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To National Committee Members

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is the first draft of a resolution on Portugal to be presented to the National Committee plenum. Our plan is to print it in the Militant following its adoption by the plenum as the position of the SWP National Committee.

Please bring to the plenum your editing suggestions marked in the margins or noted on a separate page.

Comradely,

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NATIONAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT ON PORTUGAL  
POLITICAL COMMITTEE DRAFT

I. The Potential for a Victory of the Socialist Revolution

Following the April 1974 military coup that overthrew the Salazarist dictatorship, a mass upsurge developed in Portugal that began to challenge capitalist rule. The masses utilized the opening provided by the coup to assert their democratic rights to discuss, to assemble, and to organize to better their conditions of life and to struggle for a better society. The great mass of working people and large sectors of the petty bourgeoisie came to the conclusion that their aspirations for economic security and democratic freedoms--the opposite of the totalitarian oppression they had suffered under for 48 years--could be realized only under socialism.

The old regime fell completely discredited. Since Portuguese capitalism had ruled so long through a totalitarian setup, capitalism itself and capitalist ideology were discredited. The Portuguese capitalist class found itself in a weak political position as the radicalization among the masses deepened.

The dynamic of this development points toward the rise of various united-front type action and factory committees of the masses and the creation of soviet or council-type organs, breaking from class collaborationist schemes on every level, the installation of a workers and peasants government, the dismantling of the old capitalist repressive apparatus, the establishment of a workers state and the beginning of the construction of socialism. A working class victory in Portugal would sound the death knell of European capitalism and deal a staggering blow to the main powerhouse of international capitalism in the United States.

The fundamental reason why this potential and dynamic has not yet been realized has been the absence of a mass revolutionary socialist party that could provide the correct policies and program in each step of the process. Instead, the mass movement has been dominated by fundamentally reformist forces--the leaderships of the Socialist and Communist parties--who have confused and disoriented the masses, and blocked them from moving forward again and again through their class collaborationist policy of vying to be the favored supporter of the capitalist government. This has deeply divided the working class.

The historically unprecedented duration of the mass upsurge, even in the face of the setbacks inflicted upon them by the false and treacherous policies of the Stalinists and the Social Democrats, itself demonstrates how ripe the objective conditions for the triumph of the socialist revolution are. But victory requires overcoming the central weakness of the Portuguese revolution up to now--the absence of a politically competent leadership of the working class--through the construction of a mass party based on a revolutionary socialist program.

II. The April 1974 Coup and the Upsurge of the Masses

The April 25, 1974 military coup that toppled the totalitarian dictatorship was an outcome of the conclusion drawn by Portuguese finance capital that neither the colonial empire nor the working class at home could be dominated any longer primarily by repressive means.

After more than a decade of savage war against the peoples in their colonies, the Portuguese imperialists had failed to crush the nationalist movements. They finally realized that they did not have the resources to sustain a large-scale military occupation of the colonies without undermining capitalist stability in Portugal itself. As was the case with the more powerful imperialist powers before them, they decided they had to try to shift to indirect, neocolonial methods of imperialist domination.

Those sectors of the Portuguese ruling class who came to see the need for a change in policy faced grave difficulties in carrying it out. For nearly five decades the regime had rested on repressive structures modeled after those installed by Mussolini, Hitler and Franco. Not only were substantial repressive forces such as the secret police and the riot police strongly intertwined with the regime, but the economic interests of a swollen layer of backward petty capitalists and latifundists were bound up with the maintenance of this special repressive system. The dominant sectors of the ruling class decided to reorganize its form of political rule through a military uprising against the entrenched layer of the state and political apparatus.

What Portugal's rulers underestimated was the power and extent of the mass upsurge that would follow the coup. In the sweep of this mass radicalization, the bourgeoisie found it impossible to reconsolidate its repressive apparatus immediately. It was forced to permit far more widespread purges of rightist police and officials than it intended or than was compatible with the stability of capitalist class rule.

The workers in the factories and the poor masses in the neighborhoods organized spontaneously. Hated bosses and strikebreaking goons were purged. Unused housing was seized. The workers asserted the right to hold meetings and organize assemblies in the plants. The factories became centers of political discussion and activity. Wage gains were won.

Democratic factory committees sprang up in most of the big plants. They were elected by general assemblies involving all the workers. These committees represented a step toward overcoming the craft-union fragmentation inherited from the corporatist unions of the old regime, and opened the way to development of soviet forms of organization.

The pressure of the mass upsurge widened the cracks in

the discipline of the armed forces resulting from growing unwillingness to continue the long and unsuccessful colonial war. Some sectors of the bourgeoisie began to fear that the mass movement in Portugal and the colonies was getting out of hand. Their resistance led to splits in the military command, and opened the way for democratic organization in the armed forces, especially in the military police, the navy and some regiments of the army. As it deepened, this process threatened to shatter the armed forces as an instrument of the bourgeois state.

