While previously this demagogy had been used primarily against the SP and supported by the CP, now it was being used against the CP and its allies and supported by the SP. Just as the military had based itself primarily on the CP in its crackdown on the strikes that followed the April 25, 1974, overturn, now it was utilizing SP support to start its campaign to restore "order" in the armed forces.

Furthermore, in its first major test in early October the new government seemed on the way to accomplishing what the



preceding cabinets had failed to do—utilize the class-collaborationism of both the CP and SP without being impeded by the contradictions between the two political currents following this orientation.

When Admiral Azevedo sent the military into the radio and TV stations September 29, it was clear that he intended a general political test of strength:

"This is an emergency measure designed to prevent a declaration of a state of emergency, which strictly speaking is called for. I believed that it was my duty to prevent such a declaration, inasmuch as it involves an undesirable restriction of the normal exercise of civil liberties. The situation requiring this measure is so grave that unless the trend is blocked, it will end in a short time by endangering more than even our national independence. The MFA and the government have already demonstrated in an unmistakable way their horror of violence and their determination to pursue their program of achieving socialism and safeguarding national independence. If there were any doubts about this, they should have been removed by the degree of restraint with which we have faced forms of social conflict that otherwise would have been intolerable.

"However, the events of recent days, with the occupation of the Emissora Nacional [the national radio studios were occupied by disabled veterans demanding increased benefits], the attack on the Spanish embassy and consulate in which both buildings were destroyed by fire, and the attempt to imprison the government itself by force, go beyond the limits of tolerance. These actions endanger the survival not only of effective authority but of all authority, if not of the nation itself as an independent state. As you can easily understand, I cannot and must not specify all the potential risks of the situation that is developing."

#### American Stalinists Worried Over Anti-Franco Demonstration

The premier was implying that the attack on the Spanish embassy threatened to produce a response that would endanger Portugal's security. Apparently the Stalinists at least were intimidated by this. For the American CP, for example, the alleged provocation of the Spanish government overshadowed the military take-over of the radio and television stations dominated by its comrades. In the October 1 *Daily World*, Tom Foley said:

"Portuguese commandos yesterday seized the radio station, Radio Renascença, after regular army troops refused to obey government orders to occupy the station. The U.S. news media incorrectly labeled the station as 'Communist.'

"Premier Jose Pinheiro de Azevedo on October 13, 1975

Monday had ordered the regular troops to occupy the country's major radio and television stations to put a halt to what he called a 'campaign of provocations.' This



PREMIER AZEVEDO: Purges "unreliable elements" in the Portuguese military.

appeared to be directly related to the sacking of the Spanish Embassy in Lisbon Saturday by ultra-left elements within a much larger mass of protesters.

"The attack on the Spanish Embassy had the gravest consequences for Portugal and posed a threat to the revolution: Spain's diplomatic personnel were recalled, a step short of actually severing relations with Portugal. Spain is Portugal's only neighbor.

"More than 80 percent of Portugal's foreign trade goes overland through Spain, and more than half of the tourists who visit Portugal come by rail, bus or car through Spain. The announcement Sunday by the Bank of Spain that it will no longer change Portuguese currency was a blow to the Portuguese economy and was directly related to the attack on the embassy.

"If Spain actually had severed relations with Portugal it would have cut off Portugal from all direct land contact with the rest of Europe and would have been a crushing blow to the Portuguese economy.

"On Sunday Alvaro Cunhal, general secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party, urged the tight consolidation of 'authority and discipline' in the government and in the armed forces to deal with the present political situation."

This Stalinist hack put all the blame for the military occupation on Rádio Renascença, which he said had praised those who burned the Spanish embassy and "in fact was inciting more attacks of the same kind."

Rádio Renascença, like *República*, was

taken over by a "workers committee" with CP backing. The origins of the dispute were different, and there have been some indications that the committee in the former Catholic station, which had valid complaints against the previous management, tried to maintain a certain nonpartisanship. However, this incident fitted into the CP-ultraleft campaign over *República*, and the Stalinists apparently left the running of the station to elements in the ultraleft bloc that it has manipulated to gain certain advantages. Thus, the fact that the Stalinists seemed to be turning against Rádio Renascença had broad political implications.

The CP-dominated press in Portugal has not turned openly on the ultralefts and continues to be filled with ultraleft sectarian rhetoric. Yet the events around the military occupation of the radio and TV stations seem to have brought the Stalinists closer to explicit conciliationism. They did not mobilize against this action, leaving their ultraleft allies alone in the street. They only criticized the government for not consulting them in advance.

"It was also clear that the Communists had not directly participated in yesterday's effort by the far left to organize action against the Government," Lewis wrote from Lisbon September 30, "and this apparently was an important reason for the scantiness of the crowds that took part."

The CP response to the occupation also seemed to concentrate its fire on the ultraleft rather than on the government: "It is necessary to oppose the attempt to push a right turn in Portuguese politics. And for this purpose, it is also necessary to be extremely vigilant against demagoguery and adventurism, as well as violent initiatives by ultraleft elements who play into the hands of reaction at a time when it is trying to impose a rightist government on the country based on reactionary repressive forces."

By all accounts, the participants in the demonstrations against the occupation numbered no more than a few thousand altogether. However, the actions gained considerable attention because the troops at most of the radio stations fraternized with the demonstrators as well as the broadcast staffs.

A detachment of soldiers from the Queluz and Trem-Auto units sent to Rádio Clube Português, the most openly CP-controlled station, refused to carry out orders to impose censorship, and also refused to leave when ordered. The troops from the Centro de Instrução Antiaérea de Creta sent to the Emissora Nacional did the same.

When the broadcasters at Rádio Clube Português, with the backing of the soldiers, resumed their regular program, General Carvalho ordered the studios evacuated. His order was carried out. But, before

leaving, the staff broadcast an appeal by the Frente de Unidade Revolucionária (FUR—Front for Revolutionary Unity) for a demonstration in Rossio.

A few thousand supporters of the front, according to *Le Monde's* correspondent José Rebelo, gathered in front of the Ministry of Information. The crowd included a number of workers from the Lisnave and Setenave shipyards. These are the enterprises where the ultraleft has its main support among workers. In particular, it is here that the Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado-Brigadas Revolucionárias (PRP-BR—Revolutionary party of the Proletariat-Revolutionary Brigades, an ultraleft “armed struggle” group) has a certain working-class base. Rebelo reported that the ultralefts gave their former hero, General Carvalho, a hard time when he showed up at the Ministry of Information:

“It was a sort of people’s court. ‘The problem of the disabled veterans should be settled by the government,’ the Copcon head tried to say. He was interrupted: ‘Down with Social Democracy!’ ‘Down with the government of the bourgeoisie!’

“The general made a last attempt to speak. ‘This government has been in existence only a week. It hasn’t had time yet to show what it can do.’ This argument provoked an explosion of whistles. ‘We don’t want to hear any more,’ the people were saying.

“Four cars of military police drove up. They were brandishing their weapons. The crowd cheered: ‘The guns of the soldiers will never be turned against the people.’ A worker climbed on top of a car. Equipped with a megaphone, he shouted: ‘Comrades, we have had enough demagoguery. I understand your anger against a man who has betrayed us.’”

Carvalho then proposed that the marchers go to the presidential palace. About half reportedly went there, while the other half went to Rádio Renascença. A picket was maintained around the station’s studios, but the transmitter was occupied by the Amadora Rangers. Pinheiro de Azevedo decreed that because the broadcasters at this station had “hardened their attitude” it would remain off the air.

#### **Soldiers Reject Orders**

The fact that a large proportion of the military detachments sent on this operation did not obey their orders and assumed attitudes of revolutionary opposition to the government created a sensation. However, this fact was not altogether surprising considering the units that were drawn on. By now the political complexion of the Queluz regiment and the military police is well known. This suggests that the premier may have been trying to put the radical regiments on the spot.

Furthermore, the detachments sent were quite small, about fifty men each. There are only four radio and TV stations in Lisbon. It is not believable that the government does not have 200 soldiers it can rely on. Otherwise, how could it keep some 20,000 troops in Angola? Reportedly 120 soldiers were used to occupy the transport unit barracks in Oporto alone. And in the case of Rádio Renascença, where the broadcasters were not backed by any major political force, the government effectively shut it down.

Why also did Pinheiro de Azevedo act so precipitously? Why move first against the media? It does not seem likely that this operation was provoked by fear of Franco’s reaction to the burning of his embassy. Most of the West European governments have been obliged to temporarily withdraw their ambassadors from Madrid because of the massive public outcry against the dictatorship’s murder of five revolutionists. What is more likely is that the sensation created by the diversion of weapons by PRP-BR sympathizers in the armed forces and the ultraleft aspects of the actions by the Soldados Unidos Vencerão (SUV—Soldiers United Will Win) had created the right atmosphere for a provocation.

Another factor was the CP’s defensive strategy of keeping one foot in the government and another in the street, marching in demonstrations headed by the FUR. The CP’s aim was to apply pressure on the government by threatening to throw its force behind the ultraleft. But it is highly unlikely the MFA leadership was impressed by this bluff; instead they apparently knew how to turn it to their advantage.

Following this two-faced policy in order to hold on to the positions it gained under the Gonçalves government, the CP came out in opposition to an SP proposal for parity committees of representatives from the three major parties and the MFA to run the nationalized press, which is now dominated by the CP and its allies.

This position was justified as follows by the CP leadership in a September 24 statement: “Since there is no coalition government and we are critical of the presence of the PPD [Partido Popular Democrático—Democratic People’s party, the main bourgeois party] in the government and since we have strong reservations about the policy of the SP, the PCP [Partido Comunista Português—Portuguese Communist party] cannot endorse, approve, or participate in ‘coalition’ solutions for the mass media.”

This argument was completely hypocritical. The CP was participating in a coalition government in all but name and its insistence on talking to the PPD only through the SP changed nothing of the reality that it was in the same government with this party. The fact was that in the nationalized

media the CP was in possession and it wanted that to remain nine-tenths of the law. It offered no more democratic alternative to the SP’s proposal.

At the same time, the CP continued to resort to unprincipled demagoguery to resist giving any ground to the SP in the areas where the two parties are in competition. It called strikes on September 16, 17, and 18 by the agricultural workers unions in Alentejo, which it totally controls, and turned these actions against the bank workers union, a former CP bastion in which the SP and its Maoist allies have just won a strong majority. Speakers in the strike rallies claimed the SP had taken over the union to stop credit to small farmers and agricultural collectives. Clashes occurred when the CP-led unions tried to intimidate the bank workers.

This whole operation, which was covered up with a profusion of superrevolutionary rhetoric, was carried out while the CP was struggling to gain two ministers instead of one in the new provisional government.

This course of action by the CP helped to line up the SP firmly behind the new government, which the Social Democratic leadership saw as the only force that could compel the CP to relinquish some of the positions in the unions and the press that it had gained through its alliance with the Gonçalves team.

Of course, the SP leadership did not need much inducement to sell itself lock, stock, and barrel to a military government that smiled in its direction. But the sectarianism of the CP and the ultralefts enabled it to bring its membership along.

#### **What Soares Wants**

Socialist party leader Soares mobilized 20,000 to 30,000 persons on a few hours notice to support the government’s move against the media. Previously, when the government tried to impose a news blackout on “unauthorized” voices in the military, SP supporters in the press either opposed it or fell into an embarrassed silence.

In this case, *Jornal Novo*, a daily close to the SP, did oppose the military occupation, and its editor, Arturo Portela Filho, ridiculed the premier’s claims that the national independence was in jeopardy. However, *A Luta*, which has replaced *República* as the semiofficial voice of the SP, supported the government’s crackdown.

What Soares wanted was clear enough: “We are with the government when it wants to assure pluralism in the news media, to end manipulation for the sake of minority groupings.”

Thus, he apparently thought the operation was intended to cut the CP and ultraleft down to size and open the way for the SP’s reentry into the nationalized media. To get this, he was willing, even



anxious, to call for abject obeisance to the military government.

The premier spoke to the demonstrators, appealing for "discipline." The crowd was encouraged to take this up as a chant. The SP press pointed to the fact that the CP-dominated papers did not refer to the presence of the premier in their demonstration as yet another example of "manipulation."

In Amadora on October 3, the SP even organized a demonstration in support of the reactionary commander of the Amadora Rangers, Jaime Neves. This officer was kidnapped in May by the SP's Maoist allies, the MRPP (Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado—Movement to Reorganize the Proletarian Party), who claimed that he was linked to the Spinoist terrorists of the Exército de Libertação Portuguesa (ELP—Portuguese Liberation Army). It was as a result of this action that Carvalho locked up a couple of hundred MRPP members.

In its communiqué on the occupation, the MRPP said: "Taking the initiative, the fascist sector of the state has unleashed its coup. And it began as the MRPP had foreseen, with the news media. The organization of the communist journalists always said that only workers control would prevent the social-fascist domination of the news media from being replaced by fascist domination, that only workers control would provide a way out of having to choose between Castrim [apparently a CP figure] and Jaime Neves."

Another factor that helped the SP leaders mobilize the party's ranks behind the government in its test of strength with the left-wing regiments was the behavior of these units toward their demonstrations. In the Lisbon mass rally of July 19, the Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment (RALis) opened fire with tear-gas grenades on an SP crowd. In the September 30 demonstration, the military police fired tear-gas grenades at SP marchers outside the Emissora Nacional.

Furthermore, following the fall of Gonçalves, some of the "military left" made statements that were interpreted in the pro-SP press as meaning that the CP and/or the ultraleft intended to use armed force to prevent the SP from taking control of the government.

In its article on the diversion of weapons by the PRP-BR, the September 25 *Jornal de Notícias* in Oporto said: "The opposition group, specifically Captain Clemente, said that it was necessary to seek *new forms of struggle* to keep the country from being dominated by Social Democrats." (Emphasis in original.)

The PRP-BR defended the seizure of these weapons in a statement published in the same issue of *Jornal de Notícias*: "The PRP-BR, which did not let itself be disarmed by Caetano or Spínola, is not afraid of the

flabby and veiled violence of the Social Democrats."

The PRP-BR is probably the strongest component of the FUR and of the SUV. Furthermore, the FUR has coupled fascism and Social Democracy and called for "purging the Social Democratic and fascist putschists from the armed forces."

#### Ultraleft Planning a Coup?

The petty-bourgeois legalistic leadership of the SP may be easily panicked. In any case, for its own political reasons it is anxious to call the CP's bluff and force it to abandon its semiopposition stance. These attitudes may have been involved in the SP's warning October 2 that the left-wing regiments and their ultraleft supporters were planning a coup.

One of the SP leaders, Raul Rêgo, the former editor of *República*, however, told reporters, according to an October 2 dispatch from Lewis: "... that the first warning, calling upon the populace to rise up and defend the revolution, had been issued because of information received during the afternoon from 'some military sources.' He declined to give any further details but said that the information 'may have been a provocation.'"

The SP leadership, however, has not backed off from the charge that the left-wing regiments and the ultraleft were planning a putsch, nor, as of its October 3 issue, has *A Luta*.

The denial by the FUR reported in the October 4 *Diário de Notícias* did not seem likely, in fact, to convince the SP supporters that there was nothing to worry about.

The Lisbon daily reported: "Speaking of the possibility of an armed insurrection, the statement said that 'this implies a further advance of the movement with a neutralization of the authorities that can only be achieved when the soldiers and sailors are linked with the workers.'" Apparently nothing was said about winning a majority of the workers and toiling masses. In the past two months, these groups have taken whatever neighborhood or workers committees they have been able to form or influence and exaggerated them as expressions of "workers power" capable of offering "mass approval" for their initiatives.

In this respect the ultraleft groups have gone to almost incredible lengths in grabbing at straws. A "national meeting of workers councils in Covilha" scheduled for September 27-28 was touted all over Europe, for example, as a great new advance for "people's power." Actually, it was organized by the MRPP with the cautious support of the supposedly archreactionary SP. The CP violently denounced it. The September 27 session, according to *A Luta*, was adjourned because of small attendance.

The CP-dominated papers have been ridiculing the SP's claim of an intended putsch and accusing it of irresponsibility and worse. But these attacks on the Social Democrats have been overshadowed by the extensive coverage of Costa Gomes's trip to the Soviet Union, and by the reports of his invitation to the Kremlin chiefs to visit Portugal. Such reports have also prevented the Soviet press from paying any attention to the incidents around the occupation of the radio and TV stations in Lisbon.

In the midst of such a love feast, it is not likely that the CP can maintain its semioppositionist stance. The reassurance of Costa Gomes to the Kremlin leaders is probably sufficient for them to order their Portuguese followers to take a more cooperative and positive attitude toward the government, regardless of the sacrifices this may mean for the local Stalinists.

A turn by the CP at this point could have immediate and serious effect on the resistance of the Soldados Unidos Vencerão group to the crackdown in the military. The only notable success so far in this campaign has been in Beja, a CP stronghold in Alentejo, where popular mobilizations prevented some transfers.

If the CP turns against the SUV, the latter could suddenly find itself isolated in an exposed position where it would have to bear the brunt of the resentment among the pro-SP masses at the sectarian tactics of the CP but would not have the CP's mass support. Furthermore, the actions and statements of the PRP-BR in particular make it possible for the government to mount a major provocation anytime it thinks the time is ripe. □

#### Judge Rules Baader-Meinhof Trial Can Continue Without Defendants

The trial of alleged leaders of the Baader-Meinhof group in West Germany was adjourned for nine days September 30 after the four defendants were expelled from the courtroom. According to a panel of five doctors, the defendants—Andreas Baader, Ulrike Meinhof, Jan-Carl Raspe, and Gudrun Ensslin—were too weak from their three years in pretrial custody to undergo the rigorous courtroom proceedings.

The state court in Baden-Württemberg ruled that the trial would continue regardless of whether the defendants were able to attend. The chief judge, Theodor Prinzing, justified the decision by stating that the defendants themselves were to blame for their poor health because of hunger strikes they had undertaken. Defense attorneys filed an objection to the ruling, which will be taken before a federal court.

# AROUND THE WORLD



## **FBI Admits 238 Burglaries**

A Federal Bureau of Investigation report, released by the Senate Committee on Intelligence September 25, admitted that the FBI had conducted at least 238 "black bag" jobs against domestic "subversive" organizations and individuals from 1942 to 1968. Senator Frank Church, who released the report, said he knew the names of some of the groups, but he did not make them public.

The purpose of the break-ins, according to the 1966 FBI memo also released, was to obtain membership and mailing lists of groups that "aimed directly at undermining and destroying our nation."

## **West German Social Democrats Get a 'Shock' in Bremen Vote**

West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's Social Democratic party suffered a setback in the September 28 elections to the state legislature in Bremen. It received 49 percent of the vote, 6 percent less than its showing in the 1971 elections.

Mayor Hans Koschnick, the state Social Democratic leader, attributed the decline to the continuing economic slump. "We got a considerable shock today," he said, "and the economic situation was the main factor."

Unemployment among women and recent school graduates is high in Bremen. At the same time, the federal government has enacted a series of unpopular budget cuts and tax increases.

During the last year and a half the Social Democratic party has lost heavily in elections in Hamburg and Berlin, two areas where they traditionally win easily.

## **Ethiopian Military Regime Declares State of Emergency in Addis Ababa**

Ethiopia's military junta declared a state of emergency in Addis Ababa September 30 after the Confederation of Ethiopian Labor Unions (CELU) issued a call for a general strike. Thousands of workers in the state banks, insurance companies, and government printing offices and in dozens of private firms either walked off their jobs on that day or failed to show up for work.

The state of emergency gives the police, armed forces, and Territorial Army powers to arrest and detain anyone without trial and to break into homes without search

warrants. The decree suspends all civil liberties and prohibits strikes, slowdowns, leaving work without permission, public assembly, speech making, possession of arms, and distribution of literature hostile to the military regime.

"Our revolution will not be diverted because of the strikes taking place," the regime stated. "If we have to shed blood, we will do so to protect the rights of the broad masses." It also said that "antirevolutionary forces will be sought out and will be put to the sword."

The CELU issued its general strike call after seven persons were killed and several hundred arrested by Ethiopian troops September 25 at Addis Ababa international airport. Police and troops were trying to arrest an employee who had distributed antimilitary literature, and several hundred airline workers refused to allow the arrest.

## **Famine Strikes Dominican Republic**

The worst famine in half a century is sweeping the Dominican Republic. Relief agencies have begun distributing food to 500,000 starving Dominicans, about one-sixth of the rural population. The mayor of San José de las Matas has said that 42,000 of the 70,000 inhabitants in the area were starving. Bananas, which are usually plentiful, are now scarce or priced so high that most persons cannot afford them. Many of the famine victims are staying alive on a diet of mangos, although mango supplies are fast running out.

## **Indonesian Troops Raid East Timor**

Indonesian troops entered the Portuguese colony of East Timor, wiping out a military base of Fretilin (Frente Revolucionária do Timor-Leste Independente—Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor) in the Aditu district, according to a September 30 Reuters dispatch from Jakarta. All Fretilin troops defending the base were reported killed when thirty Indonesian troops launched the attack from West Timor, the Indonesian-ruled half of the island.

The Indonesian regime had previously warned that it would not "tolerate" a victory by Fretilin, which it brands as a "Communist" group. The attack against the Fretilin base may have been designed to test international reaction before launching

a larger assault. On September 17 Jakarta sent naval reinforcements to patrol Timor's coast.

The União Democrática Timorense (UDT—Timorese Democratic Union), which staged an abortive coup attempt in East Timor in August, has called on Jakarta for help. It is reported to have joined forces with the Associação Popular Democrática Timorense (Apodeti—Timorese People's Democratic Association), a group favoring merger with Indonesia, to launch a counter-offensive against Fretilin.

## **Public Workers Strike in Bangkok**

Bangkok has been hit by a wave of strikes by public sector workers. In late August, 3,000 sanitation workers struck, winning their demand for overtime pay on weekends. Ten days after the sanitation strike began, 2,000 postal workers walked off their jobs, cutting telex lines, all overseas telephone service, and mail service for four days. The city government gave in and granted their demands for higher pay and other benefits. On September 19, the bus drivers of most of the city's eighteen bus companies went out on strike.

## **U.S. Policy of Guns Instead of Food Starved 15,000 Cambodian Refugees**

At least 15,000 Cambodians starved to death or died from malnutrition-related diseases in the areas held by the Lon Nol regime in the last four months of the war in Cambodia. In a report released by the Indochina Resource Center in Washington September 29, these deaths are attributed to Washington's policy of giving priority to arms shipments for Lon Nol rather than stepping up food relief for the refugees in Pnompenh.

Based on data supplied by private relief agencies and clinics, the report states that relief supplies in the final days of the U.S. puppet regime fell far short of the requirements, and the food that was available was diverted from those who needed it the most.

Dr. Gay Alexander, medical director for Catholic Relief Services in 1974 and 1975, declared shortly before the fall of Pnompenh that "hundreds are dying of malnutrition every day." At the Catholic Relief Services children's clinic, 20 to 25 percent of the children admitted died because their conditions were already so poor, the report said.



## For a Correct Political Course in Portugal

By Gerry Foley, Joseph Hansen, and George Novack

### A Flawed Indictment

In their joint article "In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution," published in the September 8, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Comrades Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, and Ernest Mandel "lodge a strong protest against the line *Intercontinental Press* has seen fit to follow in covering the events in Portugal since the eruption of the *República* affair, especially in the issues Vol. 13, Nos. 21-30."

According to them, *Intercontinental Press's* handling of the revolutionary events in Portugal in this period (the issues dated June 2 to August 4) calls for condemnation: "In our view, the line that has been taken by *Intercontinental Press* represents a serious political mistake, a departure from the traditional position revolutionary Marxists have taken in similar circumstances of revolutionary upsurge in imperialist countries; if persisted in, it could seriously discredit Trotskyism in the eyes of advanced workers not only in Portugal itself, but throughout capitalist Europe."

The charge is a grave one. By way of concrete indictment, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel offer the following, which, they claim, represents the "position" developed in the articles that have appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, particularly those bearing the signatures of Gerry Foley and Joseph Hansen:

"There exists in Portugal today an authoritarian military regime that upholds and defends capitalism, albeit with leftist-sounding phrases. This regime, on the road to an outright bourgeois military dictatorship, regards the existence of a powerful Social Democratic party with a relatively free press as an obstacle that must be eliminated. Thus, both in the conflict around the *República* affair and in the political conflict that arose from it and led to the resignation of the SP and PPD ministers from the government, we have to give full support to the Social Democrats (and their bourgeois allies of the PPD? On this Comrade Foley has been silent) against the MFA. In fact, according to the views expressed in Comrade Foley's articles, the only realistic choice in Portugal today is between a bourgeois military regime mov-

ing in the direction of outright military dictatorship and the Constituent Assembly, which is seen as the embodiment of bourgeois democracy and as the legitimate expression of popular will. In a conflict between a bourgeois military regime (supported by the Stalinist Communist party) and bourgeois democracy (supported by the Socialist party), we must stand foursquare on the side of bourgeois democracy (the Constituent Assembly), while criticizing the SP for its class collaboration with the military. So-called organs of dual power are either fake (that is, creatures manipulated by the bourgeois army) or irrelevant." (Emphasis added.)

This presentation of our position certainly offers an easy target. However, it bears no resemblance to the position taken by *Intercontinental Press*, as we will prove in detail in what follows.

At this point, we will simply focus on the main political charge; namely, that we urge giving "full support to the Social Democrats."

It is true that we have defended the democratic rights of the Portuguese Socialist party, in particular its right to freedom of the press, which was under reactionary assault in the *República* affair. But we deny that defending the democratic rights of class-collaborationist leaderships of mass workers parties (whether they be Social Democratic, Stalinist, or otherwise) signifies giving them political support. To argue to the contrary is sophistry.

In taking our stand in defense of freedom of the press in Portugal, we acted in accordance with the basic principles of revolutionary Marxism. Trotsky outlined this position with admirable clarity in an editorial in the October 1938 issue of *Clave*, which we translated and published in the June 9, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*; that is, one of the numbers condemned by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

They avoid mentioning Trotsky's editorial; yet it did have a certain impact in Portugal, being translated into Portuguese, published by *Jornal do Caso República*, and

widely circulated.<sup>1</sup> Did Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel find this embarrassing? Was it because Trotsky's position went counter to theirs?

We turn now to the explanation offered by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for our having suddenly joined—according to them—"a political bloc of the bourgeoisie, the Social Democracy, and a few CPs" (the Italian and Spanish Stalinists but not the Portuguese). Their explanation is not political but psychological. Unsatisfactory as this may be, it is understandable in view of the difficulty of finding a rational political explanation for the positions they accuse us of holding.

"The Portuguese revolution," they write, "is the first revolution to break out after the Tenth World Congress [of the Fourth International], the first to confront us with the need to verify our long-term analysis and prognosis about the likely pattern of world revolution. And it is here that the probable motivation for Comrade Foley's mistakes must be located, a motivation that he shares with Comrade Hansen: fear that to recognize that a genuine revolutionary process is under way in Portugal would somehow imply recognizing the ability of 'petty-bourgeois officers' (or 'reactionary bourgeois officers') to be magically transformed by the Communist party into 'tools of proletarian revolution,' thereby 'justifying' the class collaborationist maneuvers carried out by the Stalinist Communist parties throughout the world."

"This motivation leads to an approach that is identical to the Healy-Lambert method of examining unforeseen turns of objective events. It is an approach that is alien to Marxism and can only lead to disastrous results."

There are some quite obscure references in this psychological interpretation that we will take up later. The items include the "Healy-Lambert method" and the possibility of a wing of the officers' caste leading a "deformed popular social revolution."

As to the charge that we "fear . . . to recognize that a genuine revolutionary process is under way in Portugal," we can in good conscience leave that to the readers of *Intercontinental Press*. Anyone who has

1. For a report, see *Intercontinental Press*, August 4, 1975, p. 1125.

followed the coverage given in our pages to the Portuguese revolution since it began a year and a half ago has sufficient evidence, we think, to judge the worth of that allegation.

In association with their pre-Freudian conclusions about how our minds operate, the authors' use of the label "Stalinophobia" is to be noted. For example, they say:

"Only people who have been completely mystified by bourgeois public opinion and blinded by Stalinophobia can speak of Portugal as a country in which democratic rights have been eroded by 'military dictatorship.'"

Perhaps we are not included among "people" of that kind. Nonetheless, since no names have been mentioned, perhaps it would be well for us to state exactly where we stand on this question.

Stalinophobia designates the political position of professed socialists or would-be revolutionists so revolted by the crimes and antidemocratic practices of Stalinism that they choose to support their own capitalist government rather than support a revolution in which a Communist party happens to be playing a prominent or leading role. Two examples will help point up what Stalinophobia can lead to.

1. On the eve of World War II, many radical intellectuals long known as "friends of the Soviet Union" abandoned the cause. They turned sour because of the Stalin-Hitler pact and the invasion of Finland and Poland by Soviet armies. Because of Stalin's actions, they refused to defend the Soviet Union any longer.

The majority of these intellectuals ended up as ardent advocates of the virtues of capitalist democracy, particularly the American variety, denying that there was anything progressive to be found in the Soviet Union, including its economic structure. Some of them became carried away to such an extent as to set themselves up as advisers to the State Department on how best to "fight communism."

2. During the U.S. imperialist intervention in Indochina, the American Social Democrats and circles under their influence refused to participate in the antiwar movement. Because of their Stalinophobia, they preferred a victory by the Pentagon and its puppets over a victory by the Vietnamese revolution. The reason for their stand, which they did not hesitate to expound, was that this was a lesser evil to domination of Vietnam by Stalinist forces.

The label of Stalinophobia signifies that the holder, through recoil from the Stalinists, generally favors the Social Democrats. There are many such persons in Portugal as elsewhere. But we have never been among them.

Despite their dissimilar international attachments, both of these working-class currents are equally class collaborationist

and have to be opposed and exposed. We see no virtues in the Social Democracy any more than in Stalinism and have no preference for one over the other.

Any variations in our judgments regarding them arise from purely tactical considerations based upon the specific roles one or the other happen to be playing at a given conjuncture or in a particular situation.

