



Nahuel Moreno

Revolution and Counter Revolution in Portugal



CEHUS

Centro de Estudios
Humanos y Sociales

Nahuel Moreno

Revolution and Counter Revolution in Portugal

Translated from the supplement to the July-August 1975 issue of *Revista de America*, Buenos Aires, Argentina, a magazine of the *Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores* of Argentina.

English (Internet) Edition: *CEHUS*, Buenos Aires, 2016

English Translation: Daniel Iglesias

Cover & Interior Design: Daniel Iglesias

www.nahuelmoreno.org

www.uit-ci.org

www.izquierdasocialista.org.ar

Copyright by *CEHUS* Centro de Estudios Humanos y Sociales
Buenos Aires, 2016

cehus2014@gmail.com



Index

Foreword	1
Chapter I	
The Portuguese Revolution and the Russian Revolution	2
1. A Felicitous Comparison	2
2. A Dangerous Oversight: the Petty Bourgeoisie and Its Parties	3
3. The Stages of the Portuguese and Russian Revolutions.....	5
4. The Portuguese Revolution and the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s	5
Chapter II	
A Colonial Revolution Transformed Into a Metropolitan Socialist Revolution	8
1. The Forecasts of the Third International.....	8
2. A Capitalist Empire in Decadence	9
3. The Colonial Revolution Upsets the Empire	10
4. The Crisis Within the Army: the MFA and the “Putsch”	11
5. A “Putsch” Transformed Into a Proletarian Revolution.....	11
Chapter III	
The Masses Defeat the Spínolista Counter-revolution	14
2. The Spínola Government In Crisis: The MFA Shares Power and a Constituent Assembly Is Set Up	15
3. The Masses Liquidate Spínola’s Government	16
4. The MFA-CP-SP Government Slows Down the Masses.....	17
5. A New Rise in the Movement of the Workers and The Masses Begins	17
6. The Spínolista Counter-revolution.....	19
Chapter IV	
The 11 March Putsch Opens a Revolutionary Stage.....	20
1. Four New Decisive Facts.....	20
2. The Transitional Program Defines This Situation	22
3. A Revolutionary Situation	22
4. The Organically Counter-revolutionary Role of the MFA-CP-SP Bars Any Possibility of Portugal Becoming a China or Cuba.....	23
Chapter V	
The MFA Government	26
1. Classical Bonapartism: An Unfortunate Definition	26
2. More Confusion: Bonapartism ‘Sui generis’?.....	27
3. A Government of the Armed Forces or of a Popular Front?	30
Chapter VI	
A Classical Kerenskyst Government	32
1. The Different Types of imperialist Governments	32
2. Bourgeois Democracy and Fascism.....	33
3. Imperialist Bonapartism.....	33

4. Kerenskyism	34
5. Kerenskyism and Bonapartism.....	35
6. A Government of the 'Left', a Class-Collaborationist, Popular-Frontist, or Kerenskyst Govern- ment Are All the Same	36
7. A Classical Kerenskyst Government.....	37

Chapter VII

The Armed Forces Movement..... 40

1. Institutionalised Kerenskyism.....	40
2. Political and Class Character.....	41
3. Two Dangerous Interpretations of the MFA and the Crisis of the Armed Forces	43

Chapter VIII

The Crisis of the Regime and the Bonapartist Plan of the MFA 46

1. A Regime in Permanent Crisis.....	46
2. Spinola Vs the MFA-CP-SP Bloc.....	47
3. The Revolutionary Upsurge Turns the MFA Toward a Counter-revolutionary Policy and Ideology .. 49	
4. The MFA-CP: New Counter-revolutionary Front Provoked by the Upsurge	51
5. The Communist Party: Agent of the Kremlin and the MFA	52
6. The Socialist Party and Its Alliance With the PPD and Costa Gomes.....	54

Chapter IX

The MFA-CP Launches a Counter-Attack Against the Masses and the Colonial Revolution 56

1. The Weaknesses of the Revolutionary Upsurge Facilitate the MFA's Counter-revolutionary Ma- noeuvres.....	56
2. The Attack on the Workers Movement and the Seeds of Dual Power. The Battle for Production .. 57	
3. The Attack on the Democratic Gains.....	60

Chapter X

For a Consistent Leninist-Trotskyist Course 61

1. The SP's Reformism and the Demagogy of Popular Assemblies Should Not Stop Us From Rec- ognising the MFA-CP as the Main Enemy	61
2. Neither a Minimum Democratic Program Nor a Maximum Program of Exclusively Proletarian De- mocracy and Power. For a Transitional Program for the Workers Commissions and Soldiers Com- mittees Taking Power.	63
3. The Examples of Spain and France.....	66
4. For a Transitional Program That Will Lead to the Revolution of the Workers Commissions and Soldiers Committees Against the MFA-CP-SP Government	68
5. No United Front With the CP and the Other Reformist Parties! Yes, to Work Within Intersindical and Mainly in the Workers and Soldiers Committees!.....	72
6. The Agreement With the Socialist Party to Defend Democratic Freedoms.....	74
7. Only Trotskyism is and can be the revolutionary vanguard.....	76

Foreword

The whole of the left movement agrees that Portugal is, today, one of the main revolutionary centres of the world, and without a doubt, the axis of the European revolution. For many of us, it is without a question, the highest peak of the class struggle on an international scale.

This first agreement on the current importance of the Portuguese revolution vanishes as soon as we begin to consider some of the problems it poses. Is it a workers' revolution, or a popular-democratic revolution? What is the Armed Forces Movement [MFA — *Movimento das Forças Armadas*]? What is the character of the government? Is it something new for Marxism or is it already well known? What is to be done given the pact the MFA has forced upon the working-class parties holding a majority, the Socialist and Communist parties, by which they recognised its right to govern the country for a number of years? Do we allow the sovereign attributes of the already elected Constituent Assembly to be cut down in this way? Do we defend the legal rights of the Maoist groups outlawed by the government? Do we agree that the daily *Republica* — a private enterprise, but at the same time an unofficial organ of the Socialist Party — should cease to be published as such because of a joint manoeuvre of the CP and MFA — or a sector of it? How do we define ourselves on the struggle between the SP and CP? And in Angola, the main former Portuguese colony, what do we do about the troops stationed there? Should they remain to intervene in the civil war that has been unleashed between the three liberation fronts? Or should they withdraw and let the FNLA [*Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola* — Angolan National Liberation Front] — linked to Zaire — defeat the opportunist MPLA [*Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* — People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola] — linked to the CP and willing to make a pact with the Portuguese government and Portuguese imperialism? Various answers have been given to these and other questions of as much or less importance.

The world Trotskyist movement is no exception. Within its ranks, an intensive discussion has been going on and different answers have been given to these questions. The articles we are publishing in this issue of *Revista de America* (articles by Gus Horowitz, Livio Maitan, Ernest Mandel, Andres Romero, and Fernando Sousa, and an editorial from *Rouge* about the daily *República*) are contributions to this lively but responsible polemic, which only Trotskyists are capable of conducting from the perspective of revolutionary Marxist principles. We do not agree with them in every respect; that is why we thought it might be useful to write this extensive article, which we do not regard as a definitive answer, but as another contribution to the debate. Distance and the lack of exhaustive documentation make us more open than ever to modify our point of view if other facts and other interpretations prove to be more accurate.

A final clarification. This article was written for the last issue of *Revista de America*, which was scheduled to go to press on 23 June. Because of this, I have not polemised with Mandel's interesting article, which I had not yet seen. The delay in printing the magazine permitted me to make some corrections in form and some of content, which did not, however, alter its general line.

Nahuel Moreno, Buenos Aires, 10 July 1975

CHAPTER I

The Portuguese Revolution and the Russian Revolution

1. A Felicitous Comparison

Although modern logicians dedicate long paragraphs to explaining the function of analogy or comparison, Bacon, several centuries ago, limited himself simply to saying: “new things in themselves will be understood by analogy with the old”. Revolutionaries follow, among other methods, the advice of the old philosopher. Thus *The Militant*, the senior newspaper of the Trotskyist press, shortly after the “putsch” that overthrew Caetano, noted in an important editorial in the 14 June 1974 issue that the situation in Portugal “is remindful of the situation in Russia in 1917”. Gus Horowitz tells us a little more in his article, which we are publishing in this issue of *Revista de America*.

According to this editorial, there are five important similarities. The first is that “in Russia, there was a similar awakening of the masses, the first consequence of which was the downfall of the hated tsarist regime and an attempt by the bourgeoisie to set up an alternative regime to maintain capitalism”.

The second is that “there was a similar betrayal of the masses by the majority party in the workers movement, the Mensheviks, who supported the bourgeois alternative to tsarism”. They, like the Portuguese Stalinists of today, entered the national coalition government as ministers, and under the pretext that the current democratic stage of the revolution had to be consolidated, told the workers to postpone their demands.

The third similarity lies in the urgent need for the masses to end the war, imperialist in Russia, colonial in Portugal.

The fourth, in favour of the desire for unity and a workers government, against the bourgeois ministers and the coalition government.

The fifth, and last, is the tendency of the “Russian workers ... [who] organised broad councils (the Russian word was ‘soviets’)”, since “already the Portuguese workers have taken some steps in this direction”.

We believe that the comparison made by *The Militant*–Horowitz is accurate, albeit with two limitations: it does not probe the similarities, and it does not indicate the differences.

In the first place, we agree that both revolutions are the product of a “mass uprising” and that in both cases the bourgeoisie attempted a change of regime in order to maintain capitalism. But what would be surprising — permit us to indulge in this bit of humour — would be the opposite: a revolution that was not the outcome of a mass uprising and in which the bourgeoisie did not attempt to maintain power by changing the regime. These are characteristics common to any revolutionary process. But *The Militant* does not point out the important differences between the “mass uprising” in Portugal and the one in Russia. The engine of the February 1917 revolution in Russia was the workers movement and its geographical centre in the cities, where it spread out to the periphery; it was, in its class dynamic, a workers revolution that turned power over to the

bourgeoisie. In contrast, the revolution in Portugal was the direct consequence of the colonial revolution, petty-bourgeois and peripheral, which reverberated in the metropolitan centres and affected the metropolitan urban masses, immediately becoming transformed into a workers revolution.

We have no objections to the second analogy — the comparison between the betrayal of the Russian Mensheviks and that of the majority Portuguese working-class parties. Except one detail, the consequences of which we will see further on: The editors of *The Militant* do not name and do not include in their analogy the other mass party of the Russian revolution — the Social Revolutionaries.

The third similarity is an outright success. The need to end the war was of utmost urgency to the masses, both in Russia, caught up in an inter-imperialist war, as in Portugal, involved in its colonial war. *The Militant* should have added that the result of both wars was an acute crisis in both armies, the ultimate pillars of the bourgeois state; a crisis that was the product of successive defeats. Furthermore, *The Militant* failed to mention that to be defeated by another imperialist army is not the same as being defeated by 10 years of colonial revolutionary war.

On the fourth comparison, concerning the sentiments of the Russian and Portuguese workers in favour of class unity and against the coalition government, we only want to add that in Portugal these sentiments are more easily expressed in one sense, and less easily in another sense, than in Russia. More, because in Portugal the Socialist and Communist parties, like the MFA, are relatively improvised and not greatly structured or implanted in the consciousness of the workers and masses, as were the Mensheviks and the Russian Social Revolutionaries, parties built during decades of political action. Less, because the Portuguese workers do not have a longstanding and widely known revolutionary, as was the Bolshevik party, to strengthen and organise those sentiments.

Finally, the fifth analogy with the soviets is far from being fulfilled. Although it is true that *The Militant* poses it as a necessity and stresses that only “some steps in this direction” have been taken, unfortunately, the hopes that all of us entertain have not been borne out. In place of soviets, other methods and more embryonic and spontaneous forms of workers power and of the mass movement have developed — the occupations and the commissions of workers, tenants, and soldiers, that is, committees in the factories and other places, but not soviets. Soviets bring together all the workers and exploited people in an area and become the coordinators of all the exploited masses, who practice direct democracy. The committees represent only the workers of one factory, the tenants of one building, or the soldiers of one regiment, not all of them together. The reasons for this are the sabotage of the Communist and Socialist parties as well as the lack of experience of the workers movement. But there is another difference between the Russian soviets and the Portuguese commissions: The soviets were from the beginning centralised in a national organisation recognised by all. Instead, the Portuguese commissions and occupations are neither centralised nor organised on a national level; they have been forming in a spontaneous, anarchistic, and atomised way, although they are apparently much more generalised than is believed.

To all these similarities we can add at least one more. Russia and Portugal were, in their respective periods, the weakest and most backward links in the world imperialist chain, although the character of the Portuguese backwardness is different from that of Russia.

2. A Dangerous Oversight: the Petty Bourgeoisie and Its Parties

As we have already indicated, there is forgetfulness and inaccuracy, which is perhaps not accidental: In the editorial under discussion no mention is made of the Socialist Revolutionary party, also known in the history of the Russian revolution as “Social Revolutionary” or “SRs.” However, it is not accurate that the majority party in the working class, and the only one to practice class collaboration, has been the Menshevik party. The Social Revolutionary party was the big mass party that collaborated with the bourgeois governments and from whose ranks Kerensky

came, the nexus between the bourgeoisie and the mass organisations. It was a party typical of all revolutions: It reflected “the masses” in general and the petty bourgeoisie in particular (including the most backward sectors of the workers coming from the countryside, who retained their rural mentality). It was the expression of the great masses set into motion by the revolution, led by the modern middle class, sectors of the intellectuals and professionals, technocrats and bureaucrats of all kinds, etc., who serve as a most useful political tool for the imperialist bourgeoisie when it is threatened by a revolutionary crisis.

The other petty-bourgeois party, although it represented the working class, was the Menshevik party, the only one cited by *The Militant*. Owing to its ideology, program, and leadership, this was a petty-bourgeois party, even though the workers followed it. It reflected within the working class the pressure of the middle class and the petty-bourgeoisification of some sectors of the proletariat. In relation to Portugal, *The Militant* compares Menshevism only to Stalinism and forgets about the Socialists.

We are concerned not so much by these oversights as by the possible reason for them. Apparently, our authors are of the opinion that in Portugal there are only two classes, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat since they never mention the petty bourgeoisie as the protagonist of the revolutionary or counter-revolutionary process. And, therefore, they see political organisations as belonging to only two categories: those of the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie and those of the reformists representing the working class. But this is not the case. The industrial proletariat constitutes only one-third of the economically active population. There is a broad petty-bourgeois layer, urban as well as peasant, in the face of which the proletariat, even counting the industrial and agricultural proletariat, is a minority. The petty bourgeoisie, as a class and as the political representative of the proletariat through the reformist parties (of petty-bourgeois ideology and leadership), plays a doubly decisive role in the revolution; we cannot, therefore, ignore it. It is one thing to correctly point out that in this, as well as in all revolutions, there are only two ways out and two types of government: capitalist or working-class. But, it is quite a different thing — and quite erroneous — to take into account only these two classes in analysing the revolution, and thus to ignore the existence and fundamental role of the petty-bourgeoisie and its political organisations.

Both Trotsky and Lenin have repeatedly stressed this problem. Lenin said: “It is quite typical and significant that the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, while not denying this ‘in principle’ and while realising perfectly the capitalist character of Russia today [1917], dare not face the truth soberly. They are afraid to admit the truth that every capitalist country, including Russia, is basically divided into three main forces: the bourgeoisie, the petty bourgeoisie, and the proletariat. The first and third are spoken of and recognised by all. Yet the second — which really is the numerical majority! — nobody cares to appraise soberly, neither from the economic, political nor military point of view” (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964, pp.201-02.).

And, stressing the role of the petty bourgeoisie, he pointed out: “It is an undisputed fact that our revolution has ‘wasted’ six months in wavering over the system of power; it is a fact resulting from the wavering policy of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks. In the long run, these parties’ wavering policy was determined by the class position of the petty bourgeoisie, by their economic instability in the struggle between capital and labour” (Ibid., p.366.).

On repeated occasions, Trotsky said the same thing: “In order to answer the question of how a revolution of workers and peasants came to surrender the power to the bourgeoisie, it is necessary to introduce into the political chain an intermediate link; the petty bourgeois democrats and socialists of the Sukhanov type, journalists and politicians of the new middle caste, who had taught the masses that the bourgeoisie is an enemy, but themselves feared more than anything else to release the masses from the control of that enemy. The contradiction between the character of the revolution and the character of the power that issued from it, is explained by the contradictory character of this new petty bourgeois partition wall between the revolutionary masses and the

capitalist bourgeoisie” (Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol.1*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1936, p.166).

“With every turn of the historic road, with every social crisis, we must over and over again examine the question of the mutual relations of the three classes in modern society: the big bourgeoisie, led by finance capital; the petty bourgeoisie, vacillating between the basic camps; and finally, the proletariat” (Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1971, p.58).

3. The Stages of the Portuguese and Russian Revolutions

By not strictly heeding the warnings of Lenin and Trotsky with respect to the petty bourgeoisie (or “petty-bourgeois democracy”, as it was also called), *The Militant* and Horowitz tied their hands to further deepen the comparison between the two revolutions and develop to the very end their success. Thus, they renounce to seek the similarities between the stages of the two revolutions and the placement in both cases of the “petty-bourgeois democracy”.

To give only one example, we note that the editorial of *The Militant* did not foresee the struggle, first veiled and then open, between Spínola, representative of the big bourgeoisie, on the one hand, and on the other, the petty-bourgeois democracy — the MFA and its allies, the CP and SP. And Horowitz, now faced with the outcome of this struggle, cannot provide us with any definition or comparison of it based on a class analysis. Horowitz, one year after the beginning of the Portuguese revolution, gives up specifying its stages and characters, limiting himself to a description of the events.

For us, up until the last coup Spínola, the parallel with the Russian revolution is emphasised. This coup reflects the bourgeois Kornilovian counter-revolution defeated by the mobilisation of the entire mass movement, including the Portuguese petty-bourgeois democracy. It seems to us that Spínola has combined, in one personality, Prince Lvov (the prime minister of the first provisional government of the Russian revolution, dedicated to consolidating a government of national unity with marked Bonapartist traits) and Kornilov (in charge of liquidating the Kerensky government in order to install counter-revolutionary Bonapartism). And this is not accidental since Lvov symbolized the feudal counter-revolution, and Kornilov, the bourgeois counter-revolution. Spínola represents only one counter-revolution, the bourgeois since in Portugal there is no other. Thus, with the first possibility defeated, Spínola launched the second in the conspiratorial and abortive “putsch” of 11 March. The Portuguese revolution has already brought down its Prince Lvov — Spínola in government — and has already had its September days, crushing its Kornilov — the Spínola of the “putsch” of 11 March. The only fundamental difference is that the Russian workers, after the September days, had a Bolshevik party to lead them with determination to power; the Portuguese workers, instead, do not have such a party. But, beginning precisely with the September days, the role played by the Bolsheviks was absolutely decisive in the ensuing process of the Russian revolution. From here on out, its absence in Portugal converts any new analogy into an empty and therefore useless comparison.

Let us suppose that we do not agree with this comparison between the relations and the stages of the big bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie, and the proletariat in Russia and Portugal. Should this be the case, it would clearly be necessary to point out the character of both revolutions and their differences in this respect.

4. The Portuguese Revolution and the Spanish Revolution of the 1930s

Just as it has seemed fruitful to us to compare the Portuguese revolution up until 11 March 1975, to the Russian revolution, we believe similarly that to understand the new stage it is useful

to compare it to the Spanish revolution of the 1930s, although we should also note some of the important differences.

Just as Trotsky foresaw in his time, the Spanish revolution moved very slowly in comparison with the Russian revolution. The present Portuguese revolution, on the other hand, covered in one year what the Spanish revolution took almost six to achieve. This was because the Russian and Portuguese revolutions had in common a crisis in the army from the first moments, a phenomenon that was not present in the Spanish revolution. And to this factor was added, in Portugal, the lack of reformist organisations strongly rooted in the working-class and mass movement.

As we have already said, for us, the classical Kornilovian or Francoist coup took place in Portugal at the end of the first year of the revolution. That is the meaning in the Portuguese calendar of Spínola's two failed coup attempts. In their results, the Russian and Portuguese revolutions are once again similar: The counter-revolutionary coup fails, and in doing so, the crisis in the army deepens. In Spain, instead, the victory over the coup in the first days was not consolidated because of the betrayal by the government and the working-class leaders. Thus, the reaction was not disorganised, and it initiated a civil war. This divided the country into two camps: In one, the now fascist bourgeois army was the dominant force; in the other, the camp of the republic, the police, and the army disappeared in the first moments to be replaced by workers and antifascist militias. In this way, dual power reached a certain level of development in Spain (with the disappearance of the army and the dominance of the militias, with the expropriation of the major part of industry by the workers movement, mainly in Catalunya, and with the occupation of the land by the peasants, only in Aragon) that is not approximated in Portugal. But this difference is compensated for by the brutal crisis in the Portuguese army, which cannot base itself — as Franco did with the famous “Moors” — on the colonial troops. And we see the birth within the Portuguese army of important outbreaks of dual power, a phenomenon that did not take place in the Spanish army, which did not undergo internal crises or become eaten away by the germs of dual power. A second factor, deriving from this one, which also compensates for the difference in the development of dual power in Portugal today and the Spain of the 1930s, is that in Portugal the defeat of Spínola's coup averts for a more or less long time the possibility of a new reactionary coup.

But, despite all these differences, the two revolutions resemble each other in some fundamental aspects. The first of these is that following the reactionary coup, when objective conditions place power within reach, the proletariat lacks a strong Bolshevik party. The second aspect is that if in Spain, after the Francoist coup, the main counter-revolutionary factor was Stalinism, politically wedded to the shadow of the bourgeoisie and the remnants of the officers of the army and police in the republican camp, Portuguese Stalinism has played a similar role since the 11 March coup, slavishly tied to that shadow of the bourgeoisie that is Costa Gomes and the Portuguese “leftist” officers who constitute the MFA.

These two similarities anticipate a third, which can be tragic for the Portuguese proletariat. Just as there was a Catalanian May (1937), in which Stalinism and the republican government waged their own civil war against the workers movement in that Spanish province in order to impose a Bonapartist government, the greatest immediate danger facing the Portuguese workers is Stalinism and the Portuguese MFA playing a similar role.

Nothing better demonstrates the usefulness of these analogies and of a theoretical discussion to specify these stages than the apparent or real disagreement with Horowitz over the character of Spínola's “putsch”. It would seem that for Horowitz, this does not mean the defeat of the Portuguese Kornilov or Pinochet for a long time, and that, therefore, the stage continues in which the immediate danger for the masses is Spínola or Pinochet, that is, the bourgeois counter-revolution. Thus he said, referring to the politics of the Portuguese CP: “How reminiscent of Chile! And the lesson of what happened in Chile indicates the danger that exists in Portugal” (Gus Horowitz, *Portugal One Year After the Coup — What Is the Armed Forces Movement?* in the June 1975 issue of the *International Socialist Review*). We, instead, would say: “How reminiscent of Spain after Franco was defeated in the industrial zones! How it would resemble Chile, if in Chile the masses

had defeated Pinochet! And the lessons of what happened in republican Spain, with the counter-revolutionary governments of Largo Caballero and Negrin-Stalin, indicate the danger that exists in Portugal from the counter-revolution of the MFA-CP-SP, especially of the first two”.

CHAPTER II

A Colonial Revolution Transformed Into a Metropolitan Socialist Revolution

1. The Forecasts of the Third International

The Portuguese revolution approaches the predictions of Lenin and Trotsky, who, during the first postwar period, expected that the colonial movements of the old empires — England, France — would form part of a single revolutionary movement on the scale of the entire empire, in which the metropolitan proletarian revolution would be the vanguard of the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois colonial revolutions.

For almost 60 years, none of these predictions came true. The failure of the proletarian revolution in Europe after the First World War, owing to the betrayal committed by the Social Democratic leaderships, foiled this combination of the agrarian and nationalist petty-bourgeois or bourgeois movements with the metropolitan proletarian revolution. The overseas, not landlocked, character of these colonial empires helped them to weather the storm.

Later on, the Stalinist betrayal following the Second World War allowed the old empires to carry out the neo-colonial manoeuvre with success. The colonies conquered political independence, but only to become incorporated into the world of backward countries, dominated economically through semi-colonial forms or through dependency on the same old imperialisms in partnership with American imperialism. This process was not combined with the proletarian revolution in the metropolises. When the agrarian or democratic wars of liberation erupted (China, Indochina, Korea, Algeria, Cuba), it was Stalinism that once again acted on all fronts to block them. Neither the Vietnamese nor the Algerian revolutions, the two most heroic colonial revolutions of this postwar period within the old empires, received unconditional and revolutionary support from Stalinism and the French workers movement, which was led by the Stalinists. The fact that the colonial revolution and the workers movement of the imperialist country were not able to unite in a single process, in an organic whole, led to interminable, frightfully cruel and bloody wars in the colonies and permitted the capitalist and imperialist structure in the metropolises to survive although in a weakened condition.

For reasons ascribable only indirectly to Stalinism, and directly to the backwardness of the Japanese and American workers movement, the semi-colonial revolutions and wars in China, Korea, Indochina, and Cuba likewise did not link up with the workers in the metropolises. Fascism prevented the Japanese workers movement from collaborating with and joining the Chinese workers who opposed it in the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s. Neither the weak movement against American aggression in Cuba nor the great movement against the Vietnam War was led by the workers movement. Much less so by a workers movement advancing toward the socialist revolution.

This bond between the bourgeois-democratic and proletarian revolutions, which was lacking within the empires, did, however, take place within the borders of some semi-colonial and colonial countries. The democratic or anti-imperialist Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Yugoslavian, and Cuban peasant wars were transformed through the objective logic of these struggles into

deformed proletarian revolutions. In this way, the theory of the permanent revolution concerning the combining of both revolutions was confirmed.

This long-thwarted revolutionary combination between the colonial and metropolitan workers movements will finally occur with the Portuguese revolution.

2. A Capitalist Empire in Decadence

The ideologues of the MFA, who are followed consciously or unconsciously by many sectors in the left, make efforts to try to equate Portugal, liberated from fascism to the colonial and semi-colonial countries, in order to conceal its imperialist character. It is the famous “third-worldism” of the captains. For this dangerous and false theory to gain credence, it had to be based on a real fact: the obvious backwardness of Portugal.

All attempts to compare Portugal with colonial countries must begin with this fundamental question: the character of its backwardness. Is it because it reached capitalist development too late, like the colonial countries, or on the contrary, because it reached that stage too early? The latter is the case with Portugal, which was the first modern capitalist country to succeed in forming a commercial empire, long before England. Thanks to this, it was able to acquire colonies, which it has continued to exploit up to this very day. It is like England, with the difference that England’s decline began decades and not centuries ago. The distinction in character between Portugal and the “third-world countries” is rooted in the different origins of their backwardness. Portugal is a senile imperialism, the most senile of them all because it was the first; in contrast, the colonial and semi-colonial countries have not been able to fully develop themselves as capitalist countries because they arrived too late. If they have not been able to achieve even full economic and political independence, they will be all the less able to transform themselves into imperialist powers capable of exploiting other countries.

Portugal differs from the Russian empire in the same fact. The Russian empire was late in reaching the stage of capitalist development. It was owing to this fact that it was a semi-colony in relation to the European empires (foreign capital dominated its economy); although at the same time it was imperialist in relation to nationalities within its own territory.

Portugal never became a semi-colony of other, more powerful empires, despite its extreme weakness. On the contrary, until the 1960s, the Salazar regime had achieved a high degree of autarchy.

It is a historic fact that for centuries Portugal was a commercial, and later industrial and financial, sub-metropolis of English imperialism. But the 1929 crisis permitted the Portuguese bourgeoisie to gain relative independence from its sub-metropolitan character, and the Second World War gave it total independence.

While the crisis and the war mortally wounded its English partner, the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie used this situation to strengthen itself within its own empire. It was aided by two facts: First, it did not intervene in the world war and, therefore did not have to pay for the reconstruction of the country. Second, its most important colonies were in central and southern Africa, the zone least punished by the war and by national liberation movements (a zone very different from, for example, the Far East, which suffered the Japanese invasion and witnessed the victory of the great Chinese revolution).

This allowed Salazar to keep the autarkical empire going, relatively closed to the investments of other imperialisms, without “sub-metropolitan” elements (to exploit in partnership with stronger imperialisms), and to a still greater degree without “semi-colonial” elements. Also, thanks to this, the dictatorship was able to maintain itself in power for almost half a century.

But the favourable conditions that had enabled this independence or autarchy to be maintained despite the country’s backwardness began to be superseded with the development of the postwar imperialist economic boom. The Portuguese bourgeoisie by itself could not

develop the new branches of production characteristic of today's capitalist economy: automotive, petrochemical, electronic, durable goods of all kinds, etc. In order to develop these branches, it was imperious to enter into a partnership with the Yankee or European monopolies. The colonial war added a supplementary factor of dependence in relation to the big imperialist powers: the provision of sophisticated arms to confront the guerrilla fighters, which could not be produced in Portugal because of the country's backwardness. That is why, since 1960, American and European capital began to enter the empire. While the amount involved between 1943 and 1960 was only two million contos [1 conto=about US\$ 48], this rose to 20 million contos in between 1961-67, that is ten times the previous period, and this trend continued.

