

IN DEFENSE OF THE PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION

By Pierre Frank, Livio Maitan, and Ernest Mandel



International Marxist Group

DOCUMENTS

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We would like to lodge a strong protest against the line *Intercontinental Press* has seen fit to follow in covering the events in Portugal since the eruption of the *República* affair, especially in the issues Vol. 13, Nos. 21-30. This line has been imposed on the magazine without consultation with us, three of the four contributing editors, and without taking into consideration the resolutions that have been adopted by the majority of the democratically elected leadership bodies of the Fourth International, of which we are members. It has been adopted without taking into consideration the unanimous opinion of the Portuguese Trotskyists and of the sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Portugal, the Liga Comunista Internacionalista (LCI—Internationalist Communist League). In our view, the line that has been taken by *Intercontinental Press* represents a serious political mistake, a departure from the traditional position revolutionary Marxists have taken in similar circumstances of revolutionary upsurge in imperialist countries; if persisted in, it could seriously discredit Trotskyism in the eyes of advanced workers not only in Portugal itself, but throughout capitalist Europe.

The position taken by Comrade Gerry Foley in the above-mentioned articles, obviously with the approval of Comrade Joseph Hansen, editor of *Intercontinental Press*, can be summarized as follows: There exists in Portugal today an authoritarian military regime that upholds and defends capitalism, albeit with leftist-sounding phrases. This regime, on the road to an outright bourgeois military dictatorship, regards the existence of a powerful Social Democratic party with a relatively free press as an obstacle that must be eliminated. Thus, both in the conflict around the *República* affair and in the political conflict that arose from it and led to the resignation of the SP and PPD¹ ministers from the government, we have to give full support to the Social Democrats (and their bourgeois allies of the PPD). On this Comrade Foley has been silent against the MFA. In fact, according to the views expressed in Comrade Foley's articles, the only realistic choice in Portugal today is between a bourgeois military regime moving in the direction of outright military dictatorship and the Constituent Assembly, which is seen as the embodiment of bourgeois democracy and as the legitimate expression of popular will. In a conflict between a bourgeois military regime (supported by the Stalinist Communist party) and bourgeois democracy (supported by the Socialist party), we must stand foursquare on the side of bourgeois democracy (the Constituent Assembly), while criticizing the SP for its class collaboration with the military. So-called organs of dual power are either fake (that is, creatures manipulated by the bourgeois army) or irrelevant. This general outlook can be seen in the following few quotations from Comrade Foley's article in the July 21 *Intercontinental Press* dealing with the MFA's plan for "popular power" (pp. 1010 and 1011):

"The July 8 plan shows with crystal clarity that the MFA is the political apparatus of the bourgeoisie and the most immediate enemy of the workers and the revolutionary movement." . . . "The move in reality represents an escalation of the offensive by the

military to roll back the democratic freedoms won by the masses following the overturn of the Caetano government." . . . "The fundamental principle of the plan is the institutionalization and perpetuation of a military dictatorship." . . . "Unlike the monolithic CP, the Socialist party, despite its equally class-collaborationist and opportunist line, was unreliable from the military's point of view . . . Its selling point was to offer 'socialism with liberty.' Thus, the SP stood in the way of the objectives of both the military and the CP. The attempts of the SP to play an autonomous role had to be ended."

This ideological construction, which bears little relation to current social, political, and economic reality in Portugal, can be easily destroyed, so many are its glaring contradictions. Comrade Foley contends that the MFA wants to restrict the Social Democrats in Portugal in order better to defend capitalism. How, then, does he explain the fact that the *entire* Portuguese bourgeoisie and the whole international big bourgeoisie support the Social Democrats in this conflict? Is this support simply a trick aimed at throwing the "ultraleftists" off the track? Has there ever been a case in which indigenous and international capital unanimously defended reformist mass parties of the working class against the armed forces of capital itself? It is sufficient simply to pose this question for Comrade Foley's schema to collapse.

If the real political conflict in Portugal today were one pitting democratic rights against a bourgeois military dictatorship, one would expect the Social Democratic leaders to center their attack around the charge that the MFA regime is authoritarian. But their major charge against the government has not been that it is too authoritarian but rather that it exercises no authority at all. Their main war cry is not against authoritarianism but against "anarchy." This happens also to be the war cry of international and Portuguese capital today. How does this undeniable fact fit into Comrade Foley's schema? It doesn't, so it has been conveniently forgotten. It has become an "unfact."

We, on the other hand, believe that the political struggle in Portugal today centers essentially not around the counterposition "military dictatorship versus bourgeois democracy," but instead around the issue "for or against socialist revolution." Since the last few months of 1974, and especially since the defeat of the Spínolist putsch of March 11, 1975, the revolutionary mass movement, based fundamentally on the working class, has gained in momentum and has begun to escape the control of the bourgeoisie and its military and reformist stooges. It is beginning to go beyond limits that are compatible with the maintenance of capitalist property relations and the bourgeois state apparatus. This has created universal fear, even near panic, among the Portuguese and international bourgeoisie. Hence the unanimous battle cry of all bourgeois, petty-bourgeois, and reformist forces: "The revolution has gone too far; stop the revolutionary process; restore the authority of the (bourgeois) government and of the (bourgeois) state," combined with the assisting slogan "Down with Communist dictatorship!" It is around these issues that the class forces in Portugal (and throughout capitalist Europe) are aligning and realigning. It is on these issues that revolutionary socialists have to take an unambiguous stand.

Comrade Foley could extricate himself from the contradictions of his schema only by erecting an even more absurd construction,

1. Partido Popular Democrático—Popular Democratic party.

one that denies that there is a genuine revolutionary process unfolding in Portugal today, that denies that there has been a serious weakening of the bourgeois army. The truth is, in fact, that the very peculiar way in which readers of *Intercontinental Press* have been informed about Portugal might indeed raise some doubts in their minds about these questions. Let us therefore briefly remind them of some basic facts.

Under the mounting pressure of the workers, all the Portuguese banks and about 60 percent of the country's industry have been nationalized; the last remaining large Portuguese financial group, the CUF, is also threatened with nationalization, for there have been many workers strikes and demonstrations demanding this. Dozens and dozens of factories are occupied by the workers. Various forms of workers control are being applied in at least 100 factories. Many large estates in the South have been taken over by agricultural workers. Many empty buildings, luxury hotels, etc., have been taken over by squatters and tenants committees.

On the other hand, in a period of less than eighteen months the Portuguese officer corps has been successively split between supporters and opponents of the Caetano dictatorship, supporters and opponents of Spínola, supporters and opponents of the MFA, supporters of the Gonçalves faction and of the Melo Antunes faction within the MFA, and among supporters of a number of political parties. Because of these many divisions, the so-called military dictatorship has gone through no less than five governments in less than a year and a half, and hardly has the fifth been installed (described by President Costa Gomes himself as a transitional or caretaker government) but a sixth one is said to be in preparation for the autumn.

In addition to these horizontal splits, the soldiers themselves are increasingly politicized and politically organized. More and more, they question the orders of the officers. In fact, one of the immediate causes of the failure of the March 11 military coup was the refusal by several key regiments in Lisbon to execute the orders they had been given, saying that they had first to meet, discuss, and gather information before they could take to the field. There have already been several cases of reactionary officers' being dismissed by soldiers' assemblies. In some half dozen barracks, soldiers and revolutionary officers have begun giving military training to hundreds of workers in the neighboring working-class districts; the basis is thus being laid for the nucleus of a mass workers militia and for close collaboration between armed workers and soldiers against the counterrevolution.

Under such conditions, it is illogical to believe that it is in the interest of the bourgeoisie to provoke a head-on confrontation between the shaky state apparatus and the moderate Social Democratic mass party. The course of all proletarian revolutions and bourgeois counterrevolutions teaches us that the bourgeoisie first tries to isolate and crush the most advanced sectors of the working class. In so doing, it tries to construct an effective repressive apparatus and to demoralize and divide the working class. Only after succeeding in this does the bourgeoisie take on the heavy battalions of the working class in a head-on confrontation.

Comrade Foley's schema is unrelated to the basic class interests and fundamental movement of the antagonistic class forces in Portugal today. His approach is wrong from top to bottom. He does not start from the questions: What is the basic relationship of forces between capital and labor? How is this relationship of forces evolving? What are the key areas of class conflict at present and what are they likely to be in the foreseeable future? Instead, he turns the Marxist method on its head and subordinates everything to the question, How do various political forces and currents relate to the MFA, which "intends" to establish a military dictatorship? It is not surprising that by approaching the analysis with such a subjectivist and arbitrary criterion he comes to conclusions that fly in the face of reality and seriously harm

the defense of the basic interests of the Portuguese working class and revolutionaries.

Again on the República Affair and Its Aftermath

The Fourth International and its Portuguese sympathizing organization approach the current situation in Portugal from a diametrically opposed position. We say that since the end of 1974, intensifying and radicalizing mass struggles have increasingly challenged basic bourgeois "law and order." Concurrently, there has been a constant weakening and the beginning of a decomposition of the major pillars of the bourgeois state apparatus, especially the army. This explains the sharp political crisis in the country, the constant government overturns, and the mounting street confrontations.

At the same time, the working class, although it is radicalizing rapidly, does not yet possess the organs (workers councils), level of consciousness, or revolutionary leadership needed to place the conquest of power on the agenda immediately. This implies that there will be a rather prolonged period of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary convulsions until one of the basic classes is able to shift the unstable equilibrium in its favor decisively: either the capitalist class by recreating an effective instrument of rule (and eventually of mass repression) or the working class by establishing workers councils, gathering the majority of the population around itself in support of the concept of workers power, and building an adequate revolutionary leadership to attain this goal.

With the backdrop of these diametrically opposed interpretations of what is really going on in Portugal today, two completely different interpretations of the political significance and repercussions of the *República* affair arise, as Comrade Mandel has already indicated in an article published in the June 23 issue of *Intercontinental Press*. Since the end of the affair, events in the *República* printshop, in the Portuguese press, and in the field of political struggle permit easy verification of which of these interpretations was correct and what class forces were actually involved.

In light of subsequent events, it becomes simply ludicrous to continue to say that the Social Democrats in Portugal were or are defending democratic rights that are denied them. As the main opposition leader, Mário Soares speaks on television to millions of people. He is able to organize tens of thousands of people in street demonstrations. So is the CP and so are the independent left-wing working-class organizations. In fact, so is right-wing reaction. *República's* journalists are publishing their own weekly paper, and they are preparing another daily paper, which is to appear shortly. The SP controls one of the most widely read papers in the country, *Jornal Novo*. *Expresso*, the most widely circulated weekly paper, takes a cautious but outspoken antigovernment stand. Not a single worker militant or member of any left-wing organization is in jail (the Copcon liberated the militants of the MRPP² on July 19, 1975). More than thirty trade unions have been wrested from CP control.

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

2. Movimento Reorganizativo do Partido do Proletariado—Movement for the Reorganization of the Party of the Proletariat.

every day to note this obvious fact.