If a Communist party that is temporarily at odds with a capitalist regime finds difficulty in implementing its policy of collaboration with a sector of the bourgeoisie and takes an oppositional stand in one way or another, it is possible and even necessary to propose unity in action with it on specific issues against the class enemy. This approach does not in the least modify our fundamental appraisal of Stalinism as a counterrevolutionary force within the labor movement, and is indeed one means of struggle against its pernicious influence over the masses.

Precisely the same criteria apply to the Social Democracy.

There have been six cabinets in Portugal since the coup against Caetano. During the first period the CP and SP, holding posts in the MFA government, shared alike in blocking and betraying the revolutionary aspirations of the people.

When the SP withdrew from the cabinet after the seizure of *República*, the CP took the lead in defending the bourgeois government while the SP engaged in a few oppositional gestures.

Now, with the demotion of the CP and its military allies in the revamped cabinet of the sixth MFA government, the SP has replaced the CP. Pushed onto the outskirts of the regime, the CP may well embark on a show of criticism.

Throughout these *objective* changes, we have maintained our political hostility to both formations. We play no favorites among our opponents in the working class.

## Origin of the Differences

As noted above, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel place the origin of the differences in the "eruption of the *República* affair"; that is, at the end of last May—less than three months before the date of their article. To explain the abruptness of our alleged "departure from the traditional position revolutionary Marxists have taken in similar circumstances of revolutionary upsurge in imperialist countries," they advance psychological reasons.

In our opinion, the clash of positions has a much earlier origin, making it possible to explain the opposing views on political grounds. The present differences over what policies to follow in Portugal can be traced back to variant lines that were first delineated in late 1967 or early 1968; that is, more than a year before the April 1969

To remove some heat from discussion of this point, consider the current situation in India, where we have agreement. There the Communist party backs Indira Gandhi's dictatorial coup and her bonapartist role as servilely as its Portuguese counterpart upholds the MFA military government. If the Indian Trotskyists were to make a common front with certain Social Democratic elements in resisting her suppression of parliamentary rule and democratic rights, would that constitute evidence of Stalinophobia?

A hypothetical case may clarify the question even better. Suppose that Comrade Mandel were to advocate that the Belgian Trotskyists ought to follow a tactic of "entryism *sui generis*" in the Social Democracy, would this signify that he was capitulating politically to the Social Democrats? And suppose that Comrade Frank were to advocate at the same time that the French Trotskyists ought to follow a tactic of "entryism *sui generis*" in the Communist party, would this signify that he was capitulating politically to the Stalinists?

If Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are of the opinion that we have succumbed to Stalinophobia in relation to the Portuguese revolution, they could save a good many circumlocutions by naming us and proving the point. For instance, the charge that *Intercontinental Press* made a mistake in defending freedom of the press in the *República* affair because freedom of the press was not really at issue in that concrete instance is hardly of interest if what really motivated our stand was *Stalinophobia*.

What is the point of prosecuting a person for allegedly driving through a red light if this was but incidental to the commission of murder? Shouldn't the state's attorney put the defendant on trial for the major crime rather than the traffic violation?

world congress of the Fourth International where a "turn" was adopted by a majority of the delegates that, as we noted then, represented a concession to ultraleft pressures.

The two tendencies that appeared in the world Trotskyist movement at that time subsequently developed into two factions of fairly equal size—the International Majority Tendency (IMT) and the Leninist Trotskyist Faction (LTF). We adhere to the LTF; Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel to the IMT.

During the past seven years, the Fourth International has carried on a voluminous internal discussion on a series of important issues that came into dispute between the two factions and some smaller groupings. Since very little of this material has been



made public, readers of the Trotskyist press are at a disadvantage in trying to reach an objective judgment on the merits of the current debate and its relation to previous disputed issues.

For lack of space it is impossible here to outline, much less document, the development of the long polemic. Suffice it to say that the differences have concerned policies on such questions as guerrilla war in both its rural and urban variations, what attitude to take toward competing organizations standing to the left of the mass reformist parties in Europe, and above all the role of a Leninist-type party in providing leadership for the masses in a revolution, what methods to use in constructing such a party, and the deadly danger of gambling on shortcuts or of conceding to the ultraleft pressures that mounted in the wake of the Chinese and Cuban revolutions.

The internal debates over these questions find a certain reflection in the article by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, accounting in particular for the tone they chose to adopt, their imputing positions to us that we do not hold, and their rather extravagant arguments on some points. This should be borne in mind in weighing their contribution—and, conversely, in considering our reply. The political line of our reply is in accordance with the stress on party building that our tendency (and later faction) has fought for within the world

Trotskyist movement over the past seven years.

As a further bit of essential information, we want to point out that there are two Trotskyist organizations in Portugal that have declared allegiance to the Fourth International. One, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (Internationalist Communist League), which is mentioned several times by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, was recognized officially at the February 1974 world congress as a sympathizing organization.

The other, which they have chosen not to mention, is the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores (Revolutionary Workers party). The existence of this group was not known to the delegates at the 1974 world congress. It came to the attention of the Trotskyist movement only after the April 25, 1974, coup that touched off the Portuguese revolution.

Both groups began as very small nuclei in the underground struggle against the Caetano dictatorship. They have played an active role in the ongoing revolutionary events in Portugal. As a consequence, despite some errors, they have recruited and become recognized as a distinctive revolutionary current. In our opinion, the two groups would gain considerably by uniting their forces on a principled basis. In what follows, we will refer to their positions on certain issues.

### What Is Not in Dispute

In accusing us of developing an "ideological construction," which in their opinion "bears little relation to current social, political, and economic reality in Portugal," Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel fall into an exaggeration that leads them to disregard some very important issues on which common views are held. Perhaps they have reached the view that the areas of common agreement are now minimal or approaching the vanishing point. Nonetheless such a conclusion appears to us to be unwarranted, particularly in the absence of arguments to substantiate it. The better to focus in on the area of dispute, we think it is necessary to bear in mind what we agree on.

The main points can be listed as follows:

Both sides are in agreement as to the class nature of the revolutionary process that has begun in Portugal—it is proletarian.

And both sides are in agreement as to how to characterize the stage that has been reached in the process—it is prerevolutionary.

Both sides understand by this term that the working masses, particularly the proletariat, are in dynamic movement; that the ruling class is confronted with a deep

political crisis in its own ranks; and that the middle classes, now leaning toward a radical solution, could be either drawn in behind the proletariat as active allies or at least be neutralized were it not for the fact that the proletariat itself suffers from a crisis in leadership.

From this viewpoint, all that is missing to make the situation fully revolutionary is the appearance and influence of a mass revolutionary Marxist party.

In accordance with this analysis, both sides reject the hoary Menshevik position, whether advocated by the pro-Moscow or pro-Peking Stalinists, that the revolution falls into two stages—first bourgeois, then proletarian, with a layer of the national bourgeoisie naturally assuming leadership and the masses just as naturally playing a subordinate, supportive role to it in the first stage.

Both sides are agreed on what the basic economic, social, and political forces were that led to the outbreak of the revolution. These included the increasingly insupportable economic drain owing to the long years of colonial war and the compounded effect of the international economic depression. As the weakest of the imperialist powers, Portugal could least sustain the cost of a prolonged effort to suppress the

rebellions in the colonies by force.

In addition, the efforts to maintain the empire with such methods generated increasing strains in the Portuguese social structure, which became most visible in the armed forces themselves. Thus the key sectors of the ruling class decided to attempt a neocolonial solution in the example set by de Gaulle. This was the aim of the April 25, 1974, coup.

Both the IMT and the LTF have held this analysis in common up to now. As to the nature of the government, we have certainly held that it is bourgeois and that the Portuguese state is imperialist. We do not think that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have changed on this, all the more so since they have insisted (along with us) that the main problem facing the Portuguese capitalists is how to restabilize their government so as to be able to utilize it once again effectively in repressing the masses and bringing the revolutionary ferment to an end.

On the decisive question of the main line of development of the revolutionary process, no significant differences in estimate have been registered up to now.

The political operation opened up by the Portuguese ruling class in opting for the April 25, 1974, coup did not turn out as planned. It was disrupted by a deepgoing upsurge of the masses. This ranged from occupations of the factories by the workers to seizure of the land by the peasants on big estates in the South.

Workers control was established on a rather wide scale. Factory committees, representative of dual power on a plant level, began to appear in various areas. These, along with neighborhood tenants committees, and assemblies in some of the units of the armed forces, constitute nuclei that could, under propitious circumstances, develop into soviets (or comparable forms).

There is agreement, too, on the meaning of the nationalizations of industrial enterprises and banks in Portugal. Most of them took place under heavy pressure from the masses, although in certain instances what was involved was a rescue operation of companies headed for bankruptcy.

Both the IMT and the LTF are agreed that the main course of the Portuguese revolution points toward the rise of soviet-type formations as the basis for the establishment of a workers state in Portugal. Since the first days of the upsurge, we on *Intercontinental Press* have been impressed by the many parallels to be seen between the pattern of the Russian revolution of 1917 and the current revolutionary process in Portugal.

Finally, let us note that both sides have repeatedly stated their opposition in principle to the class-collaborationist role played by the leaderships of the Socialist and Communist parties in Portugal. Both sides

consider that the popular frontism practiced by the Stalinists and Social Democrats constitutes the main political prop of the bourgeois state within the labor movement.

Having indicated these broad areas of agreement, we have to add that the differences that have appeared may *logically* put in question the reality of the agreement we have had on certain of these points. For instance, much of the argumentation advanced by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel indicates that they think our

positions are not in accordance with the principles stated above and that we have actually (and knowingly) fallen into the camp of the Social Democracy and of the bourgeoisie—in short, broken with the long-held positions of the world Trotskyist movement.

However, this may prove to be a fantasy that does not conform with the facts. We will examine their views and their positions in detail to see what merit this schema may have.

### Bourgeois Democracy Vs. Proletarian Democracy and the Legacy of Eduard Bernstein

The main difference, on which Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have a great deal to say, concerns how to transcend bourgeois democracy in the struggle for victory in the developing Portuguese revolution. What is concretely involved is the bearing of this issue on the bourgeois efforts to mobilize counterrevolutionary forces, and on the proletarian efforts to resist them.

In the polarization of class forces in Portugal, the bourgeoisie has been compelled to grant democratic concessions. It has done so reluctantly and with the intention of utilizing them to gain time, the better to eventually liquidate them and restore firm dictatorial control. From the side of the proletariat, the political situation demands defense of these gains, the better to utilize them to advance the revolution and at a certain point go beyond them to proletarian forms of democracy.

The general position of our movement on this question is not at all new. For instance, it was stated by Joseph Hansen in a criticism of Fidel Castro's support of the Kremlin's invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Among other things, Hansen wrote:

"If we have understood Castro correctly, he believes that the aim of the democratizers in Czechoslovakia was to introduce dirty machine politics and petty 'politicking' such as Cuba knew before the revolution. And, if we are not mistaken, he considers shallow, miserable politics of this type to be the 'bourgeois form' of democracy.

"Now there is absolutely no doubt about the mean, trivial and fraudulent nature of bourgeois democracy in the political arena in prerevolutionary Cuba, and, for that matter, throughout the rest of the capitalist world today. But the question of 'bourgeois forms' of democracy is not exhausted by this fact.

"The question is much broader. In reality it involves some of the profoundest theoretical and political problems of the world revolution today and the connection of

these problems with the heritage of previous revolutions.

"Marxism does not reject the conquests of previous revolutions, such as the winning of democracy by the bourgeois revolution against feudalism. Marxism defends these conquests, seeks to deepen and develop them, to supersede, not do away with them.

"Thus the Marxist appreciation of bourgeois democracy is that it represented an enormous gain for humanity, one of the great achievements of the revolutions of the past. The Marxist criticism of bourgeois democracy is that it remained limited; it did not go far enough.

"One of the main charges leveled by the revolutionary Marxist movement against the capitalist system today concerns its tendency, as it exhausts all the progressive features of its earlier stages, to narrow down, pinch off and reduce democracy in the political arena as well as elsewhere to an empty shell.

"The culmination of this tendency is fascism; that is, a reversion to utter barbarism. As against fascism, revolutionists are duty bound—independently and with their own methods—to defend bourgeois democracy with all their strength. Not to do so is suicidal.

"Even more than this is involved. Taking bourgeois democracy as a conquest of previous revolutions, the program of Marxism calls for expanding it into proletarian democracy, spreading democracy from its limited area of application under the bourgeoisie in their best days to the entire economic and social system, right down to the factory level. This is the key thought developed by Lenin in *State and Revolution*, where he also considers the problem of how this is to be accomplished."

Under the subheading "Socialist Democracy and World Revolution," Hansen said further:

"In the imperialist sector, the issue of democratic rights is of key significance. Having won these rights in immense and often bloody battles in the past, the masses are not inclined to give them up readily. They are inclined instead to defend them.

They can easily understand the virtue of deepening and extending them or trying to win them where they have not already been gained. The current student struggles in various imperialist countries and the Black freedom struggle in the United States are cases in point.

"The problem for revolutionary Marxists in these countries is to find ways and means of converting these struggles into struggles for socialism. This cannot possibly be done if the masses believe that socialism signifies taking away what they have already achieved.

"The greatest single obstacle to a socialist victory in Western Europe and the United States for decades has been the treacherous role played by leaderships committed to Stalinism; and, in particular, the totalitarian image conferred on socialism and communism by the practices of Stalin and his heirs.

"The purges, the frame-up trials, the forced confessions, the deportations, the labor camps, the liquidation of all political opposition, the suppression of all free thought in politics, the schools, art, and even some of the sciences—horrors such as these, which became common knowledge in the West despite Stalin's censorship and the dithyrambs of his retainers, dupes and sycophants, made the task of building a revolutionary socialist movement in the advanced capitalist sectors almost insuperable up to recent years.

"The reversion of the Soviet Union to a *precapitalist* level so far as democratic rights were concerned was pictured by the bourgeois spokesmen as synonymous with socialism. And this propaganda—ably assisted by the cult of Stalin and the dictator's claim to be the incarnation of socialist wisdom—gained widespread acceptance among the masses.

"If there is one thing needed to counteract this lie of socialism and Stalinism being one and the same thing, it is an example of socialist democracy in practice."<sup>2</sup>

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel did not voice a whisper of protest over this article written in 1968. That was perfectly normal, since the author was simply explaining what has always been the position of the Trotskyist movement on this question.

Yet when Hansen wrote about the same question from the same Trotskyist viewpoint in the article "Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?" (in the August 4, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*), Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel found themselves in such disagreement as to require

2. The quotations are from "Fidel Castro and the Events in Czechoslovakia," which appeared in *Intercontinental Press*, November 25, 1968, p. 1051. The article was included in the pamphlet *The Invasion of Czechoslovakia* published by Merit Publishers in 1969.



them to lodge a public protest, claiming that Hansen's article represented an endorsement of "a wrong, one-sided, and mechanistic conception of the relationship between bourgeois democracy and socialist revolution," and that this conception is at the root of *Intercontinental Press's* "misjudgment of the political conflict in Portugal today. . . ."

Who, then, has changed since 1968? The least that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel owe is an explanation of the reasoning that led them to give up a position that goes back to the foundation of the Fourth International.

In defense of their position, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel say they believe in defending democratic rights whenever they are attacked by bourgeois reaction, and they are for defending and extending democratic rights during and after socialist revolutions. "But this in no way means that a socialist revolution amounts to a 'qualitative expansion' of bourgeois democracy. Nor does it mean that the extension of democratic rights is equivalent to 'fighting for bourgeois democracy in the period leading up to socialism.'"

(The sentence is quoted inaccurately. It should read: "Is bourgeois democracy worth fighting for in the period leading up to socialism?")

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel then lecture us on how restricted bourgeois democracy is both in form and content, even at its best. They tell us, "A proletarian revolution is not simply an extension and generalization of democratic rights; in addition to that continuity, there is a strong element of *discontinuity*, of break—a break with *all the institutions of the bourgeois state*, a destruction of the bourgeois state machine and its replacement by *new organs of power*." (Emphasis in the original.)

All the institutions? Including such items as the Bill of Rights in the American constitution?

We thank Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for their illuminating lecture. However, we should like to ask then, "If you were to repeat your lecture to the Portuguese workers could you point to a single living example of soviet democracy anywhere in the world today? Could you point, for instance, to the Soviet Union, or China, or Albania?"

These questions lead us to a further line of inquiry. How did it happen that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel forgot about the problem of *Stalinism*? It certainly still exists as a worldwide obstacle to the establishment of proletarian democracy. It certainly plays a most active role in Portuguese politics, confronting our small forces in Portugal with an immense problem. How could the question of *Stalinism*, with its direct bearing on the struggle for democracy—whether bourgeois or

proletarian—vanish from the thinking of any Trotskyist leader?

The hiatus in their thinking becomes all the more notable in their consideration of the *República* affair. They outline how a model workers state would guarantee the exercise of freedom of the press, especially in giving it genuine content. The picture they draw is very attractive, and, we will agree, corresponds to the program for which Trotskyism stands. A Portuguese worker belonging, say, to the Socialist party might well exclaim, "It sounds wonderful!"

The same worker might also add: "But meanwhile the Stalinists are trying to impose practices like those they follow in Czechoslovakia and Hungary. They've already got most of the press in their grip. Shouldn't we fight for our rights on this? Here and now?"

Thus the danger exists that the program Trotskyism projects for a workers state will sound like a utopian schema at the present moment in the class struggle in Portugal. The Portuguese Trotskyists can win credibility only if they prove their devotion to democratic rights in practice in the actual class struggle as it unfolds in Portugal. Otherwise they will appear to have dissolved the concrete reality into abstractions, realizable who knows when?

While Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are considering how they came to overlook these items, let us return to the qualitative difference between bourgeois and proletarian democracy.

The point of qualitative change from one to the other level is easily determined. It consists of a successful socialist revolution that follows, by and large, the pattern of the Russian revolution of 1917. Such a revolution has laws and a logic of its own that temporarily override the priority of democracy, particularly if the bourgeoisie—as is to be expected—launch a civil war to block the will of the majority from being carried out. The key political determinant is the existence of a Leninist party capable of winning a majority of the masses at the crucial phase.

To win that majority requires fighting in the most stubborn way for democratic rights that from a scientific point of view can only be designated as bourgeois. But this defense occurs in face of the fact that the bourgeoisie themselves are *abandoning democracy*, or are maintaining a show of being for democracy while they cold-bloodedly prepare a totalitarian dictatorship.

In the period of preparing to take power, revolutionary Marxists defend bourgeois democracy in order to prepare and to train the masses to *supersede* it, that is, to establish proletarian democracy, which is infinitely superior.

All of this, of course, is elementary so far as Trotskyism is concerned; and, after

thinking it over, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel will, we hope, acknowledge the validity of this stand. We hope this all the more because of the timeliness of the issue in Portugal. There the left is permeated with a suicidal view on the question.

The Stalinists are most to be blamed for this because of their reactionary propaganda concerning bourgeois democracy. The ultralefts likewise share responsibility. Worst of all, the position of the Stalinists and the ultralefts regarding bourgeois democracy has filtered into our own ranks. (We will document this further on.)

The main deviation from revolutionary Marxism on this question consists of advocating and trying to bring about the suppression of bourgeois democracy under a capitalist state. Such lengths have been reached in Portugal that the Stalinists and the ultralefts have pictured the reigning bourgeois government in a favorable light for backing and implementing this view. The adroit politicians of the Armed Forces Movement, who are jockeying amongst themselves for position as candidates to play the role of a Portuguese bonaparte, have deliberately fostered the deviation. That is the meaning of their demagoguery about favoring "soviets."

The theory behind this political position is simplicity itself. It is the concept that the gradual destruction of bourgeois democracy signifies an automatic gain for proletarian democracy.

It can be characterized as a variant of the theory of gradualism expounded at the turn of the century by Eduard Bernstein, who sought to revise Marxism on the grounds that "evolutionary socialism" was more realistic than revolutionary socialism. Let it be said in behalf of the grandfather of the revisers of Marxism that he was sophisticated enough to know that "gradualism" had to be applied to the state.

His argument was that the capitalist state could be modified bit by bit until it passed into a socialist state. The means he advocated was the enactment in parliament of increasingly progressive legislation.

His views were, of course, refuted by the revolutionary Marxists of that time, and their arguments have been sustained by innumerable experiences in the class struggle since then.

In Portugal, the ultralefts direct their gradualist approach to chipping away at bourgeois democracy and replacing it bit by bit with soviets. Whereas Bernstein conceived of expanding bourgeois democracy until it gradually passed over into socialist democracy, the ultralefts conceive of achieving a comparable result by gradually narrowing bourgeois democracy. Through the withering away of bourgeois democracy, so to speak, the dictatorship of the proletariat will be assured.

In their view, the erosion of bourgeois

democracy and the concomitant burgeoning of proletarian democracy can be won under the bourgeois state (and with its aid), a

theory that Bernstein might recognize as a lineal, if illegitimate, descendant of his own revisionist approach.

## The Charge of Capitulating to Methods of 'Healy-Lambert'

A charge that on the surface seems to have been dragged in by the hair is that we have capitulated to the methods of "Healy-Lambert." Several variations are played on this theme. Foley, we are told, is obsessed with undermining any faith in the bourgeois MFA, "an obsession he shares with Healy, Lambert, and their ilk." Foley and Hansen have an excessive fear of Stalinism. "This motivation leads to an approach that is identical to the Healy-Lambert method of examining unforeseen turns of objective events." This approach is "alien to Marxism and can only lead to disastrous results."

Still more emphatically: "We can only say that Comrade Foley has now completed the road to the Healy-Lambert method of politics."

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not offer any analysis of the "Healy-Lambert method" to which we have allegedly succumbed. They mention that in the period when Healy and Lambert were in a common organization, they refused to acknowledge that a revolution had succeeded in Cuba, ending in the establishment of a workers state. However, they do not accuse us of holding any such position.

They quote but a few sentences from the *Workers Press*, which is published by the Workers Revolutionary party (WRP) headed by Gerry Healy, and still less from *Informations Ouvrières*, the newspaper published by the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste (OCI) headed by Pierre Lambert.

We are told that "Healy-Lambert" have "creatively applied the rule of the three wise monkeys and consequently hear nothing, see nothing, and talk unlimited nonsense."

This is not very enlightening. If we have "now completed the road to the Healy-Lambert method of politics," it does not make much sense to address a long document to us. Unless, of course, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel enjoy chatting with a cageful of monkeys.

If their decision to inject the topic of "Healy-Lambert" appears strange, it is stranger still that they chose to amalgamate the two, for they are perfectly aware of the differences separating them.

Before we go into that it may prove useful to note Healy's reaction to the article written by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel. He approves their main charge leveled against *Intercontinental Press*. In the September 15 issue of *Workers Press* we read:

"The Hansen line—as *Workers Press* has

repeatedly explained—consists of full support to the Portuguese Social Democrats and to the bourgeois Constituent Assembly. Formally correct criticisms of the Armed Forces Movement are raised, not in order to build and train a revolutionary alternative, but to justify support for reformism (now in close alliance with right-wing forces) and bourgeois parliamentarianism.

"The split within the United Secretariat, as far as Portugal is concerned, centres around the only possible alternatives presented by Hansen—either military dictatorship, represented by the AFM and backed by the Stalinists, or bourgeois democracy, represented by the Socialist Party and the Constituent Assembly."

As we have noted, this version of the position of *Intercontinental Press* is false. Why did Healy accept it with such alacrity? There are several possible explanations. One is that Healy on the one hand, and Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel on the other, follow an identical method that leads to identical conclusions.

Another is that for his own factional reasons Healy has decided to try to tip the scales in favor of the false charge leveled by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel against *Intercontinental Press*.

Still another possibility is that Healy is willing to take anything from any source, including the "Pabloites," that bears promise of helping in the campaign he has been running in recent months to bury Hansen in slander. Healy, as is well known by those who follow his press, regards Hansen as Devil No. 1, primarily because of his role as a leader of the Socialist Workers party in supporting the reunification of the world Trotskyist movement in 1963 on a principled basis.<sup>3</sup>

3. Healy's propensity to use smear tactics in the Stalinist tradition is illustrated to perfection in the very same article. He included a photograph of Guillermo Lora, the Bolivian Trotskyist leader, along with the following morsel:

"As for Mandel, he has conveniently 'forgotten' the abject excuses penned by the Bolivian revisionist Guillermo Lora in 1971, after the counter-revolution there.

"At this time (October, 1970) everybody thought—including we Marxists—that the arms would be given by the governing military team, which would consider that 'only through resting on the masses and giving them adequate firepower could they at least neutralize the gorilla right.

"This position was completely wrong. It did not take into account that Torres preferred to capitulate to his fellow generals before arming the

Despite Healy's dead-end factionalism, the analyses and judgments offered in his press must be considered objectively. In their article, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel say: "Sectarianism toward 'centrists and ultraleftists' is no more justified than sectarianism toward opportunists, especially when thousands of workers follow the 'centrists and ultraleftists.'"

We concur in this and think it is applicable to currents that claim to adhere to Trotskyism even if they are not followed by thousands of workers.

The *Workers Press* has given regular coverage of the Portuguese events, including many on-the-scene accounts by reporters sent there. The interest displayed in the Portuguese revolution contrasts with Healy's disregard of the Cuban revolution, and deserves commendation.

It is true that the reportage of the *Workers Press* could stand improvement. Occasionally gross errors get a headline. This may be ascribable to impressionistic reporting, snap judgments, and sovereign disregard for facts, the latter being one of the manifestations of Healy's unique views in the field of philosophy.

In the September 18 issue of *Workers Press*, in a polemic against Ernest Mandel done in the usual scurrilous style, the general line of the WRP on Portugal is summarized as follows:

masses who showed signs of taking the road to socialism and whose mobilization put in serious danger the army as an institution.' (Guillermo Lora 'What Happened in Bolivia?' September, 1971.)

"Does the future hold in store for the Pabloites yet another article from one of their leaders—this time Mandel—explaining how 'we Marxists' had got it wrong again about 'the army as an institution'?"

The fact is that in 1970 Guillermo Lora was one of the leaders, together with Healy, of the rump "International Committee." And Lora's group, the Partido Obrero Revolucionario (Revolutionary Workers party), constituted the official Bolivian section of the "International Committee."

In 1969 the Healyite press featured a slanderous attack leveled by Lora against Hugo González Moscoso, whose identically named Partido Obrero Revolucionario constituted the Bolivian section of the Fourth International.

When the "International Committee" split down the middle in 1971, Lora sided with the Organisation Communiste Internationaliste against Healy's Socialist Labour League. Although the OCI and POR (Lora) have debated differences in public, they maintain fraternal relations.

How could Healy expect to get away with the fraud of foisting Lora on Mandel? It is very simple. The article is intended for consumption by members of the Workers Revolutionary party (formerly the Socialist Labour League). But the turnover in membership is very high. The bulk of the present members of the WRP probably never heard of Lora before.

How easy then to use Lora's public self-criticism in swinging at Mandel! No doubt the congratulations over the shrewdness of this frame-up were most gratifying to the warped ego of the general secretary of the WRP.

*Intercontinental Press*



"... the International Committee of the Fourth International and its Portuguese section, the League for the Construction of the Revolutionary Party, demands that the Communist Party and Socialist Party break immediately from the bourgeois parties, the state machine and the Armed Forces Movement.

"Only in that way can the Stalinist and reformist leaders be exposed in practice and their followers won to a revolutionary programme, and party.

"We strive to mobilize the working class for the repeal of all repressive legislation against the working-class organizations, nationalization under workers' control of all large concerns and land, collectivizations of the big landed estates, dissolution of the standing army and formation of workers' and peasants' militias, linked to factory committees, immediate support for the liberation forces in Angola and Timor, break from bourgeois alliances such as NATO, support to workers' struggles everywhere, particularly in neighbouring Spain, and the creation of workers, peasants, and soldiers soviets in opposition to the Armed Forces Movement and the bogus constituent assembly."

One of the most surprising items in the "strong protest" lodged against us by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel is the amalgam they make between Healy and Lambert, since they are fully aware of the facts.

Sharp differences within the "International Committee" appeared in 1969. These came to a head at a youth conference held in Essen, West Germany, July 3-4, 1971. At this conference, which was attended by about 5,000 persons, according to *Informations Ouvrières*, the representatives of Healy's Socialist Labour League demanded that a vote be taken on a resolution putting the conference on record as favoring dialectical materialism and opposing the bourgeois philosophy of idealism. The OCI representatives, quite correctly, were against taking such a vote.

Healy's response was to split the "International Committee" and break off all relations with the OCI.

In opposition to the "International Committee," which had now become nothing but a rubber stamp on Healy's desk, the OCI formed the "Organizing Committee for the Reconstruction of the Fourth International."

On May 28, 1973, this body sent a letter to the United Secretariat proposing that a discussion be opened on the differences between the two organizations. The propo-

sal was rejected. However the OCRFI sought to meet the stipulations of the United Secretariat and sent a new request dated October 10, 1973. It is not necessary to detail the further steps. Suffice it to say that at its October 12-13, 1974 meeting, the United Secretariat agreed unanimously to send a delegation to talk with representatives of the OCRFI on their overtures.

At this meeting it was agreed to exchange internal bulletins and to seek areas where it might be possible to engage in work of mutual interest.

The OCI has given extensive coverage to the events on Portugal. Here are a few indications of its attitudes and the policies it advocates:

Following the large Socialist party demonstrations in Lisbon and Oporto that marked the height of the conflict over the seizure of *República*, the OCI devoted the center pages of the July 23 (No. 713) issue of its paper *Informations Ouvrières* to the Portuguese situation. This was the most extensive presentation of its position in the recent period.

The OCI raised the following governmental slogans: "A Soares government"; "A government of the SP and the PCP without bourgeois ministers"; "A break by the workers parties with the bourgeoisie, and in particular a break by the PCP with the MFA"; and "An SP-PCP government responsible to the Constituent Assembly."

In an accompanying article, the OCI explained its reasoning:

The CP wants a military government, as Cunhal indicated when he said that neither "bourgeois democracy" nor "people's democracy" was a possible solution for Portugal. The SP rejects the idea of a military government but wants to continue its coalition with the bourgeois PPD and the MFA.

