

## Leftist Paratroops Seize Air Bases

# Lisbon: Split in Army

NOVEMBER 25—A major left-wing military revolt broke out in Portugal today. Approximately 1,500 paratroopers took over the four main air force bases of the Lisbon district—Tancos, Monsanto, Montijo and Monte Real. They were said to have captured senior officers and called on units around the country to join them. Simultaneously rebel soldiers occupied the government radio and television stations and civilian leftists surrounded the main arsenal. As the revolt spread, Lisbon-area unions called a general strike and urged the takeover of public services.

In response to the parachutists' uprising, General Costa Gomes, who is both president of the country and head of the Supreme Revolutionary Council, declared a state of emergency. All "loyalist troops" were placed on war alert under his personal command. Demonstrations were banned and press and broadcast censorship imposed. The northern region commander Pires Veloso responded by sending war planes into the air as a show of support to the beleaguered sixth provisional government of Admiral Pinheiro de Azevedo.

Initial news dispatches reported general support to the rebels from other units in the Lisbon region. The light artillery regiment, RALIS, set up self-propelled cannons to guard the northern approaches to the capital. UPI said that soldiers had begun handing out arms to civilian leftists and *República* newspaper stated that the revolt had the backing of General Otelo Saraiva de Carvalho, head of the Lisbon military region and of the COPCON security forces. A spokesman for workers at Lisnave shipyards, the largest and most militant industrial establishment in the country, declared solidarity with the paratroopers.

(Late reports announce that all of the bases have been occupied by troops backing Costa Gomes. At air force headquarters in the suburb of Monsanto, the parachutists surrendered when faced with a force of 20 armored cars. In addition, soon after the broadcasting stations were seized by leftists their power was cut off and the wave lengths immediately occupied by a pro-



Construction workers demonstrate in Lisbon this month.

Expresso

government station in Porto.)

Among the demands raised by the rebellious units were a purge of the air force high command and replacement of the Socialist Party-dominated sixth provisional government with a left-wing regime. A UPI spokesman quoted a "rebel spokesman" as saying, "We want true socialism and a government of people's power." Two other factors which are undoubtedly involved were the attempt by the Supreme Revolutionary Council to dismiss Carvalho as military governor on Friday, and an order by air force chief of staff General Morais e Silva closing the Tancos training school and disbanding the unit.

The events of the last week represent the culmination of two and a half months of the Azevedo government. Having failed to silence left-wing opposition with the occupation of radio stations in late September, the Revolutionary Council ordered the transmitters of Rádio Renascença blown up. Morais e Silva frankly admitted "that the council was afraid to have troops occupy the station—rather than destroy it—because they might have been won over by leftist demonstrators" (*International Herald Tribune*, 8-9 November). In another test of strength, in October the cabinet was forced to accede to the wage demands of the metalworkers after

a massive demonstration. This month Azevedo determined to make a stand against the construction workers; but after being trapped for a day and a half in government buildings besieged by tens of thousands of building tradesmen, he gave in.

Then came the demands for "guarantees of security." The Constituent Assembly threatened to leave for the conservative north unless the military provided it protection. The cabinet demanded law and order or it would "suspend its activities," which it did, with little noticeable effect. The attempted ouster of Carvalho from his key operational command on November 19 was the Revolutionary Council's answer to these demands. As sops they offered to bury the ill-fated Military Intervention Group (AMI), which had been rejected by virtually every Lisbon unit and could not bring together more than a couple of hundred commandos; and to reinstate the CP-dominated agit-prop "Fifth Division." But immediately after the MFA leaders ordered the replacement of Carvalho their orders were turned down by the 25 units in the Lisbon district.

