

SM. In Portugal, given the backwardness of the economy, a Castroite development is possible, given the split in the MFA. In advance we can't say Castroite rather than Ba'athist. The CP is working as putriders of a Bonapartist stratification programme. The CP is the enemy of the political clarification of the working class. Therefore there is no surprise when we find revolutionary currents in the SP similar to the revolutionary currents in the Europeans Social Democracy after the Second World War. In this context freedom of the press is important. We are not populist 'workerists'. Formal democracy is important to the working class at this stage.

BH. In what sense is the SP an agent of the bourgeoisie? What revolutionary currents are there in the SP? What difference would there be between the SP and the CP if the power base of the CP in the unions were lost to the CP?

MT. A populist co-option of the revolution is the main possibility in Portugal. It will be similar to Ba'athist and Nasserite regimes with a militant working class base. The left of the AFM can be compared <sup>in some respects</sup> to the CRS in post war France. There was a time when it too supported strikes, but because the bourgeois state remained it was gradually rendered docile.

SM. The Maoists are the major far left current. Is the possibility of a link up between them and a segment of the MFA to form a dictatorial regime ruled out in your opinion?

Alvaro M. Yes. That possibility is excluded.

Bruno P. I think the general approach of the WF cdes. is based on a lack of feeling for the situation. The Republica question is nothing to do with the freedom of the press. It was a question of the SP stopping other trends from expressing themselves in the paper. The workers did not attempt to use any administrative means in the case of Republica. It was the SP who asked the government to close the paper down. In the case of the television network now controlled by the CP, the SP controlled it before. It was as bad then as it is now. The Republica issue is about workers attempting to maintain the independence of the paper.

Alv. The totality of the press is state owned with a few exceptions. The alternative to workers' control is editorial control under state tutelage. 'A Capital' is the only independent paper in Portugal today and is under the control of the workers' Cttee. It publishes the statements of all the parties as well as workers communiques.

Br. A recent MFA communique says that they will control what goes in the press in future. This is another example of their anti-party attitude and we are totally opposed to it. But up to now there has been a near monopoly control of the press exercised by both the CP & SP. The case of Republica is bound to have repercussions in the CP controlled papers as well. Re. Radio R. the majority of the workers there are Catholic and a demonstration against the Catholic hierarchy and in favour of the workers there was held and comprised mainly of Catholics.

AH. In actual fact, it seems that the editors want Republica to be nominally independent but in all reality putting SP views across. This is a much ~~xxx~~ subtler way to go about things for them from an ideological point of view.

SM. Three elements have to be incorporated in a programme to deal with the Republica situation. 1) the question of bourgeois ownership and workers' control 2) the question of party control and workers' communiques and 3) the necessity of the right of political parties to express themselves.

Br. The programme is excellent. But all parties have their own papers. The workers are demanding that the views of all parties be expressed.

SM. There is no analogy between TV and a newspaper. Isn't there a danger of the CP-MFA imposing a regime similar to that in Republican Spain? Why was Republica brought down before the CP newspapers?

Br. Your programme is OK but there is no government to implement it. Rank-and-file action is the only way now. You say of Radio R. that the Church has the right to own its own station. OK, but no possibility for every party to have its own Radio. Church sacked workers and made the rest publish reactionary communiques to which they had no right to reply.

AH. Re. SM's question about why this hasn't extended to the CP's papers. The CP is much tighter (probably) when it comes to recruiting members to its own printing staff. Party papers as such should be maintained. But look at the News of the World incident. There was an anti-working class article which attacked the printworkers for overmanning. This was written by Lord George-Brown. The printers demanded right of reply and when denied this refused to print it.

Br. The Portuguese Church hierarchy is extremely anti-free speech. They were implicated in the last right-wing coup attempt and play a reactionary political role.

Alv. The giving back of Radio R. & Republica to the Church/SP must be seen as a rightwing compromise. The SP/CP polarisation at present is artificial. The Sp will cave in to the military in the end.

Br. The SP is in no sense a traditional working class party. Founded in 1871, sectors of it were linked to the International but to its Proudhonist wing. When the unions developed then so did the Anarchists. The PSP moved increasingly towards electoralism. By the time of the Party's 1909 Congress it had lost control over any type of working class organisation, and the Anarchists dominated the working class. Their influence declined from 1921 when a split occurred in their ranks out of which came the PCP. When the Salazar dictatorship was established in 1926 the SP was very small and petit bourgeois. It was not banned until 1933, and after that faded out completely.