Unwillingly, the Salazar-Caetano government permitted this penetration, but without allowing it to become predominant. The main partner remained the Portuguese bourgeoisie. If the proletarian revolution had not interceded, the trend of imperialist Portugal leaves no room for doubt: Its backwardness would condemn it to become a sub-metropolis, i.e., a junior partner of other, more powerful empires in the exploitation of the working class and the colonies. In the distant future, it would not be ruled out it might completely lose its influence in the colonies and become transformed directly into a semi-colony. To maintain its present independence from foreign capital, Portugal has only one alternative: socialism, through which it could overcome its backwardness without falling under the rule of the big international monopolies. This transition from a relatively independent and dominant imperialism within its sphere of influence to a dependent or sub-metropolitan status as a junior partner of other imperialisms characterises the present dynamic of the Portuguese bourgeois economy. It is an inevitable transition that gives rise to strong contradictions within the Portuguese bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, as we shall see.

3. The Colonial Revolution Upsets the Empire

If the Salazar regime managed to keep intact, and in a sense strengthen its empire for half a century, the colonial war, at last, upset its regime.

Already in 1962, a well-known English left-wing journalist, upon describing the beginning of the colonial revolution in Angola, wrote these very prophetic words (in case it was extended, as did occur, to the rest of the Portuguese colonies):

“In February 1961, the liberation war began in Angola, a war that at present seems capable of reaching the dimensions of the Algerian war, converting itself into the opening of the revolution in South and Central Africa and thus shaking the foundations of Portuguese colonialism, mortally wounding Salazar, and in this way, radically transforming the situation on the Iberian peninsula” (Peter Freyer and Patricia McGowen Pinheiro, *El Portugal de Salazar* [The Portugal of Salazar], Ruedo Iberico, Paris, 1962), p.139).

Indeed, the war will lead to stagnation the economy of Portuguese imperialism, which would find itself forced to support an army of 150,000 men and spend almost half the budget on it. The old empire could not keep that up (nor could it, as was proved later on, successfully carry out the neo-colonial manoeuvre).

Spinola's famous book, *Portugal and the Future*, was not only the most important “best seller” in the last years of fascist Portugal. Interests that were not exactly literary lay behind it. Its publication indicated that the high command of the Portuguese army had become divided, following the lines upon which the Portuguese oligarchy had divided, as a consequence of the impact of the colonial war, which had been going on for more than 10 years. The most reactionary sector held that the war should be carried on until it was won; the Spinola-Costa Gomes sector held that it should be ended by negotiating a settlement with the colonies, the outcome of which would be to set them up as states associated to the metropolis, something similar to the current situation of the British colonies. Both sectors were opposed to the colonies exercising self-determination, but while the first sector wanted to preserve them as colonies, the Spinola sector hoped to maintain the empire through a neo-colonial form. To this objective was added another, of prime importance:

to “democratise” the country in order to permit its integration into the European Common Market and join the Common Market in exploiting the colonies and the Portuguese working class.

This first plan of the oligarchic sector represented by Spínola-Costa Gomes was politically similar to that which the big Spanish bourgeoisie is following at present — to apply strong pressure so that the “fascist” government itself undertakes “modernising” itself, i.e., “change something so that everything remains the same”. Hence they limited themselves to trying to convince the government — without success — of the usefulness of liberalising the political game and of initiating negotiations to end the war. Caetano’s resistance was backed by the bourgeois sectors that continued to bet on imperialist “autarchy”. But the colonial revolution, at the same time that it accelerated the political crisis faced by the Portuguese oligarchy, weakening its most Neanderthal sectors, began to seep into the ranks of the officers of the imperial army themselves as the economic and social crisis sharpened.

4. The Crisis Within the Army: the MFA and the “Putsch”

If the colonial war caused a deep division within the Portuguese oligarchy, a much deeper crisis began to show up in the armed forces of the empire. They had to make great efforts to keep up the war in the colonies. The young suffered four years as conscripts. Many students were lured into service as officers. All of them, officers, non-commissioned officers, and troops, spent long years out of the country in a war alien to them, plagued by deceptions and defeats. Under these conditions, the division within the high command facilitated the organisation of a group of captains and lower rank officers stationed in barracks close to Lisbon.

As often occurs in history, it all began for a petty reason, trivial if you wish. The professional captains wanted better conditions than the conditions of those who had been recruited. They made a presentation to their superiors and continued to put pressure on them to see their demands satisfied. But, shortly after becoming organised, they came to the conclusion that the problem was not the recruited captains, their comrades in arms and misfortunes, but the colonial war and the fascist government, and they began the struggle. An end had to be put to the war and the fascist government.

The participation of the captains transformed the replacement plan of a sector of the oligarchy and Spínola into a military “putsch”. Caetano’s resistance to accepting Spínola’s advice had placed him in a situation without a way out or perspectives. The discontent and unrest of the middle class reflected in the protest and organisation of the captains took him out of this uncertainty. Spínola thought he could use the captains as the mechanism for a coup, to later be dismissed, with thanks for services rendered, and returned to the iron discipline of the barracks. The program of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) — as the professional captains referred to above finally named their organisation — ambiguous, without any clarity, lent itself to their being used in this way. On the other hand, the MFA also wanted to serve as the representative of the big bourgeoisie and assure discipline. The fear of the mass movement and of lack of discipline united Spínola and the discontented captains. Everything was prepared to make it a “putsch” without any intervention by the people and the workers. But things happened another way.

5. A “Putsch” Transformed Into a Proletarian Revolution

A few years after fascism rose to power in Italy, a polemic opened between the Stalinists and Trotskyists on the social character of the antifascist revolution. The Stalinists took advantage of the victories of the fascist counter-revolution to apply to the European countries their fatal theory of revolutionary “stages” in the backward countries. According to the Stalinists, it is a question, just as in the backward countries, of a long stage of the democratic revolution led by the liberal bourgeoisie. It is from this theory of the future facing the European revolution that they draw their

policy of popular fronts or democratic fronts with the liberal bourgeoisie in order to carry to its conclusion the democratic, antifascist revolution.

The Trotskyists argued that only one class, the working class, with its methods of mobilisation, could defeat fascism, assure the most unrestricted democratic rights, and advance the countries towards socialism. The democratic rights that were won would come as by-products of the revolutionary struggle of the working class; not as a historical stage, but as a manoeuvre by the bourgeoisie to appease the working class with concessions and thus avoid making the socialist revolution. Furthermore, to make possible a bourgeois-democratic stage, there must be a bourgeoisie or a petty bourgeoisie, capable of leading the masses in a revolutionary process up to its final consequences. But, since the middle of the last century, there has been no “progressive” bourgeoisie, owing to the fact that what it most fears is the mobilisation of the working class, since the proletariat is its most important historical enemy, much more so than imperialism, rival capitalist powers, or the remnants of feudalism. They are united to these sectors by their status of being capitalists and exploiters, and as direct exploiters, they are separated completely from the working class. If all this is true for backward countries, it is even more so for developed countries, where the bourgeoisie cannot for one minute cease being doubly counter-revolutionary, since, in addition to exploiting its workers, it exploits its colonies. Portugal furnishes fresh historic proof of the validity of both theories and policies. Let us see.

“(…) in spite of the fact that the radios controlled by the army called on the population to remain calm and in their homes, tens of thousands of civilians flooded the streets, accompanied the tanks, offered red carnations to and fraternised with the soldiers, while at the same time they massively and gladly launched into the most radical dismantling of the hated fascist repressive apparatus.

“(…) The collapse of the repressive apparatus of the dictatorship suddenly opened up the possibility of an immense mobilisation of the workers and the people. On the same day 25 and on subsequent days, the streets were filled tirelessly by spontaneous demonstrations of thousands of people shouting against fascism and the PIDE [International and State Defence Police], for an end to the war, for fraternizing with the military men, etc. An eloquent symbol of this perhaps is what occurred in numerous high schools, where the high school youth immediately set out to search for, follow, and detain the once-feared informers (‘bufos’) of the PIDE, and the Portuguese Legion. The ‘purge’ of the reactionary elements spread like wildfire throughout the entire country.

“The active presence of the masses and particularly of the working class was clearly visible in the May Day demonstrations, during which 500,000 people took to the streets in Lisbon alone, and in the wave of strikes and demonstrations that followed it to impose the most diverse democratic and economic demands. In this way, a very large margin of freedom was won, and a meaningful change in the relation of class forces was brought about.”

That is how Aldo Romero, in issue No.1 of *Revista de America*, summarised the consequences of the military “putsch”. In general, the entire press published similar accounts.

Sometimes, by a strange chance, dates become symbolic. The revolutionary week that opened on April 25, the day of the “putsch”, ended on May Day, the international workers day par excellence, with a demonstration of 500,000 people in Lisbon. The demonstration clearly indicated, by its social composition as well as the slogans that were chanted, the presence of a proletarian revolution that had begun to carry out a democratic program, or at least some of its fundamental tasks.

Many of the slogans were essentially antifascist and democratic, such as “Death to fascism”, “Death to the PIDES”, “Purge”. Some of them, in support of the bourgeoisie — “Long live Spinola” — or of the petty bourgeoisie — “Long live the MFA” — revealed the backwardness of the workers movement after 50 years of political ostracism. Quite striking was the absence of anti-colonialist slogans (with the exception of the somewhat ambiguous “End the war”) in a revolution that — as was to be shown later on—was, consciously or unconsciously, deeply and objectively anti-colonialist. Probably, the cheers for Spinola reflected in a very confused way this characteristic,

since he, after the publication of his book, appeared to be the standard-bearer for an end to the war by any means possible.

But along with these slogans others were chanted such as “A minimum salary of 6,000 contos” [about US\$ 288] and “A Cunhal government”, which already showed, in terms of specific claims, the absolute primacy of the working class in the movement. No slogans were heard corresponding to the specific interests of other classes or sectors. Finally, reaffirming the working-class revolutionary methods, this great demonstration was preceded and followed by an endless number of strikes, the method of class struggle par excellence. And the liquidation of the fascist apparatus began to be carried out directly, raiding and arresting their representatives, without listening to the recommendations of the military men.

Taken altogether, the slogans reflect the combination of circumstances that provoked the beginning of the great anti-fascist proletarian revolution. The “long lives” for Spínola and the MFA constituted recognition by the mass movement of the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois putschists who had opened the doors, just as the “death to fascism” clearly indicated the immediately democratic objective of the proletarian revolution that had begun and that was concretised in the method of the demonstrations and strikes as well as in the slogans for “A minimum wage” and “A Cunhal government”. But they also expressed an indisputable fact. It was the people as a whole, from the middle class to the proletariat, who rushed to change the fascist regime. Viewed from this angle it was a great popular movement, but a popular movement in which the most vigorous and dynamic support came from the proletariat. It was, in short, a workers revolution that had combined with all of the exploited sectors, mainly the urban middle class, and that had begun to demand the complete fulfilment of the democratic tasks, at the same time as it advanced tasks and methods of struggle characteristic of the proletariat, which had been put forward from the beginning.

A few months later, the same mass of workers would come out to the streets alone to shout, “Death to Spínola”, demonstrating once again the proletarian, socialist dynamic of the revolution. A dynamic that the very exploiters and their servants of the middle class, such as the MFA, the CP, and the SP, would be obliged to recognise as they resorted to the great farce of calling themselves “socialists” and hiding their bourgeois projects behind the lie that what is happening in Portugal is already the road toward socialism.

CHAPTER III

The Masses Defeat the Spinolist Counter-revolution

1. The Government of “National Unity”

The military “putsch” brought to power the first “revolutionary” government, that of General Spínola. He tried to set up a government of “national unity,” in which there would be room for those ranging from the big bourgeoisie to the reformist workers parties. And all of the sectors were in agreement on giving full power to the general with the monocle — the MFA, just formed and just stepping into public view, did not dare nominate itself for the government; for their part, the traditional working-class parties placed all their bets on a regime of national unity. Thus, Spínola became the dominant figure in the government. He surrounded himself with his friends as ministers and handed over — as one who throws a bone to a dog — some ministries to the MFA, SP, and CP. Palma Carlos, one of his unconditional supporters, was named prime minister.

The fact that the MFA began to become consolidated as a political organisation of the low-ranking officers reflected in its own way the revolutionary crisis among the army rank and file. It is totally “abnormal” for a public organisation of young officers to codirect a bourgeois army since the essence of a bourgeois army is its absolute hierarchical discipline and submission to higher commands. If Spínola had to accept this “abnormality” and incorporate it into the government, it was because of the fact that the rise of the mass movement imposed it upon him. In addition, he thought that in this way he could channel the rebelliousness among the young commissioned and non-commissioned officers the normal channels of strict military discipline, indispensable to the maintenance of the government which had integrated them. But the MFA — and we should bear this very much in mind — was not the same as the high-ranking officers. And it resisted submitting to the discipline of the top officials. It thus reflected within the army the modern middle class, whose expectations were not identical to those of Spínola and the Portuguese oligarchy.

The participation of the Communist Party in the government was a new phenomenon in European politics of the past 25 years, since the last postwar period. If we except Chile, this holds true for the Western world. The formation of this popular-frontist government of class collaboration constitutes recognition, by imperialism and the Portuguese bourgeoisie, that it is a developing proletarian revolution that they have to deal with. Precisely because of this, they were obliged, although unwillingly, to accept the flattering, collaborationist solicitations of the Socialist and Communist parties.

From within the government, the CP met the expectations of its brand new bourgeois and imperialist allies. It did so by replacing the demand for a minimum wage of 6,000 escudos with one for only 3,500, and by beginning to “condemn certain workers struggles as ‘irresponsible’ or ‘promoted by fascism’ as occurred, for example, with the national strike of the postal workers in June of 1974” (Aldo Romero, “Portugal, Reconstruction or Revolution?”, *Revista de America* No.1).

Despite this policy, and the equally treacherous policy of the Socialist Party — we stress the former because it has much more influence over the trade-union activists, and not because the latter has been less collaborationist — the working class movement continued to advance. It

began to overcome the atomisation of the craft unions inherited from fascism — and from the old anarcho-sindicalist tradition — and began to organise workers commissions in the big factories (Stalinism encouraged the development of industrial unions, and at the same time used them to create a centralised organisation of industrial unions, the Intersindical, on which it imposed a hand-picked leadership). Against the recommendations of the Stalinists, the workers continued to engage in wildcat strikes, although sporadically, within the context of a slight lull in the working class movement as a whole provoked by the calls for passivity from the reformist parties.

2. The Spinoła Government In Crisis: The MFA Shares Power and a Constituent Assembly Is Set Up

Despite the goodwill of the reformist workers parties, the Spinoła government went from crisis to crisis, until the mass movement threw it out. The laws of the class struggle are always more powerful than the reformist plans. The big bourgeoisie — divided at the end of the Caetano government over the advisability or otherwise of terminating the colonial war and “democratising” the fascist regime — united again behind Spinoła after 25 April 1974. To slow down the movement of the workers and the masses, it used with great success the petty-bourgeois representatives of the working class (the reformist parties) and the modern middle class within the army (the MFA). But precisely the success achieved, i.e., the slowing down of the workers movement with its consequent weakening, began to make petty-bourgeois democracy unnecessary to the bourgeoisie. And it was because of this that it attempted, through Spinoła, to reverse not only the developing proletarian revolution but also the democratic conquests already gained or that were being demanded.

This scheme, if it had succeeded, would have meant the transformation of the government into Bonapartist, since the workers movement and its democratic conquests cannot be decisively crushed by a popular-front government, nor can a popular-front government survive when the workers movement has been defeated. It is no accident, therefore, that an important part of the bourgeois efforts to drive back the revolution was accompanied, on the one hand, by a strong anti-communist campaign, and on the other, by tough clashes with the MFA. The bourgeoisie, therefore, after having used it to place a brake on the movement of the workers and the masses, entered into conflict with the petty-bourgeois democrats, who wanted to collaborate with the Spinoła government but within a bourgeois-democratic regime that respected the reformist parties and the MFA.

This dispute between the two sectors of the government materialised around the question of whether to call for presidential elections or for elections to the Constituent Assembly. Spinoła and the big bourgeoisie held that a strong, authoritarian government was required. They, therefore, considered it imperative and urgent to impose a Bonapartist regime by means of a presidential election, which in reality would be nothing other than a plebiscite in favour of Spinoła. They were thus thinking of ending the braking process, and, if necessary, crushing the workers movement, at the same time ridding themselves of the captains of the MFA and of the workers parties, most particularly the CP, the bothersome agent of Moscow in a government that sought to remain in NATO and the Iberian Pact, and enter the European Common Market. The petty-bourgeois democrats were opposed to this plan and advocated, at that time in a united way, the Constituent Assembly.

The other bone of contention was the colonial question. The revolution in Portuguese Africa was greatly helped by the process opened up in the metropolis. The black soldiers in the Portuguese army began to desert, and the white soldiers, officers, and non-commissioned officers began to insist on going back home. At the same time, a Portuguese Trotskyist soldier interviewed by Gerry Foley said, “In the period after April 25, 1974, when struggles were still taking place with the Spinołistas, who were opposed to decolonisation and wanted a clearer form of neo-colonialism, when massive shipments of troops were still being made to the colonies, struggles did occur. Some groups of soldiers even refused to go” (*Intercontinental Press*, 5 May 1975, p. 588). Faced with this

situation, the big bourgeoisie and its representative, Spínola, hoped to negotiate an end to the war from a position of strength, in order to impose on the colonies their transformation into provinces or states associated with the empire. The petty-bourgeois democrats, for their part, wanted to negotiate independence with the national liberation movements; a conditional independence favouring the empire, but independence in the final count.

In July 1974, this crisis became public when Palma Carlos stated that to prevent anarchy it was necessary to call for presidential, not Constituent Assembly, elections. Even though the workers movement had been demobilised, the combination of the rise of the colonial revolution, the crisis in the army, and the desperation of the petty-bourgeois democrats compelled Spínola to rid himself of his prime minister and name in his place, Vasco Gonçalves. In this way, he accepted the full participation of the MFA in the government. The policies of the petty-bourgeois democrats thus triumphed — constituent elections would be called, and the independence of the colonies would be negotiated. It was a partial defeat for the Spínolista bourgeois counter-revolution, which, in the short period of time between August and September, would reveal itself through the recognition of the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique.

3. The Masses Liquidate Spínola's Government

But, after the setback, Spínola prepared to counterattack, aided indirectly by the freezing of the workers and popular struggles the MFA and the reformist parties had caused. In agreement with them, he began to attack freedom of the press by banning a Maoist newspaper. He followed up by enacting a law against the right to strike and by organising a new military region in Lisbon, the COPCON (Operational Command of the Continent), the clear counter-revolutionary purpose of which was “to intervene directly, in support of civilian authorities and at their command, to maintain and re-establish order”. Immediately, the COPCON went into action to “break strikes and small leftist demonstrations” (Gus Horowitz, *op. cit.*, p.18).

As Romero points out in the article already mentioned from *Revista de America*, No.1, “repressive and anti-working class measures were committed by the most reactionary sectors: the violent repression of a demonstration in support of the MPLA, resulting in one death and several wounded by gunshot, prohibition of workers - demonstrations, military intervention against the strike of the workers from Transportes Aereos Portugueses [Portuguese Air Transport] (...)”. Once again, the big bourgeoisie and Spínola began to feel strong, to the point of publicly announcing their opposition to the independence of Angola and openly clashing with the MFA and Vasco Gonçalves. “The tension mounted as the presidency and other sectors of government began to launch clear anti-communist and anti-worker allegations. On 10 September, Spínola personally called upon a supposedly ‘silent majority’ to put an end to anarchy, and on the 28 of the same month, a provocation was mounted, that would serve as a cover or pretext for a phony coup that would allow for the declaration of a state of siege and the assumption of full powers by Spínola” (Ibid.)

The counter-revolutionary coup in the making forced the Communist Party, the most threatened, to desperately defend itself, and it called upon the masses to fight. They responded with an audacity and decisiveness that crushed the first counter-revolutionary attempt of the Portuguese bourgeoisie (which, by the way, objectively closed the sociological debate over whether the bourgeoisie was reactionary or included “progressive” sectors). According to what Romero reports in *Intercontinental Press* (quoted by Horowitz in the article we have published here), the workers “acted both in advance of and independently of the MFA and the provisional government, and paid more attention to the instructions of the CP and the Intersindical than to those of the military” (*Intercontinental Press*, 28 October 1974, p.1395). In plain language, despite the fact that the MFA was also threatened by the coup, its behaviour was deplorable. The mobilisation of the workers and the people thus stopped the counter-revolutionary coup, and saved and raised to

power the petty-bourgeois democrats, mainly the MFA, which had sought for months to dismantle this same mobilisation.

4. The MFA-CP-SP Government Slows Down the Masses

The great victory of the movement of the workers and the masses — and of the CP itself, which participated fully in the mobilisation against Spínola — compelled the big bourgeoisie to change its policies and its government. The tough, old-fashioned general, who wanted to impose on the entire country the discipline of the barracks, was replaced by his “civilized friend”, who makes a custom of “talking, not giving orders”, General Costa Gomes. The bourgeoisie had become convinced, for the moment, that it could not regiment and defeat the movement of the workers and the masses. For that reason, it searched among its servants for a great negotiator capable of using petty-bourgeois democracy to decelerate it, stop it, and finally defeat it.

The new bourgeois policy momentarily abandoned all Bonapartist capriciousness and turned toward the parliamentary forms of rule — it accepted the Constituent Assembly.

The bourgeois plan had at its disposal three first- tools of the first order, all of them petty-bourgeois. The MFA would be in charge of appeasing the soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and radicalised officers in order to restore discipline in the armed forces. The Communist Party, willing as usual to collaborate with the bourgeois government of the day, would take care to avoid mobilisations and control the trade unions. The Socialist Party, which according to all the reports would win any election, would guarantee the innocuousness of the Constituent Assembly and any other electoral and parliamentary variant that might appear.

Under the new government, the class struggle repeated, but on a higher plane, the same sequence as under Spínola. First, the collaborationist policy of the leaderships induced a slight retreat of the workers movement. Then, it rose again in an impetuous mobilisation.

The MFA in government, through the mouth of Vasco Goncalves, called for “Sunday workdays”, and began to insist that the big battle was the battle for production. This “battle” was part of an emergency economic plan proclaimed on 21 February, the essence of which was totally and absolutely capitalist: try to save the capitalist economy through greater exploitation of the workers. Assured of the support of the working-class parties for this plan, the MFA went further and tried political conciliation with the big bourgeoisie and its representatives. A careful campaign in favour of Spínola was begun, freeing him of any responsibility in the former attempted coup because of having been drawn in through “deceit”. It did not publish the results of the investigation of those responsible for the attempt. It did not take any measures against the oligarchy engaged in it. It virtually carried no purge of the officers in the army. And, as a proof of affection for the friends of the oligarchy beyond the borders, in February Portuguese customs guards handed over a Spanish left-wing militant to the Francoist political police.

Meanwhile, the economic situation worsened by leaps and bounds. Unemployment already affected more than 200,000 people — more than 7 percent of the working population. Capital began to take flight abroad. Some enterprises were abandoned by their owners. Imperialism began to economically blockade the revolution.

5. A New Rise in the Movement of the Workers and The Masses Begins

Toward the end of last year and the beginning of this year, the movement of the workers and masses began to confront these calamities. “The fall of Spínola”, says Romero in the article quoted in *Revista de America* No.1, “was followed by a relative impasse in the workers struggles, but since the beginning of 1975, popular resistance has intensified in a spectacular way [...]”. And he continues: “Another area of struggle has naturally involved the improvement of conditions of life, particularly in the factories. In this regard, innumerable demands have been made (rate of work,

safety and hygiene, equipment, dining rooms, etc.). The most widespread demands are, at present, job security and wage increases". The revolution was taking its first steps in the countryside: Agricultural workers and poor peasants began to organise and fight against unemployment. The demonstrations did not limit their goals to job security and wage increases; they included more general and revolutionary slogans: "countless workers assemblies in the factories in struggle have voted for motions in favour of nationalising businesses that threaten layoffs, or more generally, of nationalising the monopolies".

Parallel to the strikes, other methods of struggle were becoming generalised. The first occupation of any importance was described as follows by *Le Monde Diplomatique* (June 1975): "February 7 was a significant date: On that day, 7000 workers from the workers commissions of Lisnave, for the first time in the history of Portugal, cast doubt on the right of ownership of the means of production — without yet venturing into the field of self-management". The method of occupation would be extended, starting from there, not only to establishments, but also to the homes of fascists, the bourgeoisie, or simply unoccupied homes. Control of production also began to be attempted. In some enterprises, "entry of the bosses is prevented".

At the same time, the organisation of the workers movement was spreading on a massive scale and acquiring an increasingly direct character. The revolutionary upsurge combined the organisation of craft unions inherited from fascism with the rise of industrial unions, with the federation that attempted to group them — the Intersindical — and with the rank-and-file factory committees (the workers commissions), neighbourhood committees, and all other types. The spectacular leap that has shaken Portuguese social and political life since the fall of Caetano has thus led to the simultaneous existence of craft unions, typical of the beginning of the trade-union movement; the industrial unions and their federation, belonging to the capitalist era; and the rank-and-file committees, characteristic of this period of capitalist decay and the transition to socialism. The rise of the industrial unions and the rank-and-file committees — the latter being a field in which the working class has taken the lead over the other sectors (tenants, soldiers, etc.), inasmuch as they have been established in the majority of the important factories since 11 March — points to the liquidation of the craft unions. The two forms of organisation (industrial unions and rank-and-file committees) coincide in needing a single industrial organisation at all levels — factory, company, country — but, at the same time, they are profoundly different. The first, institutionalised for more than half a century by capitalism, lends itself much more to bureaucratisation than the committees, intimately linked to the rank and file, which represent them better than the unions and which arise only during periods of intense worker mobilisation such as Portugal is undergoing. This difference was evident in the fact that within a few days of each other two demonstrations took place: One of them, on 14 January, convened by the Intersindical and led by the CP, to demand its official recognition, brought out between 100,000 and 200,000 people; the other, very militant demonstration, convened on 7 February by the "intercompany commissions" and led by the Maoist ultraleft, gathered in front of the Ministry of Labour to protest against layoffs, manoeuvres by the bosses, and the presence of NATO in Portugal. On 20 January, six days after the first demonstration, the government enacted a law favouring a single federation that in reality transformed the Intersindical into its initial nucleus. The Intersindical is a great gain of the workers movement, but it was deformed by the Stalinists, who bureaucratised it from the beginning and hand-picked its leadership to place it at the service of the bourgeois government. In any case, the process of struggle could not help but be reflected in the search for "combative and class leaderships". Romero tells us in *Revista de America*, No.1. "Recently the union slates backed by the PCP suffered spectacular defeats in the postal workers and bank workers unions in Oporto".

The army, for its part, was not immune to the upsurge of the mass movement. The triumph led the MFA to foster discussions about indoctrination in the barracks. But these did not go beyond the limits of the discipline. In the already quoted interview by Gerry Foley, the case is mentioned of a soldier being punished because he dared to direct a barbed question at his commander during one of these discussions. All in all, they represented important progress, since they introduced political discussion into the barracks.

Beginning last January, everything began to change. “A climate of deliberations spread through the ranks, and along with the rejection of arbitrary disciplinary measures, collective demands and protests are not uncommon. Let us also point to facts such as the recent one [February 8] when COPCON forces were deployed in order to contain a workers demonstration that had not been authorised: Confronted by the demonstrators, the soldiers made a half turn. Pointing their arms in another direction and raising their fists, they shouted, ‘Soldiers and sailors are also exploited’” (Romero, *Revista de America*, No.1).

6. The Spinolist Counter-revolution

The general upsurge of the workers and the people caused a new division within the Portuguese bourgeoisie. A minority sector, represented by Costa Gomes, continued to bet on the Constituent Assembly, on the betrayal of the Socialist and Communist parties, and on the use of the MFA. In short, on a popular front. The majority sector, becoming desperate, lost patience and gathered behind Spínola in preparations for a coup d'état, in a renewed Bonapartist attempt.

The fact that the terror of the bourgeoisie was also reflected among the army officers helped the plan for a new coup. The *New York Times* commented at the time that the officers were leaning toward the right. A symptomatic fact proved this to be correct: The elections to the Councils of Arms convened by the MFA were won by the most reactionary officers, sworn enemies of the MFA itself. The MFA proved incapable of ignoring the outcome, despite adversely affecting the MFA, and that it was part of the preparation of the projected coup.

The MFA began to have doubts as to the best way to slow down and defeat the revolution. Two options were open to it: on one hand, the one it leaned on — with the Constituent Assembly — toward a parliamentary regime; on the other hand, the perspective of a directly dictatorial, Bonapartist regime. The urgent need to overcome the crisis of its regime inclined it to try to suppress its contradictions along the Bonapartist road.

The general crisis and the deep differences within the MFA caused by the upsurge were also expressed in the struggle between the Communist and the Socialist parties. This struggle became more and more acute, reaching such a degree that two opposing demonstrations, set for 30 December, came close to a confrontation. The reasons for this dispute lie in the fact that although neither of the two defends the interests of the working class (and in this, they are the same), both of them have different specific interests.