The dispute with the paratroopers has a long gestation. Less politicized at first than the ground troops, who had been badly mauled in the African colonial wars, the elite parachutist units were used in the abortive March 11 Spinoist coup attempt earlier this year, and in the dynamiting of Rádio Renascença. In

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## PART 2 OF 2

# Soviets and the Struggle for Workers Power in Portugal...6

# SL Calls Actions Against Spínola Tour

## "Spínola Assassino!"

In city after city, demonstrations initiated by the Spartacist League/U.S. and the Trotskyist League of Canada have confronted General António de Spínola, the aspiring butcher of Portugal's militant working class, as he tours North America speaking to influential bourgeois policy-making circles and seeking to rally Portuguese immigrants here behind his bloodthirsty plans.

Deposed as Portuguese president in September 1974 after intriguing for a right-wing coup, this former armed forces chief of staff of the despised Caetano dictatorship went into exile following an abortive reactionary officers' putsch last March 11. His dream is to return to Portugal at the head of an anti-communist mobilization to smash the combative proletariat and institute a reign of terror.

Spínola launched his crusade on November 17 in Washington, D.C., where he denounced impending "sovietization of Europe," called for the so-called "Western democracies" to back the "political liberation" of Portugal and appealed for financial aid to his ultra-rightist Movement for the Democratic Liberation of Portugal (MDLP) and for the imperialist-backed FNLA/UNITA forces in Angola.

The tour has not received much coverage in the bourgeois press, no doubt due in part to Spínola's penchant for the conspiratorial (this fall he travelled to Paris incognito). The demonstrations have been organized on short notice, but hundreds of left-wing militants have come forward to protest Spínola's plot to drown the Portuguese workers movement in blood.

### Connecticut

Chanting "Smash Spínola—No More Chiles," 35 demonstrators at the University of Connecticut in Storrs entered the student union building and delayed Spínola's November 18 speech for twenty minutes. With stomping, heckling and shouts of "Spinochet—Assassino!" the protesters repeatedly disrupted the talk. The united-front call for the demonstration, initiated by the Spartacist League (SL), was also signed by numerous individual faculty members and students, as well as by the Revolutionary Student Brigade and the youth group of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party. The participants also included members of the Portuguese Committee for Democratic Action.

In a J. Edgar Hoover-style anti-Communist tirade, Spínola wailed that

the Russians had been outsmarting the West since Yalta and that the policy of détente jeopardizes the very survival of the capitalist world. Exhorting the U.S. to "do something" about the Communist Party in Portugal and the Soviet-backed MPLA in Angola, he claimed the Russians were engaged in "political penetration" inside the U.S., pointing to the students' disruption as "one of the examples of Soviet strategy"! His fixation on the supposed Russian menace was received with incredulous amusement and open hostility: at one point the audience took up the taunting chant, "The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming..."

When Spínola declared, "I'm neither a Communist nor a fascist," someone indignantly shouted back, "You're a Nazi!" Indeed, this butcher fought (as part of Franco's "Blue Division") alongside the Nazis at the battle of Stalingrad. Spínola evinced a predilection for double-talking evasion but his nakedly reactionary appetites emerged nonetheless; one student's direct question, "Does your organization aim to overthrow the present Portuguese regime?" elicited the ominous reply, "It might have that objective."

A speaker for the SL received tumultuous applause when he charged, "there is no chance of returning to 'democracy,' as you call it, in Portugal today. The working class is so militant today that there is only one of two solutions—either the workers seize the industries and nationalize them, or the right wing will substitute a military dictatorship to crush the workers." He added, "you are in the U.S. today to prove to the American ruling class that you are the one capable of organizing reaction in Portugal just like Pinochet did in Chile!"

### Newark

To the students at Storrs, Spínola had attempted to portray himself as a "moderate" and the MDLP as the alternative to the "twin dangers" of Communism and fascism. The following evening before a right-wing crowd at Newark Symphony Hall he paraded in his true colors. At this rally of over 4,000 predominantly Portuguese supporters, Spínola vowed he would soon return to Lisbon to match the Communists "bullet for bullet." About fifteen members of the black nationalist Congress of Afrikan People (CAP) picketed outside.

