

REVOLUTION IN PORTUGAL // CLUW

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Jerry Berndt

Cover: A scene from the Poder Popular demonstration on August 27, 1975.

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A wheatcutter from southeastern Portugal, who is now a member of a collective farm. She said, "We will never go back to the old system; we will never give up the land."

Introduction

There is a social revolution going on in Portugal. This revolution is vital because it is increasingly composed of and pushed forward by working-class mobilization. The process now involves literally masses of workers and peasants in experiences which are developing their capacity for analysis, leadership, and united and confident struggle. A small but growing fraction of the working class is moving toward revolutionary left strategies. Many of them having been committed to socialist goals long ago, they are now wrestling with revolutionary questions, such as the path to the seizure of power and the socialist organization of the economy and society.

The outcome of this revolution is by no means clear; there may be counter-revolution or stabilization through welfare capitalism. But most Americans — including many normally well-informed socialists — remain ignorant of or uninterested in Portuguese events. The elementary facts of what is taking place in Portugal have been hidden from the U.S. public with remarkable effectiveness. The suppression of the news about Portugal has been accomplished in several ways: by veritable news blackouts on important events; by bias — whether deliberate or unconscious — in what the media have covered. Typically the U.S. press has reported almost exclusively on the political maneuverings of parties and personalities, on power struggles at the top, and on the rise and fall of successive provisional governments. It has reported on the increasing opposition to the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) without addressing either the rightward drift of the Socialist Party (PS) or the mass activity on the left. This kind of reportage tends to drain the very concept of revolution of its most important content — the politicized activity of masses of people. The U.S. press has not reported on the strikes, the factory occupations, the collective farms, the experiments in workers' control, the growth of neighborhood commissions and women's groups, or the explosion of revolutionary publications. As one of the documents reproduced below demonstrates, the press in this country has continually misrepresented the seizure of the REPUBLICA newspaper as an act by the Communist Party when in fact it was an action of the workers from several parties acting outside of party structures and discipline. At times it has seemed as if all American reporters had moved to the north of Portugal, where an economy based on small-holding peasants provides the basis for an important part of the Portuguese right. For days on end American readers read uncritical accounts of attacks on Northern Communist Party headquarters, but nothing about the revolutionary mass activities in Lisbon, the southern towns, or even such northern towns as Oporto during the same period.

Still the news is slowly filtering into the U.S. that social classes are struggling for power in Portugal, and that more is at stake than which party will run the society. Our own

elementary understanding of the situation there is based partly on the reports of visitors, the U.S.'s contribution to the crowds of revolutionary tourists flocking to Portugal; partly on the documents they returned with, some of which are reproduced below; and partly on the good reporting appearing in British and French left publications.

From these various sources we cannot put together a full and coherent understanding of the course and velocity of social change underway in Portugal, but it is clear that the repeated obituaries for the revolution in the U.S. press are simply unfounded. There is no evidence that the revolutionaries in Portugal have been defeated, or even that they have been decisively weakened. On the other hand, the transformation of Portugal into a country ruled by the working class is still a possibility, not a likelihood.

In the short year and a half since the overthrow of Portuguese fascism in April 1974 the Portuguese have made gains that are irreversible. Years of tenacious fighting by Africans, combined with low-key but telling resistance of the Portuguese to the draft, have permanently ended the colonial wars and guaranteed independence to at least two of the Portuguese colonies, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau. (In the third, Angola, the CIA and the Portuguese secret police are now reaping the profits of their decade-long investment in subversion of the liberation movements.)

The revolution began as a military coup led by junior officers who formed the Armed Forces Movement (MFA). In the course of its development, many in the MFA have become increasingly radicalized. Spínola — who had himself come to a neo-colonial critique of Portugal's African wars — was called upon by the majors of the MFA to lead the coup. But neither Spínola nor the MFA has been able to control the pace or extent of change in Portugal, and with the increasing differences between the positions taken by the right, the Communist Party, and the revolutionary left there seems to be a related fracturing of the MFA as a united force. Within the fracturing there are strong socialist leanings. Recent reports indicate that splits are appearing between officers and enlisted men. In early September 1975, a clandestine socialist organization, Soldiers United for Victory (SUV), emerged to defend their class interests

against the developing anti-communism of some of the leading generals. To the extent that this continues the role of the military in Portugal becomes fundamentally different from that in Chile, and considerably narrows the base of the right — the church, the landlords, the bourgeoisie, and parts of the peasantry.

The Communist Party, having held onto and even increased its status among the Portuguese workers due to its brave conduct during the years of fascism, has quickly developed and mobilized a mass base. The very strength of the Communist Party, which articulated goals for revolutionary economic and political activity, has also enabled it to try to clamp down on and control workers' actions. These attempts at containment are still largely successful, but have at the same time driven many workers to the left. Thus the original strength of the PCP has helped to create a growing left opposition, composed partly of small but growing revolutionary parties, and even more of non-party working-class activity. Although the revolutionary left is divided, on the whole it has demonstrated remarkable unity in its commitment to supporting progressive initiatives of urban and rural workers and simultaneously to supporting the Communist Party when it has been attacked by right-wing and social-democratic forces.

The delicate and difficult relationship between the revolutionary left and the Communist Party in Portugal is reminiscent of the situations in France in 1968 and in Chile in 1970-73. Visitors report that, to a remarkable extent, Portuguese revolutionaries are aware of the history and importance of the 1968 French rebellion and the Chilean Unidad Popular (Popular Unity) government. Indeed, Portuguese revolutionaries and working-class militants appear to have a strong sense of themselves as part of a Europe-wide Left which in turn rests on important gains the entire European working class has made in the last decade. A member of the Revolutionary Councils speaking in the U.S. called for a socialist Portugal, a socialist Europe, as his closing words. Whatever the outcome in Portugal, it is sure that the experiences — the achievements as well as the setbacks — of the revolutionary sector of its working class will be communicated directly and indirectly to Italian, French, Brit-

ish, and other European workers.

In Portugal, one of the most Catholic and patriarchal countries of Europe, women are nevertheless forcing their way with great militance into the class struggles; their actions both reflect and will contribute to women's militancy elsewhere in Europe, and to the chances of breaking down the divisive sexual hierarchy and male privileges among the European working class.

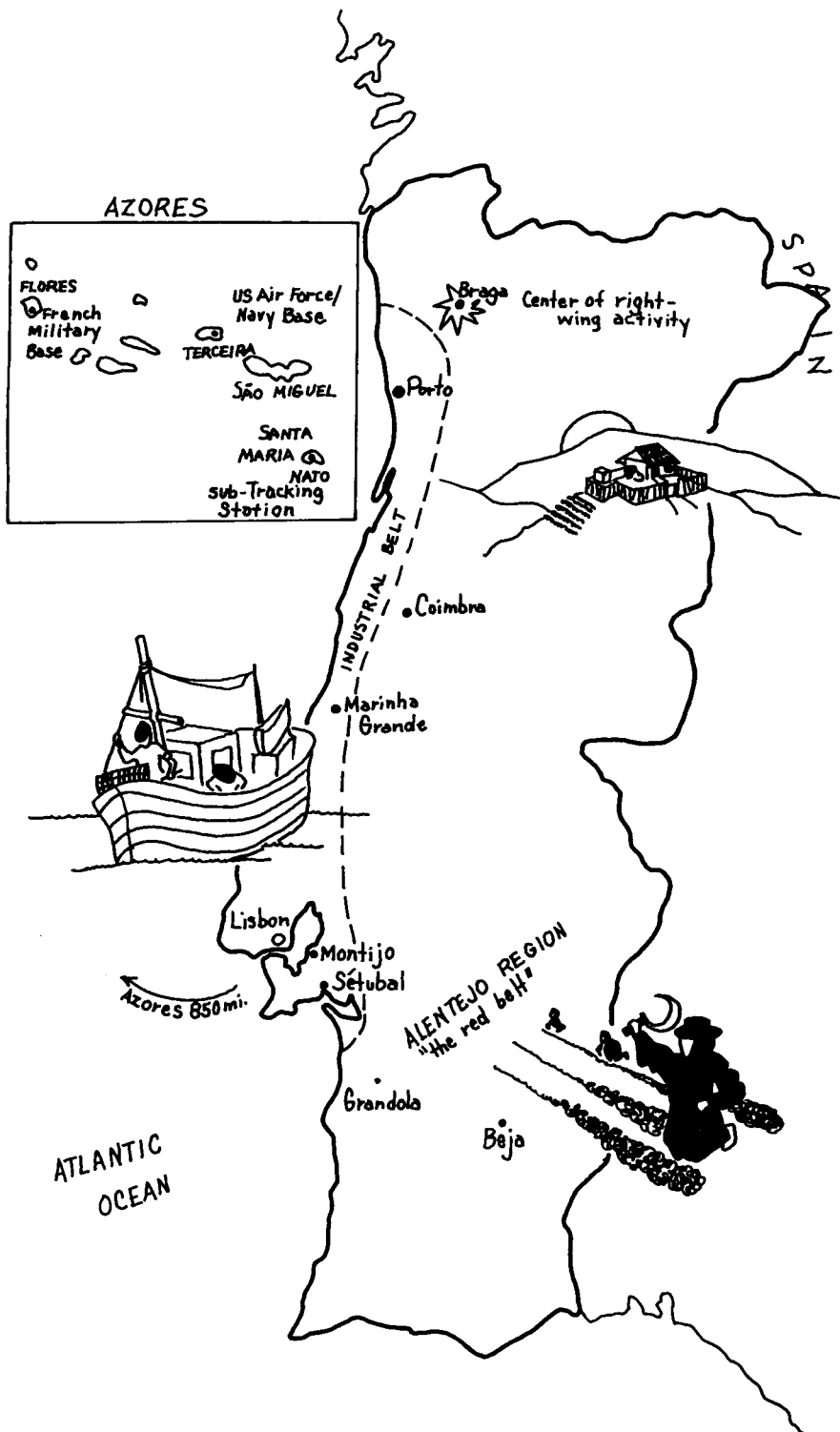
The importance of this revolution for the U.S. is only slightly less direct. Situated as we are in imperialism's capital, the U.S. left for too long focused too much solely on the anti-imperialist struggles of Third World peoples and neglected study of and solidarity with the working-class struggles in industrial countries. The lessons of Portugal are vital if we are to grope our way to a revolutionary strategy for the U.S.

It is with this perspective that we have selected the materials we are publishing from the Portuguese revolution. Our concern is with mass working-class activity. The Portugal you will see in the article and documents we print here is not the Portugal of the NEW YORK TIMES, but it is the more important Portugal. The piece by Tony Cliff is a shortened version of the article as it appears in INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM. While we do not all share its political conclusions, we do think that it presents a wealth of important historical material and informs us of events in Portugal through the summer of 1975. The documents are translated from workers' newspapers discussing their struggles and organizational forms.

Special credit goes to Stu Gedal and Donna Karl, comrades who were early to recognize the importance of the social revolution in Portugal and who worked tirelessly in helping to assemble these documents and articles.

Linda Gordon and Allen Hunter
for RADICAL AMERICA
September 21, 1975

We are especially grateful to a small group of Portuguese immigrant comrades, who translated the documents printed in this issue.



Portugal at the Crossroads

Tony Cliff

The coup which overthrew the Caetano regime on April 25, 1974 was the work of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), consisting of 400 middle-ranking officers. But its success depended on the feeling within the most powerful sections of business and among the upper ranks in the armed forces that Caetano's government was too inflexible to deal with the main problems facing Portuguese capitalism. When it came to the crunch, no substantial section of society was willing to side with the old regime.

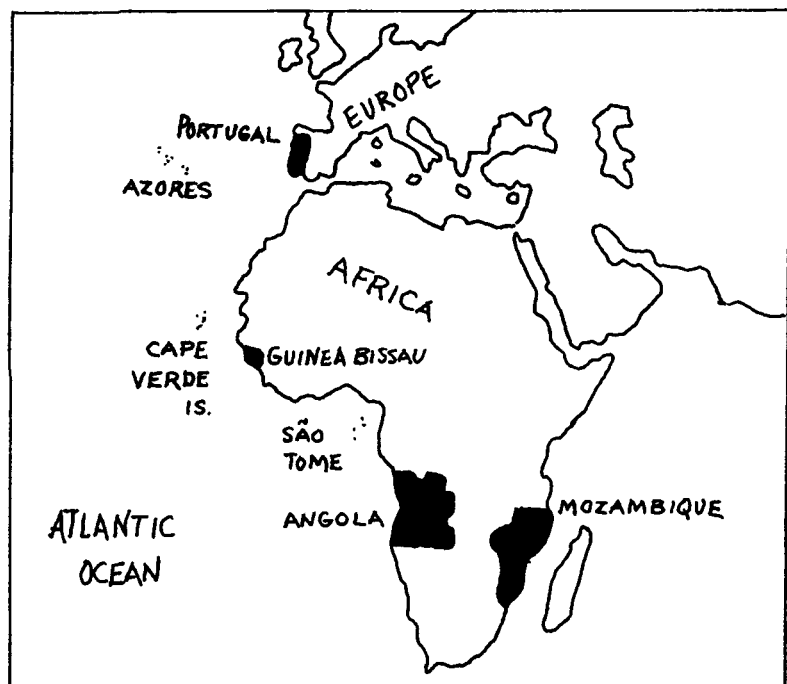
The most important problem was that of the African colonies. Portugal's army was facing defeat in Guinea-Bissau

and was bogged down in endless wars in Mozambique and Angola. The cost was eating up nearly half the government budget. Yet for the most advanced sections of big business Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique at least were a declining asset. In the last ten years the proportion of Portugal's exports bought by the colonies had declined from 25 percent to 11.3 percent, while Portuguese sales to Europe had increased from 49 percent to 65 percent. It was hardly surprising that people in high places began to ask themselves whether they could not replace colonial rule by indigenous rule, while keeping in their own hands the main economic wealth of these countries — as Britain had in Zambia, Kenya, Nigeria, and so on.

Further tipping the balance against Caetano was the economic condition of Portugal itself. The economic basis of the ruling class has been undergoing substantial changes in the last 20 years. The economy remains the most backward in Europe, with output per head only two-thirds of the Spanish level. But some industrial development has been taking place, gradually changing Portugal from an overwhelmingly agricultural country to one where industry plays an important role. In 1950 half the population lived off the land (in agriculture, fishing, or forestry) and only a quarter worked in industry; by the late 1960's the proportion in industry had risen to 35.5 percent and that in agriculture had fallen to 33.5 percent.

This change has been based on a massive flow of foreign capital into Portugal and the Portuguese African colonies. In the years 1943-1960 the total foreign investment in Portugal was 2 billion escudo; in the years 1961-67 it rose to 20 billion. Portugal became a semi-colony of the advanced Western imperialist countries. There are 200 companies in Portugal associated with British capital, with total investment of \$660 million. They include Plesseys, GEC, Babcock and Wilcox, British Leyland, BICC, British Steel Corporation, Rootes-Chrysler, and Metal Box. Other international companies, notably ITT, also are there.

The aim of the multinationals was to exploit the low-paid labor of the Portuguese working class. In Lisbon, the average wage for a 45-hour week was between \$15.40 and \$22.00; elsewhere wages were even lower. In some districts



infant mortality was as high as 10 percent and the Portuguese have the lowest life expectancy in Europe.

The most backward capitalism in Europe was likely to be hardest hit by the developing world crisis. Inflation was already greater than anywhere else apart from Greece; estimates suggest it had reached 30 percent a year by March 1974. The inevitable by-product was continual unrest in industry which the crudest repression could not stop.

At the same time, the massive scale of arms-spending on the colonial wars made impossible any attempt to deal with the grave social problems that face the majority of the Portuguese. More importantly for the ruling class, it has hampered the expansion of Portuguese industry keeping up in any way with that in the rest of Europe.

THE MASSES ENTER THE ARENA

After the MFA-led coup, the mass of the workers did not

wait for the Government or for the labor leaders to tell them what to do, but immediately and effectively entered the historical arena. The collapse of fascism raised their expectations. Revolutions are impatient, and the revolutionary masses are impatient. The down-trodden were looking for radical changes in their lives, for enlarged horizons.

Revolutions break the wall between the partial economic struggles, and the general political struggle. Each kind of struggle reciprocally encourages the other.

After April 25, 1974 the immediate task was to recover from the years of fascist repression and unite the workers split up by the multitude of unions in a particular plant and a multitude of plants and small production units throughout industry. The Portuguese working class took the task of unification into their own hands. In factories all over Portugal workers' committees were elected to lead rank-and-file struggles, not only on a local basis but also for whole industries and throughout monopolies.

In the electronics industry a combine has been formed which has workers' delegates from all the electronics firms — Plessey, STC, ITT, etc. Many factories and sections of workers are regularly producing newspapers and bulletins for the rank and file. In some cases, such as the wool and textile industries, the docks and the steel industries, these papers are produced for the workers of entire industries.

These are not alternative trade unions, but are made up of delegates elected by the rank and file of the trade unions in the plants, and are designed to give a responsive, democratic leadership to the factory. The factory committees coordinate the struggles on a day-to-day basis, and all policy decisions are taken by mass meetings. Negotiations with the management are reported to the rank and file.

From the start, political and economic demands have been closely linked in the workers' committees. Saneamento (purging) meant much more than simply locking up the secret policemen. Effectively and thoroughly carried out, it means to virtually destroy the structure of the bourgeois state. Because the corporate state meant control over every level of social life, banks, churches, schools, universities, offices, and factory managements, a complete saneamento

would mean the destruction of the entire social hierarchy from boards of directors right down to foremen.

In the big companies, multinationals especially, economic demands went alongside struggles for the purging of all members of the management or administration that were in any way connected with the fascist regime. During May 1974 alone over 200,000 workers in the key sectors of textiles, shipbuilding, transport, hotel and catering, electronics, the post office, and banking were on strike for better wages and conditions as well as for saneamento.

By the end of June significant advances had been made. Saneamento, although by no means complete, had resulted in the most compromised and prominent right wingers being cleared out of offices, newspapers, radio and television stations, local government structures, churches, and factories throughout Portugal, the most sustained and far-reaching purging being conducted in the factories where the repression which followed the wave of strikes preceding the coup was still fresh in the memory of the class.

The struggle against unemployment began in June 1974. By September 1975 there were 300,000 out of work in the industrial sector alone. The harsh facts of Portugal's capitalism continue to drive the working class to defend itself.

Many factories have been taken over by the workers, and the workers' committees, which were elected soon after April 25, 1974, have started to run them. But the bosses didn't give up without a fight. They tried to bring in the Strike Law against the workers. In Charminha, a small garment factory outside Lisbon, they tried to pay salaries with bounced checks. The Austrian manager fled the country, and the workers, mainly women, set up a cooperative to sell their work to the people.

In Tintura Portugalia, the biggest network of dyers in Portugal, the bosses answered the list of workers' demands with a list of layoffs and a lockout. The workers occupied the factory and started a work-in. The bosses, who claimed the company faced a critical financial situation, nevertheless started to run a highly expensive campaign of smear and slander against the workers in the national press and radio. Their plans were foiled by workers in the radio station who blacked the campaign and broadcast the workers'

version of the struggle instead.

Strikes are no longer the main tactic being used in these struggles. Instead an ever-growing number of factories have been occupied. Some, like the Nutripol supermarket chain, are being run under workers' control, and in a number of cases workers have demanded nationalization.

To gauge how far the workers' struggle went, one must mention that it is estimated that some 300 undertakings have been taken over by the workers !

(These takeovers included successful workers' seizures of two leading Lisbon newspapers and one radio station. See the description of the newspaper Republica struggle below — ed.)

As one factory after another was occupied by its workforce, and workers' committees were elected to run them, there was a growing number of examples of workers mobilizing on a neighborhood basis in order to take control of other areas which affect their lives such as health, transport, education, and housing.

Soon after the coup of April 25, the families living in the shanty town of Bairro da Boavista in the outskirts of Lisbon took over a housing estate that had stood empty for three years. This housing estate, like many other new estates in the outskirts of Lisbon, was part of a speculator's plan to rehouse families living in the center of the town in properties of high speculative value which would then be demolished and give place to high-rise blocks that would house the posh headquarters of some bank or a first-class hotel.

An army company, fresh from the events of April 25, was deployed to force the families back to the corrugated iron lean-tos of the shanty town. The officer in charge, a member of the young Armed Forces Movement, faced with determined opposition from the whole community, followed the routine practice of any operation in the colonial wars of Africa and went straight to what he thought was the weakest link, an old widow who had just moved with her six sons to a two-bedroom flat with electricity, water, and toilet. She replied: "You had better shoot me right here. All my life I have had the earth for a floor. At least I will die on a proper floor." The officer stood there for a moment. Outside the

men, women, and children who had assembled to resist any eviction were speaking with the soldiers: "This could be your shanty town! Remember that you too are the people! Turn the guns on the speculators and not on your brothers and sisters!" The officer understood and, taking the company with him, left the estate. The occupation had been "legalized" by the MFA.

In a country where over two million people live in slums and shanty towns, houses are no longer being allowed to stand empty. They are being occupied. Left-wing parties, trade unions, and broad-based neighborhood assemblies are all behind a movement through which hundreds of houses and buildings either unused or misused have been occupied and transformed into nurseries, social centers, clinics, old people's centers, and a multitude of other purposes tailored to the needs of the community.

Not only empty buildings, but local services, especially clinics and hospitals, have been requisitioned by neighborhood committees, who through them are running a people's health service suited to the needs of the local community.

THE WORKERS' PARTIES

Straight after April 25 the Communist Party joined Spínola's government. The government was set up under the premiership of Palma Carlos, a conservative law professor who sat on the board of directors of some of Portugal's big companies. It was made up of a coalition of forces as diverse as the Popular Democratic Party (PPD), a party of big business, with two Communists and four Socialists. The Minister of Labor was a member of the Communist Party. To pay their passage, the leaders of the Communist Party argued that nothing should be done that might upset Portuguese capitalism.