In a vast ferment, the masses began to express themselves and to examine publically forbidden ideas on a nationwide scale. An unprecedented openness to socialist and revolutionary ideas rapidly unfolded. All tendencies claiming to stand for socialism received substantial press coverage, and the masses gave the various proposals of the different tendencies serious consideration. The ferment of revolutionary ideas spread irresistibly, threatening to dissolve even the discipline of the armed forces.

Combined with a sharpening economic crisis and this partial paralysis of the bourgeois repressive forces, the ferment in the working class led to a series of factory occupations, the imposition of elements of workers control, and to demands for nationalization. The workers turned to nationalizations as a way of preventing layoffs and countering claims by the capitalist owners that they could not afford to meet demands for better wages and conditions. They imposed workers control to prevent factory closures, to discover the business secrets of the bosses, and in some key cases, such as the banks, to prevent the capitalists from using their economic power to mount an attack on the workers movement.

As the radicalization deepened, landless peasants began to seize the land of latifundists, and agricultural workers began organizing unions and demanding equality with other workers.

The fall of the totalitarian regime gave great impetus to other social movements. The women's liberation movement, for example, quickly raised demands that went beyond what the military were prepared to grant. The movement among university and high-school students against authoritarianism in the schools and against restricted access to education assumed powerful momentum, along with actions by students from the colonies.

When a section of the officer caste around General Spínola attempted to carry out right-wing coups on September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975, mass mobilizations blocked them and led to a deepening of the radicalization.

### III. The Armed Forces Movement

The upsurge of the Portuguese masses has posed a threat to the continuation of capitalist domination. Under the conditions of the deep radicalization of the masses and the political weakness of the capitalist class, the September 28, 1974, and March 11, 1975, attempts to halt the process not only failed but backfired, resulting in both cases in a deepening of the radicalization and mobilization. In the period immediately following the March 11 attempt, the mass mobilization, together with the further discrediting of procapitalist political forces as a result of the coup attempt, reached a point where continued capitalist rule hung by a thread.

In face of the mass upsurge, the ruling class sought to combine attempts at selective repression with concessions and demagogic promises to the masses. It sought to divide the working class, and to separate the working class from its allies in the petty bourgeoisie through political stratagems, reserving harsher measures until the mass upsurge subsided. The instrument for carrying out this policy was the Armed Forces Movement (AFM).

The AFM began as a movement among professional officers who sought to defend their privileges as graduates of the military academies against the ordinary university graduates, large numbers of whom were given commissions as part of the expansion of the armed forces required to fight the colonial war. It became the instrument on which the imperialist bourgeoisie relied to remove the old totalitarian regime and carry out the needed political reorganization. As such, it was the only formation to emerge from the old regime that had credibility among the masses.

As the radicalization deepened among both the civilian population and in the armed forces, the majority of the AFM officers who broke with the Spínolista attempts to crush the popular upsurge by force were compelled to adopt correspondingly more "socialist" and "anti-imperialist" rhetoric in order to maintain support and divert the radicalization process into the channels designed to reinforce class collaborationist support to the AFM.

Since the April 1974 coup, the AFM, with shifts in its leading personnel, has served as the real government of capitalist Portugal and its empire. During this time, it has presided over and maintained a capitalist imperialist system. Its objective has continued to be to modernize and strengthen Portuguese capitalism--not to overturn it. For example, the policy of the AFM in face of the inflation and unemployment that have afflicted Portugal as well as other capitalist countries during the international capitalist economic crisis, has

consistently been to attempt to make the working people bear the brunt of the crisis. This is the same policy pursued by capitalist governments the world over, the only difference being that the AFM uses "socialist" demagoguery to try to persuade the Portuguese workers to help out capitalism in its hour of need.

The AFM has made only such concessions to the mass movement as were inescapable if popular support were to be retained and its position held against both the more conservative bourgeois elements anxious to halt the reforms at any cost and the more combative elements in the workers movement. For example, when the bank workers exposed the links of certain capitalists to the March 11 coup attempt, and mobilized to demand the nationalization of the banks, the government was obliged to give in to this demand, partially to defend itself against sections of the bourgeoisie who were now opposed to the reform policy it represented. In other cases, the government resisted demands for nationalizing profitable enterprises. Because of the economic crisis and the need to modernize the economy, the government itself initiated a series of nationalizations to bail out key capitalist interests and strengthen Portuguese capitalism.

At every stage the AFM has striven to maintain as much control over the colonies as possible without endangering the conversion to neocolonial methods. The AFM utilized "anti-imperialist" rhetoric to cover its neocolonialist objectives. It kept troops in Angola, the most important of its former colonies, for a year and a half after the coup that overthrew the old regime. Their goal was to exacerbate the divisions among the nationalist fighters and help insure that whatever government emerges there will be weaker and more dependent upon imperialism, and that the Portuguese ruling class will get a few concessions in the new setup.

From April 1974 through December 1975 there have been six provisional governments in Portugal. This rapid turnover testifies to the deepening instability of the bases of bourgeois rule in face of the continuing social struggles and democratic ferment, the advance of the colonial revolution and the worsening economic situation. Throughout this process the provisional governments have been paralleled by military bodies of the AFM that have functioned as the real governmental authority: The various provisional governments have all been openly class collaborationist, with one or the other or both of the major working class parties, the Socialist and Communist parties, participating in them as junior partners with the AFM.