The rightist course of the officers, the electoral defeat of the MFA within the army along with the resulting “impasse”, the fight between the two big working-class parties, the doubts over the call for a Constituent Assembly — all of these elements made the ultra-reactionary, desperate wing of the big bourgeoisie and officers believe that the time had come for revenge. Led by Spínola, the counter-revolutionary coup was finally launched. The equation was almost complete, but an unknown was missing, the reaction of the working class, the movement of the masses and the soldiers. It was terrifying, the workers and soldiers began to occupy factories and barracks. The failure of the putsch was so resounding that the imperialist press affirmed it had been a provocation. This wasn't so; it had a great deal of support among the officers and had been carefully planned. What conspired against its success was the speed and combativity of the popular reply in relation to Spínola previous putsch. If the Intersindical and the demonstrations and barricades characterised the response to the first “putsch”, the committees of workers and soldiers, with their occupations, characterised the response to the second Spinolist attempt.

CHAPTER IV

The 11 March Putsch Opens a Revolutionary Stage

1. Four New Decisive Facts

Spinola's defeat by the mass movement produced off a new series of events that, combined among themselves, opened a new stage of the Portuguese revolution. Four of these facts are the most decisive:

First: The bourgeoisie fades politically and physically as a class. Spinola's flight was not an insignificant event, but one of enormous symptomatic and political importance. Along with him, thousands upon thousands of members of the bourgeoisie fled Portugal, terrified over the strength of the mass movement. Some of the biggest families of the oligarchy and all the banks were expropriated. Important bourgeois figures, such as the Champalimauds, were imprisoned. The counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie was dealt a very hard blow, one that will take time and effort to recuperate from. Physically and politically it has vanished for a while from the political and economic scene. Only its shadow remains.

Second: The economic and social crisis, already very acute, worsens to unbearable limits. The bourgeoisie, upon leaving, abandoned many enterprises. When it has been able to, it has withdrawn its capital; otherwise, it has ceased to invest. Unemployment, which was already serious — around 7 percent — has climbed up to 8 percent and it continues to rise, affecting 800,000 persons at present. Production has been declining. Added to this is the return to Portugal of the settlers from the former African possessions, making unemployment worse and reinforcing the counter-revolutionary sectors. In the face of this situation, tourism has declined and the crisis of the balance of payments has been deepening. The situation has been further aggravated because the big imperialist powers are not investing a single dollar in Portugal.

Third: Occupations of factories, stores, and houses are becoming more generalised, and land seizures are beginning to take place; workers and tenants commissions are developing and some peasant commissions are beginning to appear. All commentators have described how, after Spinola's "putsch", the banks were occupied. Romero, in his different articles published in *Revista de America* up to No.4, mentions the factory occupations and workers commissions but does not grant them any symptomatic importance. Horowitz, in his only reference to them in the article, reproduced in this edition, says in passing that "occupations of factories and offices also spread". Livio Maitan, for his part, also gives little importance to the question, although he says something (very little) about it: "The scope and dynamism of these mobilisations in recent months, the multiplication of strikes and factory occupations, the spread of revolutionary democratic bodies growing up from below, and political demonstrations such as (...) February 7 (...) by the Workers Committee" (Livio Maitan, "The Role of the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal", *Intercontinental Press*, 2 June 1975, p. 728). Besides this, the author points out that the demonstration was led by the Maoists.

Gerry Foley, for his part, states: "Factory committees do not yet exist everywhere, but they fulfil an important function in the big plants (...) The Workers Committee elected by an assembly

of all the workers in the plant is much better able to represent the workforce effectively than the fragmented unions. It is also considerably more democratic". Later he reports how, in Oporto, "on the night of March 11, these committees organised vigilance pickets". These committees and pickets from the above-mentioned factory kept on functioning, "rooting out rightists from the administration and the shop" (Gerry Foley, Portuguese Trotskyists Call for National Workers Assembly, *Intercontinental Press*, 21 April 1975, p.527.) *Combate Socialista*, in one of its issues, without giving it any importance, informs us of the deep trend toward centralisation of these workers committees, when it reports the existence of a "coordinating committee of the CUF commissions" (the most important monopolist group in Portugal). And it confirms Livio Maitan in relation to the 7 February demonstration (which it characterises as an example of combativity), called for by an "inter-factory committee". Finally, whether the lucid commentator of *Le Monde Diplomatique* (June 1975) exaggerates or not, he is close to the truth when he states: "The occupations of factories, land, palaces, and buildings —the latter rapidly transformed into popular clinics, centres for mutual aid, child-care centres, recreation or resting places or into headquarters of popular organisations— have taken the parties in the coalition by surprise (...) nevertheless, the PCP and Intersindical were losing speed, while the rank-and-file organisations and committees consolidated their counter-power".

Fourth: The crisis in the army acquires a new magnitude with the flight of the reactionary officers, the spread of committees and assemblies of the soldiers and non-commissioned officers, which begin to put into question the military hierarchy. Of all the new developments, the most important is the one beginning to take place in the armed forces, described to Gerry Foley by a soldier as follows:

"After March 11, a general assembly of soldiers was held. Not only the commander and deputy commander were purged, but all the Spinolist officers down to the level of sergeants. A cousin of Gen. Galvão de Melo, who was a junior sergeant, was also purged.

"The comrades felt a need to move forward and take control of the barracks. They decided in the general assembly to form various committees. (...)

"After the purge", he says further on, "the military hierarchy was broken, since the ousted commanders were replaced with lower-ranking officers."

In Coimbra, "the rank and file threw out two officers assigned to the barracks by the Council of the Revolution".

In the same article by Gerry Foley (*Revista de America*, No. 4), the soldier points out that "in the navy, where the political consciousness of the rank and file is higher, there exists a committee of sailors which discusses the orders given by the officers, and which can accept or reject them".¹ And Romero (*Revista de America*, No.4) confirms it: "On 1 May, several hundred sailors of all ranks participated in the demonstration, in accordance with what had been decided on in the general assemblies of their bases and some ships — later a 'higher order' ratified the decision arrived at democratically". All these facts indicate the dynamic that the situation within the bourgeois armed forces has taken. But these are just the beginning; they still have not become generalised nor has the qualitative point been reached at which the army begins the plunge toward total and definite collapse: the appointment of officers by the soldiers through the promotion of non-commissioned officers. Together with this process of the rank and file, the defeat of the "putsch" gave the timid MFA enough encouragement to annul the outcome of the elections to the Councils of Arms, which, as we have already seen, had been unfavourable to the MFA.

1 This passage does not come from the English translation of the interview granted to Gerry Foley, which was published in the 5 May 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*, but rather from a news article by Gerry Foley published in the 21 April 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press*. Both articles were published in *Revista de America*, No.4 [Translator].

2. The Transitional Program Defines This Situation

In relation to both the occupations as well as the factory and enterprise commissions, the Transitional Program is categorical:

“*Sit-down strikes*, the latest expression of this kind of initiative, go beyond the limits of ‘normal’ capitalist procedure. Independently of the demands of the strikers, the temporary seizure of factories deals a blow to the idol, capitalist property. Every sit-down strike poses in a practical manner the question of who is the boss of the factory: the capitalist or the workers?”

“If the sit-down strike raises the question episodically, the factory committee gives it organised expression. From the moment that the committee makes its appearance, a factual dual power is established in the factory. By its very essence, it represents the transitional state because it includes in itself two irreconcilable regimes: the capitalist and the proletarian. The fundamental significance of factory committees is precisely contained in the fact that they open the doors if not to a direct revolutionary, then to a pre-Revolutionary period between the bourgeois and the proletarian regimes” (Trotsky, *The Transitional Program*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, pp.79-80, emphasis in original).

As we have already seen, in Portugal we have not only occupations and workers commissions everywhere, but something much more important: a crisis in the armed forces and the germs of dual power within them.

3. A Revolutionary Situation

For some Marxists, the Portuguese situation “evolves or matures toward a pre-revolutionary situation”. We think this definition is erroneous. Up to 11 March, there was a pre-revolutionary situation, and, since that date, a revolutionary situation has begun to mature, if we are not already fully in it. We choose Trotsky’s definition: factory committees are a symptom that, at least, “a pre-revolutionary, if not a direct revolutionary period” has been opened.

We think that if to the occupations and committees we add the crisis in the army, with its soldier’s committees and assemblies and the purges of reactionary officers, we are already in a direct revolutionary situation. And, with even greater reason, if we take into account the situation of the Portuguese bourgeoisie and economy. Referring to events of far less magnitude in the French army in 1936, Trotsky assigned very great importance to them: “The protest of the soldiers against the rabiote (the increase in the service term) signified the most dangerous form of direct mass action against bourgeois power” (Leon Trotsky, *Whither France?*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, p. 144). Now, Trotsky considered the direct action of the masses to be the cause of the revolutionary situation: “The working masses are now creating a revolutionary situation by resorting to direct action” (Op. cit., p.140). With still more reason, then, “the most dangerous form” of that action.

Two shortcomings can be pointed out in our definition: the absence of soviets and of a revolutionary party with mass influence.

We believe the first objection gives an absolute character to the importance of soviets. There are comrades who hold the opinion that, if they do not exist, there is no dual power nor a revolutionary situation. We agree that in Portugal only miserable buds of soviets exist, we have already stated that; but there is a dual power concretised in the occupations and the workers commissions. This dual power is molecular, largely spontaneous, but it does exist and occurs widely in all corners of the country. It is a form of dual power more primitive than soviets, but dual power anyway. The same can be said about the situation in the armed forces: No soviets have been organised, but the process is one of development of a powerful dual power, which is just in its very beginnings, but which is enough to shake the structure of the fundamental pillar of the capitalist regime.

The second objection, concerning the non-existence of the revolutionary party, can very well be based on Trotsky’s definition, repeated several times, of the four basic conditions for the triumph

of the revolution: confusion and division in the ruling class, a turn toward revolutionary solutions by the middle class, revolutionary disposition of the working class, existence of a strong Marxist party that poses the seizure of power. The first three conditions are clearly given in Portugal; but the last one, the strong revolutionary party, is not.

For the classic Trotskyist analysis, the absence of the subjective factor, the party, in the framework of the other three conditions, characterises pre-revolutionary situations. From a formal point of view, the Portuguese situation would fit, then, in this category. This is what those who define the Portuguese situation as maturing toward a pre-revolutionary one have probably taken into account.

Now, if we reason that way, we would find pre-revolutionary situations — different only in intensity, quantitatively, on the one hand in Bolivia in 1952 (when the bourgeois state apparatus had collapsed, the army had been defeated by the working class, and only the armed militias of workers and peasants existed), in Spain during the civil war, or in China after Chiang Kai-shek; and, on the other hand, situations like the one in Argentina after the Cordobazo and the one in France before 1936, in which there was no arming of the proletariat, nor the appearance of organisms of dual power, nor the destruction of the bourgeois army or a crisis within it. It is obvious, however, that between the first three and the last two there are profound, qualitative differences, which become obscured if we group all these situations under the common denominator of pre-revolutionary. Argentina after the Cordobazo and France before 1936 were, to us, pre-revolutionary situations. Bolivia in 1952, Spain during the civil war, and China after Chiang Kai-shek went much further: They were revolutionary situations. Not classic revolutionary, because the revolutionary Marxist party was missing in them, but revolutionary “*sui generis*”.

Trotsky, in various circumstances, pointed out that “abnormal” revolutionary situations could arise which do not conform to classical conditions. In a premonitory article, entitled “What Is a Revolutionary Situation?”, he says: “It is not excluded that the general revolutionary transformation of the proletariat and the middle class and the political disintegration of the ruling class will develop more quickly than the maturing of the Communist Party. *This means that a genuine revolutionary situation could develop without an adequate revolutionary party.* It would be a repetition to some degree of the situation in Germany in 1923” (*Writings of Leon Trotsky-1930-31*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p.354, emphasis added).

This means, according to Trotsky, that when the weight of objective factors takes very acute form, a revolutionary situation may appear even though the revolutionary party is absent. Later, in an elliptical way, without referring directly to the subject, he again gave a new hypothetical definition of an “abnormal” revolutionary situation. In referring to the historical possibility of the installation of workers and peasants governments formed by petty-bourgeois reformist parties, he pointed out that this could occur as a consequence of “war, defeat, financial crash, mass revolutionary pressure, etc.” (*The Transitional Program*, op. cit., p.95). These conditions and others not mentioned could, then, give rise to a situation leading to the formation of a revolutionary, workers and peasants government, the anteroom of a dictatorship of the proletariat, without the condition of a revolutionary Marxist party.

In Portugal, we see assembled and overflowing the conditions for a revolutionary situation, “*sui generis*” according to us, just as predicted by Trotsky. There was “war” and “defeat”; there are an economic crisis and a “revolutionary offensive of the masses”, as well as a “general revolutionary transformation of the proletariat and the middle class and the political disintegration of the ruling class”.

4. The Organically Counter-revolutionary Role of the MFA-CP-SP Bars Any Possibility of Portugal Becoming a China or Cuba

This possibility of forming workers and peasants governments, which Trotsky considered very remote — let us clarify, in passing, that this was because he believed, among other things, that in

the Western countries revolutions would occur immediately following the war — became constant in the second postwar period. The Chinese, Indochinese, Korean and Cuban revolutions followed that pattern. That led us to hold that we were dealing with “*sui generis*” revolutionary situations that did not follow the classical schema. We made an effort to define this new revolutionary situation and we pointed out that it was characterised by the fact that the objective factors indicated by Trotsky had acquired a permanent, chronic character. In our opinion, the revolutionary situations we have seen in this postwar period have been caused by the enormous weight of the objective situation. Fundamentally, by an economic and social crisis of a chronic character that impelled the petty-bourgeois masses into a very acute revolutionary upsurge and forced their parties to break with imperialism and the landlords, turning to guerrilla warfare, which destroyed the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois regime. It is an approach completely opposite to that of the Guevarist guerrillas, to whom a revolutionary situation is unleashed essentially by the subjective factor, the guerrilla group of the armed vanguard that sets heroic examples for the masses.

The international situation helped or facilitated the guerrilla warfare of the petty-bourgeois parties. The inter-imperialist war, the crisis and reconversion of imperialism during the immediate postwar period and the “cold war” enabled these parties to count on a wide margin of manoeuvre and confronted them with a weakened counter-revolution, unable to meet the petty-bourgeois colonial revolution with a solid united front. The cold war had, in its way, the same effect: It divided the counter-revolutionary bloc of the United States and the Soviet bureaucracy.

Another element of considerable weight, which has not received the recognition it deserves, is the subjective factor of the counter-revolution.

With good reason, we Trotskyists have emphasised the importance the politics and leadership of the parties claiming to represent the working class have on the development of the revolutionary process. Our attitude is otherwise toward the politics and tactics of the leaders and parties of the exploiters: We do not analyse them with the same amount of interest. However, in a revolutionary situation, these are elements of prime magnitude. The disastrous — from the point of view of their own interests — politics of Chiang Kai-shek, of the French and Yankee imperialists, and of Batista and Washington had a decisive influence in the triumph of the Chinese, Indochinese, and Cuban revolutions. A much more careful and refined political line followed by the French and Yankee imperialists in Bolivia and Algeria, respectively, was able to block revolutionary victories in those countries.

But the international and subjective situation of counter-revolution has radically altered the possibility of new “*sui generis*” revolutionary triumphs, like those seen in the last 30 years. The crisis in the counter-revolutionary front has abated and the divisions are being closed. The bloc of the imperialist countries and the bureaucracies of the USSR and China to confront and divert the revolution is today quite solid, without great fissures. And all of them have learned from the new “revolutionary situations”. Nothing demonstrates this better than the change in the policies followed by French imperialism from Indochina to Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia. Except for the recent end of the Vietnam War, it has been more than 15 years (and it is not by chance) since “*sui generis*” revolutionary victories, giving rise to workers and peasants governments, have taken place. And the victory in Indochina is the product of the combination of the heritage of more than 30 years of guerrilla war, from the period of the cold war, with the mass movement in the United States and Europe against the imperialist war.

We do not say that these victories will not again be repeated in the colonial and the semi-colonial countries. But, for that to occur, they will have to count on a new factor, much more powerful than the inter-imperialist crisis alone or the cold war: the rise of the mass movement in the metropolitan countries. Such is the case with the victory in Vietnam. But the counter-revolutionary united front between the United States, the USSR, and China is also working here to try to obtain what French imperialism achieved in Algeria: driving the workers and peasants government back into a capitalist regime.

All these factors are of prime importance in preventing a “*sui generis*” revolutionary triumph from taking place in Portugal so that we do not even come near to a variant of a workers and peasant government. But, although they are of prime importance, that does not mean that they are the decisive factor making that variant impossible. The essential factor making impossible a Chinese or Cuban variant in Portugal is the character of the Portuguese petty bourgeoisie and its parties.

The prognosis made by Trotsky in the *Transitional Program* (Ibid., p.94): “the experience of Russia demonstrated, and the experience of Spain and France once again confirms, that even under very favourable conditions the parties of petty-bourgeois democracy (S.R.’s, Social Democrats, Stalinists, Anarchists) are incapable of creating a government of workers and peasants, that is, a government independent of the bourgeoisie”, is still valid. And it is more valid than ever for the imperialist countries, even if it turned out to be mistaken for the colonial countries. The reason is simple, even though Trotsky did not take it into account. It lies in a class difference: that which exists between the petty-bourgeoisie of an imperialist country and the petty-bourgeoisie of a colonial or semi-colonial country. The former enjoys a privileged situation thanks to the exploitation of the backward countries; the latter, including the peasantry, lives in a chronic and insoluble crisis because of the exploitation of imperialism and its agents, the national exploiters. That is why the imperialist petty bourgeoisie and its parties and organisations — the Communist and Socialist parties included — are organically counter-revolutionary, agents of imperialism.

Stated in another way: Because their privileged existence depends on the existence of their own imperialism, they are organically incapable of confronting it. That is the situation in Portugal today, where the MFA, the CP, and the SP compete with each other to find the most ingenious and quickest way of saving crisis-ridden Portuguese imperialism. This is the reason why there is no possibility that they will break with their imperialism and form a workers and peasants government. The slightest error or theoretical confusion on this question of principle will inevitably make us fall into the abyss of concessions to opportunism, capitulation to Portuguese imperialism and its agent: the MFA government.

CHAPTER V

The MFA Government

1. Classical Bonapartism: An Unfortunate Definition

“In other words, the Portuguese ruling class is compelled to have in power a sort of judge-arbiter, appearing to stand above the classes and capable of acting with decisiveness both to regulate the internal affairs of the capitalist class and to contain and repress the workers movement — acting in the last analysis as the representative of the capitalist class as a whole. In Marxist terminology, this phenomenon is sometimes called ‘Bonapartism’, after Napoleon Bonaparte, who fulfilled a similar function, although in a much stronger way than the MFA can.”

That is how Gus Horowitz defines, in the previously mentioned article, the current Portuguese government: as “classical Bonapartism”. In this paragraph, there are theoretical and political novelties by the wholesale that have astonished and worried us. But let us proceed step by step. Before considering the novelties, let us see what Trotsky had to say about classical Bonapartism:

“In order that the Little Corsican might lift himself above a young bourgeois nation, it was necessary that the revolution should already have accomplished its fundamental task — the transfer of land to the peasants — and that a victorious army should have been created on the new social foundation. In the 18th century, a revolution had no farther to go: it could only from that point recoil and go backward. In this recoil, however, its fundamental conquests were in danger. They must be defended at any cost. The deepening but still very immature antagonism between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat kept the nation, shaken as it was to its foundations, in a state of extreme tension. A national ‘judge’ was in those conditions indispensable. Napoleon guaranteed to the big bourgeois the possibility to get rich, to the peasants their pieces of land, to the sons of peasants and the hoboos a chance for looting in the wars. The judge held a sword in his hand and himself also fulfilled the duties of bailiff. The Bonapartism of the first Bonaparte was solidly founded” (Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol.2*, Simon and Schuster, New York, v1936, pp.154-55).

We have only to read the two quotations to see that there is a great difference between them. For Horowitz, Napoleon Bonaparte “fulfilled a function”, that of “containing and repressing the workers movement”; for Trotsky the function he fulfilled was that of “defending at any cost” the “fundamental conquest” of the revolution: “the transfer of land to the peasants and that a victorious army should have been created on the new social foundation”, and, in fulfilling that function, he “guaranteed to the peasants their pieces of land” and created his victorious army with the “sons of peasants” and the “hoboos.” In fulfilling this same function, he “contained and repressed” the feudal reaction of all Europe, which aspired to suffocate the bourgeois nation and restore the “old regime”.

Let us add that Trotsky’s definition of Napoleon’s regime has nothing to do with the current Portuguese reality, in which there are no victorious armies (in fact, there is a defeated army), no transfer of land to the peasants, nor anything else like that.

Let us go back to Horowitz. His definition poses a question of method that is really alarming. As we have already seen, he considers that Napoleon “fulfilled a similar function” to that of the MFA “although in a much stronger way than the MFA can”. Putting the pieces together, this would mean that Napoleon Bonaparte fulfilled, in a much stronger way than the MFA, the function of “repressing the workers movement” (!). But let us leave this aside. What is certain is that, for Horowitz, the differences between Napoleon I and the current Portuguese regime are differences of degree, quantitative, not qualitative, differences. Following the logic of his way of thinking, the MFA and its government are weak Napoleon Bonapartes; Napoleon Bonaparte was, then, a strong MFA.

We do not know by what method Horowitz is led to suppose that in 1975 there can exist a regime substantially similar to one at the beginning of the XIX century. All the circumstances have changed: Then, capitalism was rising powerfully; today it is in decadence. Then the antagonism between the proletariat and bourgeoisie had “not yet matured”; today it is fully developed; etc., etc., etc. It is precisely these “small” differences between one and another era that makes Trotsky distinguish very sharply between the Bonapartism of the rising stage of capitalism and that of its decadence.

“We always strictly differentiated between this Bonapartism of decay and the young, advancing Bonapartism that was not only the gravedigger of the political principles of the bourgeois revolution but also the defender of its social conquest” (L. Trotsky, *Writings of Leon Trotsky — 1934-35*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1974, p.181).

“Historically, Bonapartism was and remains the government of the bourgeoisie during periods of crisis in bourgeois society. It is possible and it is necessary to distinguish between the ‘progressive’ Bonapartism that consolidates the purely capitalistic conquest of bourgeois revolution and the Bonapartism of the decay of capitalist society, the convulsive Bonapartism of our epoch (von Papen, Schleicher, Dollfuss, and the candidate for Dutch Bonapartism, Colijn, etc.)” (L. Trotsky, *Writings of Leon Trotsky — 1933-34*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1972, p.107)

Napoleon I’s Bonapartism was progressive because it defended capitalist progress against the feudal reaction. Up until the end of last century, Bonapartist governments retained progressive features (Bismarck succeeded in the national unification of Germany, Napoleon III gave a great push forward to capitalist development in France). But, in this century, with capitalism in full decadence and putrefaction, no Bonapartism in an imperialist country can be “progressive”; it is — and it cannot be anything else — counter-revolutionary, regressive, and opposed to historical progress.

No regime, of any type, can be defined outside of the specific social conditions in which it originates and develops. In the case of Bonapartism, this means that in our epoch a Bonapartist regime fundamentally the same as those in the epoch of the rise of capitalism cannot be repeated.

Furthermore, if Horowitz was right in his definition, this would go against what he wants to demonstrate. Indeed, in that case, the MFA government would be a relatively “progressive” government.

We will say no more about Horowitz’s unfortunate, definition.

2. More Confusion: Bonapartism ‘Sui generis’?

But there is still another aspect to the question of Bonapartism. Trotsky analysed a type of Bonapartism typical of semi-colonial and neo-colonial countries. The weakness of the national bourgeoisie in these countries, where the main exploiter is imperialism, gives rise to governments that act as arbiters between the movement of the workers and the masses and the dominant imperialism. To the extent that the national bourgeoisie is unable to directly impose its own government, it is required the appearance of an arbiter between the two most powerful forces on the national scene.

These governments can operate either as agents of imperialism, in which case they have a markedly reactionary character, or they can base themselves on the worker and peasant masses to resist the pressure of the metropolis. In the latter case, they have a relatively progressive character, which, despite the historical distance, repeats some of the positive features of the Bonapartism of the last century. This relatively progressive character has its counterpart in the role these “*sui generis*” Bonapartisms play in preventing the working class from advancing along an independent path toward its revolution and in maintaining a resistance to imperialism within the limits of the bourgeois property. Cardenas, Nasser, and Peron are some examples of this “*sui generis*” Bonapartism: bourgeois governments to the marrow, which defend their countries from imperialism by basing themselves on the exploited masses.

Some MFA ideologists proclaim themselves to be adherents of the “third world” and compare their movement with those of the colonial and semi-colonial peoples, trying in this way to take advantage of the prestige and attraction the national liberation movements have on eyes of the European left, especially the younger layers.

Unfortunately, they have found an echo within our movement. On the basis of purely formal terminology and comparisons, the MFA is presented as similar to the military regimes of the “third world”. Livio Maitan tells us, in his article, “The Role of the Armed Forces Movement in Portugal” (*Intercontinental Press*, 2 June 1975, p. 728):

“The process we are seeing today in Portugal shows clear analogies with those that have already occurred in neo-colonial, or economically and socially underdeveloped countries.”

What are those “clear analogies”? Here is what Maitan argues:

“In situations where the bourgeoisie finds itself unable to exercise its political hegemony by the normal means — the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary or presidential mechanisms, the formal or de facto dictatorship of a bourgeois party, and so on — in periods of deep political crisis, the military apparatus may emerge as the only force capable of running the state. More precisely, the army can play the role of a ruling party with the capacity to maintain the functioning of the essential mechanisms of the system. This need not necessarily takes the form of a reactionary military dictatorship but can occur under the leadership of reformist or populist tendencies in the military (obviously the Brazilian dictatorship falls into the former category, while the Peruvian regime comes under the latter, to mention only the two most prominent examples in Latin America).”

We confess that the author’s method astonishes us. It leaves aside the fact that it is impossible to understand a government of any kind, outside the framework of the deep, structural, class characteristics of the country and of the situation in which they occur. Portugal is an imperialist country; Peru and Brazil are semi-colonial countries exploited by imperialism. This is a sharp and decisive difference. No matter what type of bourgeois government may appear in Portugal, it will constitute above all an imperialist government. Any government of any type in Peru and Brazil must in some way reflect the great contradiction that puts the country as a whole into opposition to imperialist domination. The Brazilian regime has served as a direct agent of imperialism and an enemy of its own country. The Peruvian regime offers a timid defence of the country in the face of imperialism.

In Portugal, no government of this kind could arise because the main exploiter is Portuguese capitalism. Naturally, the “third world” ideology of sectors of the MFA contains an element of truth. Portuguese capitalism is weak and backward, which arouses fears of colonisation by its more powerful competitors. The strengthening of the state points in that direction: to have available a strong instrument to better negotiate with the other imperialisms and with the working class and the colonial movement.

While the most important by far, this is not the only difference between Portugal, on one hand, and Brazil and Peru, on the other. Portugal is undergoing the development of a working-class revolution and a crisis of the capitalist regime. There has been no pre-revolutionary, let alone

revolutionary, situation in Peru in the last 10 years. The Brazilian regime is the product of a counter-revolutionary stage.

While Portugal is being shaken by an instability reaching a paroxysm, the two Latin American countries cited have enjoyed years of bourgeois stability (11 in the case of Brazil: seven in Peru).

Again, we find that the only similarity between the three cases is that the military rule. But, even considering the question from this formal point of view, Maitan's analogy is wrong. Let us see what our commentator says:

“The only solid apparatus, the only relatively cohesive force, remains the armed forces, and precisely for this reason they are emerging as the dominant political force. The MFA, which arose and developed in this context, has thus become the real political leadership of the country” (Ibid., p. 729).

Now, let us take a look at reality. Between the Portuguese army, on the one hand, and the Peruvian or Brazilian, on the other, the only thing in common is that in both cases they are armies, and therefore, the final and decisive guarantor of the bourgeois regime. The armies of Peru and Brazil are normal armies in normal bourgeois situations; they are cohesive and within them, hierarchical discipline rules. The Portuguese army is completely anarchic because it is immersed in the process of a revolution. All of its hierarchies have been thrown off balance. It has little about it that is “solid”; it is split; there is a group within it — a minority among the officers — that is trying in its own way and within the framework of the conditions imposed by reality, to save the bourgeois and imperialist order, even if it has to go against the “natural command structure.”

That is the MFA in the government. It is there not because it is military, but because it enjoys the trust of the mass movement; not because it is part of the “solid” apparatus of the army, but because that apparatus is going through such a deep crisis that it is unable to rule without basing itself on the captains.

Comrade Maitan makes another comparison in the same article as unfortunate as the one we have just considered. According to him, the Portuguese situation is characterised “precisely by the growing inadequacy of the traditional political apparatus and the absence of a bourgeois party with a mass base sufficiently broad to allow it to exercise hegemony, say, in the manner of the Italian Christian Democracy or the English Conservative party”.