When the first big strikes took place after April 25, the Communist Party exerted all its efforts to get them called off. In the weeks which followed every major industry was hit by strikes and occupations. The Communist Party did not only order its own militants to argue against strike action: it went further and spread various slanders, arguing that strikes of bakers and transport workers in Lisbon were

fomented by "fascists." When 35,000 postal workers (97 percent of the workforce) struck, the Communist Party claimed that the right was once again behind the strike and that the committee running the strike was unrepresentative. It supported the use of troops to break the strike and organized meetings on street corners and demonstrations outside the post offices against the strikers.

The Communist Party leadership supported the Spínola government Labor Law. Despite the claim that it legalized strikes for the first time for 40 years, it actually put restrictions on them. The first two articles in the text of the Strike Law guaranteed to the workers of Portugal the Right to Strike in principle. Having so established the workers' rights, the law continued with a further 29 articles of conditions, restrictions, and exceptions which chipped away at these rights, leaving a law which attempted to block and suppress the struggles of the working class at every turn.

Firstly there were the exceptions. The army, the police, judges, prison officers, and firemen were forbidden to strike, and a special law was to deal with the rights of civil servants and employees in public institutions. Secondly the types of strikes permitted under the law were severely limited. It was illegal to strike for "political motives." It was illegal also to strike in solidarity with workers in a different trade.

There remained, though, a residue of situations where strike action was legal, and so the bulk of the law went into creating complicated procedures and restrictions upon the actions of strikers that forced them to walk a delicate tightrope between what was permitted by law and what was not. A strong feature of the law was its attempt to bureaucratize the actions of the workers themselves. A strike was legal when conducted through an official trade union or unions representing the majority of the workers in a factory. In addition a strike committee had to be elected and the identity of its members communicated to the management and the Minister of Labor.

Lockouts by management also became illegal under the terms of this law, but to this there were many loopholes. Lockouts were justified if the workers tried to occupy the factory, if they damaged or destroyed goods or equipment,

if they infringed on any clause of the strike law, or if for any technical reasons it was impractical to keep the factory open — all vague clauses leaving much room for management maneuver. But the trump card was held by the government, which reserved the right to intervene to break a strike if in their view it was “against the national interest.”

In practice the strength of the working class was such that the law remained a dead letter. In August 1974 the workers of TAP, the Portuguese National Airline, one of the most militant sections of the working class, were involved in a struggle against management which led to an attempt by the government to curb the strike wave. Troops were sent in to try to enforce the law, arresting and sacking strike leaders. The TAP workers quickly drew the lesson of their struggle. In a leaflet published on August 25, 1974, they asked: “What kind of government makes laws against us the workers and does not revoke the fascist laws?”

In order to control the workers, Salazar had established a union structure that divided the workers into tiny groups. Corporate unions were horizontal structures, organized on the basis of profession/trade; a machine operator therefore would belong to the metal-workers’ union, whether he worked in a brewery, car factory, or airport. These bodies were also divided on the basis of sex — tailors and “seamstresses” belonged to different unions. There were over 400 unions in Portugal when the coup took place — in some factories there were 30-40. In CUF there were as many as 100. In the Lisnave shipyards there were 24 separate craft unions of which most of the 7000 shipbuilders were members. Approximately two million workers were divided among these bodies. In 1969, 80 percent of the unions had average memberships under 1616 and only eight unions had more than 20,000 members.

The Communist Party which controlled the Intersindical after April 25 did not smash the existing structure, but took hold of it. The trade unions are still suffering from the fragmentation imposed by the fascist regime. A very large number of unions still exist which are divided both according to trades and according to district. Metalworkers, for instance, who form a large proportion of industrial workers in Portugal, have separate unions in each of the major cities. The same is true of the bank employees’ unions.

After April 25, the Portuguese Communist Party was the only political party organized on a national scale. It had a significant base in the working class, and an estimated membership of 5000, and the credibility and respect earned by consistent opposition and action throughout the years of fascist rule. The Communist Party weekly AVANTE was the only clandestine newspaper to come out regularly during those 48 years, and many Party militants were imprisoned and killed for their part in working-class opposition to fascism. After the coup the Portuguese Communist Party alone was in a position to give leadership and unite the struggles that developed. Instead it set about establishing bureaucratic control over the trade-union structures in their existing fragmented form — Communist Party members were elected, or replaced fascists, in the leaderships of most of the trade unions. Communist Party control over the Intersindical was firmly consolidated.

Side by side with bureaucratic takeovers of trade unions, local government, and national government and army offices, the Communist Party carried out a massive recruitment campaign. Soon the Communist Party claimed a membership of 100,000 — a massive influx.

In the provisional government the Communist Party initially shared power with the Socialist Party and the PPD (Popular Democratic Party), the parliamentary expression of Portuguese capitalism, and eventually with the Movement of the Armed Forces. To maintain and justify this position it faced an enormous contradiction — on the one hand to retain its influence it had to retain its base within the working class; on the other hand it considered that a powerful offensive from the masses would threaten its position in the government and therefore its ability to carry through the “democratic” as opposed to the socialist stage of the Portuguese revolution. The Communist Party therefore performed a balancing act — between supporting some but not all the major struggles that took place.

The Socialist Party did not exist before 1973. Soares and the other leaders of the Socialist Party were a handful of individuals without a party in the period of Salazar and Caetano.

After April 25, 1974 the Socialist Party entered the government. At first it had next to no local organization, but with the PPD still participated in the electoral front run by the Communist Party under Caetano (the CDE — later the MDP-CDE). They only withdrew from this in the late summer.

There is little doubt that, in the early post-April 25 period, the Communist Party effectively built up the Socialist Party and Soares; e.g., in a mass demonstration in Lisbon in July 1974, the audience was supplied by the Communist Party, but Soares was one of the star speakers. At that time, the Socialist Party did its best to cultivate a left image. Indeed, the Socialist Party statement of aims sounds almost revolutionary, as a few extracts show :

“The Socialist Party fights the capitalist system and bourgeois domination... The Socialist Party is implementing a new conception of life that can only be brought about through the construction of workers’ power...”

At that time the Socialist Party put forward a double image. Big meetings for international speakers featured Altamirano, the left-wing Chilean Socialist Party leader, but also Mitterand, the right-wing leader of the French Socialist Party, who is currently aligned with Harold Wilson, Schmidt, Palme, and company in defense of “democracy” (meaning capitalism) in Portugal.

The workers of the Socialist Party recruited at the time could be to the left of the Communist Party cadres in the factories. But the Socialist Party never became a workers’ party in the way in which the Communist Party is : although much of its support has come from workers, its cadres and activists have been mainly petty bourgeois. Because its activists are not in the factories, the Socialist Party could swing very quickly to the right once it had built up a national organization. This happened last autumn, under pressure from Western social democracy.

In reality two things were at stake : the clash between the supporters of NATO and the Warsaw Pact over who was to control bits of the state apparatus in a strategically important country, and the desire of the “West” (via the Socialist Party) to divide and weaken the workers’ movement.

Shortly prior to March 11, the Socialist Party opposition

to the Communist Party hardened (one of the things that prompted the attempted coup of March 11). But the Socialist Party did not support the extreme right on either September 28 or March 11. Why not? Because, firstly, on the African question the Socialist Party represented that section of the bourgeoisie (and petty bourgeoisie) that had decided it could no longer afford the African wars. Secondly, if the coups of September 28 and March 11 had succeeded, the right would probably have decided they could govern without politicians like Soares.

Since March 11 the Socialist Party has sought to win back, for pro-western bourgeois elements, those sections of the state machine in the hands of the Communist Party and areas of society under control of the workers. Hence the Party's repeated threats to withdraw from the Provisional government and its eventual departure.

At present the Socialist Party, as a petty-bourgeois party par excellence, represents everything that is immature and confused in the masses' consciousness. Everybody who had not inherited from the period of fascism a clear political consciousness — i.e., belonged neither to the fascist right, nor to the Communist Party, nor to the "ultra left" groups — now found himself ready to support the Socialist Party.

Until April 25 the Maoist groups were almost entirely confined to the universities (and via them to sections of conscript officers).

Their leaders had been in the Communist Party (in one or two cases part of its leadership) until the early 1960's. They broke at the time of the Sino-Soviet dispute, and then later when the Communist Party was under internal pressure because of its failure to turn the mass agitation of the early '60's into armed action. All the Maoist groups accept the Chinese designation of Russia as "social imperialist" and see the Communist Party as an agent of "social imperialism."

They all accept, to some degree or other, a Stalinist stages theory by which the first task in Portugal is "national democratic" revolution. (Hence the name of the Popular Democratic Union (UDP) and the stress on the slogan "National independence.")

All the Maoist groups accept a variant on the Stalinist notion of the party, claiming that their aim is to "reconstruct" or "reconstitute" the Communist Party as it existed before Cunhal.

The Revolutionary Brigades were formed in 1969 by a group of activists who split from the Communist Party, accusing it of being reformist. For a number of years they carried out armed actions against the fascists and the colonial apparatus, including the blowing up of a NATO base.

The Revolutionary Brigades always made it clear that for them "the practice of armed actions was never separate from the need to create a revolutionary organization of the proletariat, which would link the armed struggle with the mass struggles." The key theme underlying the BR analysis was that the fight against imperialism could not be separated from the struggle for socialism.

In September 1973, the BR joined with a number of revolutionary communists and other groups to constitute the PRP-BR. In all its propaganda, the PRP-BR put the stress on the need for autonomous organizations of the working



Jerry Berndt

People arguing politics in Lisbon's Rossio Square. According to Jerry Berndt, the photographer: "People used to argue about bull fights and soccer matches in Rossio Square. Now they only talk about politics."

class and the necessity for the party to be made up mainly of proletarians and not of a few intellectuals adopting the mantle of leadership.

The PRP's stress on the autonomy of the class was a definite advantage to it in the period after March 11, 1975. Apartidarism (non-partyism) corresponded to the feelings of much of the advanced section of the class. When the PRP raised the question of workers' and soldiers' councils it got a response from the advanced section of the class, and also from revolutionaries within the armed forces. Hence the successful CRTSM demonstration of mid-June 1975 involving some 40,000 people.

TWO FAILED RIGHT-WING COUPS

After a lull in late July and early August 1974, a new wave of strikes and occupations developed, with strikes in textiles, among agricultural workers, in the shipyards, at TAO, and on the daily paper JORNAL DO COMERCIO. In the Lisbon area at least these strikes were much more political than previously.

Such a development itself was enough to worry the bourgeoisie. But there were other factors at work as well, which turned this worry into complete panic among sections of big business and certain generals.

One was the complete failure of the "center" to develop as a political force capable of resisting the growing strength of the workers' organizations. The Communist Party could not prevent the development of independent working-class activity to the left of it. But it did predominate in large parts of the country compared with the political parties to the right of it. Big business began to feel that the only possible counterweight lay with those political forces it had itself dismissed only five months before — the former members of Caetano's political apparatus.

Finally, there was the unresolved problem of Africa. The handing over of power to Frelimo made the ruling class fear that the government would allow a potentially very rich Angola to slip out of Portugal's grasp. Those industrialists like the Champalimaud family who had welcomed the coup in April, now began to denounce the provisional government

in the bitterest terms. It was not a far cry from denunciation to organized opposition.

The organization leading to the abortive putsch was primitive. Leading industrialists, such as representatives of Champalimaud, the Banco Spirito Santo, and Mabor, met together with a few of the generals, including at least three who were in the Junta, and leading former supporters of Caetano. Spínola made a speech calling on the "silent majority" to demonstrate, and the industrialists and right-wing politicians tried to mobilize behind it on the streets. Groups of fascists were supplied with arms.

The aim was to give the impression of mass popular opposition to the left. This was to culminate in a pro-Spínola march which was intended to be 300,000 strong. The arms were meant not to enable the fascists themselves to take power, but to create such disorder as to give the generals an excuse to intervene, attacking the left and re-establishing "order."

Yet despite the crudeness of the scheme, the right nearly won.

The demonstration was called for Saturday, September 28. All that morning the leaders of the MFA begged Spínola to call it off. He ignored them and kept them in a state of virtual arrest in the presidential palace. From there they could not move their units of troops against the right. For several crucial hours, COPCON was paralyzed.

However, the one thing missing from the calculations of the generals was the reaction of the mass of workers. The evening before the rally was due to take place, a number of unions came out calling for opposition to it. The Communist-controlled Intersindical called upon the people to be "vigilant." The railway union went further and instructed its members to refuse to man special trains carrying rightists to Lisbon and to search other trains for them. It called upon the coach drivers' union to do the same, with the result that only two coach loads of demonstrators ever left for Lisbon.

The Left began to set up road blocks throughout the country. What began as a demonstration 10,000 strong soon grew until it was at least 40,000 strong.

The first workers to demonstrate on the streets were those whose struggle had been criticized by the Communist Party and attacked by the army in recent weeks: the Lisnave shipyard workers, the TAP maintenance staff, the Jornal do Comercio workers, and the same postal workers who were alleged by the Communist Party a few weeks ago to be led by "reactionaries." Such a movement of workers did not fail to penetrate the barrack walls. Those officers backing the rightist line began to find themselves isolated. Soldiers began to join civilians on the barricades, despite broadcasts from Spínola's supporters ordering removal of the road blocks.

The mass mobilization on the streets shifted the balance within the army command from Spínola to the MFA. Spínola made one last desperate bid for the Council of State to grant him dictatorial power, and then called off the rally.

On September 30 General Spínola, together with two Ministers and three members of the Council of State and the military Junta, resigned. Two hundred people involved in the plot were arrested.

On March 11, 1975, barely a month before the scheduled election, a new plan to restore the right wing to power was put into action. It was organized by a group of right-wing officers around Spínola, who was living in the countryside outside Lisbon since the failed coup of September 28 lost him the Presidency of Portugal. Centered on the Tancos Air Force base, 100 miles northeast of Lisbon, it should have involved a simultaneous uprising of military units in and around Lisbon.

The plan was a disaster, miscalculated and mistimed and virtually unsupported: two Fiat T-6 fighters and two helicopters bombarded the RAL 1 (1st Light Artillery) barracks by Lisbon, backed up by a ground force of paratroopers. Two hours later the second attempt since April 25 last year had fizzled out. While the bewildered paratroopers fraternized with the RAL 1 soldiers, explaining: "We are no fascists — we are your comrades," Spínola was fleeing to Spain and the rest of the conspirators were being rounded up.

The coup was not unexpected; it had been rumored for at least a week beforehand. Otelo Carvalho, Commander of

COPCON and military commander of Lisbon, had already stopped all fuel supplies to the military region around Tan-cos. But just as on September 28, it was workers and people in Lisbon and throughout the country who took decisive and immediate action against the right wing, in advance of the military. Barely two hours after the attack on RAL 1, barricades had been set up around Lisbon sealing off all main roads, manned by workers from adjacent factories. Many were armed, and they used everything they could lay hands on as reinforcements. Bulldozers, lorries, and cement were expropriated from factory yards. Agricultural workers armed themselves with spades and hoes. The banks were occupied, closed down, and encircled by pickets, and so were factories and schools. Offices and shops were similarly closed down. Workers in the press and radio issued continuous news bulletins, newspapers printed special editions and used lorries to distribute them to those manning the barricades.

The role of the revolutionary left was far greater than during the September events. Revolutionaries joined the barricades alongside the workers and Communist Party militants.

Two weeks before the coup the results of elections to the air-force, army, and navy councils of the Assembly of the MFA showed a decisive swing to the right among the officer corps at grass-roots level. Key members of the Co-ordinating Committee such as the commander of COPCON, Otelio Carvalho, lost their positions. These men are no "extremists." Carvalho himself was courting the center within the officers' corps. The results of these elections probably led the ruling class and the right-wing generals groups around Spínola to judge that the time was ripe to strike. They must have believed that a current of reaction within the lower hierarchy of the military was strong enough to carry the right wing back to power. The right-wing tendency within the officers was not consolidated. These men did not have the confidence to change the leadership of the MFA on the one hand, or the confidence in their own control over the rank and file of the army on the other. For some of them, to order their soldiers against the workers would have been tantamount to suicide, and instead of leading the army

against the working class, the coup resulted in radicalizing the rank and file.

In many units soldiers simply refused to carry out the orders of officers known to be right-wing, and in those units whose officers were loyal to the leadership of the MFA, the orders were superseded by the rank and file. Soldiers openly fraternized with workers manning the barricades, some handed over the arms demanded by the workers. And for the first time ever, mass meetings of officers and soldiers were held.

The defeat of the coups of September 28 and March 11 show the power of the working class. But this should in no way lead to the conclusion that the counter-revolution is finished. It is worth recalling that in Chile, the right wing tried to overturn the Allende government three times before it finally achieved success. In Portugal, the splits in the armed forces and the freshness of the memory of fascism in the consciousness of the population will make its task more difficult. But it can succeed in Portugal too, eventually, unless the working class develops its own, independent forms of class-wide organization, led by a coherent revolutionary leadership.

THE MFA

The main force in carrying through the coup had been the middle-rank officers of the Armed Forces Movement, some 400 in number. Their attitudes and goals were by no means identical with those of the generals.

Among the junior officers, a large number were conscripts. In the Portuguese armed forces, anyone who is conscripted after being a student is enrolled as an officer (unless he has committed some political or criminal offense).

Since 1962, Portuguese university students had been involved in effective and organized anti-regime activity. Since 1968, Portuguese universities have been in continuous turmoil. Practically no student could have avoided participating at one time or another in these activities. Thus these conscript officers, ex-university students, brought into the army a degree of political experience which was shared by

only very few of the career officers. Most of the ex-students resented being dragged off to fight in a futile war in Africa, and many continued to retain some of the left-wing ideas picked up in their student days.

The middle-rank officers on the Co-ordinating Committee of the Armed Forces Movement found that their goal of breaking the hold of the old political elite and ending the African wars could not be guaranteed merely by relying on the generals of the Junta. They maintained their own organization, the Co-ordinating Committee of the MFA, to act as a watchdog on the Junta.

The overall result was that Portugal emerged from the coup with at least three centers of power: the Junta, the Provisional Government, and the Co-ordinating Committee of the MFA.

Spínola tried to reconcile these different forces through the establishment of a new organ, the Council of State, made up of equal numbers of representatives of the Junta, the MFA, and the civilians appointed by Spínola. This was given the power of vetoing all governmental decrees and new laws.

But the new arrangement never worked perfectly. From the first days after the coup of April 25, the mass pressure of workers affected the MFA. Portuguese workers immediately demanded and got, with the support of sections of the MFA, the immediate abolition of the hated secret police PIDE/DGS. The attempts by the generals to restrict the scope of the purge of the old regime led to clashes with the MFA. In one incident, for instance, the generals arrested an officer who refused to stop examining secret files on the connection between the PIDE and the CIA. Representatives of the MFA went to the barracks and released him.

With the repressive apparatus of the PIDE/DGS broken, the working class continued their offensive through strikes, occupations, and demonstrations. The sharpening class struggle was reflected immediately in the armed forces and within the MFA itself, some sectors being drawn toward the bosses and some toward the workers. The Co-ordinating Committee of the MFA was only able to maintain a semblance of unity by alternately supporting and representing the working class.

In July 1974 the leaders of the MFA joined the government, and the chairman of the movement, General Vasco Goncalves, became the Prime Minister. Other key posts taken by the MFA were Labor (replacing the Communist Party Minister of Labor in the first Provisional Government), Defense, and Economics — seven in all out of a total cabinet of 16. By entering the government, the MFA hoped to be able to control the situation more effectively and avert increasing class conflict. But they failed to achieve this. For the same reasons on July 8 the MFA created COPCON — Continental Operation Command. COPCON is a separate military establishment whose task was to “intervene directly in support of the civilian authorities and at their command,” under General Otelio Saraiva de Carvalho, the mastermind of April 25.

Over many months the military have been balancing between left and right, trying to avoid coming down decisively on one side or the other. Troops were used last summer to break the strike of the postal workers, to attack strikers at TAP, the Portuguese airways, and the JORNAL DO COMERCIO, and to attack demonstrations of shipyard workers from the huge Lisnave yards. COPCON supported the strike law passed in September, which virtually eliminated the legal basis of the right to strike, and was a determined attempt to break the strength of the growing independent rank-and-file working-class movement.

The coup of September 28 was a turning point in the role of the MFA and COPCON. Since then — until August of this year — by and large the MFA in general, and COPCON in particular, sided with the left against the right.

Take the case of the Corane strike. The 300 workers of the factory, which makes metal equipment for heavy industry, decided to occupy the plant. They had voted unanimously at a mass meeting to do this because they had evidence of consistent sabotage by their boss, ex-air force commander Dos Santos Nogueira.

Simoa, a member of the workers' committee, explained how they organized the takeover. “After the decision in the mass meeting, we telephoned the workers' committee in the bank and explained why we wanted them to freeze the accounts of the firm. They agreed to do this.

"We then telephoned COPCON, and told them we had taken over the factory and that we were going to occupy the parent company SAPREL. COPCON said: 'OK, it's your problem — this is revolutionary legality.'"

At the beginning of August 1975, Major Melo Antunes, former Foreign Minister and a leading supporter of the Socialist Party, together with another eight members of the Supreme Revolutionary Council of the MFA (out of 28), issued a document called "It Is a Time of Great Decisions, a Time to End Ambiguity."

This has become a war statement of the right wing of the MFA.

Antunes' document argued that nationalization had gone too far — "at an impossible speed."

In reply to the nine who signed the Antunes document, a group of officers in COPCON published a counter-document arguing that the crisis in Portuguese society was a result of the country's not going far enough in the direction of overthrowing capitalism and fighting imperialism.

"The degeneration of the economic situation and its effects on the political and social life of the broad masses of the people is due above all to a failure to define an objective political line and a consequent government programme. It is futile to believe there is a combination of economic measures that can solve this degeneration within the existing capitalist structure while at the same time maintaining total dependence on imperialism and all its consequences, such as the closing of factories, the flight of foreign exchange, unemployment, scandalous political pressure on our sovereignty."

The COPCON document suggests a number of reforms: financial and technical aid to the peasantry, public works to help the unemployed, cutting down and limiting house rents, socialization of the health service, nationalization of the drug industry.