#### V. The Role of the Leaderships of the Communist and Socialist Parties

The support given to the various provisional govern-

ments by the SP and CP leaderships flows from their fundamentally class collaborationist or popular frontist policy, which in the given situation in Portugal to date has been expressed through political support to the AFM, although each of these parties does this in a different way.

The CP emerged from the April 1974 coup as the only force not compromised with the old regime that had an effective apparatus. From the beginning the Stalinist leadership of the CP placed its apparatus at the service of the new military regime. Initially enjoying a great deal of prestige among the masses, it utilized its position to campaign to put over the AFM's austerity program and "battle for production" as in the interests of the working class. In the summer of 1974 it denounced striking postal workers seeking higher pay as "in the service of fascism" and organized demonstrations to break their strike. This action prefigured the CP's role as labor policeman for the AFM. It early won key positions in the unions, but utilized its positions to block the formation of industrial unions. It supported the so-called Trade Union Unity Law promulgated by the AFM early in 1975, that united the craft unions under a single federation, Intersindical, and tended to freeze both the craft union structure as well as CP control of these unions in spite of the fact that CP support had waned in favor of the SP.

The Stalinists succeeded in many instances in perverting the concept of workers control in the factories from workers imposing control over the process of production in their own interests into workers disciplining themselves to carry out the AFM's austerity program and "battle for production." This had the effect of shoring up the capitalist profitability of plants in a period of political crisis when the capitalists could not themselves effectively manage their plants.

After the April 1974 coup, the AFM promised elections to a Constituent Assembly. In view of its weak political position and the mass upsurge, the Portuguese ruling class feared that it could not maintain control over the Constituent Assembly and that the Constituent Assembly might be utilized to put a government in power that would begin to express the aspirations of the masses and thus facilitate the process pointing toward a soviet system. In face of this danger to capitalist rule, the AFM insisted that the two largest workers parties in particular bind themselves in advance to denying any real authority to the Constituent Assembly and to supporting the AFM instead as the real authority. The leaderships of both the CP and SP signed the pact to this effect, hamstringing the Constituent Assembly and committing themselves to uphold the military regime.

In the elections held in April 1975, over 90 percent

of the electorate voted. All the parties, including the capitalist parties, claimed to stand for some kind of socialism, reflecting the mass sentiment in favor of socialism. Some leaders of the AFM called for blank ballots, but only a small minority followed this advice. The combined vote for the two largest workers parties was just over 50 percent, with the SP getting about 38 percent and the CP 13 percent. The bourgeois parties received a distinct minority of the vote. In this situation, revolutionary socialists should have seized the initiative and began campaigning around the demand that the SP and CP break the pact with the AFM, and utilize their majority to form a workers and peasants government, mobilize the masses behind this government and carry through the socialist transformation. The leaderships of the SP and CP, naturally, could not be persuaded to take such a course, but a campaign around this demand would not only have exposed the fraudulency of their claims, it would have indicated the way forward for the working class; that is, to break with the policy of class collaboration and form a government independent of any capitalist forces. Such a campaign would have met with a favorable response from the rank and file Socialist and Communist workers as reflecting their aspirations for socialism.

In response to the setback suffered by the capitalist forces in the election, the AFM launched a demagogic campaign against the Constituent Assembly as merely a "bourgeois democratic" institution. To it the AFM counterposed a vague drummed-up program for "peoples power." At the same time, the AFM sought to deepen the division in the working class by denouncing the SP, charging it with being the main danger to socialism. The Stalinists became strident supporters and organizers of this AFM campaign. They passed off their low vote relative to the SP as simply an example of the evil results to be expected from "bourgeois democracy," attacked the Constituent Assembly in favor of the AFM's demagogic "peoples power" plan, and joined in the AFM campaign against the SP, charging it with being the main danger to socialism and even resurrecting for a time the old Stalinist theory of the early 1930s that the SP was "social fascist."

The CP spearheaded an attack against the democratic rights of the SP. It gave full support to the takeover of the newspaper República from its pro-Socialist Party editors, and then unsuccessfully attempted, along with the AFM and with the support of ultraleft groups, to block mass mobilizations called by the SP to defend its democratic rights. The SP leaders resigned from the government in protest against the attacks on its rights, and as part of its efforts to displace the CP as the favored junior partners of the AFM. The CP moved closer to reliance on the AFM to defend its position in the labor movement as its popularity dropped over the summer be-

cause of its antidemocratic course. Its stance was that the "socialist revolution" would be made by a minority--by the CP in alliance with the AFM--against the majority of workers who supported the SP.

The CP's campaign against democratic rights in general and those of the SP in particular, as well as its bureaucratic attempt to maintain its positions in the labor movement through reliance on the AFM, helped pave the way for restoration of one of the props of capitalist rule--the fear among the masses that socialism means an end to their democratic rights and subjugation to a tyrannical machine. The Stalinists' attack on democratic rights played into the hands of reactionary forces, who were able to mobilize mobs, especially in the North, that attacked and burned CP headquarters, while the deep division in the working class fostered by the Stalinists at the behest of the AFM resulted in the majority of workers standing aside.