The meeting had been built on the basis that, as one introductory speaker put it, "we are all Portuguese," but was quickly turned into an organizing drive

for the MDLP. A Captain Ramos was introduced as the man who was at Spínola's side during the March 11 putsch attempt and the current head of MDLP activities in the United States. Preparing the physical liquidation of the workers movement in Portugal, in Angola the MDLP is openly linked with the "Portuguese Liberation Army" (ELP) of reactionaries and mercenaries which, after training for months in Franco's Spain, is now attempting to install an imperialist puppet regime.

Whipped up to a frenzy, the crowd repeatedly rose to its feet to applaud Spínola's calls for a "dignified" and "honorable" Portugal and smashing the Communists. An ugly air of violence permeated the meeting, and several people overheard uttering remarks which might have been interpreted as mildly leftist were beaten up and dragged out of the meeting. When asked how Portugal could be made a better place, someone yelled out "Kill the Communists!" and the hall rang with cheers as Spínola looked on approvingly.

### New York

Spínola was greeted by a spirited protest by some 90 demonstrators as he entered the Council on Foreign Relations in New York on November 20. This address to the members of this nefarious National Security Council think-tank was preceded earlier this year by a meeting in Switzerland with John McCone, former head of the CIA and now vice-president of ITT. (Earlier in the day, Spínola had been observed wandering around Pace College in lower Manhattan; after descending from a white Cadillac, this aspiring Pinochet rained verbal abuse on his hapless entourage as they ineffectually tried for twenty minutes to determine which of two buildings he was supposed to enter.)

For two hours, throughout his speech to the Council, an effusive mood of militancy was maintained on the picket line with chants of "No More Chiles—Workers to Power!", "CIA, NATO—Out of Portugal!" and "Arm the Workers—Split the Army!" Coming the day after the death of Spanish dictator Franco, the demonstration enthusiastically shouted out, "Hooray, Franco's Dead—Too Bad He Died in Bed—The Workers Must Rule Instead!" The crowd also took up a Portuguese chant, "Si a burguesia quer a guerra, sta bem" ("If the bourgeoisie wants war, all right"), and once again "Spinochet—Assassino!" The demonstrators had the satisfaction of jeering the decrepit ruling-class moguls who



WV photo

António de Spínola on U.S. tour.

## Picket This Butcher!

hobbled out after the meeting. But the general did not emerge: he either sneaked out a back door or hid inside the building until the picketers had left. One foreign policy expert emerging from the Council and passing by the picket line paused to remark, "I didn't agree with you till I heard this guy speak. He just went off the deep end." Even to the braintrusts for the monopolies, Spínola's anti-Communist fanaticism is somewhat embarrassing.

The protest, called by the SL, also included contingents from the Revolutionary Socialist League and International Workers Party. Members of the former Internationalist Tendency expelled from the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) and representatives of Progressive Labor also were present. CAP set up a small picket around the corner, saying they could not join a united action with "Trotskyites." Notable by their absence were the Revolutionary Communist Party (formerly RU), Youth Against War and Fascism (YAWF) and the SWP. Especially scandalous was the non-participation of the International Socialists (I.S.), represented by a lone (and embarrassed) *Workers' Power* salesman. The I.S.' fanfare about solidarity with Portuguese revolutionaries, expressed in a maximum-effort series of public meetings featuring speakers from its favorite Portuguese group, is thus revealed as nothing but a sectarian publicity stunt. They couldn't be bothered to demonstrate against Spínola! (We wonder how the I.S.' friends in Lisbon will react to this pitiful abstentionism!)

The SL spokesman noted that it is not surprising that the SWP was not moved to protest Spínola's tour; the SWP is fronting for the SOCIALIST Party in Portugal, whose head, Mario Soares, met secretly with Spínola in Paris last

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WV photo



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# Letter

Toronto  
22 October 1975

To the Editor:

In your recent article on wage controls and the Canadian postal strike ("Break Trudeau's Wage Controls," *WV* No. 83, 31 October) you point out the betrayals of the postal union leadership and of the would-be militant union oppositionists who have consistently failed to provide a class-struggle alternative. During the current strike supporters of the economist Postal Action Committee and the fake-Trotskyist Revolutionary Marxist Group in particular have borne out this analysis by continuing to act as a left pressure group on the CUPW [Canadian Union of Postal Workers] bureaucracy.