This feature of the Portuguese situation is not at all a result of the benevolence of the MFA, nor does it mean that these freedoms will be enjoyed for very long. Rather, it reflects the profound revolutionary process that is now unfolding in the country, the massive mobilization and politicization of antagonistic class forces, and the emergence of a situation of dual power, which, as Trotsky pointed out, inevitably leads to civil war. But whatever the threat of *future* mass repression (which is very real), to deny the *present* freedoms enjoyed by the Portuguese workers is to lose sight of what has been won and what must be defended tooth and nail.

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

This does not exactly fit into Comrade Foley's schema. *To urge the intervention of a bourgeois army against workers occupying a factory is not exactly to defend democratic rights against a military dictatorship*. Comrade Foley has maintained a shameful and shameful silence about Soares's demand. *Does he approve of it or not?* This clear outcome of the *República* affair, which completely upsets Comrade Foley's interpretation of the political crisis in Portugal, perfectly confirms what was our analysis from the beginning: What was involved was *not* the issue of freedom of the press (which in any case nobody is in position to deny the powerful Social Democratic party in Portugal today), but rather the question of an offensive to restore both "law and order" in the factories and the authority of the bourgeois state in society. *That is the key issue of the class struggle in Portugal today*. That is the key demand international capital is making before giving the Portuguese military government the two thousand million dollars it desperately needs to avoid bankruptcy. That is the key demand Portuguese capital is making before it halts the investment strike and general economic sabotage through which it is trying to break the militancy of the workers by stimulating mass unemployment and even starvation. The *República* affair relates to this issue much more concretely and logically than it does to the issue of "freedom of the press."

The "crime" committed by the MFA in this particular case is not that it suppressed "freedom of the press," but rather that it refused to use force to evict workers from an occupied printshop. And the reasons why it refused to do so were correctly summarized in an editorial of the *London Times* of June 24, 1975: "Its (the Supreme Revolutionary Council's) desire to crack down on the extreme leftists who have been trying to set up soldiers', sailors', and airmen's councils within military units is no doubt sincere. But the breakdown of military discipline may already have gone too far to be easily reversed."

In other words, the MFA refused to use force against the workers not out of the goodness of its heart, but because it feared

that the soldiers themselves would refuse to use force against workers occupying factories. This is not exactly evidence that a repressive military dictatorship exists in Portugal. Nor does it constitute any reason for dissatisfaction among revolutionary Marxists. But it does perfectly explain the MFA's hesitations and gyrations around the *República* affair, as well as the *class content* of the issue involved.

Democratic rights are so abridged in Portugal today that the *República* printing workers, after defying the government's decisions and the reformists' injunctions, sent a delegation to West Europe to put their case before the trade unions and working-class organizations of these countries. Anybody interested in listening to their case could do so easily and could hear from the workers themselves that they are highly critical not only of the SP leadership (many of them are actually members of the SP!), but also of the CP and the MFA. In fact, in a television debate Soares was forced to admit that these workers, far from being "manipulated" by the CP (as Comrade Foley contends), greeted a visit from Cunhal with shouts of "Down with Soares, down with Cunhal!" In fact, the SP leadership soon dropped the accusation that the *República* affair had been engineered by the CP (as *Intercontinental Press* has continuously claimed) and instead accused "anarchist provocateurs" of having been responsible. (The *Times*, June 19, 1975.)

The *República* affair has been adroitly exploited to initiate and justify repressive actions against factory occupations and "lack of discipline" in the army. This has been done quite cleverly, for it has divided the working class. If, for example, the first blow in such a campaign had been struck against an occupied steel plant, 99 percent of the Portuguese workers would have supported the steelworkers. But the class is obviously divided in the case of the occupation of the *República* printshop, which may appear as a challenge to the right of the Socialist party to publish its own newspaper. Political prejudices and wrong political judgment clearly play an important role on both sides. In that sense, as we have stated unambiguously, the *República* workers fell into a trap. They made a serious political mistake in the way they answered Régo's and Soares's provocations. The ultraleftist groupings and the CP compounded the mistake tenfold by their disastrously sectarian and unprincipled reaction, which was hostile to proletarian democracy.

It would have been very easy for the *República* workers to turn the tables on the Social Democratic fakers, by answering the SP along the lines suggested by the Trotskyists: "We are perfectly willing to publish *República* under the old Social Democratic editors, provided: 1. You give us the right to print our own opinions and the opinions of the various political groups to which we belong as well, either in the columns of your own newspaper or in another newspaper printed on the presses you own. 2. You give us veto power over any layoffs in the plant." Working-class and democratic public opinion would then have been able to see very clearly *whose* "freedom of the press" was being denied and what workers control is all about.

But such a struggle against the reformist fakers is possible only from the principled standpoint of *workers democracy*, which neither the Stalinist nor the ultraleftists are defending. Only the Trotskyists adopted a position in this affair that combined intransigent defense of workers actions against repression by the bourgeois state with defense of full and unrestricted freedom of the press. Only on such a principled basis can the unity of the class be restored under conditions of revolutionary crisis in the country.

It is one thing, however, to criticize the mistake the *República* workers made by falling into Soares's trap and by thus facilitating a repressive maneuver against the working class. But it is quite another thing to become so hypnotized by this aspect of the affair, which is after all secondary, as to lose sight of the political role of the affair in the present political situation in

Portugal, to be prepared to cross picket lines, and to come close to demanding the intervention of the military against workers—in the name of defending “freedom of the press.”

We say that the *República* affair has been deliberately blown up out of all proportion in order to serve the cause of Portuguese and international capital. To demonstrate this, let us examine the practical aspect of the alleged denial of freedom of the press to the Social Democratic party in Portugal. This party has a strong mass following. It can bring tens of thousands of people into the streets. It has extensive financial resources and can receive even larger amounts of money from its rich allies in West Germany, Britain, the Scandinavian countries, Austria, and the Benelux countries. Under such conditions, who prevents the Portuguese SP from bringing the most modern printing press to Lisbon, staffing it with its own members and volunteers, and publishing a big daily paper? A veto by the MFA? There has been no such veto. A veto by the printers union? On the contrary, the union has proposed that Soares do just that! Isn't there something strange about the fact that the Social Democrats did not take this simple step if all they wanted was a big daily paper of their own? But their action becomes perfectly understandable if their real purpose was not to defend their right to have a newspaper of their own, but rather to force the MFA to settle in their favor a conflict with workers occupying a factory and a conflict with the CP, which was giving lukewarm support to these workers. And if that was the SP's real purpose, we have only to ask the question, *cui prodest?* In whose class interest could such a step be taken in Portugal today? It is then easy to understand the background and aftermath of the *República* affair.

Joining a Political Bloc With the Bourgeoisie?

Revolutions, especially proletarian ones, are acid tests in revealing the ability or inability of political forces to orient themselves under conditions of rapid change. From that standpoint, the Healy-Lambert sects in Britain and France, each of which claims adherence to “orthodox Trotskyism,” miserably failed the test in the case of the Cuban revolution. Now, in the case of Portugal, after various hesitations and gyrations, sometimes effected from one day to the next, they have failed even more abysmally. When the reformist leaders organized the mass demonstrations of July 17 and 18, Healy had this to say: “The Socialist party's belated call for a break with the military dictatorship [!] is a reflection of the growing pressure on the Socialist leaders from the working class, now being hammered by the capitalist crisis.” (*Workers Press*, July 16, 1975.)

As for the Lambertists of *Informations Ouvrières* (issue of July 23, 1975), they regarded the SP's demonstration in Lisbon with such “open eyes” that the only thing they noticed were shouts and demands of the type: “Socialist government” and “Socialist party, Marxist party.”

It so happens, however, that the SP mass demonstrations to which Healy and Lambert refer were not at all directed against “military dictatorship.” If shouts were heard against “dictatorship,” they were against “Communist dictatorship.” If the military officers were attacked, it was because they were allegedly “supporting the Communists.” It also happens that the SP leaders violently opposed any attacks on the military at these demonstrations. And it must be stressed that these demonstrations touched off the systematic attacks on the headquarters of the CP, trade unions, and other leftist organizations that have been going on since—not only through the anticommunist hysteria whipped up by Soares, but also through the actual burning of CP and other left-wing literature during the meeting in Porto.

In its July 21 issue, *Workers Press* made this comment: “Civil war is beginning in Portugal. Right-wingers attacked Communist Party headquarters in many northern towns while the Stalinists were provoking fights with the Socialist Party in Lisbon.” A few days later the light had dawned more intensely in Clapham High

Street: “The only way out for the bourgeoisie is to re-impose dictatorship on the working class. The ‘Financial Times’ reports that lists have been drawn up with names of officers and civilians who may need to be arrested; the accompanying political plan for reinstalling authority is also said to contain potentially repressive measures. People close to a number of Ministers and State Secretaries in the fourth coalition, both military and civilian, say some are no longer spending the night in their homes, as a precaution against arrest.”

“But the real attack will have to be made on the working class, with mass repression of occupations, strikes, political groups, trade unions, publications and demonstrations.

“To this end, right-wing reactionaries are being allowed to freely organize in the north and train new forces in savage attacks on isolated Stalinist headquarters and other sections of the workers' movement.” (*Workers Press*, July 25, 1975, our emphasis.)

So, on July 25 the attacks on CP headquarters are seen as preparation for a general assault on working-class rights and organizations. On July 16, however, demonstrations organized under the slogan “Down with Communist dictatorship” were hailed as having been undertaken “under the pressure of the workers.” Were the headquarters of the trade unions also burned “under the pressure of the workers”? Was there no relation between the anticommunist hysteria whipped up by Soares and the subsequent events in the North?

Lambert too will have some trouble explaining how the “biggest working-class demonstration since May 1, 1975,” a demonstration supposedly calling for a “socialist government,” could mysteriously touch off a powerful rightist offensive against the elementary democratic rights of working-class organizations (including the right of existence) and the burning of trade-union headquarters.

We do not doubt that many Social Democratic workers genuinely in favor of socialism have been incensed by the Stalinists' bureaucratic manipulations in the trade-union movement and in some mass media, especially television. Many of the workers genuinely (though incorrectly) believed that the occupation of the *República* printshop was a “Communist plot” to deprive the Socialist party of a newspaper. But it is one thing to understand the motivation of these workers and quite another to become confused about the class significance and thrust of the anticommunist demonstrations. Portugal is a capitalist country, not a degenerated workers state. The social force in power is the bourgeoisie, not the Soviet bureaucracy. Under such social and political conditions, to support demonstrations that raise the slogan “Down with Communist dictatorship” is to capitulate to the ideological pressure of the class enemy, whether out of blind Stalinophobia or out of political confusion or misjudgment of the overall alignment of class forces.

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

suppressing the democratic right of the masses to burn down CP and trade-union headquarters?

The SP's campaign during the *República* affair was enthusiastically and fully supported by Portuguese and international capital. It was likewise supported by international Social Democracy, and was (cautiously) supported by the Italian and Spanish Communist parties as well. What was constituted was a political bloc of the bourgeoisie, the Social Democracy, and a few CPs. Both Healy and Lambert joined this political bloc, at least for a few days. Healy later left it, although without offering any self-criticism. What about Comrade Foley and the editor of *Intercontinental Press*? Did they join too? Have they since left?