Unfortunately, the COPCON document is far from adequate to deal with the crisis. For instance, there is no reference in it to the need to expropriate foreign capital that dominates the key positions in the economy. Above all, the COPCON document is defective in its kernel — the organizational suggestions regarding the armed forces themselves.

No dealing with over-representation of the officers in the army assemblies, no election of officers by the rank and file, no equality of pay between officers and men, no abolition of the separate messes.

Practically all the officers of the MFA come from sections of the middle class. Their fathers are small businessmen, better-off peasants, teachers, and so on. The officers can, therefore, be quite hostile to the big monopolies while supporting the capitalism of the myriad of small firms in Portugal.

They did not benefit from the African wars, and so opposed Caetano and then Spínola when it looked as if he might prolong the wars. But they also have cause to fear the effects of the growing workers' movement on the property-owning middle classes. After all, the worst wages are usually paid by small firms, not big ones. And they cling to the ideas of military discipline and rank that provide them with their own privileges.

In general, the army officers have a hierarchical concept of society. Only in very few cases are officers of the Portuguese army elected. The soldiers' commissions have a preponderance of officers, as members of the commissions are elected according to rank: officers elect officers, sergeants sergeants, other ranks other ranks. In the 240-strong Assembly of the Armed Forces Movement there are very few soldiers, as opposed to officers.



MFA soldiers demonstrating their refusal to go to Angola in early August, 1975.

Jerry Berndt

THE ECONOMY IN IMPASSE

The growth of the Gross National Product in 1974 fell to two to three percent from 8.1 percent in the previous year. New investment has dropped sharply, productivity is down, credit is very difficult to obtain, and inflation has remained generally high. Unemployment has reached a level of 8-10 percent. Income from tourism fell by 30 percent. The income from the two million Portuguese workers abroad has been slashed as a result of increasing unemployment because of the world recession, fears of instability at home, and financial fiddles by the rich. At the same time the trade deficit almost doubled. As a result a balance-of-payments surplus of 255 million dollars in 1973 became a deficit of 647 million dollars in 1974.

Everyone in authority in Portugal talks about the need to plan the economy, and in this way to overcome the crisis. But planning cannot work if key sectors of the economy are not under state control, but still in the hands of the multinational monopolies.

After the abortive coup of March 11, there was a great expansion of state ownership. Until then, in the ten months since April 25, 1974, the structure of the economy remained completely unchanged. The only nationalizations which took place were of the banks of issue—which were already governmental arms under the former regime.

But following the attempted coup, all Portuguese-owned banks and insurance companies were nationalized. Because of the central role of these credit institutions, as sources of loans and holders of stock, in the large economic groups, the government by this stroke alone took control of approximately 30 percent of the country's industry.

This action was followed in April by Decree 203-C/75, giving the government broad powers to control the "commanding heights" of the economy. At the same time the national airline (TAP), the railways, Portugal's only integrated steel mill, the Portuguese-owned oil-refining and distribution companies, and the electric power, petrochemical, and shipping sectors were nationalized. This was followed in May by nationalization of the tobacco, cement, wood pulp, and public-transit sectors.

On the face of it, such far-reaching nationalization of industry and banking should create a sufficient basis for planning. But this is not so. First of all the predominant role of foreign capital prevents any effective planning.

To overcome the reluctance of foreign capital to invest in Portugal, not only did the government not nationalize any foreign enterprise, but it also tried to entice foreign capital.

Portuguese capitalists began to send their money abroad by all sorts of devious means, despite the strict exchange controls. One of the methods most commonly used was for the banks with foreign branches to retain money abroad deposited by Portuguese emigrants for transfer to their accounts in Portugal. The rich Portuguese would then deposit their money into the emigrants' accounts, and the foreign branch of the bank would then simultaneously transfer an equivalent amount out of the emigrants' account into its own account. In this way no foreign exchange entered Portugal, but the emigrant would still receive his money. Considering that the remittances of emigrants to Portugal are enough to turn into a surplus what would otherwise be a heavy deficit in the balance of payments, the extent of this sabotage can be clearly seen.

Multinational companies in Portugal also began to move capital out of Portugal. They did this by moving work, and also by paying excessive prices for imported materials from the parent company, and exporting at artificially low prices to the parent company.

At the same time the World Bank and the IMF have refused credit to Portugal. British banks also withdrew credit facilities from Portugal at the same time that Britain was attempting to get money for the Chilean junta.

Big business resorted to other methods of economic sabotage. Orders from parent companies would be cancelled for no apparent reason, forcing contractions and closures. Lisnave shipyard workers were able to prove that the administration was diverting tankers for repair to other shipyards abroad.

The balance-of-payments situation is very grave. The situation in industry is deteriorating very rapidly: the number of firms with order books that are quite empty has reached 68 percent, while no more than four percent have

full order books, and 28 percent reasonable ones. Only 42 percent of firms work to normal capacity. Unemployment will probably reach the fantastic figure of 500,000 in the coming few months. For a country of about three million earners, this is a rate of 17.5 percent — three and a half times worse than in Britain at present.

One of the most intractable problems facing Portugal is that of agriculture. Here the dead hand of the past threatens to choke any progress. Portuguese agriculture, exploited very harshly and badly neglected over many generations, is very primitive indeed. Agriculture has been systematically neglected, and its share in the national product has declined catastrophically throughout the years. Thus in 1950 an agricultural population of 48 percent of the total population produced 33 percent of the national product. The corresponding figures for 1971 were 31 percent and 13 percent.

One fundamental result of the position of agriculture was the extremely low living standard of the masses in the villages. The twin of poverty — ignorance — is rampant in the countryside. Thus about 43.4 percent of the population in the countryside is illiterate.

In trying to understand the agrarian problem in Portugal, one must remember the crucial fact that agriculture in Portugal falls into two very distinct zones — the North and the South. The border between them is the River Tagus.

In the South, approximately 444,000 people work on the land as a rural proletariat. They sell their labor to the latifundistas, the absentee landlords of the vast estates that dominate agriculture in this region, where the main products are wheat, corn, and olives. They suffer poverty and filthy living conditions — many are seasonal and migrant workers, forced to follow the harvest from estate to estate. But they have a long tradition of struggle. In 1962, 200,000 agricultural workers staged a national strike to demand an eight-hour day and won.

In the North, approximately 300,000 peasants scratch a miserable existence out of small plots of land which they own themselves or lease from the large estate owners — this is the wine-growing region and is one of the most barren and backward areas of Western Europe.

In the South the agricultural workers, following the April

25, 1974 coup, began to struggle for better conditions and decent wages. Though excluded from the national minimum wage, they were not ready to wait with folded arms. Rampant inflation and growing unemployment, together with the general militant mood of the country as a whole, led them to take action. They put forward demands for better wages, a shorter working week, and job security. The government was forced to act. And a national agreement was signed between the unions and the landowners' association which satisfied their basic demands: a daily wage of over 100 escudos on average (it varied according to the type of work), a 44-hour week, and permanent employment.

Although short (it lasted only one day), the struggle of the rural workers in Salvaterra de Magos is a good example of the action they took. On September 9, 1974 about 3,000 workers began a strike. Very early in the morning they organized a sophisticated communications network which insured that all concerned were duly informed of the decisions taken by the strike organizers, and then formed pickets of 80 to 100 men at all the workplaces. It was a 100 percent stoppage, and the bosses gave in.

A factor that greatly contributed to the success of this strike (called in the middle of the harvest) was the involvement of the neighboring rural community. Even the migrant laborers who were brought from different regions to help with the harvest and to undermine the bargaining position of the local workers were won over. Flying pickets were organized to maintain a continuous flow of information among the different groups, and their identities were known only to the workers' committees.

In the North there was no improvement at all in the conditions of villagers after April 25. Quite the contrary. The property relations were in no way changed, although land reform would have greatly improved the position of the majority of country people. There is a tremendous disparity in the size of land holdings, with the top 13 percent of the peasants owning 67 percent of the land, while 87 percent of the peasants own only 33 percent of the land.

Many of the peasants with tiny farms of their own are forced to work for wages for other farmers, or to rent land from them, or both. Here too, nothing has been done for the

poor farmer. Nothing was done about cutting the rent paid by the poor peasants. Most importantly, the peasants are weighed down by debts. Nothing has been done to cancel these debts. When the banks were nationalized, the agricultural credit institutions were not even touched.

The peasants need cheap tractors. In the whole of Coimbra province, with its 69,114 farms, there were only 109 combine harvesters. A revolutionary government would have turned car production over to produce agricultural machinery. After all, how many Portuguese workers can afford cars? But nothing of the sort happened.

The peasant needs fertilizers. Fertilizers have doubled in price this year. What would have been more effective than using army lorries to deliver cheap fertilizers to the poor peasants? But again this did not happen.

The peasants need to sell their wine. A revolutionary government would have found the funds to buy their wine, by seizing the wealth of the rich: their luxury cars, their houses, their bank balances. But again this did not happen.

The peasants are robbed by the middlemen—the merchants. Nothing was done to get rid of the middlemen by organizing a network of cooperative buying and selling, and fixing an agreed price for agricultural produce.

No wonder the agricultural population in the North are in a rebellious and reactionary mood. Again and again they hear on the wireless talk of a new life in Portugal. And what they find is that everything is the same as before, only worse.

The reactionary policy of the government in the area of agriculture played into the hands of the most reactionary forces active in the North, especially the Catholic Church. The Catholic Church hierarchy in Portugal has a long history of association with fascism and reaction. The efforts of Prime Minister Goncalves, the MFA, the Socialist Party, and the Communist Party to curry favor with the Church with nice words were naturally ineffective.

Traditionally, the North was the main base of fascism. The ANP, the national party under fascism, had its headquarters in the main northern city, Oporto, as does the extreme right-wing Christian Democratic Party (now outlawed). The fact that over 60 Communist Party offices have

been burnt in the North by mobs incited by priests and organized fascists is evidence that the North is still largely under extreme reactionary influence.

IN CONCLUSION

The economy is in an impasse. The crisis of capitalism will become even deeper in the coming weeks and months. The present regime is one of permanent crisis. When the thunder of revolution has awakened hundreds of thousands, procrastination has become, and will become, more and more intolerable.

We can have either a general plan of production in the interests of the proletariat and the poor peasantry, or a new freedom for big business — both foreign and Portuguese — to rob the people. "Planned economy" with the anarchy and waste of capitalism becomes more and more unacceptable to the two contesting classes.

A consistent struggle by workers to defend their wages and conditions grows naturally into a purge of nasty factory owners and foremen and the forcible keeping open of plants which the owners wish to close. And the struggle for worker control is inevitably locked in with the struggle for workers' state power.

THE WAY AHEAD

A rebovolutionary situation is very unstable by definition. There is no unbridgeable gulf between revolutionary and counter-revolutionary situations. Up to now the capitalists have not managed to get a clear grip on state power in Portugal, while the proletariat have not been ready to challenge them for it. The result has been an unstable balance whose center of gravity has been the MFA. The MFA has stood above the nation. Its mediation between the contending classes, together with the inherent weakness of the middle class, made the movement look larger than life. But the class struggle goes on, and it breaks the false unity of the MFA to pieces. The economic and social crisis is deepening and breaking up the MFA — the main factor that has till now acted as buffer and mediator between the classes.

Adding to the threat from the right is the fact that international big business is causing economic chaos and then blaming it on the left, as in Chile two years ago. The middle class, who were prepared to tolerate the revolution when it was just a matter of fine words, is moving rapidly to the right as it gets squeezed between the economic crisis and the demands of the workers. This is just as true of the middle class in the armed forces.

The right is bound to try and challenge the working class, so as to re-establish capitalist law and order. And it is only in struggle — especially in a situation with so many contradictory and unknown factors — that one can find what is the real balance of class forces. There is bound to be greater and greater pressure from the right — from the moderate right of Antunes and Soares to the extreme right of the CDS, Spinola, and the ELP.

The workers, especially the best-organized ones in Lisbon and its environment, are bound to fight back in defense of the gains they made since fascism was overthrown on April 25 last year. They know these gains are now at stake, no matter how confused some may be by the maneuvers, wrangles, splits, and shifting alliances at the top of society between professional career officers and professional politicians. And the workers have developed enormous power.

The present regime does not represent a new equilibrium, but the ending of an old one. It is a short-lived transitory regime leading either to the victory of the proletarian revolution or to the victory of fascism. It is a void between two dictatorships.

Because of the divisions and lack of discipline in the army — and, as Marx and Engels taught us, the State is essentially nothing but armed men and their accessories — a number of Government combinations are on the agenda.

Two parties play a key role in deciding the Governmental combination: the Socialist Party and the Communist Party.

Mario Soares, in a letter to President Costa Gomes made public on September 4, asked for a guarantee that elections for a legislative Assembly would be held within 60 days and that a new government based on voting results would be formed. He also demanded, among other things, that regional elections be held before February next year, that the

newspaper REPUBLICA be returned to its Socialist Party former editor, and that Portugal's bishops be given back control of the Roman Catholic radio station, Radio Renascença.

The right is also going to insist on the complete restoration of the old discipline in the armed forces.

The Communist Party leaders have a very difficult choice. The Socialist Party is offering the Communist Party a new coalition. But it demands a very high price. Restoring REPUBLICA and Renascença to the old owners means re-consolidation of bourgeois authority. The Communist Party does not want to lose its own bastions of power in the state and the media (like DIARIA DE NOTICIAS and O SECULO) or its influence on the radio and TV.

And if it sacrifices Radio Renascença and REPUBLICA (which it does not control but which are symbols for all the most advanced workers in Lisbon and Setubal), its militants will find themselves completely isolated in the factories. Under such conditions, some if not many would leave the Party.

The Communist Party leaders will naturally be extremely reluctant to accept Soares's terms. But the pressure on them from international Stalinism is extremely strong, and will continue to increase. The Portuguese Communist Party perhaps could have stood up to the pressure of international Stalinism if not for the fact that its own mass base — including the army — is very seriously shaken.

The Communist Party at the moment is still organizationally strong. But it is completely isolated politically. This has been shown by the relative failure of the Intersindical's half-hour strike of August 19 — some of the strongest sections of workers (REPUBLICA, A Capital, RCP radio, RR radio, the underground, TAP, TLP, etc.) ignored it; by its leaders' feeling, however briefly, that they needed a united front with the revolutionary left; by its loss of union elections in the Journalists, Pharmaceutical, Clerical, and Bankworkers' Unions. (N.b.: The Bankworkers' Union used to be synonymous with the Communist Party, and was the launching pad used by the Communist Party to control the Intersindical.)

Among the army units with guns, the Communist Party

seems much weaker than the revolutionary left.

The military police (the most radicalized section of the army besides RAL) voted unanimously for a resolution on Angola last week which referred to "social imperialism".

There were more troops on the revolutionary demonstration on August 20 — in which the Communist Party did not participate — than on the United Front demonstration of August 27 — in which the Communist Party did participate.

Within the class there are certain key sections where the Communist Party seems to have lost out completely — REPUBLICA, the Post Office, telephones. In other sectors (Lisnave, Setenave) one gets the impression that there is continual competition between the Communist Party and the revolutionary left, with the balance of influence shifting from day to day. Even in places like CUF, where the Communist Party has been very strong, the revolutionary left has some influence.

But of course there all sorts of factories, not deeply involved in the agitation of last summer (when the Communist Party controlled the Ministry of Labor and condemned all strikes), where the Communist Party's influence is unimpaired.

The isolation of the Communist Party presents it with insuperable problems.

A coalition with the Socialist Party will threaten the Communist Party first with loss of much of its control over the state machine, the media, etc., and second with loss of control of many of its own rank-and-file militants to the revolutionary left.

It was partly in order to protect its left flank, partly in order to get a mobilization in the streets that could defend its position in the state, that the Communist Party accepted the United Front on August 25.

But the Front was an embarrassment to international Stalinism and to the Communist Party allies in the officer corps.

In the short term at least, their isolation would seem worse than ever. The centrist groups that used to provide them with a certain left cover (MES, LCI, possibly FSP) have been forced to join with the PRP in denouncing the Communist Party's treachery.

It is not impossible that the Communist Party will be forced once again to try a United Front with the revolutionaries. Despite the size of the Communist Party's apparatus and the strength of its cadres, it could easily fall between two stools and fail in its attempts to exist as an apparatus suspended in mid-air.

As the present governmental set-up is a passage toward one of two dictatorships, the working class urgently need to build a representative democratic organization that covers the whole of the working class, i.e. soviets (councils). Parties, even large ones, can only include a minority of the proletariat. This could remain an abstract statement if one did not show how such soviets can be created from the immediate struggles, and first of all, from the need of workers to defend themselves against reaction.

The councils must be widespread, organized across the whole working class and not only its vanguard. The PRP-BR deserves real credit for urging the formation of Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers, and Sailors. The CRTSM's demonstration on June 17 of some 40,000 people was very fine. But this was only the vanguard — i.e. workers, soldiers, and sailors who should be members of a revolutionary party. The real councils must organize far more people with far greater unevenness in their levels of consciousness.

The collapse of the MFA as a unified force, and the sharp threats from reaction will make it possible and urgent to raise the question of the united anti-fascist front — as a transition to the soviets.

The problem of the united front — notwithstanding the deep differences between the political parties within it, and the inevitable split between them — is rooted in the need to defend workers' organizations against attack from reaction.

In what forms exactly, with what parties, the united front will be built in Portugal, we can never know in advance. Quick changes of tactics, including that of the united front, are needed in a swiftly changing situation. But one thing we can be absolutely sure of, if we study the historical experience of the international proletariat. One of the main issues connected intimately with that of a united front, and leading directly to it, is the question of arming the workers, the creation of workers' militias.



Lobo Pimentel, Jr./Vida Mundial

Scene from a meeting of a neighborhood commission. These commissions are autonomous and "apartidaria"—above all parties.

Workers have to protect themselves. Already in the North the need arises to patrol the streets, to defend working-class centers from reactionary attack. This need will arise also in Lisbon and Setubal.

At the same time one cannot have a workers' militia side by side with the regular army for any length of time. So the demand for their amalgamation has to be raised. This entails the election of all officers in the armed forces, the democratic election of soldiers' committees in each unit, centralized in a national election of soldiers' delegates to a national council. As the proletariat cannot win State power without arms, the slogan of "arming the workers" and the slogan "build the Councils of Workers, Soldiers, and Sailors" are indissolubly bound together.

Revolutions do indeed start as spontaneous acts without the leadership of a party. However after being triggered by a spontaneous uprising, revolutions move forward in a different manner. Spontaneity is inevitably irregular and uneven, and while all revolutions in history have begun spontaneously, none have ended so.

For the working class to take and hold power, a revolutionary workers' party is necessary. That is not to say that a revolution, an overthrow of the old order, cannot happen except under the leadership of a revolutionary party. Even the April 25 coup demonstrates this clearly. Without a party the overthrow of an old regime can certainly take place.

Nor is there any magic in parties as such. The traditional working-class parties, social-democratic and "communist", have for decades been a brake on, not a motor of, socialist revolution. "The proletariat may tolerate for a long time a (party) leadership that has already suffered a complete inner degeneration," Trotsky once wrote, "but has not as yet had the opportunity to express this degeneration amid great events. A great historic shock is necessary to reveal sharply the contradiction."

The shock may produce skepticism about the whole notion of a revolutionary party. Various substitutes may be supposed to exist — whether left-wing officers, spontaneous working-class action, or whatever. But there is no possible substitute. Many kinds of non-party institutions can play a part in the revolutionary process; workers' councils in particular can play an almost indispensable part; but without a revolutionary workers' party, the working class, as a class, cannot rule.

A revolutionary party is different in nature, not simply in policy, from reformist parties. Reformist parties are always substitutionalist. Vote for us and we will do this or that for you is their invariable approach. In the case of social-democratic parties, it is virtually the only political call they make to their supporters in "normal" circumstances.

Nowadays, everyone pays at least lip service to the need for political preparation, but in fact substitutionalism is still rife on the revolutionary left. It needs to be emphasized and re-emphasized that, in Marx's words, "the eman-

cipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself". A revolutionary party can never substitute itself for the working class. Other kinds of parties can, do, and must. Their aims, however various, all include keeping the workers politically passive — voting fodder at best or supporters of well-controlled demonstrations planned from above.

But the rejection of substitutionalism in no way involves rejecting the necessity for a revolutionary workers' party. The working class is the product of capitalist society. Its consciousness and militancy and understanding are necessarily extremely uneven. To act, even in sectional struggles, it requires organization. For it to act as a class for the biggest aim of all, the taking of power and the socialist reconstruction of society, the most conscious and confident workers must be welded together. They are the actual or potential leaders of their fellows. United they can, under favorable circumstances, carry the whole mass with them. This union of these advanced workers is the revolutionary workers' party. In times of crisis workers, like other sections of society, respond to some leadership or other. Acute problems have to be solved and will be solved — in a progressive way or in a reactionary one. In the absence of a revolutionary party led by the more advanced workers, the mass of the working class will follow or acquiesce in some other kind of lead. The vacuum has to be filled, and if the advanced workers lack the cohesion and confidence to lead, if they are not able to act as a party, then the vacuum is always filled by a substitutionist force which builds on apathy and confusion.

The party must be able to translate words into deeds. For this it must have wide and deep implantation in the proletariat; it must be a mass party. The PRP-BR on April 25, 1974 was only a tiny organization, and for it to become a mass party is not at all easy. Especially as the PRP has to contend not only with the Communist Party (and to a lesser extent the Socialist Party) in working-class circles, but also with other small extreme left organizations (above all the Maoists). The Bolshevik experience is quite useful. In the revolutionary months of 1917, the Bolshevik Party grew very swiftly indeed. In the spring and early summer of 1917, its membership increased manifold in Russia's largest cities.

Whether easy or difficult, in one way or another, the success of the revolution in Portugal demands the building of a mass revolutionary proletarian party.

Building the mass party, making the party paper a central organizer, making the party and every one of its members an active interventionist in the class struggle, are integral parts of leading the proletariat to victory. Politics and organization can in no way be separated.

A victory for the Proletarian revolution in Portugal will open a new chapter in world history. The impact on neighboring Spain will be decisive. Even before the fall of fascism the working class in Spain shows fantastic militancy. Official figures for 1974 record 1196 industrial disputes involving 669,861 workers, and these are the conservative figures put out by the Spanish government. If the multi-nationals lose their factories in Portugal, there is a good chance they will lose them in Spain too.