When the SP was refounded again in 1973 it only had 171 members. These were lawyers, doctors and professors and it had no W/c implantation. After 25th. April there has been a massive swelling of its ranks from three sources. \*1) careerists and fascist elements who joined to escape identity with the former regime. 2) petit-bourgeois elements like clerical workers 3) a section of the working class. The SP is now beginning to gain in some unions like that of Bank employees where it is expected to have a majority in the coming union elections.

The SP has a momentary influence in the w/c. There is no indication of an organised left wing in the SP. The struggle for democracy should not be seen in SP terms. The situation today is now beyond a straight struggle for bourgeois democracy.

SM. We defend those who do not defend bourgeois democracy, as is evidenced by the SWP's defence of the CPUSA in the post war era. Since there is the possibility of a CP-MFA collaboration for a Nasserite model we defend the SP's openness against this.

Br. SP militants pay little attention to SP policy. I asked to workers why they were in the SP and they told me a) they didn't want to be in the CP because of its bureaucracy b) the revolutionary groups were too small to do anything. They supported a united tu movt and when I said that this contradicted the SP official line they said: "It's Soares Party, not ours. He's a bourgeois. What does he know about trade unions." SP workers don't give a damn about what the SP says when it comes to tu struggles.

Minutes of a meeting held on 22.6.75 between the Steering Cttee. of WF and the Portugese Workers' Co-ordinating Cttee.

### 1. The Current Situation in Portugal.

Intro. given by Alvaro M. The Armed Forces Movt. is not a cohesive formation. Its composition is mainly petit bourgeois. At the moment, the MFA government is caught between two factors. They are the deteriorating economic situation and the working class upsurge as expressed in the wave of factory occupations. Since the January to March period, the class struggle has been on a much higher level and is no longer confined to purely economic questions. It has become a challenge to the bourgeoisie's ownership of the factories and is in response to economic sabotage, bankruptcy, etc.

The bourgeois political forces first tried to organise around General Spinoza, but they did not have a clear political focus. Since the unsuccessful coup of 11th. March the bourgeoisie now sees the Socialist Party as its main ally. The European Social Democratic Parties have been putting pressure on the Portugese government to give the SP more say in the running of the country. Economic aid has, in the past, been conditional on this. But SP has little influence inside the AFM, though many workers are moving away from the CP to join the SP as well as the others who are going to the revolutionary groups.

A reason for the increase in SP membership is that the SP, at rank-and-file level has supported strikes and attacked the CP for not doing so. There is a general discontent with CP bureaucratism and internal splits are developing within the CP because of this.

Now to clarify the present situation regarding Republica. The CP doesn't have the majority among the printworkers there. The group with the most members is the Maoist UDP. The second largest group is LUAR, then there is the CP which has about the same number of members as LUAR. Even some of the printworkers in the struggle belong to the SP.

The Republica struggle was about making it a workers' paper and not an SP paper. The Republica wrkrs' Communique protests against party control and wants a paper for the working class which will give a fair coverage to all the workers' parties. There is unity amongst all the workers on this question. The SP organised counter-demos. have been of an 'anti-Moscow' variety. COPCON have for their part generally supported the Republica workers against the press laws. They first gave custody of the building to the editorial staff, but the editors said they wanted guarantees from COPCON that there would be no more disruption from the printers. This COPCON refused to give.

Regarding Radio Renascanca the Catholic Church hierarchy was trying to reassert control by sacking some of the work force there. In response the workers took over and the Church tried to cut off the station's electricity supply. COPCON at one stage intervened in support of the workers. The SP supported the Church on this issue and condemned 'anti-clericism.'

There is a slogan at the moment being raised by the PRP for Revolutionary Councils. This slogan is at the moment largely propagandist (i.e. the PRP has formed cttee.s. 'for' the Revolutionary Councils) and was advanced by them along with the slogan calling for the boycott of the Constituent Assembly elections of last April. This is gaining support in the working class, particularly among the shipyard workers, where pro-RC cttees. have been formed. Saraiva de Carvalho made proposals at the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the MFA for RCs in the army and outside. He also defended the soldiers who took part in the RC movement. In answer to the RC proposals the CP has put the counter-proposal calling for the setting up of Cttees. for the Defence o f the Revolution.