The OCI considered its slogans concerning an SP-CP government to be a positive alternative designed to help the Portuguese workers press for a political break with the bourgeois government and thus advance along the revolutionary road to workers power.

The OCI claimed that although the April 25, 1974, coup originated in a division in the bourgeoisie, that division developed under the direct pressure of a rising mass movement, which forced the MFA to go further than it intended. It claimed that in line with this, the MFA did not want to abolish corporatism.

Thus, from the very first the bourgeoisie had lost control of the situation. A prerevolutionary crisis opened with the April 25 coup itself.

The OCI claimed that this position differentiated it from all other groups on the left, in particular the "Pabloites" of the United Secretariat. The OCI also claimed that it had been the first to see the workers

committees as organs of a rising workers power.

The OCI saw the relationship between the workers committees and the Constituent Assembly as follows: The mass reformist workers parties and the MFA prevented the centralization of these committees. Consequently the rising workers power was atomized.

But the workers are faced with problems on a national scale. Every revolutionary process raises the question of the state and thus of the government. The elections to the Constituent Assembly provided a national focus, therefore, for the aspirations of the workers. However, the Constituent Assembly was limited by the Pact-Program the major parties signed with the MFA before the elections.

Nonetheless, the elections had expressed the will of the workers and the majority of the people for an SP-CP government based on the body that had been elected.

It was then that the MFA and the CP, which had opposed the workers committees before, turned to the notion of people's assemblies. This plan gave the military the right to block any centralization of these bodies, which thus remained isolated in the individual neighborhoods, thereby risking becoming "corporatist organs lacking any real power of control."

*Informations Ouvrières* maintained that for the first time since 1935 when the Stalinists adopted the popular-front line, a sector of the masses in Europe were repelled by this betrayal and were turning toward a Social Democratic party instead of simply withdrawing from the political stage. This was what was revealed by the SP victory in April.

At the same time, the OCI argued that because of the extreme weakness of the bourgeoisie, the CP itself had been entrusted with carrying out some of the repressive functions of the bourgeois government.

The July 23 issue of *Informations Ouvrières* noted that the armed forces were splitting along class lines, but argued that the MFA remained a "bourgeois instrument." At the same time, it stressed the need for democratic election of soldiers committees and for defending the right of soldiers to elect their officers.

Whatever one may think of formulas such as "A Soares government" (why not a Cunhal government, a government of the two, or of neither?), it is clear that attention must be paid to the analyses offered by the OCI. They, too, have been affected by the upheaval in Portugal, and it is obvious that they are not proceeding on the basis of blind sectarianism. They have their opinions, based on an independent reading of the facts, but they are also aware of the opinions of others about what is going on in Portugal, and they have shown their readiness to engage in serious discussion.

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## The Level of Mass Consciousness

The centrality of democratic rights in Portuguese politics since the April 25, 1974, coup stands out with unusual force and clarity.

This should not have taken anyone by surprise. Once the totalitarian governmental structure was cracked by the coup, the masses surged forward with one main objective. That was to topple the whole thing and sweep it away forever, replacing it with democracy.

Naturally, this was democracy as the masses conceived it—freedom to exert their will. They knew its name was “socialism,” as the vote in the April 25, 1975, elections showed.

It is this level of mass consciousness that has given such force in the political field to the issue. The readiness of the masses to rally in the most militant way in defense of their democratic gains was shown in the most palpable way by their reaction to the attempted coups of September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975.

The issue came repeatedly to the fore, particularly in relation to the grabs made by the Communist party, in alliance with

the bourgeois government—and perhaps at its instance—for control of the press, the trade-union movement, and posts in the government bureaucracy. The issue of democratic rights preoccupied public attention to such a degree as to give the *República* affair prime importance.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel maintain that the *República* affair was “deliberately blown up out of all proportion in order to serve the cause of Portuguese and international capital.”

That opinion accords with their schema. It leaves out of account the thinking of the Portuguese working class, which was visible enough in the demonstrations that were mounted over the issue in Lisbon. More on this later.

For the Trotskyist movement in Portugal the central problem has been how to open a bridge from their revolutionary Marxist program to the consciousness of the masses on this central political issue. In what way can they utilize the transitional method suggested by Trotsky to tie in with the level of thinking of the masses on the question of democracy?

## The Electoral Victory—an Opening or a Trap?

We think that of the many opportunities open to our comrades in Portugal, one deserving the most serious consideration was provided by the April 25, 1975, vote for the Constituent Assembly. If seized at once, it offered an extraordinary promising opening for application of the transitional method.

The thinking of the masses was registered in numerical terms in the vote. While the figures were only indicative, they were nonetheless very significant.

With the very high proportion of 91.7% of about six million registered voters casting ballots, the Socialist party received 37.87% of the vote, the Communist party, 12.53%. The two mass working-class parties thus received 50.4% of the vote. Adding the vote for other groupings of the left—3.97%, or 8.09% if you include the vote for the *Movimento Democrático Português*—we are confronted with the important political fact that the populace (including petty-bourgeois layers) gave the two mass workers parties a clear mandate to form a workers and peasants government.

The voters also utilized the elections to administer a stinging rebuff to the Communist party because of its antidemocratic practices and its reactionary propaganda against bourgeois democracy, which the masses correctly interpreted as being aimed

at the democratic gains they had scored since April 25, 1974.

It should be noted that the working-class victory in the elections occurred in face of government efforts to discourage voting, in face of a bourgeois campaign to minimize the importance of the elections, and in face of a pact signed by the class-collaborationist leaders of the two mass workers parties guaranteeing continued rule by the Armed Forces Movement no matter how the vote turned out.

In this situation, the Trotskyist movement stood to gain by raising the demands, “Let the leaders of the Socialist and Communist parties exercise the mandate given them by the voters. Break the pact with the bourgeois MFA government. Oust that government. Set up a workers and peasants government.”

These demands, in our opinion, would have appeared completely reasonable to workers who voted for the candidates of the Socialist and Communist parties. Coming on the rise in self-confidence among the masses resulting from the electoral victory, they would have had all the greater impact.

Our comrades could have talked to these workers along the following lines: “Look, we don’t have any confidence whatsoever in the Constituent Assembly. And we don’t have any confidence in the leaders of the

Socialist and Communist parties. But you disagree with us. Good. Then why don’t you demand that your leaders carry out their proclaimed program of establishing socialism in Portugal? The majority of the population has just registered its will on this in the most emphatic way. Why don’t you demand that they go ahead and set up a workers and peasants government in place of the MFA regime? We will support you in pressing these demands.

“However, we think if you make the test you will come to agree with us that they are fakers who in reality are serving as political agents of the bourgeoisie.

“And as a way of organizing to put on the maximum pressure and to unite our forces in the fight, don’t you think it would be a good idea to extend the factory and tenant committees and the committees in the armed forces, and coordinate them on a national scale? And don’t you agree that it would be wise to begin organizing defense units in face of the obvious intention of the rightists to smash all the gains that have been made up to now and to reinstitute a totalitarian governmental system?”

Such an approach is completely principled. It is in accordance with both the demands and the method outlined in the Transitional Program. To be especially noted is the combination in which pressure is put on the reformist leaders to exercise the mandate received by the mass workers parties in the bourgeois electoral process while the workers are urged to place reliance only in *proletarian methods of struggle* that logically point toward the establishment of soviets, the basis for a workers state.

The stance taken by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel toward the opening offered by the victory of the mass workers parties in the elections to the Constituent Assembly was completely different from ours. They considered it to be not an opening but a trap.

That there was something unusual about the electoral victory was noted by Comrade Mandel in his June 5 article “The Portuguese Revolution and the Dangers That Threaten It,” which was published in the June 23, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press* (page 868).

The revolutionary mass movement in Portugal, he said, “has made tremendous steps forward. . . . It has now reached the point where the question of the struggle for power by the working class is put on the agenda. In their own biased and indirect way, the results of the election for the Constituent Assembly confirm this. The parties claiming to speak for the working class, and presenting the aim of building a socialist Portugal as an immediate short-term perspective, polled nearly 60 percent of the popular vote. This is the highest percentage ever attained in Europe under



universal franchise, outside of the elections for the Russian constituent assembly, which coincided with the conquest of power by the soviets."

Note Comrade Mandel's observation: "the highest percentage ever attained in Europe under universal franchise, outside of. . ."

Was this merely an empirical oddity of interest only to academicians who might want to file it away with other curious facts like "the driest climate in the world is to be found in Antarctica"?

Or did it register a clash in the political

arena, the outcome of which could be turned to account by the small Trotskyist movement if a correct policy were followed?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel saw only deadly political dangers from which the Portuguese Trotskyists must be safeguarded at all costs. The question of trying to gain from the electoral victory by bringing the Portuguese Trotskyists into better contact with the masses at their present level of political consciousness was the least of their concerns.

## Sectarian Thinking Par Excellence

The outcome of the elections to the Constituent Assembly occupied the center of the political arena for a time. For revolutionary political thinkers it would hardly seem much of a task to find a point of support in the public commotion by which to advance their own cause. However, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel came up with very little that was positive.

The challenge remained nonetheless and the proposals we advanced made it all the more acute. How then did they meet the issue? By making it disappear. The procedure they used to accomplish this is worth noting, for it tells much about their pattern of thinking and the political course they have been following in Portugal.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel concede rather grudgingly that since the experience of the Russian revolution of 1917, "it has been commonly accepted among revolutionary Marxists that it is tactically correct to call upon the mass parties claiming to represent the organized labor movement to take all power."

"The purpose of such a tactic," they concede further, "is essentially a dual pedagogical one: On the one hand, to teach the workers to pose all the key questions of the class struggle as questions of power; on the other hand, to expose the misleaders of the working class as unwilling or (in the unlikely event that they do take power) unable to satisfy the burning needs of the workers."

What they deny is that this concept, while true in general, is applicable in the concrete situation in Portugal today. This position is reminiscent of that of the old-time professional pacifists who were adamantly against war in general but who did not believe that this principle applied to the concrete war at hand.

Does it sound unbelievable? Are Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel really capable of departing so far from the teachings of Lenin and Trotsky and specifically the Transitional Program? Read it for yourself:

"But is the *main goal today* to play some propaganda game to 'expose' this or that

parliamentary formation? Or should one instead give priority to a tooth-and-nail fight to defend all the current gains of the workers?" (Emphasis in original.)

The either-or formula is typical of sectarian or ultraleft thinking, which insists on its unbridgeable categories. The gibe about "some propaganda game" follows quite logically. There are more important and exciting things to do in Portugal, it seems, than to work with bulldog stubbornness at winning the mind of the masses.

Such "lofty contempt," to use Trotsky's term, for revolutionary Marxist propaganda work contrasts with Lenin's insistence on the need to "patiently explain" to the masses until a majority is won. It is diametrically opposed to Trotsky's insistence on the "educational" value of advancing transitional demands even though there might not be an immediate prospect of realizing them.

But then Lenin and Trotsky understood the political necessity to win a majority of the masses, which can only be accomplished by the most persistent efforts to expose and discredit the reformists in whom the masses have mistakenly placed their trust. It is precisely through such political battles, in conjunction with other initiatives dependent on the size and influence of the revolutionary Marxist party, that "all the current gains of the workers" are best defended and advanced.

Seeking to bolster their contention that a tactic of pressing the leaders of the two reformist workers parties to take power is not applicable in the concrete situation in Portugal, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel advance still another argument.

They concede that in the long run a capitalist system in decay cannot tolerate a "sovereign and democratically elected Constituent Assembly." However, they continue, this "does not at all imply that under no conditions can the capitalists use a 'sovereign constituent assembly' as an instrument in halting a proletarian revolution."

They then point to places where this was done "and under circumstances that were not so different from those prevailing in

Portugal today. . . ." Their analogies are "Germany in 1918-19, in Spain (with the 'sovereign Cortes') after July 1936, in France and Italy at the end of the second world war."

We come to the next step in this chain of reasoning: "To conclude from the long-term trend of the decay of bourgeois democracy that at no time and in no place can capitalism use bourgeois democracy as a weapon in halting a proletarian revolution is to contradict all historical experience of the past fifty years in Europe."

Let us disregard the equation made between "bourgeois democracy" and a "constituent assembly," although you might expect that comrades as long in the movement as these would know the difference. What have they actually said? That it is *not excluded* that the Portuguese capitalists can use the Constituent Assembly to halt the proletarian revolution.

Must it therefore be concluded that it is absolutely certain they will succeed in doing so?

In our opinion, this question will be determined by the course of the class struggle itself in which the Portuguese Trotskyists, too, can play a role.

And what has happened to the concrete Constituent Assembly in Portugal that came into existence as a result of the April 25, 1975, vote? Let us recall that Comrade Mandel noted that the parties claiming to speak for the working class "polled nearly 60 percent of the popular vote. . . the highest percentage ever attained in Europe under universal franchise, outside of. . . ." One might have expected that a theoretician of Comrade Mandel's stature would mark this down as one of the *peculiarities* of the Portuguese revolution. Instead he joined Comrades Frank and Maitan in dissolving it in the vague abstraction of "all historical experience of the past fifty years in Europe." What about the first premise of dialectical thought, that it deal with the concrete?

We have not yet reached the end of the wonders to be achieved by the method of thought employed by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

They offer us the example of the British Parliament. "Just imagine," they tell the audience, "a British revolutionary who would say that it would be sufficient to give all power to Parliament for the newly imposed wage freeze to be abolished!"

We reply: "Just imagine theoreticians who would say they cannot see any difference between the British Parliament and the Portuguese Constituent Assembly!"

Why stop at the conclusion reached by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel? "Just imagine," one could continue, using their method of thought, "Portugal has suddenly acquired a centuries-old parliament. That's a bloody shame for Portugal."

But since all parliaments are the same, Britain has a duplicate of a constituent assembly that was elected in a prerevolutionary situation after fifty years of totalitarianism and that represents a concession made by an almost nonexistent military government containing a wing of Fidels and Che's. Bully for England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. We're likely to get a wage rise. Just imagine!"

By revealing their theoretical premises, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have provided us with an instructive insight into the reasoning behind their political course in Portugal. They have proceeded precisely as if the house of cards set up with such fear in Portugal equals the powerful institution through which the British imperialists exercise their rule.

Let us leave aside the ultraleft sectarian bias Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have unwittingly displayed toward revolutionists seeking seats in Parliament or putting revolutionary demands on reformists sitting in that august body. Of primary interest to us here is the method of thought they have used in analyzing the Portuguese situation. Through it they have scored the singular success of wiping out the actual constituent assembly. It is an impressive bit of legerdemain. Let us recall that not even Houdini ever succeeded in making more than an elephant disappear from the stage.

By dissolving the concrete into the abstract in this way, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel may think they have successfully disposed of the question. Doesn't the issue now concern the role of parliaments in general, or, if we are to be more specific, of the parliaments in Germany in 1918-19, in Spain after July 1936, and in France and Italy at the end of World War II? If we insist on discussing the situation in Portugal, must we not admit that it is *not excluded* that a parliament can play a reactionary role there? And what is this nonsense about "some propaganda game" to expose the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders?

The dialectic, however, has a way of taking its revenge on those who fall into sectarian modes of thought. *What are the concrete consequences of advancing these abstractions in the Portuguese political arena today?*

Don't they bolster the demands to dissolve the Constituent Assembly even though the working class is not yet in any position to offer soviets as an alternative? Don't they help take the heat off the Stalinist and Social Democratic leaders who signed a pact to reduce the Constituent Assembly to impotence? Don't they facilitate the efforts of the officer caste, who hold government power, to keep a tight leash and a muzzle on the Constituent Assembly with its majority of members of working-

class parties? How do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel account for finding themselves in such strange company?

The puzzle disappears once we understand the political orientation of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel. They are concerned about the concerns of the "new mass vanguard."

The "new mass vanguard" in Portugal, as elsewhere in Europe, is strongly affected by ultraleftism. Instead of meeting the nostrums, sectarian positions, and truly dangerous illusions of the ultralefts with sharp polemics based on the program of

## Was Trotsky Right, Wrong, or Irrelevant?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are correct in general in dating the emergence of our disagreement on the Portuguese events from the *República* affair. However, there were earlier differences, and the divergence could actually be traced back to the Trade Union Unity Law dispute in January 1975.

A significant political shift occurred in Portugal at that time. The CP, which had served as the main instrument of the government in the labor movement since April 1974, had become widely discredited. It now turned—with the support of the dominant team in the MFA—to left-sounding demagoguery to bolster its threatened positions.

In making this turn, the CP began to draw most of the ultraleft groups behind it. This brought great pressure to bear on the small Trotskyist groups that worked primarily in this milieu.

The effect was observable in the abrupt reversal of the position of the LCI on this question. While it had condemned the Trade Union Unity Law in its paper, *Luta Proletária*, it supported the Intersindical demonstration called precisely to impose this regulation.

The PRT likewise bent to these pressures, adopting a position that in practice was equivalent to that of the LCI and the ultraleft and centrist groups.

The analyses made by Hansen and Foley became sharply counterposed in July 1975 to that of the publications and representatives of those sections whose leadership shares the views of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel. It was then, apparently, that these three comrades decided a public discussion was necessary. Previously both views had been expressed in *Intercontinental Press* without polemics.

In the August 4 issue the differences became still more obvious. For example, Charles Michaloux, a reporter for *Rouge*, the paper of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, the French section of the Fourth International, analyzed the stage in the

Trotskyism, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel believe that through diplomacy they can infuse these currents with revolutionary Marxist principles and convert them from hostile opponents into an "adequate revolutionary leadership."

That is why Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, in composing their arguments on the Portuguese Constituent Assembly, seem to have borrowed so heavily from ultraleft sectarian patterns of thought. Their soft approach to the Portuguese ultralefts has led them to bend to the milieu they are seeking to influence.

class struggle in the following way:

"For the first time, the barracks are concretely proceeding to organize meetings to elect assemblies of rank-and-file delegates, based on democratic guidelines that go beyond the tortuous recommendations of the MFA. Last Sunday, general assemblies in two Lisbon barracks passed motions and initiated election procedures, in many instances with the active encouragement of MFA officers. On Saturday and Sunday, People's Assemblies were held in almost all the neighborhoods, districts, and urban centers.

"The coordinating committee of all the Lisbon committees issued a call for a demonstration tonight with the open support of the assembly of the soldiers in the RALis (the former RAL 1).

"In Portugal, the governmental power is vacillating, while the power of the rank and file is taking shape. It already has a name: the People's Assemblies, which will elect a National Assembly of the workers and soldiers. This National Assembly will create a Workers and Peasants Government, which the international solidarity movement must help to defend against the blows that the reaction is already preparing against it. There is no doubt that the coming weeks will be decisive for Portugal and for the socialist revolution in Europe."

The subheading over this section was "Birth of a Power," obviously echoing Victor Serge's description of the birth of workers power in Russia in 1917. Comrade Michaloux's article was dated July 16.

Elsewhere in the same issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Foley evaluated the demonstration of the "Lisbon coordinating committee," to which Comrade Michaloux had referred, in the following terms:

"The military tops also know all the magic words for the centrist and ultraleft groups—'workers control,' 'unity of the soldiers and the people,' 'people's power,' 'national independence,' and 'soviets.' All

4. See *Intercontinental Press*, August 4, 1975, p. 1115.



these have been promised by the military, just so long as the legitimacy of rule by the generals is not challenged, so long as nobody raises awkward questions about who has the right to make the fundamental political decisions.

"De Carvalho has demonstrated his skill at manipulating the ultraleftists in the process of consolidating the position of the military dictatorship. He cautiously encouraged the most left-wing military units [RALis was under Carvalho's command at the time] to participate in the march to the Palácio São Bento on July 16, which had been called by a number of workers and tenants committees, thereby assuring that it would be a success in the eyes of the ultraleft. It was, in fact, the latest thing in the Lisbon revolutionary theater.

"The ultraleftists who had been working themselves up to it for the last year by pumping their fists up and down, waving red flags, and chanting rhyming slogans were ecstatic over the arrival of tanks and soldiers. They reportedly gave their finest performance. No doubt General de Carvalho, who comes from a family of actors, was the most appreciative.

"The demonstration did not threaten capitalism or the capitalist state apparatus. It mustered no more than 6,000 to 7,000 persons, who covered only a small part of the approach to the palace, no more than the usual ultraleftist crowd. Furthermore, the military could be sure that not all the ultraleft groups could ever unite in one action. Sure enough, some stayed away and would not let their 'soviets' participate either.

"Nonetheless, the demonstration was useful as a provocation against the Constituent Assembly, which as the symbol and focus of the principle of popular sovereignty, did pose a threat to the military. The guard was conveniently removed to facilitate this provocation. In the actual political circumstances, such a demonstration could not but become a mobilization against the Constituent Assembly, and thus a part of the campaign by the military and the Stalinists to dissolve the body. It also helped to lend a 'revolutionary' luster to this campaign.

"It would after all be rather unpopular to dissolve the assembly in the name of military dictatorship. That could lead to a confrontation. It was far more effective to do this in the name of a more perfect democracy, workers democracy, a government of workers councils.

"This could be done quite safely, since the mass movement is still far from having reached the point where workers committees actually pose a possible governmental alternative. Such forms are still marginal, and their growth has been hindered rather than promoted by ultraleftists who view them already as full-blown organs of

'people's power,' or embryos that by their very nature are certain to grow into this overnight.

"Thus, the 'people's organizations' have not figured as an alternative here and now to military rule; in fact, their only credibility for the time being as an alternative to the Constituent Assembly has come from what the military has promised to make them in the future.

"The Communist party and the Kremlin recognized this and gave their strongest support to the 'people's power' plan. The Stalinists have followed a consistent policy of supporting a 'progressive' military dictatorship. This support, in fact, posed certain problems for the generals, since it enabled the SP to appeal to fears of a 'Stalinist dictatorship.' But in the short run the Stalinists were useful to the military; and whatever discredit came to the generals from such an association was far less dangerous than the democratic forms supported by the SP.

"Actually, the fears of a 'Communist take-over' stirred by the CP's alliance with the military only made the Stalinists more dependent on the junta, which could throw them to the wolves whenever it thought their political usefulness was exhausted."

The contrast with Comrade Michaloux's view of this same demonstration and its meaning is clear. The following two paragraphs from the article by Foley made it even clearer:

"Regardless of any qualifications or reservations the ultraleft groups might raise, by joining in the military's campaign against the Constituent Assembly they were in fact trading the opportunities to build real workers power, which was offered by the struggle for democratic rights, in return for a promise by the military rulers that they would assume this task. The ultraleftists thus subordinated themselves politically to the junta. They turned away from the masses and toward the military saviors.

"At the same time, to defend the Constituent Assembly and its parliamentary perspectives, the moderate, thoroughly unrevolutionary Socialist party was forced to mobilize hundreds of thousands of workers, toilers, and radicalized petty bourgeois against the government. It was not a course on which the SP leaders willingly embarked. They tried every way possible to avoid it. But the Socialist party was forced to fight for its life."

There are differences here both in the estimate of the concrete situation, in the facts, as well as in political judgment. It is not surprising that such differences should appear together. Marxists know that facts cannot be understood outside of their context.

A schema is a different matter. It is a preconception that excludes the facts, or

selects out arbitrarily those that fit its pattern. The charge of schematism is perhaps the most common in Marxist polemics. When two sides reach opposite conclusions, both claiming to be following the same method and observing the same facts, one side must be guilty of "schematism," seeing reality in a skewed way so that it is made to fit a false or inapplicable preconception.

To determine which side is at fault, both the context, that is, the development of the analysis, and the specific facts it is based on have to be examined. This can be difficult in practice, since the factors in a given situation are always changing and combining with others, sometimes in ways that are difficult to predict.

It can also be hard to determine precisely what the issues in the dispute are when both sides agree on the general principles and the general aspects of a situation. In such a context, it is necessary to avoid trying to score debater's points that might sway minds through appeals to general truths accepted by both sides.

The purpose of Marxist analysis is to orient revolutionists, that is, to help clarify what the tasks are in a given situation. No matter how a concrete line may be dressed up, or partially concealed, those who actually look for guidance in action will put the line into practice. Through this, the real underlying political differences will sooner or later come to the surface.

The first public criticism of *Intercontinental Press* to appear in any of the papers of sections where a majority looks to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for leadership was in *Rood*, the Flemish-language organ of the Belgian section of the Fourth International.

In its July 30 issue, *Rood* carried a statement on its back page that said:

"Some members of the Jong Socialisten and readers of *Links* have asked our members questions about the July 15 issue of *Jornal do Caso República* (the pirate edition of *República* that reflects the views of the editors). Indeed, these left members of the Belgian Socialist party were astonished—since they had taken a stand for the *República* workers against the editors (*Links*, July 5) and we in *Rood* had written that we agreed with this stand—to see in that issue of *República* [that is, *Jornal do Caso República*] that a full page was given to the American Trotskyist paper *Intercontinental Press*, which took the side of the editors of *República*. These left-wing members of the Belgian Socialist party correctly wondered whether the Trotskyist movement was not guilty of a hypocritical position.

"But what they saw was not a hypocritical but a conflicting position. The Socialist Workers party—which publishes *Intercontinental Press*—is an American organization.

It was prevented by reactionary American legislation from fully integrating itself into our International and occupies a somewhat peculiar position in the Trotskyist movement. We are *not* in agreement with this position of the SWP on the *República* affair, and the fact that this standpoint was used by the Portuguese Socialist party against the Portuguese Communist party and (still worse) by the editors of *República* against the workers of this paper confirms our opinion. Neither the RAL [Revolutionaire Arbeiders Liga—Revolutionary Workers League, the Belgian section of the Fourth International] nor the Fourth International is responsible for the position of the SWP or *Intercontinental Press*.

"In the conflict between the editors and the workers of *República*, we took a position for the workers. While we defend the absolute right of the Socialist party to have its own press, we denounce the maneuvers of the Socialist party. We condemn this alliance between Soares and the church hierarchy (which upheld the fascist regime) 'in defense of freedom of the press' as well as the big propaganda campaign in the truest cold war style against the workers of *República*." (Emphasis in original.)

*Rood* was thus rather quick to condemn both the SWP and *Intercontinental Press* so as not to be discredited in the eyes of the Jong Socialisten and the editors of *Links*, representatives, one supposes, of "advanced workers . . . throughout capitalist Europe." In its haste, it acted in a rather disloyal way. It is not true that *Intercontinental Press* is an outlet for the views of just the SWP.

Since its origin this magazine has published more articles by one of the leaders of the Belgian section, Ernest Mandel, than any other English-language publication. It has always carried translations of many articles by *Rood* and its French-language sister publication *La Gauche*. It would be possible to point to many examples where these did not correspond to the views of the Socialist Workers party.

*Intercontinental Press* has consistently published the opinions of the world Trotskyist movement as a whole.

The Belgian comrades know the *Links* group very well. They were in a common faction with them in the Belgian Social Democracy before the reunification of the Trotskyist movement in 1963. They tried to wage a struggle together with them against the right-wing Social Democrats only to be faced with the capitulation of their "allies" at the decisive moment.

It is true that the *Links* current talks a great deal about "workers control" and agrees with the view of the majority of the Belgian section that the real issue in the *República* affair was precisely this and not freedom of the press.

In general, left-wing Social Democrats in

Europe talk a lot about workers control. This, however, has not led them to adopt revolutionary-socialist positions. In fact, it has the advantage for them of offering a kind of centrist utopia in which self-reform in the Stalinized countries and "leftward" movement in the SPs could converge. Very fuzzy positions toward Stalinism have generally been typical of left-wing Social Democracy since the 1930s at least.

Have the alleged errors of the American Trotskyists who write for *Intercontinental Press* become so grave that these limp left-wing Social Democrats must be praised as holding a better position on a key issue in the Portuguese revolution? If so, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel could rightly fear something far graver than the possibility that these writers could "discredit Trotskyism in the eyes of advanced workers . . . throughout capitalist Europe." They would be justified in fearing the disorientation of a whole sector of the world Trotskyist movement.

For opposite reasons, we believe this is precisely what is at stake in Portugal. We have seen such situations before and what can result from them. In Latin America, the disorientation of two sections (Bolivia and Argentina) that looked to the tendency headed by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for guidance led to a very grave setback for the world Trotskyist movement, both in loss of cadres and in violation of the principles on which the Fourth International was founded. At the time, these three comrades were convinced that the activities of these sections added greatly to the credit of Trotskyism among "advanced" strata "throughout capitalist Europe." These activities—i.e., guerrillaism—still remain popular among the "advanced" strata. But they were disastrous for Latin American Trotskyism.

However, perhaps this time, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are correct, and it is those comrades who opposed the guerrilla line in Latin America who are now guilty of disorienting the Trotskyist cadres. Such turnabouts have happened in the history of the revolutionary movement. That is one of the reasons why blind factionalism can be so deadly. Instead of looking at each situation with an open

mind, factionalists see only the further development of the "implicit" original sins of those with whom they have disagreed in the past. Every new position becomes a further expression of the tendency "to adapt to petty-bourgeois leaderships," or cave in to "Stalinophobia."

The test of events in the Portuguese revolution seems to indicate, however, that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have not drawn the lessons of the errors that were made in Latin America but have adapted the same basic course to European conditions.

It is disturbing, for example, that the article in the July 30 *Rood* quoted above did not mention that it was not an article by one of the *Intercontinental Press* writers that took a "full page" in the July 15 issue of the *Jornal do Caso República*. Instead it was an article by a representative of the Fourth International who can neither be dismissed as an "American" nor accused of holding a "peculiar position in the Trotskyist movement." It was an article by the founder of the Fourth International himself, Leon Trotsky, "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class."

Did the Belgian comrades think that Trotsky's article threatened to "seriously discredit Trotskyism in the eyes of advanced workers . . . throughout capitalist Europe"? Perhaps it was the few phrases from our introduction quoted in *Jornal do Caso República* that created the problem.

But shouldn't they have at least noted that it was Trotsky's article the Portuguese paper translated and reprinted and not an article by the New York staff of *Intercontinental Press* or a member of an "American" organization that stands in a "peculiar position in the Trotskyist movement"?