Portugal, the weakest link in the capitalist chain in Europe, can become the launching pad for the socialist revolution in the whole of the continent.

The stakes are extremely high for both the working class and the capitalist class. NATO, CIA, MI6, EEC, the State Department and the Foreign Office, Tories and Social Democratic leaders have joined together in a holy alliance to defend "democracy". The international proletariat should close ranks behind their Portuguese brothers and sisters to see that Portugal does not turn into another Chile and that the struggle culminates in workers' power and socialism.

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This article has been excerpted from Tony Cliff's longer article, "Portugal at the Crossroads", a special issue of INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM, #81-82, September 1975. In the process of shortening the article, we removed all footnotes and references. A complete version can be obtained for \$1.00 from Sun Distribution International, 14131 Woodward Avenue, Highland Park, MI 48203.

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Documents of the Workers' Struggle

Workers undertook independent political and economic struggles in the period immediately following the coup, despite the open opposition of the new government, the MFA Assembly, the Communist Party, and the trade union federation, Intersindical. They developed their own organizations, the Workers' Coordinating Committees — elected at general assemblies and subject to recall at any time — to conduct their struggle.

The first three leaflets which follow show that the workers brought an extraordinarily clear class consciousness to essentially defensive economic struggles, transforming them into struggles for power. Fiercely independent, they not only pressed demands, but developed organization through a coordinating body of factory committees and a communication network of numerous strike newspapers. The fundamental issues of Marxist theory, discussed below by workers of EFACEC-INEL [A Belgian-owned conglomerate], should not be dismissed as some kind of quaint intuitive Marxism. Portuguese workers have not only developed their analysis through concrete activities and struggle, but also they have built on a tradition of Marxist thought within the working class. This tradition has been

Opposite: REPUBLICA workers meet after they took over their newspaper.

kept alive both by discussion in the armed forces and by working-class parents passing it on to their children.

The Lisnave shipyard workers went right for the throat of the bourgeoisie: get the fascists out of the management and off the shop floor so that can't sabotage production. The Lisnave workers were exemplary in solidarity campaigns with other workers, and led the demonstration of September 12, 1974, despite a government ban, Communist Party criticism, and armed opposition. This demonstration was the occasion for the leaflet excerpted below.

At Sogantal, the occupation of the workplace by the all-woman workforce was at first "merely" a necessity, a tactical move designed to insure the strikers could survive. It became an inspiration to all the militant sectors of the working class. The women of Sogantal took a fight which had already advanced from an anti-fascist battle for control over management [Lisnave], and wages and working conditions fights (EFACEC-INEL), and extended the power of the working class into control of distribution.

The REPUBLICA newspaper case summed up one contradiction of the post-March 11 period: the obscuring of class conflict by Party and parliamentary politics. The REPUBLICA struggle was a move upwards from the stage of mimeo machines and bullhorns: the workers took a newspaper [and later a big radio station, Radio Renaissance] and put them in the service of the working class. REPUBLICA today is the journal of the working-class struggle in Portugal. On its pages are, side by side, leaflets, analysis, and interviews with unemployed workers, cooperative members, neighborhood commissions fighting for housing and family health care, along with a distinctly proletarian slant on the "news". For example, REPUBLICA'S coverage of the dramatic prison-break by captured agents of the old fascist secret police included an analysis of why the break took place, written by a committee of prison workers.

From venturing into control of distribution and communication, the workers' movement was forced to deal with power, with the question of constructing an organization capable of taking state power, but which would not reproduce the kinds of contradictions between party and mass which had forced the workers to create their own organizations in the first place. An important form discussed here is the Revolutionary Councils of Workers, Soldiers and Sailors.

In embryonic form, then, many of the essential parts of a deep, truly revolutionizing movement for working-class power are being created. Inspired by the persistence of the African guerrilla struggle, the solidarity of Italian, English, and emigre comrades, and a sense of urgency created by their own bitter experiences of fascism, the Portuguese workers' movement has taken "en frente" — "Straight

ahead!" — as its byword. While its clarity and militancy enabled it to survive the sharply drawn governmental crisis of this past summer, we will see if it has the flexibility to keep growing while simultaneously preparing for civil war or the stabilization of a capitalist regime.

TO DO AWAY WITH MANAGERS WE NEED TO DO AWAY WITH OWNERS

This analysis was printed in issue number 11 of the strike newspaper of EFACEC-INEL plant, July 22, 1974. EFACEC-INEL is a Belgian-controlled conglomerate with electronics assembly plants in Portugal. The struggle at this plant broke out shortly after the April 25th coup and was widely publicized. The analysis here was extremely important in addressing itself to the limits and lessons of the saneamento (purging of fascists) campaign.

One talks a lot about "saneamento" of people, but maybe it would be good to better clarify whether the actions of the persons who are "saneadas" are only their fault or whether they are also a result of the position which they occupy in the system we live in.

This does not mean that those elements should not be purged, but we have to be aware that even with "saneamento" nothing fundamental is changed. Because there are only two alternatives: either the one who substitutes for the purged one performs the role which is assigned by the boss, or the boss himself removes that person. This is so because there is no one who can please both parties in ques-

tion: bosses and workers. Exactly because the interests of the boss are fulfilled by the exploitation of the worker, the persons at whom "saneamento" is aimed perform a very important role in this exploitation. Their function is to oppress the workers in order to defend the bosses.

It is not by chance that these people function this way, just as it is not by chance that the salary of engineers and managers is always much higher than the workers' wages. By giving a higher salary to the managers, the bosses are buying them off and putting them on their side. Consequently, even the workers are normally against the managers.

But we have to see that it is the boss who has authority over and pays the manager, and even if the manager is changed, another will take his place. Since the boss keeps him there and pays him, he has to defend the boss and thus be against the workers who are under his orders.

Therefore, the workers will only be free when they do away with the managers, and to do so they have to do away with the bosses.

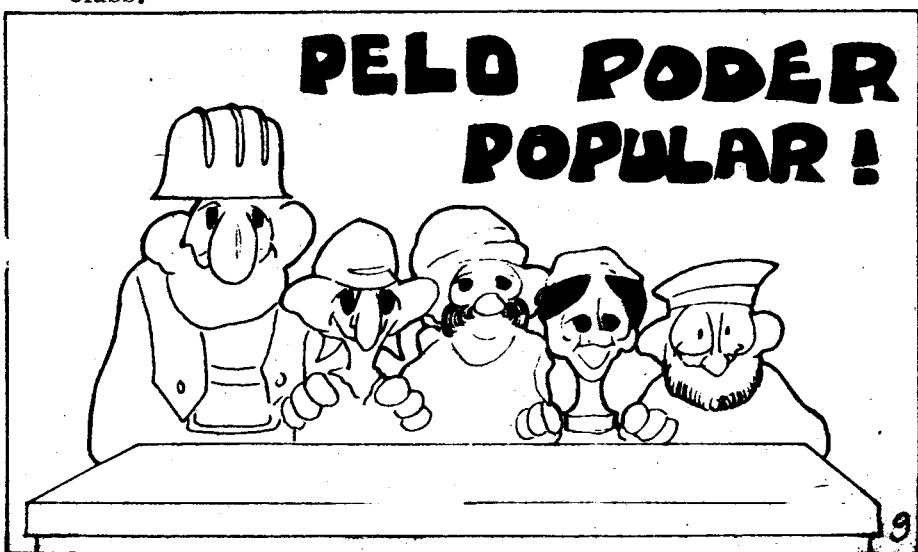
July 22, 1974



COMMUNIQUE FROM LISNAVE WORKERS

Lisnave is a giant shipbuilding and marine construction and repair corporation. Lisbon Lisnave workers had to fight off Inter-sindical cadres attacking their picket lines and then turn COPCON forces away from an attempt to break their occupation of their shipyard. Under fascism, the Lisnave workers had suffered severe repression. PIDE [secret police] agents were brought into the factory, workers beaten and blacklisted. After the revolution the workers were absolutely determined that those responsible should be not only thrown out of the shop but punished. Thus this communique, issued at the demonstration of Sept. 12, 1974, was part of a detailed defense and explanation of their need for saneamento and the right to strike. The opposite side of this leaflet contained a list of the names of police agents and fascist collaborators whom the workers were demanding be punished.

In struggling to rid the Lisnave management of its fascists, the workers have become aware that they are fighting not only for the downfall of the fascist structure inside Lisnave, but also against the whole of the exploiting ruling class.



Towards Popular Power.

Esquerda Socialista, 18 June, 1975

In this way, the workers of Lisnave are joining with the brave fight of TAP, of "Jornal do Comercio", of Siderurgia, of Texmalhas, backing all the struggles from North to South, and leaving the narrow walls of the factory to come onto the streets and show :

- That our fight to rid ourselves of fascists is not a secondary fight, it is a principal struggle because it is part of the permanent fight against all the forms of fascism being constantly generated by monopoly capitalism.

- That where there is initiative and organized struggle by the oppressed classes, the forces of reaction retreat. Where there is lack of vigilance on the part of the people, the counter-revolutionary forces advance and wipe out the freedom already achieved.

- That we support all the laws and measures of the Provisional Government which help to increase the freedom of the workers, and of the peoples exploited and oppressed by Portuguese colonialism.

- That we do not back the government when it comes out with anti-working-class laws which undermine the struggles of workers against capitalist exploitation.

- That we reject the Lock-out Law as a law against the workers and for the protection of the capitalists, granting to the bosses the freedom to starve thousands of workers.

- Because we know that the 120 million escudos (5 million dollars) (1) are not, as claim the Melos, Champalimouds, Quinas, and Company, to create 120,000 jobs, but to create better conditions under which to exploit the workers.

- That we reject all attempts, no matter from where they come, to sabotage and divide the working masses in their fight against fascism and capitalism.

- That we support the Armed Forces so long as they support the struggles of the oppressed and exploited classes against the oppressing and exploiting classes.

LISNAVE WORKERS PURGE FASCISTS

DEATH TO PIDE — DEATH TO FASCISM

1. Allusion to a plan to "develop" and "assist" the Portuguese economy.

RIGHT TO STRIKE — YES!

LOCK OUT — NO!

SOLIDARITY WITH THE COMRADES ON STRIKE

September 12, 1974

WOMEN IN THE PORTUGUESE CLASS STRUGGLE: The Case of Sogantal

Under fascism, Portuguese women suffered under the most severe conditions. Capitalist exploitation and its resulting fascist-Catholic ideology, which repressed the entire class, was compounded for them. Their wages were half that of men in the same job. Divorce was prohibited by the Church, daycare glaringly absent. In housing, 60% was without running water, 80% without a kitchen and bathroom. Many women washed clothes in nearby streams and carried all water for home use. There was no welfare. When unemployment rose dramatically in the late 60's and early 70's and Portuguese men left to find work elsewhere in Europe, women stayed behind. There were no jobs even there for them.

The April 25 coup that released the Portuguese people from fascism provided them the space to create alternatives for themselves, and women, along with men of their class, went into action. The struggle of women was waged primarily on two fronts—work and housing—and is now being built through elected workers' committees in the factories, neighborhood commissions in urban communities and agricultural cooperatives in the countryside.

About 25% of waged industrial workers are women. Until the early 1960's, Portugal was an industrially undeveloped country whose ruling class, the landed aristocracy, relied on its colonial investment. When Western European and multi-national development began, women were used because they could be paid low wages. Women were concentrated in light assembly industries, primarily electronics and computers [e.g., Timex, Applied Magnetics, British

Plessey, and Belgian EFACEC-INEL], and textiles and garments, like the French Sogantal.

After the coup, when women workers participated in electing workers' committees, they raised demands for equal wages with men and for a minimum wage. In May 1974, responding to the latter, the MFA declared a minimum wage of 3300 escudos [\$130] a month. Companies which had located in Portugal because of the low women's wages refused to pay the increases. Many attempted to close down and leave the country, and some, even with militant workers' struggles to keep them in Portugal, succeeded.

At one Applied Magnetics factory near Lisbon, women locked the company's president in his office and stole his passport. When this failed, they alerted sympathetic bank workers who froze the company's account so that at least the profits wouldn't escape with him. Other companies tried lay-offs and speed-ups to maintain profits.

Women agricultural workers, part of a decades-long tradition of struggle, participated in land occupations and agricultural-cooperative building. In the cities, Neighborhood Commissions of women have carried out numerous housing occupations, setting up daycare centers and health clinics in some.

In Lisbon's shanty towns, women successfully demonstrated, demanding to have the rent they formerly paid to the fascists for the land on which they lived go instead into a food/consumer goods co-operative and a building fund.

On February 18, 1975, the MFA reached an agreement with the Vatican on new divorce rights for Church marriages. At the same time, however, marriage itself is becoming less important — an increasingly common practice among young Portuguese people being to abandon it and simply live together, even after having children.

Revolutionary organization-building in factories, the countryside, and communities is proceeding fast in Portugal — with a continuously-expanding participation of women and development of a women's consciousness within that.

An autonomous women's movement, however, has not yet developed from this struggle. The Communist Party-led MDM [Women's Democratic Movement] recruits women into the trade union and anti-fascist movement through the Intersindical. The MLM [Women's Liberation Movement] that preceded the coup comes from a bourgeois feminist tradition and class base. Although it does some work among working-class women, raising demands for abortion and daycare, it is not an integral part of the working-class organizations which have the power to implement demands, such as the neighborhood commissions and factory workers' commissions, like that of Sogantal.

Donna Karl.

Sogantal, the French-owned manufacturer of track suits, decided to close its doors on May 30, 1974, when the workers presented demands for:

- a month paid vacation each year
- 13th month paid [A commonly-met workers' demand in Common Market countries for a month of extra pay as a Christmas bonus.]
- a raise of 1250 escudos [about \$60] in monthly wages which then ranged between 1040 and 1600 escudos a month

Although wages are paid monthly, they are based on a 45-hour work week. This meant that the demands of the workers listed above amounted to less than the legally established minimum wage. The company still refused to pay, just as it refused to accept the rest of the demands. Indeed, the company responded with an attempt to lock out the workers, threatening to close down all its facilities in Portugal.

The Sogantal workers responded by occupying their plant and demanding that it be nationalized and reopened under workers' control. The Sogantal workers today continue to produce and sell and are in the process of converting their production to more socially useful garments.

A definite women's consciousness underlay their actions along with a strong class consciousness. In the first issue of their *SOGANTAL JOURNAL* they wrote that they were partly stimulated to take their action because it was a "moment when all women workers are gaining consciousness of their problems and giving proof of their capacity and initiative in the struggle to defend our interests..."

In the following excerpt from the story in their journal, the Sogantal workers describe their struggle from the moment the bosses announced the intended lock-out.



Women from Sogantal.

To this we have replied by occupying the factory and by selling the track suits we produce by ourselves.

To this day, August 26th, the bosses refuse to come to any agreement concerning our demands and maintain their intransigent position of trying to lock us out.

Realizing that they were not able to defeat our struggle, the bosses attempted a desperate maneuver on Saturday, August 24th. Fashioning themselves after some kind of spy movie, they worked out a plan aimed at removing everything from inside the factory. Overwhelming the guard whom we had hired to watch over the workshop, they invaded the factory and began to dismantle the machines and seize the stock.

Sometime later, one of us saw a sign posted on the factory saying that the building was now "protected" by police dogs and that the owners would not be responsible for what happened to anyone who entered. Thinking that something was wrong, she left to inform the rest of us of the situation. Everyone of us who could assembled immediately and headed straight for the factory to check out the posted notice and the situation. We were not timid and advanced on the factory, only to be greeted by a hail of pistol shots and clouds of tear gas as well as threatened by billy clubs and two vicious dogs. Still, we succeeded in entering the factory, and the bosses were able to leave only by hiding face down on the floor of an army truck.

Following this confrontation we headed for the Ministry of Labor, and once more we left without a concrete response to our demands. According to documents which have been made available to us, various French authorities and even some departments of the Portuguese Ministries had been made aware of the plan of these gangsters on August 23rd (one day before the attack!).

Our bosses are now under military guard (2) and we demand that they be tried. Or is it that these gentlemen have the right to rob the fruits of our labor and to attack us as well?

2. The Sogantal owner was arrested by COPCON during the aforementioned confrontation.

The material for the track suits came from France all cut. Once assembled and sewn in Portugal, they were sent back to the mother factory in France which was responsible for marketing them.

Thus it was cheaper to pay the Portuguese workers less and transport the material here and there than to have to meet the wage rates of French workers !

A LIVING WAGE ?

And how was this monthly salary of 1600 escudos (\$64) used ? An apartment in Montijo costs between 1,000 and 3,000 escudos a month. The average worker pays 400 escudos a month for 9-hour-a-day child care. Some of the workers must support an entire family by themselves. The situation is such that many do not have a roof over their heads.

Production bonuses have been established to increase peoples' pay. The minimum bonus, 600 escudos (\$25) was a reward for doubling the production of track suits ! The required effort was so great that hardly anyone actually got a bonus. And what's more, this sort of competition only served to build divisions among the workers.

Right now we get 3300 (\$130) escudos a month by selling the track suits we make. But this situation will not last indefinitely. Since we live under a capitalist system, the factory cannot survive simply because we control it ourselves. Already the other bosses are trying to strangle us with competition. This is why we approached the Labor Ministry. We wanted the government to guarantee our wages and to nationalize Sogantal.

The only thing we were told was that it could not be done. To our faces, the Ministry of Labor said to us : that we "should all remain calm and confident because the government is going to help. All the responsibility reverts to us." But this is the same thing we've heard for months. As one of us pointed out to the Minister : "The government always says it will be responsible for everything, but this is not enough because, the fact is, our situation does not get resolved. The words you use are exactly the same as those

spoken by the government before April 25th." The Minister was then shown the door.

The daily papers present at this meeting hardly mentioned our struggle. They were of no help. The TV stations that came to report "allowed" us to talk — but only for 3 minutes. While filming they told us "Sum up! Sum up fast! There's no time left." But when we turned on the set to watch the news, they spent more than 10 minutes telling the story of a religious procession.

Since the beginning of our struggle, the support we've gotten has essentially come from other workers. The workers of Lisnave and other factories were willing to help us economically if we needed it. Some workers from nearby shops, on their break time, took responsibility for setting up the machines that the bosses had tried to take. Lisnave workers took up a collection.

When the attack on the plant occurred, many people from the neighboring streets came right to the factory and resisted the COPCON troops and the Military Police who had come to defend the bosses. It was the power of these people which made certain that the bosses wouldn't escape. Frightened by the righteous anger of the people — people who were familiar with the struggle of our factory — the boss barricaded himself on the first floor and left only when he saw he would be well protected by the military men present. He was afraid to confront the people.

We could resolve our situation if we could find new jobs for each one of us," said one Sogantal worker. "I've already been able to get another job offer, but I don't care about it because our struggle is not just to win higher wages. It is much more a part of a struggle that involves the entire working class for our total liberation. We know that the boss has a castle in France and his own airplane, paid for by our work. This is precisely what we want to overcome. From the start we have had this idea, and we are willing to struggle to the end."

At the outset of the struggle, some gentlemen of the CDE of Montijo came by. (3) They tried to convince us to estab-

3. CDE: Democratic Electoral Committees that united a broad front of left and pro-left forces to participate in the "legal" opposition allowed by Caetano in 1969 and 1973 elections. The CDE's were organized and led by the Communist Party, although some other forces par-

lish "amicable relations" with the boss : to accept his proposal and not make more demands. They tried to obstruct the strike and to have us submit to the will of Mr. Lagart (the boss). When we refused this advice, since we still wanted to struggle against the boss, they sang us another little tune : any vote should not be by a show of hands in an open meeting, because this could create an "excited atmosphere" in which we would all vote in favor of our "current demands". They advised us to use a secret ballot. None of us followed their advice and we did as we wished, voting by hand. Since that time, as we have continued our struggle, the CDE has not shown up again.

Late September, 1974

MANIFESTO TO ALL POOR AND EXPLOITED WORKERS OF PORTUGAL FROM THE WORKERS OF REPUBLICA

The workers of the newspaper "Republica" are a group of simple workers among all Portuguese workers, and in the present news-media crisis in Portugal are reacting against the general opportunism. They are obeying no sect, are subordinate to no party.... They have assumed a responsibility toward all exploited people of Portugal and are fighting to make the dissemination of news a collective action.

We are happy to belong only to our own thinking, our own work, and we are fighting against the plot to divide Portugal's exploited workers into different parties, different politics, with different managers.

ticipated. Activity was limited to preparing for local elections 30 days prior to their actual date. Participants were often blacklisted and forced into exile. After April 25, the CDE was transformed into the MDP but is still often referred to as CDE.

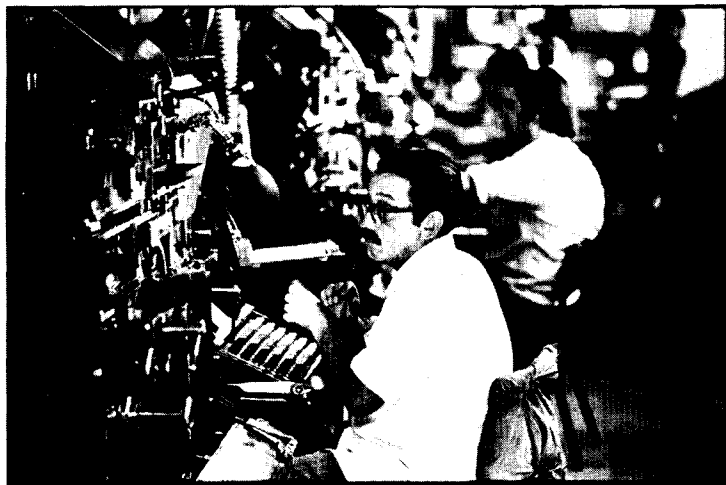
Some parties are using the general media crisis to make immoral and corrupt compromises. Prostituted news media at the service of parties such as those can only contribute to division, indifference, and negligence in the society.

