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PORTUGAL Key to the International Situation

Index for 1975

U.S. Senate Votes to Stay Out of Angola

By Ernest Harsch

The White House hawks who favor escalating the American intervention in the Angolan civil war have received a setback. On December 19 the Senate voted 54 to 22 to amend a defense appropriations bill in order to bar funds "for any activities in Angola other than intelligence gathering."

The Senate action placed in doubt the White House's plans to allocate an additional \$28 million in arms and support funds for two of the three warring Angolan nationalist groups. A few days before the vote, White House leaks revealed that the Central Intelligence Agency had already sent \$26 million to the FNLA and UNITA over the past few months and that another \$7 million was "in the pipeline."

"As outlined by several Senators and apparently substantiated by Mr. Kissinger, the Administration presently has only \$3.6 million remaining in a contingency fund for use by the Central Intelligence Agency on covert operations," David Binder reported in the December 20 *New York Times*.

Minutes after the Senate vote, President Ford appeared at a news conference and declared, "The Senate decision to cut off additional funds for Angola is a deep tragedy for all countries whose security depends on the United States. Ultimately, it will profoundly affect the security of our country as well."

The next day he claimed, "The action of Congress is crucial in that it has deprived us of helping a majority of the people in Angola to make their own decision."

Ruling circles in South Africa, which has forces fighting in Angola against the MPLA, also reacted to the vote with disappointment.

The congressional opposition of both Democrats and Republicans to the White House's plans to plunge further into the Angola war arose over tactical differences on how best to advance American imperialism's interests.

Using propaganda reminiscent of the early days of U.S. involvement in Vietnam, Kissinger and Ford have argued that it is necessary for Washington to counterbalance the large amounts of Soviet aid given to the MPLA. The opponents of this course of action replied that U.S. interests in the region were not threatened by an MPLA victory and that the risks of increased American intervention were, in any case, too great.

The probability that a large-scale involve-

ment in Angola would meet with mass opposition among the American population—which has become highly sensitive to military adventures by Washington as a result of the Vietnam War—was certainly the main factor in determining the outcome of the vote.

The Senate action, however, is not conclusive. The amended defense bill has yet to be passed by the House of Representatives,

Schedule

This is a reminder that there will be no issue for January 5. We will resume our regular weekly schedule with the January 12 issue.

which reconvenes on January 19. Those forces in the White House, CIA, and Pentagon that favor pushing ahead in Angola still have resources at their disposal to try to influence the outcome of that vote.

Even if the House upholds the amendment, Ford and Kissinger have ways of partially bypassing the congressional restrictions. The \$3.6 million reportedly left in the CIA's "contingency fund" and the \$7 million "in the pipeline" could be stretched by underpricing the value of the arms shipments to Angola.

In addition, some of the U.S. military aid given to other governments, such as the Mobutu regime in Zaïre, may in actuality be earmarked for use in Angola. The State Department, the CIA, and the Pentagon undoubtedly have other secret funds on which they can draw.

Parallel to his attempts to obtain more

money for the FNLA and UNITA, Ford has also sought to cut off the MPLA's major financial source, the royalty and tax payments made to it by Gulf Cabinda, a subsidiary of Gulf Oil.

Gulf, which is the largest American investor in Angola, made its last quarterly payment, of \$116 million, in September. The funds were transferred to the Banco Angola in Luanda, which is now controlled by the MPLA. Gulf's next payment of "a little under \$100 million" is scheduled for December 31.

"Running at a total of \$500 million a year, the Gulf payments are almost 10 times what the Central Intelligence Agency has been empowered to send to the Angola factions it supports," Binder reported December 20.

The State Department has applied pressure on Gulf to place its payments in escrow, rather than make them to the MPLA. Gulf officials expressed reluctance to go along with this proposal.

The MPLA, which has made no pledges to nationalize the oil fields or other major imperialist holdings in Angola, has described its relations with Gulf as "very good." If Gulf stopped the payments, however, the MPLA might retaliate by seizing the oil fields.

The propaganda campaign against Soviet and Cuban involvement in Angola and the White House's continued efforts to aid one side in the civil war indicate that the hawks in Washington will press for as great an American intervention in Angola as they can get away with.

It should be clear to everyone who supports the right of the Angolans to self-determination that the intervention of American imperialism, whatever its form or extent, is a serious threat to the struggle for real national independence.

As the massive opposition to Washington's war in Vietnam showed, it is possible to restrict—and even block—American imperialism's ability to carry out its aggressive policies in the colonial world. A similar course, aimed at blocking American intervention in the Angolan civil war, is now called for. □

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Portugal—the Key to the International Situation

By Gerry Foley

The Crisis of Leadership

The Awakening of the Masses

The fall of the Salazarist government on April 25, 1974, touched off a rapid and massive radicalization that blocked the plans of the succeeding government to replace the half-century-old dictatorship with more modern capitalist methods of rule. In 1975, this mass upsurge rose to new heights, threatening to sweep away the capitalist system itself.

Hitherto the most stagnant and repressive country in Western Europe, Portugal became the scene of the deepest revolutionary crisis in any imperialist country since World War II. It became a revolutionary laboratory for the entire world, and in particular for its potentially powerful neighbor, Spain, where another old dictatorship is beginning to break down.

Already the Portuguese upsurge has shown how quickly great masses of people can turn toward socialism, once the capitalist repressive apparatuses and habits of obedience are shaken by the inevitable breakdowns that come as the ruling classes try to adjust to the mounting pressures they face.

After more than fifty years of capitalist decay and retreat, the Portuguese masses had taken hope in their ability to change their lot and move to the only serious alternative—socialism.

The leaders of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA—Movimento das Forças Armadas), who toppled the antiquated Salazarist dictatorship, were evidently taken by surprise by the power of the forces released when the masses got the opportunity to express themselves and demand fulfillment of the promise of democratic rights.

There was a proliferation of strikes, not yet giant national struggles but hundreds of small and middle-sized actions, as workers began to rise up against the conditions imposed on them by brutal police intimidation and repression. They began to test their strength, to assert long suppressed aspirations that seemed hopeless not long before.

There was a tremendous hunger for socialist ideas and socialist perspectives. Virtually any socialist group, no matter how sectarian or exotic, was guaranteed an audience of thousands. No ideas and no groups were rejected without being considered. The masses were sick to death of

capitalist orthodoxies and thought-control. Every group was welcome to argue its point of view.

In a country with a chronic lack of books of any kind, Marxist literature became enormously popular. Books by Lenin dominated the windows of all the stores; they were sold by poor newspaper sellers and gypsies.

As this mood spread, it became an almost irresistible force and far outdistanced the actual organization of the working class. There had been no mass workers organizations when the Salazarist regime was overthrown. The great majority of workers had no experience in mass struggles.

Moreover, the Communist party, which was the only opposition party with a substantial national apparatus, blocked the development of united, democratic, national workers organizations in order to preserve its bureaucratic control over the fragmented craft unions that were allowed during the "liberal" phase of Salazarism after 1969.

The braking role of the Communist party and the provocative actions of ultraleftists trying to impress the masses by displays of "revolutionary" determination and daring led to ebbs in the radicalization, and repeatedly opened the way for counterattacks by bourgeois forces.

But each time these conservative forces moved to try to cut off the development of the radicalization by restricting democratic rights, hundreds of thousands of workers and toilers mobilized and drove the bourgeoisie into rapid and disastrous retreats.

In each confrontation, the radicalization leaped to a qualitatively higher level. When the chief of the MFA regime, Gen. António

Year in Review

In our final issue each year, we have for some time offered a review of the main events affecting the international political situation during the year.

This year, despite such major happenings as the defeat of American imperialism in Indochina, we decided to limit our review to the events in Portugal. In our opinion, the developing revolution there, with its potential of spreading to Spain and far beyond, outweighed everything else.

The review drawn up by Gerry Foley seeks to single out the key facts in the Portuguese class struggle, to place them in their dialectical relationship, and to outline the revolutionary Marxist conclusions to be drawn from them.

de Spínola, tried to stage a reactionary show of force on September 28, 1974, for the first time the working class and toilers mobilized en masse, escaping effective control by the MFA. Despite the objections of all the mass reformist leaderships, the need for the workers to take power came to the fore.

In their hundreds of thousands, the working people showed that they and only they could defend the democratic rights that had been gained and that they could do so only by acting independently of the "progressive" military leaders like Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, who remained passive until tests of strength were decided.

On March 11, 1975, when the Spínola wing of the MFA tried to use force to stop the radicalization that had begun to spread rapidly in the armed forces themselves, the

Political Line of Articles in Intercontinental Press

Owing to the current debate in the radical movement over policies in various areas such as Portugal, in which some of our regular contributors have taken variant positions, we should like to call special attention to the following paragraph in our masthead:

Signed articles represent the views of the authors, which may not necessarily coincide with those of Intercontinental

Press. Insofar as it reflects editorial opinion, unsigned material expresses the standpoint of revolutionary Marxism.

Up to now, statements, declarations, and resolutions of the United Secretariat of the Fourth International have appeared under the general heading of "Documents." As a matter of further clarification, we are now listing them under a separate heading.

workers said, "No!" And Spínola was sent packing.

The direction of the revolution toward workers power became manifest in other telling ways. The bank workers exposed the way financial institutions had been supporting the capitalist parties, including those implicated in the attempted coup. They forced the government to nationalize the banks and insurance companies in order to defend the democratic rights of the masses and to live up to its socialist claims.

At this point, many of the big capitalists decided that it was healthier to leave the country and let the military government look after their fundamental interests. And as the world economic crisis began to affect Portugal more and more and the capitalists argued with greater insistence that they could not meet new demands for decent wages and working conditions, the workers asked the government to nationalize their enterprises.

In defending the workers against decisions of the bosses, plant committees assumed control over hiring and firing, and the workers won democratic rights on the job. Some large factories became centers of political activity and discussion almost as open and free as the most radical campuses had been after April 1974.

Capitalist rule was left hanging by a thread. Nothing held the masses back from organizing to take power but their own illusions in the demagogy of the MFA and the reformist parties.

Thus, in 1975, the problem of political leadership assumed a new acuteness.

The Rivalry Between the CP and SP

Under the pressure of the mass upsurge, rifts appeared between the MFA and the reformist parties supporting it.

After the September 1974 crisis, the MFA had to rely principally on left-sounding demagogy to maintain its rule. It began picturing itself as a kind of "Portuguese national liberation front." Whereas the MFA government had previously relied on the Communist party as its main auxiliary in the mass movement, it now became directly dependent on this political relationship.

Only the CP was prepared to subordinate itself completely to the military regime. Only the CP was "disciplined" enough to defend the bonapartist policies of the regime in the workers movement without yielding an inch in the face of rising rank-and-file militancy.

The Socialist party was no less opportunist. It was equally committed to maintaining capitalism and was trusted even more by the Portuguese capitalist class. But its membership was less "disciplined" and dogmatically indoctrinated than the CP ranks. First of all, the SP attracted a

following by offering a gathering place for all sorts of socialist currents who wanted to see some concrete progress toward socialism. Second, it appealed to the most general aspirations of the Portuguese masses, who wanted socialism but not the kind of dictatorship that exists in the Soviet Union. At the same time, it offered a home for those who wanted radical social reforms but hoped to accomplish them peacefully, without violent domestic or international conflicts.

The SP based itself primarily on the democratic aspirations that arose among the masses after April 25, 1974.

The SP was important to the MFA as a reservoir of non-Communist but "progressive" support for the regime. But it could not be counted on to play the same role as the CP. In the first place, it did not begin with a strong apparatus in the union movement. Second, it lacked disciplined activists, and by its nature had great difficulty in developing any. Thus, it could not compete with the CP for the role of mass organizer of the MFA.

In addition, people joined the SP for various reasons, some openly reformist, others vaguely socialist, but all of them connected to such palpable goals as wage increases, union democracy, the dismantling of the Salazarist structure, and so on. On the other hand, the CP attracted its following by presenting a mythologized revolutionary image associated with the Soviet Union and demanding blind faith in the name of a "final struggle" with capitalism to be carried out not right now but when the party leadership gave the word.

The CP was thus the only workers party that could mobilize its ranks to oppose the demands of the workers head on, as it showed in the case of the postal workers' strike in June 1974.

Furthermore, although the CP was a class-collaborationist party, it was not constructed solely along parliamentary lines but rested on an activist base, on disciplined factions operating in every area of social activity. As such, it could serve as an essential ally for a military regime that needed to be able to control the society from top to bottom to achieve its ends. Such a party could also accommodate itself best to military forms of rule.

The Socialist party, built to function in the electoral arena, could not adapt itself so easily to a military regime. It needed parliamentary forms, elections, a free press, in order to capitalize on its loose but broader popular support.

As a result of these differences, the two workers parties tended to enter into conflict from the beginning, even though at first they worked together rather closely in most areas. The very fact of competition caused problems. The SP had less direct responsibility for maintaining "order" in the mass

movement. So, it could take a more flexible position toward challenges to the government's authority from the left.

The SP did this to compensate for its lack of an apparatus. It sought to broaden its appeal and reinforce its democratic image. This attitude brought bitter reproaches from the CP, which viewed the SP's ambiguous stance as "opportunism"—an accurate designation, of course, within the class-collaborationist perspective both parties accepted. The CP considered that the SP was taking unfair advantage of the difficulties the CP suffered in the mass movement as a result of its loyal defense of the government. But the CP could hardly have expected the SP to play the game differently. There is, after all, little honor among thieves.

The antagonism between the CP and SP sharpened in late 1974 and early 1975 in the debate over "institutionalization" of the MFA, that is, over whether the MFA's control of the government should be legitimized by law for an extended period. The SP claimed to support this proposal. Nonetheless, a bitter, if vague, polemic broke out over the issue. Apparently, the CP and the MFA did not believe the SP was as enthusiastic as it should be. On the other hand, the SP seemed to think that the CP and the MFA were putting a noose around its neck.

The conflict was obviously real and serious, although there was not any fundamental difference between the SP and the CP about the imperativeness of supporting the MFA. What the conflict reflected was the contradiction of mass workers parties supporting a bourgeois government, a contradiction that in 1975 would blow up the "left" MFA formula.

The wrangle that was muffled and obscure over "institutionalization" burst violently to the surface when the MFA moved to shore up the sagging position of the CP in the unions by decreeing the Trade Union Unity Law in January 1975.

In this battle, the CP, with the help of the MFA, was able to mobilize large numbers of workers in demonstrations supporting the law. The SP got certain guarantees from the MFA to soften the defeat it suffered, but the guarantees were later disregarded by the military rulers.

Consequences of the SP's Electoral Victory

By the time of the Constituent Assembly elections in April 1975, the prestige of both the MFA and the CP had dropped decisively. Although the CP and some sections of the MFA spread rumors trying to link the SP with the March 11 coup attempt, the Social Democrats won a smashing victory in the elections. The appeals of military demagogues such as Gen. Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho and Adm. Rosa Coutinho for a

blank vote as a way of rejecting the "parties" and showing confidence in the MFA went substantially unheeded. The CP and its petty-bourgeois front, the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP—*Movimento Democrático Português*), received a relatively small vote, losing heavily to the SP even in their own traditional strongholds. Both the CP and the MFA had suffered a sharp rebuff.

In response, the CP and the MFA came out against parliamentary rule, proposing instead to maintain military tutelage in the context of "direct democracy." This was formulated in the so-called People's Power plan that was adopted by the MFA Assembly on July 8, 1975. But when its parliamentarist prospects were threatened in this way, the loose, moderate SP displayed an energy and determination it had given no hint of before. In face of threats of violence and repression from the MFA, from the CP, and from the whole spectrum of ultraleft groups, it mobilized tens of thousands of its supporters in the streets to oppose the government's plan.

For the first time, masses of workers and toilers openly began to call for a political break with the MFA, apparently terrifying the SP leaders, who had no intention of going that far.

However, the MFA and the CP were already quite isolated. The "direct democracy" plan had little chance of political success. A section of the military came out against this solution, and the SP leadership immediately subordinated itself to them, obviously welcoming the chance to escape from the uncomfortable position of having to oppose the government of the bourgeoisie in the streets.

The CP's allies in the MFA were defeated in a struggle that lasted through the month of August. A new cabinet, the sixth provisional government, was formed on September 19, the SP assuming the major political responsibility. Now the roles of the two workers parties became reversed. The SP tried to mobilize support for the government's actions by claiming that they were necessary to "defend democracy."

However, its democratic slogans suddenly seemed to lose their magic when they were clearly directed against the interests of the soldiers and the workers. The SP was unable to mobilize support for the government on the scale of its previous demonstrations against the government.