Shouldn't they have stated whether they considered Trotsky's article relevant to the *República* dispute?

Finally, we should like to ask: Why hasn't a single Trotskyist publication that looks to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for leadership thought fit to publish the article by Trotsky? Are they trying to keep their readers in the dark about this important contribution that has already had an influence in the Portuguese revolution?

## Their Version of the República Case; and Trotsky on Freedom of the Press

The article in *Rood* apologizing to "advanced" circles for the backwardness of the SWP and the staff of *Intercontinental Press* indicates what pressures the Trotskyist movement faces in Portugal and elsewhere. The *República* case was a clear test.

Once again the CP, using left-sounding demagoguery, drew the ultraleft behind it as it had in the case of the Trade Union Unity

Law. This time it actually succeeded in enlisting the ultraleft in its attack against the SP.

The CP was able to do this because of the confusion among the ultraleft groups over the importance of bourgeois democratic freedoms. The confusion occurred in particular over two key democratic rights, freedom of the press and the right of



majority rule.

Ultraleftism is a political expression of voluntarism, the philosophical outlook that gives human will primacy over objective processes. The ultralefts seek to avoid the tasks of educating and convincing the majority of the working class. They rely instead on the determined actions of small but dedicated groups. They have no respect either for the weight of objective fact or for the prevailing opinions of the masses. Thus, general political questions are usually of little interest to them. What matters is "direct action."

This tendency was displayed very clearly in the United States in the mid-1960s by a Maoist group, "Progressive Labor," which argued that the American socialist revolution could be made without the majority of the working class breaking from the capitalist Democratic party, since obviously the American workers could participate in very violent direct actions without necessarily drawing general political conclusions. So, perhaps they could go beyond their point of political development in action.

There is, in fact, a grain of truth in this conception, since action may, and usually does, advance more rapidly than consciousness. However, this "advanced" group greatly exaggerated the bit of truth, falling into a position similar to the "revolutionary apoliticalness" of the anarchists.

From such a voluntarist standpoint, freedom of the press is an obstacle. It stands in the way of arbitrarily imposing the views of small groups upon the masses. This attitude has been attacked by the Portuguese SP as "vanguardism," which may serve as a descriptive term. Unfortunately, the SP—deliberately in the case of some leaders, out of ignorance in the case of many middle cadres—mixes this up with the theory of the vanguard party.

The Leninist conception is actually quite different. It holds that a trained leadership that understands the historic interests of the working class is necessary to lead that class to victory in its struggle with the bourgeoisie. But this leadership must lead through persuasion and education and cannot do so by trying to suppress or limit discussion through physical or psychological intimidation.

Ultralefts tend to believe that small groups can win the leadership of the masses by identifying themselves symbolically with them or by carrying out courageous actions in their name.

This can even become a way of settling differences within rather small left groups. There was an interesting example in the United States at the height of the wave of ultraleftism in the late 1960s.

An old organ of the Stalinist periphery, the *Guardian*, had tried to gain a new audience by voicing the views of the ultraleft. However, as this current moved

toward actual terrorism, the heat got to be too much for the Stalinoid opportunists on the staff. A split occurred. The proterrorist element was in the majority among the printing workers. They decided that as proletarians they should "off the bourgeoisie."

And so, they physically took over the paper. Now, it can be said that the quality of the *Guardian* did not greatly deteriorate under its new management. But this did not resolve the political differences, and it violated the rights of the editorial staff and the majority of the paper's subscribers, who read the paper because they were interested in what the editorial staff wrote and not in what the typesetters and printers thought of it.

*República* has some features in common with the *Guardian*. It was a moderately large daily paper by Portuguese standards but still marginal as a business enterprise, even within the Portuguese publishing world. It was not a giant capitalist monopoly. Nearly a dozen daily papers are published in Lisbon for a population of about a million. All are fairly small; *República* was one of the smallest. The paper had been identified with the Socialist party for some years but was not an official organ of the SP.

Under the Salazarist government, *República* was the traditional liberal opposition paper. It was supported by a large number of liberal and SP stockholders who contributed to keep the paper alive despite recurrent seizures. It became a refuge for leftists who could not find work on other papers. It differed from the *Guardian* in one respect. Its printing and technical workers were generally better paid than their counterparts on other papers.

The *República* case became a textbook example of the logic of ultraleftism, or vanguardism. The seizure of this paper by a group of printing workers was the answer of the "vanguardists" to the victory of the SP in the April 25 elections and its attempt to exploit that victory.

Both the CP and the ultralefts were smarting from the results of the vote. The "direct action" by at most 150 noneditorial workers seemed to be more powerful than the opinions of millions, including hundreds of thousands of workers, that were expressed at the ballot box. It showed how to move ahead despite the "backward" consciousness of the Portuguese masses. Thus, the action, backed up by the powerful CP propaganda machine, became very popular with the ultraleft.

The popularity of the *República* seizure in the circles of greatest interest to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel is reflected in their apologetics on behalf of the noneditorial staff. They were led to overlook whose general political interests this occupation served.

The general principle involved was explained by Trotsky in the article that embarrassed the editors of *Rood*. We thought these lines from Trotsky's article were particularly relevant:

"A campaign against the reactionary press is under way in Mexico. The attack is being directed by the CTM [Confederación de Trabajadores de México—Mexican Workers Confederation, headed at the time by the Stalinists] leaders, or, more precisely, by Mr. Lombardo Toledano personally. The objective is to 'curb' the reactionary press, either by placing it under democratic censorship or banning it altogether. The trade unions have been mobilized for war. The incurable democrats, corrupted by their experience with a Stalinized Moscow and headed by 'friends' of the GPU [Soviet secret police], have hailed this campaign, which cannot be regarded as anything but suicidal. In fact, it is not difficult to foresee that even if this campaign triumphs and leads to practical results that suit the taste of Lombardo Toledano, the ultimate consequences will be borne primarily by the working class.

"Both theory and historical experience testify that any restriction of democracy in bourgeois society is, in the final analysis, invariably directed against the proletariat, just as any taxes that are imposed also fall on the shoulders of the working class. Bourgeois democracy is of use to the proletariat only insofar as it opens up the way for the development of the class struggle. Consequently, any working-class 'leader' who arms the bourgeois state with special means for controlling public opinion in general and the press in particular is, precisely, a traitor. In the last analysis, the sharpening of the class struggle will impel the bourgeoisie of every stripe to reach an agreement among themselves; they will then pass special laws, all sorts of restrictive measures, and all kinds of 'democratic' censorship against the working class. Anyone who has not yet understood this should get out of the ranks of the working class.

"'But at times,' some 'friends' of the USSR will object, 'the dictatorship of the proletariat is forced to resort to special measures, particularly against the reactionary press.'

"'This objection,' we reply, 'comes down primarily to trying to identify a workers state with a bourgeois state. Even though Mexico is a semicolonial country, it is also a bourgeois state, and in no way a workers state. However, even from the standpoint of the interests of the dictatorship of the proletariat, banning bourgeois newspapers or censoring them does not in the least constitute a "program," or a "principle," or an ideal setup. Measures of this kind can only be a temporary, unavoidable evil.'

Trotsky also described the kind of jour-

nalism practiced by those "working-class 'leaders'" who claimed the right, "in the interests of socialism," to enforce a kind of bureaucratic censorship within the framework of bourgeois rule:

"The most effective way to combat the bourgeois press is to expand the working-class press. Of course, yellow journals of *El Popular's* ilk are incapable of taking up such a task. Such sheets have no place among the workers' press, the revolutionary press, or even the reputable democratic press. *El Popular* serves the personal ambitions of Mr. Lombardo Toledano, who in turn serves the Stalinist bureaucracy. Its methods—lies, slander, witch-hunt campaigns, and falsification—are also Toledano's methods. His newspaper has neither program nor ideas. Obviously such a sheet can never strike a responsive chord in the working class or win the proletariat away from the bourgeois papers."

Although he did not openly polemicize against Trotsky, Comrade Mandel did indicate indirectly in an article in the June 23, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press* why he thinks Trotsky's position does not apply. While agreeing that Trotskyist principles on the question of freedom of the press hold, Mandel contended that the principle of workers control must also be weighed, and in this case given priority.

"We are very skeptical, to say the least," he wrote, "whether what was really involved in that incident was a serious attempt to prevent the Socialist party from having its own newspaper, i.e., a serious attempt to destroy the freedom of action of the largest political party in Portugal today."

This, he continued, would necessarily mean (1) that Portugal was on the eve of a "Prague coup"; or (2) that the bourgeoisie was preparing to establish a bloody military dictatorship. Since both possibilities had to be excluded, clearly there must be another explanation for the affair. This is the one Comrade Mandel offered:

There was an upsurge of mass initiatives going beyond capitalist legality in both the military units and the plants. Under such conditions, the bourgeoisie was unable to apply repression. Thus, no attack on freedom of the press need be feared. What the bourgeoisie wanted to do was "divide and confuse the mass movement, in order to stop the revolutionary process at a level compatible with the survival of capitalist production relations. . . ."

Hence the outcry over the *República* affair was an attempt by the Socialist party and the bourgeoisie to divide the workers. They were trying to use a provocation, for which the printing workers had fallen, to gain the strength to crush or curb workers control.

Comrade Mandel continued: "Now when we study what really happened at the

*República* printing plant, we understand how these incidents dovetail with the fundamental plans of Portuguese and international capital. For, contrary to the version of these incidents spread by the bourgeois press, the initiative did not come from the CP, and even less from the MFA officers, but from the workers of that plant themselves among whom CP supporters are actually in a minority. They are faced with a rapidly decreasing circulation of the newspaper, and heavy financial losses at the printshop. They are threatened with layoffs and redundancies. And they reacted exactly in the same way in which workers have been reacting in hundreds of other factories and offices throughout Portugal to such threats—by removing the manager and requesting a new administrative structure under workers control, whatever may be the exact scheme proposed, which differs from case to case.

"That these motivations became intertwined with all kinds of political intrigues is obvious. That the CP bureaucrats tried to use the workers' initiative in order to strike a blow against their Social Democratic rivals and associates, who had just given them such a beating in the elections, is undoubted. That the strongest left-wing workers group inside the printing plant, the Maoist UDP [União Democrática do Povo—Democratic People's Union], tried to utilize its influence in order to bar publicity for a rival Maoist grouping 'critically supported' by the Social Democratic editor, also played a role. That some military leaders of the MFA, confronted with this confusing picture, tried to whip up hostility against 'warring political parties,' which has been one of their main propaganda themes for many months, is likewise undisputed. But the outcome of the whole intrigue never was in doubt. The whole logic of the bourgeois class pressure, both nationally and internationally, plays today in favor of the Socialist party recuperating its newspaper. The bourgeois leadership of the MFA cannot but go along with that pressure. The losers will be the workers of the *República* printing plant." (Emphasis in original.)

However, this is not what happened. More than four months after the seizure, the Socialist party editors have not yet regained control of the paper. Furthermore, "under workers control," *República* tried, unsuccessfully it is true, to interfere with a fundamental right of the Socialist party, the right of assembly.

Under the headline "People's Power Ready to Block SP Rally in Oporto," the July 18 issue carried an article that said: "At 5:00 p.m., tens of thousands of workers, radiant with joy at the latest decisions of the MFA, which is trying to transfer the Power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to those of the People, who have always been enslaved, will leap into the street to demon-

strate their determination to guide the destinies of this nation. . . ."

"In the air that the city breathed in the early afternoon, one got the conviction that the SP rally scheduled for the evening in the Estádio das Antas will never take place.

"The Power that is going to ban it is already People's Power, which is not willing to give any room for maneuver to its class enemy.

"The city will certainly be controlled by the Force of the People."

The 70,000 persons who went to the SP rally swept over the "Force of the People," which was able to mount a counterdemonstration of no more than 10,000, the usual size of joint CP-ultraleft demonstrations in Oporto. The "People's Power" did not try to defend the barricades that were set up. On one, a sign was put up: "Listen barricaders, the fishermen of Matosinhos are coming through at 4:30 p.m. on the way to Antas." There was no resistance.

But this did not discourage the self-appointed representatives of the Portuguese working class now running *República*. The next day they wrote:

"The workers and soldiers are keeping watch over a national situation marked by an acute conflict between two poles of power that concentrate respectively the interests of the bourgeoisie (the SP) and those of the workers (the MFA). . . ."

"The choice is clear. It is enough to see who in Oporto yesterday hailed the MFA and the chief of the Northern Military Region, Brigadier Corvacho.

"It is enough also to see who in Antas insulted and hissed the military officers and the revolution."

Despite this campaign, the SP held its rallies. Was this thanks to the bourgeois MFA government? No, the MFA encouraged this campaign and did not back off until it was clear that it was going to fail, just as the MFA tried to ban the first SP protest march on May 2, and retreated when tens of thousands of persons showed up. No. The SP was able to exercise its democratic right of assembly because it mobilized tens of thousands of workers to assert this right in action!

It is true that Portugal was not on the eve of a "Prague coup" or the immediate establishment of a right-wing repressive regime. But the bourgeois MFA did not defend the SP's rights against what was clearly a furious assault.

Perhaps there was another possibility that Comrade Mandel did not take into account. If neither A nor B is true, this does not exclude C being true.

Could it be that Comrade Mandel was following a "schema"? That, in his view, the fundamental revolutionary process consists of workers directly seizing control of key installations, that this action is more



important than any mere political question like "freedom of the press"?

Such a schema could have led him to overlook some things, such as the fact that the decision of at most 150 workers was counterposed to the opinions of the hundreds of thousands of workers who voted for the SP. It could have led him to overlook the fact that the "largest party in Portugal" was virtually unrepresented in the press after the take-over of *República*, while the Communist party dominated the editorial boards of the great majority of the big daily papers. It could have led him to overlook the fact that in this process of the escalation of workers control, there was no case where it was applied to CP-controlled papers, all of which sang the praises of the MFA.

It could, in short, have led him to overlook an urgent reason for an attack on freedom of the press that was not directly related to either (1) an impending "Prague coup" or (2) the immediate establishment of a right-wing repressive regime.

The motivation is this: In view of its weakness, the bourgeois MFA government preferred to manipulate forces within the workers movement to initiate certain types of repression and to provide a leftist cover

for undemocratic actions.

Wasn't this a thread running through the history of the MFA government? Didn't it use the CP to do the work of strikebreaking police in the TAP strike and the postal workers' strike?

If the MFA government is bourgeois, as Comrade Mandel admits, why wouldn't it want to oppose the largest party in the country, if this party is based on working-class and not bourgeois forces?

Didn't MFA representatives like General de Carvalho and Admiral Rosa Coutinho encourage a blank vote in the April 25 elections, and didn't they and others say many times, when it was apparent that the SP was going to win, that the elections had no importance? Didn't they confront the SP in January over the issue of the Trade Union Unity Law?

Of course, Comrade Mandel has a ready answer for all these objections. It is the "pressure of the workers." The bourgeois MFA wanted to back the SP but it was unable to do so because of the rising pressure from the working class.

Under this pressure, it itself split. The MFA was incapable of repressing at most 150 workers, despite the bloody-minded urging of the "largest party in the country."

## The Facts in the República Case

"Readers of *Intercontinental Press*, after having seen the photographs on the first pages of the June 9 and June 30 issues of *Intercontinental Press*," write Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, "might believe that if the journalists of *República* are no longer editing the Socialist party paper in their former printshop, it is because the brutal paratroopers, armed to the teeth, are preventing them from exercising their elementary democratic rights. Nothing is further from the truth. The MFA had decided the conflict in favor of Mr. Rêgo, the owner of *República*, and the SP leadership. Indeed, Mr. Rêgo happily went back to his printshop on June 18, 1975. But he was met by an unpleasant surprise: The printshop had been occupied by the workers. So he immediately left the printshop and told the Lisbon correspondent of the *London Times* 'that he and the members of the management had stipulated that all those who had been allowed previously into the building should be evacuated by the military forces. This stipulation had been rejected, he said.' (The *Times*, June 19, 1975, our emphasis.) Soares and his fellow Social Democratic ministers left the coalition government with the same stipulation: They would not remain in a cabinet that was unable to exercise authority and would return only if the military threw the workers out of the printshop."

Special attention should be paid to this

paragraph. It contains the two main pieces of evidence adduced by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel in support of their version of the *República* case:

1. Thirty-two words paraphrasing what Rêgo told a correspondent of the *London Times*.

2. The assertion that Soares stipulated upon resigning from the MFA coalition cabinet that he would return only if the military threw the workers out of the printshop.

These two pieces of "evidence" are then thrown at Foley with what appears to be the aim of sinking him once and for all:

"This does not exactly fit into Comrade Foley's schema. *To urge the intervention of a bourgeois army against workers occupying a factory is not exactly to defend democratic rights against a military dictatorship.* Comrade Foley has maintained a shamefaced and shameful silence about Soares's demand. *Does he approve of it or not?*" (Emphasis in the original.)

We will answer the question shortly. First let us hear how Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel commend themselves on how the same two pieces of evidence "perfectly" confirm their theses:

"This clear outcome of the *República* affair, which completely upsets Comrade Foley's interpretation of the political crisis in Portugal, perfectly confirms what was our analysis from the beginning: What was

involved was *not* the issue of freedom of the press (which in any case nobody is in position to deny the powerful Social Democratic party in Portugal today), but rather the question of an offensive to restore both 'law and order' in the factories and the authority of the bourgeois state in society."

Perhaps the problem here is one of information. The three authors of this indictment remark earlier in their article that they believe that readers of *Intercontinental Press* have been misinformed about the true facts in Portugal, although *Intercontinental Press* has carried articles by them on this situation as well as from the press of the sections they influence.

It is true that our presentation of the steps in the *República* affair does not correspond to theirs. However, it was not based on one "interview" in the *London Times* but on a number of sources, including what was printed in the Portuguese press itself.

Let us delve more deeply into the facts in the *República* case the better to assess the grounds of the charges made by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel concerning our "shamefaced and shameful silence" about Soares's alleged demand to use a "bourgeois army against workers occupying a factory."

One of the key elements in the *República* affair was the policy followed by the Stalinists. Foley outlined this in some detail in the June 30 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. We will briefly recapitulate what he said:

"As the auxiliary of a military government, the Communist party would have no interest in massive repression. That would be too dangerous, both in the national and international context. However, it would require strong restrictions on political life and on freedom of the press in order to safeguard its bureaucratic positions and the credibility of its bureaucratic ideology."

Foley called special attention to a new step taken by the Stalinist-controlled Sindicato Nacional de Artes Gráficas—a resolution voted June 14 calling for restrictions on freedom of the press. The resolution ended by implicitly demanding the banning of a number of papers:

"We denounce the openly sensationalist, counterrevolutionary, divisionist, and slanderous nature of innumerable provincial 'sheets' and papers as well as the two papers *Expresso* and *Jornal Novo*."

Foley explained that *Expresso* is a liberal bourgeois weekly and that *Jornal Novo*, a daily, is linked to Socialist party circles. "They are virtually the only national papers remaining that to some extent criticize the MFA and the CP."

He then took up the important role played by Copcon, the military security forces headed by General Carvalho, in keeping the closed *República* from being returned to the editorial staff. Foley's summary of the facts

differed, of course, from that of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

"At first the reopening of the paper was delayed four days by Copcon, which claimed that it could not guarantee 'security,'" Foley reported. "Then, when the political police finally agreed to take the seals off the building, the commander on the spot turned the premises over to the 'workers committee' that forced the closing, which reportedly then proceeded to burn the files it found in the building.

"The commander, Major Ferreira, claimed that editor Raul Rêgo had violated the conditions laid down by the Conselho da Revolução by refusing to accept all the workers back. His main objection apparently was to the former business manager, Alvaro Belo Marques, who has been accused of being a CP agent. Rêgo claimed that Marques had tendered his resignation before the paper was closed. In its June 17 issue, *Jornal Novo* reported: 'The Comissão Coordenadora dos Trabalhadores, on the other hand, gave a different version, stating that "Alvaro Belo Marques did not offer his resignation but was forced to resign by the administration because it wanted to turn the paper over to the SP.'"

"The *Washington Post* reported June 18: 'The management wanted to fire 12 workers, then sought guarantees that they would not interfere in the editorial policy. No firings were allowed and no guarantees were given.'"

When this story was written, the June 20 *Le Monde* had not yet arrived in New York. But its account, by Dominique Pouchin, paralleled rather closely what Foley had reported. Pouchin said:

"Encharged with carrying out the decision of the Revolutionary Council to return the paper to its publisher and editors, Major Dias Ferreira, who commanded the Copcon detachment in front of the daily's offices, in fact opened the doors to the workers, who immediately occupied these offices. The administrators and journalists—who had been told to come at 11:00 a.m., on June 18—thus found themselves once again on the outside. The atmosphere became tense. Skirmishes broke out between SP members and the youth supporting the workers committee.

"After a few hours of fruitless negotiations between the editorial staff and the officers, the workers and business staff left 'of their own free will.' . . . The SPers, still uneasy, called on their activists and sympathizers to gather again Thursday [June 19] outside the building to assure the free access of the journalists."

On Thursday, reportedly, there was a similar sequence of events.

Another account received in New York after Foley's article was written offered further confirmation. The June 21 *Jornal Novo* said:

"As we already reported, at 8:00 a.m. on June 18, the offices were opened to the printing workers and the other personnel, while the members of the editorial staff were prevented from entering when they appeared several hours later."

Here is the report the *Christian Science Monitor* gave in its June 20 issue, which again parallels what Foley said:

"The hardline faction of the Portuguese military leadership has again wrecked a compromise worked out in favor of the Communists in the seesawing struggle between Communists and Socialists for control of the Socialist newspaper *República*.

"The compromise would have allowed both the Socialist editors and the Communist-led printers into the *República* building Thursday morning [June 19]. But when editors and printers turned up, the detachment of troops from COPCON—the military security force—barred the way to the editors and allowed only the printers in.

"A young lieutenant told the editors: 'Only the workers can go in.' Senior editor Joao Gomes asked: 'On whose orders?' The officer replied: 'On the orders of COPCON.'"

All these are, of course, bourgeois sources. But are they any less believable than the bourgeois source of the June 19 *London Times* where all that is reported is a thirty-two-word paraphrase of what Rêgo allegedly told a correspondent?

Have Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel checked the other sources? What evidence do they offer of having done this? Doesn't their version rest on rather thin grounds? Isn't it at least one-sided? Isn't there a rather good case, therefore, that it is they, not Foley, who are negligent about the facts because they have a schema to save?

Such a conclusion, moreover, would be confirmed by the way they jump from this incident to the SP departure from the government on July 11, *three weeks later*, claiming that Soares urged the intervention of a bourgeois army against workers occupying a factory and that "Comrade Foley has maintained a shamefaced and shameful silence about Soares's demand."

However, the *entire text* of the SP statement on its departure from the government was published in the July 21, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*. The part relevant to the *República* case reads as follows:

"Then followed a long crisis during which the following facts were verified:

"A. The Council of the Revolution decided that the newspaper *República* should be handed over to the management and the editors, who were responsible for its ideological orientation under the terms of the press law.

"B. The Press Council made the same decision.

"C. The President of the Republic declared in France that the case of *República* was already resolved (sic), thus publicly assuring respect for revolutionary legality.

"D. Admiral Rosa Coutinho and Commandants Correia Jesuino and Rui Montes (Minister and Director General of Information) said on repeated occasions that the case of *República* was without importance and that it had been 'ignobly' exploited.

"Contrary to all these statements and promises, however, it is established that yet another pirate edition of *República* appeared today, vouched for by an army officer whose name appears as editor.

"For several days past *República* installations had been occupied by groups of civilians, strangers to *República*, armed with G-3's [a submachine gun] and saying they belonged to known party militias. The editors and administrators of *República* were prohibited from entering *República*.

"From this it is concluded that:

"A. The word of the President of the Republic was not respected.

"B. The decision of the Council of the Revolution had no real effect or significance.

"C. The decision of the Press Council was ignored.

"D. The statements by Admiral Rosa Coutinho and Commandants Jesuino and Montes must be valued in the way that each one judges to be most adequate.

"For this reason the secretariat of the Socialist party decided that its ministers and secretaries of state should immediately cease their functions in the Government.

"They will take them up again only if:

"A. The word of the President of the Republic is confirmed by the facts.

"B. The decision of the Council of the Revolution is carried out.

"The alliance between Portuguese political forces on the path to a pluralist socialist democracy must be based on carrying out of pacts signed between them and respect for the pledged word. In any other way it will not be possible to progress either toward democracy or toward socialism.

"There is no state without authority. Neither is there revolution without revolutionary authority."

Of course, Soares tried to identify the cause of the Socialist party with "order." That goes without saying; it is a reformist party. In his article in the June 23 *Intercontinental Press* Comrade Mandel himself said that "nearly all political parties and officers claim" that the next step must be "the fight against indiscipline and anarchy."

Both the SP and the CP have been competing to prove their bona fides as the best prop of order. We have pointed this out in article after article for more than a year and a half.

So let us answer the question intended to



put us on the spot: Does Foley "approve or not" the demand made by Soares, upon resigning from the government, that a "bourgeois army" be used "against workers occupying a factory?"

The answer is no. However, it is worth noting how loaded the question is. By saying "a factory," the authors assume acceptance of their thesis—that what was involved in the *República* affair was not a violation of freedom of the press but a labor dispute like any other in Portugal, in which the workers have been responding by occupying the plants. We deny the validity of this interpretation and have sought to assemble the evidence to show what the truth was.

In addition we have called attention to the text of the statement made by the SP

upon withdrawing from the government. The words cited by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not appear there.

As for our own position, we will state once again our complete opposition to the policy of the MFA government of seeking to suppress freedom of the press and our complete opposition to the policy of the Stalinists of aiding the MFA in trying to put it into force.

It was the counterrevolutionary course followed by the MFA and the Stalinists that precipitated the *República* affair in the first place. They bear the responsibility. They should be condemned for their actions and not Foley for reporting the facts.

We hope that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel will change their minds and join us in taking that stand.

### Should 'Patriotic Censorship' Be Called 'Workers Control'?

In view of the facts, how can Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel possibly see the issue in Portugal as a polarization between an SP hell-bent on repressing workers initiative and the CP, albeit reluctantly, defending it, along with "advanced" groups?

The SP did not just denounce "anarcho-populism." Their official newspaper also ran an article attacking Copcon in a veiled way as a "state within a state."

A similar complaint was voiced by the CP-dominated *Diário de Notícias* on September 1, 1975, when it lamented that Copcon had occupied the Fifth Division of the General Staff and that Carvalho had banned Vasco Gonçalves from all units under his command. They repeated exactly the same refrain as the SP: "Without revolutionary authority, there is no revolution."

If they meant this as an ironic challenge to the SP, they would have had a good point. Certainly the irony was unintentional, but which of these two reformist parties is innocent here?

Has any of this been reported in the press that reflects the views of the faction in the world Trotskyist movement influenced by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel? No. Nothing. Why then do they chide *Intercontinental Press* for its "biased" reporting? Do they think that prettying up the situation makes it easier to "defend the Portuguese revolution"?

But we cannot, in good conscience, call this silence "shamefaced." Along with the silence is the shameless apology for Stalinist methods and policies. What can really be said when the journal of a section of the Fourth International deplores the fact that an article by Trotsky on the importance of freedom of the press for revolutionists was "used against the Communist party"?

The issue, to believe Comrades Frank,

Maitan, and Mandel, was not freedom of the press. But hundreds of thousands of SP supporters thought it was freedom of the press. The Portuguese Communist party in its own way thought it was freedom of the press. The CP-controlled printers union called for censorship on June 14.

Even after the setbacks of the CP in August, when the Stalinists themselves began to fear that the new government intends to limit the right of their supporters to free expression, the printers union still spoke in favor of "revolutionary censorship" in a September 12 communiqué.

In his article in the June 23 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Comrade Mandel stressed his support for the principle of freedom of the press:

"We are staunch and principled supporters of freedom of the press. We are convinced that this should be a basic principle not only under bourgeois democracy but in a workers state as well. We are absolutely in favor of the Portuguese Socialist party having at its disposal a daily paper of its own. We believe the workers of the *República* printing plant made a serious error by creating the impression that they wanted to challenge that right."

But one of the two organs of Comrade Mandel's section published the following statement by the "workers committee" in the very same issue in which it took its distance from the SWP and from Trotsky:

"The editors under the guidance of the Socialist Rêgo were following more and more the line of the Socialist party. Finally, it seemed as if *República* were the property of the SP. A number of journalists were fired because they opposed this evolution. SP leader Soares went in and out of *República* as if it were his paper. . . . We printing workers did not want *República* to lose its independence and tie itself in this way to one party."

This was published under the headline: "República: the Workers Speak," and was apparently intended to drive home the point in the Rood article criticizing *Intercontinental Press's* publication of the article by Trotsky.

When *República*, under the editorship of its "workers committee," joined the chorus trying to incite forcible repression of the SP rally in Lisbon July 19, the Lisbon daily *A Capital* described the position of those Trotskyists influenced by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel as follows:

"The Liga Comunista Internacionalista . . . published a communiqué in which it called for a counterattack by the workers 'generalizing the people's barricades under the leadership of the tenants and workers committees and the people's assemblies' as a means of preventing the re-formation of a government with bourgeois representation."

If the SP had become the spearhead of capitalist reaction, this position was a logical one. If the democratic rights of the Socialist party were not endangered by the bourgeois government and its Stalinist allies, this position was a logical one. Since the government had assumed a threatening stance toward the SP and gone to the brink of violent confrontation, perhaps the class character of the government was changing, which would have made the stand of the LCI all the more logical.

Furthermore, the government had ostensibly entered into this course in defense of "people's power," which Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel and their followers have identified with the "anarcho-populism" denounced by the SP. Obviously this must have been the result of tremendous "pressure from the workers" on the government. Shouldn't this pressure be increased? What could be more logical?

Of course, the LCI comrades explained that they joined the barricades not to stop the Socialist party rally but simply to guard against the reaction that the SP campaign had touched off.