"REPUBLICA" HAD FALLEN INTO THE HANDS OF MEN OF POWER

The workers of "Republica" won't allow this country to go on maintaining itself only from the money of exploitation.

As media workers, we want a newspaper that helps the Portuguese people to fight, conscious of their rights and dignity. We are against demagogues and opportunists who join the fight for a freedom they don't love and for a socialist program they do not want.

The newspaper "Republica" had fallen into the hands of a group of men of false greatness, false talent, and bourgeois arrogance. It had fallen to a kingdom of usury, into the ruination of labor and the subversion of socialist principles....Our enemies have proved that they have in their hands only the power of intrigue, and with that power they showed themselves proud, selfish, and fanatic.



At work at REPUBLICA after the workers took over their newspaper.

Jerry Berndt

POWER OVER THE NEWS AND THE ECONOMY TO THE WORKERS

We, workers of "Republica", know we are part of a society that lacks science and education. It therefore lacks a media policy which, instead of reducing the exploited to silence, gives them power over the news and the economy.

We don't want the media to be at the service of demagogues, nor to be entertained by counting the numbers of possible freedoms....

This is a good occasion to reform completely our media policy. We want to create media that will be in the hands of the working classes, free from all obligations and partisanship. We want to begin a press that stands for defiance and rehabilitation in the hands of poor and exploited people.

As expected, part of the Portuguese bourgeoisie, which before April 25th stood on the side of the poor and exploited, whether from sentiment or to assure itself of customers, today, after the losses of September 28th and March 11th, willingly accepts authoritarian doctrinal formulas.

Some who were anti-fascists before April 25th became, after March 11th, authoritarians wanting to control the press, in order to make their ideology dominant among the exploited classes. The Spinola-ists of March 11th knew perfectly well the political value of the "Republica" name. So they planned the occupation of the newspaper against the principles we workers are defending today against the newspaper's masters. We are defending the principle that the emancipation of Portuguese workers must be won by the workers themselves. That's why workers must maintain the press covering the whole country so that they cannot ever be manipulated by ruling groups exercising power over the media.

THE BASIS OF FREEDOM

We are defending, before all the Portuguese workers, the principle that in building a true socialist society the media should aim to help the transformation of the working class from an exploited and ruled class into a leading class, increased in consciousness, responsibility, and freedom.

The newspaper "Republica" should be one of the basic organs in the general media. With this sense of ourselves, we are fighting against any partisan interference, against the dictatorship of the Socialist Party.

We are insisting that the newspaper "Republica" shall follow a creative perspective, bettered through practice. The ruling group we want to dismiss has already proven itself to lack the moral honesty to lead this newspaper as an instrument of analysis and revolutionary action.

We also insist that the achievement of political power over the media by the working classes cannot come from a decree nor by a decision of a Central Commission. It will happen through the development of social and economic contradictions. We do not accept the production of a press conditioned by the tactics of those who don't want to follow a revolutionary path.

The working class does not need someone else to inform it; it must inform itself. No party can rise above the interests of the people, and it is a crime against the Revolution to manipulate people through a media alien to the working class.

We also insist that the media must not fall into a spontaneist conception of revolution. It is not enough that, in concrete situations of struggle as in the present case of the "Republica", workers' commissions are born. These commissions cannot disappear after the struggle that gave birth to them ceases. The workers' commissions must transform themselves into permanent, unified, and basic organs of the proletarian vanguard which has emerged from the struggle. They should determine the actions of the unions and condition the actions of parties and political organizations concerning the media.

The workers' commission of "Republica" is composed of militant workers from several parties and political organizations, including the Socialist Party itself.

CONTROL OVER THE PRESS TO THE WORKERS

We declare to all Portuguese workers that we are fighting for control over the press by the working class. We declare that the working class should interfere in decisions related

to the production of social communications and their distribution. We declare that socialism does not mean breaking production records without changing the conditions of work. We finally declare that our struggle began from our workplace and grew till it was coordinated — not controlled — by a workers' commission. We are in solidarity with all exploited and poor workers of Portugal who, in the factories, in the countryside, and at sea, fight for a workers' revolution and who are not at the service of a few power-hungry, ambitious, and treacherous men.

June 10, 1975

WHAT ARE THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS?

Prior to 1933, the Portuguese working class had been able to conduct its economic struggle openly through the trade unions. On September 23 of that year, a fascist trade union law was passed, modelled explicitly on the repressive "Carta Lavori" instituted by Mussolini in Fascist Italy. The existing trade unions were abolished and highly-fragmented, state-controlled labor syndicates, which existed right up to the coup of April 25, 1974, came into being.

The response of the Portuguese working class to this repressive 1933 law was immediate and widespread. Among the most militant responses was the insurrection in the *Marinha Grande*, the glass-production belt 25 miles north of Lisbon where the entire population had built a long tradition of struggle. Militants of the regional Communist Party, of the CGT [the national anarcho-syndicalist trade union federation], and numerous local organizations collaborated in a Revolutionary Committee, defining a strategy for taking control of the region so that the economic and political struggle could continue. Prior to April 25, 1974, the Revolutionary Council (also called a Soviet) of *Marinha Grande* marked the high tide of working-class struggle in Portugal. The proposal to construct Revolutionary Councils in Portugal today also comes from this industrial region. It is an outgrowth of the particular conditions of struggle imposed by the rule of the Armed Forces Movement since the 25th of April.

The Councils were a response to:

1] The limits imposed on the economic struggle by the decline in production created by the Portuguese bourgeoisie and its allies in the Common Market and the United States. The factory committees could not make endless demands on a contracting economy without constructing the means to implement some conversion and expansion of the means of production.

2] The failure of the MFA, split between various tendencies and factions, and of their coalition Provisional Governments torn between Parties, to act decisively to initiate and carry through a coherent political and economic program.

3] The need to institutionalize the *de facto* political power exercised by the factory and neighborhood commissions, and the independent forces to the left of the Communist Party in a form which reflected their extra-parliamentary and mass-based approach to building power for the working class.

Tapping the experience of France in 1968, militants of various factory committees, with the support of the PRB/BR, convened a Congress on April 19, 1975 which was attended by delegates of more than 200 factories and 60 military units. A Provisional Secretariat was established by the Congress to coordinate the work of building the Councils. It had some 50 seats, 35 of which were filled at the Congress itself. Eleven foundry and steel workers, a cork worker, an office worker, an electronics worker, a teacher, a hotel worker, a graphic-arts worker, one unemployed worker, and 11 military people [soldiers, sailors, and junior officers] joined regional representatives from the North, from Alentejo and Algarve, Marinha Grande, Viano do Castelo, and the Covilha.

The Revolutionary Councils have enabled some of the groups participating in the revolutionary process in Portugal to transcend the "revisionist/orthodox" debate which has hampered the growth of the working-class left. This the Councils do by questioning the existence of the concept of orthodoxy. The Communist Party's preference for working within the state apparatus and for being "responsible" to the MFA is viewed by the Councils as a function of material interests, not bad ideas and deviations from orthodoxy. The Communist Party, the Councils charge, is constructing state capitalism, not "betraying" the working class. This analysis has enabled the Councils and some other forces to benefit from the Communist Party's real strength — its mass base in the working class — in building the revolutionary movement, rather than consigning themselves to perpetual, harping criticism of the PCP.

The Councils have also attempted to address themselves to clarifying the relationship of the MFA to the revolutionary sectors of the working class. They established a specific form in which, for the first

time, revolutionary elements in the MFA and throughout the armed forces could collaborate, in an on-going organizational form, with the rest of the working class. This was a big switch from the endless streams of proposals for more "democracy" and "participation" proposed from above by the MFA and the Provisional Governments.

To date, the largest single show of strength by the Revolutionary Councils acting alone was the march of June 17, 1975, attended by some 40,000 and led by the workers of Lisnave. This march demanded that the Constituent Assembly be dissolved and that the authority to constitute a new regime be passed on to the Revolutionary Councils.

It is important here to distinguish the Revolutionary Councils from the Factory Committees. The Councils are a specific organization. They are, at the moment, the political front, the movement for direct assault on state power, of the most militant sectors of the working class. The Interempresa, or Inter-Enterprise Committee, still exists and coordinates the day-to-day struggles of the factory committees. Similarly, the Secretariat of Revolutionary and Autonomous Neighborhood Commissions, a coordinating body representing the most militant neighborhood commissions, still functions and recently held a Congress to evaluate the work of the last year and elaborate a program for the next. Independent groups such as the Soldiers United for Victory, an insurgent group who defied the new "Moderate" government and held a march in the streets of Porto in mid-September, 1975, are still defining their relationships to the other independent organizations of the class. The Revolutionary Councils do not claim or attempt to subordinate or take over the struggles in each neighborhood, barracks, village, or factory. The continuation of these struggles, they say, will be as decisive a factor in enabling the Councils to take power some day, as they were in the very birth of the Council organization.



Some of the 150,000 demonstrators who marched in Lisbon on August 20, 1975. Their banner reads: "Towards the unity of workers, soldiers and sailors—our revolutionary councils".

We turn now to the REPUBLIC of July 23, 1975, for an interview with two delegates to the Councils who were elected to its Secretariat. As will be clear from the discussion that follows, the Councils embody the highest, most exciting hopes of the Portuguese revolution while revealing all the limitations and contradictions of the actual moment.

Stu Gedal

WHEN AND AT WHOSE INITIATIVE DID THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS APPEAR?

The Revolutionary Councils began to be discussed on March 11, 1975, in Marinha Grande, at a working-class mobilization called by various political organizations in response to the lack of a political context which would enable people to respond to the attacks of the reactionaries.

Some comrades then went to Leiria, where they discussed the political situation with soldiers from a number of forts. They vowed to continue this discussion in the barracks until they could decide what action was to be taken and against whom.

From there they began to discuss forms of working-class organization with the objective of impeding any new reactionary attacks.

These comrades were, in fact, militants of the PRP/BR who then went to Lisbon to have their proposals recognized by the Party. Since that Party recognizes the autonomous organization of the proletariat, it saw the need for Revolutionary Councils. All this began to be taken up in the workplaces, above all in the industrial center in and around Lisbon. On April 11 and 12, a plenary session was held with representatives of around 50 enterprises and some military units to discuss this form of organization.

A secretariat of 9 people was established with the object of holding a Congress the following week — on April 19 and 20.... This organization included the participation of about 200 enterprises and 60 military units from all parts of the country. Moreover, the PRP/BR, defending the autonomous organization of the workers as the only basis for the conquest of power, had not yet developed a proposal concerning any particular form of organization because they had

previously felt that the necessary pre-conditions for such a proposal did not yet exist. These conditions existed only after March 11, when the economic impasse which had been reached made it impossible for the workers' monetary demands to be met.

HOW ARE THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS CONSTITUTED? WHAT ARE THEIR FORMS OF ORGANIZATION, GUIDELINES AND PRINCIPLES?

The Revolutionary Councils are Workers' Assemblies, which are trying to make a qualitative leap in the organization of Workers' Councils because their objective is the taking of power and exercising that power in the future.

They aim to take responsibility for control of production, the management and administration of enterprises, but not actually running the factories, because for this purpose there are managers who should be subordinated to the workers' power as expressed by the Council of each enterprise, village, or fort. In order for the Councils to actually represent the will of the workers, it is essential that they are elected in a democratic way — through what we call direct and full democracy, not by representation by "voting lists." First departments in each factory would elect representatives through a secret ballot. Then the Councils are elected by department representatives unless the factory is too small, in which case a plenary of the whole factory is convened. The Council can be recalled at any time.

The Revolutionary Councils act in accordance with 4 fundamental principles :

1. Unity above all parties
2. Full democracy
3. Immediate recall at any time
4. Pyramidal structure between and across local, regional, and national councils

What we must say about the "party" aspect which is attributed to the Councils, especially in relation to PRP/BR, is that it was a party (it could have even been the MFA itself) which put forward this idea. But this is not to say that the

Revolutionary Councils are going to be controlled by that party or any other. This becomes evident if we realize that they are elected by all the workers of the most diverse tendencies, and that the majority do not even have a party. Therefore, it's not likely that the PRP/BR, which is a minority party in the working class, will be able to control or dominate the Councils. On the other hand, the parties have a fundamental role in this form of organization, which is to make ideological proposals to the class through the base.

AFTER THE FOUNDING OF THE COUNCILS, HOW DID THEY DEVELOP ROOTS AMONG THE WORKERS?

There is a Provisional Secretariat that has 35 members, and which has been carrying out the task of energizing the Revolutionary Councils on a national level. The work of political clarification is primary. Through our communiques and through the Committees to Support the Revolutionary Councils are disseminated the conclusions of the Congress, interviews, and press conferences so that the workers can know what the Councils are and what their national position is. The work requires that we go to the workplaces to hold clarification sessions about them, but only after we know that it is the will of the workers as shown by their discussions in their assembly.

WHAT KIND OF AGREEMENT AND SUPPORT DO THE COUNCILS HAVE AMONG LEFT PARTIES AND WORK- ERS' ORGANIZATIONS, OTHER THAN THE PRP/BR?

Besides the PRP/BR, the BASE-FUT (Unitary Workers' Front) also support this idea. LUAR is considering it, but the truth is that it has not collaborated in anything. And from the other parties invited (at the time, everything from the Socialist Party to the left) to participate in the work of the Congress, there still is a place for every one of them to have a delegate on the secretariat. We had none attending, and there was even a demonstration against the Councils by the PS and the MRPP, calling us the "Counter-revolutionary Councils."

THERE IS A THEORY FOR THE REVOLUTIONARY COUNCILS AND ONE FOR THEIR REVOLUTIONARY PRACTICE. THE SAME QUESTION IS POSED HERE AS IN THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1917. THIS IS THE CONTRADICTION EXISTING BETWEEN ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS AND THE POWER OF THE STATE THAT LED TO THE DOMINATION OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY OVER THE COUNCILS (AFTER 1921). THE QUESTION I PUT TO YOU IS HOW CAN WE CORRELATE THE COUNCILS, AN AUTONOMOUS REVOLUTIONARY ORGANIZATION, WITH THE PERSPECTIVES OF AN MFA WHICH CONTROLS THE STATE APPARATUS IN A SOCIETY IN WHICH THE BOURGEOISIE IS STILL THE DOMINANT CLASS.

The Revolutionary Councils defend the dictatorship of the Proletariat, not as the dictatorship of a party but as the real power of workers. What we want is precisely the destruction of bourgeois state apparatus through the victory of the Councils. Power is to be conquered by the whole class and not one party. This, obviously, does not exclude the idea of parties, because we don't have the anarchist ideas that workers can govern themselves without leadership. This leadership simply is not one of power. It is an ideological leadership that gives perspective to the workers' struggle. And this, to us, is the real Party.

But if the Party designates itself as the "leader" of the working class, it will have a tendency, whether it wants it or not, to usurp power; and that was, without a doubt, what happened in the Soviet Union and has happened in other Socialist countries. Even though they say in their defense that this is a transitory phase, we do not believe that the workers will regain power without going through another revolution.

What we think is that the workers, through the autonomous organizations that the Revolutionary Councils could be, ought to exercise the power through elected individuals who on the one hand could just carry out tasks, and on the other hand would be able to give birth to an ideological vanguard that would broaden the objectives to be achieved and to be discussed by the base.

What we say about the MFA is that there are diverse currents in it, one reformist, one conservative, and another one progressive. We consider the last assembly of the MFA, where the relationship between the people and the MFA was concretely defined (1), to have been a victory for the progressives.

Clearly, we think the MFA, a majority of which consists of petty-bourgeois elements, is not going to surrender without a fight to the power which is being created. We know that the final struggle will be precisely with those (in the MFA) who even now support us the most.

It seems to us that this contradiction can be overcome only when the Revolutionary Councils, or the autonomous organizations, are armed and capable of conquering power themselves by force, creating one Revolutionary Army — the Army of the Proletariat — ready to respond to all attacks of reaction and Imperialism.

WHAT IS THE RELATION THAT EXISTS BETWEEN THE COUNCILS AND GENERAL OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO ?

General Oteló, in a press conference after the elections, defended and supported all forms of independent organization of the workers. This a-priori public support was in contradiction with officials in the army from other tendencies.

At the demonstration of June 17, which for the first time raised the question of power — of the Constituent Assembly and the Government — the presence of General Oteló was hoped for. If he had come, this itself might have created, once and for all, a rupture between the reactionary and progressive forces within the Army. General Oteló was pressured not to appear and was called to the Council of the Revolution (2) which was meeting at the time and which issued the Plan of Political Action (PAP). This plan opposed the dictatorship of the proletariat and was followed by a

1. This Revolutionary Assembly of July 8-10, 1975 confirmed the idea of "Popular Power" — direct democracy between the people and the MFA, and redefined the MFA guidelines for establishing "popular" organizations to bring them more in line with the Revolutionary Councils.

2. The Executive Body of the Armed Forces Movement — not to be confused with the Revolutionary Councils.



Jerry Berndt

A scene from the Poder Popular demonstration on August 27, 1975. At least 140,000 attended this United Front demonstration, which included the Communist Party. Many of the demonstrators shouted, "Give us guns!"

communique from COPCON in which the position of General Otelo was very ambiguous. The statement said there had been an attempt on the part of the Revolutionary Councils to compromise General Otelo and COPCON.

Well, this is not what had happened. Previously, General Otelo (going by what he said and according to the positions taken by COPCON supporting the occupations of apartments and land and other just workers' struggles) — he and COPCON were already compromised.

As I see it, this maneuver represented a tactical alliance between the reformist and conservative forces in order to impede the advance of the working class.

ONCE THE APPARATUS OF THE BOURGEOIS STATE IS DESTROYED, HOW DOES THE SUBSTITUTION OF ITS FUNCTIONS PROCEED, IN THE SENSE OF EXCHANGING THE GOVERNMENT OF PEOPLE FOR THE ADMINISTRATION OF THINGS?

We think that this type of organization can be secured by the violent passage to a society where the workers, in an organized form, have the power to exercise a proletarian dictatorship for the first time in the history of humanity. How? The Revolutionary Councils in the factories, in the country, and in the barracks ought to maintain direct contact among themselves as follows: in a given area, the various Councils shall elect from among themselves what we call a Revolutionary Council for the Zone. In turn, the Zone Councils will do the same and will elect a Revolutionary Council for the region, and, in this way, we will develop a pyramid which will finally be completed in a Revolutionary Council at the national level. We can compare this one to the Supreme Soviet, with the only difference being that this one, at this moment, represents a high point of power, while we want it to be just the opposite, an executive organ of the will of all workers.

Clearly, once this National Revolutionary Council is achieved, it will have to have relations with numerous technicians, teams whose work will be to make various proposals to be discussed at all levels.

Nationalizations, in their current form, do not make a socialist society and can lead to state capitalism. For us, socialization will be more correct. Its first measure will be taken in relation to the land, establishing agrarian politics of collectivization of the lands, attending to the specific problems of each region and the customs of the country folk. What we say regarding industry, is that it ought to be totally converted.

As for planning, we think it requires the existence of a strong relationship between the Revolutionary Councils and well-structured teams tied to the Councils who will take responsibility for planning.

GIVEN THE ANALYSIS OF THE ACTUAL POLITICAL SITUATION, WHAT ARE THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVES OF THE COUNCILS?

One of the immediate objectives of the Councils is a Congress to be held soon — at a yet-to-be announced date. Al-

ready scheduled for the 19th and 20th of this month, it had to be postponed because of the political situation.

Aside from the Congress, we also see, as an immediate objective, the discussion of the actual political situation, a more advanced phase of the struggle, one in which the political camps become polarized and the violence of confrontation can erupt with all its force.

A third objective is the election of the Councils, since only in this way will we be able to see that the class is organized to respond to all attempts of the reactionary forces, including those reformist and bourgeois parties who are now out of the government and want to regain control.

I think that right now we are in a very advanced phase for this form of organization. And everything depends on the formation of a new government. A revolutionary government, above parties, could effectively be a first step for the autonomous organization of the class to take power.

There, given the actual situation, one of the objectives of the Revolutionary Councils will be to alert the organs of power to the immediate necessity to arm and train the autonomous organizations, truly democratic and above parties, rather than the CDRs. (3)

TO START WITH, WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES WHICH LEAD TO THE FRONTAL OPPOSITION BETWEEN THE COUNCILS AND THE CDR'S?

The differences between the Councils and the CDR's are very well known. But one of the most important is that the Councils are a form of organization enabling the class, functioning in accord with the 4 previously-mentioned points, to take power. This is not the case with the CDR's.

First, because they are Councils for the Defense of the Revolution, and, we say, it is a country where a revolution

3. Committees to Defend the Revolution, established by the MFA after the April 25 elections to the Constituent Assembly. Many elements of the MFA joined the left in expressing a sense of being boxed in by the election results. The "progressives" in the MFA advocated a plan to establish CDR's on the Cuban model to concretize the "alliance of the people with the MFA."

was not yet made. On the other hand, they are in no way a form of class organization, but rather are a form of class division. This is so because they are composed through personal invitations from lists of names which are self-appointed.

Committees for the Defense of the Revolution are not elected. The Councils, though proposed and supported by the PRP/BR, are above parties, and it is in general assemblies that everything is discussed and voted on, independent of the workers' party affiliations. This is something that cannot happen with the CDR's, since what we've seen up to now is that the MDP/CDE militants look for other militants of their own Party and the Communist Party to belong to the CDR's.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COUNCILS AND THE WORKERS' COMMITTEES?

The workers' committees are nothing more than autonomous trade-union organizations that exist because the trade unions don't work.

The Councils differ from them fundamentally in their objectives. The workers' committees were created to fight for wage demands as a class necessity (given that in Portugal trade unions are organized horizontally as they were under fascism.) The Councils go beyond this stage of demands since the task they address at this time is the seizure of power. In this way, the Councils have a political role which the workers' committees don't have.

A LAST QUESTION: HOW DO YOU SEE THE ROLE OF THE TRADE UNIONS? ARE THEY NECESSARY OR NOT?

The Revolutionary Councils do not wish to abolish the trade unions because, in a workers' dictatorship, they have an important role to play in the organization and ideological education of the workers, no longer assuming, at that time, their function of making economic demands.