To recoup its losses, the CP began to support, even encourage, some labor struggles. The SP responded bitterly, denouncing the Stalinists for opportunistically exploiting "just demands" that the government unfortunately was "unable" to meet. In the context of the class-collaborationist framework accepted by both parties, the Social Democrats had a right to complain about the dangerous CP



Portugal: L'An 1
Lisbon, May 1, 1974. From the very beginning, military rulers faced problem of how to keep mobilization of masses in check.

moves, just as the CP, when it was riding high, had complained about the SP taking to the streets. The lack of solidarity in opportunism threatened the whole game. But how could the SP expect the other thief to show more honor than the SP had displayed in the months before?

Another element in the class struggle came to the fore. The effect of the CP's pressure tactics now could not be so easily controlled. The general context had become much more unstable. The authority of the "left" MFA leaders over their own followers had largely broken down as a result of their defeat in the August crisis. Under the impact of the deepening economic crisis, workers were more impatient. The CP's position in the unions was so weakened that now it had to fight for its life. At the same time, the split between the two main workers parties, the prolonged and bitter conflict, and the continuing instability and economic decline with no prospects for improvement were turning sections of the population toward the right.

As a countermove, the CP turned to adventurist tactics, but within the same general strategy of class collaboration.

That is, it chose the gamble of making a series of "revolutionary" gestures and threatening to destabilize the position of the sixth government. The aim was to stem the decline in its influence, and by rocking the boat a little, to win some concessions from the MFA leadership and the SP.

The end result was a grave defeat for the CP and disaster for its ultraleft allies.

In the absence of a revolutionary leadership that could use the openings offered by the mass reformist parties' contradictions to advance the struggle and consciousness of the workers and unite them behind a revolutionary program, the conflicts generated by these contradictions only tended to confuse the masses politically.

As the reformist leaderships became discredited, the result was not more political clarity but rather a greater fluidity that added to the general instability and chaos. The competition did not sort out more capable and honest leaders on a major scale. Instead, all the competing groups tended to reinforce each other's weaknesses.

The big reformist parties were obliged to make some concessions to the smaller competing groups that claimed to be more

revolutionary. The União Democrática do Povo (UDP—People's Democratic Union), a Maoist group evolving in the direction of anarcho-syndicalism, became a serious rival of the CP in the Lisbon industrial unions. The parliamentarist Socialist party, forced to engage in direct struggle in the mass organizations and in the streets, had to turn to smaller activist groups for help to compensate for its lack of cadres.

As the class struggle accelerated, the reformist organizations were rapidly tested in the eyes of the masses. As a result, there was increasing fluidity in the workers movement, in particular in the orbit of the loosely organized Socialist party, as large strata shifted back and forth looking for an alternative to the treacherous leaderships, mobilizing when one or another reformist party defended objectives that were in their interests, falling into indifference or going elsewhere when it betrayed their interests.

The Ultraleft Camp

This fluidity was magnified by the existence of a number of groups to the left of the reformist parties that had managed to gain rather wide recognition because of the fact that no organization had emerged from the underground in an absolutely dominant position and because of the friendliness of the masses toward all socialist currents.

Nearly all these groups were quite sectarian and ultraleft. They were all slow to seize the opportunities that arose upon the fall of Caetano. Virtually without exception, they were reluctant to drop their underground methods. They began to function as public organizations only after the first wave of the mass upsurge had passed. Besides that, upon finally emerging from clandestinity, they did not seriously present themselves as contenders for the leadership of the masses. They focused on "radical" actions and issues that appealed to certain limited strata. They did not offer general political programs correlated to the concerns of the masses.

Nonetheless, a number of these groups, in particular the UDP and the Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado (MRPP—Movement to Reorganize the Proletarian Party), assembled a following of several thousand persons. Others, like the guerrillaist Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado (PRP—Revolutionary party of the Proletariat) and the Movimento de Esquerda Socialista (MES—Movement of the Socialist Left), were able at certain times to exert notable influence in some important areas.

While these groups have managed to complicate the job of the reformist parties, they have contributed nothing to developing a revolutionary leadership or program for Portugal. They have not even been able to avoid being manipulated by the reformist

parties. In particular in 1975, all the ultraleft groups were drawn more and more into serving as pawns and cat's-paws of the CP and the most demagogic elements in the MFA such as General de Carvalho and Admiral Coutinho.

Nonetheless, groups to the left of the reformist parties have played a larger role in Portugal than in any other upsurge since May-June 1968 in France and stand in a stronger position vis-à-vis these parties than at any time since the Spanish Civil War. In fact, these groups have largely tended to repeat the errors and trajectory of the Spanish anarchists, whose concentration on "direct action" blinded them to general political questions and led them eventually to capitulate to Stalinist reformism.

Individual groups have experienced swift ups and downs in influence, depending on their credibility at the moment. For example, the MES went into a crisis in late 1974 when its spontanéist orientation in the union movement proved ineffective against the growing CP machine. It then hitched its wagon to the Stalinists, as a kind of more militant junior partner. After this, owing to the loss of its independent role and the defeats suffered by the CP itself in 1975, the MES went into crisis again, with new splits.

The PRP managed to make a quick impact on the propaganda level with its revolutionary-sounding proclamations and daring actions. When the "direct democracy" plan was first aired, the PRP moved speedily to organize its own "soviets" in some advanced plants, such as the Lisnave shipyards in Lisbon.

This operation attracted considerable publicity. *Le Monde's* Portuguese correspondent was impressed, for example, when in June 1975 the PRP was able to get about half of the Lisnave workers to a meeting and convince a majority of them to vote to form a "soviet" and support a call for the "dictatorship of the proletariat."

But this campaign proved to be a flash in the pan. The PRP was unable to consolidate substantial influence or build a serious organization. Its orientation of "soviets without parties," similar to the "revolutionary apoliticism" of the anarchists, prevented it even from capitalizing on the impact of its adventures. It remained essentially a grouping of militarist romantics. And, although it retained some influence in certain plants and above all among certain radicalized officers, who found its brand of politics congenial to their professional outlook, it was already a burned-out rocket by the time it began to launch calls for an armed insurrection in November 1975.

The group on the far left that gained most in 1975 was the UDP. It began with some former CP trade-union cadres and managed to gain more from the opposition of militant

workers to the class-collaborationist policies of the CP than had the MES in the first period after the fall of the Salazarist regime. Perhaps this was because it was organizationally tougher than the MES and politically more homogeneous.

The initial nucleus of the UDP was more syndicalist and less cultist than the other Maoist groups. It evolved away from orthodox Maoism toward more consistent anarcho-syndicalism. At the same time, it tended to be drawn into the orbit of the CP like the other ultraleft groups. But its Maoist background prevented it from getting as close to the pro-Moscow Stalinists as the other far-left groups, which developed illusions in the CP and in their ability to impel it to go further than it wanted to. By the end of 1975, the UDP was the largest of the Maoist groups and probably larger in the Lisbon area than all the other far-left groups combined.

The next largest Maoist group was the MRPP, which incurred the most repression in 1974 and 1975. It was particularly vulnerable because of its provocative tactics. Nonetheless, despite its extreme sectarianism, it gained significant support by appearing to stand for intransigent opposition to the MFA government from the left.

However, in 1975 its dead-end sectarianism choked off further growth. As it became clear that the class struggle was moving toward a showdown, the orthodox Maoist groups started to decline, paying in this way for their crime of putting opposition to Moscow and the pro-Moscow Stalinists above all principles of class solidarity. When one leader tried to mitigate the more extreme forms of sectarianism, a violent struggle broke out. The strongest faction, the "Red Line," expelled the critical minority, the "Black Line." By October the MRPP's following was seriously reduced.

At the same time, escalating physical violence among the Maoist groups led to the death of an MRPP militant in October 1975. The death was probably an accident, but the statements of the MRPP were provocative, and those of the other organization involved, the UDP, were both provocative and cynical.

The fact that the largest and most solid organizations standing to the left of the reformist parties were Maoist meant that the propaganda field tended to be dominated by "Mao Tsetung Thought." The result was that tens of thousands of people looking for socialist ideas found instead a proliferation of the most absurd dogmatic incantations.

By the end of 1975, the people of Lisbon at least were evidently getting tired of the revolutionary theater of the Maoists and the rest of the far left and the continual barrage of almost meaningless slogans, gestures, declamations, and propaganda tags and labels. This senseless din had a wearing effect on the masses politically for

it did not appear to offer a way to improve their material conditions immediately or to offer an overall governmental solution that would lay the basis for improving them ultimately.

The large role played by groups that claimed to be more revolutionary than the mass reformist parties did help to keep the relationship of forces fluid on the left. In fact, the existence of so many groups testified to the declining credibility of the reformists, in particular the official Stalinists of the Portuguese Communist party.

The growth of ultraleft groups is a worldwide phenomenon. One of the main causes of this development is the repellent aspects of Stalinism and the Social Democracy. But the ultraleft and sectarian currents are easily drawn into the orbit of the reformist parties, particularly the Stalinists, since they are based on hopes of bypassing or electrifying the masses through minority actions and do not represent a healthy advance toward revolutionary consciousness and organization. In fact these groups played a role complementary to that of the reformist leaderships, helping them to divert the masses from the road leading to power.

Two Trotskyist Groups

The two Trotskyist groups in Portugal—the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores (PRT—Revolutionary Workers party) and the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI—Internationalist Communist League)—were unable to win a large enough number of the radicalizing elements to politically defeat the ultraleftists in 1975. They did, however, succeed in growing from small nuclei of a few dozen to organizations of several hundred persons. The LCI, the Portuguese sympathizing organization of the Fourth International, became nationally known as a result of its campaign in the April 1975 Constituent Assembly elections. The PRT played an important role in leading the high-school students movement in Lisbon, and in this specific area developed sufficient strength to combat effectively not only the ultraleft groups but the CP itself.

These groups did not entirely succeed in resisting the political pressure of the Stalinists and the ultraleft, or in uniting the Trotskyist forces in Portugal. However, the PRT did oppose the ultraleft Frente de Unidade Revolucionária (FUR—Front for Revolutionary Unity), which was formed on the basis of support for the Stalinist-supported fifth provisional government. The LCI participated in it critically but could not avoid being compromised to some extent by the front's positions and activity and by the role of the stronger organizations in it such as the MES and the PRP.

In all, despite problems of inexperience

and small forces, the Portuguese Trotskyists scored a number of important successes in 1975 toward building a credible revolutionary alternative. If the upsurge continues, they will have unusual opportunities to build at a rapid pace.

The ultraleft groups that also claim to be building such an alternative have not helped to advance the revolutionary education and organization of the working class but have continually undermined it. The existence of a large number of ultraleft groups with significant strength in certain areas did make it more difficult for any reformist party to impose firm control over the workers movement. But since the competition both among these groups and between them and the reformist parties was carried out in a sectarian and divisive way, it increased the bourgeoisie's margin for political maneuver against the workers movement as a whole. This had tragic results on November 25 in the paratroopers' rebellion.

The November 25 Attempted Coup

A few weeks before the uprising, the PRP launched a call for an armed insurrection. Its inspiration was the adventurist course on which the CP embarked after its defeat in the April 25, 1975, elections and the "revolutionary" talk of demagogues such as Saraiva de Carvalho and Rosa Coutinho. Even before this, a supporter of the PRP in the military announced that he had diverted thousands of weapons to "revolutionary forces." The MES adopted a similar perspective.

This ultraleft drum-beating, combined with the bureaucratic adventurism of the CP, set the stage for the disaster of November 25, which appeared to be the "armed insurrection" these neanarchist groups claimed to be preparing. It is possible in fact that it was the CP that actually organized the paratroopers' attempted coup.

The Stalinists have not condemned the paratroopers' action to this day. Instead they have claimed that it was not really a coup, since it did not aim to take control of the government but rather to resist the "turn to the right" in the military and in the state apparatus. This is a strange argument. It would hardly reassure anyone worried about "left" putschism. After all, those implicated in the rightist March 11 coup attempt claimed that they did not intend to overthrow the government as such. Their only blows were directed at a unit that was supposed to be most responsible for the "turn to the left" in the military.

The specific demands raised by the paratroopers, moreover, were that Carvalho, by then more identified with the CP than the ultraleft, be maintained in his post as military governor of the Lisbon region

and that Gen. José Morais e Silva and his deputies be removed from the air force command.

Morais e Silva had been a particular target of the CP for some time. In the days just before the defeat of Gen. Vasco Gonçalves, the CP's most prominent military ally, in the September 5 MFA Assembly in Tancos, the Stalinist-controlled papers announced that opposition "from the ranks" had forced Morais e Silva to resign. The story quickly proved to be untrue, but it indicated where the CP's hopes lay. The air force played a crucial role in the defeat of Gonçalves, but apparently the CP was able to convince a large percentage of the ranks and noncommissioned officers to oppose this course.

When the paratroopers resorted to arms in challenging the government's authority, they did not try to seize the centers of political power but rather those of the air force command. Also, the units in which the ultraleft was known to be strong, such as the Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment and the Lisbon Military Police, did not take the lead in the action.

If the paratroopers' coup was directed by the CP, that would also explain why it collapsed so easily. If the ultraleftists had been prepared for a coup, they probably would also have been prepared to put up more of a stand, as an "exemplary action" to arouse the masses. On the other hand, if the Stalinists held the wires, intending to keep the action within the framework of pressure politics, they would be in position to quickly call it off if it did not go as expected.

The ultraleftists, of course, would try to take advantage of the CP's move and try to develop it into an insurrection; but since they would not have been informed beforehand, they could hardly move with the necessary expedition.

In any case, by this time the CP and the ultraleft groups, following an almost identical course despite different perspectives, had boxed each other into a position where it was easy for the government to take advantage of the paratroopers' uprising. The ultraleftists had created expectations that a coup attempt was afoot. The CP, through its bureaucratic control of the main trade unions and the national news media, had created the impression that it was willing and able to ride roughshod over the opinions of the majority of the people.

The CP and the ultraleft thus reinforced each other's most negative sides. The thug methods and dogmatic rhetoric the CP used to maintain its control of the union movement and its positions in the bourgeois state apparatus and press encouraged the adventurism of the ultraleft.

On the other hand, the pressure of the ultraleft made it more difficult for the CP to draw back from its increasingly sectarian

and adventurist course. At the same time, the frenzy of the ultraleftists made it harder and harder for the CP to keep its demonstrations of force within the desired limits, and tended to give these moves a more and more provocative effect.

This was illustrated by the CP-ultraleft occupation of the Faro district government offices in October to protest the removal of a governor appointed by the military authorities when they were in a close alliance with the Stalinists. The CP wanted a "symbolic occupation" as a show of strength; the ultraleft wanted to seize the building in the name of "People's Power."

The CP attracted and consolidated its following by cultivating a tough image. It was the party that had suffered most under Salazar; it was the party that the bourgeoisie "feared"; it was the party that represented "real power." You had to be "hard" to be a CP member, to have the stomach for rough methods and the "discipline" to accept orders without question. The idea that the way to achieve socialism was by winning the majority of the workers politically was for "softies," for "Social Democrats." You had to show the workers that only you were tough enough to win. That was why dictatorial methods were needed in the party and outside. That was "proletarian" leadership.

This conception corresponded rather closely in some aspects to the vanguardism of the ultraleft, that is, to the idea that the way to impel the masses forward is through displays of determination and daring staged by the "most revolutionary" groups. In fact, both conceptions are antidemocratic and elitist in essence. Because of this identity in their outlook, a bloc developed in 1975 between the CP and the ultraleft, despite bitter conflicts in the first phase of the MFA regime when pro-Moscow Stalinists supported outright repression of every group to the left of the popular-front cabinet. The final result of this bloc was the disaster of November 25.

The Stalinists evidently hoped to use, and did use, the ultraleftists as cat's-paws and advance patrols in their antidemocratic maneuvers. The ultraleftists believed they had succeeded in tipping the CP off-balance to the left and were now impelling it to go where they wanted it to, using it as a battering ram against the capitalist system. The truth was that both were dragging each other toward the abyss.

Thus, while in Portugal for the first time since the Spanish Civil War ultraleftists bear a major responsibility for misleading the working class, it is also true, as it was in Spain, that these ultraleftists were bound very closely to the CP for all practical purposes and did not succeed in playing an independent political role. So, the fundamental responsibility for the failures and setbacks of the Portuguese workers move-

ment rests with the reformist parties, in particular with the CP.

It was the Stalinists who used their muscle to subordinate the mass movement to the MFA in the first phase of the upsurge in Portugal. It was they who resorted to adventurist tactics to maintain the positions they had gained as a reward for this role once they began to find themselves losing support because of it.