Some Maoists, like the Portuguese Communist party (Marxist-Leninist) and the MRPP, take a stand similar to that of Healy-Lambert and Comrade Foley, but on the basis of a slightly different analysis. Portugal, they claim, is on the eve of a take-over by the Communist party. Better still, it has already become "a colony of social-imperialism." In accordance with their theory of "revolution by stages," they believe that what is on the agenda in Portugal today is not a socialist revolution but a "national-democratic revolution," the "struggle for national independence." The workers are thus rising up against "Communist dictatorship," which in reality is the rule of "state capitalism," Western-style capitalism having been overthrown by the "state bourgeoisie, lackeys of Moscow imperialism." The MFA is Moscow's second most important tool, the first being Cunhal's CP; the MFA thus becomes, after the CP, the "main enemy of the Portuguese people." It then follows with unavoidable logic that one must support the Social Democracy (the "liberal national bourgeoisie") against the "agents of foreign social-imperialism." The most extreme Maoists even applaud the burning of CP headquarters, arguing that "all foreign agents and spies will die through the wrath of the people." With such an analysis, one can easily see the "primary contradiction" as one between bourgeois democracy and "dictatorship" (Communist dictatorship, that is). This schema, while weird enough, is not particularly original. The Maoists have simply copied it from the more conservative and demagogic bourgeois newspapers throughout the capitalist world.

A more sophisticated variant of the same theory would be that what we are seeing in Portugal today is the beginning of an antibureaucratic political revolution of the workers against a process of bureaucratization in a proletarian state. That would explain both the "pressure of the workers" so dear to Healy and Lambert and the support of the international bourgeoisie, which extends verbal sympathy to mass movements against ruling bureaucracies, while carefully avoiding any step that would actually help to replace a bureaucratic dictatorship with a system of democratically elected workers councils. But Comrade Foley would not touch that theory with a ten-foot pole, for it would imply that the Portuguese CP (with the aid of the MFA), far from propping up capitalism, had actually overthrown it already.

Both these theories at least have the merit of internal coherence. They are simply at variance with reality. Comrade Foley's schema, however, combines the defect of dissociation from reality with the additional flaw of lack of internal coherence. Just examine the elements: The MFA is the major prop of Portuguese capitalism. The SP, while not extremely anticapitalist, is on a collision course with the MFA. This is allegedly the main conflict in Portugal today, in the midst of a revolutionary crisis. Capital, which presumably dislikes being propped up, fully supports the SP against its own main prop. Who can make sense of such an ideological construction?

The puzzle disappears, however, once Comrade Foley's false premises are abandoned. Once it is understood that the fundamental political conflict in Portugal today is not between military rule and bourgeois democracy but between the spontaneous attempts of the Portuguese masses to go beyond any form of bourgeois rule

or bourgeois state and the attempts of the bourgeoisie, first by guile and then by force, to press them back into channels compatible with bourgeois law and order, then it is possible to understand what the worldwide political bloc against the Portuguese revolution is all about. The violence of the class conflict and the ardent support of the Portuguese and international bourgeoisie for the Social Democracy likewise becomes perfectly understandable.

One can then understand why, as early as May 1, 1975, *Tempo Económico*, one of the main organs of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, wrote: "The most obvious strategic perspective is the one that flows from the complementary character of the SP and the PPD [the main bourgeois party]." The Paris daily *Le Monde* noted in its July 31, 1975, issue that the agitation unleashed by the SP has created an atmosphere of feverish anticipation in General Spínola's emigré headquarters in Rio de Janeiro: "In their view, the SP's reaction has certainly been 'belated.' Even so, they believe that the mass demonstrations organized by Mr. Mario Soares may lead to a reversal of the prospects. In any case, that is the general's opinion as expressed in his statements to *Le Monde* today. . . . 'I am not linked to any political party, although my ideas about how to reconstruct the country coincide with Socialist ideology on several points. That means that I do not criticize the position that has now been taken by the Socialist party and the PPD in favor of the democracy and liberty of the Portuguese people.'"

It is, of course, not surprising that the international political bloc against the thus far successful struggle of the "anarcho-populist" Portuguese workers to prevent any stabilization of the Portuguese capitalist economy and any restoration of a strong bourgeois state should include General Spínola. But should it not make Healy and Lambert, as well as Comrades Foley and Hansen, think twice about the strange company they were keeping during these fateful weeks?

The Present Stage of the Portuguese Revolution

The unfolding of the SP offensive, which began with the *República* affair and was followed up by the resignation of the SP ministers from the coalition cabinet, illustrates another aspect of the current political struggle in Portugal, one that delivers yet another blow to Comrade Foley's schema. With the opening of the SP offensive, the divisions within the MFA finally came into the open. The Social Democratic leaders did not refrain from taking sides in these divisions. In fact, they took a very clear stand. It is interesting to see with whom and why.

On the eve of the MFA meeting that elected the "revolutionary triumvirate," General Costa Gomes, president of the republic, issued an impassioned appeal to the officers (see *Le Monde*, July 27-28, 1975) saying that the revolution had gone too far, that it was time to call a halt. It was time to prevent the "internal and external isolation" of the revolution. The Social Democratic leaders immediately came out in enthusiastic support of Costa Gomes. Speaking before his followers in Figueira de Foz, Soares explained that Costa Gomes had taken the correct position, but that the extremist officers were on another line. He used a formulation that speaks volumes about the class camp he represents objectively, calling upon Costa Gomes to "restrain these captains who had taken their generals' stars a bit too quickly." (*Le Monde*, July 30, 1975).

Mr. Soares's hero, Costa Gomes, was army chief of staff during the bloody colonial wars under the Salazar-Caetano dictatorship. Soares is an intelligent and well informed politician. He knows the score. Who could be so naïve as to believe that Soares considers this old butcher a faithful defender of "democracy" against military dictatorship? As a faithful servant of bourgeois "law and order" against "anarcho-populist extremists," however, he is an ideal symbol.

Things became even clearer during the early days of August.

The Portuguese opposition press published a document, supposedly written by former Foreign Minister Major Melo Antunes and supported by eleven members of the MFA's revolutionary council. It expanded on Costa Gomes's call. It said explicitly:

"Instead, we have witnessed the dismantlement of half a dozen great financial and monopolistic groups; furthermore, parallel to this, the more the nationalizations succeeded each other (at a pace impossible to absorb, however dynamic the process was and however broad the support of the people may be, without a grave threat of the breakup of the preexisting social and cultural fabric, which is now occurring), we witnessed the very rapid disintegration of the forms of social and economic organization that served as support to broad layers of the petty and middle bourgeoisie, without new structures being formed capable of guaranteeing the administration of the productive units and the maintenance of an indispensable normality in the social relations among all Portuguese.

"In the meantime, there was a progressive decomposition of the state structures. Wildcat and anarchistic forms of the exercise of power began to occur everywhere (including inside the armed forces)." (*Expresso*, August 9, 1975.)

Can there be any doubt about the class nature and thrust of such an analysis, whatever its leftist phraseology about "irreversible moves toward socialism" and "democratic socialism"? Especially when we once again find the fateful words repeated by all opponents of a victorious socialist revolution in Portugal: "It is necessary to energetically reject anarchism and populism, which inevitably lead to a catastrophic dissolution of the state in a phase of social development during which no political project is viable without a state."

In the chapter on dual power in his *History of the Russian Revolution* Trotsky notes that the formulation "the anarchy of dual power" was constantly used by observers during 1917. That is indeed one of the major characteristics of even an embryonic situation of dual power. This "anarchy" can be eliminated either in the direction of workers power or in the direction of the restoration of a strong bourgeois state. It is clear what Melo Antunes's intentions are in this respect. Yet the leadership of the Portuguese Socialist party enthusiastically endorsed the Melo Antunes document in its meeting of August 10, 1975. (*O Seculo*, August 11, 1975.) It simultaneously showed great concern for democracy by suspending three members of the party's national secretariat both from the day-to-day leadership and from the "council" (equivalent of the central committee) because they dissented from Soares's right-wing course.

Soares, of course, is playing with fire—and he knows it. When some militants of the SP itself began to organize the burning of CP headquarters in a northern town, he suspended them from the party. If Costa Gomes or any other figure acting with Soares's help succeeds in restoring "democratic legality" and the "authority of the (bourgeois) state" by first crushing the advanced workers, he could well turn against the Social Democrats as a next step. The *Reichswehr*, which the German Social Democracy used to crush the radical workers in 1919, organized a military coup against the Social Democratic government as early as 1920, thus laying the basis for what would eventually become the fascist dictatorship that would destroy Social Democracy. This should be recalled again and again. By unleashing a reactionary wave against the "anarcho-populists," the CP, and the revolution itself, Soares is helping to create the noose with which he could easily be hanged himself. But this is no reason to play down or dismiss his responsibility for supporting Costa Gomes's call to halt the revolution. Nor is it any reason to conceal the class character of that call: It serves the counterrevolutionary purposes of Portuguese and international capital. That is what is involved in the offensive, and not the defense of the democratic rights of the working class.

The political developments of the last several weeks indicate

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

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

The division of the working class has enabled bourgeois reaction to go over to the counteroffensive. The major opening for this was provided by the SP leadership, which played the role of spearhead directly transmitting the pressure of the European bourgeoisie, as mediated by Wilson, Helmut Schmidt, and company. The reversal of the trend was then picked up by the right wing of the MFA within the army, by the urban and rural middle classes, and by the church hierarchy; organized reactionary thugs then began assaulting the headquarters of the CP and other working-class organizations. The battle cry of all these forces is the same: Stop the revolution, it has gone too far.

Given the altered relationship of forces and the temporary lull in working-class struggles, the most likely immediate outcome is a victory for the Melo Antunes wing of the MFA, that is, a compromise between the various factions of the MFA, the SP, and the CP around some variety of the "national unity" solution called for by Soares. This will mean attempts to constrain, restrain, and discipline the militancy of the advanced sectors of the working class, attempts to introduce sharper discipline against soldiers' initiatives in the army, and attempts to "restore the authority" of the bourgeois state against challenges by the far left, under the cover of promising similar repression against the far right.

But this shift to the right will not at all imply a grave defeat for the revolution. The *fundamental* relationship of forces has not been overturned. The bourgeoisie is still weak. The army is still divided. The state apparatus is still shaky. There is not yet any repressive instrument adequate to crush the proletariat. The working class has not been defeated or demoralized, just temporarily disoriented.

A new wave of strikes and radical workers struggles is possible, if not probable, in the autumn, when the workers feel the full effects of the economic crisis and of the "austerity" measures of the government. All the bodies of workers control are still functioning, it will not be easy to suppress them. In past months the Portuguese workers have shown that they can take to the streets in numbers more massive than the conservative petty

bourgeoisie in the North. They will do so again. The Portuguese revolution has not come to an end, nor has its impetus been broken. The major test of strength, which will be a violent one, is yet to come. Nobody can predict with precision when it will come.

While the main initiative in temporarily reversing the revolutionary trend was taken by the reformist leaders of the SP, the CP leadership shares equal responsibility with Soares and company for the bourgeois counteroffensive now unfolding on all key fields.