Livio Maitan has not considered that, in a revolutionary period, bourgeois parties never have sufficient support from the masses to exercise hegemony, precisely because it is a revolutionary period, in which the masses do not trust the bourgeoisie and fight against it. One of the symptoms of the progress of the revolutionary crisis in Italy is precisely the growing impossibility of the Christian Democrats continuing to exercise hegemony. The same will happen to the British Conservatives as soon as the British proletariat goes beyond the stage of episodic outbursts — of which the miners' strike of 1974 was a notable example — to engage in more militant and generalised struggles. Both parties have been able to rule in normal periods, without generalised workers and popular struggles, but they will not be able to do so in a revolutionary stage. That is why the situation in Portugal is not defined, as our commentator affirms, merely by “a deep political crisis”, but by a violent social and economic crisis.

Perhaps Comrade Maitan will reply that he never intended to compare the Portuguese government with the “third world” military regimes and that he simply was trying to point out some formal similarities. If he does this, the explanation would be a weak one. For Marxists, the forms of government always express a particular relation between the classes. A comparison between mere forms, abstracting them from their class content, has no validity or usefulness. We accept analogies when they help to point out more precisely the class definition of a phenomenon; if they do not help in this, they are a journalistic exercise and pose the danger of, at least, creating confusion.

3. A Government of the Armed Forces or of a Popular Front?

Liberal thinkers and politicians have coined a superficial classification of bourgeois governments: civilian and military. We Marxists, in contrast, define governments not according to the clothes their officials wear, but according to the function they fulfil in the relations between classes. Archbishop Makarios,¹ even though he wears a cassock, does not head a medieval ecclesiastical government, but one that is the product of the current imperialist stage and a struggle of a British colony for independence. However, the uniforms of the Portuguese rulers are making it difficult for many comrades to perceive, behind them, the real relations that have been established between the classes and that have given rise to the present MFA government.

It is worth recalling that, in its time, a similar difficulty gave rise to very peculiar definitions of the Peruvian military regime and of its ephemeral Bolivian imitators (Ovando and Torres): The label “military reformism” was assigned to them, without taking into account the class relations. In this way, a vulgar journalistic description was adopted, which defined the phenomenon by its outer appearance: the uniforms worn by the rulers and the “reforms” (whether real or phony, important or significant, did not matter) they carried out.

The curious thing is that from looking so much at the uniforms of the Lusitanian rulers, a truly crucial fact has been overlooked: It is the first bourgeois government in Western Europe in the last 27n years in which the Communist Party has participated. And it is doing it not alone but with the Socialist Party.

This participation of the workers parties (Socialist and Communist), and especially of Stalinism, in the Portuguese government, is the decisive feature of the MFA regime; much more important than the epaulets of General Costa Gomes.

The participation in the government of the two large workers parties is a consequence of the revolutionary upsurge, which has forced the Portuguese bourgeoisie to accept a government shared with these organisations as the only way to paralyse and defeat the workers. A class-collaborationist government has thus been formed to help maintain the bourgeois regime in a very difficult moment. Very difficult, among other things, because the crisis of its armed forces makes it unable to keep it through the use of force. The collaboration became necessary from the moment when, without the support of the workers or their pacification, the bourgeois government could not stay in power one minute; such was the magnitude of the revolutionary upsurge.

If we leave aside the uniforms, the current Portuguese government is a typical popular-front government, a bloc of the bourgeois government and the workers parties. The Torres government in Bolivia was military and popular-frontist, one of collaboration and participation of the leadership recognised by the workers movement. That of Kerensky and of the Kuomintang were also governments of class collaboration, popular-frontist, although they were not parliamentary either.

In this respect, then, there can be no doubt: The government of Costa Gomes, the armed forces, and the reformist parties is a typical class-collaborationist government in a revolutionary period. If there is anything new it is that it is a doubly popular-frontist government, because having to confront not only the revolutionary upsurge of the workers movement but also the revolutionary mobilisation of the colonial masses, it collaborates or conciliates also with these colonial masses to save the empire. The convergence of the colonial and workers revolutions has given rise to a twice collaborationist government, a popular-front squared. This really is a genuine novelty with regard to the relationship between the revolutionary classes and movements and their exploiters; although there is the precedent of the Kerenskyst demagoguery toward the nationalities oppressed by the pan-Russian imperialism.

The form, technique, and mechanisms through which this collaboration between the representatives of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois leaderships of the workers

¹ **Makarios III** (1913–1977), was the archbishop and primate of the Church of Cyprus, a Greek Orthodox Church and the first President of the Republic of Cyprus (Translator).

and colonial movements takes place are important. But they are not determinants; they do not modify this definition of the current Portuguese regime.

For the representatives of the bourgeoisie and of the working class to collaborate, a hinge is necessary, an intermediary. In the case of Portugal, that intermediary is the MFA.

CHAPTER VI

A Classical Kerenskyst Government

1. The Different Types of imperialist Governments

Whether we accept or not the preceding definitions of the MFA government by Horowitz and Maitan, we must emphasise the importance of their attempt. The authors we have cited have hit the right spot: To define the stage of the class struggle and its probable dynamics is a prerequisite for formulating a correct revolutionary policy, but it is not enough. It is necessary to define the character of the regime and government the masses have to confront.

Revolutionary politics will not be the same against different types of governments. There is a policy for a pre-revolutionary situation under a bourgeois-democratic, parliamentary regime and government, as in the cases of France, Belgium, and Spain in the 1930s. There is another policy for a pre-revolutionary situation (or one close to it) under a post-fascist Bonapartist government, as in Spain today. During the revolutionary situation that opened in 1905, the Bolsheviks had slogans (Down with the Tsar! Republic!) that resulted from their having to confront a semi-feudal regime. In a similar situation in Germany in 1919, there was no reason at all to advance these slogans, since the communists had to confront a republic and not a semi-feudal monarch.

In response to this need, comrades in the metropolitan countries run into an obstacle: the theoretical inertia caused by reality. During the last 30 years, Western Europe has lived under the same bourgeois-democratic regime (200 years in the case of the United States). The European reality has not compelled our movement to face other types of bourgeois governments, with the exception of Portugal and Spain (which could easily be considered as “fossils” inherited from a previous period), and for some years, Greece. We should note, incidentally, that these are “peripheral” countries in the European theatre. This long period of political monotony caused our movement to lose its theoretical reflexes in reacting to new phenomena like the present Portuguese regime.

That is, new in relation to the period Western Europe has just lived, but not new for revolutionary Marxists, who already had occasion to study similar regimes during the almost three decades from 1917 to 1945. At that time, regimes and governments that were not bourgeois-democratic proliferated in Western Europe. Thus we have only to resort to the theoretical arsenal inherited from our teachers to find fundamental definitions in the attempt to characterise the MFA government and the future regimes that will make their appearance on the European continent as the revolution continues to advance.

Starting from the chronic crisis of imperialism (which has not led to a revolutionary outcome because of the betrayal of the Social Democracy and Stalinism), Trotsky studied and defined four types of imperialist governments and regimes: fascist, Bonapartist, bourgeois-democratic, and Kerenskyst. For the countries dominated by imperialism, he defined a particular kind of Bonapartism: “*sui generis*” Bonapartism, which we have already dealt with. And, in its time, he advanced the definition of Bonapartist for Stalin’s government, although with an essentially different social base: It was the organ of a workers state.

2. Bourgeois Democracy and Fascism

At the end of the last century, Engels noted the trend of bourgeois regimes toward Bonapartism, toward leaving the government in the hands of the bureaucracy and the military apparatus. It is true that this trend was and continues to be a constant. However, the bourgeois-democratic type of regime flourished and spread in the imperialist countries up until the World War I.

In the typical democratic regime, the problems of the bourgeoisie are settled through electoral competition between the different sectors that seek support among the middle class and the workers. Beyond their electoral character, these bourgeois-democratic regimes base themselves on an agreement with the middle class to maintain a democratic-electoral mechanism.

The colossal development of capitalism and imperialism in the past century and the first years of the present one was the necessary condition for the flourishing of bourgeois-democratic regimes in the imperialist countries, by making possible a certain improvement in the situation of the workers. Thus assurance was provided that granting the people the right to vote would not turn against the bourgeoisie since the workers would vote for the bourgeois or reformist parties. In that period, and in consequence of these conditions, emerged the reformist ideology that equates capitalism with democracy.

Since the end of the World War II, a similar phenomenon took place in the imperialist countries (and a similar ideology arose), as a consequence of the spectacular boom of the capitalist economy in the last 25 years.

But in the period between the two world wars, the capitalist economy, far from a boom, experienced a deep and prolonged crisis. We only need to recall the great world crisis of 1929-32 and the one that Germany and the countries of central Europe underwent for entire years.

Since 1914, the imperialist world began to suffer a social and economic crisis. As the situation of capitalism became more and more critical, the bourgeois-democratic regime burned out its electoral fuses. It was no longer possible for it to assure the middle class and the labour aristocracy their privileges. The disputes between the different wings of the bourgeoisie sharpened. The different classes no longer accepted waiting for elections and demanded immediate solutions. If in Russia bourgeois-democracy (after a short life of a few months) was replaced by the dictatorship of the proletariat, in Italy it gave way to a new type of bourgeois government: fascism. The “eternal” democratic regime of “eternal” capitalism thus revealed its true transitional character, of a period in the life of capitalism. It was laid bare its true role, that of a station house on the line leading to two opposite terminals: fascism or communism.

It was Trotsky who made an accurate analysis of the new fascist phenomenon. Faced with an economic crisis and the danger of a workers revolution, finance capital saw itself compelled to mobilise the petty-bourgeoisie and the underclass layers to crush the working class and its organisations with methods of civil war and to install a totalitarian state, which not only suppressed workers democracy but also all democratic rights.

3. Imperialist Bonapartism

But fascism is a last resort, costly and full of risks. The bourgeoisie does not always find itself compelled to mobilise the petty-bourgeoisie. In many cases, it could count on a less convulsive instrument: The reformist workers parties guaranteed its survival. This allowed the bourgeoisie on occasions to limit or directly suppress a democratic regime without resorting to fascism (many times, as anticipatory steps in the march toward such a regime). This intermediate regime, born out of the advances of the bourgeois counter-revolution and defeats of the masses, based itself on the bureaucracy and fundamentally on the armed forces, which is what gives it a Bonapartist character.

Trotsky was meticulous in his study of these regimes, typical of Europe in the 1920s and the 1930s. “The decline of capitalist society places Bonapartism — side by side with fascism and

coupled with it — again on the order of the day” (Leon Trotsky, *The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1971, p.329).

And pointing to the relationship between these distinct forms of bourgeois rule, he said:

“(…) between parliamentary democracy and the fascist regime [there is] a series of transitional forms (…).

“On the basis of the German experience, the Bolshevik-Leninists recorded for the first time the transitional governmental form (….) which we called Bonapartism (Ibid. p.438.)

These governmental forms are an indirect result of the advance of the fascists:

“The determinism of this transitional form has become patent, naturally not in the fatalistic but in the dialectical sense, that is, for the countries and periods where fascism, with growing success, without encountering a victorious resistance of the proletariat, attacked the positions of parliamentary democracy in order thereupon to strangle the proletariat” (Ibid., p.438).

And Trotsky again insists that Bonapartism bases itself on the retreat of the masses and in the victories of the counter-revolution, not on the proximity of the revolution.

“Without this basic condition, that is, without a preceding exhaustion of the mass energies in battles, the Bonapartist regime is in no position to develop” (Ibid., p. 278).

These regimes, precisely because of their character of intermediate stations in the transit from parliamentary democracy to fascism, were less stable than post-fascist Bonapartism. The later arises when fascism in power gets rid of (sometimes, with the same civil war methods that it used previously against the proletariat) its petty-bourgeois wing and begins to rule on the basis of the military-police apparatus.

Trotsky thus distinguished three types of “normal” bourgeois regimes in this epoch of crisis: parliamentary democracy, pre-fascist and post-fascist Bonapartism, and fascism. In saying “normal” we refer to the fact that we are dealing with regimes in which the stability of the bourgeoisie is guaranteed.

4. Kerenskyism

But what happened in the opposite case, when the movement of the workers and the masses was advancing toward a socialist revolution? Trotsky recognised in those cases a new type of regime and government: Kerenskyst or popular-frontist. It is an extremely unstable form, mired in a chronic crisis, of very limited duration, constituting the last or next to the last type of bourgeois government before a workers revolution or a turn backwards toward fascism, Bonapartism, or bourgeois democracy.

“The regime existing in Spain today”, said Trotsky in November 1931 in relation to the liberal-socialist government, “corresponds best to the conception of a Kerensky, that is, the last (or next-to-last) ‘left’ government, which the bourgeoisie can only set up in its struggle against the revolution” (Leon Trotsky, *The Spanish Revolution — 1931-39*, Pathfinder Press, New York, 1973, p.169).

And about the criticisms that Nin made of this concept: “You say that the present regime in Spain can be compared to ‘Kerenskyism’ ... I do not think so. ‘Kerenskyism’ was the bourgeoisie’s last card. It was the announcement for October. Azana announces Lerroux, that is, Miliukov, the big bourgeoisie” (Ibid., p.380). Trotsky responds by criticising the mechanical conception of Nin, who believed that Kerenskyism would inevitably lead to a proletarian revolution, pointing out that to the contrary the possibility was great that it would move backwards toward more reactionary bourgeois regimes. Here is the quote: “Everything depends on the manner in which ‘Kerenskyism’ is seen: as the last bourgeois government after which the bourgeoisie must perish, or as the last left government, the furthest left which the bourgeoisie can advance in the struggle for its regime, and

which must enable the bourgeoisie to save itself (and hardly perish) or yield its place to a fascist government” (Ibid., p.397).

In a Kerenskyst regime, the bourgeois counter-revolution, unable to crush the workers revolution but still able to prevent its victory, sees itself compelled to conciliate with the workers movement to stop its advance. Let me stress an example: If we take bourgeois democracy as the midway station of a railway line, if we move toward the right we pass by the station of Bonapartism; the end of the line is fascism. But, if we go in the opposite direction, we will pass by the station of Kerenskyism, and cross the class frontier we will arrive at the other end of the line, a workers state.

Kerenskyism is a combination of a workers revolution and bourgeois counter-revolution. But a combination in which the dynamic and decisive element continues to be a workers revolution on the rise. This is exactly opposite to a Bonapartist regime, in which the dynamic factor is the bourgeois counter-revolution, and the workers movement is on the defensive.

We are amazed at the resistance of the majority of contemporary Marxists to accepting this definition, which we have recently applied to the governments of Torres in Bolivia and Allende in Chile. A resistance which is all the more serious, since the present crisis of capitalism makes inevitable the emergence of governments of this type. Above all, our attention is called to the fact that the comrades of *The Militant*, who very correctly compare the Russian and Portuguese revolutions, do not notice the similarity between the governments produced by both of those processes.

It is possible that the confusion originates in the fact that Kerenskyst governments (just like parliamentary ones) tend to move toward Bonapartism. Another fact that can create confusion is that both Bonapartism, as well as Kerenskyism, are characteristic of periods of capitalist crisis, in opposition to parliamentary democratic governments.

5. Kerenskyism and Bonapartism

But the big difference between these two regimes lies in the form in which the bourgeoisie goes about solving the crisis. When it bases itself directly on the armed forces without resorting to conciliation with the movement of the workers and the masses, when it attempts to overcome a crisis with a government of the “right”, of “law and order” and of “strength”, with an “incontestable arbiter”, we are facing a typical Bonapartist government.

When it tries to “conciliate,” to obtain the “collaboration of the working class through its representatives” to install a “left” or “socialist” government, we are facing a class collaborationist, a Kerenskyst, government.

We could summarise by saying that the difference between a Bonapartist and Kerenskyst government is the same as that between a judge or arbiter, who hands down his sentences with the weight of disciplined armed forces behind him, and a conciliator, who does not have reliable armed forces with which to impose his decisions or “advice”.

Logically, this conciliator or intermediary between the contending classes tries with all his might to attain the power that would give his decisions a compulsory and incontestable character. But, as long as he does not succeed (and to succeed he must defeat the working class), he will continue to be Kerenskyst and not Bonapartist.

This combination of traits of one type of regime and another is not uncommon. On the contrary, it is the rule in reality, where pure types are a rare exception. Thus, we have Bonapartism and Kerenskyism with parliamentary forms, parliamentary-democratic regimes with strong Bonapartist tendencies, etc.

In the case of Kerenskyism, its unstable character requires it, in order to re-establish the lost bourgeois social equilibrium, to try to become Bonapartist. Trotsky, in narrating the history of the Russian revolution, points to this trait in the Kerensky government. He speaks of “elements of Bonapartism” in defining Kerensky and Kornilov. This is how we must understand the references

that Lenin and Trotsky himself made to the “Bonapartist” character of Kerensky, in the midst of the struggle against him. In the *History of the Russian Revolution*, but also in other works of his, Trotsky makes this very clear:

“The misfortune of the Russian candidates for Bonaparte lay not at all in their dissimilarity to the first Napoleon, or even to Bismarck. History knows how to make use of substitutes. But they were confronted by a great revolution which had not yet solved its problems or exhausted its force. (...) The revolution was still full-blooded. No wonder Bonapartism prove anemic (Op. cit., Vol.2, pp. 155-56).

There is no one better than the class enemy at summarising the difference between a Kerensky with Bonapartist tendencies and the directly Bonapartist Kornilov. Trotsky quotes one of the big Russian industrialists complaining about the Kerenskyst government: “They would summon representatives of the workers to Petrograd and in the Marble Palace scold them and try to persuade and reconcile them with the industrialists and engineers” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.267).

This big capitalist was anxious to have the “conciliator” government replaced by another one (Bonapartist) which, as supreme arbiter, would give orders and have the rebellious Russian workers comply with them.

As Trotsky narrates, according to the testimony of Miliukov, the most important Russian bourgeois politician, “this installing of a strong man (...) [Kornilov] was ‘thought of in different terms from those of negotiation and compromise’”. The same was said by another commentator to explain the support of Kornilov by the Kadet party: “Hopes of democracy, of the will of the people, of the Constituent Assembly (...) were already thrown overboard. The municipal elections throughout all Russia had given an overwhelming majority to the socialists [...] and there were beginning to be convulsive reachings out for a power which should not persuade [like that of Kerensky, we add] but only command” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.142..)

There can be no doubt about it: For Trotskyism, a conciliatory regime is different from that of an arbiter. The first is Kerenskyism; the other, Bonapartism.

6. A Government of the ‘Left’, a Class-Collaborationist, Popular-Frontist, or Kerenskyst Government Are All the Same

Originally, Kerenskyism got its name from Alexander Kerensky, who governed Russia in the last months of the bourgeois regime before the October revolution.

Later, Trotsky used the term to refer to all those class-collaborationist governments in which the reformist parties of the workers movement participated. In this way, the definition of Kerenskyism covered not only those left coalition governments of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat during revolutionary periods, but also those that arose during pre-revolutionary situations, as in the case of the French Popular Front government in 1936 and several similar cases in other countries in the 1920s.

“An epoch of Kerenskyism is clearly approaching in your country [France]; the regime of the Radical-socialist Bloc is the first confused rebound from the war epoch. (Leon Trotsky, *The First 5 Years of the Communist International*, Vol.1, 2nd ed., Monad Press, New York, 1972 p.163).

“But the most likely candidate at the present time is Herriot who is preparing the background and the conditions for a new policy, for French Kerenskyism, because the assumption of power by the ‘Left Bloc’ signifies a government of Radicals and Socialists, who will undoubtedly enter the Bloc” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.212).

“The appearance of the working class in power will place the entire responsibility for the government’s actions upon the Labor Party; and will give rise to an epoch of English Kerenskyism in the era of parliamentarian” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.211).

“But there are too many indications that the bourgeoisie will be driven to resort to a reformist and pacifist orientation, before the proletariat feels itself prepared for the decisive assault. This would signify an epoch of European Kerenskyism” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.262).

“(…) in Spain Kerenskyism — the coalition of the liberals and the ‘socialists’ (…)” (*Writings of Leon Trotsky-1930-31*, op. cit., p.355.)

As we can see, Trotsky includes within the category of Kerenskyism all “left” governments in which workers parties participate: from the “leftist” project in France in 1922 to the liberal-socialist coalition of Spain in 1931, including the probable Labour government in England in a pre-revolutionary period. A demagogic-leftist orientation (“reformist and pacifist”) of the European bourgeoisie leads him to predict a period of Kerenskyism on a continental scale.

He defines in this way a Kerenskyism we could call “not classic”, since, in distinction from the Kerensky regime, it does not arise in a revolutionary stage and in a situation of dual power, but in a pre-revolutionary one; and it is not put into power directly by the mass movement, but indirectly, through electoral and parliamentary means.

Later, after seeing and studying the popular-front governments of Blum, Largo Caballero, and Negrin, Trotsky went the other way: He extended the name of “popular front” to Kerensky’s government, thus indicating that they were synonymous.

“From February to October, the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries, who represent a very good parallel to the ‘Communists’ and the Social Democrats, were in the closest alliance and in a permanent coalition with the bourgeois party of the Cadets, together with whom they formed a series of coalition governments. Under the sign of this Popular Front (…)” (*The Spanish Revolution*, op. cit., p.220).

“For it is often forgotten that the greatest historical example of the Popular Front is the February 1917 revolution” (Ibid., p.220).

7. A Classical Kerenskyst Government

Let us use Trotsky’s method to define the MFA government, by observing its relationship to the revolution and the counter-revolution. Is this government the product of counter-revolutionary victories or advances, or, on the contrary, of great revolutionary victories of the masses? Is it a consequence of the latter having “exhausted their energies in battles” or on the contrary, of their having won these battles, against fascism first and then twice against Spinola?

The MFA government is a consequence of transitional stages that are opposite to those that give rise to Bonapartist governments. It is the result of the fall of the post-fascist Bonapartist government and of the rising course of a workers revolution; it reflects the transitional stages in the advance of that revolution and the successive ways in which the bourgeoisie, the modern middle class, and the reformist parties that act as representatives of the proletariat accommodate to that advance in order to block it.

Horowitz himself helps demolish the definition of Bonapartist with his description of the situation of the mass movement. Time and again, he points to the existence of big strikes, demonstrations, factory occupations, etc. In the reaction’s latest coup attempt on 11 March, the masses won, the coup was defeated, and the oligarchy received a hard blow with the nationalisation of the banks and the insurance companies. Since the fall of the fascist regime, workers have made gain after gain. Horowitz admits this in his article when he poses the need to “defend the gains the workers have made”.

Everything fits: Mobilisations are on a rising curve. We are very far, then, from the “basic condition” that Trotsky noted as decisive for a Bonapartist regime to develop: that the energies of the masses “have been exhausted”.

As has been said, we do not deny that the MFA has Bonapartist traits, that it tends toward Bonapartism. But the predominant trend since the fall of fascism and the appearance of the government of the MFA has been the opposite: more and more advances and gains of the masses.

The Bonapartist traits oppose this tendency; this is the main danger confronting the Portuguese mass movement today. But a danger is precisely that: a probable evil; not a present evil. The danger could become a reality only after a defeat of the masses, or after they have worn out their forces on partial and disorganised struggles, or after battles that were necessary but not fought. Again we see that Horowitz empties a political formula of its class content and applies it to a regime that can only base itself on victories of the counter-revolution, whereas the situation is that the workers movement has been winning positions and acquiring a more and more favourable relationship of forces with respect to the bourgeoisie.

The definition of the Portuguese government as Bonapartist suffers from another serious shortcoming. The emergence of a Bonapartist (or democratic, or fascist, or Kerenskyst) regime can only take place in the midst of the commotion since it implies moving from one stage of class struggle to another. That is why Trotsky says: "*the passage from one system to another signifies the political crisis*" (*The Struggle Against Fascism in Germany*, op. cit., p.440; Trotsky's emphasis). Therefore, the comrades who maintain that the MFA is a Bonapartist government must define precisely what political crisis opened the Bonapartist stage. Caetano's fall? Spínola's fall? The defeat of the Spínolista putsch in March? Precisely, these three political crises constituted victories of the revolution, not of the reaction. On the other hand, Caetano's regime was post-fascist Bonapartist, and Spínola was a candidate for the role of Bonaparte. Does the MFA mean only a changing of the guard in a Bonapartist regime that is but the continuation of those of Caetano and Spínola? In that case, the defenders of this thesis should, to be consistent, state that nothing has changed politically in Portugal since 25 April 1974 (except, perhaps, the "strength" of Bonapartism, which would now be weaker).

There is, however, a definition that fits perfectly the characteristics of the MFA regime. Except for the fact that, up to now, it has not produced a Kerensky, the Portuguese government has all the traits of Kerenskyism or a popular-front government. It is a typical class-collaborationist government, weak, unstable, which covers up its bourgeois character with leftist rhetoric and a profuse demagoguery around measures (undoubtedly progressive) that it has found itself compelled to carry out: nationalisation of the banks and monopolistic companies. Finally, it is structured as a popular-front government, in which a bourgeois party participates with the opportunist and reformist parties of the workers movement (the SP and CP) and a politico-military organisation that establishes the relationship between the former and the latter.

Because of the fact that it is not the product of a parliamentary combination, but of an ongoing workers revolution, and because it finds itself in a situation containing important seeds of dual power, the Kerenskyst government of the MFA is very similar to that of Kerensky himself.

The adoption of this definition and the rejection of the Bonapartist definition do not alter the principled position that we as revolutionary Marxists must take toward this government. It has not ceased to be a bourgeois government, and thus we must not place the least bit of confidence in it, we must not give it any political support, and we must not participate in it under any circumstance. It is our class enemy and our aim must be to defeat it by means of the workers revolution.

But it is of decisive importance in determining the policies that revolutionary Marxists must follow towards it. Let us recall the example of the railway line with two terminals (fascism and a workers state): If the government is Bonapartist, the country is moving to the right, and thus it is urgent to put the brakes on this trend and try to reverse it. If it is Kerenskyst, we must step on the accelerator to speed the march toward the socialist revolution and free ourselves from the counter-revolutionary government (which does not mean that we will move at the same speed at all times, but we will have to make adjustments according to the circumstances with which we are faced during the journey).

Another feature of Bonapartism is that being a reactionary government in almost pure form, which does not base itself on any popular sector, it reveals itself as an almost direct government of finance capital. That is, in the case of Portugal, a government of the seven major families. This would have undoubtedly been true in the event of a victory by Spínola. But, of course, that is not so in the case of the MFA government, which has partially expropriated the financial oligarchy.

Bonapartism is also a government of law and order, par excellence. And it is so, precisely because it bases itself not on parliament, but on the bureaucracy, the police, and the army. But, to be able to base itself on them, it needs a solid, disciplined police and army, ready to carry out the repressive orders of the regime. In Portugal, we have exactly the opposite. The former political police are practically dismantled. An openly deliberative atmosphere predominates in the army. The very existence of the MFA (a public political faction) contributes objectively to divide it. In some units, the soldiers are removing their commanders and they control the appointment of their replacements. In others, assemblies take place in which officers, non-commissioned officers, and soldiers participate on an equal footing. There have been cases of troops refusing to repress demonstrations.

Under such conditions, no Bonapartism is possible. And the crisis and disintegration of the army deepens day by day. The only way a Bonapartist regime might be established is through the previous restoration of military discipline. This is the aim of the Bonapartist tendencies within the MFA; the soldiers and the mass movement are marching in the opposite direction. Once more: Until the Bonapartist tendencies defeat the mass movement, there can be no Bonapartism in Portugal.

We do not think it is necessary to go on. The definition of the Portuguese government as Bonapartist does not withstand the least analysis. There is no doubt about it; it is a Kerenskyst government with elements of dual power, that is, a classical Kerenskyst government.

CHAPTER VII

The Armed Forces Movement

1. Institutionalised Kerenskyism

All Kerenskyst or popular-frontist regimes are made up of three elements: on one hand, the bourgeoisie; on the other, the petty-bourgeois or bureaucratic representatives of the workers movement; and in the middle, the mediator or conciliator.

This is the role that Kerensky played in the Russian revolution.

“Half Kadet and half Social Revolutionary, Kerensky was not a representative of the soviets in the government, like Tseretelli or Chernov, but a living tie between the bourgeoisie and the democracy. Tseretelli and Chernov formed one side of the Coalition. Kerensky was a personal incarnation of the Coalition itself” (*History of the Russian Revolution*, op. cit., Vol.2, p.139).

It is true that there is no Kerensky in the Portuguese government. It lacks this personal trait that Kerenskyism shares with Bonapartism. This circumstance does not hinder the accuracy of the definition that we have formulated. When the Trotskyists defined the Hindenburg government as Bonapartist, the objection was raised that this old marshal was the very negation of Napoleon, psychologically as well as socially. Trotsky quickly disposed of the question: He made it clear that the definition did not refer to the individual, but to the socio-political role that he played. Hindenburg’s Bonapartism was an institution, not an individual. Going beyond his personal characteristics, he was a symbol of the historic role played by Bonapartism in Germany.

We can apply the same criterion to the government of the MFA. Kerensky arose from the great petty-bourgeois Russian party, the Social Revolutionary party; but, at the same time, it had always been tied to the liberal bourgeoisie. And it was only from this party that a “conciliator” could emerge able to mediate between the bourgeois counter-revolution and the proletarian revolution. Almost 50 years of a political freeze in Portugal prevented the rise and consolidation of a petty-bourgeois party (and within it, figures closely linked to the bourgeoisie): This is the vacuum that the MFA fills, willy-nilly. And in this way, it makes up for the non-existent conciliator.

