

## Class Struggle or “Unity of All Honest Portuguese”

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Our Portuguese Marxist-Leninist comrades have just published in their review Revolution populaire (People's Revolution), a basic theoretical document dealing with the development of the class struggle in Portugal. It is a systematical and a very forceful critique of the revisionism of Alvaro Cunhal, the principal leader of the revisionist party.

The document is entitled "Class Struggle or Unity of All Honest Portuguese". We are publishing in this article some significant excerpts from the first chapter of that critical study.

Class Struggle or "Unity of All Honest Portuguese" (First article of the critique of "Toward the Victory").

About a year ago Alvaro Cunhal presented his report entitled "Toward the Victory" at a meeting of the Central Committee of the Portuguese Communist Party. It was a long study which was published a few months later in the form of a brochure and was distributed widely.

It was not the first time that Cunhal outlined systematically his concepts of the Portuguese revolution. However, what made this report particularly interesting was the fact that in contrast to the previous report its purpose was to defend the line of "national uprising" against the accusations of rightist leaning.

Indeed, for many years Alvaro Cunhal was able to present his ideas as a sincere effort to apply Marxism-Leninism to the national conditions, because there was no organized opposition except on his right. Thus in 1946 he outlined systematically for the first time the line of Unity in opposition to the "policy of transition" which at that time was defended by the liquidating current of Julio Fogaca, Pedro Soares, Joao Rodriguez, and others. Later on, in 1961, he formulated and developed the line of "national uprising" as a retort to the "Pacific solution" which was invented by the ultra-rightists who

dominated the Party at the time, who led again Fogaça, Pedro Soares, etc.

Today Cunhal is fighting publicly for the first time and without reservation, not against the right wing but against the left wing. While he declares that the "dogmatism" and the "leftism" are the principal dangers in the Portuguese revolutionary movement, he is forced to reveal more clearly his reformist and opportunist points of view.

His illusions concerning the Unity with liberal bourgeoisie, his abandonment of the profound interests of the masses of workers in cities and rural areas, his omission of the objectives of conquest of the political power by the proletariat are the same as 20 years ago. However, what is new is the clarity with which he declares his opposition to the popular anti-fascist uprising, to the hegemony of the proletariat, and to the establishment of a popular democratic power, to the revolution of Portugal. The opportunism of Cunhal loses its initial spontaneity and transforms itself rapidly into an elaborate, conscious, nature phenomenon. That is what makes the report "Toward the Victory" important and indicates that Cunhal's reformism has entered its period of decline (...).

#### Does the Proletariat Have or Not the Right to Work Out Its Own Class Line?

The traditional basis of the opportunism in the Portuguese Revolutionary Movement is the negation of the correct interest of the proletariat and - under the pretext of immediate and common tasks - the fusion of its interests with those of the radical bourgeoisie and the abandonment of its strategic objectives. The result of such action is that opportunism makes the claims of the class of manual workers devoid of their revolutionary potential and transforms them into inoffensive "democratic" and "national" demands of "all the people", thus putting the proletariat in the service of such or such a fraction of the bourgeoisie.

What makes precisely Alvaro Cunhal one of the most brilliant disciples of the Portuguese opportunist school who descend from the socialists of the XIX Century is the perfection which he has reached in the art of confounding the interests of the proletariat with those of the radical bourgeoisie. By using as a pretext the urgency of the immediate political tasks and the national interests in overthrowing the fascist dictatorship, Alvaro Cunhal has worked out - instead of a Marxist analysis of the class struggle and of the definition of the correct interests of the proletariat - a line of National Unity which served him as a cover for the gradual subordination of the interests of the proletariat to those of the bourgeoisie.

For two decades the line of the Portuguese Communist Party was based only on the principle of Unity of all honest Portuguese against Salazar, with the argument that it was a means to speed up the overthrow of the fascist dictatorship and a condition for the future program of the popular movement. That is how it was possible to plunge the Party into narrow and sterile empirism which is reflected clearly in the reports and other documents of the leadership of the Party and

which allows all the opportunist trends of the right and of the "left" to develop without obstacles.

That is how the workers were frustrated in their efforts to achieve victory, the workers who after a harsh experience of class struggles under the monarchy and under the republic succeeded in the Thirties and Forties to organize their Communist Party as a detachment designed to fight capitalism. By considering the resistance of the militant Party members who tried to defend the class character and class revolutionary objectives of the Party as "labor right" and "sectarian", Alvaro Cunhal and his associates tried to remove from the consciousness of the oppressed masses the hate of the bourgeoisie, the spirit of vigilance of the class with regard all the exploiters, the profound aspirations towards proletarian revolution, socialism and communism, and to set against the class consciousness their sacrosanct National Unity, and thus turned the Portuguese Communist Party into a radical party of the class of manual workers.