During the first several months after the overthrow of the Caetano dictatorship, the CP leaders actively participated in bolstering the tottering bourgeois state apparatus. They did nothing to radically eliminate the remnants of fascist legislation, penal laws, state institutions, and personnel, which were kept in place by the military leaders. At that time we reminded them of Saint-Just's warning: Woe to revolutionists who make revolutions halfway; they dig their own graves. Obviously, it was not possible to eradicate the remnants of fascism without crushing the bourgeois state apparatus. Through its policy of class collaboration and participation in the government, the CP protected the state apparatus instead of fighting to destroy it. Today, important sections of that very apparatus are showing their gratitude—by trying to destroy the CP.

For nearly one year following the overthrow of the Caetano regime, the CP did everything it could to restrain and break working-class militancy in the factories, closely following the Stalinist line the CPs applied in France, Italy, Belgium, Holland, and elsewhere at the end of the second world war. It attempted to prevent or break all strikes, with considerably less success, let it be noted, than in 1944-47. This was one of the reasons that the SP won such a large electoral victory on April 25, 1975, for at the time the SP was behaving more flexibly toward working-class struggles.

But then, under the pressure of the March 11 events, the strengthening of the far left among the workers, and the electoral defeat of April 25, 1975 (the CP lost nearly one-fourth of its potential electoral support to groupings on its left and probably another one-fourth to the SP, for the above-mentioned reasons), the CP leadership made a left turn. Ironically, Soares now reproaches the CP leaders for this, reversing his own previous more "liberal" attitude toward the radicalized workers. The SP leadership's document of July 28, 1975, expresses astonishment about the fact that the CP is now trying to collaborate with "ultraleftists." In the "Proposta de Acção Imediata" (Proposal for Immediate Action), submitted to a July 28, 1975, press conference by Mário Soares, an explicit appeal is made for "austerity" and "sacrifices," which must be imposed on the working class. In the same document, we find the following:

"As a result, a wave of absolutely irresponsible demagogy has been introduced into Portuguese society. The country lives enmeshed in ideology night and day. . . . Extremely aggressive groups of activists try to peddle their utopian elixir at all levels and to impose ever more extremist and radical 'solutions.' The acceleration of our process seems very dangerous even to those who already live in 'people's democracies' and who therefore know the difficulties and obstacles that must be overcome. There has been a succession of usurpations of houses and landed property. Insecurity, disorder, and fear are being progressively instilled under the cover of the 'improvised' formation of schools, child-care centers, hospitals, popular universities, agricultural cooperatives, etc. Few of these initiatives of occupations are viable. Frequently, the occupation is followed by destruction, and then abandonment. . . . Nobody seems to be interested any longer in opposing purely anarchistic acts, which are sometimes pure vandalism and contribute nothing to solving any real problem but lead instead to a general worsening of the situation. The authority of the state is being lost inexorably . . . and the way is open to successive waves

of discontent that inevitably provide grist for the mill of the counterrevolution. . . .

"In its policy of progressive destruction of the state apparatus, the CP uses anarcho-populism as its driving lance. This is a spurious and conflict-ridden, but no less effective, alliance. . . . The Committees of Defense of the Revolution and the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers, and Sailors—initiatives taken by the CP and the PRP-BR—provoke identical reservations. Fundamentally, they tend to create armed groups of civilians that exert pressure on the MFA or even want eventually to substitute themselves for the MFA." (*Jornal Novo*, July 29, 1975.)

And the conclusions are obvious:

"Reaffirm the principle that the tenants and workers commissions are forms of popular power that are interesting to develop provided that they do not claim to be a 'parallel power' to the state apparatus. . . .

"Introduce severe punitive legislation against 'armed militias,' which should be suppressed within one month at the most, along with the 'popular vigilance committees' or others that have arisen. The SP thinks that no compromise is possible on this question: The formation of armed militias of a party type will lead to a disintegration of the unity of the MFA and will inevitably lead the country toward tragic confrontations. . . ." (*Jornal Novo*, July 29, 1975.)

"Socialism with liberty" thus stands revealed as a call for the repression of the "anarchistic" masses and for a monopoly of arms in the hands of the bourgeois army. The lessons of Germany, Spain, and Chile are lost on these gentlemen.

The CP's left turn was expressed through united-front proposals and actions with the far-left organizations (including the LCI), the acceptance, albeit reluctantly and with many restrictions, of the slogan calling for the generalization of workers control and initiatives of factory occupations, and the prudent reversal of the previous opposition to the strengthening of the organs of self-organization of the working class, while maintaining many restrictions and trying to control these organs through the trade-union bureaucracy and the MFA.

But this left turn soon took the form of bureaucratic adventurism and sectarianism, culminating in the accusations of "social-fascism" against the Socialist party. (It should be noted that the SP replies in kind, taking up the Maoist slogan that calls Cunhal a "social-fascist lackey of Moscow.") The CP leadership has become increasingly isolated from both the radicalized and the more moderate sections of the working class, a result of its attempts to maintain control of trade unions and mass media through bureaucratic machinations, to impede the development of workers democracy, and to prevent the SP from organizing street demonstrations.

Consequent to that isolation, the CP has increasingly attempted desperate maneuvers aimed at "conquering" the bourgeois state apparatus from within as a substitute for trying to broaden its mass base and mass appeal. The CP has miserably failed to offer political answers and perspectives to the masses along the lines of an organized and democratic united front with the SP and the revolutionary left. Instead, it has concentrated all its hopes on maneuvers with the MFA. But the MFA itself has increasingly divided as a function of the class lineup and the relationship of class forces rather than on the basis of "loyalty" to collaboration with the CP. Despite its leftist phraseology, the Kremlin is not interested in provoking a big clash with imperialism over the developments in Portugal. At the Helsinki summit, Brezhnev was told in no uncertain terms to restrain Cunhal or the "détente" would be finished. The CP's new turn (its second so far), "justified" on the basis of the anticommunist pogroms in the North, was made on August 10, when Cunhal, following Soares,

3. Partido Revolucionário do Proletariado-Brigadas Revolucionárias—Revolutionary party of the Proletariat-Revolutionary Brigades.

called for a "halt" to the revolutionary process, thereby laying the basis for a compromise around the Melo Antunes document.

Is It Enough to Base Yourself on the Constituent Assembly?

Just how far Comrade Foley has departed from the revolutionary Marxist tradition of analyzing class struggles in prerevolutionary and revolutionary situations like that of Portugal today is strikingly revealed by the following passage of his article in the July 21, 1975, *Intercontinental Press*: "If the CP had been interested in establishing a government representative of the workers, it had only to base itself on the Constituent Assembly and call on the delegates there to act in accordance with the clear mandate given them by the voters." (p. 1011.)

For a workers government to come to power it is sufficient to "call on the delegates" of the Constituent Assembly to act, presumably by constituting a SP-CP government. Cunhal does not do so. All the Portuguese "ultraleftists" (including, we assume, the Portuguese Trotskyists) likewise refrain from making such a call. They are therefore all guilty of "antiparliamentary cretinism."

Trotsky used the expression "antiparliamentary cretinism" to refer to the Spanish anarchists, who in a country in which there were still powerful bourgeois-democratic and electoral illusions refused to participate in parliamentary elections, under the pretext of not wanting to strengthen these illusions. So far as we recall, the Portuguese CP participated in the elections, as did the "centrists" and many of the "ultraleftists" to whom Comrade Foley refers, including the Trotskyists of the LCI. Obviously, then, Comrade Foley uses the expression "antiparliamentary cretinism" in quite another sense than did Trotsky.

Since the experience of the Russian revolution of 1917, and especially since the publication of Lenin's "Left-Wing Communism, An Infantile Disorder," it has been commonly accepted among revolutionary Marxists that it is tactically correct to call upon the mass parties claiming to represent the organized labor movement to take all power. The purpose of such a tactic is essentially a dual pedagogical one: On the one hand, to teach the workers to pose all the key questions of the class struggle as questions of power; on the other hand, to expose the misleaders of the working class as unwilling or (in the unlikely event that they do take power) unable to satisfy the burning needs of the workers.

But Comrade Foley has now come up with an entirely new variant of that propaganda slogan. It is actually "sufficient," you see, for Cunhal to call upon Soares to form a workers government for that government to actually come into being and to receive the enthusiastic approval of the bourgeois Constituent Assembly, in which there is a majority of delegates from working-class parties. What began as a propaganda device aimed at exposing the reformist misleaders of the working class has now become an illusion among revolutionaries about the willingness and ability of these misleaders to actually carry out a socialist revolution. The Portuguese workers today are facing issues of life-or-death importance for the revolution and for the day-to-day interests of the proletariat. Workers are occupying factories, implementing workers control, and creating self-defense organizations to defend themselves against the threats of unemployment, poverty, and a bloody reactionary coup. What advice does Comrade Foley give them? It is "sufficient" to give all power to the Constituent Assembly for these questions to be settled in the interests of the workers, since a majority of the seats in the Constituent Assembly are held by representatives of the SP and CP!

But what if the SP blocs with the PPD instead of with the CP? It will then be "exposed." Undoubtedly. But in the meantime, anti-working-class laws will have been voted and the gains of the workers will have been destroyed, with the solemn consent of a Constituent Assembly in which Comrade Foley would have us invest full power. And what if the CP itself blocs with the SP and the PPD to impose these anti-working-class laws? It will then also

be "exposed." But is the *main goal today* to play some propaganda game to "expose" this or that parliamentary formation? Or should one instead give priority to a tooth-and-nail fight to defend all the current gains of the workers? Should the defense of these gains be subordinated to "exposing" the SP and CP leaderships through some sort of parliamentary maneuvering? Comrade Foley took the field against "antiparliamentary cretinism." He has very rapidly reached a position of parliamentary cretinism.

In Britain today the Labour MPs hold a majority in Parliament. They have received a "clear mandate" from the voters to oppose any wage freeze or incomes policy. Just imagine a British revolutionary who would say that it would be sufficient to give all power to Parliament for the newly imposed wage freeze to be abolished! One may answer, "But it is precisely this 'sovereign Parliament,' with its Labour majority, that has adopted the wage freeze." Has this created a big crisis in the labor movement and even in the Parliamentary Labour party? To be sure. But it is a thousand times more urgent and vital to organize the struggle against that parliamentary decision outside Parliament than it is to wait until the present crisis manifests itself by creating a new Labour majority that might undo what the present treacherous one has done. Indeed, without such an energetic, extraparliamentary fight, this overturn in the composition of the Labour MPs will *never* occur. (Whether it will occur even with such a fight is another question.)

In a polemic against tendencies guilty of "constitutional illusions" not unlike those of Comrade Foley, Lenin had this to say in 1917:

"If political power in the state is exercised by a class whose interests coincide with those of the majority, a leadership of public affairs that effectively conforms to the will of the majority is possible. But if political power is exercised by a class whose interests differ from those of the majority, a leadership of public affairs in conformity with the will of the majority inevitably becomes trickery or leads to the crushing of the majority." (*Collected Works*, French edition, Vol. 25, pp. 216-17.)