República

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10 DE JULHO

1975

PREÇO 400

A TODOS OS TRABALHADORES

«REPÚBLICA» - história de uma luta

A história da luta dos trabalhadores do jornal «República» passou por diversíssimas fases. Há muito para contar, o que agora não faremos por duas razões: falta de espaço para contos largos, e por não ser ainda oportuno revelar alguns pormenores da nossa luta que não tornámos públicos.

Era necessário, no entanto, relacionarmos aos leitores alguns dos pontos deste conflito que opôs duas entidades bem caracterizadas — os trabalhadores que somos nós e os patrões que são a Administração, Direcção, Chefia de Redacção e maioria de redactores que ficou do outro lado.

Sietizamos aqui portanto a história deste conflito do trabalho que se arrasta há 50 dias.

Lisboa, 27 de Junho de 1975

Os trabalhadores do jornal «República» vêm fazer presente o povo português o ponto de situação da sua luta.

1. Desde o jornal pelo COPCON em 26 de Maio, que se iniciou a luta da Administração e a pedido desta, foram os trabalhadores despedidos do seu local de trabalho. Começava, então, um novo período da luta por que de um lado estavam 153 trabalhadores e do outro 24 patrões, representantes do Capital — administradores, directores e a maioria dos redactores.

2. A luta dos trabalhadores do jornal «República» desenvolveu-se em várias frentes: contra as condições da cédula do PS (que tentou limitar a opor-

tação pública e fazer crescer — sem o conseguir — que fossem conduzidas pelo PCP) transformado por sua conveniência e cálculo o problema do «República» numa luta quanto nacional e internacional; contra a moralidade dos poderes constituídos, a quem fizemos relato claro da situação do «República» e esclareceram sobre os objectivos da sua luta, que mais não é do que torná-lo um jornal independente da tutela partidária, que alva efectivamente os interesses do povo português e das classes trabalhadoras em particular; contra a campanha de pressões a nível nacional (governamental e internacional), (Imprensa, forças económicas e políticas) que os administradores, directores e a maioria dos redactores, no lado do partido PS, desenvolveram com o intuito de nos fazer recuar a ceder em manobras que caracterizam bem o estilo do patronato ainda reacccionário, que nos mesmos instantes vossos denunciaram e verbalizaram nos páginas do jornal contra todas as dificuldades resultantes de os índices máximos de que dispõem serem o seu tempo de trabalho e mais nada; contra a incompreensão do corpo sector da Informação, que, não abandonando (por conveniência própria) o seu partidário acatário não aceita que a nossa verdade possa ser clarificada muita coisa que se passa neste país ao sector da Informação.

3. Não obstante tudo isto os trabalhadores do jornal «República» levaram para a frente a sua luta. Não estivemos nós, pois a seu lado se passaram muitos milhares de trabalhadores deste país, que compre-

deram que a nossa luta era também a deles e que se assim a Revolução (isto cantada pelas altas esferas mas muito maltratada por quem mais a canta) iria para a frente.

4. Os trabalhadores do jornal «República» compareceram que as instâncias oficiais se debatem sobre o seu caso. Mas, aqui, eles têm de fazer a coisa desastrosa de como as coisas se passaram.

a) Informado pelo COPCON sobre todas as fases do problema, com elementos dados pelos trabalhadores do jornal «República» o Conselho Superior de Revolução havia directa e oficialmente os administradores, director e chefe de redacção do jornal, isto é, os responsáveis do patronato;

b) os trabalhadores nunca foram convocados pelo Conselho Superior de Revolução para serem ouvidos e dizerem da sua justiça; apenas conseguiram que as suas razões fossem conhecidas através de representantes do COPCON que os levaram ao CSR;

c) os trabalhadores foram sempre recebidos por membros do CSR, em seu nome pessoal e nunca em reunião formal daquele órgão, o que, como já se referiu, aconteceu com o patronato;

d) os contactos havidos (a título particular) com dois elementos do CSR foi dito à CCI que já era uma grande conquista entrarem no jornal todos os trabalhadores e nenhum deles ser despedidos; o que o CSR não tinha poderes para fazer os patrões do «República» ao pagamento dos salários durante o período de encerramento; isto depois de o Ministério do Trabalho ter emitido um despacho que ordenava o pagamento, aos trabalhadores, do salário referente ao período em que o jornal esteve encerrado. Então se o CSR não tem poderes, quem os tem?

e) numa RGT o major Dias Ferreira (a quem não temos de associar culpas pela situação de impasse que actualmente se vive) trouxe dois recados para a assembleia: um do CSR que pediu desculpa por não ter recebido até aquela data os trabalhadores; e em que reconhecia o erro de ter recebido em primeiro lugar os representantes da Administração, Direcção e Redacção do «República» erro que repetiria mais tarde apesar da contrição; outro do Primeiro-Ministro, que manifestava a sua simpatia pela nossa luta e nos pediu para que não desistíssemos e continuássemos unidos. Que pensar de tudo isto?

(Continua na pag seguinte)

«CASAS SIM, BARRACAS NÃO»



16 PÁGINAS

«Casas sim, barracas não», foi a frase de ordem da manifestação ontem efectuada em Lisboa pelos habitantes de Setúbal — LER REPORTAGEM NAS CENTRAIS

ÚLTIMA HORA

CONTRARIAMENTE AO ESTABELECIDO PELOS TRABALHADORES, SURTIU O CABEALHO DIRECTOR, PEREIRA DE CARVALHO EM VEZ DE ASSUMIR RESPONSABILIDADE DOS TRABALHADORES.

PODEM, A RESPONSABILIDADE DA FEITURA DO JORNAL MANTÉM-SE POR PARTE DOS MESMOS.

A ALTERAÇÃO DEVE-SE AO FACTO DE TERMOS ASSUMIDO UMA POSIÇÃO FIRME, QUE LEVOU O C. S. R. A INFORMAR-NOS, ESTA MADRUGADA, DA NOMEAÇÃO DE UM COMISSÁRIO ADMINISTRATIVO QUE VIRIA A APRESENTAR-SE NO JORNAL ALGUMAS HORAS DEPOIS.

POR PROPOSTA DESTA C. A FOI NOMEADO O NOME DO CORONEL FERREIRA DE CARVALHO PARA DIRECTOR DA PUBLICAÇÃO, PARA O QUAL NÃO HOUVE OPOSIÇÃO DOS TRABALHADORES.

Glossary

apartidaria — frequently-used term to denote non-sectarian political principles, usually in the sense of “non-party” or “above all parties.”

CDS — Christian Democratic Party led by Amaral, a deputy in the fascist parliament. Adelino Amaro, General Secretary of the Party, was chief aid to Caetano's Minister of Education and another leading member was the dictator's Secretary of Commerce. Closely linked to the British Conservatives, it is the most right wing of the political parties.

Combate — a bi-weekly which started reprinting the leaflets and newspapers of the Factory Committees during the saneamento campaign, and which has appeared only irregularly since July 1975. Not to be confused with Combate Trabalhadores, newspaper of a 4th International Group, the Revolutionary Workers' Committee (CRT).

COPCON — Continental Operations Command which was established in July, 1974 in the first shake-up of Spínola's regime.. Headed by Brigadier (then Major) Otelô Saraiva de Carvalho, and consists of units chosen for their loyalty to the MFA as well as for a variety of military specialties. They perform routine security work (e.g. occupied buildings are usually “reported” to COPCON for clearance) and often issue statements on the existing political debates. Since March 11, most COPCON units are generally regarded as friendly to the independent left.

COPCON DOCUMENT— The “Proposal of Work for a Political Program” issued by elements of the COPCON on August 17, 1975 to resolve the crisis created by the attacks on Prime Minister Vasco Gonçalves. It begins with criticism and self-criticism of both the MFA and Portuguese Communist Party. It becomes the basis for the Revolutionary United Front.

CUF — United Manufacturing Company. A multi-national firm, but dominated by the largest elements of Portuguese capital. Hundreds of assembly plants, warehouses, freight yards, etc.; engaged in wide range of manufacturing, transport, and banking.

FALN — National Liberation Front of Angola, led by Holden Roberto, Mobutu's brother-in-law. At times openly anti-socialist, it is backed by both the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and Peoples' China.

Fifth Division — propaganda unit of the MFA and the Provisional Government, responsible for many fine posters, and the weekly "Bulletin April 25" which issues popular clarifications of latest MFA priorities and programs. Because it was dominated by the left and progressive wings of the FMA, it became a favorite target of PS criticism, and was dissolved under threat of arrest by Azevedo's new government. Eyewitnesses report that army units were sent in to physically shut down its headquarters in the last week of August.

FRELIMO — Mozambique Liberation Front headed by Samora Michel. FRELIMO is widely respected on the left. The theoretical work and practice of FRELIMO in integrating women in the liberation struggle is a particularly important source of inspiration to the Portuguese.

FSP — Popular Socialist Front, A left-wing split off from the Socialist Party, which it left in January, 1975 when the Soares leadership defied the Party's left-wing program committee. Often it has allied with the PCP. It joined the Revolutionary United Front during this last summer's crisis.

GNR — National Guard of the Republic. A para-military national police force like Mexico's Federales or Spain's Guardia Civil. Elements of GNR are among those most responsible for the escape of imprisoned secret police agents in June of this year. Spínola was the GNR's commander under Caetano!

Intersindical — Portuguese national trade union federation. Clandestine prior to April 25, 1974, and dominated by the PCP.

LCI—Communist International League. The Portuguese branch of the 4th International. Represented in the Revolutionary United Front of this past August.

Lisnave — Foreign and Portuguese-owned ship-building and marine construction with largest shipyards in Europe. Its militant workers are long-experienced in struggle. They're the "Red Guard" of the workers' movement.

LUAR — League of Revolutionary Unity and Action. Long established and widely respected, existed as a clandestine armed group prior to April 1974. Still armed, is largely a support group rather than an

organizing front or mass organization. Active in helping building, land, and factory occupations, and in obtaining resources for working-class groups establishing clinics, daycares, etc. Moves with the PCP in crises but its practice is closer to the independent left.

MDM — Democratic Women's Movement, established in 1968, largely a women's organizing front for the MDP and Intersindical. Rejects feminism in principle.

MDP/CDE — Portuguese Democratic Movement/Democratic Electoral Commissions. Classic mass-front for the PCP. Existed as parliamentary opposition movement from 1969 to the coup. An important unifying force for many left elements under fascism.

MES — Movement of the Socialist Left. Existed prior to April 1974. Grew out of Latin American-style, pro-revolutionary clerics and elements close to European New Left. Does much agitational work. Membership largely professional and white collar. Active in Revolutionary United Front. Often close to the PCP although quite critical of it.

MFA — Armed Forces Movement- A political organization of Junior Officers (the Colonels were almost all fascist to a man) who backed the coup attempt of April 25, 1974. Its most direct antecedents are found in the unsuccessful colonial wars of the 60's, but historical roots go back to Portuguese military sympathizers with Republic Spain, with the July 26 Movement in Cuba, and Potemkin-like mutinies on naval ships. Has an elected delegate Assembly of 240 members who reflect various political currents.

MPLA — Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. Broad front which leads the independence and socialist struggle in Angola. A classic united front, led by and organized around both industrial and rural workers. Supplied with Soviet arms, but broadly supported by the Portuguese left and aided by all the clandestine anti-Fascist groups before April 25, and all mass organizations since.

MRPP — Movement for the Reorganization of the Party of the Proletariat. Dogmatic "Maoist" group more akin to the National Caucus of Labor Committees than any Maoists here. Puts "Social Imperialism" line into practice by organizationally uniting with the "Socialist" Party in specific attacks on the PCP and MFA as "agents of Russian imperialism." Not to be confused with the PRP/BR, a left-wing group.

PAIGC — Popular Army for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and the Cape Verde Islands. Victorious liberation front now in power, headed by

Amilcar Cabral before his assassination.

PCP — Communist Party of Portugal led by Alvaro Cunhal. Allied with the Soviet Union, although it appears as the "most left" of the Western European CP's. Close to many elements of the MFA who on their own have developed similar "democratic" politics.

PIDE/DGS — International Police for the Defense of the Empire, earlier known as the D.G.S. A notorious secret police, specifically linked to German, Italian, and Spanish Fascism. Torturers and murderers, their headquarters were besieged during and after the coup by angry mobs. Most of them are now imprisoned.

PPD — Popular Democrats- popular with the bourgeoisie. Important in the North, and unfortunately in the new MFA provisional government. Ran on a heavy socialist platform in the elections for the Constituent Assembly. Propagandists for the right wing during the mob attacks on the PCP in July and August 1975. Closely tied to Church, Middle Peasants, and the Portuguese national bourgeoisie.

PRP/BR — Revolutionary Party of the Proletariat/Revolutionary Brigades. The Revolutionary Brigades existed as a clandestine armed organization prior to April 1974. Performed many acts of armed struggle, largely in solidarity with the African struggles. Has merged with many leading elements of the independent, working-class left, active in promoting the Revolutionary Councils. Has ties with Lotta Continua in Italy and played perhaps the leading role in the formation of the Revolutionary United Front in August of this year.

PS — "Socialist" Party headed by Mario Soares, and allied with such noted proletarian leaders as Indira Gandhi, Willy Brandt, and Harold Wilson. At this writing, the favored instrument of American and Common Market interests. Won a resounding plurality in the Constituent Assembly elections, but on a program of national independence and "real socialism." By late June was publically proposing reliance on American aid as basis for economic development. Broadly supported by white-collar workers, small store owners, and some service workers. Popular amongst the principal stockholders of at least one newspaper in Lisbon.

PUP — Party for Popular Unity. Marxist-Leninist group. Part of a front to build a new party.

Revolutionary United Front — A response to the coordinated attack of the European and American bourgeoisie on the Fifth Provisional

Government headed by Vasco Goncalves. United around principles of unity based on the COPCON DOCUMENT. Included PRP/BR, PCP, FSP, MDP/CDE, MES, LUAR, and LCI. The PCP was expelled days after its formation for continuing discussions with the PS on the formation of a new government.

saneamento — often translated as “purging” but really means “cleaning out.” Refers to the continuing struggle to kick out fascist collaborators and fascist ideas in the State apparatus, the ships, neighborhoods- on all levels of Portuguese society. This struggle was initiated and carried through from the bottom up.

Supreme Revolutionary Council — Executive organ of the State consisting of 30 members of the MFA Assembly. Established after March 11, 1975 coup attempt, in which members of previous MFA Executive were implicated.

UDP — Democratic Popular Union. The organizing arm of a Marxist-Leninist Group. Has organizing practice, and pockets of support among workers. Many of its leading members were once PCP militants. In many ways similar to early Progressive Labor here. Will not join United Fronts with the PCP, although it categorically refuses to ally with the PS.

UNITA—National Union for Total Independence. US-backed “liberation” movement in Angola akin to an armed “cultural nationalist” group. Advocates “Christianity” and has allied with, if not recruited, white mercenaries. Militarily allied with FALN.

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Coalition of Labor Union Women: Strategic Hope, Tactical Despair

Annemarie Troger

The women's movement has reached a new level — in spite of itself. A new consciousness has reappeared in the labor movement — against the labor unions. The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) symbolizes both these developments. It signifies more than the intentions of its founders: It is women's liberation in the working class.

THE SOURCES OF CLUW

According to its founders, a group of trade-union officials, the stated objectives of this national coalition of trade-union women include organizing the approximately 32 million non-unionized women in the workforce; pressuring for affirmative action at the workplace; engaging in lobbying campaigns around issues concerning women; and encouraging women to move into policy-making positions

Opposite: CLUW founding convention on March 23-24, 1974.

within trade unions and political parties. Initially, rank-and-file women enthusiastically received the idea of an organization of women workers. After the founding conference in March 1974, they began immediately to organize CLUW chapters across the nation without waiting for the CLUW leadership to take the initiative. The concept of CLUW changed from that of a coalition of women in trade unions to a broader, more responsive organization of working women—at least in the minds of the rank and file. This transformation due to rank-and-file pressure is so threatening to union leaders, female and male, that they may well reduce CLUW to a paper organization, or abolish it. But the needs and the spirit which initiated CLUW will survive in other organizations, in a broader movement, because these needs express concrete historical forces and material needs which together are stronger than the Coalition and the political factions or trade-union bureaucrats operating in or on it.

The Growing Economic Crisis

Rising unemployment in spite of economic booms, and soaring inflation in spite of recessions, have brought home to the public the growing economic crisis. The present crisis is ending the pay-off to some parts of the American working class and reducing the standard of living to an "international level." Profits must still be extracted, but to a larger extent this time from American workers, through higher prices, job speed-ups, automation, and runaway shops.

For women, the feeling of being drawn into a full-fledged depression has been especially dramatic. Not only do we see inflation from week to week in the supermarkets, but the economic crisis has had an impact on our consciousness. Employed women recognize that they no longer hold jobs merely to "help the family out." Instead, their salaries are as vital for family survival as their husbands'. Women must continue working despite a continually contracting job market. While women's unemployment rates are not now increasing as rapidly as men's, many women are being

forced into worse jobs. This is because the structural, i.e., long-term as opposed to short-term, decline in jobs has hit the female labor market hardest. Runaway shops are typical in the textile, garment, food processing, and electronics industries, while rationalization in office and retail work is just beginning. Furthermore, the brunt of short-term fluctuation on the job market, on the "last-hired, first-fired" principle, has fallen on women and Third World men. This survival problem is intensified for the millions of women who provide their families' sole support. Clearly, such an organization as CLUW is vital to protect the interests of working women under any conditions, but particularly under the present ones.

The Bankruptcy of Traditional Trade Unionism

The pressure on living standards through inflation and unemployment has increased the critical interest of working people in their only defense — unions. Full-hearted, proud identification with unions subsided since business and government succeeded in killing militant industrial unionism. Since the mid-1960's the trend began to reverse. The fight of black auto workers in and against the UAW, the struggle of farmworkers, miners, textile workers in the South, the Farah strikes, and the victory of the Miners for Democracy raised critical awareness about union leadership and structure on a mass scale. (1) But unions are both unwilling and unable to resolve the major problems facing the workers.

Inflation presents the clearest example of the labor movement's refusal to confront the economic crisis effectively. Inflation is not just a bread-and-butter (i.e., economic) issue; it is also political. But the policy of the national union leadership has been to conceal its political aspects and concentrate workers' attention on the bread-and-butter aspect only. As part of this policy, union leadership has chosen to sell relief in the guise of a cost-of-living escalator, while at the same time eliminating the workers' only political weapon — the strike — by pushing for no-strike contracts. A more political response would be

to attempt to force the capitalists to pay for wage increases out of their profits, to prevent them from passing on to consumers the increased costs of buying labor power; but this fight would challenge the role of unions as well as capitalists. Inflation does not result from labor-union policy, but reflects a deficiency inherent in the profit motive of capitalism. Inflation, therefore, can only be cured by fundamental changes in the economic system. To treat it as only a cost-of-living issue perpetuates the crisis (which would not be bad if it was used to help build socialist consciousness), fosters monopolization, makes the rich richer and the poor poorer. Above all it deepens the existing economic divisions among workers. (2) Women's average earnings dropped from 63% to 59% of the male income in the last decade, and the average wage of black people lost again the few percentage points gained through the civil-rights movement.

A second example of the inefficiency of traditional trade unionism is the extensive concentration of business that has developed in the last decades: when one vertically integrated conglomerate owns everything from oil refineries to banana plantations to hotel chains, a one-union strike in one industry is no longer an effective weapon. Yet food processing, retail, hotel, and other service industries with a predominantly female labor force either lack the barest minimum of organization or are just starting to unionize. Even in organized industries, the coordinating structure of the AFL-CIO has refused to unify its labor actions against conglomerates nationally, hiding its collaboration with big business under the banner of a "bread-and-butter" policy. The proclaimed un-ideological or "neutral" stand of union hierarchies and labor legislation has kept the power of the working class on a nineteenth-century level, whereas capital was allowed, even helped, to reach an unprecedented level of international and inter-industrial concentration. The "bigger-piece-of-the-pie" strategy, ironically, has brought a smaller piece to the workers, because it refuses to deal with the whole pie.

Because of both leadership and structure, an adequate response to inflation and its causes cannot come from un-

ion headquarters. Instead, the push for rejuvenation and political direction has to come from the workers themselves. For this reason, the multi-union strategy of CLUW is a positive sign of women's search for an effective unionist strategy and politics more responsive to the economic needs of the rank and file.

The New Unions

The expansion of the service sector and of office work has restructured the industrial employment pattern. More people, especially women, now work in these sectors than in actual production. Since the late 1960's, the service industry has been the principal employer of women (6.8 million of the 27.9 million women in the industrial workforce), followed by the trade industry, with 6.3 million women who hold jobs mostly in retail stores. In addition, since more and more of the service sector has been taken over by the state, the employment of women on government payrolls, primarily as clericals and teachers, has soared, especially on the local and state level.

Despite this increase in numbers of women working in the service sector, women still remain clustered in fewer, lower-paid occupation groups than men. It is primarily the massive expansion of these lower-level "professional," skilled service, and administrative employees, and of service and clerical workers, which has brought about unionization, and not an absolute decline of status and income, the so-called proletarianization, as is often assumed. Today's secretaries have nothing in common with the male secretary of the nineteenth century; elementary school teachers at the turn of the century were not better off than teachers of today.

The unionization of this enlarged number of service workers and public employees has brought the greatest expansion of the labor movement in recent decades. New unions like the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) have surpassed most traditional unions in membership, money, and power. The force of this

unionization has created, as before in labor's history, an upsurge of political energy which partly explains the high proportion of these women in CLUW.

The Re-Emergence of the Women's Movement

The fourth and the single most critical factor behind the birth of CLUW was the women's liberation movement. The ideas that the movement spread, though diffuse, created the consciousness essential for CLUW's beginning. As Olga Madar (former vice-president of the UAW, and then current CLUW national Chairwoman) stated :

The Women's Movement gave us the impetus to our moving ahead (although many union women) had the same cultural hangups as the men over women having an equal role.... But the Women's Movement has been helpful in making union women and blue-collar wives aware that there was blatant discrimination against women just because they were females. (3)

In short, the women's movement, itself partly a result of women's increased employment, facilitated the expression of women workers' growing anger. Realizing that they would be locked into the most boring, demeaning, and underpaid jobs forever, without hope of promotion or advancement, women started to pressure within their unions for equal pay, equal work, and the implementation of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and the Equal Rights Amendment.