The parallel between Kerensky and the MFA is remarkable. The discussion of Bonapartism in the preceding pages could have taken place, in almost identical terms, in 1917. Trotsky points out the strong Bonapartist tendencies of Kerensky, tendencies that cannot be imposed owing to the victorious rise of the mass movement, which culminates in the taking of power. And, precisely because of this, because the Bonapartist tendencies are not able to impose themselves, the government is not Bonapartist, but another type of government: Kerenskyst, as we have already mentioned.

Another trait Kerensky and the MFA have in common is the lack of trust and sympathy the respective bourgeoisies feel for their “saviours”: “Their understanding that the régime of Kerensky was the inevitable form of bourgeois rulership for the given period, did not prevent the bourgeois politicians from being extremely dissatisfied with Kerensky, nor from preparing to get rid of him as quickly as possible. There was no disagreement among the possessing classes that the national

arbiter put forward by the petty bourgeois democracy must be opposed by a figure from their own ranks” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.157).

It is the retreat of the workers and mass movement that elevates and keeps the Bonapartist government in power. The exact opposite occurs with Kerenskyism — each advance of the workers and mass movement elevates it more and more:

“The dialectic of the compromise régime, and its malicious irony lie in the fact that the masses had to lift Kerensky to the very highest height before they could topple him over” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.140).

This is precisely what is happening with the MFA. After the fall of Caetano, it obtained only a few secondary ministries in the first provisional government. In a short time, the colonial movement and the mass struggles in Portugal confronted Spínola because of the delay in granting independence to the colonies and in calling a Constituent Assembly, causing the fall of the prime minister Palma Carlos. The MFA then imposed one of its men (Col. Vasco Gonçalves) as prime minister. When the mass mobilisations caused the fall of Spínola, the MFA was able to gain total control of the cabinet. The defeat of the 11 March “putsch” enabled the MFA to get the big workers parties and the most important bourgeois party to sign the “Pact-Program”, which recognised the right of the MFA to control the government for a period of three to five years. It is along these same lines that Trotsky says, “The July government of Kerensky had been endowed with unlimited powers” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.153). But as in the case of Kerensky, this elevation above the classes and the different parties has little practical value, since the MFA does not have the power necessary to impose its decisions. Trotsky says that “without Kerensky, compromisism would have been like a church steeple without a cross” (Ibid., Vol.2, p.140). The MFA also crowns the building of the impossible conciliation of classes in the midst of the revolutionary storm.

Finally, let us look at another trait that equals the MFA with Kerensky: his disorganising, anarchic role. Everything he wants to put in order, he puts in disorder; everything he wants to construct, he destroys. This is exactly the opposite to Bonapartism, the regime of law and order par excellence although everyone (except the revolutionists) would like to see the MFA achieve this goal. In spite of this common desire of the bourgeoisie, the petty-bourgeoisie, and the reformist working-class parties, and the efforts they make along these lines, their goal is far beyond their reach. The order can only be the product of the triumph of the workers revolution or the bourgeois counter-revolution, and Kerenskyism is an intermediary between these two gigantic forces, and at the same time, their prisoner.

2. Political and Class Character

When *The Militant* draws its analogy between the Russian and Portuguese revolutions, it forgets that in the former the Social Revolutionary party and Kerensky existed, representing the petty bourgeoisie and fulfilling the role of intermediaries between the masses and the imperialist bourgeoisie. This forgetfulness raises some questions. What parties or organisms in Portugal reflect the petty bourgeoisie, mainly the modern middle class, the way the Russian Social Revolutionaries did? Or is the Portuguese revolution the first in which the petty bourgeoisie has no representation? And is the present government a class-collaborationist government without an intermediary or conciliator like Kerensky?

If we observe the Portuguese political panorama, we find that the bourgeoisie, as well as the working class, are clearly represented. The bourgeoisie, in its various wings, by the reactionary officers, Spínola, Costa Gomes, and the bourgeois political parties. The working class has two petty-bourgeois, or bureaucratic, representatives: Socialism and Stalinism. The petty bourgeoisie, however, apparently has no specific organisation that represents it. This is no accident: All the Portuguese parties are, in a certain sense, new, because 50 years of fascism gave them no opportunity to test their cadres and leaderships. This is doubly so in the camp of the “people”. The CP and the SP based their ideology and apparatus on external factors: the first, on Moscow

and European Stalinism; the second, on the European Social Democracy. It is not in vain that they are representatives of an international class — and of its deformations. But the Portuguese petty bourgeoisie is not an international class. And its petty-bourgeois representatives are — they are obliged to be — the most genuine, most backward national product, with no ties to international apparatuses. These, too, were the characteristics of the Russian Social Revolutionaries.

It seems to us that the Portuguese petty bourgeoisie, for lack of historical time, had to improvise its political representation, dividing it among several non-specific organisations. This division of its representation fell largely in the Socialist Party and to a lesser degree to parties in the collateral parties of Stalinism. This vacuum forced a specific political organisation to be improvised within the army, to represent fundamentally the modern middle class: the MFA. In Russia, the “progressive” and low-ranking officers joined or responded to a big petty-bourgeois party, the Social Revolutionaries, organising themselves in the army in cells or branches of this party. In Portugal, the absence of such a big party of the middle class fragmented the representation of that class into two or three political sectors, but forced it to organise itself in a united form within the army.

In view of the fact that the Portuguese government is supported on two bases: the structure and the officers structure of armed forces in a crisis, and the agreement and support of the reformist parties, a division of tasks has developed between these forces and the MFA. It is the same division that occurred in Russia between the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries on the one hand and Kerensky on the other. The Portuguese reformist parties placate the masses and try to demobilise them, as did the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries in Russia. The MFA-Kerensky acts as a conciliator-bridge between them and the political and bourgeois-military organs (parties, high commands and officer corps).

The MFA plays this role because of the lack of “traditional” organisms or political personalities that could do it and because of the peculiar characteristics of the Portuguese “February”. It is no accident that Kerensky came from the right wing of the Social Revolutionaries, practically from the border between them and the liberal bourgeoisie. He was the man whose political practice formed a bridge between the revolutionary masses — represented in their time by the various nuances within their party — and the liberal bourgeois Kadets. But in Portugal fascism brought about a “February” without the existence of big historic parties representing the different classes. This is one of the reasons why 25 April, the Portuguese February, did not find its expression through the Portuguese “Social Revolutionaries” and “Kadets”, but through its military substitutes. If the 25 April “putsch” was essentially military, its personalities and organisms should likewise be military. And, if the lower-ranking officers who organised the MFA played the role of the Social Revolutionaries and Spinola that of the Kadets, Vasco Goncalves, along with the MFA itself, replaced Kerensky. It is no coincidence that Vasco Goncalves is a lieutenant colonel and not a member of the lower-ranking officers. His role as a bridge between it and the generals, his location on the border, the limit, between one and the other placed him in prime position to play the role of intermediary. And as an intermediary in the sector in which the crisis broke out, the armed forces, just like Kerensky had been in the broadest framework of the relationship between the parties of the Russian revolution when the social crisis broke out. From there to rising to the position of a Kerensky among the Portuguese parties, classes, and military factions as a whole, there was only a single step; a step that was taken by the MFA and its leader Vasco Goncalves. As a result of this role as intermediary, the MFA itself became an echo chamber for its partners, thus becoming polarised in different tendencies and living from crisis to crisis as a result of these antagonisms.

This class character and function is the only coherent explanation of the history, ideology, and politics of the MFA. The other definition, upheld by many comrades, that the MFA is the direct organ or representative of the imperialist bourgeoisie, is wrecked by insoluble contradictions. How to explain the frictions and struggle between Spinola, who gathered around him the bourgeoisie after the 25 April coup, and the MFA, which represented that same bourgeoisie? Are they two wings of the same bourgeoisie that confront each other in attempts of civil war, that hit at each other with “putschs”, that battle each other, that persecute each other, and, while one flees the country, the other “carries on demagogy”? It all looks like a game of chess played by a single person: the

imperialist bourgeoisie. But these insoluble contradictions are resolved (and the character of the MFA, its history of oscillations between the bourgeoisie and the revolution, with clashes in both directions, becomes crystal clear as soon as we consider it as the political representation of the modern middle class within the army, elevated so as to have to play the role of conciliator between the ongoing workers and colonial revolution and the Portuguese bourgeoisie and its political and military representatives.

This class definition does not in the least mean that we place the slightest confidence whatsoever in the MFA. On the contrary, the analogy with Kerensky is more useful than ever. Like him, the MFA is the representative of the imperialist middle class, which has thrived upon and will continue to thrive upon the exploitation of the colonies, just as the Russian Social Revolutionaries wanted to continue the predatory war of Russian imperialism “up until the final victory”. They have likewise thrived upon and want to continue to thrive upon the exploitation of the working class; they are, therefore, doubly reactionary.

The contradictions shaking the MFA simply express the contradictory character of the class it represents: With its plebeian, “socialising” methods, it is the most formidable tool that the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie has now. If it fulfils such an outstanding role in the bourgeois strategy, this is owing to the extreme weakness of the bourgeoisie and of the empire, it is defending. This weakness, which caused the crisis in the army, has left the imperialist middle class as the only obstacle facing the revolution, not only in Portugal but also in the empire. The imperialist bourgeoisie will have no better instrument until it is able to discipline the army and develop a fascist movement.

3. Two Dangerous Interpretations of the MFA and the Crisis of the Armed Forces

Many are the interpretations that have been given of the MFA phenomena, some of them extremely dangerous.

There are those who argue that it is “a new phenomenon”. It is true that the MFA, like any phenomenon, has something new about it, but it is very serious to assert that something is new simply to evade making a class analysis. It is precisely from the angle of the relationship between the classes that the MFA is not essentially new: It must be explained by the revolutionary impact and the dynamic of the three main classes of society within the armed forces. These comrades become confused in the face of the real crisis and the dual power in the Portuguese armed forces, and they attribute this situation to the MFA, when in reality, the MFA is the expression of the situation. Just as many “leftists” were in favour of a republican Spain and its government, or of the “February revolution in Russia” and its government, going becoming ecstatic over the revolution as a whole, including dual power, some comrades do the same with the Portuguese revolution, placing an equal sign between the MFA and the gains of the masses. In this way, they hide the clear and precise functions of the MFA: to be the conciliating agent of the imperialist counter-revolution. In the true fact that without a workers revolution and dual power in the army there would be no MFA, they dissolve the equally true fact that the MFA is the petty-bourgeois counter-revolutionary instrument of the imperialist bourgeoisie to block the revolution inside and outside the army.

But there is an opposite interpretation, also incorrect and dangerous: the one given by those who state that the MFA and imperialism are the same, i.e., that the MFA is the expression within the army of the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie. This definition has one merit: It is a class analysis. But it has one defect; contrary and symmetrical to the previous definition: It also begins with the true fact that the MFA is part of the officer caste of a bourgeois and imperialist army and that its government is imperialist, but it dissolves this generality into the equally true fact that it is not the imperialist bourgeoisie but its petty-bourgeois agent and that it is part of a class collaborationist government in which it acts as an intermediary between its bosses and the workers and colonial movements.

Trotsky has pointed out repeatedly that the armed forces express in an extremely succinct form the character of the society in which they exist. Portugal does not escape this rule. The Spínola wing of the army reflected, without a doubt, the Portuguese bourgeoisie. Today, the reactionary officers who continue to be the majority and who — according to the Trotskyist soldier — are organised and distributing leaflets in the barracks; continue to reflect it. They will continue to exist and respond to the imperialist bourgeoisie. Another wing of the bourgeoisie has accepted collaboration with the MFA and the workers parties to halt the revolution. We believe that the person who best reflects this very weak wing, formed more by ideologists than by big bourgeois figures as such, a true “shadow of the bourgeoisie”, is Costa Gomes, Spínola’s friend. It is Costa Gomes himself who is in charge of establishing the connection between this sector and the MFA. Maybe there are some officers who respond to Costa Gomes. If this is so, we have not heard that they constitute an important sector or that they are organised. They would be something like the “military shadow” of the “shadow of the bourgeoisie” represented by the present president of Portugal.

The MFA is distinct from the officers who are openly Spínolists, reactionaries, and representatives of the bourgeoisie, and it is distinct from the Costa Gomes wing. Horowitz, in the article already referred to, recognises this when he tells us: “Despite the MFA’s policy differences with the dictatorship, and despite a vaguely populist or radical ideology on the part of some MFA officers, the MFA was not a genuinely independent formation. The officers of the MFA comprised one wing of the Portuguese imperialist army. They did not even have the goal of breaking completely with the reactionary senior officers” (Emphasis added). It is a good portrait or description, but it does not make a deep analysis. It does not say what class interests the different wings represent, including the MFA.

In our opinion, nothing can be understood if we do not begin from the fact that the MFA is a product and at the same time the detonator and accelerator of the crisis of the imperialist army defeated in a colonial war, that is, a manifestation of the class struggle. Starting from this point we can advance. Everyone agrees that it is an organisation of the lower-ranking officers (with a few senior officers) and that there are three tendencies within it: the pro-Stalinists, the pro-Socialists, and the independent Socialists. Despite this, some insist that it is a mere agent or direct representative of the high command or of the imperialist bourgeoisie. But this definition cannot explain, among other things, why they fight with the Spínola wing, which also represents the imperialist bourgeoisie. We believe that Trotsky gives us the answer when he describes the impact of the Russian revolution on the army:

“(…) the Petrograd garrison followed the workers. After the victory it found itself summoned to hold elections for the Soviet. The soldiers trustfully elected those who had been for the revolution against the monarchist officers, and who knew how to say this out loud: these were volunteers, clerks, assistant-surgeons, young war-time officers from the intelligentsia, petty military officials — that is, the lowest layers of that *new middle caste*. All of them almost to the last man inscribed themselves, beginning in March, in the party of the Social Revolutionaries, which with its intellectual formlessness perfectly expressed their intermediate social situation and their limited political outlook” (*The History of the Russian Revolution, Vol. I*, p.167, emphasis in original).

For Trotsky, then, the entire lower officer class reflected “the lowest layers of that new middle caste” and was joining the petty-bourgeois party par excellence, the “Social Revolutionaries”, in which some high-ranking officers of the staff also joined. We believe that this definition is adapted very well to the MFA phenomenon. It is an organ of the lower-ranking officers, composed of “petty military officials” and — in this respect the similarity is notable — by “young war-time officers”. The big difference, as we have already seen, lies in that, because of the absence of a big party of its class, they organised themselves in a faction within the army. But this “socialising” faction also corresponds through “its vague ideology” to an “intermediate social situation” and the “limited political outlook” of those within it.

Those who insist on comparing the MFA to the high commands and the imperialist bourgeoisie do not carry this definition to its ultimate consequences: They should say that the MFA is similar to the Kadets of the Russian army during the revolution. But they do not dare go so far and opt instead for a more ingenious comparison: They compare it with the republican officers in the Spanish civil war. Despite the fact that this case involved building a bourgeois army and in Portugal of reconstructing it, the comparison seems to us to be accurate. If it is meant to refer to the improvised officer structure of the militia, the comparison is correct. The officers of the Fifth Regiment, of the POUM, of the SP, made an effort to impose a military discipline that would enable them to reorganise a viable bourgeois army. Meanwhile, the parties to which they belonged were dedicated to halting the revolution outside of the army. But these officers could fulfil the function of convincing, organising, disciplining the militia because they were Stalinists, Socialists, or POUMists; i.e. because they were not directly bourgeois officials, but the petty-bourgeois representatives of the working class.

They represented popular frontism, class collaborationism in its pure form within the army. The officers belonging to the working-class parties disciplined the militia so they would submit to the military shadow of the Spanish bourgeoisie that had remained in the republican camp: Miaja and company. The MFA is playing the same role, except that as we have already seen, it shares this task with the reformist parties: The latter act on the mass movement, the former on the army.

But we do not believe that the comparison refers to the officers of the Spanish militia. Nobody can maintain that the POUMist, Socialist, and Stalinist officers were the same as the high command of the Spanish army or the Spanish bourgeoisie. Without doubt, the reference is to the officers of the Spanish army who remained on the side of the republic. If this is so, the analogy is absolutely false. The republican officers were not politically organised nor were they part of an army in crisis. They were segregated from the Spanish army, which, under Franco's command and with no internal crisis, fought the republic. The republican officers were not a socio-political phenomenon, nor are their counterparts in Portugal, those who might agree with Costa Gomes. They were individual exceptions: the military shadow of the political shadow of the bourgeoisie that existed in the republican camp. The MFA, however, like the militia officers, is trying to reconstruct the bourgeois army to put it under discipline to the bourgeois government, and within the army, to the high command.

CHAPTER VIII

The Crisis of the Regime and the Bonapartist Plan of the MFA

1. A Regime in Permanent Crisis

Defenders of the Bonapartist character of the Portuguese regime run into an insoluble contradiction. Bonapartism is, by definition, a regime of order, capable of playing the role of arbiter between the different social sectors and enforcing its decisions. Nothing can appear further from this than the MFA, which lives in a state of permanent crisis, and which in little more than a year has undergone four or five crises. In general, our authors have given up characterising the meaning of these crises, limiting themselves to saying that they existed and were overcome. Trotsky's law, which states that changing from one regime to another provokes a political crisis, was not taken into account by these comrades. They did not ask themselves this simple question: What kind of regime or project of regimes entered into conflict, provoking these crises? Some are still more curious since they are of the opinion that Spínola's attempted coups were Bonapartist. If we follow the laws of logic, we should arrive at the conclusion that they were Bonapartist coups intended to topple one Bonapartist government to replace it with another, also Bonapartist government.

We cannot avoid an embarrassing comparison. Stalinism of the Third Period defined all governments and bourgeois parties as fascist. Trotsky pointed out *ad nauseum* again the absurdity of the Stalinist picture of fascist governments fighting against the attempted coups of fascists.

It would have been farcical if it had not been tragic: The Communist militants could not understand what it was all about; and as a result, they were incapable of combating genuine fascism, which they would not even distinguish from the other bourgeois parties and the Social Democracy. Unfortunately, this method, which was responsible for the big defeats suffered by the workers movement 40 years ago, is in vogue again within our ranks. Everything is Bonapartism: both Spínola's coup attempt as well as the government against which he directed this attempt. Thus, our parties and militants are disarmed when it comes to confronting the real danger: in his time, Spínola; today, the course the MFA government is following.

The chronic crisis of the MFA government and its increasingly acute crises clearly demonstrate that this is not a Bonapartist government. And, in addition, they point without ambiguity in the right direction. There is only one form of bourgeois regime that has this characteristic as an essential trait (not episodic): Kerenskyism.

This is so because Kerenskyism is a form of "abnormal" bourgeois government, a consequence of the rise of the proletarian revolution and its own impotence. In every normal capitalist regime, the mobilised masses play no role whatever. In a parliamentary-democratic regime, they intervene only indirectly, through the vote they cast from time to time. The first thing the more democratic bourgeois constitutions lay down is that the people govern only through their "representatives". In Bonapartist and fascist regimes, in general, they even do without the fiction of the government being "representative", and the government rules directly through the bureaucracy. In either case, a passive role is reserved for the masses: The Peronist "*sui generis*" Bonapartism coined a very illustrative phrase: "From home to work and from work to home".

The revolutionary tide turns this upside down. The masses take to the streets and take part fully in the political life of the country, creating with their mobilisations a de facto power parallel to that of the bourgeois state. This working-class power has not yet been able to give rise in Portugal to soviet-type organisms, but despite this, as spontaneous and molecular as it still is, it keeps the bourgeois power constantly in check.

Two powers confronting each other cancel each other out (at least, to a large degree). The result is a political vacuum that the bourgeoisie cannot tolerate. Kerenskyism is a regime whose normal state of being is disorder: This is why it cannot last very long. A new bourgeois order (parliamentary, Bonapartist, or fascist) must replace it or the socialist order of the proletarian revolution.

Hence the concern and the urgency with which the bourgeoisie seeks to reconstruct a normal bourgeois regime. The crises of the Portuguese government are the result of these attempts. We have already quoted Trotsky: “The passage from one system to another signifies the political crisis”. Each crisis of the Portuguese regime was an expression of the counter-revolutionary attempt to change “from one system to another”, which the masses prevented and which, contradictorily, strengthened the revolution and weakened the counter-revolution, sharpening the Kerenskyst characteristics of the government. It is no coincidence that the most serious crises, up to now, were those of September and March, when Spínola tried to impose a change of regime.

The crisis detonated by the struggle that is developing today between the MFA and the PCP on one hand, and the SP and PPD [Partido Popular Democrático — Democratic People’s Party] on the other, is the result of another similar attempt: the attempt of the Bonapartist wing of the MFA (with the support of the CP) to overcome Kerenskyism through the imposition of a Bonapartist regime.

2. Spínola Vs the MFA-CP-SP Bloc

We have already pointed out how the first attempts by the Portuguese bourgeoisie in the proper sense of the term, to rapidly overcome the Kerenskyst regime were Spínola’s three attempts to impose a strong government. Even if his political project was Bonapartist, it is quite probable that it was oriented objectively toward fascism, to the extent that it sought a counter-revolutionary mobilisation of the petty bourgeoisie, appealing to the famous “silent majority”.

The setback suffered by this plan after the defeat of Spínola and the flight from the country of a large number of capitalists has meant that this project is not currently eminently political — there is nobody with enough strength to execute it — but economic. It is a matter of economic sabotage by means of the disorganisation of the economy, the flight of capital, the closing of factories, layoffs, rising prices, etc. All of this, combined with the economic isolation to which Portugal has been subjected by imperialism, has created a chaotic and unbearable situation, which, in turn, generates the conditions for the emergence of fascism, to the extent that it begins to foster desperation in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. At the same time, the return of the settlers who are fleeing the revolution in the African territories will add new contingents to the possible mass base of fascism, and the same can occur even with the unemployed working-class sectors.

This does not mean that the emergence of fascism is inevitable, although it will become more likely longer the crisis continues because of the lack of a revolutionary alternative for the working class. The MFA, as we already saw, opposed the Spínolista attempt, and for now, it has not embarked on a fascist-type course. But the possibility cannot be discarded that like all petty-bourgeois movements, a wing of it will arise that will orient itself in that direction, reflecting precisely, if it takes place, the turn toward the fascist counter-revolution by sectors of the middle class. Anyway, this is not the perspective for the immediate future.

Spínola was confronted not only by the masses but also by the governmental MFA-CP-SP bloc. This bloc of the democratic petty bourgeoisie was opposed to Spínola’s attempts to prevent

the Constituent Assembly and the negotiation of political independence for the colonies. But, in opposing the aspirant to dictator, each of the components of this bloc defended its own specific interests and from different points of view:

- The Communist Party, the main opposition to Spínola, had no chance at all of continuing to participate in a government based on the defeat of the workers movement. On the other hand, Spínola's policies of immediate negotiations with the European Common Market made the possibility of participating in his cabinet even more remote. But there was also another profound reason, perhaps even weightier than the loss of ministerial portfolios. Had Spínola triumphed, Cunhal's exit from the cabinet would not have been as placid as the retirement of Thorez and Togliatti from the French and Italian cabinets after the war. Cunhal would not have been able to play the role of "opposition to His Majesty" in a peaceful parliamentary regime. On the contrary, Spínola's victory would almost certainly have given the green light to the "silent majority" — i.e., the reactionary petty bourgeoisie — to launch a "witch-hunt", especially against the Communists, which would have meant a regime with at least fascist features.
- The Socialist Party for its part needed — and needs — a parliament and its elections in the same way that lungs need air in order to breathe. The SP is nothing without a parliamentary regime. Because of this, despite agreeing with Spínola with regard to speedy admission to the European Common Market, it did have a tactical difference with him — the parliament — which, for a reformist party, is a matter of principle.
- Finally, the MFA, although led by Vasco Gonçalves turned mostly to an agreement with the reformist parties, and had within it a Spínolista tendency of a certain importance. Once again, the similarity with Kerensky stands out. It is well known that Kerensky, up to a certain point, played Kornilov's game. The same thing occurred with the MFA and Spínola. These doubts and oscillations of the MFA between the reformist parties and Spínola will become a constant in it. They are doubts over the bourgeois-democratic or Bonapartist variants of putting a brake on and defeating the revolution. Spínola's "putschs" and the colossal mass mobilisations that were unleashed against them, turned the MFA toward a united front with the reformist parties, but without abandoning its pursuit of a Bonapartist plan to bring the mass movement under control once and for all.

During this entire period of unity in the petty-bourgeois MFA-CP-SP bloc, the common program and ideology were bourgeois-democratic. The aim was to achieve a parliamentary system, beginning with the Constituent Assembly, which would channel the rise of the mass movement into the blind alley of bourgeois democracy. Bourgeois-democratic institutions are not progressive, taken as absolutes. They are progressive so long as the mass mobilisations have neither reached a revolutionary level nor created organs of power. They cease being so, and become relatively counter-revolutionary or relatively progressive when the class struggle has advanced beyond the bourgeois-democratic limits. This is the case in Portugal today, with its organs of dual power: the workers and soldiers commissions.

This counter-revolutionary parliamentary plan is supported, as Horowitz correctly points out, by the most lucid sectors of the bourgeoisie, which see it as the best possibility for freezing the mass movement without resorting to bloody methods, which, moreover, they are in no condition to apply and whose results would be unforeseeable, a gamble of all or nothing. It is a plan similar to the one applied to block the revolution in Western Europe after the war. But it is incomparably weaker despite the fact that those parties that are strongest in the electoral arena, the SP, and the PPD, have given it unconditional support.

The weaknesses of this plan lie in various factors. One of these is that unlike Western Europe after the war, the Portuguese bourgeoisie does not have the guarantee that the presence of Allied occupation troops signified, especially the US army, which was victorious, disciplined, and without the slightest trace of an internal crisis, exactly the opposite to the present Portuguese army. Also

lacking in Portugal is the strong parliamentary tradition of Western Europe. But these are not the only elements of weakness in the parliamentary plan. There are others.

In the first place, there is the strength of the revolutionary upsurge of the workers and mass movement. In the second place, there is the absence of strong bureaucratic organisms of the workers movement like the ones that existed in France and Italy, in which Stalinism was able to exercise iron control. In the third place, the fact of being the major working-class parties in those countries made the CPs favour parliamentarism; the opposite is occurring in Portugal today. Finally, there are two more factors that weaken still further the plan for a parliamentary counter-revolution. These are, on the one hand, that any bourgeois-democratic regime would weaken still more the already weak Portuguese bourgeoisie in face of a sudden attack by the big imperialist powers, and, on the other hand, that the general crisis of imperialism makes less and less viable these types of regimes, which in order to maintain themselves need a minimum of social and economic stability.

Because of all these factors, a parliamentary counter-revolution could place the bourgeoisie itself in serious danger: That the workers and mass movement, driven by a dizzying revolutionary upsurge, could utilize for its own purposes the democratic-parliamentary opening, escaping all electoral control thanks precisely to the weakness of the bourgeoisie and its own bureaucratic apparatuses.

3. The Revolutionary Upsurge Turns the MFA Toward a Counter-revolutionary Policy and Ideology

Faced with the weakness of the bourgeois-democratic plan and the intensification of the workers and colonial revolutions, the MFA has begun to turn toward a counter-revolutionary Bonapartist policy. It is thus attempting to impose a Bonapartist government whose fundamental objectives are the following: to eliminate all the germs of dual power; take away from the masses the democratic rights they have won and block the conquest of new rights; continue to control the empire under a neo-colonial form (especially Angola); guarantee an upward trend in capitalist production; and negotiate from a position of strength their partnership with the senior imperialist powers.

The fundamental reason for this change in the MFA resides in the extremely acute contradictions that reign in Portugal, which make more urgent the need for the MFA to transform itself into a strong government able to “rise” above them. In government, the MFA has to contend with a colossal upsurge in the movement of the workers and soldiers crystallised in embryonic forms of dual power, and with the Angolan colonial revolution. In addition, because it is a senile, backward imperialist power, Portugal has to face and negotiate with stronger imperialist powers, which try to utilize its crisis and decadence to become its senior partners. These contradictions — at one pole the workers and colonial revolutions, and at the other the pressure of the big imperialist powers — have divided the Portuguese bourgeoisie and its petty-bourgeois agent, the MFA, into different sectors, troubled by different problems. How to stop the workers and colonial revolutions? How to lose as little as possible in the negotiations with the big imperialist powers?

This turn toward a Bonapartist policy manifests itself in a clear counter-revolutionary ideology. The MFA has ceased making any statements in favour of democracy and pluralism of parties, characteristic of the past year when it confronted Spínola and has begun to speak of “direct democracy” and of the organs of power that emerged from the mass movement against formal parliamentarism. All of this is seasoned with the “march toward socialism”.

The goal is obvious: Unable to come out against the democratic rights of the workers and mass movement, the MFA is attempting to pit proletarian democracy against them, using for this purpose criticisms of bourgeois democracy taken from the Marxist arsenal. They have not invented anything new: Bonapartism and fascism have always opposed bourgeois democracy and have demagogically used our criticisms of it to justify their counter-revolutionary and antidemocratic politics. Part of this demagogic manoeuvre is the attack on the Socialist Party and the reactionary

bourgeois parties which are demanding democratic rights. A Marxist truth is thrown against them: All of them are agents of the counter-revolution. But this truth, separated from another, much more important one — the main counter-revolutionary agent at present is the government of the MFA with its Bonapartist plan — is transformed into a demagogic lie, designed to restrict democratic rights.