In Portugal economic and state power are still held by the capitalist class, weakened though it is. To talk of "popular sovereignty" and "majority rule" without first breaking that economic power and the state apparatus that upholds it, without the previous conquest of power by the proletariat, is to deceive the workers and to deceive oneself.

This debate is far from academic. In rejecting the MFA decree on "popular power" the SP leadership specifically demanded that the status of the workers commissions, tenants committees, and workers self-defense organs be defined by the Constituent Assembly. (*Expresso*, July 12, 1975.) We ought to warn the workers: Don't let the Constituent Assembly legislate on any of your conquests; it will only restrict them!

Some comrades have come up with the following argument: Under conditions of capitalism in decay, when the bourgeoisie (especially today, after the end of the long postwar "boom") cannot grant any substantial reforms to the working class and is instead compelled ever increasingly to whittle down the democratic rights of the workers, the capitalists cannot tolerate a sovereign and democratically elected Constituent Assembly. Thus, to call for full sovereignty for the Constituent Assembly in Portugal today is to raise a demand that the capitalists cannot meet and thus to place the democratic sentiments of broad, not yet radicalized masses at the service of the revolution.

This argument suffers from erroneous extrapolation and generalization. It points correctly to a long-term *trend*. But the existence of the trend does not at all imply that under no conditions can the capitalists use a "sovereign constituent assembly" as an instrument in halting a proletarian revolution. In fact, this has already been done, and under circumstances that were not so different from those prevailing in Portugal today: in

Germany in 1918-19, in Spain (with the "sovereign Cortes") after July 1936, in France and Italy at the end of the second world war. To conclude from the long-term trend of the decay of bourgeois democracy that at no time and in no place can capitalism use bourgeois democracy as a weapon in halting a proletarian revolution is to contradict all historical experience of the past fifty years in Europe.

As a matter of fact, in the wake of the constitution of the MFA's triumvirate, Soares has already called for the formation of a "government of national unity." Where does this leave Comrade Foley's "sufficient" condition? How can Comrade Foley, Cunhal, or the unfortunate "centrists and ultraleftists" rapidly persuade Soares to abandon this call in favor of a call for a CP-SP-Intersindical government (perhaps with a few burned down CP and Intersindical headquarters thrown in for good measure)? Should the workers in Portugal wait to convince Soares before they defend their conquests? Do we now adopt the position that the pace of the revolution depends on the good will of the reformist misleaders? Were Stalin, Molotov, and Kamenev correct after all against Lenin and Trotsky in February-March 1917? Were the Bolsheviks splitting the working class when they insisted on not granting an ounce of trust to the reformist misleaders?

Bourgeois Democracy, Democratic Rights, Proletarian Revolution

The root of Comrade Foley's misjudgment of the political conflict in Portugal today is a wrong, one-sided, and mechanistic conception of the relationship between bourgeois democracy and socialist revolution. This conception has now been endorsed by Comrade Hansen, editor of *Intercontinental Press*, in a "news analysis" published in the August 4 issue ("Is Democracy Worth Fighting For?"). Of course, Marxists defend democratic rights whenever they are attacked by bourgeois reaction. Marxists fight for the defense and extension of democratic rights during and after socialist revolutions. But this in no way means that a socialist revolution amounts to a "qualitative expansion" of bourgeois democracy. Nor does it mean that the extension of democratic rights is equivalent to "fighting for bourgeois democracy in the period leading up to socialism."

In the first place, it is necessary to remind Comrades Hansen and Foley that even in its most advanced and radical form, bourgeois democracy severely *restricts* political democratic rights (among other things) through the institutions of private property. The distinguishing feature of a proletarian revolution, even before the establishment of a workers state, is that increasingly radicalized mass action leads the toilers to extend democracy beyond limits compatible with *bourgeois* democracy.

The question of freedom of the press provides a good illustration of this tendency. We defend the right of even bourgeois liberal parties, not to mention workers parties, to publish their own newspaper against any attempt by bourgeois governments to suppress them. But we never defend the *monopoly of private owners* of printing presses over the expression of opinions publicly. When printing workers break that monopoly in the course of mass revolutionary struggle, when they lay claim to the right to have their own opinions printed alongside those of private owners or political parties, we say that this is an *extension* and not a limitation of democratic rights. We approve this extension 100 percent, even if the majority of the delegates to the Constituent Assembly have not voted in favor of it or have rejected it and even if the private owners protest very loudly. That is a very concrete example of how a revolution expands democracy beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy by attacking the rights of private property.

Second, bourgeois democracy consists not only of democratic rights (restricted ones that exist only on paper in part), but also of a state machine, repressive apparatus, and various institutions that limit and strangle the free democratic activity of the masses.

We oppose and challenge these institutions and their "right" to restrict the freedom of action of the masses (to limit the right to strike, for example), even in peaceful times. But when these institutions and state apparatus are challenged by the mass action of tens of thousands of workers in a revolutionary process, we stand 100 percent on the side of the workers against the institutions of the bourgeois-democratic state. We are for institutions of workers democracy, for soviets, to replace the institutions of the bourgeois state. A proletarian revolution is not simply an extension and generalization of democratic rights; in addition to that continuity, there is a strong element of *discontinuity*, of break—a break with *all the institutions of the bourgeois state*, a destruction of the bourgeois state machine and its replacement by *new* organs of power. The understanding on this point, after all, constitutes the main dividing line between Bolshevism and Menshevism in the course of proletarian revolutions. And we are convinced that these institutions of workers democracy are a thousand times more democratic than those of bourgeois democracy.

Third, in periods of intense class struggle and growing violent polarization of class forces—that is, in periods of revolution and counterrevolution—the defense of democratic rights cannot be separated from the class interests of the contending forces. The workers want to abolish exploitation, poverty, unemployment, and state repression. If, in the name of defending bourgeois democracy (or even "democratic rights" in general), one attempts to restrain their struggle, puts a brake on their "ultraleft" freedom of action, and condones or organizes repression against them, then one prepares the way for the replacement of bourgeois democracy by bourgeois dictatorship instead of by proletarian democracy.

The objective basis of bourgeois democracy, which rests on the possibility of a certain degree of conciliation between fundamental social classes, can be swept away by sharpened capitalist crisis and explosive class conflict. This is what happened in Europe during the 1930s. It happened in Chile. It is happening in Portugal today. Under these circumstances, to prevent the workers from replacing bourgeois democracy with proletarian democracy means to make the victory of bourgeois dictatorship inevitable.

In light of these theses, which were explained by Lenin and Trotsky many times, our comrades of the LCI, sympathizing organization of the Fourth International in Portugal, took the following positions, of which the Fourth International fully approves:

1. Support to the democratic right of the printing workers of *República* to have their own opinions printed on their presses, either in *República* itself or in another newspaper printed on the same presses.
2. Support to the democratic right of the Socialist party to publish its newspaper without any censorship or control.
3. Refusal to support any move by the authorities of the Portuguese bourgeois state to have the workers occupying the *República* printshop thrown off the premises.
4. Support to the right of the Socialist party to organize street demonstrations and refusal to collaborate with the CP in setting up roadblocks and barricades against the Socialist demonstrators.
5. Support to and active participation in any action of self-defense undertaken by the Communist party and the trade unions against attacks on their offices by reactionary crowds.

We believe that these positions are entirely correct and represent a consistent defense of democratic rights in a revolutionary situation, although they obviously go beyond the limits of bourgeois democracy. We also believe that it is only on the basis of these positions that the unity in action of the Portuguese workers can be restored.

The contradictions in the positions adopted by Comrade Hansen become all the more glaring when it is remembered that

in his article, written more than two weeks after the beginning of the storming and burning of dozens of headquarters of the CP, the trade unions, and other working-class organizations (including, in one case, an office of our own comrades of the LCI), Comrade Hansen did not see fit to mention these attacks even once, despite his crusade for bourgeois democracy against an alleged military dictatorship. One would have thought that a comrade so sensitive to democratic rights would scream at the top his lungs against these violent assaults on the most elementary right of existence and free functioning of working-class organizations--attacks a thousand times worse than anything to which the Portuguese SP has been subjected. Comrade Hansen's silence on this point only confirms that in a revolutionary situation one cannot set out to defend bourgeois democracy and bourgeois state institutions against the self-organization and mobilization of the workers without overlooking severe attacks on elementary democratic rights. The German workers found this out as early as December 1918-January 1919. It is a sad day when Comrade Hansen has to be reminded of it.

As far back as the electoral campaign of April 1975 we warned that the sectarian confrontation between Stalinist one-party schemes and Social Democratic clinging to bourgeois democracy could introduce a sharp split in the Portuguese working class, thereby threatening the advance of the revolution. Only a defense of the twin ideas of *workers democracy and workers councils* can assure that neither the revolutionary impetus nor the necessary united front of the Portuguese working class will be lastingly broken. We will continue to struggle tirelessly for this united front between the CP, the SP, and the revolutionary workers against the attacks of reactionary thugs and in consonance with the need to consolidate and expand the conquests of the revolution.

Toward Dual Power in Portugal

The wave of mass struggle, factory occupations, experiments in workers control, land occupations, squatters initiatives, and the emergence of tenants committees has raised the problem of how to coordinate and unify these variegated forms of self-organization of the toiling masses. History provides us with but one answer to this problem: the creation of soviets, of workers councils, whatever they may be called (the terminology preferably arising from the practical struggle experience of the country concerned rather than from a foreign language). The de facto creation of such workers councils is the spontaneous product of the Portuguese revolutionary process. If the Fourth International, its Portuguese organization, and other revolutionary groups have formulated this necessity systematically, they have done so *only after the first practical initiatives had been taken by the masses themselves.*

Comrade Foley does not agree. In the July 21, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press* he quotes a passage of Trotsky's comments on the 1931 Spanish revolution presenting soviets as "organizations of the proletarian united front" (*IP*, July 21, p. 1015.), thereby implying that Trotsky actually did not advise the setting up of soviets as long as there was no party-to-party agreement with the Social Democrats to do so. Soviets in Portugal only with the approval of Cunhal and Soares! This is orthodox Trotskyism?

In fact, Trotsky never took such a preposterous position. He gave the Spanish Trotskyists just the opposite advice, in January 1931 and in April 1936, when, let it be said in passing, the relationship of class forces was less favorable to the proletariat than is the case in Portugal today and the Trotskyists were much weaker than they are today. Trotsky's advice was to propagate the creation of soviets coming out of the spontaneous mass struggles, to carefully test the willingness of the Socialist and anarchist workers to participate in them, and to go into action as soon as there were indications that this was actually occurring. (See, among other sources, his January 8, 1931, letter to the Chinese Opposition, his long article "The Revolution in Spain" of

Jan. 24, 1931, and his "Tasks of the Fourth International in Spain" of April 12, 1936, the latter two articles in *The Spanish Revolution*, Pathfinder Press, p. 67 and p. 211.) Only after this process has been set in motion is there any hope of compelling the Social Democratic or Stalinist leaders to accept the inevitable (very reluctantly). Our Portuguese comrades have been acting exactly in this way.