In Oporto, they and other groups to the left of the mass reformist parties had refused outright to go to the barricades, as had perhaps 90 percent of the Communist party's own members. Certainly they did not want to suppress the democratic rights of the Socialist party, which unlike the CP had generally defended the small left groups against repression.

But in Lisbon, where they joined the barricades, did they have a chance to explain to SP members who saw them there that they did not have in mind stopping them but only resisting the "re-formation of a government with bourgeois representation"?

In Oporto, after the miserable failure of the CP's effort to set up barricades, the LCI comrades, along with the CP and other left

groups, participated in a counterdemonstration opposing the SP rally.

How did they expect the SP members to interpret this? Did these "backward workers" perhaps carefully inspect the party badges worn by those on the barricades, and note the absence of Trotskyist symbols? Perhaps they drew the conclusion: "The LCI is not on the barricades; they are only in a counterdemonstration. So these comrades must support our democratic rights?"

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, and their followers in the press of the sections they influence can, if challenged, point to a sentence here or there that proclaims that they of course defend the democratic rights of the Socialist party. But the comrades of the LCI engaged in demonstrative actions; and, sadly, they cannot escape the consequences of actions so easily.

In his article in the June 23 issue of *Intercontinental Press*, Comrade Mandel wrote:

"Finally, we would strongly oppose any attempt to play the correct principle of freedom of the press against the no less correct principle of workers control, in the sense of control over the livelihood and the working conditions of the working class. The Socialist party has the right to have its own newspaper." But what was involved in the *República* affair, he claims, was not freedom of the press.

However, the SP workers thought it was. The CP, in its peculiar way, thought so too. The Stalinist parties throughout the world conducted a campaign of slander against the Portuguese SP and the editors of *República*, trying to prove that the take-over was justified on political grounds to stop "anti-Communism."

The CP defended censorship in the name of "defending the revolutionary government." The CP-controlled printing workers union called for the suppression of the rest of the press that was not yet dominated by Stalinists. It reiterated this position on September 12, as we have noted, when the Stalinist-dominated media themselves were in danger of becoming the victims of government censorship.

The ultraleft allies of the LCI supported censorship in the name of "defending the revolution." On September 10, a representative of the Frente de Unidade Revolucionária, which includes the LCI, said this front believes that measures to "halt the abuse of freedom of the press" would have been "patriotic" if they had been carried out under the Vasco Gonçalves government.

Since the LCI and all the sections where the followers of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have a majority campaigned in support of the take-over of *República* in the name of "defending the workers against the editors," how do they expect to convince the

SP workers that they support their right to have their own press?

These workers have made up their minds about who supports this right, not on the basis of words but on the basis of big events, a profound political crisis, the mobilization of scores and hundreds of thousands. They went in their multitudes to

## An Unacceptable Method of Argument

In condemning the Socialist party's defense of its democratic rights, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel ask: "Was there no relation between the anticommunist hysteria whipped up by Soares and the subsequent events in the North?"

They concede that "many Social Democratic workers genuinely in favor of socialism have been incensed by the Stalinists' bureaucratic manipulations. . . ." But they contend that in a capitalist country such as Portugal demonstrations "that raise the slogan 'Down with Communist dictatorship'" pave the way for reactionary attacks on the workers movement as a whole.

Thus, they hold that the SP, which they say organized such demonstrations, attacked the democratic rights of the Communist party. In proof, they point to the wave of attacks on CP headquarters that followed the departure of the Socialist party from the government:

"These latest events deal the final blow to Comrade Foley's schema of 'what is really going on in Portugal.' According to this schema, the fundamental conflict pits the 'military dictators' intent on stamping out democratic rights against the Socialist party, which is taking a hesitant and half-hearted but nevertheless courageous stand in support of democratic rights and 'popular sovereignty.' But it so happens that the real frontal attack on democratic rights was launched not against the SP, but against the CP. As far as we know, no SP headquarters has been burned; no SP local has been prevented from functioning. Moreover, this frontal attack has been launched not by the sinister MFA but by right-wing reactionaries in the North. It could be argued, somewhat weakly, that the MFA 'permits' these attacks. But this is only a half-truth; many CP headquarters in the North have in fact been protected by MFA armed detachments. Should we have called upon the 'military dictatorship' to mow down reactionary crowds with machine guns? Or is it the other way around? Should we rather reproach the MFA for brutally (if ineffectively) suppressing the democratic right of the masses to burn down CP and trade-union headquarters?"

"Comrade Foley's schema," as presented by these comrades, is once again a caricature. The analysis offered in Foley's articles

attend a rally to defend this right in face of the guns of the military and, in one case, past barricades defended by the LCI, along with other groups.

How can the comrades of the LCI convince the SP members that they support their democratic rights? It is obviously difficult.

stands up solidly in face of these ironical thrusts. He pointed out repeatedly that by violating the democratic rights of large sections of the working class and toiling masses, the CP was following a suicidal policy that would enable its bourgeois allies to "throw it to the wolves" when its usefulness was exhausted.

It is now evident that very large numbers of people participated in the attacks on the CP headquarters. They were not impelled into action simply by the SP or Soares raising the cry of "Communist dictatorship."

The CP-controlled peasant organizations, supported by the government, used their influence to give advantages to their supporters. CP members and fellow travelers were put in control of the local government in these areas. They followed a policy that led the local population to blame them for the failings of the bourgeois regime.

The CP itself now complains bitterly that the MFA, and Copcon in particular, shirked defending its headquarters. In one case, in Ponte de Lima, the troops themselves machine-gunned a CP headquarters and killed one of its defenders.

The fact is that the class-collaborationist policy of the Stalinist parties involves more than merely capitulating to bourgeois governments; they seek to share power with the bourgeoisie and thereby cooperate with it in repression and discrimination. Portugal is not the first example where this has opened the way for reactionary anti-Communism.

In the United States during World War II the CP, in line with the Kremlin's view of Soviet interests, cooperated with the White House in breaking strikes.

Some of the union leaders, including those linked to the Social Democracy, were not so superloyal. They were willing to some extent to break with the "no-strike pledge," an attitude that the SWP was able to turn to advantage in certain instances. It is true that because the CP discredited itself by its actions among the militant workers, while the Social Democrats and figures like John L. Lewis gained a certain prestige, the Stalinists easily fell victim to a reactionary anti-Communist purge that also hit the Socialist Workers party.

Does this mean that the SWP should have



obeyed the "no-strike pledge" in a bid to gain influence in the ranks of the Stalinists? Did these strikes, conducted in face of opposition from the CP, play into the hands of reaction?

Should the Portuguese Socialist party have refrained from protesting against the violation of the democratic rights of the two million persons who voted for it because this might open up the way for reactionary anti-Communism? Should it have stayed in the bourgeois government instead of leaving it? Should it have abstained from mobilizing scores of thousands of workers in demonstrations?

Of course, the SP did not explain to its followers the dangers of Stalinophobia. It did not explain that the CP stands in the camp of the bourgeoisie, has no intention of establishing socialism, and is acting in the service of the MFA. It could not, since in those respects, the policies of the Stalinists and the Social Democrats are similar.

Should we then demand that the SP cease being Social Democratic before we will acknowledge its right to protest? Should the Socialist party be held responsible because the rightists took advantage of the outcry against the CP's bureaucratic power-grabbing and bullying?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel use the argument "cui prodest?" (who profits?) to support their contention that what the *República* affair represented was not a violation of the SP's democratic rights but an SP plot against the democratic rights of the masses of workers. Did not the outcry over this incident, they argue, help the bourgeoisie?

Isn't this reminiscent of the logic followed by the Stalinists in their polemics against the Trotskyists? Consider the following:

1. Trotsky exposes the crimes of Stalin. The bourgeois press plays up the crimes of Stalin. Thus Trotsky and the bourgeois press are manifestly in a bloc.

2. The Soviet Union is a workers state. Its greatest enemy is the United States, where bourgeois democratic rights still exist. Thus those who criticize the lack of freedom in the USSR are helping American imperialism.

Shouldn't we guard against logic of this kind being used in the world Trotskyist movement?

"Cui prodest?" This is the argument every ossified bureaucrat in the labor movement considers to be unassailable. "Anybody who criticizes me is helping the boss."

This argument in fact tended to be extended to its logical conclusion in the press of the Trotskyist groups that look for guidance to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel. For example, in the August issue of *Rotfront*, the organ of the Austrian section of the Fourth International, the editors did not simply say that the SP had prepared

the ground for the rightist attacks or tacitly encouraged them. They said: "Soares was the initiator of the anti-Communist campaign."

And they evidently concluded from this that one need not be too careful about what charges are raised against the SP. "So far, the SP has not been able to give a credible refutation of the report that one of its leaders had a brief meeting with Spínola in Paris."

Such slanders cannot help the Portuguese CP. The Stalinists were able to use them with a certain effectiveness against the Trotskyists in the past only because of their overwhelmingly superior material resources. But the Portuguese CP, as Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel agree, does not enjoy such superiority over the Portuguese SP.

The comrades of the LCI could help defend the CP from the mounting wave of anti-Communist attacks most effectively by defending the democratic rights of the SP in action. At the same time, the authority thus gained would increase their weight in opposing any concessions to anti-Communism. It would also help them enormously in promoting a united front between the Communist and Socialist parties against the mounting threat from the counterrevolutionaries. But Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have oriented these comrades in a different direction.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel seem so anxious to fault us for not defending the CP's democratic rights that they even accused us of turning a blind eye to these attacks. They say that Hansen did not mention them at all in the article he wrote in the August 4 issue of *Intercontinental Press* "Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?" They make much of the fact that this article was published "more than two weeks" after the start of the assaults on CP headquarters.

Since the closing date of that issue was July 28, the article could have been written no more than fifteen days after the attack on the CP in Rio Maior, which was the first of the series of assaults. That attack, incidentally, occurred two days before the first SP demonstration after it left the government.

Hansen's article appeared on page 1106. If Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel had turned to page 1114, they would have found a column and a half in an article by Foley devoted to the first attacks on the CP and the response of the SP to them.

It is true that Hansen did not mention these attacks in his article. He did not mention the attempts to block the SP rallies of July 18 and 19 either. The article dealt with the question of democracy on a more general level. The specific points on Portugal were covered in the news article in the same issue.

Perhaps Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are so indignant at the class-collaborationist policy of the Social Democracy that they became careless in the choice of weapons to use against it. Unfortunately, however, such weapons turn against those who use them. If the employment of amalgams is permitted against the Portuguese Social Democracy, how can this practice be kept out of polemics in the world Trotskyist movement?

We have already seen an example of this. On August 13 the Canadian supporters of the IMT, the Revolutionary Marxist Group, with which Comrade Mandel in particular has had a long and close association, distributed a leaflet at a public forum of the League for Socialist Action, the Canadian section of the Fourth International. The RMG statement said that a "counterrevolutionary drive" was being undertaken in Portugal "under cover of the hypocritical cries for 'democracy'" of the SP, and that what was in progress was a pogrom against "all other working class organizations such as trade unions, leagues of landless peasants, organizations of the far left, etc."

"Also leading these actions," apparently along with the SP, "are the Portuguese Catholic Church whose priests and officials have been whipping up mobs of enraged petit [sic] bourgeois with the cries of Christians Against the Red Menace."

The leaflet included many "unfacts," such as the following: "Despite claims to the contrary in the August 15th issue of the *Militant* (the organ of the U.S.-S.W.P) neither Mario Soares nor any other member of the dominant leadership of the S.P. has denounced these mobilizations."

The SP did fail in its duty to defend the CP, but it did not fail to denounce the attacks, as can be verified by reading the SP statements cited in *Intercontinental Press*.

Even in this leaflet, the Canadian IMT

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comrades try to hedge. They say for instance: "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."

But in that case, were the SP's "cries for

'democracy'" entirely hypocritical?

These Canadian comrades were caught up in a sectarian logic that is alien to Trotskyism. It carried them so far as to say:

"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."

### Can the Peasants Be Won Over?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel seem to think that while the Communist party made sectarian and ultimatic errors, this was not a decisive factor in the ability of the rightists to whip up a wave of anti-Communism in northern Portugal.

They say: "The bourgeoisie has taken the counteroffensive. There can be no doubt about the immediate cause of this reversal: It is the division of the working-class forces. An additional factor, however, should not be overlooked: There is a mass base for bourgeois reaction among the smallholders of northern Portugal, ideologically dominated by the Portuguese church, whose hierarchy long collaborated closely with the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship. The economic discontent of these smallholders is on the rise, and the government is unable to meet their demands."

Is the ideological domination of the Portuguese church an absolute obstacle to winning the smallholders to the side of the revolution? Must they first become atheists? Long experience points to the contrary. To cite but three examples, we can point to the revolutionary struggles in Mexico, Cuba, and Ireland. In all three countries, the dominant religious ideology of Catholicism has not proved capable of restraining the peasants under the driving force of economic distress.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel note the economic discontent of the Portuguese smallholders—which ought to incline them to radical solutions—only to offer what sounds almost like an apology for the MFA: "... the government is unable to meet their demands."

In what sense is the government "unable" to meet the demands of the small farmers? Is this because of the weakness of the productive forces in Portugal or a lack of resources? Or is it because of the bourgeois structure of the economy?

It is certainly true that the government has done little or nothing for this stratum, which makes up a substantial proportion of the Portuguese population. Should we excuse the bourgeois government's failure in this field? Is it really doing its best? Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel seem to think that the small farmers are a lost cause anyway:

"This mass base can be *undermined somewhat* by adequate offensive political

and economic demands of the workers movement: confiscation of church property and its distribution among small peasants; state guarantees of minimum agricultural prices for small producers, provided at the expense of the landlord-controlled agricultural organizations and wholesalers; direct links between small peasants and working-class organizations of consumers in the towns, etc. But it is improbable that this mass base can be eliminated altogether. Even under the Bolshevik leadership, the Russian revolution was not able to eliminate the counterrevolution's mass base among the propertied petty bourgeoisie. The Russian revolution of 1905 was defeated because the majority of the peasantry did not even enter the revolutionary process. To forget these objective facts of life, to deny that in an imperialist country like Portugal the majority of the landowning peasantry is not and cannot be favorable to socialist revolution but can in the best of cases only be neutralized, is to fall victim to the Stalinist thesis that the class struggle can be reduced to the fight between a 'handful of monopolists' and the 'overwhelming mass of the people.'"

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are too hasty in their analysis of the Portuguese peasantry. In the first place, "propertied petty bourgeoisie" is not a very useful term for describing this stratum, and that is why it was not used by Lenin and Trotsky. The fundamental question for Marxists is not whether peasants own the land they work but whether they exploit labor. Also important is their relation to the market.

The concept that the "propertied petty bourgeoisie" in the countryside is intrinsically reactionary is a new one in the Trotskyist movement. There is a whole section in the Transitional Program devoted to the question of winning this stratum over to the revolution. Moreover, Trotsky made no distinction here between the small-holding peasantry in colonial countries and in imperialist ones.

Lenin and Trotsky divided the peasantry into "small, middle, and large peasants" in accordance with their economic position and prospects. For example, the Transitional Program defines the general task of Marxists toward this layer as follows:

"The peasants (farmers) represent another

class: they are the petty bourgeoisie of the village. The petty bourgeoisie is made up of various layers, from the semiproletarian to the exploiter elements. In accordance with this, the political task of the industrial proletariat is to carry the class struggle into the country. Only thus will he be able to draw a dividing line between his allies and his enemies."

It is true that the Bolsheviks did not entirely eliminate the base of the counterrevolution on the land. But they won the civil war because they converted the landless peasantry into a "propertied petty bourgeoisie" and guaranteed that no land would be taken away from the already existing "propertied petty bourgeoisie."

The most recalcitrant section of the peasantry was the Cossacks, who had developed as a military-settler caste for centuries. Do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel believe that there is a section of the Portuguese smallholders that can be compared to the Cossacks? Surely not. The very suggestion is absurd.

However, this kind of argument raises some serious questions. For instance, if one-fourth to one-third of the Portuguese population is intrinsically reactionary, does this apply to other imperialist countries as well? If so, successful revolutions in some of these countries will be much more difficult than Trotsky forecast.

Another implication, if the "propertied petty bourgeoisie" on the land cannot be won to socialist revolution, is that Stalin's "liquidation of the kulaks as a class" was perhaps necessary and justified.

We are certain that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not intend to imply any such conclusion, but the least that can be said is that their argumentation encourages confusion on this.

Stalin felt compelled to open up a war on the peasantry because of their growing opposition to his regime. But this was one of the consequences of his failure to push the kind of industrialization necessary to meet their needs. In Russia, where the industrial sector was very small, it was difficult to meet their needs, but it could have been done.

The situation in Portugal is incomparably better in this regard. The fact that Portugal is an imperialist country is a favorable factor, not an unfavorable one as Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have concluded. Because industrialization has developed with a certain independence in Portugal, it is more diversified and spread out than in colonial countries.

In this respect, Portugal is better off for example than Ireland, although the Irish per capita income is substantially higher. Industrialization in Ireland has been greatly distorted by imperialist domination of the country. It is fitted into the interstices of the British economy and cannot meet the



need to develop the agricultural economy or absorb the population displaced from the land.

Portuguese industry by comparison, despite its backwardness, is in better position to meet the needs of developing the country.

Many of the northern towns where CP headquarters have been attacked are not stagnant, parasitical market and service centers like nearly all Irish provincial towns but reflect a certain industrial development. One of these attacks was, in fact, in Gaia, a suburb of Oporto, the second largest city in Portugal. In Oporto itself, which is hardly a town of small farms, the Communist party got only 6 percent of the vote in the Constituent Assembly elections of April 25, 1975. Does Oporto therefore offer a mass base for bourgeois reaction?

Although there are large areas, such as Tras-os-Montes Province, where agriculture is extremely backward, in other potentially more important areas in the North, there is an increasing interpenetration of industry and agriculture and thus of the peasantry and working class. There is no fundamental reason why an immense majority of this population could not be won to a socialist revolution through a correct policy that took into account their particular needs.

In fact, the left wing of the MFA itself admitted that it was specific failures by the government and the bureaucratic sectarianism of the Communist party that threatened to drive this stratum over to the counterrevolution.

Thus the problem of the wave of anti-Communism in the North cannot be dismissed so easily as Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel seem to think. Two-thirds of the population of Portugal live on the land, in the small industrial centers, in the "backward" industrial city of Oporto, and elsewhere in the North.

If these comrades dismiss the North, or a very large percentage of its inhabitants, as intrinsically reactionary, this means in effect writing off all those of similar class composition, that is, the majority of the people of Portugal.

It means there is no hope for a successful socialist revolution in Portugal, because even if Lisbon and the rest of the South were ready to march ahead alone, the North would give the Portuguese capitalists, aided from abroad, a sufficient base to regain control of the entire country.

Furthermore, in the name of the Trotskyist critique of the Stalinists' abstract unity shouting, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have in fact fallen into denouncing a whole sector of the populace as reactionary, a practice for which we have in the past correctly denounced the Stalinists.

The Stalinists resorted to such slanders to explain away the popular uprisings against bureaucratic rule like those in East Germany and Hungary. "So, what could you

expect?" the Stalinist hacks asked. "Were-n't these countries fascist during the war?" The same method has been applied in Portugal with disastrous results. In some towns, attacks on the CP seem to have been actually provoked or aggravated by either unfounded or indiscriminate denunciations of sections of the local populace. Foley described this process in a number of articles. (For example, see "Portuguese Junta Pleads for Tranquillity and Discipline," *Intercontinental Press*, July 14, 1975, p. 984, and "Why Portuguese Military Placed Troika in Power," *IP*, August 4, 1975, p. 1108.)

We do not yet know what the response of the Portuguese revolutionists will be to the offhand way with which Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel dismiss the peasantry as allies of the proletariat. Certainly in Ireland, anyone on the left who made such assertions would be regarded as hopelessly sectarian.

Ireland, of course, is a colonial country. But the problems of small farmers there are similar in many ways to those of the Portuguese small farmers. While there is more independent industrial development in Portugal, it has been completely insufficient to meet the needs of the peasantry as a whole or to absorb the surplus population on the land.

In general, the land problem has been in the process of being "solved" the way it was in Ireland, by massive emigration of poor peasants and rural workers to industrial centers outside the country.

The fact that Portugal is an imperialist country is decisive in certain questions, such as determining what attitude to take toward Portuguese nationalism and the stationing of Portuguese troops in Africa. But not all the specifics of the situation can be derived from the general truth that Portugal is imperialist.

Such a method is completely unable to provide a revolutionary approach to the problems of Portuguese agriculture, where the contradictions in the development of the country are most marked.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel contend that there is only one possible alternative to their view (again the either-or formula!); namely, the "antimonopoly" thesis of the Stalinists. We have indicated above that at least one other possibility exists: a government policy of demonstratively attempting to cope with the problems faced by the peasants.

Another possibility is the one followed by Castro in Cuba from the beginning, long before his movement succeeded. In Cuba, the radical agrarian policy of the Castro leadership was decisive. One of its achievements was to win a base of support among the "propertied petty bourgeoisie," the small independent farmers in the most backward area of the island.

In considering the social forces that might be receptive to the appeals of the counterrevolution in Portugal, it would have been useful if Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel had clarified precisely what they thought was similar and what was different in this respect in the Portuguese and Cuban revolutions. Their rather lengthy comparison of the two revolutions does not consider this question at all.

What happened to the alternative Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel once held with regard to the peasantry on a continental scale in Latin America? For example, in the resolution on Latin America approved by a majority at the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International, they said:

"The causes of the peasants' discontent and anger are manifold—the traditional land hunger, the choking off of subsistence agriculture, conflict with the state administration which extorts taxes and appears most often as an instrument of repression in the service of the exploiters, disillusionment arising from the fraudulent nature of the official 'agrarian reforms,' fear of a comeback by the landlords in the countries where they have had to renounce certain privileges, difficulties arising from price and market problems especially for small independent farmers, unfavorable repercussions from prices on the world market. . . . Far from improving, the lot of the peasants remains tragic and is even getting worse. Hence the persistent impetus to struggle and revolt. This is all the more true because the peasants are less and less isolated from the international political and ideological currents; have largely assimilated the lesson of the Cuban revolution; have learned a great deal from the guerrilla experiences and are not cut off from the student revolutionary movements, whose influence reaches them through a thousand different channels."

Cannot most of these things be said about the Portuguese peasantry, although in absolute terms their situation, of course, is by no means as desperate as that of the peasants in many Latin American countries? On the other hand, the exposure of the Portuguese peasants to advanced ideas is far greater than that of any peasantry in Latin America outside Cuba.

Why have Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, then, taken such a different attitude toward the Portuguese peasantry? Would it not be completely impressionistic—to say nothing of being one-sided and ahistorical—to judge their revolutionary potential on the basis of the attacks on CP headquarters in July and August?

There is still another alternative to the Stalinist "antimonopoly" thesis. This is the alternative projected by the Fourth International since its foundation, which we have indicated above. We think that it applies in

the most timely way in the Portuguese revolution, particularly in view of the fact that unlike Castro's course it is intimately bound up with constructing a revolutionary Marxist party.

The Stalinist thesis, referred to by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel—that the class struggle can be reduced to the fight between a handful of monopolists and the overwhelming mass of the people—is beside the point. The Stalinist thesis is not intended to advance the class struggle but to dampen it in accordance with agreements made at "summit" conferences. While it is a deadly serious matter on the political level, it is pure nonsense so far as Marxist theory is concerned.

The course followed by Lenin and Trotsky of seeking to achieve a revolutionary alliance with sectors of the petty bourgeoisie, particularly the lower layers of the peasantry, was the exact opposite of the Stalinists' antimonopoly class collaborationism.

### The Danger of Becoming Discredited

It might be argued that in the context of a massive advance of the workers, the principle of freedom of the press was overshadowed in Portugal by the development of real working-class power on the way to establishing a higher form of democracy.

If that were the case, the alleged peculiarity had to be explained very clearly to avoid confusion about the principles involved. It would be specially important to stress complete opposition to any suppression of democratic rights in the name of socialist revolution. Foley pointed this out in the June 16 issue of *Intercontinental Press*:

"Furthermore, the revolutionary process in Portugal is occurring in a different context from that of struggles in colonial and semicolonial countries. What this process represents precisely is the shifting of the axis of world revolution from the underdeveloped countries toward the imperialist centers, beginning with the weakest and most parasitic imperialism. The most positive side of this for Portuguese revolutionists is that there has already been a more extensive democratic opening in Portugal than in any of the colonial or semicolonial countries.

"However, if the revolutionary process in Portugal becomes identified with repression and totalitarian methods, the anti-Communist fears of the West European workers, fears that have a basis in the reality of the Stalinist regimes, will be increased tenfold, and the obstacles to socialist revolution in the advanced countries in like proportion. This is certainly one reason why the capitalists have seized on the *República* case to whip up a little campaign around the theme of 'red terror.'

Let us add that if the situation is prerevolutionary in Portugal, as Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel agree, then this signifies that most of the petty bourgeoisie, including extensive layers of the peasantry, are looking toward the proletariat for leadership. All the more reason for seeking to apply the tactics advocated—and successfully practiced—by Lenin and Trotsky.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel seem to be reinterpreting the Trotskyist critique of the Stalinists' "antimonopoly" demagoguery. They appear to have reached the conclusion that the only realistic alternative to the Stalinist "theory" is the concept that quite large intrinsically reactionary sectors of the population will inevitably hurl themselves against the vanguard sectors in any socialist revolution in an imperialist country.

The logical corollary of such a view would be to follow a kind of ultraleft putschist course in place of the Trotskyist course of winning a majority of the masses.

It's like taking out insurance.

"It is pretty much inevitable that the Stalinist parties will become further discredited because of the role of the Portuguese CP. However, there is also a danger that sections of radical youth breaking from Stalinism will also become discredited by identifying themselves with an apparently more militant CP that seems to be locked in struggle with defenders of 'bourgeois democracy.'

"In Portugal itself, starting with the conflict over the 'trade-union unity' law, groups that previously stood to the left of the CP, such as the centrist Movimento de Esquerda Socialista, began to be drawn, in effect, into the CP strategy. They offered a romantic left interpretation of the CP's Stalinist dogmatism and sectarianism, and seem in fact to have been used by the CP as advance patrols and pawns in sectarian maneuvers. The role of the MES and a similar group with even less political moorings, the Frente Socialista Popular (FSP—Socialist People's Front), in the May 1 incidents is one example.

"The FSP participated in the attacks on the SP contingents. The MES denounced the CP for 'making concessions' to the SP. It has been the MES also that has developed the most extensive 'left' defense of the CP's antidemocratic line, trying to carry it a step further, apparently believing that 'tougher' Stalinism equals a more revolutionary approach. For example, in its May 28 issue, the MES organ *Esquerda Socialista* said:

"Holding elections for the Constituent Assembly, with the foreseeable results, was a victory for domestic and foreign reaction,

which are now using the vote registered in these bourgeois elections to try to reverse the political process. To this end they have utilized provocations (such as the May 1 incidents) and pretexts (such as the struggle of the workers at *República* against the counterrevolutionary line of the paper).'

"These small centrist groups have no perspective of building a revolutionary party; they are not even interested in this. By their very nature, they are parasitic formations and must attach themselves to some large reformist current in one way or another. The FSP, made up of disgruntled office seekers from the SP, who discovered that the party was bourgeois after they failed to get the positions they expected in the leadership, is very clearly a left opportunist formation. The danger, however, is that these groupings will serve as a conduit leading revolutionary-minded youth back into the Stalinist orbit.

"This process could also create the impression among many sections of the working class in other West European countries that the youth breaking with Stalinism are simply more aggressive, more impatient Stalinists, that their differences with Stalinism are only tactical.

"In fact, there is no reason why revolutionary-minded youth should let the Social Democrats or the bourgeois press seize the issue of democracy. If Soares wants a more flexible alternative than the CP and the MFA leadership at the moment, he is no less committed to supporting the bonapartist military regime. As a reformist, he could hardly be. He is committed to class collaborationism, and the MFA is at present the only viable bourgeois political leadership in Portugal.

In his Hotel Altis news conference, Soares made quite clear that he really would not mind an outright military dictatorship as long as it allowed the SP to function.

"One thing the Communist party general secretary has said I think is correct. That was, if there is a completely military government, it doesn't mean that a military dictatorship has been established in Portugal.

"The government can be military, but if public freedoms are respected, if we have pluralism in the media, elections in the unions and in the municipalities, etc., if Portuguese political life continues to operate normally until there is a new constitution, and then, within the terms of the pact-program [which gives the effective power to the MFA], elections are held for the legislative assembly, there will not in fact be a military dictatorship here in my opinion."

Foley's analysis is unassailable, in our opinion. Why do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel object to it so vehemently? Perhaps the explanation lies in the judgment expressed by Foley that the small



centrist groups have "no perspective of building a revolutionary party" and are "parasitic formations" that "must attach themselves to some large reformist current in one way or another."

### The Most Benevolent Military Dictatorship in the World?

The leaderships of both the Communist and Socialist parties, as we have seen, favor an unelected military government in Portugal. All they ask is that they be allowed to function with and under it. And both of them are vying for the position of top labor lieutenant under this form of bourgeois government. Up to now the CP has been willing to pay a higher political price for the posts and privileges it seeks. The cost is rising discredit among the masses.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, of course, are opposed to this shabby game and seek to expose it. However, they unwittingly fall into a posture that stands in their way. They place such stress on the free atmosphere existing at present in Portugal under the unelected bourgeois military government that it appears to be innocuous. Thus they write:

"Only people who have been completely mystified by bourgeois public opinion and blinded by Stalinophobia can speak of Portugal as a country in which democratic rights have been eroded by 'military dictatorship.' In reality, Portugal is the freest country in the world today, a country in which all political forces have the greatest possibility of speaking out and making their opinions known, in which the political and social activities of the mass of toilers is less restricted than anywhere else. Anybody who visits the country today has only to look at the graffiti on the walls, see the array of material available at all newsstands, or attend one of the innumerable public meetings that take place every day to note this obvious fact."

It is true that there is less effective repression in Portugal than in other countries ruled by bourgeois governments. How could it be otherwise in a prerevolutionary situation? But does this mean that a military dictatorship does not hold power there? Is a dictatorship defined solely by repression, as Soares said?