The development of the Portuguese situation in 1975 showed a side of Stalinism also that has not appeared clearly in Europe for some time. Ultraleftism and adventurism are endemic in the parties of bureaucratic opportunism and dictatorship.

Stalinist ultraleftism is by no means limited to the period 1928-34, when it was the official line of the Third International. There are a number of more recent examples. Under the pressure of the Korean War, the Kremlin sent the Japanese CP on an ultraleft course. It used its Japanese myrmidons in effect as a kind of suicide squad, in the same way that it used all the foreign CPs after the defeats it suffered at the end

of the 1920s. The virulent ultraleftism that developed in Japan in the 1960s descends from the Stalinist students who broke away from the CP when it shifted back to the right in the mid-1950s. But ultraleftism had not been practiced on the scale it has been in Portugal by any CP in Europe since the 1930s.

The ultraleftism and adventurism of the Portuguese Communist party in 1975 grew directly out of the right-wing opportunist line it followed in 1974. Moreover, the CP did not shift its fundamental orientation or its objectives. It continued to be just as class-collaborationist and just as counterrevolutionary in 1975 as in 1974. Its objective was to serve as the mass organizer of the MFA and build its bureaucratic apparatus and influence by proving to the bourgeoisie that it could control the workers better than other available labor lieutenants.

However, by the end of the first year of democratic freedoms in Portugal, the CP was rapidly losing its popularity precisely because of its role as labor lieutenant of the military regime.

Up to the March 11 Attempted Rightist Coup

CP Decline in the Unions

By the beginning of 1975, the CP's role as the labor lieutenant of the government had so discredited it in the eyes of the workers that it was in danger of losing the leadership of the trade-union movement. The opposition had become so extensive that it threatened to wash away even the CP machine. That became clear in the Oporto bank workers' union elections in January, in which Avelino Pacheco Gonçalves, the Stalinist minister of labor in the first provisional government, was swamped by a 2-to-1 vote.

It is, of course, generally harder to dominate a white-collar union by machine methods than it is an industrial one. But in the preceding period, the bank workers union was known as a CP stronghold. A Maoist-influenced MES trade-union leader described it in June 1974 as a "nest of revisionists." The CP defeat in Oporto was not a result of the conservatism in the North. The same process was to occur in the Lisbon bank workers union.

The pro-Moscow Stalinists suffered a sharp defeat in addition in the postal workers union. This should not have been surprising after the CP mobilized its membership to break the postal workers' strike in June, organizing crowds around the post offices who reviled the workers as "tools of fascism" and even stoned them in some instances. To consolidate its victory, the CP had to be able to claim that the majority of the postal workers realized that the party was only defending their "real interests." It

had also to crush the "adventurist" leadership of the organizing committee of the postal union. Thus the CP brought the power of its machine to bear as it had in other such situations. This time, however, to no avail.

In this same period, the CP began to worry about the Constituent Assembly elections scheduled for the spring. What effect would a poor showing have on its influence in the state apparatus? The December 6, 1974, issue of *Avante!*, the party organ, saw a danger to "unity" both in the struggle that was developing in the unions and in the first hints of the struggle that was to develop in the national election campaign. Under the heading, "Unity, a Matter of Life or Death," it said:

The Communist party has firmly stressed and shown in its actions that its policy of unity is not just one for the moment, that it is for today and for tomorrow. This means that the PCP thinks that we need broad people's and democratic unity and the alliance of the people's movement with the MFA not only to assure the defense of freedoms against reaction but to install and build a democratic regime.

The unity of the working class is a fundamental element of the people's unity and democratic unity; and trade-union unity at present plays a decisive role in the unity of the working class.

The great majority of the unions, through their leaderships or in assemblies, have declared for broad freedom in internal life and for the complete independence of the unions, for trade-union unity, and for a single national federation.

The so-called pluralism in unions has been roundly rejected by the workers. It is now raised jointly by certain representatives of the bosses and certain "parties" engaged in reactionary plot-

ting such as the Partido do Progresso and the Movimento Federalista, by certain foreign agents, and by parties that are trying to divide the workers who are today united in a broad united trade-union movement and to create a trade-union apparatus subordinated to them and to their sectarian policy. If this so-called trade-union pluralism is legitimized by law, the facts will confirm the divisionist aims of its defenders.

The unity of the democratic forces is another important aspect of the unity of the people's movement.

In this respect, we are profoundly concerned by the anti-Communist and anti-unity tendency that has come to the fore in the Socialist party. While in many regions and sectors, there is still lively, loyal, and energetic common action by Communists and Socialists, we see at the same time that at very responsible levels, such as in the press and in various documents of the SP, an anti-Communist, and lately an anti-Soviet, tone has been developing. When the latest issue of the Socialist party paper lumped together the USSR and Spain, we saw how far this anti-Communism has already gone.

The activity of bodies and groups of the SP fits in with this orientation and is endangering the unity (which remains necessary) of the democratic forces. What is happening at the University of Lisbon, where the SP organizations are supporting the reactionary provocation against the government, against the MFA, and against the democratic forces, illustrates the degradation opportunism leads to.

As is often the case in Byzantine Stalinist polemics, it was not clear what the CP was really referring to by "provocation" at the University of Lisbon. About this time, there were sharp clashes between the CP student organization and Maoists at the university.

Needless to say, the principles involved were not too clear. The CP had been supporting the Ministry of Education's plans for suppressing political activity in the universities, including canceling the first year and substituting "civic service," i.e., work at low wages on projects conducive to "national reconstruction." It attacked all opposition to these schemes as ultraleft provocations. As a result, CP influence declined in the student milieu. On the other hand, the Maoists used thug tactics like the CP, and were willing to make alliances with anyone, even rightists, against the "social fascists."

The Socialist party youth continued the policy they began in the summer of 1974, seeking support among the layers to the left of the CP and defending the Maoists against repression.

The *Avante!* editorial continued:

What does the Socialist party want? Why is it acting this way? Why is it trying the patience shown by the Communists? Does it want to hang on to fiefs or create them? Does it want to meet the demands of foreign circles for divisive activity? What meaning could there be to Mário Soares's statement in Paris . . . that the participation of the PCP in the government after the elections will depend on the vote? Will the SP, in turn, if it fails to get a high percentage of the votes, lose its right to a place in the government? . . .

The PCP is ready to examine all these questions



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together with the SP and seek a solution that through cooperation in word and deed will remove the atmosphere that has been poisoning the relationship between these two parties more and more every day.

The condition for "removing this atmosphere," the editorial went on to say, was that the SP also subordinate itself completely to the MFA:

The alliance of the people's movement with the Movimento das Forças Armadas is an essential feature of the present democratic political situation. Any breach that opens up in this alliance is an important victory for reaction. Anti-MFA positions are the invariable mark of reaction. These are the positions of the fascist rags sent in from Spain and the ultraleft rags produced in Lisbon.

The ultraleft provocateurs, who more and more play the role of the spearhead of the counterrevolution, are attacking the MFA and its alliance with the people, and have tried several times to provoke confrontations with the Armed Forces.

Against such activities and maneuvers, it is essential to continue tirelessly to defend the alliance of the people's movement with the MFA and combat still more firmly activities aimed at disrupting this alliance.

The editorial was an indication of the tensions that would lead to an open split in the government in January 1975. It also clearly outlined the CP's perspectives.

The MFA Shores Up the CP

The minister of labor in the Gonçalves government, Capt. José da Costa Martins, was apparently very understanding of the problems the CP faced in the labor movement. Like Avelino Pacheco Gonçalves, the CP minister whom he replaced, he continued to defend the CP union leaderships. In

fact, he, like the premier himself, became very closely identified with the PCP. On November 16, he was to show up at a demonstration organized by the Communist party in Lisbon to cap an offensive designed to regain the influence they had lost in the state apparatus in August-September 1975.

At the beginning of 1975, the Ministry of Labor drew up a "trade-union unity" bill to assure that no rival federation could be organized to oppose the CP-controlled Intersindical. The essential effect was to force the SP and all other groups competing for leadership in the union movement to play by the rules the Communist party set.

The bill placed the existing craft-union structures under the bureaucratic umbrella of Intersindical, although with the proviso that they should move toward becoming industrial unions. This cut directly across the course of some of the SP activists who were trying to go around Intersindical and organize a new national union structure. This was to be based on industrial unions built around the workers commissions that sprang up in May and June 1974 and that had led the first wave of strikes.

These commissions were considerably broader than the union locals, in which only a small percentage of the workers participated. They were elected in general assemblies of entire plants rather than by meetings of workers in specific crafts. But they had no permanent structure and functioned on a purely local basis. In some cases they were organized by the SP or smaller groups specifically to bypass union locals dominated by the CP. As ad hoc structures in what was a very fluid situation both on the political and union level, they could wax and wane rapidly depending on the initiatives and momentum of various political nuclei. Likewise, their representativeness could vary greatly depending on the ups and downs of the class struggle and their specific role at the moment.

So long as the workers commissions retained an ad hoc and local character, there was an inevitable tendency in the long run for the old union locals to reassert their role. The unions were generally rather weak, with little in the way of funds or a professional apparatus. In some cases, they were organized in regional federations, each completely independent from the other. But they had at least some permanent structure and resources. Furthermore, Intersindical was the only national federation.

Nonetheless, the existence of broader and more democratic bodies representing the workers at the plant level represented a certain threat to the bureaucratic union structure. It also provided a certain fulcrum for opposition, since the commissions might or might not go along with the actions of the unions. Consequently, the CP strongly

opposed these bodies in the first phase.

In its January 14 issue, *Luta Proletária*, the paper of the Liga Comunista Internacionalista, explained the meaning of the trade-union law in these terms:

The proposed decree-law presented by the government does not aim to guarantee the defense of the workers, but very simply, as can be read in the draft, "regulate union activity . . . so as to create the conditions for equilibrium and justice in the plants. . . ." That is, for the government, unions are not instruments of struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression (which will end only when capitalism itself is overthrown), but simple organs of class conciliation.

At this point, when some items were still being negotiated, *Luta Proletária* also rejected Intersindical's suggestions:

Ignoring the reactionary character of the draft decree-law, the Intersindical leadership made a proposal that does not really indicate any criticism of the government's points. This leadership's fundamental objective is to get one union established by law. So, confusing oneness with unity, these gentlemen of Intersindical "forget" that only the working class can construct such unity, and so only it and not a class-collaborationist government has the right to establish one union.

The Trotskyists of the LCI explained the intent of the measure as follows:

The trade-union field is a particularly important one, and with the invaluable help of the reformist organizations, the bourgeoisie is trying to cage the working class at any cost.

Thus, the bosses, police, and Copcon,¹ with the blessing of Intersindical and with the support of the CP-SP, have tried to combat all the independent forms of struggle of the working class and the bodies developed in such struggles (occupation strikes, forcible opposition to the removal of inventories and machines, the establishment of strike funds, the development of class solidarity among plants where struggles are taking place and between these and the class as a whole, the establishment of strike committees, the holding of general assemblies of workers, the election of workers commissions, and so on).

Thus, the CP and the Intersindical leaders in particular have tried to slander and attack all the struggles that have developed outside their bureaucratic control (e.g., the postal workers' struggle, the struggle in the Lisnave shipyards, at *Jornal do Comércio*, TAP,² and so forth).

1. Comando Operacional do Continente (Mainland Portugal Operations Command), the special security command headed by General de Carvalho. It was created after the fall of the first provisional government. Carvalho could co-opt any unit he considered necessary. Generally he was careful to include the radical ones. Eventually this command became more of the government's social peace-keeping force, serving as a balancer, negotiator, and progressive front in certain cases. It also tended to become Carvalho's "party," the political-military organization that could hoist him into the role of bonaparte.

2. Transportes Aéreos Portugueses, the Portuguese airlines.

Now finally, the provisional government, with the more or less implicit support of the MFA, is trying at all cost to legislate against the workers and behind their backs. This is an attempt to create a "legal" cover for a systematic and continually more severe repression of the working class—in defense of the most influential sectors of finance capital.

It is not very difficult to see what lies behind this machination.

For those who are objectively defending the interests of national and international finance capital, it is a way of making the working class pay for the reconstruction of the capitalist economy and of the capitalist state. The problem for these gentlemen thus lies in creating the political and organizational instruments that can carry out this scheme (a strong state that will not only limit democratic freedoms but also restrict the struggle of the workers to unions controlled by the bosses' state, unions that will prevent the development of struggles beyond certain limits, struggles that go to the point of challenging capitalist society).

This analysis was quite correct, in particular as regards the principles. *Luta Proletária* was the only paper on the left that made these principles so clear. The publishing schedule of *Combate Socialista*, the paper of the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores, was such that it did not appear when this debate was at its height.

However, very strong pressures developed. The Communist party and the MFA launched a large-scale demagogic campaign in support of the measure. The SP's opposition was denounced as part of a maneuver of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to split the labor movement. Portugal's independence was supposed to be in danger. The whole prestige of the MFA as the restorer of the country's liberties and as the savior offering "socialism" was thrown into the campaign.

Despite this, the SP put up a hard fight. It was at this point that Soares first raised the specter of civil war. The fact was that the outcome of the struggle in the unions meant life or death for the Social Democrats. If the MFA guaranteed the CP's bureaucratic control, the SP would be condemned to play a subordinate role in the unions, and as a result, since it was a workers party, find itself condemned to a politically subordinate position.

Nonetheless, the CP and the MFA were able to impose their will. They still had sufficient credibility, and the CP machine still had the necessary capacity to mobilize masses of workers. The CP mobilized a very large demonstration in support of the decree, thus assuring its observance.

The Ultralefts Move Into Stalinist Orbit

The pressures that were generated also brought in all the groups to the left of the CP. The most prominent union activists of the MES opposed even participating in Intersindical, but the MES leadership now came over to "trade-union unity" with clari-

on calls to support the demonstration.

The LCI joined despite the positions expressed in *Luta Proletária*.

The PRT also joined. It explained this participation in the January 23 issue of *Combate Socialista*:

The great workers demonstration that marched through Lisbon on January 14, responding to the call issued by Intersindical and supported by a large number of organizations and political tendencies, was the concentrated expression of all the small struggles that are developing in the factories and offices throughout the country. Tens of thousands of workers shouted their determination to block unemployment, inflation, and the speculative maneuvers of big capital. They demanded the nationalization of the monopolies, starting with the banks, and repudiated the attempts of all those who were preparing to divide the united organization that the workers need.

It was because of all this that we supported the demonstration and we think that it represented a step forward in that it concretized, however partially, some of the positions we have been expressing in the pages of *Combate Socialista*, particularly the need for actions centralized by the workers organizations to force the nationalization of the monopolies. But we must also say clearly that the January 14 rally was an expression of the weaknesses introduced by the conciliationist leaderships, weaknesses that we could sum up in two closely related aspects. The rally and the closing speeches did not offer measures of struggle able to achieve what the banners and slogans demanded. Still worse, the immense power of the mobilized masses was presented as a simple prop or aid to the MFA and the government.

Combate Socialista was sensitive to the rising tempo of the class struggle. Its judgments about this were proved correct in February. No doubt much of this combativity was reflected in the January 14 demonstration, as it had been in the May 1, 1974, demonstration. That action, while it was in general rather effectively channeled by the CP and the MFA, was also marked by the appearance of some demands that went beyond what the reformists and military wanted.

The problem in January 1975 was that this action was organized to support a specific objective that was reactionary and in the long run not conducive to unity but rather to division. It was impossible to support the demonstration without supporting this objective. The PRT apparently recognized this, since it argued that in a distorted way the law represented a gain for working-class unity. The actual political results took some months to become clear.

It was at this point that a de facto alliance developed between the CP and the far-left groups. Previously, most of these groups had had better relations with the SP than with the CP, since they had a common interest in defending the rights of minorities against the repression supported by the CP. Now there was a very sharp disenchantment on both sides. Nearly all the far left adopted the view that the SP was less

patriotic than the CP, that is, was the agency of foreign imperialist powers and thus a Trojan horse of reactionary intervention.

On the other hand, the left SP members felt betrayed. They viewed this attitude as opportunism toward the MFA and treachery toward those who had defended the rights of the far left against the MFA and CP. A reporter on *República*, at the time the semiofficial paper of the SP, said that the far leftists had always been careful to send their communiqués to the SPers on the staff because they knew the CPers would "lose" them. The *República* staff reflected the working relationship of the SP and the CP; a number of the journalists and other personnel were CPers and objected in particular to the publishing of Trotskyist material.