The most democratic form of workers councils is that in which the masses in factories and neighborhoods freely elect their delegates rather than having them nominated by parties. Parties are present in the soviets only as a result of the freely elected delegates assembling themselves into political factions, groups, etc. A system of councils in which parties delegate representatives not elected by the masses and over the heads of the masses is many times less democratic, for it tends to freeze the initial relationship of forces, and to falsify them to boot. Trotsky's criticism of this manner of composing the militia committees of the Catalan revolution in 1936-37 is well known. (See his "The POUM and the Call for Soviets," October 1, 1937, *ibid.*, p. 298.)

Of course, we oppose the nonsensical line of the ultraleftist PRP-BR: "soviets without parties." When thrown out the door, politics comes back through the window; in practice, "councils without parties" lead to a one-party system that fosters bureaucracy. We are for full freedom of political affiliation and activity of all workers and all members of workers councils. We are for a multiparty system within workers councils. But we are against agreements at the top among bureaucrats as a replacement for the free election of delegates by the masses of workers, soldiers, housewives, craftsmen, and all those toilers willing to participate in the emerging workers councils.

Real workers councils must be organs of the broadest possible unity of all the toilers. It would be criminal to say to a group of workers: You cannot participate in setting up workers councils because you are affiliated to the Socialist party. But we know of nobody who has upheld such a disastrous, divisive position in Portugal today. On the contrary, the greatest efforts must be made to involve the maximum number of Socialist party affiliates at all levels in the establishment of councils, by granting them all the required guarantees of the democratic functioning of these bodies. Attempts to draw local and regional organizations of the SP into the spreading and coordination of the councils should be multiplied. A call should be made to the national leaders of the SP to participate in the organization of the councils, and if they refuse, they should be challenged in public debate to explain the reasons for their refusal. (These gentlemen are all in favor of democracy and debates, aren't they?) The same obviously applies even more strongly to the Communist party, whose ranks and middle cadres are more inclined to participate than are the cadres of the SP, at least at this stage.

But if all ultimatum with respect to the SP and CP must be banished, all the more so should it be rejected with respect to those vanguard workers who are organized in various centrist, revolutionary, or "ultraleftist" groups, each with its particular shibboleth and ideological confusion, but each with much greater eagerness to actually set up councils than the CP and SP militants. We have uncompromising political differences with the CP and SP; nevertheless, we are prepared to build soviets with them, without demanding that they first abandon their faith in bourgeois democracy (SP) or in the one-party, bureaucratic system (the CP). Shouldn't we be prepared to build with the comrades of the PRP-BR, MES, LUAR, or UDP,⁴ without first demanding that they abandon their various creeds--support to the MFA, "councils without parties," the "armed struggle," Mao Tsetung Thought, or

4. Movimento de Esquerda Socialista--Movement of the Socialist Left. Liga de União e Acção Revolucionária--League of Revolutionary Union and Action. União Democrática Popular--Popular Democratic Union.

around which the decisive test of strength takes place, whether it be the defense of the gains of the revolution against attempts to eliminate them through a reconstructed "stable" bourgeois democracy, whether it be the defense of the working class against an attempt to restore a military or fascist dictatorship, whether it be an open possibility of the seizure of power by the working class, or whether it be any combination of such issues, there is no road to victory and no road to the building of a mass revolutionary party in Portugal today other than the road of tirelessly campaigning for an extension, generalization, coordination, and centralization of democratically elected workers councils.

Comrade Foley appears not to understand this. In the July 28 *Intercontinental Press* he wrote that the July 16 demonstration in Lisbon was "a wild display of ultraleft fantasies." After that demonstration, he concluded, "it will be hard for any workers or tenants committee to gain acceptance as a genuinely representative body that can unite workers and poor masses in struggle." (p. 1063.) What an utter lack of historical perspective and sense of proportion is expressed in these words!

The Russian soviets, not to mention the German councils and the Spanish committees, committed hundreds of "ultraleft" acts and political mistakes, much graver than any that may have been committed in Lisbon on July 16. That did not prevent them from spreading, and still less from "gaining acceptance" as "genuinely representative" bodies. Contrary to Comrade Foley's predictions, the number of workers and tenants committees will not cease to grow after July 16. Attempts to coordinate and generalize them will increase in number. The Portuguese working class will follow the road of self-organization that has been followed by all working classes during genuine proletarian revolutions, regardless of any errors that may be committed along the way. This upsurge can be halted only by a crushing bloody defeat and not by some mistaken slogans in one demonstration. In fact, Mário Soares himself, who stands physically nearer to the reality of the revolutionary process in Portugal than does Comrade Foley and who above all is subject to the strong pressure of his own rank and file, who after all want to participate in the building of the committees of workers power, expressed his willingness (after July 16) to accept the workers and tenants committees, provided some form of reconciling them with bourgeois parliamentary institutions could be found. (See *Le Monde*, July 29, 1975.) Of course, "combining" soviets with bourgeois institutions is the classical path of Menshevism during proletarian revolutions. Sad to say, however, Comrade Foley finds himself both less lucid and further to the right than Mário Soares on the question of the future of Portuguese workers councils.

Cuba and Portugal: The Parallel and the Difference

All revolutions in the twentieth century have given rise to unforeseen developments. Nobody had ever heard of soviets before they were created by the Russian revolution of 1905. (Similarities with the Paris Commune were discovered only later, after much discussion and experience.) Workers control was a product of the revolution of 1917. The Spanish revolution of 1936 created committees of militias. Since the great defeats of the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s (caused by reformism and Stalinism), unusual forms of proletarian revolutions have occurred—a result of the combination of the inventiveness of the proletarian masses and the inadequacy of the subjective factor, that is, the lack of an adequate level of class consciousness and revolutionary leadership. This has given rise to a new phenomenon: *deformed popular social revolutions*, such as the Yugoslav, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cuban revolutions.

These were popular social revolutions in the dual sense that: 1. They brought millions of people into political action; that is, they were popular in the sense in which Trotsky used the term in his *Theses on Permanent Revolution*; they were revolutions born of

the immense self-activity of workers and peasants.⁵ 2. They led to the destruction of bourgeois state power and to an overturn of capitalist property relations; that is, they destroyed capitalism as an economic system and destroyed the power of the bourgeoisie as a ruling class. At the same time, however, they were *deformed* revolutions, in a threefold sense: First, their leaderships, either because of their Stalinist origins and education (Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam) or because of their empiricism and pragmatism (Cuba) were unwilling and unable to allow the emergence of democratic forms of self-organization of the workers and poor peasants. Second, from the outset the emerging workers states were consequently qualitatively more bureaucratically deformed than the Russian workers state had been during its initial stage. Third, as a result of these deformations, these revolutions were unable sufficiently (if at all) to act as stimulants for the international revolution, despite the fact that it was possible for them to act in such a way in the given world situation.

Our movement did not immediately and successfully tackle the political and theoretical problems posed by this unforeseen turn in world history, a turn that in the final analysis was the result of a merely partial upsurge of world revolution after two decades of crushing defeats and of the combination of that limited upsurge with the programmatic, political, and demoralizing long-term effects of those defeats, that is, of the temporary hegemony of Stalinism and reformism within the international workers movement. Our movement had to undergo a crisis before it was able to find the correct answers to the problems posed by this unforeseen turn.

Those who failed to find the correct answers and thought it was a deadly sin to recognize a social revolution if it occurred in any unforeseen way maneuvered themselves into impossible theoretical and ideological contradictions and into hopeless political sectarianism and isolation. The *Lutte Ouvrière* group in France has decided that although Russia is a workers state, the East European "people's democracies" are bourgeois states, even though their social structures, economic systems, and state powers are identical with those of the USSR. The Healy-Lambert groupings claim that China is a workers state but that Cuba remains a bourgeois state, even though bourgeois property relations were eliminated far more radically in Cuba than they had been in China. (This implies an additional contradiction as well: If only the leaders of the July 26 Movement had joined the Cuban Communist party before overthrowing Batista, Cuba could be recognized as a workers state; the only trouble is that in that case they would never have overthrown Batista.)

In most cases, the root of this theoretical bankruptcy is fear of succumbing to temptation, which is the common characteristic of sectarians, as Trotsky so aptly put it. All these sectarians have somehow managed to convince themselves that if one "admits" that Tito, Mao, Ho Chi Minh, and Castro were able to overthrow capitalism under exceptional circumstances and to successfully lead deformed revolutions, one must "logically" admit that other figures of a similar type could be capable of repeating such feats anywhere and any time; the future role or usefulness of the Fourth International would "consequently" be "liquidated."

For a quarter of a century now we have vainly attempted to convince these sectarians that the conclusion does not at all follow from the premise, that innumerable revolutionary situations since 1945 have been betrayed by the traditional bureaucratic leaderships, that the balance sheet of Stalinism on a world scale is a clear counterrevolutionary one, that Tito, Mao, and Ho

5. In this sense, every social revolution is not necessarily a popular revolution. In East Europe capitalist property relations and the bourgeois state power were overturned without popular revolutions, essentially through the bureaucratic-military actions of the Soviet bureaucracy, in some cases with limited mass mobilizations that can in no way be considered genuine mass popular uprisings.

whatever. We are opposed to the slogan "Dissolve the Constituent Assembly" and are equally opposed to the slogan "All power to the Constituent Assembly." But it would be irresponsible ultimatism to refuse to build workers councils along with supporters of either of these incorrect lines. Sectarianism toward "centrists and ultraleftists" is no more justified than sectarianism toward opportunists, especially when thousands of workers follow the "centrists and ultraleftists."

Councils are now arising in Portugal as the result of and at the height of tremendous mass struggles. They are genuine products of these struggles and are indispensable instruments for the extension, generalization, and final victory of these struggles. But in one article published in *Intercontinental Press* (July 21, 1975) Comrade Foley, basing himself on the text of the MFA decree on "popular power" and admitting that "this elaborate scheme is unlikely ever to be fully applied" (p. 1014), describes the MFA's call for these committees as an attempt to set up a "system of totalitarian military dictatorship" that "recalls Caetano's semi-corporatist union setup." (p. 1014.)

Everybody has the right to make mistakes. But there are mistakes that assume such proportions as to take on a new quality. We can only say that Comrade Foley has now completed the road to the Healy-Lambert method of politics. In fact, the definition of the MFA-proposed "people's committees" as "corporatist" originates from these great Marxists, who have creatively applied the rule of the three wise monkeys and consequently hear nothing, see nothing, and talk unlimited nonsense.

Corporatism is a fascist-type form of rule born of the crushing of every form of working-class organization and self-activity. It is the result of a disastrous defeat of the working class—in the case of Portugal, a very bloody defeat indeed, one can be sure. Its imposition requires the previous physical destruction of working-class cadres, organizations, headquarters, and presses and the total demoralization and domination of the working class.