In fact, some military dictatorships may be less repressive than some parliamentary regimes. Examples can be found in Latin American history. What defines a military dictatorship is not the degree of its repressiveness at a given moment but rule by an unelected government openly based on the military. Soares is ready to accept such a government if it lets the SP serve as one of its agencies in the working class.

If the statements made above by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are taken

In contrast to our stand, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel consider them to be part of the "new mass vanguard" out of which an "adequate revolutionary leadership" can be forged.

at face value, one could conclude that they also find such a government relatively tolerable—"Portugal is the freest country in the world today. . . ."

But what about the democratic right of the majority of the workers and toilers to elect a government of their own choice? If a military dictatorship is less repressive than a parliamentary one, should we then oppose elections and reject the principle of majority rule?

There are two political problems here. One is the relation of democracy to socialist revolution. The other is the attitude to be adopted toward the MFA government and its revolutionary pretensions. This "problématique" is posed quite well in the passage quoted above from the May 28 *Esquerda Socialista*. The leaders of the MES prefer to rely on the MFA government to advance the revolutionary process, rather than try to take advantage of elections to help win a majority of the masses for the program of socialist revolution.

The Marxist and Trotskyist tradition on the relationship of democracy to socialist revolution is different, as we have explained. Thus, there was a real test of Trotskyist principles in Portugal, not just of the principles regarding democracy but the question that is inextricably bound up with this: independence from a bourgeois government that claims to act in behalf of the masses without having won an explicit mandate and without having taken the road away from capitalism.

How did the Portuguese Trotskyists who look to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for political guidance respond to this test? How did the guidance of these three experienced Trotskyist leaders help them to meet the challenge?

First, let us look at the response of the papers of some of the sections of the Fourth International to the *República* affair.

The paper of the German section, *Was Tun*, devoted the front page of its June 26 issue to the case. The article concluded with this paragraph:

"We see that the chatter of the bourgeois parties and press about 'freedom' in Portugal and the 'fundamental rights of freedom of opinion and the press' turns out to be pure hypocrisy. They say that the *República* affair is the test case for freedom of opinion in Portugal—and they mean a test case for bourgeois freedom of opinion; for the freedom to whip up people against the

struggles of the workers and their organizations, the freedom to obstruct the development of consciousness also among the backward layers, the freedom to poison the public climate of discussion, of the masses learning through experience and self-activity, with lies and manipulations. Since the bourgeois monopoly of opinion has been broken, Portugal is today the country that, under capitalist conditions, has the greatest freedom of the press." (Emphasis in original.)

The same article gave the following explanation of the origins of the *República* affair: "The workers reacted to threatened layoffs. They elected a workers committee after the occupation, removed the manager, and demanded a new management under workers control. Also involved were political differences with the editors. In the opinion of the workers, the editors were pushing into the forefront of the paper attacks on other workers parties, especially the PCP, attacks most often coming from Maoists. They reacted like thousands of other workers in Portugal today when they occupy factories to oppose threatened unemployment or to proceed against organs of the mass media that resort to manipulation, and spread false reports, and are financed from obscure (often foreign) sources."

Many passages of this editorial seem to be direct paraphrases from the article by Comrade Mandel published in the June 23 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. But what a miserable apology, what a miserable jumble of justifications.

Was the reason for the take-over of *República* economic or political? If it was political, should Trotskyists defend the take-over?

Obviously there was at least a political aspect. The suggestion is made that this was only secondary, but it is not examined. How did the line of *República* differ from that of the other Lisbon dailies? Was it the only one that "resorted to manipulation" and that "spread false reports" or emphasized "attacks on other workers parties"?

Most of the Lisbon papers were dominated by the CP. Didn't it resort to "manipulation" or "spread false reports"?

Why were there contradictions in the statements of the "workers committee," sometimes indicating that the reason for the take-over was political, while other times indicating that it was economic? Why, moreover, were these contradictions carried into the European Trotskyist press without comment? In fact, an imperceptible shift appeared in these Trotskyist newspapers from the economic reason to the political one.

For example, in its July 24 issue, *Red Weekly*, the organ of the International Marxist Group, the British section of the Fourth International, gave half a page to an interview with Marcolino Abrantes, vice-

president of the Portuguese Textile Union, a union led by members of the MES who work closely with the CP. Among other things, Abrantes said:

"The struggle of the workers of the newspaper *República* is a clear example of this [i.e., an "open struggle against the various aspects of capitalism"]. The fact that a party which has clearly not been defending the interests of the workers wanted to control the paper to express exclusively its own positions shows the importance of the struggle in this field. The fact that workers were not prepared to give in, but on the contrary were prepared to fight against reactionary manoeuvres, was clearly demonstrated again by the workers of the Catholic-owned radio station Radio Renascença. . . ."

In an analytical article next to this interview, the editors of *Red Weekly* wrote:

"But the workers were determined to make *República* into a truly independent paper in the service of the working class, rather than the undercover organ of the Socialist Party that it had become. Despite the capitulation of the military Supreme Council of the Revolution to the Socialist Party's demands, the workers stood firm. On 9 July they announced that they were 'not prepared to wait indefinitely' for the Government to work out a solution, and were going to publish the paper 'under the responsibility of the workers.'"

"Faced with this decisive action, the Government reversed its position and named a military officer as director of the paper, thus allowing it to be published legally. But the paper's production remained under the control of its workforce."

"Since 10 July *República* has appeared regularly, and has been eagerly received by the militant workers of Lisbon, who understand that it is their own. The new *República* is a model of working class journalism, featuring prominent and regular coverage of the major workers' struggles, and open to different shades of opinion inside the workers movement."

"The absurdity of the slander that the workers' struggle was an attempted 'Communist Party take-over' is shown by the fact that *República* runs a prominent column called 'workers in struggle' (at least a full page, and often two, in every issue) at a time when the Communist Party leadership has been opposing strikes as 'inopportune' and placing all its emphasis on the 'battle for production.'"

The editors of *Red Weekly* then chose to reprint all the fine-sounding phrases from a manifesto of the "workers committee" explaining that the take-over had been in the interests of applying the paper "to ends that concern the transformation of man and life, and not the rows of politicians, the privileges of corrupt minorities, or the exhibitionism of political parties. . . ."

In the previous issue of *Red Weekly* (July 17), these same editors printed a picture of a representative of the "workers committee," with a caption that said, among other things:

"Domingues explained during his stay that 'it was the Socialist Party that chose to blow this thing up.' When the increasing bias of the paper became clear it was the workers who suggested that it be turned into an open SP organ and the management who refused." (Emphasis in original.)

Why didn't the editors of *Red Weekly* at least comment on these contradictions? What happened to the alleged economic reasons for the take-over?

One cannot really blame the German, English, and Belgian followers of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for failing to examine this tissue of justifications, even though it has been one of the main historic contributions of Trotskyism to expose reactionary objectives hidden under revolutionary rhetoric. They look to Comrade Mandel in particular as their authority on Marxism. He explained what the "real issue" was and they filled in the rest.

However, the result could hardly be more discrediting to the Trotskyist movement. It is astounding to read in a Trotskyist paper that the fact that the purged *República* published reports of strikes showed that it was not influenced by the CP. According to that criterion dailies like *Diário de Lisboa* and *Diário de Notícias*, to say nothing of the CP organ itself, *Avante!*, could be declared to be free of Stalinist influence.

Furthermore, could a person alert to political conniving believe that it was in the interest of the CP to convert the paper, over which a great controversy had arisen, into an obvious mouthpiece of the party? Besides that, what was the net political effect of the operation? A paper that had been an unofficial SP paper for years had been destroyed. Most importantly, what about the paper's line with regard to the MFA? Apparently that question never occurred to the editors of *Red Weekly*.

The shift away from arguments about the economic justification, defense of jobs, etc., is interesting. They are not repeated in the contribution of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel. Instead these comrades now focus on the question of whether Foley wanted to send the military to "repress" the *República* workers. Have the three accepted the analysis Foley offered in the June 23 issue of *Intercontinental Press*?

"... was it reasonable," Foley asked, "to think that if *República* changed its line to resemble more that of the other five afternoon papers [at that time all dominated or heavily influenced by the CP] that its circulation would have increased, especially in a climate of general economic crisis in which the newspaper industry suffered special disadvantages? That is hardly

likely. In fact, the most immediate possibility for rescuing the paper from financial trouble would have been more help from the SP, the country's largest political party. This, however, is exactly the opposite, by all accounts, of what was wanted by the printing workers who forced the shutdown of the paper. Nor did these workers raise the question of nationalization or state support like workers in other failing enterprises."

If Comrade Mandel has become convinced that the take-over was not actually carried out to defend the jobs of the printing workers, wouldn't it be helpful if he clarified this point? It would certainly help to stimulate a more critical attitude on the part of those who look to him for Marxist expertise. Doesn't it set a bad example to suddenly drop this argument and shift, on the basis of one isolated and dubious report, to asking whether Foley really wants to send in the "bourgeois army" to repress the *República* workers? Is this how revolutionists should discuss and determine the truth?

The confusion thus created is compounded by this sentence in the contribution of the three: "In fact, the SP leadership soon dropped the accusation that the *República* affair had been engineered by the CP (as *Intercontinental Press* has continuously claimed) and instead accused 'anarchist provocateurs' of having been responsible. (The *Times* [of London], June 19, 1975.)"

What spell does the London *Times* have over Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel?

The SP has repeated its charge of CP responsibility many times since June 19. The charge was repeated in the official statement on the reasons for the party leaving the government on July 11. This, it seems, must be dismissed in view of what Soares is reputed to have admitted in a "television debate." What kind of respect for facts are Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel teaching those who look to them as Trotskyist educators?

It became clear within a few weeks after the occupation of *República* that other forces were involved, that the CP was using ultraleft groups as cat's-paws. This was nothing new. The pattern was already apparent on May 1. And the CP is still using the ultralefts as cat's-paws.

On August 29 Comrade Mandel himself felt compelled to make a public criticism of the LCI for allowing the CP to use it to build a pro-Gonçalves demonstration.

As an alternative explanation, do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel believe that the UDP, the LUAR, or the PRP-BR singly or collectively, or, as they sometimes imply, just a group of ordinary workers, could have carried through the *República* operation without the support of the Communist party and at least a wing of the MFA? Or did the *República* "workers



committee" come forward on the crest of a wave of "pressure from the workers" that forced the CP and the MFA to support it?

No, they do not accept this alternative. They plump for still another possible explanation:

"Political prejudices and wrong political judgment clearly play an important role on both sides. In that sense, as we have stated unambiguously, the *República* workers fell into a trap. They made a serious political mistake in the way they answered Rêgo's and Soares's provocations. The ultraleftist groupings and the CP compounded the mistake tenfold by their disastrously sectarian and unprincipled reaction, which was hostile to proletarian democracy."

This variant only entangles Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel in further contradictions. Was it just a political goof committed by these organizations that produced a major issue in the most profound crisis since the April 1974 overturn? What persuaded the CP to bring its power to bear? What, in other words, was the driving force? The three say:

"In other words, the MFA refused to use force against the workers not out of the goodness of its heart, but because it feared that the soldiers themselves would refuse to use force against workers occupying factories."

This equates the *República* seizure with the occupations of plants in general throughout Portugal.

Do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel think that the MFA is so weak, the discipline in the Portuguese armed forces so decayed, that the regime could not even muster the force to oblige at most 150 workers to allow the *República* editorial staff to resume writing the paper? Then, the bourgeois government would really be so feeble as to be almost nonexistent. In fact, it would be nonexistent.

How, then, a month and a half later, when the soldiers of a Copcon regiment voted to oust a rightist officer, Jaime Neves, could Saraiva de Carvalho muster the strength to reinstate this officer and bring four soldiers before a military tribunal for insubordination?

The regiment was based in Amadora, a strong CP area, and the soldiers were supported by the workers councils in a number of very large plants. And this was in early August after the MFA had been forced, according to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, to legitimize soviets.

Let it be noted, too, that the MFA mustered strength enough to imprison military policemen who demonstrated September 1 against being sent to Angola. And this was immediately after the big "people's power" demonstration August 27, which was supported by the Communist party.

The argument is too flimsy to explain the position of the government in the *República*

affair. It is the *argument* that is weak, not the MFA. Relying on that argument to explain the actions of the government and Copcon in the *República* affair led to a collapse of the critical faculties of those who

accepted it and to the tangled web of apologies that we have seen in the press of those sectors of the world Trotskyist movement that look to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for political leadership.

### Carvalho, a Possible Fidel Castro?

There is still another possible explanation. This is that the government is so weak it cannot resort to direct repression on a large scale as a means of controlling the mass upsurge. On the other hand, because of the very fact that it is weak and cannot maintain control by democratic means, it wants to initiate repression under the guise of revolutionary phrases. It had already received much help and guidance from the Communist party in how to apply this technique before the *República* affair.

This would not be the first time a weak bourgeois government resorted to such methods. The history of the Spanish republic is rich in such examples. This includes repression against the very numerous anarchists, who nonetheless remained in the government.

Furthermore, if that is the situation, it would be understandable why there are conflicts among various teams in the military regime over tactics, to say nothing of rivalries among various aspiring bonapartes.

Could such an analysis explain the episodes in the *República* affair? Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel say no:

"Comrade Foley's obsession with 'undermining any faith in the bourgeois MFA' (an obsession he shares with Healy, Lambert, and their ilk) is a typical sectarian reversal of an opportunist mistake; it is based on fear that one might be on the point of succumbing to temptation. Comrade Foley's analysis shares an essential feature with the analysis of the centrist and opportunist tailenders of the MFA leadership: the assumption that everything that is happening in Portugal today depends essentially if not completely on the role, function, intentions, and actions of the MFA."

The three offer Foley a way out of his predicament.

"Only if Comrade Foley returns to the method used by Marxists in judging all revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—that is, the method that begins by defining the basic class forces in contention—will he be able to extricate himself from the absurd positions into which he has maneuvered himself. Otherwise, he will share the sad fate of Healy, Lambert, and other sectarians. . . ."

Of course, they had every reason to expect that Foley would welcome this road to salvation from the "sad fate" of sectarians. Unfortunately, the good intentions visible

in the advice are hardly sufficient to provide correct answers to some key political questions.

The MFA constitutes the present political leadership of the bourgeoisie, which is still the ruling class in Portugal. The MFA regime is not just a shuttlecock batted back and forth in the class struggle. Any leadership that claims to offer guidance to revolutionists in the class arrayed against the MFA must analyze the adversary's moves and expose his stratagems and ruses. "Defining the basic class forces in contention" is so general that it can be extended to justify the worst opportunist confusion about the government and its aims.

For example, in a little book entitled *A Farsa dos Pseudo Radicais em Portugal* (The Farce of the Pseudoradicals in Portugal), which was published in May 1974, the CP argued against the analysis that it was divisions within the bourgeoisie that had led to the coup and that the new government had bourgeois objectives:

"For the narrow understanding of these petty bourgeois, history is not, as we see, the result of class struggle. The movements of masses (classes united in common struggle) are not the motive force of history. As good intellectuals, they are ignorant of the struggle of the people, and as they contemplate at leisure they see movement only within the bourgeoisie. The people are thus excluded from the revolution and from their dialectical alliance with the armed forces (the peculiar feature of the democratic revolution in Portugal) and replaced by a putschist conception. . . ." (p. 17.)

This was written at a time when the CP was supporting Spínola.

However, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel offer a concrete example of the utility of their method.

"In the July 28 issue of *Intercontinental Press* Comrade Foley presents General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho as a 'possible' 'general on a white horse,' that is, a possible Bonaparte emerging from the power struggle in Portugal. (p. 1063.) We have no interest in speculating about the secret intentions or basic character of this or that individual officer. We can only judge class and political trends. When we say that Costa Gomes and the Melo Antunes group obviously constitute the right wing of the MFA, it is not because of their secret intentions but rather because of their public

defense of a program to stop the revolution, which has supposedly 'gone too far.'"

Was the question of Carvalho's "secret intentions" unimportant? It is a rather decisive question in class warfare as in other kinds to know who is on your side and who is not, especially when this person commands a substantial force. Was there no problem here in the case of Carvalho?

Today virtually everyone accepts the fact that he was a wolf in sheep's clothing, since he aligned himself during the August power struggle with "Costa Gomes and the Melo Antunes group." But even before August 10, the Amadora Rangers, who tried to oust their rightist officers, discovered in a rather demonstrative way whose side "Otelo" was on.

Did Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel broadcast warnings about people like Otelo and his ilk? We do not know of any. Perhaps this will explain the following assertions in an article in the June 26 *Was Tun*:

"We have no illusions in the MFA. It is not a workers organization, not a revolutionary leadership of the proletariat. But in it are reflected the class contradictions in their real dynamic, the shifts in the relationship of forces among the classes. On one side are the 'moderates,' basically bourgeois democrats like Foreign Minister Melo Antunes, President Costa Gomes, Labor Minister Costa Martins, or Information Minister Correia Jesuino. On the other side are officers like Rosa Coutinho and Saraiva Carvalho, confused but uncorrupted left radicals, who—and this is certainly the most important in their political development—have understood with astounding clarity an essential aspect of the socialist revolution and workers power, even though they do not see the need for a revolutionary workers party and a revolutionary program. That is, they have understood the need for the self-guided mobilization of the workers, the independent action of the masses, without bureaucratic reins.

"We have given in a separate section excerpts from the discussion of the MFA Assembly of May 19, which show what an advanced consciousness has been attained by a wing of the MFA.

"And this is above all the sections of the MFA that have the real apparatus of power, the army under them. Saraiva de Carvalho, the actual Copcon commander, occupies a position of power quite different from that, for example, of the president (and nominal head of Copcon), Costa Gomes, or from that of Foreign Minister Melo Antunes. This is a position of power not in itself, but because of the consciousness of the soldiers, who discuss every command before they carry it out."

This article in *Was Tun* was written after the Revolutionary Council decision of June 19, which was interpreted as a setback for

the "direct democracy" advocates such as Carvalho and Coutinho. So the article started this way:

"The international press is relieved. No soviets in Lisbon! After a six-day meeting, the Portuguese Revolutionary Council announced that the 'dictatorship of the proletariat' and the creation of 'workers militias' did not correspond to Portugal's pluralistic socialism.

"Frankly, we Marxists would have been rather astonished if the dictatorship of the proletariat had been called into being by the existing military regime. We are still of the opinion that the dictatorship of the proletariat can only be won by the victorious struggle of the working class—in Portugal too.

"However, the development of the MFA gives observers, both Marxist and bourgeois, some things to ponder over. What a rapid development of consciousness on the part of these officers, who not long ago were leading a colonial war on the orders of the most reactionary dictatorship in Europe. On April 25, 1974, they wanted to establish a bourgeois democracy, and now they are seriously discussing the introduction of the dictatorship of the proletariat and a regime of soviets! Only a year ago the MFA officers

made Spínola president, issued reactionary press and strike laws. The very same Copcon commander, Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, who sent his units against striking workers, today wants to arm the workers."

How delighted and astonished the *Was Tun* editors must have been two weeks later when the MFA and the bourgeois government accepted the "soviet" plan that "these officers" had been "seriously discussing"!

Why haven't Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel lodged a "strong protest" against the line the editors of *Was Tun* saw fit to follow in covering the events in Portugal?

Is it because they shared the fantasies of the editors of *Was Tun*? Did they view Carvalho, "the uncorrupted left radical," as possibly emerging as the Fidel Castro of Portugal?

If so, we can understand why they bristled at the very suggestion that Carvalho was pushing his candidacy for the role of a bonaparte. Must we conclude that after all, they did have an interest, different from ours, "in speculating about the secret intentions or basic character of this or that individual officer"?

## And the Exciting Admiral Coutinho

Were the illusions in Carvalho just an isolated case, in which some comrades "went too far"?

A far more serious example of such illusions was to be seen in Comrade Alain Krivine's interview with Adm. Rosa Coutinho, one of the principal personalities in the "progressive" wing of the MFA.

Comrade Krivine is the most prominent representative of the largest European section of the Fourth International, one in fact that rather overshadows the others. He is also the best-known Trotskyist leader in Europe, aside from Comrade Mandel, whose intellectual prestige places him in a somewhat different category. Comrade Krivine was one of the principal leaders of the mass student actions in the French upsurge of May-June 1968.

Consequently, it is impossible that Adm. Rosa Coutinho did not know whom he was talking with and what the effect of an interview given to Alain Krivine would be. The interview thus transcended mere journalism, appearing as an overture from the Fourth International to the MFA. This is also evident in the questions and answers.<sup>5</sup>

Comrade Krivine asks: "So you favor a very broad debate among the workers?"

The admiral answers: "Yes, a very broad

debate, because the parties must debate, not fight each other. You spoke to me of a popular assembly made up of delegates from committees. That's worth considering. . . ."

Comrade Krivine asks: "In Portugal today, there are workers committees, fishermen's committees, village committees, and so on. What do you think of a proposal to centralize all these committees nationally so as to build a power base for the workers?"

The admiral answers: "We support all these committees, because any form of direct participation of the workers should be encouraged; they are the ones who must be able to choose the type of socialism to be built. But it is impossible to say at this time that this form is the best one. We must try experiments and see which ones work in practice. Then we can think about giving legal form to the initiatives you're talking about, if they turn out to be successful."

Comrade Krivine asks whether the admiral thinks socialism can be built with a "bourgeois party like the PPD" in the government.

The admiral reassures him that the "cadres" of the PPD are "more advanced than the ranks." Anyway, he explains, the real power is going to remain in the hands

5. For the full text, see *Intercontinental Press*, June 23, 1975, p. 892.



of the MFA, so you shouldn't worry about bourgeois parties.

Comrade Krivine expresses concern that the MFA's repression of the Maoists could become a precedent for repressing "all those who claim to be socialist yet are critical of the MFA's policies."

Nothing to worry about, the admiral says. These Maoists are only agents of some unnamed but sinister force. The MFA is not against the radical youth. Of course, you have to protect the sheep from the wolves. "The youth must understand our revolution and give it their support. Not the degenerate youth of the MRPP, but the working youth in the fields and the factories."

Didn't this remind Comrade Krivine of the slanders circulated by the Communist party against his own organization in 1968—that it was a bunch of "degenerate youth," "papa's boys"?

Apparently not. At least he did not indicate it. Perhaps a candid admission by the admiral that if he were "a reactionary military officer" he would "attack from the left" allayed any uneasiness Comrade Krivine may have felt.

Did Comrade Krivine and the admiral agree on the *República* case?

The admiral has accused the SP of "betraying the country" by raising a protest over this. The admiral is no admirer of "bourgeois democracy" either. He places no confidence in any electoral farce.

Comrade Krivine asks: "What do you think of a democratic organization that would represent all the soldiers?"

The admiral answers: "That can be considered later, but for the time being it would be very dangerous. It would give rise to a class division within the MFA, between the rank-and-file soldiers and the officers. We prefer to have a vertical MFA. What's more, if there were elections in the army we would lose, because of the political backwardness of part of the country, a little like what happened in the civilian elections. Of course, the MFA is more to the left than the rest of the army. It is like the yeast in the bread. But you can't make bread without yeast, any more than you can make bread with yeast alone."

On top of that, the admiral is for workers control and even arming the workers: "... and I can assure you that as far as we are concerned, we will not hesitate one second to arm the workers."

A man such as this could accomplish great things with a little encouragement. So Comrade Krivine asks: "Can the MFA remain neutral toward what is happening in its former colonies?"

The admiral answers: "It is difficult to intervene, especially in Angola. But it is true that we need to exert international pressure on Zaïre so that Angola can really be decolonized. We don't want to have delivered it from white fascism only to see it

fall into the hands of black fascism."

This leftist navy commander is not only able to define "the basic class forces in contention," he is able to define fascism by the color of skins. Did Comrade Krivine congratulate him on that or did he maintain a diplomatic silence as the means best calculated to infuse the admiral with the program of revolutionary Marxism?

The admiral is not without his weaknesses. The battle for economic survival holds top priority in his view of the situation.

Comrade Krivine asks: "What do you think of the wage demands put forward by the workers, especially in the private companies?"

The admiral answers: "This is an important question. Some of those demands are demagogic and could result in the company going bankrupt. As for the nationalizations, we are not going to continue them forever, for one simple reason: we lack capable managers. The workers will be capable of managing their companies in three or four years. Today, with some exceptions, that is impossible."

It is hard to believe that Comrade Krivine could see no flaws in this position. But the interview was published in *Rouge* without any critical comment whatsoever.

It was republished in virtually every journal where the views of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel prevail. In the May 30 issue of *Internationales*, the paper of the Swedish section, it was featured under the headline: "MFA Leader: We are giving arms to the workers."

The article on Portugal next to it, however, was in contradiction to the implication of the interview. Its analysis was along the same lines as Foley's:

"The Socialist party tried to utilize its great advance in the April 25 elections to gain increased influence relative to the Communist party in the unions and in local government bodies, and also increase its influence relative to the MFA."

"By mass mobilizations the party had shown again and again its strength as an effective means of pressure."

"Mass mobilizations precisely were the Communist party's key to the MFA's heart earlier. The Communist party was the only organized force in the workers movement that could mobilize and direct the masses. The MFA was dependent on the Communist party to bring these masses under control."

"The Socialist party understood the great importance these mobilizations can have as a way of pressuring the MFA, and now this has become the party's main method of struggle against the Communists."

"On its side the Communist party has suffered an electoral defeat. But the party soon licked its wounds and took up the struggle in the workers movement by using

its influence gained earlier in the unions and the mass media, as well as in the MFA, against the Socialists."

"The Communist workers at the paper *República*, a paper that supports the Socialist party, went on the attack in the early part of this week. They closed down the paper on the grounds that it was spreading Socialist party propaganda."

"The military intervened quickly to the Communist party's advantage. *República* was shut down."

"This was a clear expression of the Communist party's attitude to proletarian democracy. Instead of fighting the Socialists on the political level, they exploited the relationship of forces to try to block a political opponent."

The contradiction between voicing political judgments of this kind and playing up material like Krivine's interview with Admiral Coutinho has continued in the press of the Swedish section. Perhaps Comrade Mandel can explain how it should be resolved.

The French-language organ of the Belgian section, *La Gauche*, which is edited by Comrade Mandel, published the interview with Admiral Coutinho in its June 5 issue with a somewhat critical introduction: "In view of the analysis we have made of the MFA's bonapartist role, we obviously have differences with the content of this interview."

But an accompanying article, entitled "The MFA: a Tangle of Contradictions," did not attack a single point in Coutinho's demagogy. It said only: "Facing this situation, there can be no question of relying on the progressive wing of the MFA. The vital task is the self-organization of the soldiers and not, as the CP advocates, trusting the Revolutionary Council."

*Rood*, the Flemish-language organ of the Belgian section, ran the interview with the same disclaimer but no article explaining the "contradictions" of the MFA.

*Intercontinental Press* published the same interview to inform its readers and the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement, not of Rosa Coutinho's "progressive" views, but of Comrade Krivine's overture. It was published with an introduction that, without entering into polemics with Comrade Krivine, made it clear that Coutinho was a phony, and that his remarks were demagogy aimed at covering up reactionary objectives.

Not long after this, the admiral gave a speech to businessmen at the American Club in Lisbon in which he asserted that socialism was decades away, perhaps more, in Portugal. After this, he was sent on a tour of Scandinavia and Germany to reassure the capitalists and authorities in those countries that the process in Portugal would not go "too far."

Nonetheless the admiral had promised Comrade Krivine to "arm the workers," establish workers control, "consider" democratizing the army and even setting up a "popular assembly." Was all this just evidence of his "contradictions"? Or did he

think he could use these promises as bait for suckers? Did he succeed?

Unfortunately, the evidence is strong that he, and others like him, did create quite a fluttering of hearts among those willing to be had.

### A Cuban Pattern in Portugal?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel devote about one-sixth of their "strong protest" to discussing the degree to which the process in Portugal today parallels what happened in Cuba in 1959-60.

They conclude finally that the Portuguese revolution will not follow the pattern of the Cuban revolution. It will follow the pattern of the Russian revolution of 1917 and thus "will triumph only through the conquest of power by the proletariat organized in soviets and led by revolutionary Marxists and not at all through the leadership of the MFA."

Thus, as they see it, the Portuguese revolution will not be led by a radicalizing petty-bourgeois team that has the support of the toiling masses yet does not establish bodies, such as councils or soviets, that democratically represent the workers.

We agree with them on this. But why they chose to discuss the patterns of the Cuban and Portuguese revolutions when apparently they have no difference with us on them remains a mystery.

Of course, a gamut of left-centrist groups in Europe have dangerous illusions in the MFA, that is, they believe that the MFA, or a wing of it, can play a revolutionary role similar to that played by the Castro-Guevara leadership.

Ironically, this is even true of the British International Socialists, who hold that the Cuban economy is state capitalist. This almost apolitical workerist group wouldn't touch an Irish guerrilla with a forty-foot pole. But it has formed an alliance with PRP-BR, a Portuguese guerrillaist group committed to many fantasies such as seeing Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho as the "Che" of Portugal.

The leader of the PRP-BR in fact denounced the first provisional government for failing to name a street after some of her comrades who died in a premature bomb explosion. The PRP-BR is a caricature of the Castroist formations that developed in the late 1960s in Latin America.

Elementary sanitation requires disposing of the arguments of this circus of "left" opportunists. Why have Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel held back from doing this? Of course, they may feel that we have applied Trotskyist criteria too rigidly and too narrowly and that there are other factors that we have failed to take into consideration. Nonetheless, all Trotskyists ought to feel duty bound to defend Marxist

principles against centrist confusion.

Certainly, this would not impede cooperation with centrist groups on concrete issues. In fact it would clarify the limited objectives of such collaboration and thus strengthen our work, particularly in maintaining political clarity among our own cadres.

However, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have not done this. The reason, sadly, is all too obvious. They are overly concerned about the concerns of the "new mass vanguard." This explains their tendency to adopt positions that could be defended from a Marxist standpoint only if Portugal were not an imperialist country and the MFA leadership were the kind of radical anti-imperialist leadership that has arisen in some colonial and semicolonial countries. This tendency is shown in a slide toward regarding the bourgeois MFA as more progressive than a workers party such as the SP.