The article pointed to another example of the RMG's capitulation to the sellout union leadership, in the April 1974 national wildcat against the effects (wage-cutting, speed-up, layoffs, victimizations) of the P.O. management's automation scheme. On that occasion RMG supporters in Toronto blocked with the CUPW bureaucrats in voting to end the strike on the basis of a totally inadequate settlement. The article states that the strike was still solid at the time. Since RMG supporters here contest this, I think it would be useful to expand on the point. I was a postal worker during this period and am familiar with both the events of the April 1974 strike and the RMG's supporters' maneuvering at the Toronto ratification meeting.

On Friday, April 26, the CUPW national executive agreed to end the strike and shove the major disputed question (the downward reclassification of certain employees) on to a government-appointed mediator and a do-nothing union management body, the "Manpower Negotiating Committee." Following this decision confusion was rampant across the country and most locals returned to work, including the two large militant locals of Vancouver and Montreal. But in Toronto, although pickets broke down briefly on Friday morning they were re-established by afternoon and maintained until the Sunday ratification meeting.

At this April 28 meeting an RMG supporter moved to split the bureaucrats' ratification motion, intending to vote against the settlement while supporting a return to work on the basis that the strike had already been defeated. When this motion failed, RMG supporters voted for the original motion to return to work by accepting the settlement!

This position was doubly criminal, representing capitulation both to the bureaucrats' abandonment of the fight against management automation plans and to the massive red-baiting which the bourgeois press had whipped up against CUPW militants over the previous week. A class-struggle union opposition would have opposed the settlement for the sellout that it was, by calling upon the Toronto local to stay out and attempt to revive the national strike by setting up a democratically elected strike committee and dispatching union members to the major locals to explain the situation and win their support. As Toronto handles nearly 50 percent of Canada's mail it was strategically located to serve as a springboard for a re-organizing drive. This battle was decisive, as it could have turned the tables on the Post Office and prepared the way for a militant showdown over management's plan to automate at the expense of postal workers. But the RMG flunked the test.

S.L.

# "Two-Line" Squabble in National Black Assembly

NOVEMBER 20—Last weekend's meeting of the National Black Political Assembly (NBA) in Dayton, Ohio, was a disaster for its organizers. The attendance of less than 200 fell far short of the expectations of NBA leaders. In addition, a "two-line struggle" between left and right nationalists emerged as bluster, name-calling and bureaucratic maneuvers. Amiri Baraka, chairman of the Congress of Afrikan People (CAP), the left wing of the Assembly, resigned his post as NBA secretary-general, while flinging down the gauntlet to the "new reactionaries," who support NBA president Ron Daniels. With Baraka out as number two, Daniels proceeded with adoption of a new charter which makes the NBA even more respectable by dropping the post of secretary-general and making himself "chairperson."

Every single agenda point at the Dayton meeting was hotly disputed, and on every single point Baraka's bloc of some 50 votes was defeated by roughly twice that number of Daniels votes. CAP supporters repeatedly challenged the credentials of Daniels' backers on the grounds that they were not involved in local NBA activities. CAP also opposed the rules which virtually eliminated speaking rights for observers (it had about another 50 non-voting observers present). CAP supporters protested an amended agenda which eliminated the secretary-general's report. They put forward motions that those responsible for altering a statement of principles accepted at an earlier conference should step forward and that xerox copies of the statement as originally written be distributed. But CAP lost every vote, leading to heated protests and, at one point, a brief fight involving Walter Stewart, anti-Baraka chairman of the New York State Black Assembly.

The stage for this confrontation between Daniels and Baraka had been set by the NBA president's campaign of public red-baiting against the CAP

chairman. Daniels also has collaborated closely with Gary mayor Richard Hatcher and other "Black Elected Officials" (BEO's) who have deserted the NBA since Baraka's turn last year to "Mao Tse-tung Thought." Baraka weathered Daniels' attempts to force him out of leadership earlier this year and succeeded in winning NBA approval of "Strategy '76," the CAP plan for an "independent" black presidential candidate.