There has been an increase in strength of the right-wing around the SP and also rightwing demonstration in the Azores to coincide with NATO ~~as~~ off the Azores. The demo. slogan was "NATO save the Azores" and the demo. w ~~as~~ ced by the USA.

Carvalho has proposed an end to the present government coalition and its replacement with a "revolutionary government." During the eight day SRC, the PRP had a lot of success in putting forward the RC slogan. The PRP held a meeting in the Lisnave shipyard on 18.6.75 attended by over 4,000 workers (one month ago they only got 600 workers along). This was complimented by a demonstration of 10,000 workers, supported by the workers at Radio Renascanca and Republica plus twenty other factories, and the FSP, LUAR and UDP. On May Day the PRP could only rally 1,500 workers.

Immediately after this demo. of 19.6.75. COPCON put out a statement saying that left-wing groups were trying to take advantage of the positions it was putting. Carvalho in all probability an untrustworthy populist. He recently went on Radio Renascanca saying that the revolution must go forward to socialism and it was a mistake not to shoot several thousand reactionaries after the coup which overthrew Caetano.

Four factions can be recognised within the MFA. First of all there is the left-populist wing lead by Carvalho which is based in COPCON. Then there is the right-wing around the C-in-C General Fabio and foreign minister Atunes. This group was very much in the background at the SRC. Thirdly there is the CP supporters grouped around the PM Goncalves. Finally there is a Bonapartist group around Admiral Rosa Coutinho. This group wants political parties to be superceeded and replaced by a system of direct links between the MFA and the "people."

The SRC meeting was a victory for the Bonapartists in alliance with the CP. Neighbourhood Cttees. should be set up but they would be linked directly to the MFA. The SRC also came out for wage restraint, but the question is how will this be implimented? There are strong divisions about what to do with Portugal in the imperialist camp. Should immediate financial help be given with or without conditions? Either way it will be too little and too late

Bruno P. The working class has shown an increase in political consciousness. The factories have been taken over, but the workers do not hold government power. They do not, for example have control over sources for credit. There is an increasing awareness of the need to take the question of state power seriously. In addition to what has already been said re. Republica, it was the editor who asked the government to close down Republica.

Alvaro M. A few more important points need to be stated. Angola has become very important and a very dangerous situation of Congo civil war potential. The Portugese army has played a dubious role there, but this is due to a lack of clear policy on their part. There are tensions within the MFA about what to do with the 30,000 troops in Angola who have not been radicalised. Most of the MFA do not want them recalled. It should also be borne in mind about the situation in Portugal itself that the working class struggles are largely in and around Lisbon.

AH. Regarding the Republica story. The impression given is that it was a CP attempt to stop Republica printing 1) Report of SP/CP confrontation at May Day rally 2) report of return from China of Maoist AOC group which supports SP.

Bruno P. Republica had to do with other things. Over a period the SP management sacked or forced 17 non-SP journalists to resign (total no. of journalists 40) Before 25th. April, Republica was vaguely anti-fascist and the majority of the journalists were not SP. Also the sales of Republica went down in direct proportion to the increase in SP influence over the editorial line of the paper.

The workers became discontent with the drift in the paper since from last October on. It is only recently that they have developed a clear platform. In Portugal, papers have to define themselves as "independent" or informative papers or party organs according to the press law.

The Portugese w/c is more militant than its organisations. The disappointment with CP has led to a revival of syndicalist consciousness.

Is MFA 'Bonapartist'? The MFA is not a coherent unit. It has Bonapartist currents in it. Yet it is not Bonapartist in one respect. It is closely connected and influenced by the parties. The MFA is also effected by w/c struggles.

major slogans for the present situation should be 1) workers' democracy 2) workers' democracy and 3) democracy inside the armed forces. The danger is that there is an absence of a revolutionary party inside the workers' councils. The CP are the strongest opponents of the RC's, but even in one of their strongholds-Lisnave-they could only get twice their membership (400 people) to oppose RCs and were thus heavily defeated.

What about the slogan of the RCs? What's wrong with the PRP if there is no revolutionary party.

Personally I am very pessimistic about the situation in Portugal, but there is a way through workers' democracy. The slogan of the CP is "We want bourgeois democracy" they continue that to do this they need a strong economy and to get that they have to go against the w/c. But with the economy in the state it is in it is impossible to establish bourgeois democracy especially when the w/c upsurge is taken into account. Bourgeois democracy can only be established as a result of a big w/c defeat.