It does sometimes happen that a petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership can stand to the left of a Social Democratic party in a colonial country, or to the left of a Stalinist one as well, as was the case in Cuba. But in an imperialist country, the balance of class relationships is quite different.

Ostensibly, the comparison of Portugal and Cuba is intended to indicate the contrast between the authors' willingness to recognize a revolution when it occurs—even though it may be "deformed" instead of conforming to the classical pattern—and our alleged attitude that would deny the reality of such a revolution so as to preserve the purity of our abstract criteria.

Why then are we placed in the latter category of dogmatic purists, even though the authors assure us that they believe the Portuguese revolution will follow the classical pattern? Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not indicate what evidence they have unearthed that can be explained by our supposed dogmatism on this point.

Has Hansen shown a negative attitude toward revolutionary processes that departed from the classical norms? Wasn't he, along with the rest of the Socialist Workers party leadership, among the first in the Trotskyist movement to recognize the nature of the postwar overturns in Eastern Europe? Wasn't the SWP the most active and firm defender of the Cuban revolution in the United States and among the very first to recognize its socialist character?

Didn't the SWP also distinguish itself in

the face of very strong pressures as the most effective defender in the United States of the revolution in Vietnam despite its deformations? Has the SWP leadership changed its attitude in this respect since the end of the antiwar movement?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel say they have been trying to convince "these sectarians" for a "quarter of a century" of the need for a positive approach to "deformed revolutions." By our calculations, that takes the discussion back to 1950, or thereabouts. They mention Healy, Lambert, and *Lutte Ouvrière* as examples of such sectarians.

However, the Fourth International's differences with *Lutte Ouvrière* go back to 1940. The problem with Healy goes back to 1960 or so and arose specifically with regard to the Cuban revolution. He did not oppose recognizing the abolition of capitalism in Eastern Europe and China. In fact, for a time he aligned himself with Michel Pablo, who not only had a positive attitude toward these "deformed revolutions" but thought they represented a new historic pattern that would replace the classical model for centuries.

Healy took the position he did on Cuba for the same reason he now seeks to differentiate himself at all cost from our positions on Portugal—blind factionalism. On the other hand, the OCI, led by Pierre Lambert, has not tried to escape from seriously discussing the issues that have arisen in Portugal.

Again we ask, why raise the question of sectarianism toward "deformed revolutions" when we are in agreement that a socialist revolution in Portugal can triumph in all likelihood only according to the classical pattern?

We can ask the question all the more pointedly since we do not exclude the possibility, owing to extreme political weakness of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, the strength of the workers parties, and the growing aspirations of the masses for socialism, that a government could come to power in Portugal that would not be controlled by the bourgeoisie but would not be a socialist regime either.

We think that the possibility is remote. But, as we see it, it is not ruled out.

Lenin and Trotsky foresaw that such cases could arise in exceptional circumstances. They characterized regimes of that type as workers and peasants governments, a passing transitional form of rule.

The appearance of a government independent of the bourgeoisie would open up extraordinary opportunities for building a revolutionary party and leading the workers rapidly toward establishing a workers state. If such a government arises, we are prepared to recognize it.

Why then do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel not mention the possibility,



since they place great stress on the political weakness of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, and it is obvious that there is no mass revolutionary party?

If they exclude the possibility, don't they risk making serious sectarian errors if the bourgeoisie proves too weak to control the situation before a mass revolutionary party is built?

Thus the reference to Cuba by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel raises many more questions than it answers. It clarifies nothing.

We have already noted that others are pushing what they consider to be a most attractive possible parallel between the

Cuban and Portuguese revolutionary process—that a Portuguese Fidel or Che may appear. The purpose of this propaganda is absolutely clear. We believe that it is being deliberately advanced by elements within the MFA leadership such as Carvalho and Coutinho.

In our opinion, the main immediate danger in this situation for groups that claim to stand for socialist revolution is not missing a Castroist development but capitulating to a demagogic MFA leadership that has proved adept in manipulating the European "new mass vanguard" so as to gain leftist cover for reactionary objectives.

## Why There Was No Campaign to Get Troops Out of Angola

One reason why illusions about the MFA and the state it administers are particularly dangerous is the continuing colonial war in Angola.

Any confusion whatever about what the MFA represents or what its aims are leads inevitably to confusion about the duty of revolutionists toward the national liberation struggle in the main Portuguese colony. There is now a considerable body of evidence that confusion on this question has filtered into the ranks of the world Trotskyist movement.

In his interview with Admiral Coutinho, Comrade Krivine asked whether Portugal could avoid intervening in the struggle among the three nationalist movements in Angola. The admiral answered that "it is difficult to intervene" but that the MFA had no intention of delivering the country to "black fascism" after having liberated it from "white fascism."

The obvious implication was that Admiral Coutinho favored Portuguese intervention in the struggle among the three nationalist movements. Even more—he favored intervening on the side of the MPLA, the guerrilla group considered by all the "advanced" circles in Western Europe to be "progressive."

The admiral evidently shared the disdain of these advanced circles for the "black fascists," "cannibals," "tools of Yankee imperialism," and "foreign agitators from Zaïre," i.e., the MPLA's rivals. He was obviously ready to put his considerable experience as a colonial administrator to good use in assuring "progressive" rule in Angola.

In other words, he opposed withdrawing the 24,000 "progressive" Portuguese troops there.

From the viewpoint of the "advanced" circles, the admiral's position made sense. If the MFA was not an imperialist or even bourgeois leadership in Portugal, then it could not be in Angola either.

This point in the admiral's interview,

more than any other, required critical comment in the Trotskyist press. There was nothing whatever that was "progressive" about Coutinho's views, either abstractly or in the objective effect that they could have in the Portuguese situation or the situation in Angola.

Not a single Trotskyist paper under the influence of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel singled this point out for attack.

The illusions in the MFA demonstrated by this overture to Admiral Coutinho have kept most of the European sections of the Fourth International from campaigning for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of Portuguese troops from Angola. They have tended to become propagandists for one of the nationalist groups, the MPLA, even repeating its mudslinging against its rivals.

It is true that the MPLA is supported by the Soviet Union, although it is also supported by a number of West European Social Democratic parties. In fact, it is supported by the Portuguese Socialist party as well. The other groups have been supported by Peking, and according to recent White House leaks, by U.S. imperialism trying to hedge its bets in Angola.

Even if all these accounts are correct, however, this is not sufficient reason to believe that there is a clear division into proimperialist and anti-imperialist camps. On all the key points of program there are no significant differences among the groups. And U.S. imperialism has been able, on a number of occasions, to make deals with nationalist movements that previously received considerable material support from the Soviet Union.

Under the pressure of an armed struggle, a nationalist movement will accept material aid from all available sources. Did the fact that the Kurds received support from the shah of Iran (like Mobutu, an ally of Washington) mean their struggle was reactionary?

The Stalinists claimed it did. They used

this argument to justify their backing a right-wing Arab nationalist regime with which they had reached some diplomatic agreements.

The Trotskyist movement did not accept this argument; it supported the struggle of the Kurds in face of a furious campaign of Stalinist demagoguery that had some effect in the "new mass vanguard."

By their nature, nationalist movements seek to exploit whatever contradictions exist among the world powers to achieve their objectives. Since their goal is independence, they do not apply class criteria. They are compelled to follow a policy of seeking material aid, including guns, from any available source, and no one can deny them the right. However, we can warn them against making any political concessions to proimperialist sources, or to Moscow or Peking, and oppose them on the political level if they do make such concessions. But it is possible to play an effective role in this respect only if we make clear that our support is for the national liberation struggle as such and not for a specific team or formula.

Even from a narrow practical point of view, it is foolish for small revolutionary groups to link themselves politically to nationalist organizations whose positions may shift drastically in accordance with factors that often are murky or openly unprincipled.

In the first place, it leads to obscuring the principle of self-determination and the duty of revolutionists in imperialist countries to defend the independence of the colonies unconditionally.

Second, it tends to entangle revolutionary groups in the sometimes fratricidal factional politics of the nationalist groups. This in turn prevents revolutionary groups in the imperialist countries from giving effective aid to the national liberation struggles by bringing full pressure to bear for ending all interference by their own governments in the affairs of the colony.

Serving as propaganda auxiliaries of one nationalist group tends inevitably to entangle a revolutionary group in the diplomatic maneuvers of the nationalists. Thus, the MPLA tried for a time to use its alliance with the Portuguese Communist party to get the imperialist government in Lisbon to tip the scales in its favor. The PCP tried to do the MPLA's bidding and drew a whole series of smaller groups behind it, including the LCI.

Along with the PCP, MES, LUAR, MDP, and FSP, the LCI signed a joint communiqué May 31 that said, among other things:

"The destinies of Portugal and Angola, like the other ex-colonies, are closely linked by the struggle in which they are involved against economic and military domination

by the forces of imperialism and capitalism. Thus, it can never be repeated too much that since we have the same enemies our struggle is the same struggle.

"So, the Portuguese workers, revolutionists, and progressives cannot remain indifferent to the recent attacks by neocolonialist forces against the MPLA and the Angolan people, which have resulted in the massacre of thousands of victims. And at the same time as expressing their militant solidarity, they must expose, without any ambiguities, the counterrevolutionary nature of Holden Roberto's mercenaries, which are supported by Mobutu, a puppet of the United States, and the no less opportunist and no less reactionary character of the UNITA, which is in the service of international capitalism and neocolonialism.

"We must demand that the MFA and the Portuguese government take a clear and firm attitude against these forces."

What happened to Portuguese imperialism? Was it eliminated with the overturn of the Caetano dictatorship?

A May 13 statement by these same groups, minus the CP, had expressed this position more directly. It demanded:

"e. Real control by the Portuguese armed forces of transport and communications (roads, ports, airports, etc.), thereby preventing their use by the FNLA.

"f. Disarmament and imprisonment of all FNLA elements that engage in armed attacks, and the seizure of the war and logistical matériel used in these attacks."

On August 8, the LCI went further in its appeals to the MFA to do the right thing in Angola:

"Above all, it is necessary to have a revolutionary policy toward the situation in Angola, to combat the hesitations of the government and the MFA that have objectively given cover to the reactionary FNLA and UNITA, and consequently to the neocolonial maneuvers, and have given cover to the political and military penetration by imperialism in Angola.

"We demand the immediate recall of Silva Cardoso [the Portuguese commissioner] from Angola and the immediate disarmament of the FNLA and UNITA, as well as the other capitalist mercenaries."

In ten years the Portuguese imperialists had not been able to "disarm" the guerrillas of the FNLA. But the "progressive" wing of the MFA can apparently be expected to perform miracles. Wasn't the MFA for workers control and for arming the workers? And now one of its key leaders had even promised to consider Comrade Krivine's suggestion to set up a "popular assembly."

The MPLA's illusions in the MFA were suddenly deflated July 27 when Portuguese troops massacred a number of its followers. Clearly, the groups in Portugal and other

West European countries that sympathize with this organization did it no service by encouraging its fantasies.

More importantly, suspension of any campaigning for the total and immediate withdrawal of Portuguese troops from

## The 'Corporatism' in the Guide Document

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have certainly done remarkably little to discourage illusions in the left wing of the MFA and to warn against the dangers involved.

"It can be predicted with the utmost confidence," they assure us, "that in order for 'corporatism,' totalitarianism, or fascism to return to power in Portugal, all the initiators of the present workers councils, and not a few of the MFA 'theoreticians' who drafted the decree so detested by Comrade Foley [the July 8 Guide Document, an English translation of which was published in *Intercontinental Press*, July 21, p. 1050], will have first to be shot. Not the slightest scrap of any 'people's council' would survive under a victorious reactionary dictatorship. If things actually came to that, Comrade Foley would have a hard time explaining how he managed to confuse the victims with the executioners."

Carvalho was one of the supporters of the Guide Document, one of the most prominent, in fact. Thus, there is no need to worry about him! He would have to be shot before a right-wing dictatorship could be established! It would be sad to confuse the victims with the executioner, but it could prove lethal to confuse the executioner with the victims.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel denounce Foley quite harshly for comparing the Guide Document to "corporatism." They say he himself said this, "admitting that 'this elaborate scheme is unlikely ever to be fully applied.'" It is true that Foley "admitted" that. However, this phrase by itself gives a rather distorted impression of what he was talking about. Here is the context:

"While this elaborate scheme is unlikely ever to be fully applied, any more than was the complex dual government outlined in the 'pact-program,' it does establish some principles and procedures quite clearly. Its basic meaning is the same as the former 'guide document.' The military is boss. The new document just carries this principle further, stipulating that the military is the supreme arbiter and will rule society directly, reaching down to the local, factory, and neighborhood levels.

"Among other things, the adoption of this scheme shows the suicidal character of the SP's class-collaboration policy, since the plan is not only a logical extension of the 'pact-program' that the SP signed but of the

Angola, because of undue concern for the concerns of the "new mass vanguard," entailed the loss of valuable time in carrying out this vital anti-imperialist work in behalf of the Portuguese revolution and the liberation struggle in Angola.

June 21 'Program of Political Action,' which the SP hailed as an affirmation of democracy and 'pluralism.'

"Leaving aside what the document says about its more distant goals, the immediate proposals are reminiscent of corporatism, similar to the system in force under Salazar but actually more thoroughgoing. It leaves no room even for the formal national elections that Salazar permitted following the defeat of the fascist powers in World War II. After all, like Salazar and Caetano, the ruling military group has just had its fingers burned by an election that it intended to be purely formal in character.

"The only 'people's assemblies' envisioned at the moment are local ones. No 'people's grass-root organizations' will be allowed to federate until the military decides the time is ripe. Furthermore, the military will decide whether to 'recognize' all such organizations, and recognition will depend on its evaluation of their activity.

"While the military pledges to encourage the formation of workers and tenants committees where they do not as yet exist, it also stipulates that the existing committees must be 'broadened' to carry out the tasks set for such organizations. These tasks include 'political work through educating and informing sections of workers or the population,' and 'strengthening the alliance between the people and the MFA' as 'a constant activity.' The MFA itself will be the judge of whether these tasks are carried out, and presumably this will determine which 'grass-roots people's organizations' are 'recognized' and which are not.

"Not only does this eliminate the independence of any groups that are set up, it empowers the government to begin interfering immediately in the embryonic factory and neighborhood organizations that do exist. Any organization that develops spontaneously to meet the needs of a group of workers or the poor masses is required, according to point 3.1, to affiliate to 'recognized' structures and adjust its composition and activity to meet the 'tasks' and standards set by the military.

"This provision carries the attack on freedom of association begun with the 'Trade-Union Unity Law' to the point of totalitarianism. Even the most elementary forms of mass organization can be diluted and packed to suit the purposes of the military government."

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel



## Antiparliamentary Cretinism and the Copcon Program

confuse two things here—the actual document and what they think its objective effect will be. Both are important, but a certain distinction has to be made. Do they deny that the document as it stands is totalitarian in intent? Is the system outlined by the Guide Document what Trotskyists mean by “soviets”? If it is, every “advanced worker” in his or her right mind should avoid the Trotskyists like the plague and fight to the last drop of blood against any attempt by them to establish their new society. This document does not leave the smallest opening for genuine democracy or for any democratic right.

Is there no danger that this document, as it stands, might be mistaken for a real plan of workers democracy? The July 19-August 21 issue of *Tribune Socialiste*, the organ of the French centrist PSU, with which the French Trotskyists have formed a front to “defend the Portuguese revolution,” gave favorable prominence to the Guide Document. The banner headline across the cover was “Neither Social Democracy nor Stalinism—PEOPLE’S POWER.” There was no criticism of the document, no indication that it was not a democratic “soviet” alternative to Stalinism.

A similar position is held by another centrist party, Förbundet Kommunist in Sweden. This group has conducted a campaign against the Swedish Trotskyists, who they say have slandered the MFA. The August 28 issue of *Internationalen*, the organ of the Swedish section, explained the problem as follows:

“Both Gunnar Wesslén in *Aftonbladet* [a Social Democratic daily] and Förbundet Kommunist in *Arbetarkamp* look toward the possibilities of workers power that can take form through the building of soviets, but at the same time they hail the MFA’s proposal and falsify the July 8 document to fit their rosy red dreams.”

The press of the Italian and Swedish sections of the Fourth International has been noticeably more critical at times toward the MFA “left” and its “soviet” schemes than that of, for example, the English, Belgian, German, and French sections. This is an indication of the fact that the Fourth International, even where the influence of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel is strongest, still stands head and shoulders above the ultraleft and centrist groups in Europe that are staging a carnival of “left” opportunism in support of the left wing of the MFA and delirious anarchist groups like the PRP-BR.

However, the conclusions drawn by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel offer no help at all to the Swedish and Italian sections in their polemics with rather large centrist organizations. In fact, they risk leading them into a hopelessly contradictory position.

In addition to their objections to Foley’s use of the term “corporatism” in referring to the Guide Document, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel protest against the way he applies the term “antiparliamentary cretinism.” They write:

“Trotsky used the expression ‘antiparliamentary cretinism’ to refer to the Spanish anarchists, who in a country in which there were still powerful bourgeois-democratic and electoral illusions refused to participate in parliamentary elections, under the pretext of not wanting to strengthen these illusions. So far as we recall, the Portuguese CP participated in the elections, as did the ‘centrists’ and many of the ‘ultraleftists’ to whom Comrade Foley refers, including the Trotskyists of the LCI. Obviously, then, Comrade Foley uses the expression ‘antiparliamentary cretinism’ in quite another sense than did Trotsky.”

Trotsky used this term in a letter written May 28, 1931, entitled “The Spanish Revolution and the Dangers Threatening It.”<sup>6</sup> Apparently these comrades are familiar with the letter. It seems to have provided the title for Comrade Mandel’s article on the *República* affair, which was entitled: “The Portuguese Revolution and the Dangers That Threaten It.”

There is a whole section in Trotsky’s letter under the heading “The Parliamentary Cretinism of the Reformists and the Antiparliamentary Cretinism of the Anarchists.” It is true that this begins with a criticism of the anarchists’ abstention from elections. But it does not end there. Trotsky says:

“From the very beginning, the question of suffrage had to be advanced to the foreground of agitational work. Yes, the prosaic question of suffrage! Soviet democracy, needless to say, is incomparably higher than bourgeois democracy. But soviets do not fall from the sky. To achieve them takes work.

“There exist Marxists who have a lofty contempt for such a slogan, for example, as universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage for all men and women from the age of eighteen. Nevertheless, had the Spanish communists advanced this slogan in time and defended it in speeches, articles, pamphlets, and leaflets, they would have acquired tremendous popularity.”

Under this same heading, opposing not only the anarchists but ultraleft Stalinists, Trotsky took up a whole series of questions, such as the importance of defending national self-determination and the importance of

advancing a program on the agrarian question for the peasants, whom Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel dismiss as hopelessly reactionary.

Trotsky also says: “By speaking *only* of the seven-hour day, of factory committees and arming the workers, by ignoring ‘politics,’ and by not having a single word to say in all its articles about the elections to the Cortes, *Pravda* goes all the way to meet anarcho-syndicalism, fosters it, covers up for it.”

Trotsky also took up the question of a constituent assembly:

“The communists need the forum of the [Constituent] Cortes as a bond with the masses; and from this bond will develop actions that will submerge the Cortes. This is the essence of the revolutionary dialectic with regard to parliament.

“Nevertheless, how is it to be explained that the leadership of the Comintern is silent on this question? Only by the fact that it is a captive of its own past. Too loudly have the Stalinists rejected the slogan of a constituent assembly for China. The Sixth Congress officially condemned the slogans of political democracy for colonial countries as ‘opportunism.’ The example of Spain, a country incomparably more advanced than China and India, reveals all the inconsistency of the decisions of the Sixth Congress. But the Stalinists are bound hand and foot. Not daring to call for a boycott of parliamentarism, they simply pass over it in silence. Let the revolution perish, but long live the leaders’ reputation for infallibility.”

So it is quite clear, despite the definition given by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, that this term “antiparliamentary cretinism” covers many other failings besides a simple refusal to participate in elections.

Is the attitude Trotsky described under this heading not a problem in Portugal today or elsewhere in Europe where groups are trying to relate to the revolutionary process in Portugal? Evidently it is. In Sweden, for example, our comrades have had to polemicize against a rather large centrist group that peddles just such illusions.

The Swedish comrades criticize what in fact is the “antiparliamentary cretinism” of the centrist Förbundet Kommunist, which in defense of the MFA has been attacking the Swedish Trotskyists. The pundits of Förbundet Kommunist had written in an editorial in their paper *Arbetarkamp*:

“The revolutionary left has gained significant strength in the struggle on the grass-roots level. But the electoral campaign in

6. See *The Spanish Revolution (1931-39)* by Leon Trotsky. (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1973), p. 111.

April obscured the conflicting class interests and transferred the struggle onto the level of party politics. But violent clashes among the political parties obstructed the mass movement."

To this, Comrade Göte Kildén replied in *Internationales*: "How dreadful! It's better to work locally, to occupy yourself with sectoral work and trust in the MFA when it comes to national political questions."

Comrade Kildén is quite correct. This is a good example of the "Marxist method." However, should he not make the same criticisms of the German comrades who also align themselves with Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel?

In addition Comrade Kildén described concretely how antiparliamentary cretinism works in Portugal and what its effects are.

The definition of "antiparliamentary cretinism" given by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel is so narrow as to be almost useless. They say that it is only making a principle out of abstaining from bourgeois elections.

Reducing this form of ultraleftism to just not running candidates in bourgeois elections eliminates the problem from all arenas except the electoral. The PRP-BR abstained from the Constituent Assembly elections, so it suffers from antiparliamentary cretinism. The MES participated, so presumably we cannot accuse it of that failing, even though this organization regarded the elections as a step backward and thought the MFA made a mistake by calling them.

It was these illusions that led the MES and the PRP-BR to swallow the bait of the Guide Document. Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, while not swallowing the bait, do not reject it either. The Guide Document in itself is of no interest to them, they say. What is important are the objective consequences of the document. These, they claim, have little to do with its actual provisions.

Their argument goes as follows:

"In Portugal today the possible emergence of embryonic workers councils has been expressed by the fact that the workers commissions have begun assuming tasks whose areas of fulfillment spill out of the factories themselves. If the 'progressive' wing of the MFA undertakes a pathetic attempt to 'co-opt' this development into its own plans, this in no way modifies the origins or direction of development of these councils. Their gradual emergence has not been the result of a defeat but a tremendous upsurge of working-class activity."

But the workers councils, such as they are, have existed since April 1974. In some ways they played a more important role in the period immediately after the overturn, when a wave of strikes overflowed the union structures. Later some of these committees clearly became union organizing committees. For a long period the

committees tended to decline in importance relative to the unions.

Then, with the wave of nationalizations, involving a measure of workers control, the committees gained a new importance as the bodies most suited to carry out these tasks. In the March 11 mobilizations, the workers committees played no independent role but simply carried out the directives of Inter-sindical.

In some cases, the unions have been more militant than the workers committees; this is the case, for example at TAP, the Portuguese national airline, which has been a not unimportant center of conflict.

By no means do all the capitalist observers react to the workers committees as the devil is said to react to holy water.

For example, the British *Economist*, whose primary function is to offer very practical advice to one of the capitalist classes with the greatest stake in Portugal, had this to say in its September 13-19 issue about the kind of workers control and workers councils that exists in Portugal:

"Although ITT has been one of only half a dozen major international companies to flee the revolution, more are likely to follow suit.

"But their reasons for closing their books cannot be seen purely as one outcome of the trend to worker control or of government chaos. The Gonçalves government's law enforcing worker control, almost its last act, is in many ways extremely conservative, and admonishes the workers to increase productivity. At the base of private industry's problems, whether foreign or Portuguese, is the overnight change from extreme laissez-faire capitalism to a normal degree of concern that workers get a fair wage, earned under acceptable working conditions, and benefit from employers' contributions to social security. . . .

"The new workers' committees have matured since they began a year ago. One electrical-goods company boss says the workers' committees are now far more co-operative and conscious of the company's problems than the unions—they represent a wider section of political opinion, they often include employees from accounts departments, and their 'control' is often more a question of scrutiny and understanding of management and the company books, than of demands to run the show themselves. At Plessey, for example, the workers' committee put up the idea of starting a new production line, which is now under way."

Why do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel offer so few examples of this wave of self-organization of the working class that is so powerful there is no need to fear any "pathetic attempt" by a wing of the MFA to use it for its "plans" (which, by the way, they never define)? The only example, in fact, that they give is the occupation of *República*, although they themselves say

that a "provocation" was involved here.

The mystery is easily cleared up if we refer to the facts. There was no upsurge of "self-organization" in May or June or July that put "people's power" on the agenda any more than in any month since the April 1974 overturn. The two most important developments were the following:

1. Despite attempts to delay the Constituent Assembly elections, despite attempts by sections of the MFA to slander the SP as pro-Spínolist, despite attempts by the "progressive" wing of the MFA to encourage the casting of blank ballots, the SP won the elections overwhelmingly.

2. The elections were followed, not by a blooming of "soviets" and workers control, but by a wave of economic strikes.

In fact, in his May 1 speech, Premier Gonçalves tried to use the existing workers control as an argument to convince workers to produce more and demand less in terms of higher wages and better conditions.

What then put dual power on the agenda? Wasn't it the fact that the "progressive" wing of the MFA, Carvalho and Coutinho—in whom the ultralefts in Portugal placed such great hopes—pushed the scheme of "direct democracy" codified in the Guide Document as a means of opposing the SP and opposing elections, and as a means of settling the "national political questions"? Wasn't this in line with their previous positions?

When did the SP become the reputed spearhead of a bourgeois campaign to restore law and order? Was it before or after Carvalho and Coutinho expressed their distrust in "bourgeois democracy"?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are certain that the MFA cannot use the Guide Document's "soviet" scheme for reactionary purposes. Their confidence rests on the following chain of reasoning:

"The case of the 'people's committees' provides a good illustration of the differences in the two approaches [theirs and Foley's]. If one looks at a plan (on paper) calling for the presence of a military commander in each district council by beginning from the arbitrary and mystifying starting point that we are dealing with a powerful military junta that is fully in control of the situation and intent upon establishing a 'corporatist state,' then such a plan becomes a 'sinister omen.' If, on the other hand, one sees the reality of a divided and increasingly paralyzed MFA tottering from crisis to crisis and unable to maintain any independent position between the increasingly polarized forces of capital and labor, then one sees the plan as a pathetic attempt by one wing of the MFA to co-opt and manipulate the radical initiatives of the working class, initiatives that have been taken independently of the MFA. One further sees that such attempts at co-optation are doomed to failure so long as



the mass movement remains on the upswing. Instead of replying to the MFA 'popular power' decree with the incredibly sectarian social-fascist-type cry of 'corporatism,' one should rather respond: Let that 'army commander' not be nominated but instead freely elected by all the soldiers and officers of the district, on the basis of 'one man, one vote.' In fact, that is exactly what occurred in the first local popular assembly that gathered in Portugal—on July 13 in the town of Pontinha."

That happened in the "first local popular assembly." Wonderful! How many others are there like it? What have they done? What was happening in the rest of the country while a "pure" people's assembly was being set up in Pontinha?

Wasn't the working class being profoundly split, wasn't the whole of political life being focused on an obscure conflict between military cliques? Wasn't this, from the standpoint of officers like Gomes, a result that justified giving a few left-wing regiments "soviets" to play with?

Did the conflict in August represent a clear polarization between a wing of the MFA being drawn behind the radicalizing workers and another wing supporting capitalist reaction with a victory for the right and a defeat for the left?

But the process was much more contradictory than that. The ultralefts made the mistake first of trusting Carvalho and second of allying with Gonçalves, who had a project basically as conservative as that of Melo Antunes, although more demagogic. Carvalho even tried, with some success, to form a bloc with Antunes on the basis of the so-called Copcon document,<sup>7</sup> which in the abstract contained some correct revolutionary demands.

The LCI supported this program both in the August 20 "workers committees" demonstration and in the August 27 People's United Front demonstration, in which this document was incorporated in a program that included defense of virtually the entire record of the Gonçalves government. Who was taken in by a "plan on paper" at this point?

The fact was that in the concrete political situation the promises contained in the Copcon document were just window dressing, made all the more effective because the persons who drafted it subjectively wanted a socialist revolution.

The Copcon program accepted the framework of the MFA and Portuguese "patriotism," in the context of an imperialist country. That was the essence of it, and the rest was worse than meaningless. That was why for just a short period, but a crucial one, Carvalho was able to use this document for his "plans."

So, are not Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel guilty of an error similar to that made by the Förbundet Kommunist? In their rejection of bourgeois democracy, do they not concentrate so much on self-organization of the masses that they become open to the charge of leaving the "national political questions" to the MFA?

In our opinion that is a real danger. It is, moreover, not a new error in the history of the revolutionary movement. Its concrete form is antiparliamentary cretinism, but it could more broadly be categorized under the headings of anarchism and ultraleftism.

### The Constituent Assembly as a Stepping-stone to a Workers and Peasants Government

By placing the defense of bourgeois democracy very low on their list of priorities, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are led into picturing Foley's position on the Constituent Assembly as constituting a departure from the principles of Trotskyism.

As we have previously explained, what Foley pointed to was the possibility of putting heat on the leaderships of the Communist and Socialist parties to use the mandate expressed by the popular vote and set up a workers and peasants government in opposition to the unelected military regime.

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel agree that Lenin and Trotsky's method of placing mass reformist workers parties under the demand to take power is a useful propaganda device to educate the workers about the true nature of the leaderships they happen to be following.

But the Portuguese workers have leaped over such illusions, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel intimate; and so priority should be given to a "tooth-and-nail fight to defend all the current gains of the workers." As they describe it the workers "are occupying factories, implementing workers control, and creating self-defense organizations to defend themselves against the threats of unemployment, poverty, and a bloody reactionary coup."