But years have passed and the practical experience began to reveal that the line of Unity, instead of speeding up the fall of the dictatorship - as Cunhal promised that it would happen -, served only to prolong its life. The revolutionary workers, who found themselves on several occasions under the leadership of radical bourgeoisie and saw that their chiefs were dominated by the spirit of collaboration of the classes, by pacifism, by legalism, began to cease to believe in the virtues of the Unity and to seek some other orientation in the confusion.

Colonial uprisings and popular movements of 1961-62 were a great school for the communists and for all the workers whose consciousness was awakened by the revelation of their strength, of their objectives, of their true allies. Since 1961-62 new vistas began to open to the labor movement. Increasingly broader strata of revolutionary workers began to understand that it is the Unity which emasculates the anti-fascist struggle and that their struggle, far from requiring limitations of their class demands, could on the contrary become fruitful only through such demands. Many communist militant members began to understand that the Party cannot lead the proletariat in their immediate tasks if it does not study seriously the class struggle which takes place in our society, if it does not distinguish the interests of the proletariat from those of all the other classes, if it does not determine the objectives and stages of the revolution.

Cunhal was hit by a wave of criticism in the last years, and this wave became a storm when he issued the ultra-opportunist text entitled "Prospects of National Struggle" in 1962. He realized then that it was not possible any more to continue to make the Party accept his concept of an "Oppositionism" which was alien to the class struggle. By publishing that text he tried to save his line, using abundant Marxist terminology and mentioning certain class contradictions in order to support his thesis of "democratic and national revolution".

When read for the first time, the text succeeds indeed to

mislead the militant members who were not accustomed to such a profusion of references to the classes, to the stages of the revolution, and to the alliances. But if we study the text, we discover the old opportunism behind the "revolutionary" phraseology and realize that this pompous "political line and tactics of the Party during the present stage of the revolution" is only a new edition of the old line of Unity.

In his report "Toward the Victory", Alvaro Cunhal does not start from a Marxist analysis of the class struggle in Portugal in order to infer from it the Party line. He does just the opposite: he starts from a political line which was established in advance in an empirical manner from the line of National Unity (which is disguised today under the terms of "democratic and national revolution"), and he seeks to justify it by means of a distorted analysis of the class struggle.

It is undoubtedly correct to concentrate the fire of criticism on the great monopolist bourgeoisie and on the holders of large estates who constitute the principal fraction of the national bourgeoisie and the principal enemy of the proletariat and of the people at the present stage. It is the right thing to do to analyse by means of figures, as the report does, the role of private companies and financial groups, the concentration of large estates, and the imperialist penetration in the national economy, by claiming that in the present situation there are "hardly a dozen of monopolist groups, a few hundred big estate holders, and foreign imperialists" which exploit and oppress the country (page 8. "hardly" underlined by us), by failing to mention the strength and the interests of the other strata of urban and rural bourgeoisie, by minimizing the role of the working peasants and colonial people in the present class struggle, Cunhal manages finally to conceal the nature of the capitalist society in Portugal, the multiplicity of contradictions with which the proletariat is confronted, and to disguise the real interests of the proletariat which are not common to any of the other classes.

In this way Cunhal merges the interests of the proletariat in the union of anti-fascist forces by effacing the differences and contradictions which exist between the various classes which are dominated by the monopoly, by the big estate holders, and by foreign imperialism. He does not state clearly that there are two conflicting lines in the anti-fascist struggle, namely the revolutionary line of the proletariat and the reformist line of liberal bourgeoisie, and he failed to mention that it is necessary for the proletariat to take the control of the struggle and to gain political power, which is the only way to crush definitely the big bourgeoisie and big estate holders and expel imperialism.

At the moment when the Portuguese bourgeoisie tries laboriously to find a way to modernize the institutions and to re-enforce its dictatorship, Cunhal offers it an inestimable support by reducing all the class contradictions to the contradiction which opposes "a handful of monopolists (supported by foreign imperialism) and big estate holders to the mass of the population". It is a subtle way to abandon under the pretext of critiques of the big bourgeoisie the critique of

Portuguese capitalism and to juggle away the correct interests of the proletariat and its revolutionary tasks in the present situation.

To sum up, the mission to which Cunhal consecrates himself in his report is to conceal (as, incidentally, he always did in the past) the fact that in Portugal there exists a principal and decisive class contradiction, the contradiction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, and that the task of the Communist Party is to act in a revolutionary manner in order to solve this contradiction and to replace the bourgeois dictatorship with the dictatorship of the proletariat, to replace capitalism with socialism.

All the stages which the Portuguese revolution must go through, starting with the stage of the overthrow of the dictatorship of Salazar, can be overcome victoriously only if they are inserted in the perspective of that great class struggle between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie which constitute the Portuguese society of today. To conceal this fact is to conceal from the proletariat its interests, to detract it from its tasks, to help the bourgeoisie to prolong its dictatorship in a new form. That is what leads us to state that the report "Toward the Victory" sanctifies Alvaro Cunhal as one of the most remarkable Portuguese reformists of all times, as a defender of the interests of the bourgeoisie in the bosom of the proletariat.