The Stalinist policy over the summer also played into the hands of the reformist leaders of the SP. Radicalized workers and petty bourgeoisie turned to the SP which appeared to defend democratic rights, especially because of the massive mobilizations the SP leaders were forced to call in defense of their own democratic rights.

Under the impact of these mobilizations of SP workers and supporters the AFM was forced to make a shift. At the end of August officers most closely identified with the CP, such as the premier, General Goncalves, were dumped from the AFM's ruling Revolutionary Council, and officers closer to the SP were elevated. Along with this change in the composition of the top AFM ruling body, a new--the sixth--provisional government of collaboration with Portuguese capital was installed, with the CP reduced to a token role and the major role of junior partner to the AFM being filled by the SP.

The Communist party leadership's class collaborationist policy flows from its Stalinist program of subordinating the needs and interests of the Portuguese workers to those of the Soviet bureaucratic caste. The Kremlin does not seek a socialist Portugal, only a stable capitalist Portugal that would not invite U.S. intervention or upset its policy of achieving "peaceful coexistence" with Washington. The Kremlin's chief bargaining chip with the U.S. imperialists is its influence on the working class, exercised through pro-Moscow Stalinist parties, including that in Portugal.

The Socialist Party, like its sister Social Democratic parties throughout the world, is a reformist workers party that claims to represent socialism but is opposed to the abolition of capitalism. It maintains that socialism can be accomplished through the gradual reform of capitalism. Its perspectives of reform are tied to the ability of Portuguese monopoly capitalism to grant concessions to the workers.

Its class collaborationist strategy flows from this basically reformist perspective.

The SP differs from the CP in its methods of organization. It is not a disciplined or homogeneous party. In the first year after the 1974 coup, it sought to present itself as a champion of democracy. While maintaining a basic position of subordination to the AFM, its support of some of the forms of parliamentary democracy led it into conflict with the AFM and the CP. It defended victims of certain repressive moves by the AFM directed against some of the smaller left groups. When its own democratic rights were under attack by the AFM and the CP with the support of the ultraleftist groups during the summer, it called large mobilizations in defense of its rights, which further enhanced its image as a fighter for democratic rights. This was the political capital it placed at the service of the sixth provisional government under the reorganized AFM.

The SP had consolidated the support of the majority of the working class and radicalized petty bourgeoisie in the course of the summer. The sixth provisional government, with full support of the SP leadership, made new efforts to implement the austerity program that has been AFM policy from the beginning, to call for capitalist law and order in the factories and barracks, and restrict the role of the soldiers committees that had appeared in some units and the workers commissions in the factories.

But the continuing radicalization process hindered their plan. Early in September, there were demonstrations by soldiers in an organization called Soldiers United Will Win (SUV). The SUV reflected the continuing process of radicalization among the rank-and-file soldiers, which was leading toward greater breakdown of military discipline.

The militant demonstration by construction workers in November demanding a wage increase in the face of capitalist-caused inflation was the first action on a massive scale directly challenging the AFM's austerity program. It indicated the potential for working class action in defense of its rights against the anti-working class policies of the AFM and how rapidly they can move from economic demands toward posing the need for a workers government. This demonstration was followed by another large demonstration, called by workers commissions in the Lisbon area, against the sixth government.

The Communist Party leadership, its role demoted in the sixth government to that of token participation (although that token participation itself was an indication that the CP's basic policy of subordination to the AFM remained unchanged), gave support to one degree or another to the SUV demonstrations, the action by the construction workers and the mass mobilization that was called by

workers commissions under its leadership. The CP's oppositional stance helped provide an opening for the masses. While its support of the construction workers' struggle for higher wages ran directly counter to its own policy, up through the fifth provisional government, of opposing such struggles in the interests of the "battle for production," its support to mobilizations against the sixth government did not signal any break with its policy of subordination to the AFM. The CP leaders did not call during these actions for a break with the AFM and for a workers and peasants government; they sought nothing more than a resumption of their privileged position of junior partner with the AFM instead of the SP. This was indicated by their slogan of a return of Vasco Goncalves. Their support to the mobilization against the sixth government was designed to show that the AFM still needed them if it was to effectively discipline the working class.

Initially, a sizeable section of the youth and workers looking for an alternative to the left of the Communist and Socialist parties was attracted to various Maoist groups. These groups themselves differ in many respects, the sharpest dividing line being between the PCP(ml), which acts as a right-centrist ally of the SP, and the others, which are generally ultraleftist in their poses. They all have one trait in common--sectarianism, which is exemplified in their common slogan, "Neither fascism, nor social fascism--people's democracy." With the epithet "social fascism," they rule out any united actions with supporters of the Communist party. Their sectarianism has made them more and more irrelevant, and their influence has dropped sharply.

#### VII. The Role of the Centrists and the Nov. 25 Attempted Coup

There are a number of left-centrist groups that have a certain influence in Portugal, especially among the youth and intellectuals but also among the military and workers. These groups dominate the United Revolutionary Front (FUR) that was formed in August.