But the CP journalists' attitude toward statements of the far-left groups was also changing. A convergence was taking place, and the Stalinists now apparently realized that the ultraleftists had their uses.

Buoyed up by the January 14 demonstration, the CP came out openly for continued MFA rule. That was the lesson taught by this action, according to *Avante!*:

Strengthening and vitalizing the popular component of the Portuguese revolutionary process is a condition for consolidating and broadening the rights that have been won and for confronting and overcoming the crisis in which the country finds itself as the result of the policy of sabotage by the more reactionary sectors of finance capital.

This involves persistent work on two fronts: One is reinforcing active collaboration among the forces really interested in the democratic process by means of a dogged search for common roads to the practical and just solution of the difficult national problems. The other is a continued, many-sided campaign among the working people to organize and vitalize the mass people's movement in the broadest sense, which involves continually wider participation in the practical solution of the national problems.

In the context of the originality of the Portuguese revolutionary process, there is no other way to constitute a genuinely democratic state in Portugal. When we say "genuinely democratic," we mean that this would be a state that would increasingly reflect the profound aspirations of our people and identify with them.

The crisis, the writers of this editorial indicated, had shown that a coalition government by itself was not stable enough to handle the strains of the "process."

We have maintained that reinforcing and vitalizing the popular component of our revolutionary process was indispensable for overcoming the unevenness in the tempo of the evolution of the military movement headed by the MFA and the evolution of the democratic movement, which has been dangerously weakened by the difficulties of the political parties in working together.

The dizzy pace of events in recent days has yet again shown the political maturity and unity of thought and action that distinguish the military component, as well as the worsening of the crisis



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of unity among the political parties of the government.

While they were apparently ready to admit that the popular-front coalition, at least in its parliamentary form, was somewhat disappointing, the authors of the *Avante!* editorial thought the CP could provide an indispensable partner for the MFA.

Without the Movimento das Forças Armadas—we said in the last editorial in *Avante!*—the people's movement would be unable not only to advance democracy but even to assure its survival. Without the people's movement, the Movimento das Forças Armadas might be able to hold political power but never build a democratic society.

At the time, I commented in *Intercontinental Press* (February 3, 1975):

The CP favors the inclusion of delegates chosen by the MFA in the Constituent Assembly. In line with this, the editorial in the January 16 *Avante!* indicated that the Portuguese Stalinists are looking forward to an alliance directly between the military and the mass organizations led by the PCP. This was the context, as the authors of this editorial saw it, of the debate over the "trade-union unity" bill.

I also wrote:

This invocation of "revolutionary legality" by the Portuguese Stalinists to justify a form of government regulation of the workers organizations that they think will advance their specific bureaucratic interests is pure demagoguery. It is a very dangerous kind of demagoguery, moreover, for the PCP itself, because it is illusory to think that a capitalist regime will accept a permanent partnership with a Communist party, no matter how abjectly such a party subordinates itself and the

interests of its supporters to "the needs of the nation."

Revival of Anarcho-Syndicalism

A new political factor appeared on February 7 that represented a certain development of the concept of direct alliances between "the people's organizations" and the "military movement." A mass march took place in Lisbon against the visit of NATO ships and against rising unemployment. The action, which contravened a ban on demonstrations, reflected the deepening radicalization. But the UDP and MES, who played a leading role in it, banned all slogans, banners, and literature carried by political parties. It was to be a "revolutionary nonparty demonstration."

This was the debut of the attitude, similar to the "revolutionary apoliticalness" of the anarchists, that was to flower in May, June, and July when the military demagogues pushed their "direct democracy" plan.

In its February 27 issue, *Combate Socialista* commented on this revival of anarcho-syndicalism:

The sponsors of the demonstration made it a condition for participating not to show any sign of party identification (papers, posters, banners). In their opinion, this would go against the needed unity. Thus, they reinforced in the demonstrators and in the workers in general the idea that the parties are the cause of the lack of unity, and that without them it would be easy to achieve unity. They also stressed that the parties should not interfere in questions that concern the workers because these are problems for the workers themselves to solve on the level of their economic organizations.

Combate Socialista attacked this concept:

It in no way helps the working masses to take positions in the workers movement against the idea that the parties must take positions on the problems of the working masses, and still less when these problems have an eminently political dimension, as in the case of the struggle that must be waged against the antilabor and counterrevolutionary maneuvers of the capitalists. To fail to defend intransigently in the workers movement the need for building a revolutionary leadership, a Leninist combat party—or, worse, to wear out the vanguard of the class with syndicalist and anti-party appeals—is objectively to play the game of the Stalinists of the CP and other reformists, or of the bourgeoisie itself, which has always found the anarcho-syndicalists to be useful allies.

At the same time, the February demonstration was marked by an open display of solidarity with the soldiers sent to keep "order." This represented a qualitative advance of the radicalization. Beginning almost immediately after the April 25 overturn, young soldiers in uniform began turning up in left meetings in small numbers. But politics in the ranks had always been repressed, and with apparent success. Now apparently this process of radicalization in the armed forces could not

be contained any longer. At least it had spread to the level of whole units.

Alarm in Wall Street

Not long after this, the American bourgeoisie began to raise the alarm. In an editorial February 17, that authoritative voice of U.S. imperialism, the *New York Times*, issued a hardly veiled threat of intervention if the process in Portugal continued to go the same way.

Communist influence in the government was giving rise to "intolerable dangers."

These [dangers] go beyond the obvious strategic threat of a Soviet ally athwart the American naval lifelines to the Mediterranean and NATO Europe. A forcible Communist takeover in Portugal might encourage a similar trend in Italy and France; create problems in Greece and Turkey; affect the succession in Spain and Yugoslavia and send tremors throughout Western Europe.

Something dire could happen if these "dangers" were not removed:

Détente, of course, would be the first casualty, as Moscow should note, if the close relationship between the Portuguese Communist party and the Soviet Union—which maintains a large, active embassy in Lisbon—is a factor in promoting a forcible takeover. It would not be in the interest of either the Russian or the Portuguese people to have the popular will in Portugal denied free expression.

Intercontinental Press explained the importance of this editorial in its March 3 issue, noting that a much milder warning had been issued before the overthrow of the Allende regime in Chile:

What really worries U.S. ruling circles is peasants seizing estates despite the Communist party's appeals to them to wait for government action, and in particular, armed forces units showing solidarity with leftist demonstrators. It was the beginning of left-wing organization in the armed forces in Chile, for instance, that most directly sparked the decisive confrontation there.

Chile, moreover, was only the most recent of many examples of the dangers of trying to prevent a mass upsurge from going to the point where it can effectively defend itself against counterrevolution. The fact that the Communist party was in effective control of the Allende government and a united trade-union movement did not enable it to defend itself against the reactionary coup.

While U.S. ruling circles are trying to intimidate the Portuguese left into pulling back the mass movement, these threats simply prove that the only way to "defend democracy" is to mobilize the Portuguese masses and the ranks of the armed forces into a power that can defeat any intervention.

And that is possible only if the masses take full control of the economy and root out the material basis of reaction.

We noted:

At the same time, the threats of the *New York Times* and Washington's bullying interference in

Portuguese internal affairs are a warning to the working-class movement in the Western capitalist countries, as well as all antiwar forces, that they must begin to speak out now against intervention in Portugal.

A disturbing aspect of the editorial of the *New York Times* was its obvious search for a "democratic" pretext for American intervention in Portugal. After the victories of the movement against the Vietnam War in the United States, Washington desperately needed to regain political support for counterrevolutionary operations abroad. This need went far beyond the immediate problem of Portugal. So, the *New York Times* tried to use the attempt of the far left groups in Oporto to break up the convention of the main rightist party, the Centro Democrático Social, in December 1974 to claim that there was a concerted assault on political freedom in Portugal by the left.

This claim was ridiculous. But at the same time, it was clear that actions by small groups aimed at preventing the right from organizing were ineffective and counterproductive, and could be extremely dangerous.

One of the dangers was in fact shown when a member of the LCI was shot and badly wounded in the demonstration against the CDS convention. He was a leading worker activist.

On the governmental level, the conflict that came to the surface in January continued to develop. At the MFA Assembly February 18, the military announced that it would not withdraw from politics but would continue to play the same role for an indefinite period. On February 19, Capt. Duarte Pinto Soares said that politicians who warned of a possible civil war should be prosecuted. The threat was evidently directed at SP leader Soares, who made such a statement during the fight over the "trade-union unity" law.

Rightist officers and politicians who objected to the concessions made to the masses in Portugal and in the colonies, and who had no confidence in the MFA leading group's ability to control the masses, now began using democratic rhetoric in pressuring or opposing the regime. For example, not only the SP but the right opposed the "trade-union unity" law, often using the same arguments about democracy and the independence of the union movement.

The SP leaders began to raise anti-Communist scarecrows as a way of defending their position against the CP and its allies in the MFA. For example, on February 3 Soares charged that the Kremlin was testing the chances for getting port facilities in Portugal. Obviously, after his defeat in the "trade-union unity" law fight, Soares was trying to get across the idea that a government based on a special alliance between the CP and the MFA would not be

acceptable to the West, so the MFA could not do without the SP.

Obviously, none of the leaders involved in this struggle were going to explain what their real objectives or programs were. Furthermore, democratic arguments were the strongest ones available to the right and likewise to U.S. imperialism. Nonetheless, those who looked at the political struggle as a contest between two superficially defined camps instead of focusing on the logic of the class struggle itself and the way class-consciousness and working-class organization develop came to view the question of democracy itself as the dividing line between the "revolutionary camp" and the "counterrevolutionary camp."

For the Stalinists, this was a necessary concept; in fact, it is probably the most important element in the Stalinist mental makeup. As they see it, the class struggle comes down to a contest in which the United States and Western Europe, where bourgeois democracy exists, stand against the USSR, which can afford no such "luxury." For the others, ranging from paternalistic liberals to ultraleftists, impressionism and confusion guided the way they saw the issue. The actual attitude of U.S. imperialism is only now becoming a matter of general public knowledge in association with the fresh revelations concerning the "covert activities" of the CIA.

For example, in the winter issue of *Foreign Policy*, a magazine close to State Department circles, Tad Szulc, formerly of the *New York Times*, explained that the most extreme variant that could have occurred in October 1975 if the CP and the MFA "left" had won their struggle with the Azevedo government was a "left-wing military regime on a Peruvian or Algerian model, but supported by the Communists."

Szulc's article also shows how cautiously political characterizations by bourgeois reporters and commentators must be taken, even when they are writing to inform the bourgeois policy makers themselves. For example, this "expert" was apparently unaware that the Peruvian regime was also supported by the CP. Furthermore, he gets the course of developments in Portugal so mixed up that he dates the appointment of Vasco Gonçalves as premier after Spínola's fall rather than before. Probably, it did not seem to make sense that the leader of the "radical" turn in the MFA could have served two months as head of government under an openly rightist president. Nonetheless, Szulc was obviously privy to a lot of thinking in top Washington circles, and he reveals a number of things that give quite a different picture of their attitude toward developments in Portugal than was offered in the capitalist newspapers at the time.

As for the possibility of a Peruvian-style "progressive" dictatorship, it was clear almost from the beginning that that was

the CP's objective. And, while Washington has not generally welcomed such regimes in colonial or semicolonial countries, it has not found them an insuperable obstacle to pursuing its interests, nor has it expended much energy in opposing their violations of democratic rights. Democracy may be a useful issue in political conflict with such regimes, but it is a double-edged one. Thus, the fall of the Velasco Alvarado government in Peru did represent a shift to the right in the regime in general. But at the same time, in order to gain political cover, the new government relaxed repression against the left and trade-union movement for the time being.

The Masses Answer General Spínola

On March 11, the rightists in the Portuguese military forces attempted another coup, hoping thereby to help reverse the radicalization. But this time, it was not preceded by a political buildup. The only action was an attack on the Lisbon Light Artillery base in Sacavém, on the northern edge of the city near the airport. It was in this unit that the radicalization in the armed forces first came to the surface. The base was strafed and then besieged by paratroopers who did not know the reasons for the orders given them. The air attack was ineffective. The paratroopers quickly surrendered. General Spínola and a number of other prominent rightists fled the country.

There were rumors of an extensive plot, but nothing definite was reported until more than a month later when the results of the inquiry were released, just before the Constituent Assembly elections. Spínola and the other rightists implicated claimed there had been no coup attempt, only a "defensive action."

At the end of March, it was generally believed in the far-left groups that the coup was "not fascist but Social Democratic," that is, that it was not aimed at imposing a rightist military dictatorship but at "halting the radicalization."

There were reports that SPers were sounding out the far-left groups about forming a joint defense committee for political prisoners because they expected a number of Socialists to be prosecuted for involvement in the March 11 plot. The SP was evidently nervous about the report of the investigating body. There were suggestions from SP sources that the decision to release the results of the investigation just before the election was a form of "black-mail."

Actually, when the report was released it did not indicate any SP involvement. In fact, it was announced that the SP leaders were on the plotters' death list. But these rumors apparently represented a continuation of the tensions between the SP and the



Portugal: L'An 1

Portuguese masses mobilized to block Spínola's rightist coup attempt March 11.

CP-MFA, and a growing tendency to try to lump the SP in with the right.

The March 11 coup touched off an even more extensive mass mobilization than the September 28 crisis. This time it was nationwide. Peasants mobilized to guard the border with Spain. As in the previous case, the main organizing center was Intersindical. But this time Intersindical was apparently more completely in control, with the far-left and far-left-controlled workers commissions playing less of an independent role.

Intersindical called a general strike and its directives were carried out by local workers commissions. The SP, CP, and all the left groups organized huge demonstrations to condemn the rightists. The mass movement took a new giant leap.

The bank workers exposed the way the big banks had been financing the right and demanded that the government nationalize them. They forced this measure through by militant mobilizations. Since a very large proportion of Portuguese capital was held by the banks, many businesses came formally under government ownership. Among other things, the banks owned the dominant interest in most of the Lisbon dailies. It was at this point that the CP, through its machine and its influence with the government, was able to nail down control of most of the national press.

At the same time, the nationalization of the banks did not go entirely against the plans of the MFA. For one thing, by this time many of the big capitalists had left the country for their health and some way had to be found to look after their interests. Also, by their speculative and parasitic policies, the banks had stood in the way of capitalist development. The MFA's modernization policy required reform of the banking system. Nonetheless, the control the bank clerks exercised over the accounts of the capitalists and the nationalization of the big banking trusts obviously sent a shiver down the backs of the bourgeoisie in Portugal, and not in Portugal alone.

Demands for nationalization of all the big companies began to mount, as well as demands for the nationalization of all companies that claimed they could not pay their workers a living wage.

The government adopted a more demagogic policy. The MFA declared its aim to be socialism. The workers were called upon to work harder because the economy belonged to them. Strikes were now not only crimes against democracy but against socialism itself. Premier Vasco Gonçalves took the occasion in his very first speech after the failure of the March 11 coup attempt, a speech to a huge crowd celebrating the defeat of the rightists, to denounce the TAP strikers. He lumped the TAP strike in with the preparations for the coup.

What the April 25 Elections Revealed

Expropriate the Capitalists!

The failure of the third bourgeois counter-offensive, and the second rightist putsch in six months, placed the entire big bourgeoisie virtually outside the law. For the second time in six months the masses had mobilized in hundreds of thousands to defend their rights, and for a period, they effectively asserted their control of the country.

More and more sectors of the working class were demanding the expropriation of the capitalists. All but a small part of the national press and broadcasting media were taken out of the effective control of the bourgeoisie. The conservative forces were left with few means to openly propagate their views outside of parish "sheets" and weekly publications of a relatively small circulation.

The hopes and enthusiasm of the broadest masses of the Portuguese for socialism reached their highest point. Despite small defeats at various times, in every major confrontation they had won overwhelming and inspiring victories.

Now Washington was really worried, Szulc noted in the article in *Foreign Policy* previously referred to:

In Washington, Kissinger lapsed back into pessimism. He told aides that his fears about Portugal's slide toward Communism were being confirmed. In April, the NSC [National Security Council] reviewed the situation, and the 40 Committee met to determine how CIA resources could best be used in Portugal.

But the U.S. imperialists found their hands largely tied because of the growing outrage of the American people against Washington's undemocratic operations, which stood in glaring contradiction to the declared "national objectives."

At that point, the CIA was already under investigation by the Rockefeller Commission concerning its domestic activities and by the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence on the subject of its covert operations abroad. The 40 Committee, aware of the pressures on the agency, recommended cautious efforts by the CIA, preferably through secure foreign channels, to provide assistance to anti-Communist groups in Portugal, ranging from the Socialists to right-wing elements. It is not known how much was earmarked by the committee for this effort, but sources in the intelligence community say that the amount was "not spectacular" by any measurement.