The emergence of CLUW proves that the issues raised by the women's movement — sexual oppression and sex stereotyping — are not the gripes of neurotic middle-class ladies, but rather are issues of great importance to a broad spectrum of women workers. Although the women's movement's influence on working-class women has been diffuse, abstract, and distorted by the mass media, CLUW would not have been created without it.

THE STRATEGIC QUESTION : A WOMAN PROLETARIAT ?

Employed working-class women do not have a group identity. Women who work outside the home do not yet see themselves as a class or part of a class subjected to common forms of oppression. Most importantly, they do not perceive themselves as a force which can act collectively, and which, as a collective, has achieved something visible in the past. Women wage laborers are not yet conscious of being a historical subject. The role of women proletarians as a distinct historical force in the huge strikes in the textile and garment industries in this country in the early twentieth century, in the French and Russian revolutions, and in the Paris Commune, for example, was suppressed soon afterward. Bourgeois journalists and historians filed them under "labor unrest," the left under "the proletariat" or "revolutionary forces," trade unionists under the "workman's (!) struggle." "Working women" remains only a sociological category, rather than a designation for a political force. Close your eyes and say aloud, "workers." It carries the spirit of past labor struggles, but the phrase "working women" still seems to be a mere percentage of the labor force, categories of female labor. The Sojourner Truths, Mother Joneses, and Emma Goldmans are no substitute for even a dim consciousness of a collective history.

"Woman Proletariat"? What for? To drive another division into the working class? Hidden or overt accusations of divisiveness have paradoxically always been raised against those who struggled to abolish real economic divisions in the working class. There are innumerable incidents in history where working women fought for higher wages for men. Where are comparable actions of the male proletariat? On the contrary, men so often struck against equal wages and equal work for women that it is historically correct to define trade unions as defense organizations against the intrusion of women and other minorities, as well as against capitalists. The most outrageous and divisive lie in labor history, that at the beginning of the industrial revolution women flooded the market with cheap labor and took the jobs away from men, has been transported into a theory,

ironically by those who called fervently for proletarian unity. They still believe in it, not asking what those women had done before: The fate of the English weavers still haunts us, that of the spinners remains unheard of. The subsequent militant, organized, and sometimes bloody drive of the male workers to get or keep women out of industries, trades, and unions through the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century is at best forgotten, at worst subsumed under "heroic working class struggles." The call for "unity" by white, male-dominated trade unions has as much credibility as the call for "industrial peace" by capitalists and governments. It means "Bow down and we will forge unity (peace) on your backs!" History is to learn from, not to "speak bitterness." We uncover the dirty side of the glorified labor history to find out what to expect from today's labor movement. To talk about the specific revolutionary potential of the woman proletariat does not mean to map out a women's revolution ending up in daydreams about a matriarchial empire. It also does not mean the easy identity of interests announced traditionally by socialists and communists: "Whatever is good for the male workers (i.e., "the Proletariat") is good for women anyway," with some extras thrown in for the "social duty," childbearing. Our strategy is to improve the social and economic position of women fundamentally and directly (and not indirectly as in traditional socialist strategies). (4) This means attacking the division of labor.

Unequal Work and the Division of Labor

The development of the means and forces of production, pressure from the labor movement, and the most profitable use capitalists could make of both — these factors forced the woman proletariat into two types of division of labor which may be described as horizontal and vertical.* Hori-

* "Division of labor" generally describes the splitting of the production process into smaller and smaller special tasks on the plant or shop level. In this sense, it became an economic-technical term losing its social and political relevance. It might seem confusing to use it for the different categories or levels of labor (unskilled/skilled, clerical/

zonally, women were pushed into specific industries: the service sectors mentioned above, non-durable-consumer-goods production (such as textiles, food-processing, etc.), and "modern" industries which require a large, cheap labor force, such as pharmaceuticals and electronics. A huge army of clerical workers cuts across all industries and sectors, always in the lowest categories of labor; clerical work also has its own unique sectors, banking and insurance for example. Women and minority people have their own strictly defined labor markets, with their own laws: easier replacement of workers through a huge reserve army of labor, even in economic booms, resulting in a low degree of unionization, low wages, and a high unemployment rate. The reduction of the wages of white male workers by competition from cheap labor is only a marginal result as compared to the central effect — keeping an important part of the workforce constantly unorganized and cheap.

This labor-market segregation, along with forms of labor organization designed for craft workers, has greatly weakened women workers politically. For example, CLUW is the first major working women's organization since the Women's Trade Union League in the early twentieth century. Today as then, the need for higher wages, job security, and immediate correction of criminal working conditions is so pressing for blue-collar women that their specific situation and problems are widely seen as an object for reform; but

professional) in what I call "vertical division of labor"; and for labor in different industries as "horizontal division of labor." That Marx used it in all three respects is not the only excuse. In the last years, the concept "labor-market segmentation" has come into use. It has the advantage of being able to define the position of a group of workers on the hierarchical ladder (vertical) and in type of industry at the same time. Furthermore, it can identify the economic position of the industry in terms of concentration, capital investment, etc. But "division of labor" is more useful for our purpose since it shows that all "categories," "segments," and "levels" of labor have their roots in the production process itself, and can only be changed there, and not at some political or legislative level. Most importantly, "division of labor" is a constant reminder that the separation of jobs, tasks, and industries has historically grown, is man-made, not eternal or absolute, in one word: it can be changed; whereas concepts like "category" or "segment" impress the eternity of the status quo on the mind.

their needs are rarely seen in a revolutionary perspective.

Women's jobs are so terrible that many factory women have enthusiastically looked to the Equal Rights Amendment for help. There is confusion about this on the Left. The women's liberation movement saw in ERA a reformist movement serving the career aspirations of professional women, represented by the liberal women's organizations such as NOW. Left organizations protested the potential loss of maternity and other protective provisions for which "the working class has victoriously fought"; (5) unfamiliar with factory conditions, they did not see how puny these "protections" were in comparison with the loss of protection due to inequality with men. Most leftists saw in ERA only another plot of the ruling class to divide workers. They were therefore puzzled by blue-collar support for it. Women factory workers with career aspirations? The fact remains that in CLUW, Affirmative Action and ERA will be major issues. CLUW's Statement of Purpose says: "Employers continue to profit by dividing workers on sexual, racial and age lines. This encourages the segregation of job classifications and results in wages and benefit losses to women.... The Coalition will seek to encourage women ... (to) take positive action against job discrimination in hiring, promotion, classification and other aspects of work." The imminent danger of even larger structural unemployment of women will increase pressure for ERA as the only legal tool to break the narrow confinement of the female job market. The overwhelming vote of the more than 3,000 women at CLUW's founding convention for ERA indicates the feelings of women workers.

Unskilled and Semi-skilled Work

Vertically, the lowest categories of labor are filled with women. To accept this categorization as justified by skill or physical strength clouds its political-economic function. The differences between unskilled and semi-skilled jobs are admittedly only differences in degree, subjected more to the requirements of profit and management's control over the labor force than to objective differences in train-

ing and abilities of workers. (The president of the West German Parliament — a woman — searched for years, with much publicity, for one (!) case violating the "equal wages for equal work" law, as an exemplary court case. She did not find one. The thousands of cases reviewed always showed minute differences in job descriptions "explaining" male/female wage differentials, which are larger, by the way, in the skilled categories than in the unskilled.) The demand "equal wages for equal work" has become so obviously untenable that some European trade unions began recently to replace it with "equal wages for work of equal value" — whatever that means! The actual splitting of the production process can be dictated by the rationale of productivity and the "objective requirements" of the machinery, but even this is doubtful in many cases. (6) The categorization of labor, i.e., the basis of the wages, is dictated by the profit interest pure and simple: to throw as many people as possible into the lowest wage groups, but with enough artificial differences to avoid spontaneous solidarity. To have reinforced these job categories and wage differences by defining them for specific strata of the working class (for black women, brown men, white women) has been one of the brilliant maneuvers of the bourgeoisie. (7) If anything, wage differences are an expression of working conditions: the most repetitive, dirty, and heavy jobs are the lowest paid, the least human equals the least "skilled."

Different Exploitation

The women's movement identified the exploitation of women in two respects: 1) Double exploitation through the job and unpaid reproductive work. "Wages for housework" is one of its political expressions. 2) Extra-exploitation through lower wages. The demand "equal wages for equal work" represents the generally accepted opposition to extra-exploitation.

The latter demand is based on two false assumptions: That "equal" work exists, and that there is "a fair day's work", i.e., that the male wage represents the "fair pay." The feminist demand for "equal work" gets closer to reali-

ty, recognizing that women are forced into different, "lower" work. But since this usually means only equal representation in higher jobs, it does not question the existing division of labor, and its economic expression, the wage and job categories.

Women's exploitation in industrial production is affected by different conditions from that of men. Women constitute the overwhelming majority of the manual work force in consumer-goods production. Mass production of non-durable, low-priced consumer items has been possible only through extreme taylorization and intensification of production-line work. Profits were made through women's low wages (8) and the high productivity of "light female" work. This "light" work is extraordinarily heavy and wearing. Its small motions, unending repetition, speed, necessity for constant attention, unremitting pressure, produce all sorts of physiological injuries, nervous breakdowns, psychosomatic disorders, and a below-average life expectancy. At the same time most women workers do a second job — housework. Under these conditions it becomes an economic and medical necessity for most women workers to take breaks from their work lives. Only 40% of the female workforce — mostly lower professional-service workers — are able to maintain full-time, permanent jobs.

Skilled Work

Many skilled jobs and crafts have been abolished by taylorization, mechanization, and automation. In some industries, like machine building, steel, or printing, it happened more slowly than Marx predicted from the example of the British textile industries. Unions jealously guarded job descriptions, apprenticeship, and the ethnic composition of skilled trades. But they preserved, if anything, only the status symbols and exclusivity, such as unnecessary years of "apprenticeship" to keep minorities out. The fate of the printers, the intellectuals of the working class, is a dramatic example in recent history: clerical workers were used effectively as scabs after a few weeks of training on the new machines, and this experience sent shock waves

through all the skilled trades. The various skilled groups of the steelworkers will be the next to fall. International competition, such as the threat of steel mills in Brazil, has already convinced the union leadership. The economic crisis will convince the rank and file, so they hope, of the necessity of job re-definitions, speed-ups, and further dehumanization of their work. (9) I. W. Abel of the United Steelworkers has cleared the path with his no-strike agreement.

It is ironic that women finally gained support in a century-old demand for access to skilled jobs when the economic base for the demand dwindled away, at least in industrial production. The lessened resistance of unions and industrialists to letting women into once exclusive trades may have another political dimension: the black and female newcomers, anxious to keep their new status, un-acquainted with the traditional rules of the trade, but used to monotony and low pay, may put up less resistance than the old brotherhood of skilled workers. The unavoidable fights arising from the intrusion of outsiders will loosen the internal cohesion of craft unions and diminish their retaliatory power. Industrial "progress" will run smoothly, and women may again function objectively as scabs.

This does not mean that women workers should give up their fight for equal work in industrial production, but they should be aware of the struggles that will follow with those who want to preserve the old unity of the working class.

What is the strategic position of the woman proletariat? Its weaknesses have been noted again and again: less constancy at work and less involvement in labor struggles, due to responsibility for reproductive work, and as a result, "retarded consciousness"; the limitations of the female job market, and the size of the female reserve labor army; a lower skill level, and therefore easier replacements of women workers. The strengths of the female proletariat have rarely been thought about. Women workers are less divided by real or imagined pay, status, and qualification differences, which have been some of the strongest barriers to class consciousness among working-class men. Racial tensions and outright racism — although undeniably

present — are less sharp, less antagonistic among women than among men.

One of the strategic goals of the woman proletariat should be an attack on job classifications and wage differentials. Work on the production line is a heavy job, not to be defined as a light, "less skilled" job with "less responsibility." Why should monotony and speed be paid less than more humane "skilled" jobs? What is responsibility, if we all have to carry the consequences anyway? The attack on the classification system must aim first at elevating the lower categories of jobs. But in the long run, it is a fight against the existing division of labor. (10) For the woman proletariat, "division of labor" is not an esoteric intellectual problem but the concrete condition of their work, the visible tool of their exploitation. The demand for equal work and admission to skilled jobs is a search for "better, more interesting work, a more fulfilling job," as a woman steelworker in a CBS interview put it, besides being a demand for decent pay and a stable job.

The present unequal division of labor is basic to the maintenance of the profit system, as much as the private ownership of the means of production itself. A struggle against the division of labor is not a "deviation from the major contradiction," but is aimed at its heart. The greater homogeneity of the female workforce is a reason and a precondition for building a force unified enough to attack such a complex and far-reaching issue.



CLUW is certainly not the organization to confront the problem of division of labor, but it could be an agent for activating a collective sense of unity among working women. The founding of CLUW was a step toward working women uniting in the struggle to fulfill our own, self-defined economic and political needs. But a broad focus permeating all actions and politics of the Coalition, a collective awareness of unity, can grow only if rank-and-file women, rather than union officials, are the moving force in CLUW leadership.

DIVISION IN THE FEMALE WORKFORCE — DIVISION IN CLUW

The old, more ideological than economic, division between production workers and clerical workers has considerably diminished in the last decade. There remain a majority of white women in offices, although non-whites are increasing. The artificial identification of secretaries with management, and the sexist and condescending attitudes of unions toward the "gals in the office," are giving way to the realization that office workers are workers too.

The real division within the female workforce is between professional-service workers (teachers, registered nurses, social workers, administrative employees, etc.) on the one hand and the rest of the women workers on the other. It is certainly true that the objective difference between these female professionals and the overwhelmingly male high professionals (doctors, lawyers, university professors, architects, etc.) is larger than that between the two parts of the female workforce, or between males and females in industrial production. Therefore it is appropriate to identify the majority of female professional-service employees as workers, and not as a new professional class. The famous "proletarianization of the middle class" seems to be nothing but the unprecedented growth of the lower and middle skilled workforce in the service industries. It was "proletarianized" since it began.

Yet, it would be dangerously misleading to assume unity under the banner "we are all workers" or through an emo-

tional appeal to sisterhood. To begin with, educational differences are great, and professional-service workers are better paid, have more job security and benefits, are less regulated and disciplined, and have even some determination over their work — to a small, but for a woman on the production line to a great, degree. The differences are certainly not antagonistic, but they are real enough, and might function as specific group interests.

From these differences, unionization of professional-service workers gets its political ambiguity (11): On the one hand, unionization is progressive compared with bourgeois interest groups, professional associations, borrowed from the higher professionals. Unionization reflects the realization that "professional"-service employees are dependent, like all the other workers, and must unionize to protect their interests. In this context, unionization is a progressive step toward unifying all workers' interests.

During the 1930's, 40's, and 50's, the state was able to solidify the power and the credibility to represent itself as the common interest, and to function as a "neutral" mediator between two "private" parties, capitalists and workers, as a guard over union democracy, etc. Unionization of public-service and administrative workers has more than anything else destroyed the myth that the State is Us. The right to strike for public workers confronts the identity of interests between the state and private capital; reveals that all functions of the state — even social services — are geared to sustain an apparatus in and through which private capitalist interests can operate profitably. The potential for developing class loyalty is critical among public employees who have not yet won the right to strike.

On the other hand, rugged unionism which only fights for a bigger piece of the pie can be a reactionary fight for more professional privileges, making it a fragmenting force. Professional-service workers still tend to identify with the ideology, and imitate the model, based on the status and privileges of the high professional strata as doctors and lawyers. Under the banner of militant trade unionism, freed from the constraints of professional ethics, they march — "Solidarity Forever" on their lips...if necessary

with the call for "workers' control" — to fight for more of the privileges which they never had. More professional privileges means by definition less self-determination for the blue-collar working-class community. "Professional rights" have been, with few exceptions, partial rights to control and exploit those beneath as well as partial exemption from control from above. (The gains of such rights are minute for the individual professional workers, but considerable for the union leadership in terms of political power in city governments.) By striving for the needs of one group at the expense of the other, a potentially unifying and progressive form of organization could turn into a powerful weapon for further dividing working women.

CLUW has a singular chance to counteract the reactionary tendencies of women who have been trained to see themselves as professionals. Unionization has uprooted the traditional identification with doctors and lawyers, but things are still in flux. Shanker's dangerous appeal, militant trade unionism mixed with elitist professionalism, demonstrates the floating political identification and social homelessness of the not-really-professionals and not-yet-proletariat. Close political and personal contacts among lower service workers, clerical, and factory workers could point out where real allies are. But this can happen only if all groups of working women are represented equally in the coalition.

Currently, professional-service workers, along with union officials, are over-represented in CLUW. This over-representation occurs not so much in the membership but in leadership positions. New unionization as among the professional-service workers creates a rather high level of political activity and awareness. Professional jobs require and reinforce certain superficial leadership abilities as rhetorical and organizational skills, some factual and procedural knowledge, self-assertion, etc. Lack of these personal skills is a considerable disadvantage among some factory and clerical workers.

Yet, the most important factor is the nearly identical economic and political situation of professional-service workers and of women trade-union functionaries, regard-

less of which union they represent, and whether they have been recruited as professional trade unionists or from the rank and file. Both groups of women are mostly stuck at the lower-middle steps of the career ladder dominated by old men, and often stepped over by young men with less experience and often less ability. These women's personal, political, and professional abilities and ambitions are constantly frustrated, sometimes with the threat of being degraded or dropped at an older age. CLUW is for both groups not only a political pressure group but also a way to gain a personal political visibility which in turn could promote their professional careers. "The Coalition seeks... to encourage our leadership and our movement into policy-making roles within our own unions and within the union movement in all areas." And: "Whenever or wherever possible, CLUW urges union women to seek election to public office or selection for governmental appointive office at local, county, state and national levels." These passages from the "Statement of Purpose" are probably the most strongly felt. Without disqualifying these women as "petty bourgeois careerists," without denying the justice of their demands for equality, they do not represent the most urgent or the long-term needs of the majority of CLUW's membership or constituency.

CLUW must guarantee the leadership of blue-collar, rank-and-file women, if necessary through structural provisions. In order to insure their political influence, leadership bodies should be composed according to the size of the sectors of the female labor force, such as clerical, professional, blue-collar and white-collar service and factory workers. Although some may object that such a strategy would be divisive, sometimes we have to split now in order to unify later. Representation in CLUW in each region must be composed of both the organized and unorganized female labor force. Such a plan is the only way to guarantee a significant voice for the predominantly black and Third World women workers in unorganized factory and service jobs, and to prevent CLUW's blue-collar women from becoming mere adjuncts to skilled, "professional" women workers, and to trade-union functionaries.

The Membership Question

The conflict between a club of professional women trade unionists and an organization of working women has been solved by a compromise: a coalition of women in trade unions. Difficulties began with the definition of membership: What is to be recognized as a labor union? What about women in organizing drives, or the unemployed unable to pay union fees? What about domestics and women who have to work for their welfare checks but are not allowed to unionize? The irrationality of the definition is matched by the irrationality of the reasons given for it: "Do you want all these students in CLUW?" ("Students" means probably younger, left women.) Well, the "students" are in, because they are more often unionized in contrast to 88% of the female workforce. And: "We want to apply pressure in and through our unions." As if union hierarchies would be moved by something which they control. Or, the fantastic logic that un-unionized women are better organized — one of the proclaimed goals — if they are excluded from CLUW!

Membership is not primarily a question of the political aspirations of the women functionaries, but rather a question of the control of union hierarchies over the new organization. To keep the membership confined to union members is probably one of the strictest obligations of the women bureaucrats toward their bosses. Politically experienced women such as CLUW president Olga Madar (12) have no illusions about CLUW's inconsistencies and limitations. Her prominent participation indicates the value the big industrial unions place on CLUW: To keep the growing unrest of the female rank and file out of the union, and to give them an "independent" organization to isolate disturbing women's issues. This way, craft locals and other groups of skilled workers, some of whom are already on the verge of seceding because of the black question, will not be further alienated by the international having to take a stand on equal rights for women. CLUW can only accomplish this if it remains under firm control. Otherwise it could, on the contrary, carry the unrest into the unions instead of keeping it out. Control by the union hierarchies can only be exerted

through the leadership of their women functionaries; their supremacy requires that CLUW elect its leaders through union caucuses.

The problem of membership was a hot issue at the founding convention, and has threatened to get out of hand ever since. If a vote on the question had not been blocked in Chicago, CLUW would be an organization open to all working women. But there is no force strong enough to pull such an organization together at this point, over the aggressive resistance of most labor unions.

Aspirations of Rank-and-File Women

Two of the few floor votes which could not be prevented at the founding convention indicate the aspirations of rank-and-file women. They also illustrate that the rank and file is much more aware and militant than the leadership seems to have expected. An amendment to the Statement of Purpose from the floor called upon CLUW to fight for democracy in all unions. The officials denounced this amendment as anti-unionism, because in their view it was critical of traditional union politics, but it carried. This incident reiterated the tendency of officials to silence members by accusations, and pointed out the dichotomy between the concerns of the officials and of the members. The one side wants to keep the unions an unquestioned authority, the other looks for an authority capable of challenging the unions.

The second dispute in which the leadership lost overwhelmingly to a coalition of rank-and-filers and leftists concerned a paragraph in the structure provision which read: "National CLUW and area CLUW chapters shall not be involved in issues or activities which a union involved identifies as related to a jurisdictional dispute." This provision would have barred CLUW from supporting the United Farmworkers' campaign. In general, if CLUW is serious about organizing the unorganized, it will invariably run into the conflicting interests of individual unions, into so-called jurisdictional disputes. Declaring these cases irrelevant for CLUW is no solution. If CLUW fails to develop guidelines for its organizing drives based on the interests of the

women concerned and on today's economic realities (conglomerates, runaway shops, etc.) rather than on the business perspectives of unions, it will fail in its primary reason for being.