In Portugal today the possible emergence of embryonic workers councils has been expressed by the fact that the workers commissions have begun assuming tasks whose areas of fulfillment spill out of the factories themselves. If the "progressive" wing of the MFA undertakes a pathetic attempt to "co-opt" this development into its own plans, this in no way modifies the origins or direction of development of these councils. Their gradual emergence has not been the result of a defeat but a tremendous upsurge of working-class activity. Far from being demoralized, the self-confidence and activity of the class is increasing at a pace seldom seen in West Europe since the second world war. Far from being crushed, working-class organizations are multiplying, spreading, and differentiating in a symphony (and sometimes a cacophony, but that is the price we gladly pay for workers democracy) of free exchange of opinions and free debate. Public opinion is dominated by the working-class press and working-class literature. To identify *this trend* with totalitarianism, to see a threat of fascist corporatism in *these forms* of organization, is to have completely lost one's bearings. It can only be called a re-edition of the Stalinist (and Mao-Stalinist) theory of social-fascism, for it overlooks the fundamental difference between a situation in which working-class organizations exist and a situation in which they do not exist. And in the case of Portugal, the theory has even less justification than it did during the time of Stalin-Thälmann, for there is incomparably greater workers democracy and freedom in Portugal today than there was in Germany during the final period of the Weimar Republic.

It can be predicted with the utmost confidence that in order for "corporatism," totalitarianism, or fascism to return to power in Portugal, all the initiators of the present workers councils, and not a few of the MFA "theoreticians" who drafted the decree so detested by Comrade Foley, will have first to be shot. Not the slightest scrap of any "people's council" would survive under a

victorious reactionary dictatorship. If things actually came to that, Comrade Foley would have a hard time explaining how he managed to confuse the victims with the executioners. Happily, there is still great hope that the resistance to any return to fascism will be victorious and that history will thus spare Comrade Foley this ugly hour of reckoning.

Particularly clever sophists may argue that "isolated" workers control in "a limited number" of factories does not yet represent genuine dual power and that "fragmented popular councils" restricted to some neighborhoods or branches of industry are not yet real soviets. This is certainly true. We do not maintain that there is already a situation of generalized dual power in Portugal. What we do maintain is that such a situation is gradually emerging and that we must struggle with all our might to extend and accelerate that trend. But the sophists are easily caught in their own trap. What should revolutionaries do when they are confronted with "only limited" instances of workers control in some fifty or a hundred factories? Accept the limitation? Prefer that they be suppressed by order of a "sovereign Constituent Assembly"? Or struggle for their extension, generalization, coordination, and centralization? That is surely the line of Lenin and Trotsky. And that is the line that the Fourth International upholds in Portugal today.

The solution to each of the key questions with which the Portuguese toiling masses are confronted today requires the extension and coordination of bodies of self-organization of the masses. Under conditions of galloping inflation, bourgeois economic sabotage, wholesale factory closures, a massive flight of capital, and widespread concealment of material stocks, it is impossible to fight against unemployment, for the seven-hour day, or for the sliding scale of wages through methods of "normal" trade-union negotiation. Workers control must be boldly generalized; nationalized banks and enterprises must be centralized under workers control; a state monopoly of foreign trade must be established; a workers economic plan for guaranteeing full employment and satisfying the needs of the masses must be drawn up. This requires a network of committees in the factories, neighborhoods, villages, and ports to check, verify, and organize. And that requires a system of workers councils.

Guarantees against the threat of a fascist coup and an imperialist intervention can be provided only by the massive arming of the workers and poor peasants, by close unity between the workers in their factories and neighborhoods and the soldiers in the barracks, by a system of integrated workers militias and soldiers committees, and by a system of vigilance inside and outside the barracks. This also requires an integrated system of workers and soldiers councils.

The revolutionary left today is still a small minority, although it is growing rapidly. The bureaucratic leaderships of the CP and SP still control the majority of the working class, although the prestige of these leaderships is increasingly being undermined and shattered. To overcome the present division of the working class it is necessary to establish organs within which Socialists, Communists, and revolutionaries can meet, discuss, develop their differences, and debate in front of the entire class, so that the entire class can judge. What better forum for free debate and freely accepted unity in action than freely and democratically elected workers councils?

We cannot be sure that his line will triumph in Portugal. We do not know in advance when generalized soviets will actually come into existence. For this trend to be victorious, it is not enough simply to have a correct line. It is also necessary for the relationship of forces between the classes and between the revolutionary organization and the reformist misleaders within the class to be such that the revolutionaries can win the confidence of the majority of the proletariat. We do not know whether there will be sufficient time to achieve such a relationship of forces in Portugal. But we do know this: Whatever the issue

were able to lead their deformed revolutions to victory only by breaking with key strategic and tactical theorems of Stalinism (and incidentally by breaking down the subordination of their parties and revolutions to the interests of the Soviet bureaucracy), and that the reality of a social revolution is an objective phenomenon that must be analyzed objectively and without subordinating the willingness to adopt this or that definition to the cranky "conclusions" that allegedly "necessarily flow" from the analysis. (We may note in passing that it is the school of reformist and Stalinist bureaucrats that subordinates the Marxist method of analysis as an instrument of scientific knowledge to the "needs of the organization," which means in reality the needs of the bureaucracy, thereby transforming Marxism into a handmaiden of large or petty bureaucrats.)

Again and again we have insisted that the cases of Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam, and Cuba would remain exceptional, that the detour of world revolution through the phenomenon of deformed revolutions would be temporary, that as the crisis of the world imperialist system continued to deepen and the worldwide relationship of forces continued to shift against the bourgeoisie it was only a question of time before the world revolution would again hit the imperialist countries, and that the more this occurred the more the industrial proletariat would play the leading role in the revolutionary process both in the imperialist countries and in an increasing number of semicolonial countries, and the more the world revolutionary process would return to its "classical" pattern: the pattern of the self-organization of the toiling masses, the pattern of soviet democracy. We have further insisted that these "undeformed" revolutions will be able to triumph only under revolutionary Marxist leaderships, through the emergence of genuine mass revolutionary parties of the working class. The sectarians were not convinced by this argumentation. That is not surprising, for people who cannot be convinced by powerful revolutions are not likely to be persuaded by any argumentation, however valid.

Our movement was almost unanimous in formulating this type of analysis and prediction—at the 1963 Reunification Congress, after the great rallying call of May '68 in France, and at the Ninth World Congress of the Fourth International in 1969. Even though there was a sharp tendency struggle at the Tenth World Congress (1974), the political resolutions of the majority and the minority shared the above-indicated conclusions.

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

This motivation leads to an approach that is identical to the Healy-Lambert method of examining unforeseen turns of objective events. It is an approach that is alien to Marxism and can only lead to disastrous results. Such an approach is all the more unjustified in that in reality the Portuguese revolution strikingly confirms the predictions of the documents of the Ninth and Tenth World Congresses and the theses of the Reunification Congress, namely that the eruption of a proletarian revolution in an imperialist country will involve a return to the classical pattern, to the pattern of soviets and workers democracy.

But the Portuguese revolution also confirms that each and every proletarian revolution has some peculiarity, some specific feature that must be understood but that must not allow the analysis to

be diverted from the fundamental trends and issues.

The Cuban revolution began with the destruction of the army and state apparatus through the guerrilla war led by the July 26 Movement. This destruction did not guarantee the outcome of the revolution. Strenuous efforts were made (especially by the right wing of the July 26 Movement) to rebuild a bourgeois army and state apparatus after Batista's fall. But this destruction, combined with huge mass mobilizations and the conscious choices of the Castro leadership, did open the way for the rather rapid victory of the revolution once the reconstruction of the bourgeois army and state apparatus had been prevented. That is one of the key factors that explains why a workers state was created in Cuba without the prior formation of a mass revolutionary Marxist party.

The Portuguese revolution also began in a peculiar way. Its development has been marked by a series of factors: First, the weakening of Portuguese imperialism by the fight of the national liberation movements in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, and Angola; second, the attempt of a sector of Portuguese finance capital and some of the main chiefs of the army under Spínola and Costa Gomes to utilize the obvious need to end the colonial wars and the need to shift from direct to indirect rule in the former colonies as a basis from which to thoroughly modernize and overhaul Portuguese bourgeois society and the Portuguese capitalist economy by replacing the Caetano dictatorship with a "strong state" under Spínola, allowing limited fragments of bourgeois democracy (not unlike the pattern of de Gaulle's regime in France); third, the failure of the Portuguese bourgeoisie to realize the Spínolista project of a "strong state" because of the violent and ever expanding emergence of broader and broader masses onto the political scene; fourth, the growing division of the officer corps, a result of the combination of all the previously enumerated factors, and a growing polarization of the whole army; fifth, the growing political awareness and self-activity of the soldiers, which introduces an element of disintegration into the army, that is, a refusal by the soldiers to obey orders they consider politically unacceptable, a decline of discipline, and even attempts to alter the hierarchical structure of the army.

All these factors have come into play gradually, not all at once. The way they developed took many people by surprise, beginning with the Portuguese bourgeoisie and ending with not a few Trotskyists. But there is nothing "revisionist" in the analysis. Nor is there anything "liquidationist" in the conclusions that flow from it. The fact that a proletarian revolution is immensely accelerated by phenomena of division, disintegration, or temporary paralysis within the bourgeois army is after all an elementary principle of Marxism.

Comrade Foley's obsession with "undermining any faith in the bourgeois MFA" (an obsession he shares with Healy, Lambert, and their ilk) is a typical sectarian reversal of an opportunist mistake; it is based on fear that one might be on the point of succumbing to temptation. Comrade Foley's analysis shares an essential feature with the analysis of the centrist and opportunist tailenders of the MFA leadership: the assumption that everything that is happening in Portugal today depends essentially if not completely on the role, function, intentions, and actions of the MFA.

We categorically reject this approach. We maintain that what is going on in Portugal today is fundamentally a growing confrontation between the impetuous mass movement of the proletariat and poor peasantry on the one hand and all those forces that want to maintain and restabilize the capitalist economy and the bourgeois state on the other hand. We maintain that the growing divisions within the army, the officer corps, and the MFA itself are simply reflections of this growing polarization of class forces and are not at all results of the diabolical maneuvers and plans of the MFA. We therefore conclude that the key problem is to create organs of workers power and to compel all political forces to take positions on that question instead of proceeding by dividing Portugal into

those who "have illusions in the MFA" and those who do not.

The case of the "people's committees" provides a good illustration of the differences in the two approaches. If one looks at a plan (on paper) calling for the presence of a military commander in each district council by beginning from the arbitrary and mystifying starting point that we are dealing with a powerful military junta that is fully in control of the situation and intent upon establishing a "corporatist state," then such a plan becomes a "sinister omen." If, on the other hand, one sees the reality of a divided and increasingly paralyzed MFA tottering from crisis to crisis and unable to maintain any independent position between the increasingly polarized forces of capital and labor, then one sees the plan as a pathetic attempt by one wing of the MFA to co-opt and manipulate the radical initiatives of the working class, initiatives that have been taken independently of the MFA. One further sees that such attempts at co-optation are doomed to failure so long as the mass movement remains on the upswing. Instead of replying to the MFA "popular power" decree with the incredibly sectarian social-fascist-type cry of "corporatism," one should rather respond: Let that "army commander" not be nominated but instead freely elected by all the soldiers and officers of the district, on the basis of "one man, one vote." In fact, this is exactly what occurred in the first local popular assembly that gathered in Portugal—on July 13 in the town of Pontinha. It is true that the assembly met in the local barracks. But it was composed of democratically elected delegates from fifteen local workers commissions and twenty-four local tenants commissions. There was also one representative of the local army unit. But he happened to be not the hierarchical nominee of the general staff, but a man elected by the general assembly of the soldiers and officers after a mass meeting and an extensive discussion. We ask the question: Is that a soviet or is it an organ of a fascist-type "corporatist" state? And if one wants to deny the "pure" soviet character of this assembly (and we would be interested to know for what reasons), the question remains: Is that local popular assembly close to a soviet-type organ, or is it close to an organ of a fascist- or corporatist-type state?