Nonetheless, if Kissinger and his aides were despondent, the new U.S. ambassador in Lisbon, Frank Carlucci, noted for his "toughness" in Brazil and the Congo, was not so pessimistic:

The alarm felt in Washington was not shared by Ambassador Carlucci in Lisbon. His cables

reported the continuing power struggle, but Carlucci still seemed confident that "all was not lost" in Portugal.

The veteran counterrevolutionist understood the forces he was dealing with:

He remained relatively optimistic even though the MFA had announced that it would run Portugal for at least five years and barred several conservative parties from participating in the Constituent Assembly elections.

Szulc explained some of Carlucci's grounds for optimism:

What may have escaped Kissinger was that the Portuguese regime was extremely careful not to burn its bridges to the West despite its leftist orientation at home. In this context, it was possible that Gonçalves was taking advice from the Soviet ambassador in Lisbon, Arnold Kalinin, who is known to have told him that Moscow had no interest in creating a confrontation with the United States over Portugal. It is also likely that President Costa Gomes, essentially a pro-Western figure, was determined to keep his lines to the United States as open as possible. Kalinin, for example, missed no opportunity to tell Carlucci that the Soviets were not "subverting" Portugal. He was evidently interested in having this message relayed to Washington; Carlucci, who assumed that Kalinin was instructed to do so, passed it on to the State Department without comment. Carlucci's private view was that the Russians wanted the best of both worlds: a pro-Soviet regime in Lisbon, if possible, but no problems with the United States over détente.

What Szulc did not explain and perhaps could not grasp was the way this understanding was implemented in Portugal itself. Although the danger existed that the upsurge could get out of control, attempts at restoring "order" by the local rightists had proved disastrous; and even if the U.S. and the West European imperialists were willing to pay the costs of direct intervention, there could be no assurance that it would be successful. Under the circumstances, the best kind of government for safeguarding capitalism was a demagogic one that could ride with the wave of the radicalization and retain a vital minimum of political control over the masses.

Thus, although parliamentary-type elections offered a way of magnifying the weight of the more passive and conservative sections of the population, the preelectoral period held many dangers for the capitalists, the reformists, and the military demagogues.

It provided an opportunity for the masses to consider what they wanted politically, and to consider questions of program, including socialism. The possibilities for this political discussion and registration of opinion were unusually large. Any group could win a place on the ballot by getting 5,000 names on a petition. In the conditions

of that time, a couple of hundred activists were sufficient to the task. Once recognized, a party had the right to considerable coverage for its views both on radio and television and in the newspapers.

The capitalist parties did not have their usual advantages—quite the contrary, at least in the populous urban areas. Not only did they not control the press, but bourgeois politics in general was gravely discredited. Also, the bourgeois parties did not even have a traditional electoral following to vote for them out of habit, since there had been no real parties or elections before April 25, 1974. The bourgeoisie had to begin building its political arm in the most difficult conditions.

On the other hand, revolutionists had the advantage that neither of the big reformist parties had been able to establish itself as the exclusive representative of a majority of the proletariat. Furthermore, the two combined did not command exclusive control of the working class. Even among the workers who had already identified with the SP and the CP, many were still ready to listen to arguments from revolutionists. And large sections of the masses, not committed at all to reformism, were looking for new, more revolutionary options. There was great interest in all the parties, however small, that represented opposition to the old world that existed before April 25, 1974.

Not all the left welcomed this opportunity, however. For example, the spontanéists of the MES deplored the MFA's decisions to go ahead with the elections. By now it had come to place its hopes in the "progressive officers." Nonetheless, the MES participated in the campaign, although obviously only in a halfhearted way. Activists complained about how much time they had to waste in electoral campaigning. The only rallies that were successful were of a strident ultraleft character, concentrating on the theme of "rank-and-file-organizing" and the glories of the Latin American guerrilla organizations. Presentations of political program tended to drift away into incoherence, to the boredom of all present.

The guerrillaist PRP also opposed the elections, but in a more consistent way. It called for a boycott in accordance with the examples provided by its guerrilla models in Latin America.

The call for a boycott was raised by the MRPP, which specialized in painting slogans on the walls and in theatrical, superrevolutionary demonstrations. "Boycott the electoral farce" soon covered walls throughout Lisbon as thoroughly as "Open fire on revisionism" had previously.

Trotskyists Campaign for Socialism

The Trotskyists of the LCI seized the opportunity offered by the elections, however, even though they were one of the

smallest groups standing to the left of the CP. The PRT, a generally younger group and organized more recently, did not campaign to get on the ballot, but supported the LCI.

As a result of its campaign, the LCI became nationally known. Its ideas gained considerable circulation, and some of its leaders became relatively well known in Portuguese politics. The press began to pay even more attention to what the LCI itself was saying than to the speeches of prominent international leaders of the Trotskyist movement who came to speak on its behalf. The LCI's propaganda began to take on a concreteness, which it had largely lacked before, and to address itself more to the general political questions. For example, in one short radio program, an LCI speaker presented a concrete program on the land question.

Certain weaknesses, however, remained. One was that LCI speakers made it an absolutely inviolable rule to refer to the need for an "armed insurrection," although naturally this point could be raised only in a rather abstract way. Another weakness was lack of clarity with respect to the nature of the MFA and failure to offer an immediate alternative that would have some credibility for the working class and toiling masses.

The PRT centered its criticism of the LCI on these points. It itself denounced the MFA as bourgeois and demagogic. In a meeting in the CP stronghold of Amadora just outside Lisbon, its speakers told a crowd that when they shouted, "The people are with the MFA," a slogan popularized by the CP, they were betraying their own interests.

At this point in the Portuguese process, it was extremely unpopular for any organization to say such things. The PRT was definitely swimming against the stream. It was the only organization on the left to oppose the MFA so forthrightly. As an alternative to MFA rule, it called for a government by the organizations the workers regarded as their own—the CP, SP, and Intersindical. The PRT was also the only organization to put forward a program for the Constituent Assembly.

Who Should Rule?

The question of MFA rule and the Constituent Assembly were key ones. Among the main issues in the elections was the right of the MFA to rule; in fact, in a certain sense, that was the fundamental issue.

Public opinion polls in March had shown that 50% of the electorate did not support any party. Following this, one of the leaders of the MFA, Adm. Rosa Coutinho, raised the idea of a kind of MFA party, actually something on the order of the "national



Cover of magazine Flama shows symbols of parties competing in April 25 election.

liberation front" organizations ruling the "progressive" one-party states in Africa. According to the admiral, this party should stand somewhere "between" the CP and the SP. Such a party, Rosa Coutinho claimed, could unite all the progressive forces supporting the "revolution" and avoid partisan conflict. Similar opposition to independent political parties, or "partisan conflict," was expressed by General de Carvalho.

Such figures in the MFA began to suggest publicly that those who were not sure about the parties should vote blank ballots, as a way of giving the MFA a mandate to continue superintending politics in the country. The press spread the word that Carvalho and Coutinho hoped that the blank ballots would exceed the vote cast for any of the parties. They were said to be counting on a blank vote of as much as 40%.

In particular, the MFA brought pressure to bear on the SP, whose loyalty to the regime had been most questioned in the months preceding the election. The party was still under threat of being implicated in the March 11 coup attempt. At the same time, obviously, the SP placed great hope in the elections. They were its chance to prove its strength as an electoral party and make up for the defeats it had suffered at the hands of the CP and MFA in January and February.

By the end of the first week in April, it had become clear that the MFA would fail to get the support it hoped for and that the SP would win the elections.

The 'Pact-Program'

At this point, the MFA called on all the recognized parties to sign a "pact-program"

accepting continued military rule for a period of several years no matter how the elections turned out. The pact did not provide for MFA representation in the Constituent Assembly as had been proposed earlier; this was an unworkable proposal. Instead, it dictated the essential provisions of the constitution that was to be drafted. It established a two-tier military-civilian government remarkably like the oligarchical British parliament that existed before the granting of popular suffrage. The military was the higher house, with all essential powers of government reserved to it.

The leading military body was to be the High Council of the Revolution, which was set up after the March 11 coup attempt to represent the MFA. Its members were to be chosen by the MFA Assemblies in each service. However, the Council of the Revolution was not directly responsible to any lower body. The MFA Assembly had only a deliberative role. Only the council had the power to make decisions. The whole structure was presided over by Gen. Francisco da Costa Gomes, the unelected president, who had been given the position of chief of staff of the armed forces under Spínola.

The SP obviously signed this pact reluctantly. It robbed the party in advance of most of what it could hope to gain from the elections, putting a large question mark over the future of parliamentary forms of government in Portugal. The foreign press stressed the private unhappiness of the SP. There was little mention of this in the Portuguese papers. In contrast to the SP, the CP was enthusiastic about the pact. This arrangement suited its perspectives.

The MES, whose principles were offended by elections, announced that it had no principled objections to signing the pact, but it failed to do so. There was apparently considerable internal dissension on this point. The Frente Socialista Popular (FSP—People's Socialist Front), a group that split from the SP around the beginning of the year, signed the pact, adopting a particularly opportunist version of the themes stressed in common by all the ultraleft organizations.

The only parties that rejected the pact were the LCI, and three Maoist groupings—the Frente Eleitoral de Comunistas, Marxistas-Leninistas (FECml—Electoral Front of Communists, Marxist-Leninist), the Partido de Unidade Popular (PUP—People's Unity party), and the UDP.

Some pressures were brought to bear against those who refused to sign, but the climate obviously did not permit the MFA to engage in any real arm-twisting if a party was determined to stand up for its rights. The FECml was denied some of its rights for a period, but it put itself in a vulnerable position by using its radio-TV time to engage in diatribes against the CP.

There was intense interest in the elections in Lisbon and throughout the country. It was a completely new experience for the masses to be able to participate openly in political activity, to express opinions, to pass judgment on political programs and politicians. Party buttons blossomed on lapels everywhere. The city was covered with posters; hundreds of thousands of persons attended political rallies.

It was the workers parties that dominated the political scene. The bourgeois parties, the Partido Popular Democrático (PPD—Democratic People's party) and the CDS (Social Democratic Center), were shoved to the sidelines in the most populous centers of the country.

In Lisbon about 80,000 to 100,000 persons attended the final rally of the CP; the SP drew 150,000. The CP, stressing its role as the organizational center of the resistance, to the September 28 and March 11 coups called on the people to vote for it as a "guarantee of democracy." The SP made "socialism with freedom" its main slogan. The day before the elections, SP caravans drove through the city with their loud-speakers blasting: "Vote SP, vote for liberty!"

Unfortunately, however, the election campaign was very badly used by most of the workers and left parties that participated. One example was the demonstration organized April 16 by the CP to "thank the MFA" for the second wave of nationalizations. The Stalinists tried to identify themselves with the nationalizations and the MFA. They did not try to organize a joint rally that could bring in the SP as well.

To make the demonstration look broad, they included the MES and the FSP. This was becoming a standard tactic. But the main slogan chanted became: "Assim, se vê a força do PC" (This shows the power of the CP).

In its subsequent rallies, the SP countered with the slogan: "Assim, se conhece a força do PS" (This gives you an idea of the power of the SP). This set a pattern of turning demonstrations into shows of force for one or another party or bloc.

For the Portuguese people, April 25 became a festival of freedom. At midnight, April 24, Lisbon began to celebrate the first anniversary of the overthrow of the Salazarist regime. The government had recommended that as the clocks struck 12:00 everybody should lean out of their windows and sing "Grandola, Vila Morena," the song that was the signal for launching the MFA coup. But it was not possible to keep the festivities down to the level of mere Christmas caroling.

Lisbon went wild. It was the most massive expression of popular feeling since the gigantic demonstrations of May 1, 1974. Long caravans of cars drove down the

avenues of the city, filled with people singing and waving flags; there were people on the bumpers, in open trucks, and even on the roofs of the cars. Spontaneous demonstrations took place in various parts of the city.

The point of convergence was Belém palace. The streets and avenues in this area were packed with long lines of cars. Crowds of civilians and soldiers joined arms and danced in the streets. Many of them were singing the song most popular in the demonstrations after the fall of the old regime: "Viva a liberdade, com' è bom, com' è bom!" (Long live liberty, how good it is!)

The celebrations seemed to go on almost all night. But most people were still able to get up the next day and stand in long lines to vote. More than 90% of the population above the age of eighteen exercised their new right.

MFA and CP Suffer Rebuff

The results were a great disappointment to the MFA "left." The hoped-for blank vote did not materialize. Only 7% of the ballots were counted as blank. Apparently the percentage of the Portuguese people who were ready to leave politics to the MFA was declining to the vanishing point.

The big winner was the SP with 38% of the vote. The next biggest score was that of the bourgeois PPD, which got 26%. It rolled up its largest percentages in the backward rural areas that were still priest-ridden and dominated by local strongmen. But even so, nationally it tried to present a "socialist" image. Even the notoriously reactionary CDS claimed to be socialist. It got 8% of the vote.

The CP received roughly 13%. The groups that claimed to be to the left of the SP and CP all got significant minority votes. Together they accounted for about 4% of the poll. The FSP scored the highest of these groups, with 1.17%. Perhaps this was because some of its leaders were well known and had a base in left Catholic circles.

The MES received a little over 1%. That had to be counted as a severe defeat for them, since it was a rather well-known party with notable influence on the fringes of the government. In particular, the Maoist UDP, which was fast replacing the MES as the strongest anarcho-syndicalist organization, won almost as large a vote. Also, it was the only group in this spectrum that elected a deputy to the Constituent Assembly. In addition, the UDP was organizationally harder than the MES and able to mobilize many more people in the streets. Thus, the MES, the Portuguese homologue of the French Parti Socialiste Unifié, was now threatened with losing its niche as the main "left" Social Democratic alternative to the CP and SP.

Perhaps the biggest loser in the elections

was the Portuguese Democratic Movement (MDP), which got about 4% of the vote. This organization preserved the name and form of the old "united, antifascist opposition," a popular-front formation embracing the CP, SP, and left Catholics, although the Stalinists were organizationally dominant. One of the first conflicts between the SP and the CP after April 25, 1974, was over whether this organization should be preserved. The SP claimed that it served no function now that parties could function openly, and that it was just a CP front claiming to represent a fictitious unity.

But as representatives of "the united antifascist organization," MDP members were awarded a great number of positions in local government.

This party did attempt a very ambitious campaign in rural areas in particular, where it might be thought that the CP would be less welcome. It also tried to appeal specifically to the "petty bourgeoisie" as opposed to the proletariat, which it left to the CP.

The results were often comical. Radio programs by this group bewailed the lot of small businessmen beset by unfair taxes. On television, pompous "left" priests rolled their eyes heavenward and counted Jesus among the MDP's supporters.

The MDP vote was not numerically insignificant. But probably most of those who voted for the party would have voted in its absence for the CP. And this vote certainly did not justify the number of governmental posts held by MDP members. The contradiction between the small demonstrated electoral support of this formation and its many posts in the state apparatus was obviously going to become an issue. It had become a weak spot in the CP front.

The LCI was the least known of the groups to the left of the SP and CP, and accordingly it got the smallest vote. However, in Oporto, its score was almost equal to that of the main Maoist group.

Meaning of the Vote

The victory was won by "socialism with liberty." Obviously, this meant many different things to different people. To many it meant the high living standards and social welfare of the "democratic socialist" countries, that is, Sweden and perhaps West Germany, where extensive trade-union and civil rights are observed. The campaign of the MFA and the CP against "Social Democracy" and for austerity and hard work for "national reconstruction" had evidently failed to arouse general enthusiasm.

A great many others voted for the SP because they wanted socialism but without the kind of bureaucratic dictatorship that exists in the Soviet bloc countries and

China. The rationalization of the CP and MFA that people voted for the SP only because it had the word "socialist" in its name, whereas the MFA government had defined its aim as "socialism," was very lame indeed.

The claims of the CP that the SP had run an "anti-Communist" campaign were essentially slander. That is not to say, of course, that the Social Democratic leaders were averse to exploiting certain anti-Communist feelings to their advantage. But the country was generally not interested in anti-Communism. Although the SP was the only left party that got a substantial vote in the rural parts of the country and the conservative North, it also rolled up large votes in the most radical areas of the country.

In Lisbon and Oporto it swamped the CP. Even in the traditional CP industrial strongholds south of the Tejo River, the SP showed unexpected strength and, overall, nosed out its rival. The only district the CP carried was Beja in the rural proletarian area of Alentejo, where it had a long tradition and where it totally controlled the peasant unions. Even here its advantage over the SP was small. And in Alentejo as a whole, the SP had a slight majority.