The other campaign is the so-called battle for production. According to the ideologists of the MFA, the problem is to increase production in order to build socialism, or come closer to it, not in favour of the bourgeoisie, but in favour of the working class. As part of this demagogic campaign, the better to deceive them, the masses are told that the progressive measures adopted under pressure of the struggles of the movement of the workers and the masses — the nationalisations for example — are also measures in the march toward socialism.

Combining the two most urgent needs (to deceive the working and colonial masses in order to put a brake on the revolution and to resist the European Common Market so as to strengthen the indigenous imperialism), the Bonapartist wing of the MFA raises as its dominant ideology “anti-imperialist nationalism”, attempting to copy the forms of the nationalist movements of the colonial and the semi-colonial countries. By doing this, Portuguese imperialism, through its petty-bourgeois agents of the MFA, continues in the old imperialist tradition: masking its plundering with an attractive ideology, to mobilise in its behalf the opinion of the working class and the petty bourgeoisie.

Since it came into being, imperialism has hidden the genuinely bandit character of its colonialization under the guise of “civilizing” the backward countries. Later on, when England, France, and the USA were enjoying to the full their colonies and power, they raised the slogan of “defence of democracy” against their rivals who came late to the division of the booty. These countries — Germany, Italy, Japan — promoted in turn the ideology of the “superior race” and other suchlike stupidities in order to deceive the masses and lead them to the slaughter. They were expanding imperialisms that wanted to take the colonies away from the old empires, surfeited with subjugated countries.

But Portugal is not even a shadow of the old imperialisms, nor is it a shadow of Nazi Germany or Japan. It cannot raise the banner of democracy because it is used by its enemy-partners of the European Common Market. Nor can it use the banner of the “superior race”, because it is not expanding, but decaying and crisis-ridden, and its economic power would not enable it to conquer even the Republic of Andorra. It has to be content with saving whatever it can of its old empire from the colonial revolution and from the attack of the big imperialist powers. To do that it has had to invent a new ideology. What is better than disguising itself as nationalist, as anti-imperialist? If the masses believe it, then their main enemy is not their own imperialism but other, stronger imperialisms.

The ideology of the MFA is similar to the counter-revolutionary nationalist ideologies of other small or decadent imperialisms. When the tsarist empire was collapsing, the Russian Social Revolutionaries discovered that it was necessary to continue the imperialist war so that “revolutionary” Russia would not be subjugated by the Prussian imperialist barbarism. It is similar to the anti-American Canadian nationalism and to the sector of the British bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie who voted against entering the European Common Market.

Like those nationalisms, the nationalism of the MFA has nothing progressive; it is reactionary no matter how you look at it. To avoid confusion, it is essential that we resort to the clear distinction that Marxism makes between the nationalism of colonial and semi-colonial countries and that of imperialist countries. The former is progressive; it weakens imperialism. The latter is counter-revolutionary; it favours imperialism precisely because it is the nationalism of an imperialist country. For this reason, we Trotskyists defend backward countries against attack by an imperialist country, but favour defeat of our own imperialist country in a war with another country, whether that country is imperialist or not. For a consistent Marxist, the best is always “defeat of the imperialist country”, no matter whether it is backward and senile, or young and full of riches and colonies.

Logically, as the weak imperialism that it is, the MFA's imperialism will be very careful not to touch the property of other imperialisms. It will be content with nationalising the businesses of the Portuguese oligarchy and the property of those who abandoned the country, but in order to place them at the service of the bourgeois imperialist state, to remove them from workers control. Thus they can use them as their trump card in negotiating with the colonies and other imperialisms, in the service of Portuguese imperialism. Because of this, if a financial and commercial war breaks out between the imperialist bandits of the MFA and European imperialism over control of the Portuguese colonies, our mission would not be to come out in favour of the poor imperialism against the rich one. We should wash our hands, "the lesser evil is the defeat of your own country".

In its counter-revolutionary politics, the MFA's best ally, or better said, its ally come what may, has turned out to be the Communist Party.

4. The MFA-CP: New Counter-revolutionary Front Provoked by the Upsurge

We have stressed the relatively progressive role that the Communist Party, and to a lesser degree the MFA and the SP, played in calling upon the workers to oppose the demonstration prepared by Spínola in attempting his first frustrated coup. We have pointed out that this was one face, the positive one, of the contradictory politics of the petty-bourgeois democrats: to stop the Spínolista counter-revolution. We also said that the CP, as well as the SP and MFA, fully presented the other face, the negative one: to likewise stop the workers revolution by demobilising the masses. Finally, we held that this policy of the petty-bourgeois democrats began to change, provoking internal divisions as the workers upsurge intensified and the immediate danger of a bourgeois counter-revolution subsided: The MFA and the CP turned toward a Bonapartist counter-revolution; the SP and its ally the PPD remained in the camp of bourgeois democracy. Let us examine the reasons.

Already before Spínola's second coup, this wing of the petty-bourgeois democracy, the MFA-CP, in the face of the deepening workers upsurge, began to move toward the counter-revolution. It attempted to curb and crush the mass movement, taking away from it the big concessions already obtained, especially the Constituent Assembly, through the famous "Pact", and trying to prevent the conquests placed on the agenda by the factory occupations and the development of workers commissions. It was then that the rapprochement between CP and the MFA began, agreeing to impose on the rising workers movement a Bonapartist government based on the MFA-CP-Intersindical combination. The correspondent of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, already mentioned above, testifies: "No one has been able to control successive waves of the social movement during this period except the Portuguese Communist Party, which, changing its strategy en route, has made an effort to contain and control the occupations in Alentejo, a region traditionally considered Communist or Communistic".

From that moment on, the MFA government reinforced the agreement reached with the CP since early in the year when the workers upsurge began. The more advanced and deeper character taken by the upsurge since the frustrated "putsch" explains why, according to the same correspondent, "11 March brought about a temporary improvement in PCP-MFA relations".

In combination with sectors of the MFA, the CP has become the transmission belt within the workers movement for a new Bonapartist plan; such is the character of the political counterattack of the petty bourgeoisie that we pointed out.

This counter-revolutionary plan is not the same as Spínola's plan of delivering a single definitive blow to the revolution. The extraordinary strength of the workers and mass movement compels them to use other methods: to proceed by denting and crushing the movement a little at a time and by sector. Similarly, instead of openly confronting their gains, they recognise some of them in order to transform them into counter-revolutionary weapons with which to attack other gains. To rule, one must divide.

If the SP-PPD bloc has severed relations with the Bonapartist wing of the MFA-CP, it has not done so, of course, out of love for the democratic rights of the workers movement. It has been and still is a counter-revolutionary bloc, a mortal enemy of the factory occupations, of the seeds of dual power, of the nationalisations, and of the workers revolution. It is the continuer of the counter-revolutionary plan of the MFA-CP-SP previous to 11 March, of the Constituent Assembly and parliamentary plan to ward off the revolution. The present opposition of the SP-PPD to the MFA-CP stems from their differences over which is the best counter-revolutionary tactic. But this alone does not explain why the rupturing of the previous front was so violent. We believe there are two weighty reasons that made this break or clash inevitable. The first is that, as we pointed out above, for the SP (and possibly also for the PPD) the existence of a parliament is a matter of life or death, because without a parliament it ceases to be what it is, an electoral party. The second reason stems from its role as an agent of European imperialism and of the strongest sectors of Portuguese imperialism that believe their only way out is through association with the European Common Market.

5. The Communist Party: Agent of the Kremlin and the MFA

We have seen that the MFA has become divided over and is oscillating between two projects: Bonapartism and parliamentarism. Its big ally in backing the first plan is the Portuguese Communist Party.

Horowitz explains this alliance of the CP and the MFA as resulting from the MFA's need of the CP to control the workers movement. He forgets that the CP is also almost indispensable for the MFA's neo-colonial manoeuvre because of the influence of world Stalinism over the nationalist movements and especially that of the Portuguese colonies. In other words, the MFA needs the CP to halt the workers revolution in Portugal and the colonial revolution in the empire. But if this explains the MFA's policy toward the CP, it does not explain why the CP does not accept the parliamentary game nor why the CP clashes with the SP. There must be deep reasons for this Stalinist game.

Bourgeois journalists counterpose the policy of the Italian and French Stalinists to that of the Portuguese Stalinists. However, although they are formally different, they are not so in terms of content. The whole world Stalinism — and particularly European Stalinism — has a common feature: They are agents of the Soviet bureaucracy. They are tied to it not only ideologically but — and this is the essence — as appendages of an extremely powerful apparatus. They faithfully serve the diplomatic needs of the Kremlin, i.e., they adjust their politics to the specific circumstances of each country the better to defend the bureaucratic apparatus of which they are a part, and whose head and heart is to be found in Moscow.

Here is the key to the question. Stalinism does not currently carry out everywhere in the world the same popular frontist policy it applied the period between 1935 and 1947 of total and absolute subordination to “democratic” imperialism against fascism. Today the Soviet Union is the second world power, and it defends this situation with a policy of maintaining the “status quo”. This policy has two sides. One is to stop the world revolution, and the Kremlin agrees with imperialism on this point; the other is to try to impede the strengthening of imperialism, which it does by trying to add to the “neutral countries”, i.e., those relatively independent of the big imperialist powers within the capitalist world. This second aspect of the Kremlin's policy manifests itself essentially through diplomatic manoeuvres of support and the support of local Communist parties to the regimes in semi-colonial countries that take relatively independent positions in relation to imperialism. Such is the case with India, Peru, Egypt, Bolivia under Torres, and Chile under Allende. This neutrality, in the final analysis, winds up benefiting US imperialism by curbing the revolution. Examples: Chile, Egypt, Bolivia.

Portugal is not a semi-colonial, but an imperialist, country. However, it is an imperialism that, although weak, is momentarily autarchic, relatively independent of the big imperialist powers. And the Kremlin wants this to continue as long as possible since Portugal's “neutrality” strengthens its

policy of negotiating with imperialism in containing the world revolution, but from a position of strength, not of complete subordination as during the period from 1935 to 1947. (This does not rule out the hypothesis that, in the final analysis, the Kremlin and the Portuguese CP are playing a game on behalf of the United States. Alvaro Cunhal's statements are extremely friendly and suspicious when he refers to US imperialism; so are Kissinger's statements, when he refers to Portuguese imperialism.)

These basic considerations should frame our interpretation of the political "differences" between Portuguese, French, and Italian Stalinism. All three serve the Kremlin but must adapt their politics to their respective national realities. The CPs of France and Italy are the reformist parties that receive the highest vote in a relatively stable parliamentary regime. The Portuguese CP finds itself under heavy pressure in a revolutionary situation of dual power, in which it is a minority in the electoral arena. Through the parliamentary electoral path, the Portuguese Stalinists cannot pressure the bourgeoisie to allow them to access government and thereby safeguard capitalism and strengthen the Kremlin's diplomacy.

That is, the CP does not in a major way serve the plan of the parliamentary wing of the MFA, linked to the European Common Market. But, because of its centralisation and its cadres, the Portuguese Stalinism is the only one that can collaborate with the counter-revolutionary Bonapartist plan of the MFA. The CP is currently the only party that can control the unions and maybe, with time, the organs of dual power.

The different structure and technique of the CP, its "Bolshevik" inheritance, its daily work in the mass movement (although with a reformist or counter-revolutionary policy), the creation among the masses of specific organisations, cells or factions tightly centralised, all make it, unlike the SP, indispensable to the MFA. The SP, with an exclusively electoral organisation, lacking a base structure and discipline, formed as an electoral movement rather than a centralised party, is not indispensable to the MFA right now. It is because of this that the CP, rather than the SP, is considered an essential ingredient in all counter-revolutionary politics at this stage of dual power.

In principle, we can point out that this tendency of Stalinism to collaborate with Bonapartism or Bonapartist projects is not an isolated phenomenon, limited to Portugal. It has been repeated in other countries where the CPs were in a minority in the electoral arena as, for example, in Peru. But although their electoral weakness may be the immediate explanation for such policies, we believe that it is a more generalised phenomenon than may appear. In Uruguay, it continually urged the "Peruvianist" military figures to take power by means of a coup d'état, and it does not appear to us to be accidental that General Seregni was the head of the electoral coalition, the Frente Amplio [Broad Front].

Even in countries where Stalinism is a true electoral power, it has shown a tendency toward Bonapartism. In postwar France it was the champion of the reorganisation of the bourgeois army, and, in the beginning, it decidedly supported de Gaulle. In Italy during the same period, Togliatti, faced in a referendum with deciding between a monarchy and a republic, came out in favour of the former, and only the repudiation by the Stalinist rank and file forced the leadership to change position.

In the case of Portugal, there are two very significant historic examples that can serve to illustrate this permanent trait in Stalinist politics in revolutionary situations. In Chile under Allende, the CP was and advocate for the admission of the military in the cabinet and for a rightist bourgeois policy, against the proposals of the Socialist Party.

In republican Spain, this extreme-right policy was applied to the bitter end. The Stalinist CP imported the counter-revolutionary police methods of the GPU to Spanish soil to help implant the semi-Bonapartist regime headed by Negrin, which clashed not only with the POUMist and anarchist currents but also with the SP of Largo Caballero.

There must be a Marxist interpretation of these phenomena, a law to explain them. Our hypothesis — and we stress that it is a hypothesis, a line of investigation, not a conclusive opinion — is that the Bonapartist tendencies of the CP have a fundamental reason: They are part of the

Soviet bureaucracy's apparatus. This factor exerts its influence in a dual way. In the first place, the Communist parties do not have a direct relation with the proletariat and the masses of the countries in which they operate, but do have a direct relation with the Kremlin's apparatus, which permits them — unlike the Socialist parties — to operate much more independently of the feelings and desires of the broad masses.

In the second place, the apparatus on which they depend is Bonapartist; it is the Bonapartist dictatorship of the Soviet bureaucracy that “infects” all of the Communist parties.

The CPs are, in their own way, “Bonapartist”, totalitarian to a most extreme degree. The reason for their discipline and politics comes from the bureaucracy, from their own international and national “apparatus”. This explains their bureaucratic or “Bonapartist” centralism. This gives them the ability to collaborate with the bourgeois Bonapartism from apparatus to apparatus.

The Socialist parties are a different case. These can exist only under the conditions of bourgeois democracy. Added to this is their better connection with the masses, which forces them to reflect more directly the needs and aspirations of the masses; the lesser weight of the party's bureaucratic apparatus; and on an international level, the fact that they do not form part of a great world apparatus whose axis is the bureaucracy ruling the Russian workers state, the second world power.

All of these objective aspects should not make us forget the content of Stalinist politics. Stalinism, as a current in the workers movement, is a result of the counter-revolutionary influence of the subsidence of the first triumphant workers revolution. It is not the same as the Social Democracy, which arose from the upsurge of the workers movement under the bourgeoisie in the highly favourable circumstances of bourgeois democracy. This makes the Stalinists much more alert and responsive to the needs of counter-revolutionary Bonapartism, which will use it as an agent, than the Socialist parties, which are tied a little more closely to the needs of its rank and file, and above all, to bourgeois-democratic rights.

6. The Socialist Party and Its Alliance With the PPD and Costa Gomes

If the CP is the great ally of the MFA in its counter-revolutionary Bonapartist plan, the SP is the ally of the PPD and Costa Gomes in the equally counter-revolutionary semi-parliamentary plan.

According to Livio Maitan, “(...) a large part, perhaps the majority, of the working class has seen the PSP as the instrument of its struggle. This may be regarded — and correctly — as a result of the insufficient experience of the Portuguese workers with Social Democratic reformism and a lack of clarity about the roles actually played by the various formations in the workers movement. But, at the same time, it must be understood that the PSP has been able to take advantage of the revulsion of sections of the proletariat against the PCP's bureaucratic methods, its open opposition to a series of struggles, and its seizing the leading positions in the unions by manoeuvres at the top. Moreover, the PSP has been able to take advantage of the general demand for the right of democratic expression, which, after all, is natural in a working class that has emerged from nearly a half century of dictatorship. Certainly at least some of the strata of the proletariat did not take favourably to the famous pact imposed by the MFA, which made the Constituent Assembly virtually a dead letter” (Livio Maitan, “The MFA or Revolutionary Workers Democracy”, *Intercontinental Press*, 9 June 1975, p.759.)

As an explanation of the way in which the PSP came to be the largest current — without a “perhaps” — in the workers movement, it is totally correct. But this does not exhaust the analysis of the PSP since it does not take into account its leadership or its program.

For his part, Horowitz makes different mistakes. The first is that in his entire article he mentions this party only once, despite its being the majority party in the working class. The second is that, like Maitan, he does not denounce the SP as an agent of European imperialism. This is surprising since this characteristic is blatantly proclaimed by its top leader. “My party”, says Mario

Soares in *Le Monde Diplomatique*, “is democratic. It is the largest Portuguese party. I do not deny that it had a democratic parliamentary and reformist plan that would have enabled it to avoid the great commotion that broke out over the linking of Portugal to the Europe of the Common Market”. Horowitz’s third mistake juts out when he says that “the Communist Party’s policy can lead the Portuguese working class into a terrible tragedy, for it *can disarm the workers in face of the future danger of a major violent repressive attack by the ruling class*” (emphasis added). And doesn’t the Socialist Party have any responsibility in “disarming the workers” in face of the “ruling class”, inasmuch as it is the majority working-class party? Not to denounce the SP’s politics, not to clearly and unmistakably point out the “division of labour” with the CP in “disarming the workers”, is to unconsciously play the game of reformism. In the justified desire to defend the democratic rights of the SP from the attacks of the MFA-CP, some underline its character as the majority working class party. But, when the time comes to assign responsibilities for disarming the revolution, this characteristic seems to vanish. However, the SP has been the permanent ally of the MFA-CP in the struggle against the workers revolution. It is not accidental that it remains intimately linked to Costa Gomes, that it signed the antidemocratic “Pact”, and is opposed to the nationalisations and factory occupations.

Summarising then, there is a sharp contradiction within the SP, which is compounded by the fact that, with the exception of its leadership cadres, who were educated by European Social Democracy, it is a new party, under construction, lacking older cadres. It is more a movement than a solidly structured party. Its strong rivalry with the MFA and CP comes from its dual character: an ambiguous and unclear expression of the highly positive feelings of the movement of the workers and the masses toward winning and defending democratic rights; a transmission belt of European imperialism (we would need to study whether this last aspect has been reinforced by a certain sympathy toward the European Common Market by a part of the large sector of the populace that benefits from money sent by workers who have emigrated to some of the countries within it).

CHAPTER IX

The MFA-CP Launches a Counter-Attack Against the Masses and the Colonial Revolution

1. The Weaknesses of the Revolutionary Upsurge Facilitate the MFA's Counter-revolutionary Manoeuvres

The Portuguese workers revolution, with the tremendous impulse given to it by the rank-and-file of the workers and the mass movement, nonetheless displays tragic weaknesses as far as organisation and political leadership are concerned. The first is the fragmentation and weakness of the dual power. The rank-and-file workers, tenants, and soldiers commissions, the factory occupations, the soldiers' assemblies, still fully retain their spontaneous, molecular, and decentralised character. Soviets do not exist in Portugal, nor does it exist any other central organ of workers power that — while not necessarily duplicating the structure of the Russian soviets — could draw together the existing organs of dual power. This situation, which had its positive aspect insofar as it converted the rank-and-file commissions into bodies escaping the control of the reformist parties precisely because they were not integrated into a centralised organisation, is now increasingly showing its negative side. The more urgent the taking of power by the proletariat becomes, the more striking is the absence of an institution of the workers and the mass movement that is able to organise it, that is widely recognised, and that is in a position of assuming the government of the country.

It is very dangerous to delude ourselves in this regard, the February demonstration of the workers commissions was far less numerous than that of the Intersindical. This demonstrates the present weakness of the dual power. They are powerful seeds and nothing more. They are far from being the revolutionary organisation of the Portuguese masses. At the moment it is the organisation of only the most advanced sectors. This character is aggravated because of the confusion within the workers movement and because of the criminal policies of the ultraleft.

The second fundamental weakness, which is at the same time a cause and a product of the first one, is the division among the workers parties. The confrontation between the bureaucratic, petty-bourgeois leaderships of the two big reformist parties, to which the role of the no less petty-bourgeois ultraleft Maoist groups as a third figure in the dispute must be added, has prevented the development of revolutionary united front organisms of the workers movement. Each one of these three currents tries to gain ground in the sector where it sees the best possibilities of increasing its influence: the Socialists in the parliamentary arena, the Stalinists in the trade unions, and the Maoists in the workers commissions. And each one fights in every possible way against those organisms where it is weak. Thus, Socialists and Maoists attack the Intersindical, the Stalinists attack the Constituent Assembly, and the Socialists and Stalinists attack the workers commissions, the strikes, and the factory occupations.

In relation to the seeds of dual power and the workers commissions and the soldiers committees, the Maoists and ultralefts have followed a dreadful line. They are repeating the no less dreadful line of Spanish anarcho-syndicalism, but without its generosity, influence, and positive aspects. The ultraleft line of these sects — unfortunately, influential in the rank-and-file organisms —

is transforming these into just another tendency, sectarian and ultraleftist, in the workers movement and not into what they should be, the organisation of the masses par excellence. Thus, they use the organisms they control to support their sectarian and ultraleft political line, without taking into account the needs of the mass movement. By acting in this way, they isolate these organisms from the political life of the country, when they should be its axis. They thus make it possible for the government to turn them into “useful idiots”, its best propaganda tool to deceive and divide the masses. The sectors influenced by the ultraleft make speeches in favour of the socialist revolution, forgetting a small detail: against whom to make this socialist revolution. The most confusion concerns the “whom”. For some, it is the right wing of the MFA. For others it is imperialism. For others further out, it is the capitalist enterprises, and thus they raise workers control. All of them forget to consistently point out that the main enemy, against whom the revolution is going to be carried out, is the government of the MFA, and that any workers or popular current that goes against the government of the MFA is relatively progressive and we have to try to incorporate it, thus unifying and broadening the orbit of the rank-and-file organisms. But to do this they must be organisers of the masses against the MFA government.

There are thus no working-class organisms — neither a parliamentary workers faction, nor soviets, nor trade unions — constituting true organisms of a revolutionary united front of the workers. The division of the ranks of the workers movement, for which the petty-bourgeois leaderships are responsible, is, then, the second weakness of the Portuguese revolution.

The third one is the lack of a revolutionary Marxist party with mass influence. Its absence prevents the masses from drawing the lessons of their experience with their reformist leaderships and the government. There is no one to denounce the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of the MFA government; no one to explain the need to take power; and no one to defend at the same time the rank-and-file commissions and to fight for their centralisation; no one to defend the Intersindical and to fight for its democratisation, no one to defend the Constituent Assembly and democratic rights and to fight for the full sovereignty of the former and the extension of the latter; no one to defend the occupations and pose the need for workers control. Trotskyism exists, but it is still not listened to by broad sectors of the masses nor begun to be seen as an alternative leadership.

These three fundamental weaknesses combine to hold back a process whose objective conditions are more than ripe enough for it to result in what would be its logical and necessary conclusion: the taking of power by the working class. And they facilitate, right now, the Bonapartist manoeuvres of the MFA-CP to use some sectors of the masses against others in order to consolidate its position as arbiter and to strengthen its government.

2. The Attack on the Workers Movement and the Seeds of Dual Power. The Battle for Production

A first sector in which the counter-revolution has launched its counterattack is that of trade-union organisation and the right to strike. Thus it has tried to control, from the word go, the first organisms born in the upsurge: the industrial unions and Intersindical. Thus, on 30 April, the government announced that according to the “forthcoming trade-union law, there will be no elections in the trade unions whose leaderships were elected after 25 April 1974”. The industrial trade unions were thus left under the control of the counter-revolutionary Stalinists, sweeping aside any possible attempt to democratise and transform them into revolutionary unions. This included banning even the Socialists and Maoists from running for union posts. In parallel, an antistrike law was aimed at liquidating the enormous gain for the workers movement represented by restoration of the right to strike after 50 years of illegality. Stalinism, meanwhile — grateful for the government’s gift of the perpetual leadership of the Intersindical — agreed to join with it in declaring that the Portuguese workers’ greatest task was the “battle for production”.

The MFA and CP together have sought in this way to achieve solid economic support for capitalist Portugal by resorting to greater exploitation of the workers. A part of this plan was a

campaign for “austerity”. Together, they constitute the basis for a thousand percent bourgeois plan, against which the working class is not raising its own economic plan. The objective is to strengthen the weak Portuguese imperialism against the European Common Market. “Although the economic plans advanced by the PSP and the PPD”, this is, according to the previously quoted *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the opinion of high government officials, “can possibly increase expansion with the massive aid of foreign capital, they would correspond to a model of consumption that would not be acceptable to a Portugal desirous of reducing social inequality”. Even though it is true that after 11 March the anti-strike law and the “battle for production” have not had major consequences, they hang over the head of the workers like a sword of Damocles.

Another gain the counter-revolution would like to liquidate is the elements of dual power that have developed within the army. But here, the MFA acts without intermediaries. At its 7 April assembly, it issued a public announcement that clearly indicates its objectives: “to reinforce the revolutionary will and discipline”, that is, to eliminate all the elements of control by the soldiers and lower-ranking officers over the higher officers. Although along with the battle for production, a top priority objective is to neutralise the soldiers and sailors committees, the MFA is acting in this area with great tactfulness and caution. Its aim is to control and eliminate the soldiers committees, i.e., to wrench them away from the direct control of the ranks, in order to reinstate discipline. To achieve this, it has resorted to the demagogic manoeuvre of incorporating some non-commissioned officers and soldiers into the MFA’s Assembly, obviously as a minority. Another manoeuvre has been to encourage the formation of committees under the discipline of the higher officers. In this area, it is in the full stage of making concessions. After all, it is very difficult to repress an armed people.

But it is precisely in the realm of the relations of production, in what has happened with the factory occupations and the workers commissions, where the new counter-revolutionary policy stands out most clearly since they are the most important advances of the present Portuguese revolutionary process. The MFA and Stalinism are transforming — or trying to transform — the occupations and workers commissions of a profoundly anticapitalistic and revolutionary character into their pro-capitalist and counter-revolutionary opposite by nationalising businesses and naming administrators of the bourgeois state to manage them. The workers movement in its upsurge carried out de facto expropriations of the businesses they occupied, and it administered them through the workers commissions; the MFA-CP, accepting the progressive fact of expropriating the affected sector of the bourgeoisie, in turn, expropriated the workers, taking away from them what was already in their hands, and imposing their bourgeois administrators.

The first aspect of the plan began with the nationalisations. On 14 March, the banks occupied by their workers were nationalised; the 15th, the insurance companies; on 15 April, steel, electricity, petrochemical, oil, and transportation industries were nationalised; and on 7 May, the announcement was made of a plan to take over the pharmaceutical industry. The fact that the greater part of the nationalised industries had already been occupied by the workers reveals the manoeuvre of the government of the MFA; namely, accepting the accomplished fact that the bosses were no longer owners of the occupied businesses, prying them out of direct control by the workers, and handing them over to the bourgeois state. In any case, the nationalisations have been an indirect recognition of the working-class character of the present revolution, since they point toward a workers state expropriating the capitalist class. But, by themselves, they do not in the least way have a socialist character. It is a bourgeois state and not a workers state that controls the nationalised industries. At the most, they lead to state capitalism or an approximation of it.

At the same time that it expropriated the occupied businesses from the workers, the government also expropriated from the workers commissions the control they exercised over the businesses (a task facilitated by the fact that the workers commissions were not centralised and were influenced by Maoism and its populist ideology). *Le Monde Diplomatique* describes in the following way the proceedings of the MFA and evaluates its possible objectives:

“When the popular initiative or action of the workers unleashes conflicts with the bosses, the MFA places a commission, composed of technocrats it selects and delegates of the workers, in charge of restructuring the functioning of the industry. In cases where the business has been abandoned by the boss or in cases of bad management, the workers take production into their hands or demand its nationalisation. (...) Only the future will reveal if this dual power, which allows the MFA at present to base its actions on a new ‘aparty’ force, in face of the electoralist strategy of the parties on the left, will be channelled or neutralised to the exclusive advantage of the MFA, that is, of a new state.”

These functionaries of the MFA, occupying their posts as managers and working in direct contact with inexperienced working-class leaders, Maoists and ultralefts, facilitate the manoeuvre of actually incorporating them, owing to the lack of a clear class perspective of power, into the apparatus of the nationalised industries of the bourgeois power.