While their political line and course vacillates between, and often combines, adventurism and opportunism, they have all followed a basically ultraleftist policy--one that was aimed at jumping over the necessity of winning the masses to posing the question of "power," that is, a minority revolution. These groups, who call themselves the "far left," seek a short-cut to the socialist revolution, emphasizing "rank-and-file" organizing and initiatives from below, while downplaying the key political and strategic problems, such as what attitude to take toward the defense of democratic rights or the bourgeois government supported by the mass reformist parties, and how to project a working-class alternative to it. They act as if the revolution could be made by a determined minority, without winning the majority of the working class and the intermediate layers from the reformist parties to a revolutionary policy.

In the course of the summer, these groups became the left cats-paws of the Stalinists, supporting the CP's campaign against democratic rights. The first major incident was the República affair.

República was one of the daily papers in Lisbon that reflected the views of the Socialist party. As such, it printed criticism of the government from time to time. The AFM was interested in smothering this more independent voice, but utilized the CP, supported by the left centrists and some Maoists, to do its dirty work. The workers commission and the CP-led union in the República printing plant led a revolt, charging that the paper's criticism of the CP and MFA had reduced its circulation, thus endangering their jobs. The AFM, initially taking the stance that it was above it all, closed down the paper, and then turned it over to the workers commission.

The left centrists and Maoists joined in behind the Stalinist chorus that what had happened was merely an exercise in "workers control." But real workers control of production has nothing to do with groups of printing workers restricting freedom of the press. To suppress a voice of the largest workers party does not increase the real rights the workers enjoy, but just the opposite. Under the slogan of "workers control," the left centrists and Maoists supported an attack by a bourgeois regime against the democratic rights of the Socialist party.

When the Socialist party called mass actions to defend its rights, the "far left" again supported the Stalinists in attempting to physically stop these demonstrations, and failing that, in attempting to organize counter demonstrations that could only be interpreted as being aimed against the SP's democratic rights.

The left-centrists joined the campaign launched by the AFM and the CP leadership charging that the SP had become the "main danger" to the socialist revolution. The largest of these ultraleft-type groups, the PRP-BR and the MES, took up the charge that the SP was "social fascist." This played into the hands of the AFM, which sought to deepen the division in the working class and prevent united working-class actions. At the same time, all the left centrists and Maoist groups failed to oppose the fundamentally class-collaborationist policy of the SP leadership toward the AFM, which, together with the same basic policy of the CP leadership, has been and remains the major obstacle and danger to the Portuguese revolution.

From the beginning the "far left," following the policy of both the SP and CP leaderships, accepted the AFM's demagoguery of being a "national liberation movement" and of having abandoned imperialist objectives. Thus, for example, they failed to oppose the AFM's policy of keeping troops in Angola for 18 months after the April 1974 coup.

When the AFM announced its "peoples power" plan during the summer, the left centrist and Maoist groups thought that the AFM had come over to their position. For the AFM, of course, the "peoples power" plan was merely demagoguery, designed to bolster their own bonapartist role. On July 16, the "far left" groups organized a demonstration in support of "peoples power" that marched on the Constituent Assembly under the slogans "AFM--Peoples Power" and "Down with the Constituent Assembly."

In this campaign, too, the left centrists played the role of ultraleft cats-paw of the Stalinists. The majority of the Portuguese people, for whom the elections to the Constituent Assembly were the first and only national elections they had been allowed to participate in for five decades, could only interpret this campaign as directed against their democratic rights. The counterposing "AFM-Peoples Power" to the Constituent Assembly not only reinforced illusions in the AFM and the bourgeois government, they presented the idea that the fight for soviets and workers democracy is contradictory to defending democratic rights under capitalism. The Socialist party workers could only interpret the "peoples power" campaign as being aimed against their democratic rights. Thus the united front of the "far left" supported a Stalinist campaign that resulted in strengthening the hand of the reactionary and bourgeois forces generally, as well as the reformist leadership of the SP, which is opposed to building real soviets and making a workers revolution.

The left centrist groups failed in general to understand the relation between bourgeois democracy, workers democracy and socialist revolution. They supported an attack on the real rights of the workers under a bourgeois regime in the República case, denouncing those rights as mere "bourgeois democracy." They called for the bourgeois military regime to abolish the Constituent Assembly as the road to soviet democracy. And they placed confidence in the ability and willingness of the AFM to lead the way to "peoples power," leaving out the fact that the transition from a regime of bourgeois democracy to one of workers democracy takes place through a revolution that dismantles the capitalist state apparatus and replaces it with the new power of a workers state--and that it is a fatal illusion to think that this step will be carried out by a section of the capitalist state apparatus.

In a typical ultraleft manner they failed to see that the outcome of the Constituent Assembly elections presented an important opportunity. The combined vote for the two mass reformist workers parties constituted a majority of the votes cast. This reflected the desire for socialism on the part of the masses, and provided a timely opening for demanding that the SP and CP utilize their majority to form a workers and peasants government. Such a demand would have countered the class collaborationism of the SP and CP leadership, emphasized the necessity of the workers and

peasants forming their own independent government as opposed to coalitionism with the bourgeois AFM, and would have done so in a way that the rank-and-file SP and CP workers could understand.