Initially the PRP has made two dangerous mistakes. They have raised the slogan "Dictatorship of the Proletariat" but this doesn't go down well given the fact that Portugal has emerged from 50 years of dictatorship. Secondly, participants on the pro-RC demonstrated slogans to the effect that the RCs could be obtained through the offices of the MFA.

Are bourgeois and workers' democracy two distinct principles? (Russia - Constituent Assembly and Soviets not counterposed to one another in Bolshevik propaganda, but in many cases the Soviets were counterposed to the National Assembly because the latter was counter-revolutionary.) What does Portugese CA represent? Is bourgeois democracy bypassed by the massive vote for the parties in the CA elections.? The Parties still have influence in national politics.

But MFA misses the point re. Russia. CA connected with the need to win over the peasantry. This is important in Portugal also. Also even if you had Soviets in Port. there would be a revolutionary party and you'd have a protected period of dual power.

Protest against the term 'bonapartism' because it doesn't fully account for the complexities of the MFA. Re. the CP & SP, internally the CP is as dangerous, but the SP represent now an alternative strategy for imperialism. Re Russia, the comparison is misleading. In Portugal, Portugal is an industrial country. And also CA elections had a demobilising effect as the struggles declined immediately afterwards and the w/c also became deeply divided.

The Castroite alternative as posed by SM is real but unlikely. The Portugese bourgeoisie has been defeated several times but is not routed as a class yet. Nor is there an internal decay of the bourgeoisie like in Cuba. But bourgeois/working class struggle will force people like Carvahlo to take sides.

Carvahlo actually proposed that the state be smashed. He also went to the SRC to discuss ten points with all his comrades in full battle dress.

Portugal is an industrial country. But is there a possibility that the workers might be treated as they were in Hungary in 1919.

It is possible. Civil war is a real possibility. There is also the possibility that a sharp clash of state power will make COPCON break from the state apparatus.

The main reactionary centre is the North of the country. In Portugal the breakdown of population is as follows: Industrial w/c 35%, service workers 37% The rest are agricultural but these also include agricultural workers in the south who are also in reality a rural proletariat.

### Left in Portugal

Communist Party. They have two main slogans. 1) 'Support the Armed Forces Movement' 2) 'The Struggle for Production.'

Maoist groups. The Movement for the Reconstruction of the Proletarian Party (MRPP) is the biggest group to the left of the CP after 25th. April with approximately 10,000 members, perhaps rising to 40,000. Its main slogans are 'Bread, Land, Peace, Democracy, National Independence.' It has a line which brings it into a continuous contact with the MFA, in an ultra-left manner. It calls the army 'social fascist' and has the slogan 'MRPP to Power'. The MRPP is very strong in the student world and has expelled students belonging to other groups from the law faculty of Lisbon university. MRPP sees its main enemy as the CP. It has some support in the SP and calls for a 'National Democratic Revolution.'

Peasants' and Workers' Alliance. (AOC) In reality this is another name for the PCP (Marxist Leninist) This group's main slogan is 'Socialist Party to Power'. It is the exponent of Chinese policy and because of its links with the SP is recognised by Chinese leadership. AOC is the only Maoist group to call for a Socialist Revolution, stating that the national democratic revolution has been accomplished but this must be consolidated until next stage of the soc. rev. itself. AOC has some limited w/c influence and controls the chemicals unions of two towns. It also uses the 'socialist' slogans and like MRPP was banned from the CA elections.

Workers' Democratic Union. (UDP) This is a coalition of three Maoist groups, and has the influence of all the Maoist groups in the w/c. It made big gains in the struggles of 1974 but is now on the decline. It is very rank-and-file but has no policy in relation to overall political situation. It has one deputy in the CA.

Workers' Party of Popular Unity (PUP). This is a split from AOC, at the time when the latter was the PCP(ML) It is a small student group and it is the least sectarian amongst the Maoist groups.

Regional Communist Front - Marxist Leninist (FEC-ML). This group is negotiating with the UDP and UDP with a view to merger. FEC is well organised and quite big, its strength being in the Oporto area. FEC regards the building of the party as its first priority and this is where it disagrees with UDP.