The SP's victory was not due either to greater resources or to a more favorable press. In Lisbon, there was every indication that the CP campaign was more extensive. And it was the CP that predominated in the media.

The fact was that the CP's strategy of subordinating itself to the military in return for bureaucratic influence in the state apparatus and the unions had alienated decisive sections of the masses. The Stalinists had been unable, despite their exceptional opportunities, to expand their mass influence beyond a few strongholds. They now found themselves dangerously isolated. The only cards they had left were tight organization, bureaucratic positions, and their alliance with a wing of the military—that is, physical force and the threat of physical force. They would have to use these cards in a more and more adventurist way in an attempt to maintain the bureaucratic empire they had built up.

But overall the elections were a tremendous victory for the working class. The workers parties, for the first time in the history of Western Europe, had won an overwhelming majority in general elections. The Portuguese masses had given a resounding mandate for socialism.

The capitalist press in Europe and the United States took up the cry that the elections were a victory for "Western democracy." This theme has been maintained ever since. Actually, as Szulc indicated in *Foreign Policy*, the assessment of the most experienced and astute State Department officials was quite different.

The results of the 1975 elections are key to the understanding of the Portuguese political scene. They make the point—one that Washington still finds hard to accept intellectually (or emotionally)—that even under the best of circumstances, as seen by the United States, Portugal is in the midst of a leftist social revolution that simply will not go away short of a right-wing coup d'état restoring not only the old dictatorship, but also the quasi-feudal capitalism that characterized the Salazar-Caetano years. The hundreds of thousands of white refugees from Angola—the bitter, frustrated *colons* who lost everything in the final phase of the African war—are potential recruits for such a rightist coup, along with other disaffected rightist elements at home, just as the Algerian *pieds noirs* provided the basis for the French Secret Army Organization (OAS). In the Portuguese context, such a right-wing move would almost certainly lead to a civil war, a situation the United States could not possibly favor. (Emphasis in original.)

Szulc directly contradicted the interpretation of the election results repeated ad nauseam by the *New York Times*. He continued:

In other words, if at all possible, the United States must come to terms with the reality that except in the conservative pockets in the north, Portugal has acquired a leftist political orienta-

tion, a fact that explains a great deal of what has been happening in that country since the 1974 revolution. The elections, which the United States keeps invoking, when convenient, in defense of a pluralist democratic solution in Portugal, gave the leftist parties (including the Socialists, the Communists, and their respective allies) nearly 90 per cent of the vote. The Christian Democrats were banned from the ballot by the military, but the voters largely ignored the Social Democratic Center, a possible alternative, to give the Socialists a 37.8 per cent plurality and the PPD 26.4 per cent. That the Communists did so badly was a measure of the fact that Portugal's leftist sentiment does not signify a pro-Communist posture, a notion that seemed to have been lost on Kissinger until quite recently.

The elections and their results favored a qualitative leap in the political consciousness of the workers, a rapid advance to understanding the need for a government of their own based on organizations of their own. The elections were a stunning rebuff to the military's attempt to establish itself as the tutor and savior of the workers. It took a long series of betrayals by the reformists and almost unparalleled confusionism by the ultraleft groups to divert and undermine this advance.

The SP's Defense of Its Democratic Rights

The Clashes on May Day

Following its defeat in the April 25 elections, the Communist party sought to recoup its lost prestige by a show of strength at the May 1 demonstrations.

These marches and rallies were billed as a repeat of those that hailed the overthrow of Salazarism a year before. But this time the organizer was Intersindical, the "single union federation." Thus the Communist party had tight control of the arrangements.

The MFA government for its part served notice on the Socialist party that it did not intend to let the election results influence its policy. It recognized Intersindical as the sole national union federation before the new elections in the unions that were supposed to be the condition for this step.

Thus, the national union structure was handed over to the Stalinist bureaucrats. They, of course, had already established de facto control, exploiting their initial organizational advantages. Premier Vasco Gonçalves, by this time closely identified with the CP, was expected to announce the recognition of Intersindical at the rally in the Estádio Primeiro de Maio. Obviously a confrontation was shaping up.

During the week before the demonstration, a battle took place over the question of speakers. The SP refused to accept the inclusion of speakers for the MES and the FSP in the list. The SP leaders argued that these groups were unrepresentative and

would only attack the SP. In fact, by this time, that had become nearly the sole political function of the MES and the FSP. The SP leadership also favored allowing the PPD to participate in the march. The CP opposed this.

The result of the negotiations was an agreement to exclude speakers representing parties; the list would include only the president, the premier, and a representative of Intersindical. This corresponded to the CP's objectives. But representatives of the CP and SP were to be seated on the podium.

Participation in the march was massive, but less spontaneous and all-embracing than the year before. This time, the marchers were divided into distinct party contingents, usually kept separate from the rest of the march by teams of monitors. Many chose not to march but to go directly to the stadium. The demonstration was also more concentrated, with less of a tendency to engulf the entire city. Perhaps 250,000 gathered finally at the stadium, which was completely packed, the crowd overflowing into the adjacent streets.

The two Trotskyist groups were at the end of the march, along with the FSP and the MDP. The MES decided not to march as a way of protesting not having a speaker. Although the Trotskyist groups were assigned assembly points a mile apart, at opposite ends of the Alameda Afonso Henriques, the PRT managed to march in front of a number of groups and join the LCI. The joint

contingent numbered more than 500 persons and was larger than the FSP group.

The PRP marched with the "International Contingent," which was made up mostly of representatives from Latin American guerrilla groups. There were banners of the Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo (Revolutionary People's Army) from Argentina, the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (Movement of the Revolutionary Left) from Chile, the Uruguayan Tupamaros, and a number of others.

In the stadium a confrontation occurred between the CP and the SP, but the crowd was so closely packed that most of the persons there only learned about it from the radio reports that night.

The SP claimed that its supporters were harassed when they reached the stadium and that some were turned away. Those that got in found that the CP and its allies had taken up all the best spots. Then the Intersindical monitors prevented Soares and other SP representatives from taking their places on the podium. The CP and Intersindical accused the SP of creating a "disturbance" and showing "disrespect" for the president and the premier.

The statements by the CP and Intersindical did not admit that Soares was kept off the podium. However, the most objective of the Lisbon dailies, *A Capital*, reported May 3:

Intersindical leader José Gomes confirmed that he prevented Dr. Mário Soares from coming onto the platform while the president was speaking not only because "the Socialist party had violated the accords previously reached" but also because it was clear that on this occasion also "it might provoke still graver incidents."

Diário de Notícias, which had been captured by the CP not long before, claimed to have inside information that the SP planned an incident:

The need for a strong Socialist delegation was justified by Henrique Gomes da Costa [in an alleged meeting of SP workers nuclei on April 28], who announced that a "big surprise" might be offered during the rally by the president of the republic or the premier, a surprise that would require a strong protest from the Socialist workers.

This surprise—it was revealed later—could be related to the legal recognition of the Intersindical exactly two months before its congress, to be held at the end of June, recognition that would make this body the only institution recognized by the bosses and put it above the Workers Commissions that have won so many victories for the working class.

Intersindical also accused the SP of planning a demonstration against its recognition as the "single national union":

The Secretariat of Intersindical understands that, while the leaders of the Socialist party tried to stage another splitting maneuver, the working people present in the great rally in the Estádio Primeiro de Maio proved able to give the response that was called for and did not allow the profound significance of the commemorations of International Workers Day, the day of the working peo-

ple, the genuinely progressive forces, and the Armed Forces Movement, to be sullied.

The SP's reply made it clear that a violent struggle for power had begun:

Only the Socialist party can assure the Armed Forces Movement of the popular support essential to the defense and progress of the democratic revolution and the construction of socialism.

Intersindical insulted the workers who consider the SP their class party. By offending the SP, Intersindical offended the majority of the working class and the people of Portugal.

The Socialist party is with the Armed Forces Movement for freedom and democracy, for socialism. But it would betray the confidence that the people placed in it if it allowed minority forces to substitute themselves for the Portuguese people and the Armed Forces Movement. We were a people insulted for forty-eight years by a minority that was violence institutionalized. We do not accept the manipulation of the masses by activist minorities. By the attitude it took, the Intersindical dropped its mask, insulted, and excluded millions of Portuguese workers from "unity."

Thus, while the SP once again pledged its loyalty to the MFA, it announced that it would fight for the role of the military's chief political lieutenant. In its view, the elections had established its right to such a position. But in order to take it, the SP had to prove that it could match the CP in the streets.

The SP Demonstration

On May 2, the SP tried to mobilize its supporters for the first time against the CP, and to a certain extent, against the government. In fact, at first the authorities tried to ban the demonstration. There were tanks and armed soldiers at the assembly point in Rossio Square as the SP supporters tried to gather there. They were prevented from gathering in the middle of the square. But once the march started up the Avenida da Liberdade no attempt was made to stop them. Apparently the government had changed its mind, or been deterred by the tens of thousands of demonstrators that turned out. It was a determined crowd, and by the end of the march it may have numbered 70,000 or more.

The Communist party and some ultraleft groups tried to link the march to the right. There were some anti-Communist slogans, and rightists certainly may have been attracted. But how could that be avoided once a Social Democratic party began to mobilize against a Communist party? Certainly the origins of the struggle had nothing to do with anti-Communism. Some ill-informed foreign ultraleftists, pointing to the presence of banners of the People's Monarchist party, a tiny crank group that calls for a "fifth, socialist dynasty," roundly condemned the entire demonstration.

More of a problem was caused by a small Maoist sect, the PCPm1, which tried with some success to get the crowd to take up chants such as "Down with social fascism."

However, the bourgeois party closest to the SP leadership, the PPD, was kept out of the march by Socialist monitors.

One of the most common chants in the march was "*República não saiu*" (*República didn't come out*). In fact, the semiofficial SP daily was mysteriously absent from the streets. At the rally culminating the march, Soares attributed the nonpublication of the paper to a CP maneuver.

This version was denied officially by *República's* editors on May 3. Publication, they said, had been prevented only by an ordinary labor dispute. The printers objected to the hiring of two new journalists. Later developments indicated that this disclaimer was untrue. Apparently what was involved was a power struggle in the staff between CP and SP supporters. The new reporters were SPers. The balance of power in the journal was at stake.

The press was to become the first theater of battle between the CP and SP in the war opened by the election results. On May 5, Soares announced at a news conference that his party was going on the offensive to roll back the influence of the CP in the press, the unions, and local government bodies.

Of these three areas, the unions were most important, but it would take time to achieve any changes here. Ousting the CP from local government positions required the cooperation of the MFA, which had at least to call elections. For the moment the MFA was taking quite a different stance. But the press was a strategic area, where relatively few persons were involved.

The Seizure of República

It was in this area that the CP, alert to the SP's actions, decided to make its first counterattack. On May 19, noneditorial workers linked to a minority faction on the journalistic staff seized the offices and printing plant of *República*. An issue of the paper was put out with a different editorial line. On the masthead, the name of the SP editor, Raul Rêgo, was replaced by that of Alvaro Belo Marques, the business manager.

However, Rêgo and the SP journalists barricaded themselves in an office and refused to accept the occupation. SP demonstrators surrounded the building and clashed with troops sent to maintain "order." Volleys of shots were fired over the heads of the crowd. Rêgo appealed to the government to enforce the press law that gave editors the right to decide the content of their publications. The building was cleared and sealed by Copcon.

The courts ruled in favor of Rêgo and the government promised to hand the paper back to its editorial staff.

The officers commanding the Copcon troops outside the building, however, took the side of the "workers committee." They

allowed the occupiers into the building a few hours before the journalists were scheduled to enter. A dispute also occurred over whether all the occupiers should be permitted to return. Rêgo maintained that some of the leaders of the occupation should be transferred to other jobs in order to assure normal operation of the paper. The Copcon officers insisted that all the workers had the right to return.

The outcome of the dispute was that in June *República* resumed publication under the control of the "workers committee," and a military officer took the position of legally responsible editor.

The SP accused the CP of having sponsored the take-over through the printers union, which it controlled. The CP denied this. But at the same time, violent attacks were launched on the *República* editors in the world Stalinist press. The paper was described, slanderously, as being reactionary and anti-Communist. The Stalinists were clearly giving political support to the "workers committee" and to the actions of the Copcon officers.

The former managing editor of *República*, João Gomes, charged that the coup had been organized by Belo Marques, whom he identified with the CP. In fact, a combination of CPers and ultraleftists seemed to be involved, with the Mao-anarcho-syndicalist UDP playing perhaps the most active role. In the first months after the take-over, the paper reflected the concerns of both the CP and the ultraleft. But eventually it became primarily the paper of the ultraleft.

On November 25, *República* carried a letter from Belo Marques charging that the paper had become "anti-Communist." The responsible editor, Jorge Pereira de Carvalho, resigned at the same time, citing Belo Marques's letter as a sign that the paper was not fulfilling its intended function. Pereira de Carvalho wrote:

We all agree that the paper's quality is low. Moreover, no one denies that the distribution is deficient. But it seems to me that we should pay more attention to the content of the paper, while taking care of the problem of distribution at the same time. . . .

It does not seem to me that in its present form the paper has any chance of surviving, nor—and this is important—serving the purpose laid down in the editorial statutes. In fact it is not by publishing an infinite number of motions, communiqués, and statements, all saying more or less the same things, nor by the complete absence of critical and educational pieces of any value, that the working class can be served. Nor can a paper read by only a tiny fraction of the workers defend their interests. . . .

Moreover, it is essential to carry out a reorganization that can increase efficiency and work discipline, making possible a higher productivity of the sections. We need a spirit of cooperation, which is necessary for building anything useful. We must eliminate, I repeat, the partisan tendency, unbridled arrogance, and replace it with a spirit of unity and truly revolutionary humility.



Informations Ouvrières

Seizure of "República" resulted in suppression of only pro-SP daily in Lisbon.

By September, according to the figures cited by the "workers committee" itself in appealing for subsidies from the government, the circulation had fallen to 20,000, half of the minimum under the old management.

Two motives were cited in May by the "workers committee" to justify its seizure of the paper. One was that because of the unpopularity of Rêgo's allegedly reactionary editorial line, including attacks on the MFA, the circulation was dropping and the workers' jobs were threatened. Another was that the workers were opposed to the paper becoming the organ of any "party" and wanted it to serve the interests of the class "as a whole."

Both motives were cited at different times, although they created a contradictory picture of what was actually involved politically in the seizure.

The SP leaders argued that the occupation of *República* was an attack on freedom of the press. In fact, to the degree that the party stood in conflict with the MFA government, *República* took a more independent line than the rest of the daily papers, which were effectively CP-controlled. Also,

the paper reflected SP policy in trying to use China as a counterweight to the USSR.

One of the SP's talking points was that Mao refused to recognize the Lisbon government because he thought the CP had too much influence and that only an SP government could deal with "all the socialist countries."

A few days before the seizure, *República* published a report on the return from China of the SP's Maoist ally, the PCPml, in which the main message was that Mao preferred the SP. This apparently infuriated both the CP and the UDP, since it also implied that Peking had given the Maoist franchise to a rival group.

Also, the paper published an exposé of an alleged attempt by the CP to tighten its control of radio and television broadcasting by purging "unreliable" elements. *República* published a document allegedly drawn up by the CP faction in the national network recommending the ouster of a number of persons for things like being a "latent and possibly even active homosexual" and being relatives of reactionaries.

The SP claimed that its rights were being trampled on by the government and the CP.

It also claimed that small but determined groups were trampling on the rights of the majority and introducing a kind of law of the jungle, which it called "anarcho-populism." In fact, since there was no principled political leadership of the masses, there was a tendency for small groups to act outside of any democratic control in the relative power vacuum that existed. This tendency has also been seen in the Catholic ghettos in Northern Ireland, where it has led to severe defeats for the mass movement.

Of course, the SP leadership wanted to use this as an argument for restoring bourgeois "law and order," which it would help maintain as a servant of a government duly appreciative of its role. The Social Democratic leaders did not differ from the Stalinists in their desire to restore the authority of the bourgeois state. For example, in his May Day speech, the premier supported by the CP, Vasco Gonçalves, said:

In the present conditions, it is essential and urgent to begin the battle for production. The main role in this belongs to you workers. Today after the measures that have been taken against monopoly capital and the landowners, changes that signify establishing state control of the basic sectors of production and launching agrarian reform, you have a guarantee that your labor and your determination will benefit the community and not the privileged classes.