The left centrist and Maoist groups also presented a false picture of the real extent of the formation of soviet-type organizations in Portugal. In addition to placing false hopes on the AFM's "peoples power" demagoguery, which even on paper was a scheme for "peoples assemblies" under the tutelage and control of the AFM and which in actuality never got off the ground, the "far left" exaggerated the extent of the development of the workers and neighborhood commissions and soldiers committees. The factory councils that appeared in the period following the fall of the Caetano dictatorship were primarily a response to the need for an economic organization representing all the workers in an enterprise, a special need created by the fragmentation of the economic organizations of workers under the Salazarist regime. These bodies have generally remained in the trade union framework, and have not functioned as soviets, which would mean discussing and acting on the broad social and political questions before the working class and its allies. Many workers commissions are artificial and restricted formations set up by only one tendency. Some of the centrist and Maoist groups have set up their own "workers councils" which are little more than caucuses of their own supporters. The neighborhood commissions are even more fragmented and dominated by the different tendencies. The most advanced revolutionary-democratic forms of organization that have yet appeared in Portugal were the assemblies and committees of soldiers and sailors that have sprung up in various units at certain times. However, they did not become standing committees on a substantial scale. Thus dual power, a situation where organs of a soviet or council type appear that embrace the mass of workers and begin to function as a center of power parallel to and competing with the government, does not and has not existed in Portugal on a national scale up to now.

The most important of the left centrist groups initiated the Front for Revolutionary Unity (FUR) at the end of August. The CP initially gave the FUR support, but quickly withdrew. When it was formed, the FUR declared that it supported the "peoples power" plan put forward by COPCON, the military security forces, and the measures taken by the fifth provisional government. Thus from the beginning, the FUR politically supported a section of the AFM. While some of the groups in the FUR, such as the LCI, the Portuguese sympathizing group of the Fourth International, were dubious about such support, they held that this was secondary to the importance of the organization of the FUR itself. But this meant that the FUR was programmatically unclear at best on the central problem of the Portuguese revolution, class collaboration through support to one or another wing of the AFM. The FUR could offer no basic alternative to

the class collaborationism of the SP and CP leaders.

The FUR asserted either that dual power already existed in Portugal, or that it could be created by the centralization of the limited, fragmented embryonic forms of dual power that were represented by the workers and neighborhood commissions and soldiers committees, or even the AFM's fake "peoples assemblies." This was essentially a technical view of how dual power could actually arise, that left out of account the political prerequisites for the formation of genuine workers councils. Soviets or workers councils represent the highest form of the united front-- they seek to embrace all the workers of all the tendencies. But the left centrist groups of the FUR had renounced the united front in practice through their sectarian campaign against the Socialist party, which had the support of the majority of the workers. Real soviets can only be built on the basis of fighting to unite the working class in struggle around concrete issues and demands, not by calling for the centralization of fragmented embryonic forms of dual power from which the majority of the working class is excluded.

The most important groups in the FUR from the viewpoint of size are the PRP-BR and the MES. Their position of attacking the SP as "social fascist" dominated the politics of FUR. They saw the sixth provisional government as dominated by "social fascism."

The PRP-BR and other groups received considerable arms from some radicalized officers after the fall of the fifth provisional government. As the masses began to mobilize in opposition to the policies of the sixth provisional government this fall, the PRP-BR and the MES launched an adventurous campaign for armed insurrection. They fostered illusions that their own arms, plus the support of radicalized soldiers, would easily defeat a sixth provisional government that they characterized as basically powerless. They also had the illusion that the forces of the Communist party would support their insurrection, because of the CP's oppositionist role.

Underneath this position, which dominated the politics of the FUR, was the ultraleft conception of a minority revolution. They failed to see that the question of power was not on the immediate agenda, that the fundamental job remained of winning the majority from the policy of the class collaborationist leaders of the SP and CP and from illusions in the MFA. They believed that the determined action of a minority could spark the majority into action or bring it to give tacit support to their "insurrection."

Related to this was an incorrect view of the role of the soldiers. Much of the FUR saw the radicalization that developed among the soldiers and that deepened in the



fall period as a sufficient basis for revolution--if the revolutionary soldiers made a bold move, the workers would follow. But this reverses the real relation between the workers and soldiers. The workers must first be won to a revolutionary course--this is the basic class force of the revolution. It is only in that context that the revolutionary soldiers, acting side by side with the workers, can win the majority of soldiers to readiness to back the workers' cause in action.

This ultraleft agitation formed the background to the attempted coup spearheaded by the newly radicalized paratrooper units on November 25. These soldiers had reacted against their own use just a few weeks before by the AFM to carry out repressive moves.