In face of this dramatic situation, they argue, Foley falls into "parliamentary cretinism." Foley advises the workers that it is "'sufficient' to give all power to the Constituent Assembly for these questions to be settled in the interests of the workers, since a majority of the seats in the Constituent Assembly are held by representatives of the SP and CP!"

Thus, a propaganda slogan designed to expose the reformist leaderships has now become "an illusion among revolutionaries about the willingness and ability of these misleaders to actually carry out a socialist revolution."

These errors have been committed by a whole series of groups in Portugal, some of which have adventurist histories, such as the PRP-BR, which Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel mention, others of which have centrist histories. But they fall into the same pattern so far as their approach to the governmental and political questions in Portugal is concerned. The position of these groups parallels that of others outside Portugal, such as the centrist groups already mentioned in France, Sweden, and Belgium, as well as *Lotta Continua* in Italy and the International Socialists in Britain.

The offending "advice" by Foley is from the July 21 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. Foley argued that the strategy of the Stalinists was to serve as the mass organizers of a "progressive" military dictatorship. He said that in this role they could not win the support of the masses or maintain their control of the unions by democratic means. Because of their growing unpopularity, they had been led, in self-defense, to an attack on the very principle of popular sovereignty, of majority rule, in the name of "socialist revolution." The ultralefts, who also view democracy with suspicion, had converged with the Stalinists in this. The full paragraph reads:

"If the CP had been interested in establishing a government representative of the workers, it had only to base itself on the Constituent Assembly and call on the delegates there to act in accordance with the clear mandate given them by the voters. Instead of following this revolutionary course, the Stalinists preferred to lick the boots of the military. For this privilege they were willing to scuttle the Constituent Assembly, as well as trample on popular sovereignty and the democratically expressed will of the masses."

Foley did not advise the masses to trust the Constituent Assembly, kowtow to it, or stop their struggles. Nor did he raise the slogan "all power to the Constituent Assembly."

His position was that if the CP leaders had actually been revolutionary-minded, they would not have left national political questions in the hands of the MFA, but would have respected the mandate clearly given by the voters in the April 25 elections and would have pressed the SP leaders to join them in setting up a workers and peasants government.

To flout the will of the great majority and counterpose bodies to the Constituent Assembly that could not claim to represent politically more than a minute fraction of the Portuguese workers would not advance

7. For the full text, see *Intercontinental Press*, September 15, 1975, p. 1210.

the development of dual power in Portugal, Foley contended, but would retard it. Instead of advancing the independent struggle of the working class, rejection of their will as expressed in the election would disorient the workers and throw at least a section of them into dependency on the MFA or a wing of it. Isn't this what happened in fact?

Why have Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, whose knowledge of Marxism cannot be doubted, opposed this position? Why do they distort it so crudely and obscure the issues with quotations that apply either not at all or but remotely?

Isn't it because they have fallen victim to the anarchist-type illusions Foley warned of, and ended up dissolving the decisive political questions for the working class into a vague and timeless concept of "self-organization"?

Doesn't this in fact lead them into political errors, into developing political illusions in the CP and a wing of the MFA, which, to one degree or another, have supported the "people's power" scheme against the Constituent Assembly?

In fact, the demonstrations of the "workers committees" attained significant size only when they were supported by the CP, as on August 20 and August 27 in Lisbon. And they quite clearly served a political purpose that was by no means revolutionary.

Isn't one of the dangers of this error of the anarchist tradition to begin viewing the MFA as on the right side of the class line and the SP on the wrong side—as a bourgeois, if not flatly reactionary, party?

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do, it is true, try to present a more rounded position by which the Trotskyist program can be reconciled with taking advantage of the openings provided by the MFA's "people's power" project and the enthusiasm it evoked among the ultraleft and centrist groups because of its correspondence to their spontanéist illusions.

They call attention to the fact that they warned against the danger of a split in the working class arising out of the SP's "clinging to bourgeois democracy" and the Stalinists' pushing "one-party schemes." However, they say, the only way to advance the revolution and maintain the basis for working class unity is through a "defense of the twin ideas of *workers democracy and workers councils*." (Emphasis in original.)

Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel are against the slogan of "All power to the Constituent Assembly" and equally against "Dissolve the Constituent Assembly." But, they argue, we must be prepared to build workers councils in cooperation with those who hold both views.

The proposed united front must also include the ultraleft and centrist groups.

This position is nothing if not balanced.

Unfortunately, its balance is in the realm of abstractions and not predicated on reality. In the first place, in the actual situation no significant force calls for "All power to the Constituent Assembly." The SP does not.

In addition, in the concrete situation, a wing of the MFA and the CP have been counterposing a nonexistent workers power to the popular sovereignty represented by the Constituent Assembly and doing this for antidemocratic reasons. It would seem difficult to reconcile that campaign with working-class unity.

The whole logic of the MFA-CP campaign was to lead to an escalating attack on the SP, whose reactionary character was allegedly shown by its support for "bourgeois democracy"—in Portugal, where bourgeois democracy was suppressed for almost a half century. The reactionary character of the SP was also said to have been proved by its alleged opposition to the "national liberation front" program of the MFA—in an imperialist country!

The contribution of the ultraleft and centrist groups was to make this campaign even more aggressive and sectarian. They did not hesitate to demand that the MFA crush the SP outright.

### How Issue of Democracy Was Stolen From Portuguese Revolutionists

A remarkable turn in the political arena has occurred in Portugal, a turn that has dealt grave injury to the international defense of the revolution.

After almost a half century of totalitarian rule, the Portuguese bourgeoisie, one would have thought, would be so discredited as to be utterly incapable of ever recuperating politically, particularly on the issue of democracy. The same can be said of all the bourgeois forces in other countries that backed Salazar and kept him afloat. It would seem to hold above all for Wall Street and some of its institutions, such as the *New York Times*.

Yet these reactionary forces have managed to stage a comeback of sufficient strength to enable them to take the initiative in posing as defenders of democracy in the Portuguese class struggle.

The ultrareactionaries in the North who took advantage of the divisions within the working class and staged murderous raids on many headquarters of the Communist party did so in the name of "democracy." They calculated that it was the most popular issue and that the challenge to their fraudulent use of it would prove to be so weak that it could be disregarded.

The bourgeoisie throughout Europe, who are trying to bolster the capitalist structures that survived the upsurge of the masses following the April 25, 1974, coup, are

But Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel were so dazzled by the potential of "workers committees" turning into soviets that they overlooked this reality. Those who might dare to argue that these workers committees did not yet constitute a governmental alternative, and that there was something fishy about the MFA counterposing them to the Constituent Assembly, are dismissed as "particularly clever sophists." What should we do, then, they ask, accept the "limitation" of these committees? "Prefer that they be suppressed by order of a 'sovereign Constituent Assembly'?"

No, we "particularly clever sophists" base ourselves on reality and argue that the key to building workers power is political. We note that by overlooking the political questions, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have failed to see that in the concrete situation, the MFA has invoked workers power only to transform it into its opposite—the preservation of its own rule. The fiction of carefully balanced abstractions can only prove detrimental.

What is required is a clear political line based on the principles of Trotskyism and designed to find points of support in the real class struggle as it unfolds.

likewise doing so under the stolen banner of defending democracy.

The *New York Times*, which prints all the news that's fit to print until it needs to lie, has been able to make a plausible pretense of being a shining champion of democracy in Portugal.

Things have gone so far that the White House decided it could get away with using the issue of democracy in Portugal as a good excuse for openly ordering the Central Intelligence Agency into action there. Ford obviously considered it to be a stroke that would help his chances of being elected in 1976.

Ford's CIA ploy is particularly instructive. The crimes of the CIA have been exposed to such a degree as to raise a clamor in the United States to put curbs on the agency and even do away with it. In reply to this pressure, Ford, Kissinger, and other mouthpieces of the administration, have decided that they can counter effectively by picturing the CIA as just what is needed to shore up Portuguese democracy.

In behalf of a cause so much in line with the ideals of the "free world," isn't it obvious why the CIA needs to continue its undercover operations? Doesn't it explain the need for hundreds of millions, even billions, of dollars for which it would be criminal to demand an accounting? Doesn't



it explain why the CIA has to develop and stockpile rather nasty weapons?

Here is a mystery indeed. How could these totally discredited reactionary forces steal the issue of democracy away from the Portuguese revolutionists, who are genuinely dedicated to winning a world in which all of humanity can live in freedom?

It was primarily the practices of the Portuguese Communist party and its brazen campaigning *against* bourgeois democracy that opened the way for the Portuguese reaction and its international backers to seize the issue and make it their own.

The political specialists in the pay of the White House understood to perfection what was happening, and they took full advantage of the opening.

The centrists and ultralefts trooped behind the Stalinists in clamoring against bourgeois democracy, providing an idiot chorus of slogan-shouters, who could not have done better if they had been paid by the CIA to offer dramatic evidence that socialism means death to democracy.

And where were the comrades who look to Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for political guidance? They were trailing behind the ultralefts, exclaiming, if only weakly, "Us, too!"

It is true that they never pointed to the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe as models of proletarian democracy, as the pro-Moscow Stalinists did.

And they did not follow the pro-Peking Stalinists in pointing to China or Albania as examples of what to expect in the way of freedom of thought when the proletariat conquers.

As can be seen in the contribution of Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, they were reduced to pointing to the program of our movement, that is, to what becomes possible if our forces succeed in gaining leadership of the revolution.

Comrade Mandel in particular has offered blueprints of what ought to be done and could be done in cases like the seizure of *República* if the institutions of proletarian democracy were further advanced and if they adhered to the programmatic norms of Trotskyism.

This purely propagandistic approach (Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel might call it playing "some propaganda game") was ineffective, since the number of countries that can be pointed to as upholding proletarian democracy is zero.

To avoid appearing like utopian schematists, it was necessary for our comrades to show in action their capacity to defend whatever democracy existed, even if it was in the form of no more than pinched, narrow bourgeois democratic rights.

It is worth considering Trotsky's approach on this question. In his article

"Freedom of the Press and the Working Class," he leveled a devastating attack against the Stalinists who pressed the bourgeois government in Mexico to place restrictions on the reactionary press. Trotsky defended freedom of the press against the Stalinist attacks on it in the most energetic way.

Trotsky's stand was designed to make it as difficult as possible for the bourgeoisie to restrict the exercise of freedom of the press by revolutionary-minded workers. But this same line also had the effect of undercutting any move of the bourgeoisie to sanctimoniously palm themselves off as defenders of democracy in face of the fact that their

## The Payoff Begins

The comrades of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista, who are directly involved in the situation and who are seriously trying to apply the orientation that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel have helped to give them, had to make hard choices—either continue the logical development of the line or work out something new. They chose to stick with the line.

As a result, they ended up tail-ending the ultraleft and centrist groups. These groups in turn have been tail-ending the Portuguese Communist party. The outcome represents a grievous political setback for the LCI and also for the Fourth International.

In fact, the recent errors of the LCI are sadly reminiscent of those of the POUM in Spain in which the majority of the Trotskyist forces were lost to the Fourth International and its program.

The POUM began by capitulating to the anarchists and ended up in fact capitulating to the Stalinists when the anarchists, because of their political confusion, were drawn into the wake of the Communist party.

The fact that the LCI could end up, even for a few days, in a bloc such as the People's United Front of August 25 and that it remains in the Front for Revolutionary Unity, as this coalition was renamed after the departure of the CP, should be taken as a sharp warning to those who expected more positive results from the orientation projected by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

In June 1975, the PRT also became caught up in the ultraleft euphoria over the MFA forming "soviets." The PRT made what it called a "necessary rectification" of its clear class characterization of the MFA and began moving toward the CP-ultraleft bloc.

The PRT adopted the conception that the MFA ought to be characterized as a petty-bourgeois movement whose contradictions

real political objectives are just the opposite.

If Trotsky's well-calculated policy had been advanced vigorously by a revolutionary tendency in Portugal, it could have made it that much more difficult for the Stalinists and those bringing up the rear to cry, "Good riddance!" and hand the issue of democracy over to the counterrevolution in Portugal and its reactionary backers abroad.

By the same token, the defense of the Portuguese revolution in other countries could have been greatly facilitated and strengthened, particularly in the imperialist bastions of reaction that claim to be show windows of democracy.

can be exploited in the interests of the socialist revolution. This incorrect characterization led it into a position where, along with the others who were drawn into support of the "people's power" plan, it could be manipulated by demagogic military officers.

Under the effect of these illusions, the PRT participated in the July 16 "workers committee" demonstration, which was turned into a march that demanded dissolution of the Constituent Assembly.

However, the PRT has pulled back from this course. It did not join the People's United Front or the Front for Revolutionary Unity. It publicly denounced this POUM-like combination and called on the LCI to leave it and join with them to build a Trotskyist party in Portugal. (The full text of the PRT statement and the LCI reply were published in the October 6 issue of *Intercontinental Press*.)

Let us turn again to the article "In Defense of the Portuguese Revolution," in which Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel lodge a "strong protest" against the way we have reported and analyzed the events in Portugal. One of the items they emphasized quite heavily in their criticism was their unanimous agreement with the LCI.

They dated their article August 10. Just two weeks later, the LCI entered into an unprincipled political bloc that included the Portuguese Stalinists.

That action of the LCI so discredited Trotskyism in the eyes of advanced workers, not only in Portugal itself but throughout capitalist Europe and the entire world, that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel considered it absolutely necessary to clear themselves forthwith and publicly.

Whatever their discomfiture, it was imperative, of course, for Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel to shake loose from the actions of the LCI. We do not criticize them for that. In this respect their disavowal was commendable. One has only to consider

what joining the August 25 bloc signified to see that.

In joining the bloc, the leadership of the LCI approved the whole record of the bourgeois government headed by Gonçalves, a record that included a procapitalist foreign investment code, censorship proposals, and other reactionary laws.

Approving the "August 25 Platform"<sup>8</sup> was but another step down the path they had started on by supporting the Copcon proposal in the August 20 demonstration in Lisbon.

The Copcon document, a most treacherous statement because it includes sentences that might have been copied from a revolutionary program for Portugal, accepted the framework of the MFA bourgeois government. The actual effect of these demagogic proposals, therefore, was to lure the ultraleft groups into giving political support to a "left" bourgeois government.

When the LCI supported the Copcon document, Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel seemed unable to make a consistent and understandable criticism of the error. And perhaps as a result of this ambiguity, the LCI did not correct its mistake but carried it further.

While we commend Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel for publicly dissociating themselves from the LCI's violation of basic Trotskyist principles, we consider that their way of doing it was not in accordance with the tradition of Trotskyism. We do not know of a previous instance where a similar action has been taken in such a shamefaced way. Under cover of a stirring summary of the advances of the Portuguese revolution, they make their disclaimer in such an oblique way as to assure that no one can understand its meaning except the initiates.

The criticisms directed against the LCI for joining the People's United Front were expressed in a resolution passed by the majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International and in a public statement by Comrade Mandel.<sup>9</sup> *Rouge*, the weekly of the Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire, also made a statement.<sup>10</sup>

In these statements, the criticisms were kept within the general framework of the notion that achieving a united front with the CP was an important accomplishment, even though this was done *on the basis of support for the CP's class-collaborationist program and sectarian objectives!*

8. See "Portugal: Text of the August 25 Unity Accord," *Intercontinental Press*, September 15, 1975, p. 1206.

9. See "United Secretariat Resolution on Portugal" in *Intercontinental Press*, September 15, 1975, p. 1208; and "Concerning the Unity Accord" in the same issue, p. 1207.

10. See "'Rouge' Statement on the Unity Accord" in *Intercontinental Press*, September 15, 1975, p. 1207.

Let us note how Comrade Mandel proceeds in his disclaimer.

He begins by asserting the necessity for an agreement among the workers organizations. Few would disagree with his three-paragraph indication of what the general objectives of such an agreement ought to include.

He then considers the defects of the August 25 unity accord.

It does not "mention" any "concrete initiative" corresponding with the general objectives that ought to be included in the kind of agreement Comrade Mandel advocates.

The "total lack of initiatives toward the SP," for instance, "... amounts in practice to endorsing the sectarian policy of the PCP. . . ."

The document "implies" support to the "actions of the fifth provisional government. . . ."

While the MFA is "being torn apart," the unity agreement calls on the MFA to join in forming a front of the "workers commissions, neighborhood committees, people's assemblies, etc." along with the "revolutionary parties and organizations of the workers movement. . . ."

"Here again it can only be interpreted as an endorsement of the PCP's reformist project for creating a 'popular, democratic, and socialist front.'"

That would seem to be pretty bad; but there's still worse: "By supporting the guide document of the people-MFA alliance, the agreement also places the workers commissions, the neighborhood commissions, and the people's assemblies within the framework of a project of integration that is in opposition to the real autonomy of the mass movement in relation to the institutions of the bourgeois state."

That paragraph is worth reading again. Hasn't Comrade Mandel put his finger on the *corporatist* content of the MFA Guide Document on "popular power"? Wasn't this one of the main points that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel found especially derisive in Foley's analysis? Didn't they hold it up as damning proof that Foley had "now completed the road to the Healy-Lambert method of politics"? What should we now ask Healy-Lambert-Foley to do? Make room for another strange bedfellow?

What lessons does Comrade Mandel draw from the LCI's departure from Trotskyist principles? None whatever. He does not even mention the LCI! Not by a single word. How then can anyone learn anything about the nature of the LCI's error, particularly its basis in the line upheld by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel? What caused the sudden collapse of the "unanimous" agreement with the LCI? What efforts, if any, were made to convince the comrades of the LCI that they were

committing an error that might prove suicidal?

Silence on such questions does not help train cadres; it helps destroy them.

In the August 29 issue of *Rouge*, in which Comrade Mandel's murky disavowal of the unprincipled action of the LCI was published, an unsigned article (presumably by the editors) went even further in obscuring the error committed by the LCI. This was done by stressing the *practical* gains to be seen in the August 25 accord:

"Beyond the criticisms (printed elsewhere in this issue) [this refers to Comrade Mandel's article—F., H., and N.] of the content of the common agreement signed between the PCP and the Portuguese far-left groups, the document has been rightly seen by many militants in the workers movement as a small historical event. . . ."

"In fact it is the first time a Stalinist party, faced with a rising revolutionary ferment that is radicalizing increasingly important fringes of the workers vanguard to its left, negotiated and signed an agreement on this level with several far-left groups, including a Trotskyist organization."

"The breach is rather large. Will it be necessary to revise the almost fifty-year-old police fables about 'Hitlerite-Trotskyism'?"

In short, despite some errors, well done, LCI. As for principles? Bof! Was it any less principled than Comrade Krivine's interview with Admiral Coutinho?

What about the LCI's error? Is this explained? Are any lessons drawn? The LCI is not even mentioned! The editors of *Rouge* skirt this by saying that the agreement was signed by "several far-left groups, including a Trotskyist organization."

What "Trotskyist organization"? How demure the editors of *Rouge* are! But then they can point to the example of Comrade Mandel. He did not go even as far as they did in admitting that "a Trotskyist organization" was included in the unprincipled bloc.

The editors of *Rouge* said, "In no way do we support the basis of this agreement." What basis? Why shouldn't it be supported? The editors are silent.

Yet they were so elated over the agreement that they sought to utilize it as a springboard for a common campaign with "the Communist party, the Socialist party, and all the workers organizations . . . of support to the Portuguese revolution. . . ."

On what basis? An agreement like the one signed by the LCI? Or are the editors of *Rouge* only engaged in "some propaganda game"?

Let us turn now to the resolution on this subject adopted September 2 by a majority of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International.

The opening section of the resolution, about 67 percent of the entire document,



offers a glowing general estimate of the present stage of the Portuguese revolution. About 25 percent deals with the unfortunate August 25 agreement on which the People's United Front was based. A final 8 percent takes up the LCI.

Here are the criticisms made of the unprincipled agreement that brought the Portuguese Stalinists and the LCI into a common "front":

- "The accord in effect sanctioned the CP's policy of supporting the government and maintaining the unity of the MFA. . . ."

- "The accord mentioned no concrete objective that would permit the unification of the working class and the actual stimulation of workers self-defense and self-organization."

- "... the accord sanctioned the present division of the workers movement and did not contribute to surmounting this major obstacle to the development of the revolutionary process."

- "... the 'unitary accord' envisaged the formation of a 'front' in which the MFA is included on the same footing as the autonomous organs, parties, and revolutionary organizations of the workers movement. This not only appeared as a stamp of approval of the CP's project of creating a 'democratic and socialist popular front,' but also fell within the framework of the perspective of integrating the autonomous organs in opposition to their real independence of the institutions of the bourgeois state."

- "... the accord could easily serve the objective of the CP (as it did during the August 28 demonstration), which is to utilize the weight of the workers vanguard to negotiate compromises on the level of the state apparatus, the government, the army, and the MFA under the best possible conditions."

- "... the lack of concrete objectives and the concessions made to the CP's political orientation prevented the lessons of the policy of the CP leadership and of the rupture of the 'front' from being clearly drawn before the masses."

The most adroit attorney could hardly have said less about the betrayal of revolutionary principles represented by the August 25 "unitary accord" of the People's United Front. However, whatever may have been the diplomatic considerations that decided Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel to draw up such a watery statement, surely nothing prevented them from clearly drawing the lessons of the LCI's participation in this class-collaborationist bloc. Otherwise, how could the cadres of the world Trotskyist movement learn something from this bitter experience?

Anyone expecting a criticism of the LCI in the tradition of the Trotskyist movement is in for disappointment. The resolution

does not offer a single word of explicit criticism. To grasp the meaning of the resolution, you have to read between the lines. In fact, the implicit disavowal of the LCI's deviation is covered up by praise of the LCI and an affirmation of general solidarity:

"In the workers and people's counteroffensive based on the real dynamic of the mass movement, the Trotskyist militants of the LCI will stand in the front ranks of all initiatives fostering the extension, generalization, and centralization of the autonomous organs of the workers and the self-defense of the workers. . . ."

"The Fourth International and all its sections and sympathizing organizations will support the comrades of the LCI by all the means at their disposal and will press for all mobilizations of solidarity with the revolutionary struggle of the Portuguese workers."

Of course, we think it would be quite wrong to single out the LCI as a scapegoat. All that the leaders of the LCI did was to extend in practice an orientation that others like *Was Tun* were extending in words. And the real source of what *Was Tun* said and the LCI did was the line advanced by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

But let us proceed; there is more to come.

As it turned out, the United People's Front formed with the Stalinists by "several far-left groups, including a Trotskyist organization," remained united for only three days. Once the Stalinists had gained a little bargaining leverage through the good offices of the ultralefts, they made an overture to the Socialist party.

For this they were "expelled" by the ultraleft groups for softness toward the Social Democracy.

The Stalinists, naturally, gave a different version. According to the September 3 issue of *l'Humanité*, the French Communist party paper, the PCP "let it be known that it had withdrawn from this provisional secretariat, noting the 'incapacity' of certain organizations to carry out 'even the slightest amount of united work.'"

However, the Communist party's daughter group, the Portuguese Democratic Movement, remained in the rump front, along with the LCI and a number of ultraleft and centrist groups, including those mentioned by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel, except the UDP, which is probably the only one of them that can mobilize significant forces.

On September 10, this front, rechristened the Front for Revolutionary Unity, issued its program.<sup>11</sup> It includes a denunciation of the Constituent Assembly elections as part

of a "reactionary bourgeois offensive," and demands "the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and exposing its bourgeois character." It "points out the road for a massive offensive to defeat the Social Democracy and to crush fascism. . . . and for national independence from imperialism."

The program couples Social Democracy with fascism in a number of places and calls for purging "all the fascist and Social Democratic putschists from the armed forces." It defends the Fifth Division of the General Staff, which used Stalinist propaganda to defend the regime.

Furthermore, when this program was presented to the public by a panel of representatives of all the component organizations, the representative of the Portuguese Democratic Movement said that measures to "halt the abuse of freedom of the press" would have been proper and "even patriotic" under the Gonçalves government.

No protest from the representatives of the other groups was reported.

The program contains points that may sound good in the abstract. But the political positions cited above place it in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of Trotskyism.

A glaring example is the Front for Revolutionary Unity's espousal of the reactionary nationalism of an imperialist country. In all, it represents exactly the positions that Foley warned could logically flow from making a fetish of "soviets" and "workers control."

Thus the groups that in the name of a socialist revolution supported the attacks on bourgeois democratic rights that began with the *República* affair, now stand on a program close to the ultraleft Stalinism of the "third period." For all practical purposes this program views the Socialist

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11. See "Manifesto of the Front for Revolutionary Unity," *Intercontinental Press*, September 22, 1975, p. 1259.

party as "social fascist." It is a program in the service of a bourgeois government.

That the LCI could join a front based on such a program was the result of a logic that followed relentlessly from a policy of conceding to ultraleftism.

Do Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel feel the irony of this? They argued that by criticizing the content of the Guide Document as "reminiscent of corporatism," Foley had stumbled into advancing a version of "social fascism." But it was those who looked to them for guidance who ended up endorsing a program that *in fact* adopted a concept of "social fascism."

The program of the Front for Revolutionary Unity, which, we repeat, is supported by the LCI, is reminiscent of the ultraleft, anarchist, centrist deviation Trotsky fought against in the case of Spain in the 1930s, particularly the politics of the POUM. Under the momentum of a mass struggle, especially with reverberations of the depth to be seen in Portugal, a "left" opportunist error can rapidly take on an irresistible momentum.

### For a Correct Resolution of the Differences

As we explained at the beginning of this rejoinder, substantial agreement on the economic and sociological analyses of the Portuguese situation exists in the world Trotskyist movement. Nonetheless, two main lines of policy have emerged. Precisely because the differentiation has occurred mainly on this level, the debate has been sharp.

Differences on other levels—economic forecasts, estimates of class relationships, the role of the national struggle, the definition of a postcapitalist state, philosophy—can be discussed with much less heat if agreement exists on political tasks. (Of course, with some implied contradictions in positions, since politics is closely tied to deeper questions, including philosophy.) Long debates in these areas have been conducted over the years within the Trotskyist movement and at times publicly without undue consequences. In fact they have contributed to maintaining the high intellectual level of the Fourth International.

It is otherwise with urgent political differences. In each country, the Trotskyists constitute a political current that has no choice, if it is to survive and prosper, but to take a stand on the concrete issues of the class struggle as they arise. The more intense the class struggle, the more immediate and far-reaching are the consequences of decisions.

In Portugal, for instance, a group could find itself on barricades set up by the Communist party to block a demonstration

We do not doubt that Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel did not favor and were disturbed by the outcome of their line in Portugal from which they have felt compelled to dissociate themselves publicly. However, they hold key responsibility for what happened. By belittling the importance of Marxist analysis of Portuguese politics, of characterizing the class nature of the government, and so on, they left their followers unarmed amid fast-moving developments in a political jungle.

It is noteworthy for example that in their long article voicing their "strong protest" against our coverage of the Portuguese revolution they do not once mention transitional demands, although they define the government as an extremely weak one. It is for just such cases that the Transitional Program has its greatest importance.

This omission is ascribable politically to their accommodation to the spontanéist and centrist illusions of newly radicalizing youth. The errors of those who have looked to them for guidance in Portugal indicate what this path leads to.

against the seizure of *República*, or it could find itself marching with the workers who posted the sign: "Listen barricaders, the fishermen of Matosinhos are coming through at 4:30 p.m. on the way to Antas."

In that particular incident, no violence flared. The barricaders bowed to the superior numbers and evident determination of the fishermen. Inherent in such situations, however, is the application of force. Skulls can get cracked. Still worse, those who make the wrong choice might not be able to recover from the political damage they have inflicted on themselves.

Thus a small revolutionary nucleus can suffer a devastating setback if it makes a serious political mistake. On the other hand, in a situation like the one in Portugal, it can advance quite rapidly if it manages to follow a correct political course.

It is thus understandable why Trotskyists the world over are following the events in Portugal with such intense interest. They want their comrades in Portugal to forge ahead and the revolution to succeed.

It is likewise understandable why the events in Portugal have deepened the controversy that has been going on in the Fourth International and the organizations in sympathy with its cause. As political parties (in program and aim if not always in size), the Trotskyists have no choice but to make their political positions known as they struggle to advance the world revolution in their various countries. Moreover, it is tied in with their function of mobilizing or helping to mobilize forces of the working

class and its allies in a revolutionary direction.

Of course, the protest lodged by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel is precisely over whether they or we are right as to the political course to be followed in Portugal. This can be determined only by the logical power of the conflicting arguments and how well they are based on the facts (which are also in dispute, as is evident). Ultimately, the question of who is right will be determined by the lesson of events.

On that, we think a judgment can already be made. A big element in the verdict consists of what has begun to happen to the LCI in applying the course recommended by Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel.

It can be contended, of course, that the Portuguese comrades were simply inept or failed to observe certain limitations. A disclaimer of that kind, however, would signify a shirking of leadership responsibilities, a position not worthy of Trotskyists.

We hope that the comrades of the LCI will reconsider their course, particularly in view of its evident logic. If they are considering charting a new course instead of continuing in the logic of the course they have been following, we hope it will be in a direction opposite from the one they are now trying out.

And if Comrades Frank, Maitan, and Mandel do not mind our suggesting it, we hope they, too, will change, and bring their not inconsiderable influence to bear in favor of a course corresponding more closely to the fundamental principles of Trotskyism, above all the method outlined in the Transitional Program.

In any case we are of the opinion that the differences can be resolved on a principled basis only through a thoroughgoing discussion. We are, naturally, certain that such a discussion will be conducted within the Fourth International. As is now clear, it will also be carried on publicly. While such a discussion may not be of interest to all readers of the Trotskyist press, for whom a good many points and especially references will inevitably seem obscure, others will find it of unusual interest, we think. The issues at stake are being discussed in many diverse circles the world over.

A public discussion, we are sure, will not damage the Fourth International. In the final analysis it will strengthen it. Certainly a spillover of the discussion into the public will offer compelling evidence of the rich internal life of the world Trotskyist movement.

In contrast to the intellectual sterility of competing movements, ascribable either to the prohibition of internal discussion, the banning of tendencies and factions, or adherence to barren sectarian schemas, the Fourth International in this way will once again prove its superiority.

September 30, 1975

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