What then does the Armed Forces Movement ask from the workers:

- Cohesion and unity behind genuinely national objectives, objectives that they will have a voice in setting.
- Deemphasizing party rivalries in the trade-union organizations.
- A clear view of the national reality.
- Realism in wage demands.
- Analysis and discussion of the ultraleftist and anarchistic proposals and the dangers that flow from the fact that they cannot solve the problems we face.
- Unremitting struggle against splitters and provocateurs.
- To work in an exemplary revolutionary way.
- To consider improving your professional skills as a genuinely revolutionary choice.
- To understand that unless we reconstruct the economic apparatus and the state apparatus, neither the Provisional Government nor the Armed Forces Movement can correct the grave distortions in the wage structure.

The only real difference between the SP and CP on the question of "anarcho-populism" was tactical. The CP had control of the mass organizations and it had the support of the ultraleftist organizations that were organized for "direct action." As a loose electoral combination, the SP was less adapted to "direct action" and in fact had more of a tendency to rely directly on the bourgeois state to accomplish its objectives.

By this time, all of the ultraleftists except the orthodox Maoists were firmly allied with the CP. They accepted the version that the *República* seizure was an example of

"workers control." They believed the CP had now been forced to come out against a "restoration of the bourgeois state" based on electoralism and the forms of "bourgeois democracy."

Since the ultraleft groups dominated the radicalized youth milieu and were thus the most direct competitors of the Trotskyists, this convergence between the CP and the ultraleft exerted great pressure on the Trotskyist groupings. This had the most effect on the LCI, which shared some of the conceptions of the ultraleft. It in fact became indistinguishable from them in the *República* case. The PRT did not accept the ultraleft version of the affair but it also did not defend freedom of the press.

CP Denounces 'Bourgeois Democracy'

The conflict between the SP and the CP-ultraleft escalated. The SP mobilized more and more people against the government's policy. Then on June 19, the Council of the Revolution published its "Plan of Political Action." Although in every concrete feature, the plan was reactionary and strengthened military rule, it included verbal concessions to the SP.

The SP leaders at once organized a demonstration to "thank" Costa Gomes for the "devotion to democracy" shown by his support for this plan. The demonstration was notably smaller than the demonstrations the SP had previously organized, which were against the government, and it tended to take on a reactionary character. This oscillation showed the limitations of the SP's willingness to oppose the government and the MFA. This became even clearer in subsequent months.

At the same time, the CP came out openly against "bourgeois democracy." Cunhal ridiculed the SP electoral victory in speeches and in interviews with the foreign press. He challenged the Social Democrats to try to rule with their "votes." He suggested that the Constituent Assembly be dissolved if the SP attacked the MFA, since it had been elected under the MFA-parties pact.

In June, the PRP, now to a large degree a political mouthpiece for General de Carvalho, began to form its own "soviets" as an alternative to the Constituent Assembly. It was aided in this by a number of military officers. On June 17, this "soviet" formation, the Secretariado Nacional Provisório Pró-Conselhos Revolucionários de Trabalhadores, Soldados e Marinheiros (Provisional Secretariat of the Movement for Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers, and Sailors), organized a demonstration demanding a "revolutionary nonparty government."

Although this demonstration had been encouraged by Copcon, two days later the Copcon command disavowed the organizers. This sequence of events also set a pat-

tern. Carvalho wanted to use the ultraleftists as a means of pressure for his own objectives. But this was a tricky business in the context of the pressures that existed, and a misstep was easy.

The 'Guide Document'

On July 8, the Assembly of the Armed Forces Movement adopted the "People's Power" plan. The scheme called for setting up a pyramid of "grass-roots organizations" to represent the people "directly." The entire pyramid was to be tightly controlled by the military and even in theory it would not function at the national level until some vague future. In the meantime, the military was given the right to supervise all "people's organizations" and even to alter their composition.

The scheme was designed to appeal to all the illusions of the ultraleft. By their very nature, regardless of the political context, the projected "grass roots" organizations, it was claimed, would enable the masses to express themselves. In fact, the scheme would give absolute power to the military. But it was seen by all the ultraleft, centrist, and left Social Democratic groups in Europe as promising "direct," or "soviet," democracy.

The French PSU, like many other groups of this type, published the text of the scheme, the "Guide Document," as an example of a "democratic alternative" to both Social Democracy and Stalinism.

On these questions, a discussion developed among the editors and staff of *Intercontinental Press*. One contributing editor, Ernest Mandel, held the view that the occupation of *República* represented, in essence, an example of workers control. Mandel, along with two other contributing editors, Livio Maitan, and Pierre Frank, argued that the "Guide Document" opened the way for organizing soviet democracy and that the SP campaigns against the occupation of *República* and against the "Guide Document" were part of a reactionary offensive designed to restore the authority of the bourgeois state. This discussion is still continuing.

In the July 10 issue of *Combate Socialista*, the PRT also came out in support of "People's Power." This went hand in hand with a change in its class characterization of the MFA. An article, headed "A Necessary Rectification," began with the following paragraph:

Until now, we have always characterized the MFA as a bourgeois movement, the defender, in the absence of any well-organized ruling-class party or even a solid state apparatus, of the fundamental interests of capital. At the same time, we noted that at times it was obliged, by its position of arbiter "above parties," to discipline traditionally more privileged sections of the bourgeoisie in order to defend the overall interests of this class.

The article went on to say that this was a "methodological error."

We forgot that in a revolution, in a great revolution, *three classes* always enter into play, the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. (Emphasis in original.)

According to the author of the article, the MFA represented the petty-bourgeoisie in the Portuguese process. The bourgeoisie had in fact wanted to use the MFA as its instrument, but this objective had been blocked by the rise of the mass movement. The Spínola wing was gradually driven out.

Another sector, driven by the class struggle, turned to the left, deepened its democratic and populist aspirations, and began systematically to promote a controlled political discussion and democratization in the barracks, principally to combat the influences of the reactionary Spínolaist sectors of the armed forces. This process seems the most decisive to us in the present Portuguese situation. It is beginning to define the MFA or at least one of its sectors. *It is the MFA that introduced another organization, another power, into the bourgeois armed forces, a dual power.* It does not matter that the assemblies in a barracks or the organization of sailors in the navy were created from the top in a "controlled way"; these rank-and-file assemblies are already *the start of a soviet power.*

At the same time, because of the political backwardness of the country and the organizational backwardness of the masses, the MFA is playing a more or less bonapartist role. It balances and contains the mass movement, but also plays a centralizing role and at times serves as the executor of the will of the masses, which still do not have their own bodies for discussion and for executing their decisions—it is a very special kind of bonapartism.

In the same way as the workers parties in the coalition, the MFA shares in, and is committed to, the policies of the bourgeois government. But this does not mean that the MFA is the same as the armed forces or that the MFA is the same as the bourgeoisie. On the contrary, the facts are demonstrating that over and above tolerance for figures who represent a guarantee for national and international capitalism, the deepening of the crisis is deepening the lines of cleavage in the MFA, and the semisoviet tendency involved in one of its poles is giving the MFA an instability that it transmits to the government as a whole, resulting in the governmental bonapartism being suspended by a thinner and thinner thread.

This process of the "sovietization" of the armed forces can hardly continue without developing into full organs of dual power inside and outside of the barracks. (Emphasis in original.)

Unlike the ultraleft groups and the LCI, the PRT did not adopt the idea that dual power existed in the society at large; it saw only a beginning of dual power in the army. In this, it was more realistic. It is true that the crisis of bourgeois authority was most acute in the military and that in some units, such as the Lisbon Military Police and the navy, forms of organization existed that were not completely subordinated to the military hierarchy. This was made clear by a member of the LCI in the Military Police in an interview published in *Intercontinental Press* in May.

However, because of its incorrect class characterization of the MFA, the PRT misunderstood the political meaning of the "People's Power" project and became in effect drawn into the wake of the ultraleft. Su-



CARVALHO: Proposed "direct democracy" under control of military hierarchy.

perficially at least, its attitude was similar to that of the PRP, which viewed the MFA "left" as a Castroite phenomenon.

Radicalized petty-bourgeois groupings in colonial and semicolonial countries have in fact shown the capacity to develop independently in a revolutionary direction. However, Trotskyists consider this to be highly unlikely in an imperialist country such as Portugal.

The PRT's new analysis flowed neither from the past analyses of the PRT nor from the Portuguese situation. It represented a 180-degree turn, adopted in a few weeks, and proved to be disorienting to the organization. The error inevitably extended into interpreting the fragmentary forms of self-organization that existed in the plants and neighborhoods as "incipient dual power"—that is, the same mistake the ultraleft made.

In late August and September, the PRT shifted back to its previous line but continued to use the new formulas it had adopted. It has not yet explained how it came to make such a serious error or what lessons it has drawn from it.

The PRT is a young group in a situation exposed to great pressures. It has bent to these less than any other revolutionary-minded organization. But obviously overcoming this error and the causes that produced it are decisive if it is to develop into an independent revolutionary leadership.

SP Thrown Into Opposition

In late July and August, the attempt to stabilize a demagogic dictatorship based on "People's Power" collapsed. The MFA and

the CP were already too discredited to win the necessary popular acceptance for such a scheme. The government had blocked wages for too long in the name of "national liberation." After more than a year of MFA rule, the standard of living of the masses was not rising but declining. In the small-farming areas, where the government had done almost nothing to improve conditions, the rural masses were turning against the MFA. Furthermore, the bullying and bureaucratic practices of the CP-controlled small-farmers leagues were goading the individualistic and suspicious-minded small and middle peasants.

The SP went further in defending its parliamentary perspectives than the MFA or CP expected. Cunhal made it clear in several statements after the April elections that he regarded the SP as nothing more than an impotent electoral aggregation. There was certainly truth in that, but Cunhal underestimated what the Social Democrats would do when they were faced with a life or death choice.

Following the publication of the "People's Power" plan, the SP left the government and mobilized masses of people in the streets against the regime, an almost unprecedented move for a Social Democratic party. The SP tried in every way to avoid this step. It accepted defeat on the "trade-union unity" law. It apparently failed even in its resolve to protest the government's unilateral abrogation of the democratic guarantees that had been included in the law. It protested loyally and impotently against government connivance in the seizure of the one daily newspaper that reflected its views and in the take-over of nearly all the media by its rival. But it could not accept a plan to do away with parliamentary forms altogether—that meant death for the SP.

On July 15, the SP organized its first demonstration outside the government. A reactionary anti-Communist trend took advantage of this as in previous such rallies. Obviously this did not worry the SP leadership. But another trend appeared that did worry them. For the first time, masses began to shout: "The people are not with the MFA."

The following day, the ultraleft demonstrated in support of "People's Power." The action was encouraged by the CP and General de Carvalho but not openly supported by them. With Carvalho's evident approval, uniformed units and military vehicles took part in the demonstration. They were needed to make it seem impressive. It was no more than the usual ultraleft demonstration of a few thousand. Inevitably, it turned into a demonstration for the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly. In fact, it seemed to be a test of the possibilities for dissolving the assembly by forces more powerful than the few thousand deluded ul-

traleftists who showed up.

The decisive test came on the weekend of July 18-19, when the SP sponsored mass rallies in Oporto and Lisbon.

The ultraleft and the CP went all out to prevent these rallies from taking place. If they had succeeded in intimidating the SP and its supporters, the "People's Power" scheme might have been applied.

In Oporto, the CP and Intersindical called for barricades to stop a "reactionary march" on the city. Six of the seven major Lisbon dailies carried giant headlines portraying the SP rallies as reactionary assaults on Portugal's main cities.

The issue of *Diário de Notícias* that hit the streets on the morning of July 19 bore the headline: "People and Military to the Barricades in Defense of the Revolution." The story under it began:

Many thousands of workers started a mass mobilization last night in the Lisbon and Oporto regions to block possible reactionary maneuvers.

Directly under the headline was a box:

Today at 3:30 a.m., the national Intersindical distributed the following communiqué:

"National Intersindical, considering the need for a better coordination of the efforts of the people's and military forces involved in the defense of the Revolution, calls on the workers—

"To fall in behind the barricades being set up by the forces of Copcon.

"To actively support the military forces in their tasks as an effective way of tightening the alliance between the people and the MFA."

The headline on the story underneath this was: "Facing the reactionary escalations, arms will be used if necessary, Copcon has announced in a communiqué."

O Século, the other CP-controlled morning paper, to be sure, ran a more restrained headline. Its story began with a slightly more conciliatory sentence:

While the toiling masses rushed yesterday to the main entrances to Lisbon and Oporto to block the attempts of reactionary and other counterrevolutionary forces that are trying to stage a march on Lisbon to halt or drive back the revolutionary process, an important meeting was being held in the Palácio de Belém between members of the Council of the Revolution and representatives of the Communist party, Socialist party, and Intersindical.

The headline in *República*, now being published by the "workers committee," was "Workers and Soldiers Keep Watch on the Bourgeoisie." Its story began:

The workers and soldiers are on the watch in a national situation dominated by a sharp conflict between two poles of power representing respectively the interests of the bourgeoisie (the Socialist party) and those of the workers (the MFA).

República provided the most lyrical note in this chorus. In its July 18 issue, a correspondent from Oporto said:

The people's and working-class forces, which have just liberated themselves from the party leaderships because they have recognized that the

power that will move history forward lies in themselves alone, are looking forward to a great day in this city that may prove historic.

At 5:00 p.m., tens of thousands of workers, radiant with the joy inspired by the recent decisions of the MFA, which are designed to transfer power from the hands of the bourgeoisie to those of the people, which has ever been enslaved, will surge into the streets to affirm their will to take control of the destiny of this country. . . .

In the air this city breathes at the start of the afternoon, the conviction spread that the SP rally scheduled for this evening in the Estádio das Antas will never take place.

The power that bans it is People's Power, which is not willing to give any margin for maneuver to its class enemy.

The city will certainly be controlled by the might of the people.

It is expected that the entrances will be sealed to prevent the forces of the bourgeoisie from concentrating. Probably there will even be clashes, such is the desperation of the bourgeoisie.

What happened was rather different. This is the way we described it in *Intercontinental Press*.

Tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of workers, however, had a different idea as to who represented their interests. They swept over the feeble barricades set up in Oporto and filled the giant Antas sports stadium to overflowing. The pitiful gangs mustered by the Stalinist bureaucrats in Intersindical did not dare offer any resistance.

In its July 19 issue, the Oporto daily *Jornal de Notícias* reported: "As for the barricades on the Circunvalação, the following poster was put up. 'Attention barricade watchers, the Matosinhos fishermen are coming through at 4:30 heading for Antas stadium.' And they went through."

Another local daily, *O Primeiro de Janeiro*, reported: "Over the loudspeakers in Antas it was announced that Mário Soares 'was on the way to the stadium, on foot, surrounded by thousands of comrades.' The many thousands of persons concentrated there began to shout in unison: 'Victory! Victory! Victory!' 'The people's will must be respected.'"

The first speaker was António Macedo: "I am proud of all of you," he told the crowd. "I am very proud of my party. I speak to you as an old antifascist, a longtime Socialist here in this home-

town of Humberto Delgado, the general without fear."

Macedo continued: "The Socialist party is the party of the people. The Socialist party is the party without fear." He was constantly interrupted with shouts of: "The people's will must be respected." . . .

Gomes Fernandes, the second speaker, said:

"The future will not be built with defensive tactics, nor with aggressive and threatening barricades. Nor with minorities that preach broad democratic freedoms trying to silence all voices but their own, calling themselves revolutionary vanguardists when they are nothing but opportunist elements of the vanguard.

"The future will be built with the people, with the workers, with those who believe they have the capacity to build a free country here. This socialist people, these socialist workers, are the real revolutionary vanguard."

After the Oporto rally, "People's Power" looked like a loser. In Lisbon, the MFA and CP backed down from their opposition to the SP rally, even though some incidents occurred.

Barricades were manned by Copcon troops, which in general did not try to stop people from going to the rally. In one case, however, the ultraleft Lisbon Light Artillery Regiment fired tear-gas grenades at an SP crowd trying to get at CPers who were burning their cars. This, of course, did not reassure the SP about the intentions of the "military left."

Once it got the upper hand, the SP would prove to be no more democratic-minded than the CP. But at the decisive moment it led the masses in defending their rights and their right to decide what kind of government they wanted against a frenzied defense of totalitarian schemes by the MFA, the CP, and deluded ultraleftists. And in this struggle, the left wing of the SP looked for revolutionary arguments where they could find them. For example, an article by Trotsky on freedom of the press was taken from *Intercontinental Press* and circulated widely at SP rallies.