Whatever their actual role in the abortive attempt, the groups of the FUR share some of the responsibility with the Stalinists for misleading the revolutionary units who engaged in this adventure. The results were the opposite from what the FUR leaders had predicted. The workers, caught unawares, observed from the sidelines. The CP, which had utilized ultraleft rhetoric this fall as a means of countering the SP's broader appeal and as part of its pressure tactics aimed at winning more posts in the government, did not mobilize its forces and issued disavowals of "left adventurers" involved in the coup attempt. The AFM officers, backed by the Socialist party leadership, were able to present their crushing of the short-lived rebellion, as well as further measures they took against democratic rights, as a defense of "democracy" without encountering serious resistance on the part of the workers or among the majority of rank and file soldiers.

#### The Present Situation and the Road Forward

The AFM, with the support of the SP leadership, quickly utilized the abortive adventure to strike blows for capitalist law and order. A state of siege was proclaimed for six days, with the military empowered to make summary arrests. Military courts were established to deal with "crimes against the public order," meetings and demonstrations were prohibited, and censorship of mail and news was imposed.

The MFA moved to oust the administrations of the nationalized newspapers, breaking the CP control of these papers. Similar measures were taken at the radio and television networks.

Officers and noncommissioned officers have been arrested charged with participating in the attempted coup.

The government announced a wage freeze, which, among other things, annuls the victory of the construction workers on the wage front some weeks before. There are reports that warrants were issued for the arrest of leaders of four of the parties in the FUR, although the government seems to be proceeding with caution. Three weeks after the coup attempt only ten civilians are reported to be in prison.

The AFM has been reorganized again, with the demolition of some of those most identified with the utilization of socialist demagoguery, such as Otelo Carvalho, Rosa Continho, and Carlos Fabião, although they have been cleared by the AFM of involvement in the coup attempt.

Political parties have been banned from the armed forces in a drive to restore traditional discipline.

In the wake of the smashing of the attempted coup, rightist political forces have begun to openly reorganize.

The AFM is utilizing the moment to assert its authority and to make as many inroads on the gains of the workers as it can. How far this process will go depends upon the response of the masses. The mass of workers have not been defeated nor have their organizations been dismantled. As the demonstration of the construction workers showed, there is deep opposition to the AFM's policy of forcing the working class to bear the brunt of the soaring inflation and unemployment. While we can expect a period of caution and confusion on the part of the workers in the aftermath of the coup attempt, it remains to be seen whether, how, and when they will regather their forces for a new rise of massive struggles, upsetting the plans of the AFM to reestablish capitalist law and order.

The SP and CP leaderships have renewed their pledge of loyalty to the AFM in the wake of the coup attempt. The ultraleft schemes of the centrists and the FUR have been exposed as barren and capable only of leading to adventures and a dead end for the Portuguese workers.

In the forefront of a revolutionary strategy in Portugal must be the campaign for the united front to mobilize the workers and their allies in united actions in defense of their basic interests and their economic gains and democratic rights. This is necessary to overcome the bitter sectarian divisions in the working class, strengthen the defense of the workers against the growing threat from the right, and prepare the ground for a new wave of upsurge of the toiling masses.

The revolutionary process has not reached the point where clear forms of workers power have emerged. What has appeared is sporadic and scattered mass initiatives, forms of workers control, and embryonic factory committees. These developments can point the way toward dual power. Progress along this road hinges on a correct political course. The fundamental task is to break the workers from subordination to the Armed Forces Movement and to assert their right to put a workers and peasants government in power.

The strategic line of march of the revolutionary struggle of the workers and their allies in Portugal at the present stage can be summarized as follows:

1. The defense of the economic gains of the workers and other layers of the masses against the attempts by the capitalist government to make the workers bear the cost of inflation and unemployment. This is one of the most urgent tasks and the likely starting point for a recovery of the momentum of struggle by the workers. The struggle of the construction workers illustrates both the burning need for a determined fight on this front and the potential for workers to be mobilized on these issues.

Included in the economic demands to be raised are those for a radical agrarian reform tailored to meet the needs of the small peasants, as well as the promotion of state-assisted cooperatives and state farms in the area of extensive farming. Demands for state support for the individual small peasants has become especially acute, as the policy of the capitalist government, with the support of the CP and SP leaderships, has become identified with "socialism," pushing the small farmers into the hands of the right wing.

In addition, special attention is needed to defend the rights and gains that have been made by women and by the youth and to support any struggles they launch.

2. The struggle for democratic rights in the armed forces. The AFM is attempting to utilize the adventurist coup attempt of November 25 to clamp down on all democratic rights of the soldiers and sailors. Rejecting ultraleft schemas, the rank and file soldiers need to organize to defend their civil rights. The broad masses must be educated that the citizen in uniform retains every basic right to participate in the political life of the country.

3. Defense of the democratic rights of the citizen-soldiers is closely linked to defense of democratic rights and democratic decision making in every area of social life. The political rights of most of the workers organizations have come under attack at various times since April 1974, including the rights of both mass reformist parties. Now the AFM is utilizing the adventurist coup attempt to strike additional blows against democratic rights. Yet the principle of solidarity of the entire workers movement against such attacks is far from established.