### Other groups.

National Communist League (LCI). This is small and has influence in Oporto but not in Lisbon. It is the sympathising section of the USFI in Portugal. It is not much stronger than the PRP but has less immediate national impact, although its politics are more realistic. Founded in 1973 it has a small w/c cadre. The LCI says that the SP and the big workers parties and have to be taken into account. Their slogan

workers' government is however altogether vague. At one time they called for a  
 ers' government' for a 'revolutionary workers' government.'

utionary Workers' Party (PRT) Was at one time was Portugese 'section' of the SWP,  
 as since broken from them. It has its main influence in the secondary schools. It  
 to call for a government of the CP/SP/Intersyndical but now calls for an MFA/CP/SP  
 nment. (Note. The Lambertists have only six people and the same goes for the Healeyites)

Other revolutionary groups.

evolutionary Party of the Proletariat - Revolutionary Brigades (PRP-ER) This has between  
 and 1,000 members and was formed by a group which split from the CP in 1970. Before 25th.  
 I they undertook armed actions but not as a strategy. They saw it mainly in terms of  
 darity with the struggle in the colonies. Their main slogan now is for RCs. After  
 ril they came out into the open. They favour a win for the Carvalho faction in the MFA,  
 ave an implatation among the advanced w/c. They didn't take part in the CA elections  
 raised the slogan 'No to t he bourgeois elections, yes to the soc. rev! instead.  
 also has its supporter in the army. They have no ideological description for the part y  
 are strongly anti-stalinist. The party has not taken a decisive stand on the question  
 ottskyism yet.

League for United Revolutionary Action (LUAR) This used to carry out armed actions  
 ce 25 April. It is a loose group containing anything from Maoists to Anarchis ts.  
 s of the Lotta Continua type, non-sectarian and has a membership of some thousands.

Centrists.

lef t Socialist Movement (MES). It is comparable to the Chilean organisation MAPU  
 . left moving Catholic. It is very good on revolutionary rhetoric but in practice  
 owns the CP. It has no programme alt ough it has the second biggest following in the  
 next to the CP. It poor electáral showing is probably the result of bad organisation.

Popular Socialist Front (FSP) This is lead by catholic socialists. It entered the SP  
 to split again. It has similar policy to MES but much weaker in the w/c. Both FSP &  
 hate the SP in the same way as the Maoist groups hate the CP. The call the  
 he 'Socialist bourgeoisie' for example.

role of the PWCC.

The solidarity campaign will be mainly conducted around the question of threatened  
 rvention from NATO, but the campaign will start before the intervention in contrast  
 hile SC.

ve has been a debate within the PWCC on events in Portugal. The problems of the SC  
 as f ollows. We had hoped to base it in the t.u. movement. Cttees. would be set  
 to investigate links local industry has with Portugal. We would also organise mtgs.  
 Portugese speakers who come to Britain. The concrete problems are a) no money;  
 mis-use of resources because different groups in the same town organise separate mt gs.  
 Portugal.

asked if the PWCC had a common political line. (Answer: No). What links did they have  
 Portuguese workers in Britain (Answer: through the International branch of the T&GWU,  
 which they play a leading role). Do they have a Portuguese language publication (Answer:  
 SM said the problem was that in a civil war or counter-revolution situation, solidarity  
 a straightforward question. In the present more complex situation, there is no such clear  
 solidarity action. 'Solidarity' activity is necessarily of a discussion type. Therefore

WCC to operate effectively needs a common coherent view. If WF had a group of Portuguese comrades, we would see their role as (a) information service; (b) propaganda amongst Portuguese emigre population.

Also (c) activity in the LPYS etc. round the question of Portugal.

o M. said that polarisation and confrontation was likely to come in Portugal very ly.

id Alvaro might be right, but the same was true of Ireland. All the same we do not ate building relief committees now: they would just be shells, given lack of response.

da P. said the PWCC had no problem of lack of response; the problem was that the could not cope with the response, could not translate it into anything structured.

id propaganda on Portugal was useful. A 'solidarity organisation' structure in ce of the resistance with which you would have solidarity would be largely useless. should cut duplication by pressing major left groups to organise joint meetings in rovinces, using as a lever to force this the PWCC's virtual monopoly of information.

WCC comrades said they were organising a tour for a textile workers' representative WF paper for details).

id we could use our position in the LPYS to organise relatively broad labour movement ags on Portugal with PWCC speakers: we should try to do that.

MEETING CLOSED.

Minutes: BH.