A Viable Direction

For CLUW to meet the needs and demands of working women, it must operate at three different levels: the individual, the union, and the multi-union. On the individual level, CLUW can actively support and advise women who have not been represented by their unions. Here CLUW will not act in place of the unions, but will put pressure on the unions to do what they are supposed to do. For example, blatant cases of a union's refusal to defend and represent its women workers should be publicized within the labor movement. On this level, the knowledge and experience of union officials is invaluable.

On the union level, CLUW can organize women's committees in union locals. The advantages are obvious: Women of a local union could legitimately unite to articulate their views on union matters and become a pressure group for women's issues in contracts, strikes, etc. In addition, women's committees could become a potential organizing tool for CLUW. However, an aggressive women's committee will survive the inevitable attacks from union and management only if CLUW as a whole is willing to intervene in its behalf. At the same time CLUW must protect these committees against various forms of union co-optation in order to guarantee the continued presence of strong, internal pressure groups for women's interests. One way to protect these interests is to have the women's committee leaders elected by the rank-and-file women and supported by an independent operational fund from their union, rather than appointed by, and therefore accountable to, the male leadership.

The multi-union level strategy is the most complex and the most crucial one at this time. If CLUW is serious about organizing women in non-union shops and supporting organizing drives, it will have to develop a set of principles to

determine which of the unions contesting for representation should be supported. These principles should not only include the usual union demands such as pension, wage, and health benefits, but also such problems as strike vs. no-strike contracts, the union's position or lack of one on the larger political-economic issues of inflation and progressive taxation, job classifications which discriminate on the basis of sex and race, and internal union democracy. Candidate unions could be rated according to their "women's score" on: wage differentials within unions and shops; the percentage of women with seniority rights; the number of women in skilled jobs; and the union's active support in contracts and legislation for such women's demands as day care, maternity benefits, and the ERA.

If CLUW becomes a mass organization of working women, these principles will have a far-reaching educational impact on all workers by giving political direction to their strong but vague feeling of dissatisfaction with the unions. If it achieves these goals, it will have gone far toward effective action on behalf of women workers.

CLUW AND THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The problem of class differences confronting CLUW has parallels in the women's liberation movement. A multi-union political organization such as CLUW could be the best thing that has happened to the labor movement in a long time. Similarly, a multi-union organization of working women could be the best thing that has happened to the women's movement by providing a focal point for coming to grips with diverse and complex economic issues relevant to women. The women's movement, for its part, will have to confront these same issues if it is to gain the active support of working and non-privileged women. In this respect, the specific goals outlined above for CLUW can help direct the enormous energy of the women's movement toward broader and more fundamental economic action.

Although the women's movement has primarily focused on professional demands, it may be capable of developing a viable relationship with CLUW that counteracts this tenden-

cy to ignore the needs of women workers. It can support major struggles that involve women workers and aid in the education, politicization, and organizing of all women around such issues, as increasing the minimum wage and the right to unionize. Until now, for example, bewildered feminists in CLUW have been shocked by the maneuvers pulled by union bureaucrats, but they have been helpless in responding to such tactics. Feminists who lack even the barest knowledge of the history of the labor movement, different kinds of unions and union structure, labor legislation, or the ongoing struggle for the right to unionize have vacillated between an uncritical acceptance of the union myth and emotional anti-unionism. To help overcome this deficiency, feminists should begin to integrate economic questions into our ideology. Without learning about and teaching economic theory, the history of the labor movement, the history of women in the workforce, and labor legislation, we cannot build a comprehensive theory of women's exploitation. And without this knowledge, we cannot develop effective strategies and provide a socialist-feminist direction for either the women's movement or working women's organizations.

CLUW is the first sign of an independent movement of women workers. The question that remains to be answered is whether CLUW's relationship to the existing women's movement will ultimately be antagonistic or mutually supportive. Lacking a clear understanding of the capitalist system and how women are divided within it, we will continue to have a women's movement and a working women's organization of limited focus, instead of a revolutionary outlook that demands that women obtain power and self-determination. Without a strong revolutionary women's movement, a working women's organization cannot succeed; and without a successful organization of working women, the women's movement cannot be revolutionary.

CONCLUSION

While there is certainly a need for a revolutionary mass organization of women workers, CLUW is unlikely to be it. Not only because CLUW was founded by the wrong people,

or because it is now controlled by trade-union functionaries, but because the political preconditions are not yet present for such an organization.

First, while the economic homogeneity of the female workforce is a fact, its social integration is just developing (aided by the unionization of service and clerical workers), and it has not yet any political cohesiveness. CLUW could be an important tool in fostering this social integration and under certain conditions could also be one of the first steps toward the creation of a political force of working women, but these developments are now in an embryonic stage.

Second, there is not yet a revolutionary strategy for the woman proletariat. The attempts of the women's liberation movement to develop revolutionary goals for women have been in the realm of reproduction, not production. Even these concepts, such as the socialization of housework and the abolition of the family, have been more abstract ideas than revolutionary goals with theoretical foundations and strategies. The Left continues to view women in general, and women workers even more, as adjuncts to the male proletariat. No autonomous revolutionary role has been envisioned for women workers within the Marxist tradition. Women workers have been seen as especially exploited, especially dominated, especially oppressed, but never in a situation with unique and sharp contradictions which would create the potential for a revolutionary outlook.

This article is an attempt to view the special conditions of the exploitation of women workers as the foundation of a specific revolutionary potential. One aspect of this potential has been sketched out: One of the main devices for exploitation of the female labor force has been the radical division of labor in social production and in society at large. Women more than any other social group need the abolition of this division of labor. The ERA campaign, or any equal-rights campaign for workers, has to be understood in this perspective. Such campaigns represent a political opportunity to fight against exploitation through the division of labor. Equal rights for all women means first and foremost the abolition of the lowest categories of labor.

Despite its limitations, CLUW is a sign of an independent

movement of women workers. If this first move becomes a force strong enough and continuous enough to pressure for and set the standards for reform of the labor movement, it could be an important step toward the development of class consciousness among working women, their self-consciousness as a collective historical subject, a woman proletariat.

FOOTNOTES

1. Leadership and structure cannot be treated in isolation from each other, as it is usually done even in left analyses. Concentrating on the corruption of union bosses fosters the illusion that an exchange of personalities could change the fundamental dilemma of American trade-union politics. The outcry of the Left over Arnold Miller's sellout is the result of a one-sided analysis. To criticize only the structure without past and present political practice of the leaderships which created and used it would eternalize the "given" structure as an a-historic, unchangeable fact, and breed defeatism. Secondly, in this context, "structure" means not only more or less union democracy, but also the political form of American unionism. After decades of racketeering, financial ripoff, and political sellout, union democracy is the dominant issue for workers, and especially for women workers. But at least since Southern Republican senators and Northern capitalists fought for "union democracy" and passed the Landrum-Griffith Act, the unqualified call for more democracy is not necessarily the most progressive one.

2. The inflation rate for low incomes is much higher than the escalator would adjust, because the inflation rate for food, especially for staples, low-income housing, and transportation, is much higher than the rate for manufactured goods and luxury items. Furthermore, the "equal" adjustment rate increases the income differential drastically. Example: Family A receives \$100 per week. Family B receives \$200 per week. With an annual escalator of 10%, the income difference between the two families grows from \$100 to \$204 over a six-year period. Combined with the uneven inflation rate mentioned above, the difference in real income and living standards is substantially larger than the figures reveal.

3. NEW YORK TIMES, March 27, 1974, p. 27.

4. I.e., "through integration into social production," "after socialist accumulation," "when we reach communism," etc. Our criticism of this strategy does not mean that we anticipate the liberation of women before the creation of socialism. But the struggle for women's liberation must be an integrated and equal aspect of the whole revolutionary struggle.

5. Such analyses rarely understood the motivation behind these struggles, once discussed quite openly in the socialist movement: to make female labor more expensive in order to keep it out of the

skilled labor market. Such a historically false solution was naturally not a real solution; the contradictions emerged sharper than ever, needing now to be solved on a higher level — demanding equal protection for men.

6. Very little work has been done on this subject. Marxists have generally assumed a too straight identity or parallel between division of labor, productivity, and profits. Steven A. Marglin ("What Do Bosses Do? The Origins and Functions of Hierarchy in Capitalist Production," in *REVIEW OF RADICAL POLITICAL ECONOMICS*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Summer 1974) is one of the first to have pointed to the rationale of domination in the development of division of labor. Much more detailed analysis is necessary to make it politically relevant.

7. The obvious disciplining function is underlined by the fact that the sex stratification of jobs is often different, even reversed, from one town or company to another. See Francine D. Blau, *SEX SEGREGATION OF WORKERS BY ENTERPRISE*, Trinity College, Dec. 1973, unpublished.

8. The extremely low wages are a result of several factors: the easy replacement of workers in taylorized production and the large female reserve army, in turn partly a result of women's exclusion from other industries. This, and the traditional reluctance of unions to organize women, result in a very low unionization of the female industrial workforce. The importance of unionization is demonstrated by the comparatively high wages of auto workers.

9. This does not mean that all skilled jobs will disappear within a short time. The process has been going on since the industrial revolution, at times more quickly (especially in and after recessions, i.e. after further concentration), and in different industries at a different rate. At the same time, automation has produced some new, highly skilled jobs, more in repair service than in actual production, and watch-dog jobs (as in electric-energy production) which demand more knowledge in engineering than craft skills. But their numbers are minute compared to those destroyed in the same process. The "new working class" theory of Serge Mallet, Andre Gorz, and others is based on this small but strategically located group of highly skilled workers.

10. The experiences of auto workers in Lordstown, Fiat (Turin), Renault (Paris) — to name a few prominent examples — have to be learned from: They switched jobs to demonstrate the absurdity of the classifications, demanded their reduction, etc. That they are better unionized has been no help: Even the "progressive" central trade-union organizations of Italy and Europe fought actively against the demands of their workers.

11. Which facet of the new unionism dominates is not simply a function of the type of professional-service workers organized, but depends also on the local and national leaderships. AFT/UFT and AFSCME are good examples of the variety.

12. Former international Vice President of the UAW, organizer of the women's committee in the UAW, she participated in the UAW "goon squad" quelling rank-and-file unrest in 1973.

AN EPILOGUE..... OR PROLOGUE TO CLUW?

Susan Reverby

The major question facing CLUW, to continue Anne Marie Troger's metaphor, is whether or not the baby can develop fast enough to outdistance the midwives who appear to be hellbent on stifling its growth. The first year and a half have been difficult—and all signs indicate that the "terrible twos" will be the decisive period.

The initial development is not very encouraging. After the high of the founding convention, women across the country went home to attempt to build local chapters. More than a year later, the number of members was still below the numbers attending the convention. Long bureaucratic procedures made the establishment of chapters a drawn-out and relatively boring process, one which caused many rank-and-file potential members to drop away. The latest figures indicate that there are now 4,271 members in 47 chapters (as of September, 1975).

The chapters are as diverse as the peculiar geographic, economic, and political characteristics of the different cities and regions. The Long Island chapter, for example, is relatively isolated from both bureaucratic union leaders and left sects. As such, it is able to represent predominantly rank-and-file women in unions ranging from the machinists to the teachers. The chapter has organized women's caucuses within locals, done support work for the farmworkers, lobbied for legislation, and sponsored speak-outs on the economy and the effects of the economic crisis on women workers. In contrast, the New York City chapter

has been the scene of pitched battles between the left and the union leadership, with the latter surviving and the independent leftists dropping out. In Boston, union officialdom has rarely if ever been seen, leaving the chapter composed of an uneasy alliance of predominantly independent and sectarian left women in a variety of industries from rubber to health care. Its membership has grown very little from an initial core of around forty women, in part because the members are unsure about just what kind of organization CLUW should be, and also about the best way to relate to the national organization.

Just what CLUW is, what it can do, and where it can organize, both nationally and locally, are still unclear. As Troger has suggested, the work can be done on three levels: individual, union, and multi-union. Much of the work of some chapters, such as Boston, has been to support women either in trying to organize or in fighting their own union for perpetuating separate seniority lines and discriminatory layoffs. But the harder questions, like how do we deal with the anger of women toward their unions, or with older women's long memories of strategies which failed fifteen years ago and which they are unwilling to try again, have not yet been answered. Only after a year of frustration has the Boston chapter decided to concentrate on building support in key locals. Perhaps such work will yield positive results. Following Troger's suggestion, if local histories of women's roles and non-roles in their unions can be recorded and written up, we may be able to use the concept of "speaking bitterness" to build and develop new tactics.

While CLUW's Statement of Purpose and several guidelines written at meetings of the National Coordinating Committee suggest a direction for CLUW, divisions have already occurred. For example, a CLUW chapter in California gave support to a group of women suing both a GM plant in Fremont and the UAW over discriminatory layoffs. But other groups of women, both leftists and union bureaucrats, have objected to the suit on the grounds that it will advance women at the expense of men and destroy the unity of the working class. Support of this suit does not just divide along political or sectarian lines because it raises the

extremely difficult question of how, in a time of massive layoffs, to consolidate the few gains which women have made in the workplace. Similarly, in a Kentucky chapter, the activity of a particularly vocal woman who has a long history of grievances against local union officials has made many local union leaders extremely wary of CLUW. Yet their support may be vital, on some level, if women are to be reached in their locals.

CLUW's membership and its relationship to both men and the unions, as Troger points out, have become its most critical issues. The union officials who control the top leadership fought for and lost a motion to limit the December constitutional convention to union delegates only. In other cases, the leadership has set up new chapters and refused to charter others when the precise rules set up by the National were not followed. Many local chapters fought to have their membership open to unorganized women. The Boston chapter chose to include women on organizing drives, but rescinded the decision after the National refused them their charter unless they came into line and admitted only union members. Boston and other chapters are preparing to take the battle over membership to the convention floor. However, rumors have circulated among the National Coordinating Committee members that if the convention and the membership get out of hand, the national leaders will attempt to dissolve the organization or sabotage it completely.

The problem of CLUW's relationship to the unions and to other working-class men is by no means only an issue of right leadership vs. the left rank and file. It is not that simple. The "left" is itself divided. Many women in organized groups believe that the issues come down to a series of problems, neatly subsumed under the "woman question." Other leftists accept the hierarchy within CLUW and follow almost any directive from the National because it is "the leadership." Still other women identify as socialist feminists but have by no means developed a complete analysis of what that means concretely for strategy and tactics in organizations like CLUW. This confusion on the left, combined with the obvious manipulations of the union bureaucrats, seems to have caused many progressive, but non-

sectarian, rank-and-file women to abandon CLUW altogether.

While this picture may be a gloomy one, there are signs that CLUW is growing and changing. Rank-and-file and left members on the National Coordinating Committee are learning to fight the bureaucratic rigmarole that so boggled them at the early meetings. The convention will be the decisive test.

If we can keep the baby alive, then as our experience and theory grow we may be able to build CLUW into a viable coalition. But it may also be true that the energy necessary to sustain CLUW may be so great that other organizations — free from the stranglehold of trade-union leadership — will have to be created in order to give women the strength to go beyond the limitations and political compromises seemingly inherent in CLUW's mass coalition.


ANNEMARIE TROGER worked — and survived — in the United States between 1968 and 1974. She has now returned to Germany, her native country, where she is trying to get a job. She has been active in the women's movement in both countries.

SUSAN REVERBY is in the Boston CLUW chapter and is a women's labor historian. She is co-editor of a documentary history of working women in the United States which will be published by Random House/Vintage in Spring 1976.

Correction

In our last issue, American Labor in the 1940's, we neglected to mention that the narratives on working women and the war by Clawson, Archibald and Stein were taken from A Documentary History of Working Women in the U.S. by Radical America editor Linda Gordon together with Rosalyn Baxandall and Susan Reverby. The book will be published by Random House and Vintage in the Spring of 1976.

We especially regret that we inadvertently left out the fact that Anne Stein's description of post-War consumer boycotts was edited from an interview done by Susan Reverby.



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Letters

(Editors' Note: With the following exchange we are beginning a letters section, which we hope to have in every issue. We are interested in printing short, succinct letters which address themselves to the analytic, strategic and political issues raised by our articles. We reserve the right to publish only those letters which we consider to be of the most general interest.)

To the Editors:

Staughton Lynd's letter in the May-June number is a perfect illustration of the hazards which plague any attempt to build an inter-racial popular movement without directly challenging the white-skin privileges which are the chief obstacle to such a movement. (For those who may not remember, Lynd suggests that "a demand be made for a higher level of education... which would benefit blacks more than whites so as to make both equal, but would benefit whites as well." He states that "this is the only approach which is both moral, and has any chance of success." In my opinion, the approach itself can be considered apart from the tax program accompanying it, which admittedly is based on slight familiarity with the Boston scene.)

The first fault with Lynd's approach is that it assumes a situation in which those to whom it is addressed (presumably the revolutionary white intellectuals making up the bulk of the *Radical America* readership) can simply spin programs without taking into account forces already present on the scene. As the editorial on busing makes clear, the present situation in Boston is a result, in part, of ten years of activity by black people around the issue of education. This activity has assumed a certain direction and given rise to certain goals, tactics and forms of organization. The self-directed activity of the black community is the most significant anti-capitalist force on the Boston scene, and can hardly be ignored by white radicals - yet ignoring it is exactly what Lynd's approach does.

The second fault is even more serious than the first, and reveals an uncritical acceptance on Lynd's part of certain commonplaces which, on careful consideration, prove false.

What, exactly, in a big city life is meant by the term "improved education?" It does not mean an increased ability to read and appreciate Shakespeare or the Greek tragedians for their own sake; for the masses of workers and working class youth, improved education means expanded access to a certain style of life, represented, above all, by a job. That is why black people have generally expressed their demands regarding education in terms of equality with whites: they want the same access to the job market that the whites have, and they want the schools they attend to serve this ambition, not prevent its realization.

For their part, whites enjoy a social status superior to that of non-whites. While by no means all white youth succeed in entering the skilled trades and professions, nearly all of those who do enter are white. It does not matter at all that the average graduate of a white public school is sub-literate: his school plays its part in guaranteeing him an edge over black folks in the job market, and that is all he expects from it. That is why the demand for *quality* education is rarely heard in white communities except in response to black demands for *equality* in education. That is also why, to those people who identify themselves principally as "white," a reform such as Lynd proposes (to bring both "X" and "Y" schools up to the "Z" level) would not be an improvement but a deterioration, since it would reduce the advantages they currently hold over non-whites.

In the struggle for "the unity of white and black workers in the long run," gimmicky programs purporting to offer something for everyone are no substitute for the direct confrontation with the reactionary aspects of white workers' consciousness.

Noel Ignatin
Chicago, Illinois
September, 1975

To the editors:

[In answer to Noel Ignatin:]

My point about Boston, and about racism in America, is that radicals should propose solutions which benefit white working people as well as black.

Increasing corporate taxes so as to be able to provide better education for white children as well as black is an example of the approach I favor. Here are some others:

1. Changes in industrial seniority systems which make it possible for blacks, Latins, and women to move from departments where they are "locked in" into better-paying, more healthy jobs in other departments, should be accompanied by a provision for rate retention by white workers displaced. Then none suffers monetarily.

2. When a demand is made that so-and-so many jobs or such-and-such a percentage of jobs should be filled by blacks, Latins, or women, the demand should be made with some attention to what will happen to the white workers displaced. One way to do this is by "red-circling" the jobs presently held by incumbents, so that the incumbents retain the jobs for so long as they

are in the workplace, but all new openings are filled by members of the hitherto-excluded groups.

The political reasons for this approach are obvious. If our intention is to build a long-term movement of working people — black and white, male and female — then that movement must seek to benefit all those whom it hopes to recruit. The only possible objections I can imagine to that truism are: it is impractical ("gimicky"); or, it is sinful.

It is impractical to seek to benefit both black and white working people if one assumes that there is a fixed quantity of benefits. Were that the case, then any benefit obtained by one exploited group could only be at the expense of another. The concept of a fixed quantity of benefits is ancient. Malthus and Ricardo advanced it as an explanation of the impossibility of raising wages.

I cannot help wondering whether Noel adheres to this concept. If so, I think he is mistaken. Every group of working people who make a demand on management say in effect: We want more of the pie, we are asking you to take a lower rate of profit. I understand myself to be advocating a similar approach toward social benefits such as good schools.

I understand Noel to be saying that the only thing which matters to white working people about their childrens' education is that it should be better than the education of black children, so that the white children, not the black, will get jobs in the end.

Perhaps other readers of *RADICAL AMERICA* can help Noel and myself resolve the question as to what it is that white working people want from schools. I believe him to be mistaken. I think that white workers, like other human beings, have feelings as to whether their children are physically beaten, degraded and humiliated by arbitrary authority, short-changed by city administrations which have "written off" the schools in working-class neighborhoods black *and* white. I think white children as well as black experience life as a succession of situations — family, church, school, Army, factory — in which there is always someone in authority whom you did not choose to tell you to sit still, be quiet, do what you are told.

Noel, apparently, would have us believe that all this does not matter to white parents and white children so long as black children have it worse.

There remains the possibility that what Noel really feels is that white people should be made to suffer for their sins. To this I have two responses: 1. I honestly do not believe that white workers should be held primarily responsible for the oppression of black workers. 2. While guilt-tripping was a fairly effective, if short lived, approach to the middle-class youth who made up the "movement" of the late 1960s, I think it strikes out as a perspective for building an inter-racial socialist movement of ordinary Americans.

Staughton Lynd
September, 1975

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Spring, 1975

Critique (#4): *A Journal of Societ Studies and Socialist Theory*, from Glasgow; the first issue of *Network: Voice of UAW Militants*, from Detroit; a special labor issue of *Philippines Information Bulletin*; and the suppressed monograph by Noam Chomsky and Edward S. Herman, *Counter-Revolutionary Violence: Bloodbaths in Fact and Propaganda*, from Warner Modular Publications.

Summer, 1975

Portugal: A Blaze of Freedom, from Big Flame (Britain); *Unions and Hospitals: A Working Paper*, by Transfusion (Boston); *Taxi at the Crossroads: Which Way to Turn?*, from the Taxi Rank and File Coalition (New York); and the first issue of *Cultural Correspondence*, edited by Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner.

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