4. Opposition to any attempts by the capitalist government to intervene in the affairs of the former colonies.

5. The struggle for effective workers organizations. The Portuguese workers are still at an early stage of organization. The embryonic factory committees and nuclei of industrial unions that have developed, although they show certain advanced features, are still not adequate on a national scale to effectively defend the elementary interests of the workers. In this situation, propaganda and agitation for industrial unions, a united and democratic union structure, free of government interference such as the Trade Union

Unity Law, and the transformation of the embryonic factory committees into action committees that can mobilize and represent the workers and poor masses in the industrial centers combine closely with other revolutionary tasks.

The fight for workers control under present conditions also fits in with these tasks. The workers have already asserted control in many instances to protect their specific interests in the face of government assaults, employer sabotage, and mounting unemployment and inflation. Workers control is necessary to obtain the economic information and organization to defend jobs, to prevent the flight of capital, fight inflation, and to administer a sliding scale of wages and hours. However, workers control cannot serve its purpose unless workers make clear that they do not accept any responsibility for the functioning of the economy until they have real political power over it. This means fighting against the "workers control," promulgated by the military government and supported by the CP and SP leaderships, which amounts to workers disciplining themselves to accept the capitalists' austerity program.

6. The struggle for a workers and peasants government. On the political level, the workers in their great majority look for leadership from the Socialist party, the Communist party and the Intersindical, the trade union federation. At present no alternative to these mass organizations has credibility among large layers of workers. Nor can any alternative develop except as the masses learn in practice the limitations of the current class collaborationist leadership of these organizations.

Concretely, the slogan for a workers and peasants government means calling upon the Socialist and Communist parties, as the representatives of the overwhelming majority of the Portuguese workers and the majority of the Portuguese people, to break with the pact-program that codified their capitulation to the military junta, establish a new government by exercising their majority in the Constituent Assembly, appealing to the workers, peasants, and the rank and file of the armed forces to mobilize in support of it. These are also the main forces in Intersindical, which should remain independent of any government, including even a workers and peasants government, as the direct defenders of the economic interests of the workers.

The only national politically representative body chosen by the workers and masses in Portugal up to now is the Constituent Assembly, in which the workers parties hold an absolute majority. The fight for a workers and peasants government cannot be waged without defending popular sovereignty and any democratic gains, against efforts by the ruling class to restrict them, and concretely, without defending the Constituent Assembly against attempts by the military junta and the leaderships of the SP and CP to undermine its authority and limit or destroy its sovereignty.

Making this demand on the two mass parties of the working class, as a fundamental part of a united front campaign, is an essential part of the process of advancing a socialist governmental alternative to the military regime and exposing the incapacity of these parties to provide such an alternative.

The class collaborationist policies of the leaderships of the SP and CP, as well as to a lesser degree the sectarian schemas and ultraleft adventurism of the centrists and Maoists have paved the way for a resurgence of the extreme right. As the disillusionment of the masses with the military regime deepens and the economic crisis worsens, the threat of a reactionary coup will become increasingly grave. At the same time, the AFM will lose its capacity to resist and its desire to resist a rightist onslaught--this has already begun to happen in the wake of the reaction to the adventurist coup attempt. Furthermore, the AFM views the arming of the masses as a deadly threat, and is now on a campaign to round up arms and prevent the arming of the masses. As the regime becomes increasingly discredited, the masses will become increasingly reluctant to mobilize under its auspices, even if it should resist a rightist attempt. Thus propaganda and agitation for mobilizing and arming the masses against the rightist hangmen can only be carried out successfully in combination with the struggle against all forms of class collaboration and for a workers and peasants government.

Incipient organs of workers power can only arise out of united mass struggles of the working class along these lines. Workers councils or soviet forms cannot be imposed on the workers. Advancing the independent organization of the working class so that the proletariat can meet the tasks of the class struggle in this period of crisis and win in a confrontation with the bourgeoisie involves pushing for broader

and broader forms of workers organizations, industrial unions, a united and democratic union structure, action committees and democratic factory committees that can unify and mobilize the broad masses of the workers in the industrial zones and draw in other exploited layers, and finally regional and national congresses of workers organizations that can adopt general policies and lead the working masses in taking decisive initiatives.

The arming of the masses against the danger from the right likewise cannot be accomplished separate from building united front struggles along these lines. No minority, no matter how heroic, can substitute itself for the masses themselves in the decisive showdown.

This strategic line of march begins with the immediate and burning elementary needs of the working class, and leads toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government and the organization of soviets as the basis of a workers state.

The traitorous policies of the leaderships of the SP and CP and the schemas of the centrists and Maoists have taken a severe toll. A correct course based on the independent organization and mobilization of the masses assumes ever greater importance as the reaction becomes emboldened. The construction of a revolutionary party to provide correct leadership assumes ever greater urgency. Such a party does not yet exist in Portugal. It must be created in the heat of the struggle itself. But even a small nucleus of revolutionists, armed with a correct program and strategy, can make swift gains. By fighting along the basic axes indicated, such a nucleus can play a decisive role in building the revolutionary party necessary to resolve the crisis of leadership in the Portuguese revolution.