The Growing Polarization of Forces

The Troika

On July 25 all powers of government were transferred to a troika made up of generals Costa Gomes, Vasco Gonçalves, and Saraiwa de Carvalho. They were seen as representing the three tendencies of the MFA—the first a "moderate" close to the SP, the second close to the CP, and the third close to the ultraleft.

At the time, this formula seemed to be an attempt to establish a government better able to balance among the various political forces without appearing to bend to the popular pressure mounted by the SP. Once it begins to make political concessions to mass pressure, a military government cannot long survive. In fact, when a struggle

opened in the MFA in August, it rapidly undermined the military's political credibility.

Clearly the troika was not intended to be a lasting solution. Its main effect was to reinforce Costa Gomes's position as the supreme arbiter. In August-November, he played this role with considerable skill.

The August crisis may have been precipitated by the CP overplaying its hand. The Stalinists tried to reinforce their alliance with the military by backing what they considered to be friendly figures and by opposing others. At the end of July they organized a movement to oust Jaime Neves, a notorious reactionary, from the command of the Amadora commandos. But only a mass political campaign to achieve democratic

rights for soldiers could have assured success to this operation. Behind-the-scenes maneuvering, even with the support of the CP-controlled mass organizations, was too limited. Besides that, there was the problem of other maneuverers.

The commandos were part of Copcon and thus under Carvalho. At first the demagogic general seemed to agree to ousting Neves. But without warning he shifted, once the soldiers were off guard, and reimposed the reactionary commander. The two soldiers who organized the movement against Neves were imprisoned.

On August 7, three days after Neves was reinstated, nine leaders of the MFA (who became known as "the Nine"), including three of the four regional commanders, published a document opposing the Vasco Gonçalves government.

The CP's allies in the Fifth Division of the General Staff, the propaganda department, and the Ministry of Information were foolish enough to attempt to block publication of the text. In this period also, the minister of information prepared a censorship bill that would establish boards to rule on the ideological content of the newspapers.

Certain moves were made against the Nine; some were removed from their governmental posts and the Council of the Revolution. But there was no attempt to move against them in the armed forces. They were allowed to circulate their document, and very quickly more and more officers aligned themselves with it.

Carvalho's attitude was ambiguous. At first it was reported that he supported the document of the Nine. Then he denied it.

The Copcon Document

On August 13, a document drawn up by a group of Copcon officers was published. It was based on the "People's Power" scheme, and claimed to offer a revolutionary alternative to the "moderate" document of the Nine. At the same time, it described the group of the Nine as "patriots" and concurred with their attack on the Communist party. The Copcon officers accused the CP of seizing bureaucratic power without doing anything to solve the problems of the people. Carvalho was identified with this document, but again he did not specifically endorse it.

The ultraleft groups called a demonstration for August 20 to support the Copcon document. The CP mobilized its supporters for the march, but allowed the ultraleft, for the first time, to take the lead. It was even forced to tolerate speeches condemning "Russian social imperialism." The demonstration was about 50,000-strong. Despite its size, it did not equal the massiveness of the windup rally in the CP electoral campaign in April, even though all the ultraleft groups were now participating. The LCI



Informations Ouvrières

July 1975: The SP mobilized masses of people in defense of democratic rights.

also participated in the August 20 demonstration. But the PRT did not. This marked the beginning of the PRT's shift back toward its original positions.

Shortly after the August 20 demonstration, Carvalho formed a bloc with the Nine. Reportedly a synthesis was being worked out between the Copcon officers' document and the document of the Nine. But apparently Carvalho could not persuade his supporters to go along with the proposed fusion of documents. The August 24 *Le Monde* reported that the synthesis attempt had failed.

On August 25, the supporters of the Copcon document formed a front with the CP, the "August 25 Bloc," also called the Frente Unitária Popular (FUP—People's United Front). The program of the bloc included the Copcon document and the "Lines of Programmatic Action" drawn up by the Vasco Gonçalves government. The latter document was never published, but the minister of information told the press that it included all the legislation of the fifth provisional government and much of the record of the fourth.

On August 27, another mass demonstra-

tion was held in Lisbon under the auspices of the FUP. It was about the same size as the August 20 demonstration, but this time the CP resumed control, causing bitterness among the ultraleft groups. The PRP, for example, left the demonstration.

Cunhal gave a speech August 28 indicating that the CP was ready for a compromise with the SP. The ultraleft groups reacted by denouncing the CP for selling out to the enemy and expelled it from the FUP, which then became the Frente de Unidade Revolucionária (FUR—Front for Revolutionary Unity).

The MDP opposed the ouster of the CP but chose to remain in the FUR, apparently as a proxy for the Stalinists. The other organizations remaining in the front were the LCI, the PRP, the FSP, the MES, and the LUAR (Liga de União e Acção Revolucionária—League for Revolutionary Unity and Action, a guerrillaist grouping).

On August 29, Costa Gomes removed Vasco Gonçalves from his post as premier. At the same time, he offered Gonçalves the post of chief of staff. The appointment was a maneuver aimed at provoking a fight to the finish in the MFA. The Nine refused to accept Gonçalves. The CP and its allies ral-

lied to his defense. The pro-Gonçalves forces waged a hard struggle, but they had no chance.

Only the navy stood by Gonçalves. The army declared against him and announced that it would not attend the upcoming MFA Assembly because it was underrepresented. When air force commander Gen. José Morais e Silva came out against Gonçalves, the outcome was certain. But a strong movement appeared among privates and non-coms against Morais e Silva. The CP-controlled papers announced that he would resign. The report was quickly denied. The air force also decided to boycott the assembly.

On September 5, only the navy delegates and some dissidents from the other services such as the commander of the Lisbon Light Artillery, Dinis de Almeida, showed up at the MFA Assembly meeting at the Tancos base. But they were forced to accept the real relationship of forces. Gonçalves declined nomination for chief of staff.

The center of battle then shifted to Oporto, where the Northern Region headquarters was located. Gen. Eurico Corvacho, the local commander, was the only regional chief who sided with Gonçalves.

Soldiers United Will Win

On September 10, a new soldiers organization made its appearance. The Soldados Unidos Vencerão (SUV—Soldiers United Will Win) and its civilian supporters demonstrated in Oporto. It raised demands linked to the “People’s Power” scheme as well as soldiers’ economic demands. Many of the marchers also shouted their support for Corvacho and opposition to the commander in chief of the army, Gen. Carlos Fabião. The demonstration did not save Corvacho. He was removed from his command September 12 and replaced by Brig. Pires Veloso, former military commissioner of São Tomé and Príncipe.

At the time, from the newspaper reports, this demonstration appeared to be just another CP-ultraleft demonstration in support of the Vasco Gonçalves wing of the MFA. Actually it did not make a decisive political break from the previous “People’s Power” movements. In addition it had a number of sectarian and ultraleft features. For example, it was organized on a clandestine basis. Its representatives gave news conferences masked.

But the SUV also reflected a new phenomenon—a revival of independent organizing in the military forces. Its organizers stressed its independence from the MFA and the hierarchy. And with the “military left” eclipsed for the moment and the CP in retreat, the political polarization was not so great. Many SP supporters among the soldiers supported the SUV demonstrations despite the failure of its organizers to make

any specific appeals to them.

The CP also supported the SUV now that its allies in the officer corps had been defeated. It needed a rank-and-file organization. In some places, such as Alentejo, it organized its own SUV. The clandestine structure made it difficult to identify who actually had a mandate.

But the far left had the initiative, especially at first, in Oporto. The LCI played a key role. It opposed the extreme sectarianism of the Maoist groups and managed to achieve a certain degree of united action. The Maoists were not able to function in such a framework and tended to be bypassed by the SUV and to go into decline in Oporto for the first time.

Intercontinental Press noted the achievements of the SUV, but warned that it was dangerous not to put the SUV demands in a general democratic framework that could win broad civilian support. *Intercontinental Press* also pointed to the dangers of relying on “direct action” by relatively small groups of soldiers without winning the support of the masses. The events of November 25 and after showed that this was a real problem, and that the reliance on “direct action” led to a grave setback, not only for the soldiers movement but for the revolutionary movement as a whole.

CP Goes Into Semiopposition

The initial successes of the SUV indicated a fundamental change had occurred in the political situation. The CP was no longer the government party. Now mass resentments were focused against the new authorities. The Stalinists were forced into a semiopposition stance that tended to encourage economic struggles. Furthermore, as a result of the long struggle, the authority of the government declined still further.

The struggle thus had contradictory effects. On the one hand, it deeply split the working class and toiling masses, and opened the way for a revival of anti-Communism. There was a wave of attacks on CP headquarters in the North in July and August.

The Socialist party did not condone these; but it did not combat them consistently either, and its explanation of the roots of the conflict gave grist to the anti-Communist mill. Soares was aware of the dangers of a rightist revival, but these actions also supported his case that a government that depended solely on the CP would not be viable in Portugal. Thus, the SP should be the “progressive” military’s preferred ally.

At the same time, the CP’s sectarian belligerence toward the SP and its adventurist stance hardened the split. In some places, the anti-Communist attacks took on the dimensions of veritable pogroms. That was

the case in Leiria, a town about eighty miles north of Lisbon, where besides the attacks on the CP the headquarters of the LCI was burned.

These attacks ended with the ouster of Vasco Gonçalves. The CP was no longer an all-powerful machine in the eyes of the masses, but tended rather to appear to be the underdog.

If the CP had dissociated itself cleanly from the government and gone into consistent opposition, it probably could have recovered very quickly and perhaps regained the opportunity it threw away after the fall of Caetano—that is, the opportunity to win the leadership of the toiling masses throughout the country.

The masses were still confident of their own strength, and the continued deterioration of their living standard was pressing them to make demands that no capitalist government could meet. In these conditions, a reformist party could be discredited very quickly by backing the government. That, in fact, is what tended to happen to the SP when it became the main political prop of the government.

However, the opposition of the CP was dishonest and distorted. If the party had withdrawn outright from the government or had decided to share the role of junior partner with the SP, it would have had to surrender the huge bureaucratic network it had built up under the Vasco Gonçalves cabinet. It tried to hold on to its booty by keeping one foot in the government and the other outside, a position that was untenable.

The CP inaugurated this tactic during the negotiations over the formation of the sixth government. Soares and the PPD demanded that the ministries be distributed in proportion to the election returns, that is, three for the SP, two for the PPD, and one for the CP. The CP objected that the PPD was a reactionary party and should not have more ministries than the “progressives.” The left wing of the SP was willing to give the CP two ministries rather than give one extra to the bourgeois party.

However, the CP tried to pressure the SP and MFA by calling an agricultural workers’ strike in Alentejo against a “turn to the right,” which, it claimed, was endangering agrarian reform. The language of the CP-controlled agricultural unions was hyper-radical and threatening. It almost seemed as if the CP were ready to go to the brink of insurrection to gain one more minister.

Sixth Provisional Government

Nonetheless, the tactic failed. The sixth provisional government was formed on September 19 with only one CP minister. CP leader Alvaro Cunhal was later to complain that his party had been promised three secretary of state posts that it did not get.

The CP continued to push for formation

of "People's Power" bodies and for their recognition by the state. Its apparent aim was to create parastate agencies that it could control as a bureaucratic fief.

The ultraleft also campaigned along the same lines with the perspective of turning such formations into "soviets." Actually, the appearance of these committees was an important development because they united most of the political forces that to one degree or another opposed the government. But the fact that they pretended to be budding "People's Power" gave them a very sectarian form.

All these problems were illustrated in the most important struggle that broke out in the armed forces after the formation of the sixth government, the fight of the soldiers at the Second Heavy Artillery Regiment in Oporto in early October. The struggle started when the regional commander ordered the dissolution of the local military driver-training unit because a soldiers assembly opposed some transfers it considered politically motivated. Commandos expelled the soldiers from their barracks. They then took refuge in the heavy artillery base and converted it into a center of protest. The soldiers all together defied the authority of the regional commander. A direct physical confrontation would have been risky for the government.

General Fabião went to the base and made a series of vague promises. Once the soldiers were demobilized, a wave of reprisals began against some of those involved in the occupation of the base.

The soldiers called a meeting of their civilian supporters to open the struggle again. The CPers immediately proposed forming a "people's assembly" for the neighborhood. The Trotskyists opposed linking the construction of "People's Power" to organizing a defense movement for the soldiers, and forced the CP to back down. The Stalinist proposal obviously would have prevented building effective support; it was completely bureaucratic and sectarian.

But, in any case, it was already too late for the Oporto soldiers. They had lost time by letting themselves be lulled by a "progressive" MFA officer. They had failed to identify their cause with the cause of defending the democratic rights of the majority of the population. The "vanguardist" actions of the ultraleftists and the bureaucratic pressure plays of the CP revived the fears of the SP supporters that their rights would be trampled on by the "activist groups."

On October 24, under cover of an alert against rightist bombers, the military deployed forces in Oporto and at strategic points around the heavy artillery base. This pressure was sufficient to "restore order" on the base.

Then on October 25, the SP and PPD succeeded in drawing a crowd of up to 200,000 to hear Premier Azevedo. It was in effect a demonstration of support for the sixth government and opposition to the soldiers who seemed to be acting specifically against this government. A demonstration in support of the soldiers on October 27 drew only a few thousand persons.

By the end of October, the opposition and semiopposition to the sixth government seemed to be weakening. It had suffered defeat after defeat.

Construction Workers Besiege Azevedo

Suddenly a development foreseen by no one staggered the shaky government. The construction workers marched November 12 for an industry-wide contract and higher wages, that is, against the wage standards set by the Vasco Gonçalves cabinet.

This was a section of workers that had never been organized before. They were the most divided, exploited by a whole pyramid of subcontractors. They were at the bottom rung of the working class and included a large percentage of immigrant African laborers.

The nationalizations and the idea that the government should be responsible to the workers had made it possible for them to mobilize against a central target, the government itself.

Once these workers moved into the streets, it was almost impossible to control them. They decided to lock up Premier Azevedo in the Palácio de São Bento until he granted their demands.

Carvalho refused to send troops to clear them away. Perhaps he did this to further his personal ambitions, since he had now allied himself with the CP and was regaining his left image and leverage. But the fact was that the political results of trying to send largely radicalized troops against thousands of determined workers could have been disastrous, in the first place for Carvalho himself.

The government was forced to yield to the construction workers. The immediate political result was that the opposition and semiopposition regained their credibility, and sections of the working class that opposed the austerity policy of the sixth government were encouraged to express their feelings.

The demonstration called by the Workers Committees of the Lisbon industrial belt on November 16 drew up to 100,000 persons, perhaps even more. Only two weeks previously a demonstration called by the same body drew only 20,000 or so, the hard core of CP support.

The Attempted Ultraleft Coup

The government resorted to a tactic all its experience indicated would be successful. It played dead and gave the CP and the ultra-

left enough rope to hang themselves. It claimed that it could not govern; that the CP and the ultraleftists in the military were preventing it from carrying out the will of the majority. But at the same time it tried to remove Carvalho from his key post as military governor of Lisbon. This was like a decoy to lure the CP and ultraleft into precipitous action. It apparently worked.

On November 25, the paratroopers seized four air force bases and demanded the resignation of Morais e Silva and his deputy. If successful, this direct armed challenge to the government's authority could have shifted the balance of forces in the military and forced a remodeling of the sixth government to the CP's taste.

Fifth Division officers marched into the television stations, along with the head of the national network under Gonçalves, who announced: "People's Power is giving the orders now."

That was what the government was waiting for, an attempt by a leftist military unit to impose its will on the country by force. The seemingly nonexistent bourgeois state sprung to life, and a couple of elite military units overpowered all the leftist units in the Lisbon area within a matter of hours. An important factor in this, also, was that when the chips were down, the leftist officers backed down.

In an instant the sixth government was stronger than ever before. The CP was brought to heel and forced to accept the liquidation of its influence in the press in one fell swoop. The government tried to exploit its advantage by imposing its austerity program.

But, to survive, the sixth government has to restore bourgeois "law and order" and to do that it has to liquidate the mass radicalization and the new combativity of Portuguese workers. And these run deep. They have not faded despite a long series of disappointments and diversion of the masses. This combativity is illustrated by the construction workers' action.

Something less palpable but very deep and widespread is illustrated by what a woman said in a café on April 25, 1975, just after a particularly provocative ultraleft demonstration.

One of her sons said that the leftists were troublemakers and should be sent to work. Another said that if there were repression even against them, it would mean the end of political life and things would be as they were before.

His mother's comment was: "I am fifty-six years old, and I never knew anything about life before, I never understood anything."

She was determined to learn more. Her political education and the political education of millions of Portuguese toilers is only beginning. They will not want to stop halfway. □

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