Comrade Foley must be reminded that during the first phase of the February revolution in Russia many army commanders were deliberately invited to the provincial soviets, and the army representatives occupied a "privileged position" there. (See Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, Volume 1, the chapter entitled "The Executive Committee.") This was not a good development. But it was no reason to deny the character of the soviets.

We do not call upon the Portuguese workers to have the slightest confidence in the MFA. Quite the contrary. We call upon them to have confidence *only* in their own independent class strength. But neither do we call upon them to turn their backs on nationalizations, workers control, or workers councils simply because a few officers call for these goals too. Nor do we hang out a sign reading "Proletarian revolution: Entrance strictly forbidden to nonfactory workers," especially in view of the fact that, as is indicated in the above-mentioned quotation from the *Financial Times*, the counterrevolution itself classifies some of the revolutionary officers (for example, those who have begun to arm and train the workers) as its deadly enemies along with the revolutionary workers. The exact character of the Portuguese workers councils (whether they will call themselves "people's committees," "committees of people's power," or whatever) will depend on the activity, strength, and consciousness of the working class and its vanguard, and not on the plans, intentions, or maneuvers of some group of officers. That is and will remain our basic approach.

In other words: We believe that there is some similarity between the Cuban and Portuguese revolutions; but there are also significant differences. The similarity is that the weakening of the bourgeois army in Portugal, like its destruction in Cuba, aids the

revolutionary process considerably. The differences are that Portugal is an imperialist country, not a semicolonial one; that the uprooting of the political and social power of the bourgeoisie is consequently much more difficult; that the weight of the industrial proletariat is much greater; that the army has not been completely shattered but only divided and *partially* (and *temporarily*) paralyzed. It is therefore overwhelmingly likely that the Portuguese revolution will follow the *classical* pattern and will triumph only through the conquest of power by the proletariat organized in soviets and led by revolutionary Marxists and not at all through the leadership of the MFA.

To speak of growing polarization of society and growing division of the army along the lines of that polarization is to imply that some officers are likely to align themselves with the proletariat during the final test of strength. Others will not. How many will go in this or that direction is a matter of useless speculation, for it is not at all the problem at issue. *The problem at issue is to assure the maximum of autonomous democratic self-organization and self-defense of the proletariat for that future test of strength.* The attitudes of this or that part of the officer corps will be by-products of the alignment of basic social forces, as has been the case since the end of 1974; these attitudes will not at all be the major motor force.

Only if Comrade Foley returns to the *method* used by Marxists in judging all revolutions of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—that is, the method that begins by defining the basic class forces in contention—will he be able to extricate himself from the absurd positions into which he has maneuvered himself. Otherwise, he will share the sad fate of Healy, Lambert, and other sectarians during the past twenty years: He will fail to understand a living revolution when confronted with it.

The Necessary Tasks of Solidarity With the Portuguese Revolution

When we say that a process of rapid polarization of basic class forces is under way in Portugal, we imply that there will be a succession of violent convulsions and violent confrontations, including armed confrontations, between antagonistic class forces. It is a matter of life or death for revolutionaries to adopt a correct stand in these confrontations. That is why Comrade Foley's errors are not purely theoretical. They could lead to disastrous abstention in a key phase of the Portuguese class struggle.

During the March 11, 1975, confrontation our comrades of the LCI fought in the front lines on the barricades against the counterrevolutionary Spínolista coup. They won considerable prestige through their courageous initiatives and interventions. So much so that the CP bureaucrats were compelled to allow their leaders to address the huge crowd (some 60,000 people) assembled in Porto that evening to condemn the coup. We assume that Comrades Foley and Hansen do not criticize that behavior.

In the July 28 issue of *Intercontinental Press* Comrade Foley presents General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho as a "possible" "general on a white horse," that is, a possible Bonaparte emerging from the power struggle in Portugal. (p. 1063.) We have no interest in speculating about the secret intentions or basic character of this or that individual officer. We can only judge class and political trends. When we say that Costa Gomes and the Melo Antunes group obviously constitute the right wing of the MFA, it is not because of their secret intentions but rather because of their public defense of a program to stop the revolution, which has supposedly "gone too far."

The real situation in Portugal *today* is not one of Bonapartist dictatorship but on the contrary one of nearly unlimited working-class freedom of action, regardless of the secret intentions of the junta. To install a *real* Bonapartist dictatorship it will be necessary first to crush the existing working-class freedoms. It therefore follows that a key task of revolutionaries, not only in

Portugal, but also in the rest of Europe and in North America, should be to warn the workers against that *real danger* and call upon them to organize and arm themselves. If instead of doing this one starts with speculation about who the Bonaparte is likely to be and if one then proceeds to indentify this future Bonaparte with some figure in a government under which all working-class freedoms remain essentially intact, one runs the real risk of completely misleading the workers in regard to the question of whom they will have to direct their first blows against.

The present situation in Portugal has many similarities with the situation in Russia under Kerensky. (Obviously, there are also many differences. The greatest differences are that in Portugal the soviets are only incipient and not yet generalized and that there is no strong Bolshevik party.) Lenin and Trotsky suspected Kerensky of not a few "Bonapartist intentions" and denounced them. But the Bolsheviks never concentrated their accusations on Kerensky's presumed desire to become a dictator. Had they done so, there would have been great confusion when it was Kornilov who actually struck. Comrade Foley has no way of knowing who will strike at what time and in what form to establish a bourgeois Bonapartist dictatorship in Portugal. It is to say the least premature to decide that it will be Carvalho. If it happens instead to be Spínola, or the Portuguese legion assembled in Spain acting along with imperialist mercenaries, or Costa Gomes, or a combination of all three, Comrade Foley will have to fight in the same camp as the Copcon officers against the real Bonapartist murderers, as we all did on March 11. Or does he believe that this was a mistake and that one ought to remain neutral in a struggle between the camp of Kerensky and the camp of Kornilov?

We have had some rather heated discussion in the Fourth International about what is meant by the formula "fighting in the camp of Kerensky against the camp of Kornilov." We believe that it means not only political independence from Kerensky, but also that no political support must be given to Kerensky and that there must be no promises to defend the "continuity" of his government, whether or not that government has been elected by the majority of the people. But it obviously *does mean* fighting in the same camp. We determine the nature of the struggle not by the nature of the political leaderships of the two camps, nor by abstract considerations about the alleged "superiority" of one form of political rule over the other, but instead by the *different class character of the combatants*.

For us, the embryonic civil war in Russia between the Kerensky and Kornilov camps and the full-fledged civil war in Spain were not wars of bourgeois democracy against fascism or Bonapartism but wars between the mass of the proletariat and the bulk of the bourgeoisie, even if the proletariat was still led (or rather, misled) by reformists, class collaborationists, and individual bourgeois politicians representing nobody but themselves. To free the proletariat of these treacherous leaders it was necessary for revolutionaries to fight in their camp. Any abstentionist position would deliver the workers to the reformist misleaders, thus making the victory of reaction inevitable.

If, as Comrade Foley has read in the stars, General Carvalho turns the Portuguese army against the working-class organizations and initiates a coup to destroy these organizations and all the gains of the past eighteen months, then clearly we shall fight side by side with the Portuguese workers (and not a few soldiers) on the barricades against him. But if the future Bonaparte bears a different name from the one Comrade Foley has seen fit to bestow upon him, and if, as on March 11, 1975, Carvalho and Gonçalves fight on the same side as the Portuguese workers against the fascist threat, will Comrade Foley be prepared to struggle alongside the Portuguese Kerensky against the Portuguese Kornilov? The fact that Comrade Foley does not say a word about this possible development is rather ominous, especially since the question is not at all an academic one, but is on everyone's lips in Portugal today.

The Fourth International and the American Trotskyists have a burning task of solidarity with the Portuguese revolution. Today that revolution is being slandered throughout the world bourgeois press. The campaign of hatred against "Communist dictatorship in Portugal" has a very clear function to perform: to prepare public opinion in the West for an imperialist intervention against the revolution.

After the great success of the Vietnamese revolution and the antiwar movement in the United States and internationally and after imperialism's consequent defeat in Indochina, we do not believe that imperialism is capable of sending hundreds of thousands of soldiers for a full-scale counterrevolutionary war of intervention against the Portuguese revolution. It is, however, capable of arming and subsidizing Portuguese reaction and the counterrevolution. It is capable of organizing aggression by a "foreign legion" supporting the Portuguese legion and other indigenous fascists. It is capable of using the NATO bases and the U.S. bases in Spain to sid a counterrevolutionary coup. And it is especially capable of using economic and financial weapons to strangle the revolution, to weaken, demoralize, and starve the masses, and to aid, embolden, and reorganize the bourgeoisie.

Intercontinental Press would serve a useful purpose if it would draw more systematic attention to these dangers and advise revolutionaries in the United States and throughout the world about how to counter them, instead of devoting large amounts of space to the fantasies of Comrade Foley. To be sure, correctly analyzing a revolution is a necessary precondition for aiding it. An open and frank debate about the nature and perspectives of the revolution and the problems and dangers that face it is part of that aid. But it is only part. One of the gravest results of Comrades Foley and Hansen's wrong analysis of what is happening in Portugal today is that it has drawn attention away from the burning need to organize a movement of solidarity with the Portuguese revolution. *End the blockade of Portugal! Hands off Portugal! Let the Portuguese workers speak for themselves! Invite delegations of Portuguese workers to address workers and trade-union meetings throughout the Western world!* These should be the main slogans of that campaign today, a campaign that should be organized on the broadest possible united-front basis, nationally and internationally. These slogans will prepare working-class opinion for more precise tasks when the decisive test of strength comes.

We sincerely hope that *Intercontinental Press* will expand that necessary campaign of solidarity with the Portuguese revolution, even before it corrects its mistaken analysis of the revolutionary process unfolding in that country.

August 10, 1975

Peruvian President Velasco Overthrown in Military Coup

Peruvian President Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado was overthrown in a military coup August 29. The new president is Gen. Francisco Morales Bermúdez, who served as premier in the previous regime.

Morales is said to represent more conservative elements in the armed forces and to have been the military's choice for confronting the popular discontent arising from the country's worsening economic situation.

Wildcat strikes, land occupations, and student demonstrations against political repression reflected the political ferment of the weeks preceding the coup. In response, the government deported in mid-August twenty-eight political figures, journalists, labor leaders, and activists considered hostile to the regime.