Along with this sector-by-sector procedure of expropriating the workers movement, the occupied industries, and the workers commissions, the counter-revolution is planning a broader, more far-ranging manoeuvre. Since the beginning of the year, the MFA and the bourgeoisie have warned that the dual power is becoming generalised and that they are faced with a grave problem. The working-class parties continued to be useful to them in castrating the workers and mass movement, but they were no longer sufficient. The Socialist Party was useful if there were elections and parliaments; Stalinism was useful in the trade unions field, but not so much in the rank-and-file committees. What was to be done? It was then that a high-level demagogic manoeuvre was begun, for which the “useful idiots” of the ultraleft, especially the Maoists, were used. We have already noted that low-ranking officers and soldiers in a minority in relation to the MFA were incorporated into the armed forces; the formation of committees under discipline to the officer corps was authorised, as a pacifying concession. (And here is the ingenious touch of the Portuguese bourgeoisie and the role played by the ultraleft in the workers and mass movement.) What was necessary was to form and institutionalise “Popular Assemblies” controlled by the MFA-CP. The objective of these Popular Assemblies was to bring the workers, tenants, and soldiers commissions under their discipline, and through them, to the MFA-CP, which could thus control them much more easily. Thus is repeated the Spanish experience in which committees of “juntas” were set up by the parties in order to control the genuine committees.

It is for this reason that one begins to hear phrases with a “soviet” ring. People are beginning to talk of bypassing the workers parties, accepting the accomplished fact that the committees have already bypassed them and their politics. They talk of legalizing and institutionalising the workers committees and incorporating them into the government by way of the Popular Assemblies in which they would be integrated. There is talk of “direct democracy”. The counter-revolutionary petty bourgeois of the MFA and CP do not become too irritated when the world press begins to mention the word “soviets”, or “new state”.

This is not the first time the bourgeoisie has tried the tactic of institutionalising the organs of workers power. In a German state of the first postwar period, soviets were included in the constitution. If the Assemblies manoeuvre were successful, the committees would become transformed into organs of workers power within the institutions of bourgeois power. But, like any manoeuvre based on demagoguery, on concessions, it can prove to be very dangerous for the bourgeoisie in a revolutionary situation like the one through which Portugal is going through: If it encourages the process of forming rank-and-file committees, it could act as a catalyst for a wider extension and centralisation of them. Let us not forget that the first soviet emerged in 1905 out of a negotiating initiative by the tsar of all the Russians.

Furthermore, there is another Bonapartist objective: to achieve a certain amount of support from the masses for the attack on democratic rights and on the Socialist Party, which won a wide majority in the elections.

It can carry out this audacious manoeuvre without running major risks, owing to the atomization of the mass movement into various workers parties, an infinite number of commissions

of workers, tenants, and soldiers committees, enabling it to carry out manoeuvres by pitting some against the others.

3. The Attack on the Democratic Gains

Another fundamental ground in which the counter-revolution is launching a counterattack through the Bonapartist MFA-CP bloc is the great democratic gains achieved by the movement of the workers and the masses since 25 April. As a sample, let it suffice to mention the control of the mass media by the CP apparatus and the creation of COPCON (Mainland Portugal Operations Command) to replace in repressive work the practically destroyed Salazarist political police.

This attack on democratic rights has reached its greatest expression in the subjugation of the biggest democratic conquest of the masses: the Constituent Assembly. That was the purpose of the famous "Pact" the MFA forced the political parties to subscribe to. Signed on 13 April, it consists of a commitment by the parties to leave the government in the hands of the MFA and the Council of the Revolution for five years, pledging not to challenge the military's rule during that period. Its objective is to achieve a stable government, without any bourgeois-democratic guarantee to the workers and mass movement; it is a bourgeois insurance policy against any possibility of the parliamentary regime being used by the proletariat. In an immediate sense, it is a concession to the CP for services rendered and in view of its electoral weakness. This was the ingenious formula found by the MFA-CP counter-revolutionaries to expropriate the biggest democratic conquest of the mass movement.

But even though they were held within that framework, the results of the elections were, nevertheless, highly significant. First, the fact that about half the electorate voted for the workers parties indicated the deepness and magnitude of the upsurge Portugal is going through. Second, the tremendous influence of the SP on the population in general and on the working class became strikingly clear, since it won by a wide margin in the proletarian neighbourhoods. Paradoxically, it revealed its lack of organisational structure among the workers, since that influence has not been reflected in the trade unions and rank-and-file commissions. Thirdly, the election showed the loss of prestige the CP has suffered because of its policy of close collaboration with the government and abandonment of principles. Finally, it demonstrated the profound anti-totalitarian consciousness of the Portuguese workers, who voted for the party that more than any other formally defends public freedoms and rejected the one that attacks them in complicity with the MFA, while at the same time paying no attention to the call for a blank vote spread in an underhanded way by the MFA. Evidently, with a good class instinct, the workers, and sectors of the middle class feel a healthy fear of totalitarian methods and want to expand democratic rights.

A third area in which democratic rights have come under attack directly involves the workers movement. The Bonapartist MFA-CP bloc has gone so far as to stop the SP from expressing itself through *Republica*, in a measure antidemocratic to the core, since they are not dealing with a fascist party, but the majority working-class party. The outlawing of the Maoists is also part of these attacks against workers democracy.

The struggle for democratic rights is a new field of battle between the revolution and the counter-revolution, which opened on 11 March. The measures already taken will be followed by others, since the counter-revolutionary course followed by the MFA-CP will continue its inexorable march as long as the workers and mass movement does not defeat it.

In the empire, the MFA-CP continues the military occupation of Angola, in a neo-colonial manoeuvre to use the clashes between the guerrilla movements to continue its domination of the former colony. This is the other face of the domestic anti-democratic policy.

CHAPTER X

For a Consistent Leninist-Trotskyist Course

1. The SP's Reformism and the Demagoguery of Popular Assemblies Should Not Stop Us From Recognising the MFA-CP as the Main Enemy

Two of the manoeuvres carried out by the MFA-CP to divert attention from their counter-revolutionary plan have had an impact on some sectors of the left, including of our own movement. The first one is their attempt to cover up their counter-revolutionary offensive against the workers, the colonial movement, the soldiers, the SP, and the Maoists by denouncing the counter-revolutionary aspects of the SP. In this way, they can better attack the highly positive democratic tendency of the workers who voted for socialism, and thus divide the masses over false issues.

The second one is their attempt to make it appear that by organising "Popular Assemblies", they favour the development of a sort of "proletarian or people's dictatorship", a direct government of the workers.

The historically counter-revolutionary character of the PSP should not be permitted to hinder us from perceiving the present reality, as has occurred with many comrades. Echoing the counter-revolutionary demagoguery of the MFA, which — correctly — accuses the SP of being in the service of imperialism, of being against the direct democracy of the workers and soldiers movement, and of having formed a bloc with the PPD, many currents identifying with Trotskyism, as well as many other working-class currents, consider the pro imperialist reformist ideology and policies of the SP and its bloc with the PPD to be the main present danger facing the workers movement. Many do not say it as clearly as that, but when they concentrate on attacking the SP more than the CP, their starting point is the same erroneous conception. We recognise that the SP, along with the Catholics and the PPD, helps just as much or even more than the demagoguery of the MFA to provoke this confusion.

First of all, it is necessary to emphasise that the MFA-CP is as much in favour of imperialism and in opposition to direct democracy as the SP is. The only difference lies in the methods and demagoguery they use to hide their purposes.

It is precisely the methods they use to achieve the same counter-revolutionary objectives what makes the MFA-CP the primary and most immediate enemy of the workers and colonial movement, relegating the SP to a secondary level. And this is so because the MFA-CP's plan is Bonapartist, for the complete suppression of the workers democratic rights. The SP holds the opposite position: defence of bourgeois democracy and democratic rights against the MFA-CP and against the organs of power of the workers revolution.

The latter is a fundamental issue. At this moment the SP and its policy of defence of democratic rights and the parliament coincide, in a limited way, with the needs of the workers and mass movement, and help in resisting the Bonapartist plan of the MFA-CP. We stress its "limited" character since the most urgent need is the development of the organs of workers power, the workers revolution, and not a defence of bourgeois democracy. But the defence of the Socialist Party's

rights is not only defence of bourgeois, but also workers, democracy. And against the Bonapartist aims of the MFA-CP, even the defence of bourgeois democracy is progressive. We do not see any contradiction between defending democratic rights and the rights of the SP and developing the organs of workers power; on the contrary, it is a necessary, explosive, revolutionary combination. This is so because without winning over the Socialist workers and neutralising or winning over the urban and rural middle class that votes for the SP, there can be no revolution in Portugal, which is based on the workers commissions and soldiers committees. Abandonment of the bourgeois-democratic program, refusal to defend the daily *Republica*, have the same significance as if the Bolsheviks had not defended the Constituent Assembly throughout 1917, which would have resulted in the soviets not being able to take power.

This discussion on who is playing the most reactionary role at present in Portugal has been obscured by the formation of “Popular Assemblies” by the MFA. Many think, perhaps correctly, that they constitute the beginning of a soviet organisation. From a distance, it seems to us a hasty conclusion. Even assuming the best variant — that these Popular Assemblies transform themselves into soviets — this would not change at all what we have said. The tsarist police and the tsar did not lose their counter-revolutionary character for having favoured, at the beginning, the first soviet as a manoeuvre that they supposed would weaken the underground revolutionary movement. Nor did French imperialism change its nature when it promoted in Algeria the formation of Arab community organisations that it thought it would be able to counterpose to the nationalist guerrillas. But, in both Russia and Algeria, the revolutionists turned the counter-revolutionary manoeuvre upside down. Basing themselves on the fact that the entrance of the masses into these organisational forms gave them a revolutionary content, the revolutionists went with the masses, and, deepening the revolutionary aspect, turned the manoeuvre into a “boomerang” against the counter-revolutionary governments.

It is because of all these circumstances that we say the greatest present danger to the Portuguese revolution is the MFA government with its Bonapartist plan. Unfortunately, we have not heard other comrades give the same essential definition.

Livio Maitan tells us — in “The MFA or Revolutionary Workers Democracy?” — of “inevitable coup attempts”. This is ambiguous. What is the meaning of “inevitable coup attempts”? A Spínola-type coup, or a “Catalonian May” by the MFA-CP? Who is in a position to carry out a “putsch” today in Portugal? Comrade Maitan should state more precisely the real, concrete, immediate danger now facing the Portuguese workers.

Horowitz, for his part, denounces the MFA-CP. He tells us, however, that the CP’s biggest sin is to disarm the masses in the face of reaction, and he compares the Portuguese situation to that of Chile before Pinochet. We think this is an error. The Portuguese Pinochet, Spínola, has already been defeated. He does not have enough strength at the moment to attempt another coup. And the CP’s major sin is not disarming the masses in the face of the danger — non-existent at the moment — of a coup d’état by the Portuguese bourgeoisie, but of serving as the direct executor, along with the MFA, of a counter-revolutionary Bonapartist plan. The immediate danger for the working class is not a Spínola-Pinochet coup, which would drown in blood the workers and the CP itself, but the Bonapartist offensive mounted by the MFA-CP, who, in common agreement, will try sooner or later to repress the workers.

Let us recall the historical example we used before: The MFA is passing from the demagogic stage of the Largo Caballero period to the Negrin-Stalin stage, although it is combining the two.

Never before has it been shown how indispensable a correct theoretical analysis is to enable a correct political course to be laid out. Only on the basis of a precise characterisation of the current Portuguese regime can a revolutionary Marxist political line for Portugal be reached.

- Those impressed by the demagogy of the MFA-CP and the formation of Popular Assemblies, who hold that the main enemy is the Socialist Party and who are silent about the role of the MFA-CP, could defend their position only if they characterised the current Portuguese government as a “left”, “*sui generis*” Bonapartist government of a semi-

colonial country, or as a workers and peasants government, or, simply, as a bourgeois-democratic or Bonapartist government facing a major danger: fascism. In this case, the SP would have turned into the organisation of the ultra-reactionary and desperate petty bourgeoisie, which, spurred by finance capital, had opened a civil war against the democratic, popular, workers movement. If this were so, we would be witnessing a genuine socio-political miracle requiring revision of the theoretical heritage of Leninism-Trotskyism, since, for the first time in history, the Stalinist fable of “social fascism” would have become a reality.

- The position of defending only bourgeois or proletarian democracy held by some comrades is based, consciously or unconsciously, on other theoretical premises; namely, that the present regime is plain Bonapartism, that we are therefore not facing a workers revolution with important embryos of dual power in the factories and barracks, that the workers movement is in a downturn, and that the only possible line because of this is a policy of defending bourgeois-democratic rights against the Bonapartist offensive of the present government.
- Finally, from the definition of Kerenskyism which we hold a completely different course from the two previous ones arises: developing the ongoing workers revolution to the point of taking power, defeating the counter-revolutionary MFA-CP government that wants to set us back to the establishment of a Bonapartist regime; and, to that end, development and centralisation of all the seeds of dual power, defence and development of all the gains, including bourgeois and proletarian democratic rights, thus winning over all the workers to the side of the organs of power of the working class.

2. Neither a Minimum Democratic Program Nor a Maximum Program of Exclusively Proletarian Democracy and Power. For a Transitional Program for the Workers Commissions and Soldiers Committees Taking Power.

We have already seen that the Portuguese masses face three dangers: the MFA-CP’s counter-revolutionary Bonapartist plan; the parliamentarist bourgeois-democratic plan of the SP and its allies among the Portuguese imperialist bourgeoisie; the economic strangulation caused by imperialist sabotage. Of these three, the most immediate danger is the MFA-CP’s antidemocratic, Bonapartist plan, since they are the ones in government and there is no immediate danger of either a new Bonapartist coup d’état or the emergence of a mass fascist movement.

This aspect of the present situation should not prevent us from seeing things as a whole, which is characterised by a Kerenskyist regime with powerful seeds of dual power, which unfortunately only mobilise a minority of the masses. The existence of this regime, as we have already pointed out, means that the situation is ripe or ripening either for the proletarian revolution or for turning back, toward a counter-revolutionary regime, whether parliamentary or Bonapartist (with time it could even be fascist).

In the current situation, two poles are counterposed: the MFA-CP’s Bonapartist counter-revolution against the seeds of dual power and any other expression of the mass movement that is relatively independent of the government: non-Stalinist trade unions, the Socialist and Maoist parties, etc. There are comrades who, very schematically, take into account only one of the elements of the reality: Some see only the offensive of the MFA-CP Bonapartist bloc; others ignore the counter-revolutionary character of the government and its role as the main enemy of the revolution, and take only dual power into consideration, forgetting about the other sectors of the mass movement, the majority Socialist Party, the Angolan masses, the workers and soldiers who have not joined the committees and who constitute a broad majority. In this way, opposing lines, all of them unilateral, have appeared in our movement.

Some comrades have outlined a correct, but partial, insufficient, position; defence of bourgeois and proletarian democratic rights and of the colonial revolution, both under attack by the reactionary MFA-CP. Thus they pose essentially a minimum democratic program and a call for the withdrawal of troops from Angola in the current stage of the Portuguese revolution, without linking these defensive democratic tasks to the seeds of dual power: the workers commissions and the soldiers committees. It would seem that the Portuguese government is bourgeois-democratic or Bonapartist in a normal bourgeois situation and has begun to attack democratic and workers' rights in a typical reactionary Bonapartist course. The socialist character of the revolution is in fact denied, reducing it to its democratic aspects.

This mistake of isolating the defence of democratic rights and the colonial revolution from the seeds of dual power and from the other serious problems facing the Portuguese masses has its opposite in the position adopted by other comrades. For Livio Maitan, the central axis of a revolutionary strategy lies in "establishing and spreading" the "organs of proletarian democracy" to fight the "inevitable coup attempts" and "the manoeuvres of local and international capitalism". "At the same time, the revolutionists must fight for the achievement of all the democratic demands raised by the broad masses" which "means" the struggle for union democracy" (The MFA or Revolutionary Workers Democracy?, op. cit., p.760).

As we can see, for Maitan the "organs of proletarian democracy" have a relatively remote and profoundly pessimistic, defensive, purpose: to fight the "inevitable coup attempt". Nevertheless, there is one way to prevent the "coup" or, if it is attempted, to defeat it immediately: the taking of power by the "organs of proletarian democracy". Why doesn't he say it? Why doesn't he point out that these organs are destined to take power, or in the opposite case, destined to disappear, since they are incompatible with the existence of a capitalist regime? Why doesn't he define them as organisations for the revolutionary offensive, which, even though they can tactically carry out defensive tasks, do not lose because of this their character of organisations for advancing the socialist revolution?

But there are other immediate, very urgent problems confronting the masses that Comrade Maitan's strategy does not consider, mainly the MFA's counter-revolutionary, anti-democratic plan. Must the "organs" fight it or not? It is not a matter, as Maitan says, of not "reinforcing the authority and organs of the MFA", as if what was involved was competition between mass organisations. Something more concrete and decisive is involved: to confront and smash the "authority and organs of the MFA" with the "organs of proletarian democracy," to combat and denounce its plans, and to prepare through struggle and propaganda for the inevitable physical confrontation with the government. Furthermore, the economic crisis and unemployment are worsening day by day and are the acutest problem facing the masses. Do not the "organs of proletarian democracy" have any tasks related to this? The Portuguese imperialist army remains in Angola to be used in the MFA's colonialist manoeuvres. Don't we have any proposals to make to the "organs" in relation to this? Freedoms are suppressed; the SP and the Maoists are persecuted. Do we demand that the workers commissions defend them?

Many comrades fall into the same error as Maitan: They make general statements in favour of the organs of dual power without relating them to the imperious needs confronting the masses, without structuring around them a program that considers and offers a solution to all the tasks of the mass movement, primarily to the most urgent and immediate of them all at this stage, the socialist revolution, the taking of power by these organs, the systematic denunciation of the MFA government and confronting it until an insurrection against it is won.

The "organs of proletarian democracy" are the most democratic form of organisation of the working class. Like any other organisational form they are precisely that, a form; they need a content, they need to know what their purpose is, what problems facing the workers they must solve. Without a transitional program that offers solutions to the most urgent problems facing the working class and the people, without posing that the central task of this organisational form is to carry out a socialist revolution against the MFA-CP government, the "organs of proletarian

democracy” become an empty form which can be filled with a reactionary content — temporary organs of the bourgeois state or of the unions — and which can then disappear with the direct victory of capitalist reaction. This is what can happen in Portugal today through the attempts of the ultraleft to transform the committees into organs of their political current, and letting the government manoeuvre with them.

Finally, can't we be more precise, more concrete, about the famous “organs”? Do they still exist or don't they? If they do not exist, we must state what has to be built. If they do exist, we must call them by their name. Are not the workers commissions and soldiers committees precisely what we believe them to be? Is that what the MFA's Popular Assemblies are? They are not, but can they become that? We must speak clearly, the revolutionary situation demands it more than ever.

We say this because of the lack of precision and clarity on the character, strength, and dynamics of these organs. Maitan tells us we must spread them. Do they control only a minimal fraction of the mass movement, as we have said? If that is so, we are faced with a life-or-death question in spreading these organs: We must attract to them the mass movement, principally the majority of the workers movement and the people who voted for the Socialists, as well as the peasants who voted for the bourgeois parties and the Stalinist workers. How to win them? By getting these organs to take the lead in the defence of all these sectors against the MFA government's reactionary offensive, transforming these “organs” into united organisations for the revolutionary mobilisation against the government. If we do not give this character to these organs, there is no way to spread them, and what is worse, they can be utilized as tools in the MFA's Bonapartist plan. By not denouncing the MFA as the main enemy of the workers at present, this manoeuvre is facilitated.

This should be the axis of our decisive, audacious intervention in any emerging organisation that can possibly become an organ of workers power. While the MFA's agents will enter these organisations, along with their “useful idiots” of the ultraleft, to pose divisionist, administrative issues or to attack the Social Democracy as “counter-revolutionary and an agency of imperialism”, we must enter them to denounce the government and defend the masses from its attacks. The agenda of the meetings of the “organs” of the rank and file should list only one point, with many sub-points: how to defend the Angolan people, the SP, the Maoists, the working class, the soldiers, and the peasants, from the government's counter-revolutionary attack. We must not permit them to divert us from this single — although multifaceted — objective of denouncing the government, of politically preparing the masses — by means of propaganda — for the inevitable physical, insurrectional clash with it. If we do not succeed in spreading the “organs” until they encompass the masses as organisations of dual power for a frontal struggle against the counter-revolutionary MFA government, up to defeating it, they will become not organs of power, but another ingenious manoeuvre by the bourgeoisie, which succeeded in deluding many elements in the ranks of the ultraleft. Once again, only a transitional program that unifies all sectors of the mass movement — beginning with the Socialist workers, who are the most numerous — can achieve the spread of the organs of power, whether they are the workers and soldiers commissions, or popular assemblies. And until we succeed in stopping these committees or embryos of dual power from being manoeuvred by the ultraleft and used by the MFA, we will not succeed in elevating them into an organisation for the revolutionary mobilisation of the masses. Today, unfortunately, those organs are controlled by the ultraleft. That is why our movement cannot wait even a minute for these committees to change their policies or for their ultra left leadership to begin to act. We must fight now, right from this moment, to establish the transitional program demanded by the situation, with or without the rank-and-file organisations.

At present, that means the fight in the front row, next to the Socialist workers, in the defence of democratic rights. That means raising now, at this moment, the slogan for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Portuguese troops from Angola.

It is through this struggle that we can give new life to the organs or embryos of dual power.

3. The Examples of Spain and France

What we have said is common knowledge to Trotskyists. In comparing the Russian and Portuguese revolutions, *The Militant* stresses the need for soviet forms. The Bolshevik party had, indeed, one central axis throughout the crucial year of 1917: giving all power to the soviets. All other demands — Out with the bourgeois ministers, Everyone against Kornilov, Boycott, Constituent Assembly, Peace, etc. — were merely tactical, combining with the basic strategy of the proletarian and socialist revolution taking power through the soviets.

It may be objected that this strategy was justified in Russia, where the soviets existed and were centralised throughout the empire, but not in Portugal, where nothing similar exists. This is not so. In any country where a pre-revolutionary or revolutionary period has opened up, Trotskyists have always adopted one central revolutionary strategy: to develop the existing seeds of dual power, or, where they do not exist, to build them as a way of orienting toward the socialist revolution and the working class taking power. That was how, in situations that were less revolutionary than the current Portuguese situation, Trotskyists raised as the central point of their program the creation or development of soviets or other organs of dual power. Such was the case in Spain starting in 1931 and France in the mid-1930s.

From 1931, a pre-revolutionary situation opened in Spain that was much less acute than the one that exists in Portugal today or in Russia in 1917, among other reasons, because the Spanish army had not suffered any crisis and thus could serve as the strongest bastion of the counter-revolution. Nevertheless, Trotsky never tired of pointing out that the only correct political course was to struggle to carry out the democratic tasks, but using as a central axis the development of organs of workers power.

“The masses of the city and countryside”, said Trotsky on 12 January 1931, when the Spanish revolution had barely begun, “can be united at the present time only under democratic slogans ... On the other hand, it will obviously be possible to build soviets in the near future only by mobilising the masses on the basis of democratic slogans” (*The Spanish Revolution*, op. cit., p.66.) In one of his most important works of that period, “The Revolution in Spain”, written in January 1931, Trotsky, despite a temporary setback in the movement, dedicates a special chapter to explaining the need to foster “revolutionary juntas”, the Spanish name for soviets. His slogan is conclusive: “On the order of the day in Spain stands the creation of workers’ juntas”. He also stresses the need for peasants and soldiers juntas (*Ibid.*, p.86.)

In April of the same year, in “Ten Commandments of the Spanish Communist”, Trotsky summarises the revolutionary program for Spain in the following way: In points seven and nine he presents the democratic and the agrarian program, but in point eight — which links, and this is not accidental, the other two — he points out that the “central slogan of the proletariat is that of the *workers’ soviet*”. And, to clear up the confusion, he says a few lines further on that “the workers’ soviet does not mean the immediate struggle for power” (*Ibid.*, p.104, emphasis in original).

On the 20 of the same month, he summarises the whole Leninist-Trotskyist program for Spain in the following way:

“In other words, it is necessary for the communists at present to come forward as the party of the most consistent, decisive, and intransigent defenders of democracy.

“On the other hand, it is necessary to proceed immediately with the formation of workers’ soviets. The struggle for democracy is an excellent point of departure for this. They have their own municipal government; we workers need our own city juntas to protect our rights and our interests” (*Ibid.*, p.107, emphasis in original).

Trotsky insisted on this same line again at the end of May in one of his fundamental articles, “The Spanish Revolution and the Dangers Threatening It”: “However, the immediate tasks of the Spanish communists *is not the struggle for power, but the struggle for the masses*, and furthermore this struggle will develop in the next period on the basis of the bourgeois republic and to a great degree

under the slogans of democracy. The creations of workers' juntas is undoubtedly the principal task of the day" (Ibid., p.128, emphasis in original).

By September 1931, Trotsky observes in a letter that the slogan of soviets has not been adopted by the working class, and he draws the conclusion that it must be stressed that the main task is the development of a pole of workers power: "At any event, if the slogan of soviets (juntas) fails as yet to meet with a response, then we must concentrate on the slogan of factory committees. (...) On the basis of factory committees, we can develop the soviet organisation without referring to them by name" (Ibid., p.162).

After the electoral victory of the popular front and before the civil war, he again insists on the same position. In April 1936, referring to the tasks of the Trotskyists for the moment, he emphasises in points eight and nine:

"8. To insist always on having the fighting masses form and constantly expand their committees of action (juntas, soviets), elected ad hoc.

"9. To counterpose the program of the conquest of power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, and the social revolution to all hybrid programs (a la Caballero, or a la Maurin).

"This is the real road of the proletarian revolution. There is no other" (Ibid., p.245).

We do not want to enter again into a discussion as to whether there is a great parallel between republican Spain and Portugal today, as we believe. What there is no doubt about at all is that under conditions that were much less revolutionary than in Portugal today, the essential axis and slogan of our political line were, for Trotsky, the creation of soviets or organisms of working-class power.

Neither can there be any doubt that Trotsky fought against the tendencies that — like Maitan today — raised the program of soviets or the dictatorship of the proletariat without linking it to the democratic and transitional demands raised by the masses. We have already quoted how he observed that the "struggle for the masses" would develop for a period "on the basis of the democratic republic¹ and to a great degree under the slogans of democracy". To be brief, we will recall only that in criticising "the platform of the Catalan Federation", which called upon the "working masses to organise themselves in all the provinces on the basis of revolutionary juntas", Trotsky answered sharply: "To what end? No program is indicated. Not only is there no mention that juntas of this kind will have to guarantee the revolutionary passage of power into the hands of the workers and the poor peasants, but there is also no program of transitional demands (...) They do not so much as mention that the junta is an organisation of the proletariat and the exploited masses *against* the class that is in power, that is, against the bourgeoisie. The junta is taken as a 'revolutionary organisation' in the spirit of the Spanish petty-bourgeois tradition" (Ibid., p.137, emphasis in original).

Let us now turn to the French example. In 1935, when a reactionary Bonapartist government came to power and fascism developed along with the economic crisis, Trotsky did not raise a program of democratic rights — as did Stalinism — but a very different one: "While explaining constantly to the masses that rotting capitalism has no place either for the alleviation of their situation or even for the maintenance of their customary level of misery, while putting openly before the masses the tasks of the socialist revolution as the immediate task of our day, while mobilising the workers for the conquest of power, while defending the workers' organisations with the help of the workers' militia, the communists (or the socialists) will at the same time lose no opportunity to snatch this or that partial concession from the enemy, or at least to prevent the further lowering of the living standard of the workers" (*Whither France?*, Pioneer Publishers, New York, p.66).

In June 1936, beginning with the occupations and the popular front, Trotsky raises the following program: "The Committees of Action cannot be at present anything but the committees of those strikers who are seizing the enterprises. From one industry to another, from one factory to the next, from one working class district to another, from city to city, the Committees of Action

¹ This is obviously a slip of the pen. The exact quote, as it is cited four paragraphs earlier, is "bourgeois republic" (Ed.

must establish a close bond with each other. They must meet in each city, in each productive group in their regions in order to end with a Congress of all the Committees of Action in France. This will be the new order which must take the place of the reigning anarchy” (Ibid., pp.147-48).

The above was written on 5 June 1936; a few days later, on 9 June, he insists in a position similar to the one he adopted in relation to Spain: “The new organisation must correspond to the nature of the movement itself. It must reflect the struggling masses. It must reflect their growing will. This is a question of the direct representation of the revolutionary class. Here it is not necessary to invent new forms. Historical precedents exist. The industries and factories will elect their deputies who will meet to elaborate jointly plans of struggle and to provide the leadership. Nor is it necessary to invent the name for such an organisation; it is the *Soviets of Workers’ Deputies*” (Ibid., p.155, emphasis in original).

Was Trotsky wrong to place so much emphasis and consider the axis of revolutionary politics to be the creation and development of soviets and other organs of power, subordinating all the other slogans to this central task? Or was he right, and, leaving aside any tactical differences, is this the correct line for Portugal today? The latter is our opinion: It is necessary to defend, develop, and centralise the workers commissions and soldiers committees; it is necessary to give them the perspective of the socialist revolution, prepare them for the inevitable armed struggle against the government; it is necessary to link them with all the tasks confronting the Portuguese masses. Any other policy is not Trotskyist, but “POUMism” of various kinds, which use the Bolshevik-Leninist program to avoid denouncing and confronting the counter-revolutionary government of the MFA-CP, as well as pursuing the socialist revolution, which are the two immediate tasks facing the Portuguese masses.

4. For a Transitional Program That Will Lead to the Revolution of the Workers Commissions and Soldiers Committees Against the MFA-CP-SP Government

We must avoid succumbing to any temptation to elaborate a program that would be nothing but a sample book of slogans of all kinds. The program must be a combination of slogans for a stage of the struggle, structured around an axis; a programmatic structure, not a collection. The axis must be the one already indicated: to develop and centralise the seeds of dual power in preparation for taking power. Only in this way will we achieve an understandable program for the Portuguese revolution. In our opinion, this should be, roughly, the following:

A. An economic and public-works plan of the commissions and committees to overcome the number one problem: the economic crisis, unemployment, and the starvation wages of the soldiers.

There is nothing more urgent for the Portuguese masses than to overcome the current economic chaos, unemployment, and the starvation wages received by the soldiers. Thus, it is necessary for the workers and soldiers commissions to discuss an economic and public-works plan that would provide employment for all the Portuguese and a decent, minimum, sliding wage, extended to soldiers, too. In this plan, we would support the need to nationalise foreign trade, the land, and industry. It is not necessary to wait for the workers commissions to meet in a national congress to take steps in that direction. It is necessary to adopt, now, immediately, at the level of each neighbourhood, industrial branch, or monopoly group, concrete measures to provide jobs for the unemployed and solve their problems. To finish the job of unmasking the MFA-CP-SP, we must propagandise our plan or that of some of the workers commissions so that the whole workers movement discusses it, demanding that the government put it into practice.

B. Down with the government restrictions on the right to strike and organise unions. For the democratisation of the Intersindical. For revolutionary trade unions that support the struggle of the workers commissions for power.

The officers and bureaucrats of the MFA customarily attend the assemblies of the industrial unions, invited and tolerated by the Stalinist bureaucracy. Not satisfied with that, they have decreed

two ultra-reactionary laws: against the right to strike and of recognition of the present leadership of the industrial unions without new elections. We must not rest until the MFA officers and troops are ousted from the assemblies. We must do it tactfully, avoiding confrontations with the soldiers, telling them that they can stay if they agree to abide by the discipline of the workers assembly; otherwise, they will have to leave. We must denounce the Stalinist bureaucracy for its complicity with the MFA officers in the assemblies. Our intransigent defence of the Intersindical and the industrial unions must be accompanied with denunciations of their bureaucratisation and lack of democracy. We must demand new elections and proportional representation for all the various union tendencies. We must form revolutionary trade-union tendencies with the activists in the workers commissions who believe that the trade unions must be in favour of the revolution of the workers commissions. We must fight tirelessly to abolish the laws that allow the bourgeois state to intervene in the life of the trade unions. Workers have the right to join the trade union of their choice or to create new ones.

C. For workers control of the nationalised companies. Out with the MFA bureaucrats in the nationalised or occupied companies. Out with the MFA managers in the nationalised banks. For control of all the banks by a committee of the commissions in the nationalised companies.

We must inculcate the idea among workers that the MFA officers and bureaucrats are their class enemies. We must insist that everything should remain under their control and not in the hands of administrators named by our perfidious enemies, the bureaucrats of the MFA. The time has come to occupy any factory that has been closed down or is badly administered, so it can begin to work at full capacity, establishing, wherever possible, “direct administration by the workers”. It is necessary to demand that the state pays the wages. But the fundamental problem is that of the nationalised banks. It is necessary to put their abundant financial resources at the service of the workers and the workers commissions: against financial sabotage, for control of the banks. Thus, combining the control of the banks and industry, including their administration, we will fight both kinds of sabotage.

D. Forward with factory, land, and building occupations.

The Portuguese proletariat has occupied many factories, houses, buildings, and some land. The development of this revolutionary method must be continued. Through the occupations, the unity between the workers and the impoverished masses in the cities and countryside will be established. Let the poor peasants and agricultural workers wait no longer: occupy the land, it belongs to you.

E. Oust the bureaucratic officers of the MFA from the workers commissions. For the independence of the workers commissions from the Stalinist-controlled unions. If they are useful, let us go to the popular assemblies to expel the MFA officers. No rest until we win the leadership of the rank-and-file organisms away from the ultraleft, the loud-mouthed agent of the MFA.

Under the pretext of supporting the rank-and-file organisms, the MFA officers and bureaucrats go to their meetings and try to manipulate the workers commissions. Very skilfully, they now try to create “Popular Assemblies” controlled by them and their Stalinist servants in order to better control workers power and to avoid the revolutionary initiative of the class. We must tell any “strangers”, beginning with the officers, that to remain in the rank-and-file assemblies they must publicly break completely with the discipline of the MFA, the government, and the armed forces, abiding only by the decisions of the rank-and-file organisms. If they refuse, we must not rest until we have ousted them. The workers commissions must denounce the MFA officers as their sworn enemies. This does not mean that we should not be tactful, especially in approaching the popular assemblies. We must also work with the workers and soldiers who participate in them. We must even be alert to the possibility of their acquiring a soviet character, in which case we should develop them. But even then, our line will be the same: to denounce, brand, and expel the MFA officers and their agents from them.

The other side of this approach must be our struggle inside these rank-and-file organisms to win the leadership and throw out the ultraleft, an agent of the MFA despite the ultra-revolutionary phrases and speeches. To achieve this we must systematically press the workers commissions and soldiers committees to support any popular or workers struggle against the government. The ultra left will drown these “minimal” proposals in a river of revolutionary phrases. We must insist, again and again — tirelessly — until we convince the rank-and-file workers and soldiers that the ultraleft only knows how to brawl but not how to confront the government. Today, we must be champions in the defence of the rights of the Socialist Party within the workers and soldiers commissions. Any Trotskyist comrade who, out of fear of being attacked by the ultra lefts, does not passionately defend within the committees the right of the SP to have its own press and other means of mass communication, is helping in prostituting and degenerating these rank-and-file organisms, permitting them to be transformed into weapons of the MFA’s Bonapartist counter-revolution. We must propose against the ultra left — the loud-mouthed servant of the “left” wing of the MFA (that is, of the MFA) — that these committees participate with their own slogans and banners in the Socialist demonstrations in defence of *Republica*. Thus, we will much more quickly destroy the counter-revolutionary manoeuvres of the SP, which wants to establish its own popular-front government and which hates the seeds of dual power just as much or more than the government does.

The attempt by the Stalinist trade union bureaucracy to transform the workers commissions into regular organs of the unions is a more subtle, but no less dangerous, manoeuvre. Against it, our slogan is for the complete independence of the workers commissions from the Stalinist trade unions.

F. Let us accelerate the crisis in the imperialist army. For spreading the assemblies and Committees of the soldiers and non-commissioned officers. Let us defeat the MFA manoeuvres in the army by expelling the officers from these assemblies. For the arming of the proletariat. Let us begin forming an army of workers and soldiers militias that elects its own officers.

The army is the sector where dual power is most explosive. We have to provide it with a clear perspective and objective: to overthrow the imperialist government so as to transfer all power to the commissions. We have to accelerate the crisis with audacious, practical slogans right now, immediately. We must spread the assemblies and commissions of soldiers and lower officers to all the units of the armed forces.

Until the workers and soldiers militias are created we must propose that the soldiers elect their own officers and that meanwhile officers cannot attend the soldiers assemblies nor be elected to the committees unless they break with the discipline of the armed forces and the MFA. In this way, we will defeat the MFA’s manoeuvres of granting certain democratic concessions in order to win the soldiers over to the imperialist army.

To counter the MFA’s manoeuvre of discussing only administrative problems or that courses be run in the assemblies, we must demand that the burning, current issues of the Portuguese revolution be discussed, beginning with the issue of minimum wages for soldiers. At present, there is no issue of more burning nature than that of democratic rights and the defence of the Socialist Party. We must demand that it be the first point on the agenda in all the meetings and that representatives of the SP be invited to explain their policies. We must invite all Socialist soldiers to attend the assemblies to defend their party, guaranteeing them the broadest democratic rights. Let us oppose any attempt by the loud-mouthed ultra lefts, and their bosses in the MFA, to obstruct through physical and ideological terrorism the right of Socialists and Trotskyists to speak in the assemblies, demanding and practicing the broadest democracy. We must turn the soldiers against the MFA government and bring them to defend the rights of all the parties, mainly the Socialist Party.

Those workers commissions and assemblies conscious of the need to destroy the bourgeois army must establish close ties with the neighbourhood soldiers assemblies and committees and hit on them with these slogans. We must immediately pose the need for economic aid to the soldiers,

giving them jobs and studying with them what can be done to improve their position of armed pariahs. At the same time, they must be asked to provide the workers with arms to be used for practice. When great mutual confidence is established, they must be asked to put their arms under the control of mixed workers and soldiers commissions. Workers and soldiers militias that elect their own officers must be created.

G. For a new Revolutionary Constituent Assembly. For the defence of the rights of all the Portuguese. For the defence of the democratic rights of the Socialist Party and the Maoists.

The Constituent Assembly was born dead. Only the government of the workers commissions will be able to convoke a new, absolutely free, sovereign, and revolutionary Constituent Assembly. This slogan will allow us to denounce the counter-revolutionary, anti-democratic nature of the present government and develop genuine democratic rights for all the Portuguese, which can be guaranteed only by a workers government. Meanwhile, we must struggle against the government's antidemocratic measures. We must pay special attention to the democratic rights of the Maoists, and, above all, those of the party of the majority of the workers, the Socialist Party. The only way to expose the Socialist Party's counter-revolutionary plan of smothering the revolution under a parliamentary bourgeois regime is precisely by defending, and even extending, democratic rights. We should and can convince the rank and file of the Socialist Party that workers commissions and Trotskyists in government will guarantee the democratic rights of all the Portuguese. Only our actions will convince the Socialist workers that we do more than talk; we carry out our promises. We must take our propaganda and our struggle in defence of the democratic rights of the Socialist Party to the workers commissions and soldiers committees. Let us not fear the attacks of the ultralefts, the CP, and the officers of the MFA, who will shout that the SP does not deserve to be defended because it is an agent of European imperialism. They are the agents of our main enemy: Portuguese imperialism.

Without convincing the Socialist workers of the correctness of our positions, there will be no socialist revolution in Portugal. Therefore, the defence of the Socialist Party, such as its right to continue to publish, uncensored, the daily *Republica*, is a tactical problem of fundamental importance. At present, a great part of our strategy to make the revolution of the workers commissions is based on this.

H. For the immediate withdrawal of Portuguese troops and arms from Angola. Down with the neo-colonial manoeuvres. For complete self-determination, national, political, and economical for the former Portuguese colonies.

The Portuguese government and army continue to be imperialist. No confidence in their manoeuvres or supposedly good intentions. Let the African nations take into their hands their own destiny. The only, not the best, aid to their struggles is to force the government to immediately withdraw its troops and arms from Angola. All peoples who struggle for national or social liberation know how and where to find arms. It is up to the Angolans to solve their problems, including the civil war. The Portuguese need only get out of Angola and all the former colonies, forcing the government to withdraw not only its soldiers, but also its arms, breaking all the pacts and abandoning all the neo-imperialist manoeuvres.

I. For severing relations with NATO and the Iberian Pact. For an Iberian Federation of Socialist Republics based on Committees.

It is not enough to break the pacts tying Portugal to world imperialism and to fascist Spain (NATO and the Iberian Pact). These measures should be part of a revolutionary process in the Iberian Peninsula, as part of the European revolution. Spain is coming close to a pre-revolutionary situation; let us give a revolutionary, worker, and socialist perspective to the solidarity and fraternity of both revolutions. For an Iberian Federation of Socialist Republics! This is the slogan that represents both this perspective and the right of self-determination for the Basques, Catalans, Galicians, and Andalusians.

J. For a National Congress of the Workers Commissions and Soldiers Committees to defeat the counter-revolutionary government of the MFA and take power. For the Socialist Revolution.

This does not mean only a national congress of the rank-and-file organisms. It must be given a clear perspective and objective: toppling the imperialist government in order to give all power to the workers and soldiers commissions. Anyone seeking to topple the government at the present time is an adventurer. The movement of the workers and the masses is not yet ready for this, nor has it built the organism needed to replace it. But anyone who does not raise in propaganda and activity this immediate objective, power to the commissions and committees, is an opportunist because this is the most immediate and urgent need and possibility facing the Portuguese masses. The big task is to win over the working class, the soldiers, and peasants in order to fulfil this slogan and to construct the organism that will effect it: the national congress of commissions and committees. Once again the task of the Trotskyists is to patiently explain the need to take power.

5. No United Front With the CP and the Other Reformist Parties! Yes, to Work Within Intersindical and Mainly in the Workers and Soldiers Committees!

Clearly, Trotsky posed as the main task for Spain and France an organisational task: to found, develop, and centralise organs of workers power. In certain moments of the life of a party or a country, the orientation of the work, the location of the militants, or organisational forms comes to the fore. Trotskyism has considered it a matter of principle that its militants and parties work in the unions, no matter how reactionary the leadership may be. For decades in the United States, the programmatic axis has clearly been organisational: the founding of a labour party. For the Black movement, the Trotskyists have favoured organising a Black party against the other two bourgeois parties. But these distinct forms should not make us forget the revolutionary content in the formulas. Trotsky proposed “juntas” or soviets in Spain because this was the best organisational form to carry out the socialist revolution. They were soviets to make the socialist revolution. When we say that one cannot be a Trotskyist without working in the unions, we are saying that one cannot be a disciple of Trotsky without being with the working class, our class, in its defensive, elementary, economic struggles, against the capitalist class and that one must work in the organisations the class has created in order to carry out these struggles: the unions. The SWP struggles without quarter for a labour party as the organisational expression of the political liberation of the American working class from the bourgeois parties that exploit it, not only economically, but politically.

The building of these organisations is in itself an immense historical advance. The emergence of unions in a country is a fundamental milestone in the development of the consciousness of the working class. In principle, the program or leadership of this organisational form is not important. In itself, it is a colossal advance. The same holds for soviets or a labour party. It is not important if they have a reformist leadership or reformist politics when they are founded. In Russia, the soviets were led at first by the reformists, which was no obstacle to considering them to be the greatest revolutionary gain of the Russian masses. The same was true of the founding of the British Labour party at the beginning of the century.

There is a contradictory dialectical relation between form and content, and very seldom do the leaderships or policies coincide with the profound significance of a form. The soviets, a form of workers state and for the socialist revolution, were led at the beginning by those who used them to support Russian capitalism.

Something similar happens with methods of struggle; they have a certain autonomy, are often progressive, useful in themselves. Strikes, general strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, actions, an insurrection, are all adequate measures for different objectives. A general strike, for whatever reason it is carried out, poses the question of power. The objective could be a 2 percent general increase in wages, but its political consequence is the questioning of bourgeois power.

We pose these considerations because there has not been enough emphasis on the number one task in Portugal is to be the best militants in the Intersindical and mainly in the workers commissions and the soldiers committees. Even if our sympathisers or militants were to work in other parties, this would be a tactical matter. The objective must be to strengthen the revolutionary work in the Intersindical and essentially in the committees of different kinds.

Not to point out this area of obligatory work as the fundamental task or base of our movement in Portugal means propagandising in general for our positions, but not doing what we must do, that is, build a combat organisation to steer the mass struggles toward taking power. The success of a transitional program in revolutionary Portugal rests on this first programmatic requisite. The second requisite is that we go into these organisations in order to confront their leaderships, the agents of imperialism and of the MFA government, whether they are Stalinists, Maoists, or Socialists, to win the organisations to our transitional program for the workers revolution.

The new reality, which requires that we concentrate our forces in the commissions and committees, has modified the traditional application of our tactic of the united front. This is a tactic that requires concrete conditions to be applied. That is, it has to be a policy that reflects the deepest needs and the most keenly felt aspirations of the working class as a whole, not a mere expression of our desires. The expression of our desires, if they went counter to the reality, would serve, despite the best of intentions, only to cover up the counter-revolutionary policies of the bourgeois government. This is what the POUM did systematically during the Spanish revolution: with its declamations in favour of the dictatorship of the proletariat, the united front, and similar things — without the least doubt honest and well-intentioned — it hid the real problems that faced the working class and the revolutionary solutions corresponding to them.

When Stalinism was the principal counter-revolutionary factor in the republican camp, the POUM raised the slogan of a “government formed by representatives of all the political and trade-union organisations of the working class, which would propose as immediate tasks the realisation of the following program”; and then came a program that was correct in general. To carry out this policy, the POUM proposed that the government convene a “congress of delegates of trade unions, peasants, and fighters, which when the time came would elect a permanent government of workers and peasants”.

The united front is not an abstraction but a tool to develop the class struggle. We Marxists favour a united front of the workers organisations as long as there are tasks that the militants and parties feel to be common. Because of this, Trotskyists have always considered that the politics of the POUM directly betrayed the Spanish revolution, since it called for the realisation of a united front with the traitorous parties, direct agents, at the time, of the counter-revolution. This hid the truth from the workers movement: The main enemy of the workers within the republican camp was the Socialist-Stalinist government, mainly Stalinism. They were agents of the bourgeois counter-revolution; it was necessary to denounce them politically at once, in order to prepare the physical confrontation later, when the mass movement had become convinced. Specifically, the Trotskyists, who were for the united front in its various forms before Franco’s coup, abandoned this policy after the coup. Or, more exactly, they gave it a directly opposite form: develop the workers committees, the occupations, and the soldiers committees, without posing the united front among the workers parties, direct agents of the counter-revolution. Something similar to what would happen in Portugal if Spínola’s putsch, instead of being defeated, had divided the country into two camps locked in civil war, or what would happen if, with the passage of time, Spínolism would again appear and threaten a new coup.

In the face of the danger from Spínola, the formula of a united front would be applicable because it would correspond to a profound need and aspirations felt by the masses and the parties representing them: to confront Spínola and defeat him. But once Spínola was beaten, this policy would have to be replaced by another: systematic denunciation of the Communist Party and the MFA, as well as its government, as the most immediate danger facing the workers and the conquests of the workers movement and the Portuguese masses. There are no — there cannot be for the time

being — common points of any kind between the policies of the CP and ours, just as there could not be, in the republican camp, anything in common between the policies of Spanish Stalinism and Trotskyism. The CP, as the agent of the MFA, is the enemy confronting the working class; the MFA-CP is, consequently, the immediate enemy facing us and the working class.

This does not imply that we should not apply the united front. We must do it, but on the only level permitted us by the reality. Strategically, we abandon the traditional form of practicing the united front: calling on the parties. But we defend an elementary form of the united front — the Intersindical — and another much more elevated: the development everywhere of the commissions of workers, of tenants, of peasants, and the soldiers committees. We propose to the reformist parties that they recognise and join the commissions, where all their democratic rights will be recognised but where they will be called on to abide by the resolutions that are passed.

Precisely to defend this form of the united front, the highest one, the one of direct democracy of the mass movement, we do not want to be side-tracked by formulas of a different, much more backward stage of the class struggle, when the main danger is a direct offensive by the bourgeoisie, that of appealing to the reformist parties. Tactically, we must and we can utilize the differences between them, defending democratic rights in general, and those of the Socialist Party in particular. But this would be a tactical variation, undoubtedly of great importance, of our essential united-front policy: developing the workers commissions and the soldiers committees against the Bonapartistic and parliamentary plans opposing them, and against the counter-revolutionary petty-bourgeois parties that advance these plans: the Communists, the Socialists, and the Maoists.

6. The Agreement With the Socialist Party to Defend Democratic Freedoms

Everything we have just said runs up against the same danger that various comrades have fallen into — dissolving the concrete political problems into more or less correct abstract formulas. The general program we have presented, the need to participate in and be the best defenders of the Intersindical, the workers commissions, and the soldiers committees, must not be utilized to evade the questions of the day and the Trotskyist response to them. As part of this danger, there is another similar one: to capitulate to the fetishism of the organisations in which we are active. If the Intersindical or the commissions say nothing, playing the government's game or, what is worse, coming out in favour of the government — to let that lead us into abandoning our correct struggle over concrete problems.

We say this because it concerns the agreement that we should and must make with the Socialist Party to defend its democratic rights. In Portugal, in recent weeks there have been demonstrations in favour of the daily *Republica* and to wrest the quasi-monopoly on radio and television to MFA-PC. It is an enormously progressive struggle and as such we must join in it and fully participate in it.

The LCR [*Ligue Communiste Révolutionnaire* – Revolutionary Communist League] of France, in a public declaration that appeared in the 6 June issue of *Rouge*, took the following position: “In Portugal, as in France, we demand the nationalisation without indemnification or compensation of the paper enterprises, printing plants, distributors, the setting up of a public press service, guaranteeing the standard of living and jobs of the workers in this branch of production”. And with respect to the specific conflict over *Republica*, they took the following position: “Consequently we support the struggle of the workers of *Republica* in defence of their conditions of work; we condemn any attempt to limit their right to strike. We do not approve the way in which these workers have, in the name of this struggle, taken the right to exercise censorship instead of control over the contents of the newspaper”.

First of all, what is the meaning of a concrete position that can be applied, according to the League, both in Portugal and France — the “nationalisation of the press”, the setting up of “a public press service”? The LCR is copying the position taken by Lenin after the soviets and the Bolshevik party took power since it is almost a duplicate of the decree passed by the Bolshevik government

and Lenin's proposal. The LCR is moving way ahead to the period when workers power dominates the country. Because the question at bottom is, who is going to control the nationalised press? Giscard d'Estaing in France and the counter-revolutionaries of the MFA-CP in Portugal? The League does not even raise the POUMist slogan of workers control.

It is no coincidence that the League leaps across countries and revolutionary stages in taking its political position with respect to *Republica*. In Portugal, we face a totalitarian, counter-revolutionary plan of the MFA-CP to control the press, television, and radio. The League does not even bother to mention this plan and counter-revolutionary policy, nor does it take a position on it. It would seem that the *Republica* case could occur in any country in the world or in none. But the *Republica* case falls within this plan; it is not limited to the struggle between an isolated workers commission and an isolated private enterprise in no matter what country in the world. It is part of the scene in Portugal. Today the enterprise is in the hands of the antidemocratic counter-revolutionary forces of the MFA. What are the Portuguese revolutionists to do in the face of the troops posted at the doors of *Republica*, what do they say to the workers in the printing plant who want to occupy and control it, and what do they say to the Socialist workers who want their organ to appear without being censored? Do we say that we are for "nationalisation without remuneration" and "for a public press service"? Doesn't this mean washing our hands of the case? Doesn't it mean furthering the counter-revolutionary policy of the MFA symbolized in the soldiers posted at the doors? Isn't a concrete policy called for of a united front between the printing workers of *Republica* on the inside and the Socialist workers on the outside, both of them with desires and positions that are profoundly positive, against the common enemy standing at the door?

But where the abstractness in their position shows up the most is in not taking into account more than one element of the reality, the factory occupations — and more specifically, a single occupation, the one in the daily *Republica*. The other reality is the Socialist workers who are demonstrating for democratic rights and the return of *Republica*. What stand should we take?

We do invite them to have a "cafesinho" in order to explain the advantages of the Bolshevik decree on the press? If they accept the invitations, will we find cafes for many thousands of demonstrators? If the demonstrations are reactionary, the Political Bureau of the League should say so and draw conclusions, call to counter demonstrations along with the PC and the MFA, but not to remain in silence, ignore them.

We believe that between supporting the partial occupation of a newspaper and the demonstrations, and the struggles of the socialist for freedom, including *Republica*, we must turn with our own policy to the agreement and support to the Socialist claims. For us, the case of *Republica* is a provocation of the Stalinists, who use revolutionary methods, occupations, at the service of the MFA. What is historically progressive at this time is the defence and extension of democratic freedoms and to defeat the counter-revolutionary plans of the MFA-PC government. All our tactics must be based on supporting the demonstrations and the current struggle of the SP for democratic freedoms and in favour of *Republica*. We have to go with our flyers, posters and especially with our class political line to these demonstrations or socialist acts. Our policy must be against the agents of MFA at the gates of *Republica* and any other organ of the press or mass media, including those of the CP, for freedom of the press. It is from there that we must fight for unity or united front between the workers who occupy the company and the socialist demonstrators.

This tactic of using the fight between the two counter-revolutionary reformist parties should not make us forget our strategic objective: to strengthen the Intersindical, the workers and soldiers commissions. The SP has precisely the opposite policy, not for nothing it is a member of the government itself and its policy is to pressure the military to form a new popular front government on bourgeois democratic basis. The best way to combat this political line of the SP leadership is to defend its rights and closely join its workers and popular rank and file in a common struggle. In the same demonstrations and acts in favour of the rights of the SP, we can and must distinguish ourselves from the counter-revolutionary policy of the leadership of the SP, proposing the occupation by the SP of bourgeois or MFA radios and press that match with the number of their votes. We can raise

slogans for the SP to break with the government and demand that it take the power to rule alone: with workers organisations to carry out a socialist and democratic rights program. But the most important task will be to convince the socialist workers, as well as their demonstrations, to turn to the Intersindical and workers and soldiers commissions, to convince them of the reason for their demands. We must divert the hatred of the protesters against the workers of *Republica* toward the government, which exploits that division and is the only one that benefits to carry out its counter-revolutionary plan.

We must demand that all workers organisations discuss the case *Republica* and the control by the MFA-PC of almost all of oral or written media. We must demand a workers assembly at a stadium in Lisbon, called by the Socialist Party, but inviting especially the Intersindical, the CP, the workers commissions and soldiers committees and the workers of *Republica* to discuss these issues. We must ensure that the two main speakers are the Socialist Party and the representative of the workers of *Republica*. We must ensure that the assembly votes and that all abide.

With these or similar variations, we can use the great opportunity that opens the counter-revolutionary Bonapartist course of the PC MFA to defeat it, uniting all the workers against the government. Thus, we would be the transmission belt between the socialist masses and their class brothers organised in committees of workers and soldiers, as well as the Intersindical. In other words, we would start to be the bridge between the socialist masses and the socialist revolution.

7. Only Trotskyism is and can be the revolutionary vanguard

Some comrades, when analysing the Portuguese revolution, define two sectors of the workers movement: the opportunists and a mysterious “revolutionary vanguard”. If it were a phrase uttered in passing it would not matter. What is serious is that it is repeated systematically, “strengthening of the revolutionary vanguard”, “propaganda of the extreme left”, “the revolutionist”, “the revolutionary left is such that it only has enough weight to start movements effectively gain accession significant sections of the masses”, etc., etc., etc. All these names are not used as synonymous with Trotskyism, but as a new political category, without name or surname.

The danger of this ambiguous definition lies in the fact that these comrades generally do not denounce with enough energy, sometimes they do not even mention them, the ultra-left and the Maoists as agents (unconscious or not) of the MFA’s Bonapartist manoeuvres, both in the workers commissions and soldiers committees as in the projected Popular Assemblies.

It is our firm conviction that in Portugal, as in any other country in the world, there is only one revolutionary vanguard, and it has a name: Trotskyism. Just as the workers, students, and peasant or under arms vanguard has many other names: Communist-Stalinist, socialist, Maoist, without a party.

Only Trotskyism has had a revolutionary political line in Portugal. It is the only one who has managed to combine a policy of systematic denunciation of the government of the MFA-PC-PS and the bourgeois parties, with a united front policy, against Spinola first and MFA-PC later, in defence of the democratic rights of the PS and the Maoists. And most important of all is that it was the only one capable of orienting themselves towards the socialist revolution.

This does not mean that the reflection of the objective revolutionary situation does not cause the emergence of factions, revolutionary centrist groups or tendencies within all workers organisations. Even, due to the weakness of our movement, it is normal that Maoist–anarchist sectors are strengthened and recruit vanguard elements within the working commissions. But to consider positive to all or some of these tendencies or factions we must measure them in relation to the Trotskyist program and organisation. The most closely they most approximate our program, the more positive they will be. And vice versa.

The essence of our program is the revolution of the workers commissions and the soldiers committees against the counter-revolutionary government of the MFA-CP-SP and their “useful

idiots”, the Maoists and ultras. Without any sectarianism, we must call for a revolutionary front, as the anteroom for the construction of a mass Trotskyist party that in the struggle for power will lead all the militants, factions, or tendencies that agree on the following point, and only this point: It is necessary to organise and prepare the revolution of the workers commissions against the MFA government. As part of this front, and to help construct it, it is necessary to mercilessly unmask the reformist, centrist, and ultraleft parties that are against this simple task or that sow confusion around it. No confusion: there is a clear dividing line. On the one side are all those who together with the Trotskyists are in favour of the socialist revolution of the workers commissions, against the enemy of the workers, the MFA government. On the other side are all those who are direct agents of the imperialist counter-revolution, like the SP, or of the counter-revolutionary imperialist government of the MFA, like the CP. Maoism, the sower of confusion, inheritor of the counter-revolutionary Stalinist theory of stages, has played a counter-revolutionary role throughout the world. We see no reason why it would cease doing so in Portugal. In the best of cases, some of its groups could orient toward the program of the socialist revolution. But nearing that program would be accompanied by a clear sign: a break with Maoism; such a group would become Trotskyist or it would become nothing.

The progress of our movement will follow like a shadow the development of the workers commissions and the soldiers committees, provided that the Portuguese Trotskyists always carry forward a transitional program of workers revolution, to be brought to completion by the commissions. Our comrades in Portugal have the floor to demonstrate how to construct a great party with the only correct method and program: that of our world movement. §