What was perhaps the high-water mark of Baraka's victories over Daniels



Imamu Amiri Baraka

Black World

occurred at the August NBA Economic Conference in Atlanta. Blocking with Fightback, Black Economic Survival and the Revolutionary Workers Congress, CAP supporters pushed through a number of resolutions supporting their projects (a Black Workers Conference, "Strategy '76," organizing against the "S-1" omnibus crime bill, etc.). When Daniels consigned a proposal for greater representation by the CAP-supported Women's Caucus to the end of the agenda, Baraka's forces protested the ruling by chanting him down. Unable to complete a roll-call vote, Daniels called for adjournment and stalked out of the meeting, taking his supporters with him. Baraka, however, stayed and, claiming support from more than half the registered attendance, chaired the rest of the conference (*Unity and Struggle*, October 1975 [2nd edition]).

But Daniels had the support of the majority of state assembly chairmen and successfully outmaneuvered Baraka in building for the Dayton conference and preventing implementation of the more radical motions passed at national gatherings. One of Daniels' more effective tactics was to set high registration fees for conferences, thereby cutting down the number of CAPers who could register. At a state meeting in Ohio, Cleveland CAP members refused to pay a \$20 fee and were thus disqualified from becoming delegates to the Dayton conference.

Incensed at Daniels' continued sniping and underhanded tricks, and facing the prospect of being soundly outvoted at Dayton, Baraka came with a prepared statement announcing his resignation as secretary-general, a post he has held since the NBA was founded at Gary in 1972. The statement ended with several slogans, including "Let the two line struggle in the NBA emerge clearly!", "Unite the many to defeat the few!" and "Build the NBA into a progressive anti-imperialist black unit-

ed front!"

It is precisely the popular-frontist Stalinist politics expressed in Baraka's adaptation of Mao's inane homilies that ensure that the NBA can never be anything more than a class-collaborationist dead end. CAP's "revolutionary" nationalism is not qualitatively different from Daniels' "pork-chop" nationalism. Both Daniels and Baraka have consistently courted the "BEO's," for example. At Gary in 1972 Baraka was key in preventing young black militants, dissatisfied with the endless speeches of Democratic Party politicians and "black capitalist" hucksters, from overturning the bureaucratic rigging of the NBA's founding convention. On the other hand, Daniels proved in the October 1975 *Black World* that, if necessary, he can turn a few "anti-capitalist" phrases himself when called upon. Both NBA leaders would let black bourgeois politicians use the NBA as nationalist camouflage to hide their fundamental loyalties to the ruling class.

The two nationalists diverge over the



Ron Daniels

Black World

particular tactical recipes for gaining influence with black politicians. Daniels knows that few "BEO's" can afford to be politically associated with an ostensibly revolutionary group like CAP. Baraka, who took his rhetorical left turn after his years of faithful service to black Democratic Newark mayor Kenneth Gibson had netted him only betrayal and repeated atrocities against the city's black and Puerto Rican communities, counts on the depression-intensified suffering of the black masses and the rightward lurchings of the capitalist parties to create a conjuncture where certain black bourgeois politicians will need a left face in order to retain their base of support in the ghetto.

Neither Daniels nor Baraka can hold out any hope of fundamental change to the exploited and oppressed. Even the most left nationalist perspective writes off the white workers as a necessarily reactionary force, and thus lines up with the bourgeoisie—from Gibson to Rockefeller. Whether this is expressed in strikebreaking (Baraka's specialty) or virulent red-baiting (Daniels' forte) the effect is to leave the minority workers isolated from their class allies in the face of a united class enemy. Not separatism and nationalism, but proletarian revolution under a united vanguard Trotskyist party is the road to liberation of the black masses. ■

## Demonstrate

### Protest the Butcher Ky!

Friday, December 5  
at 11:30 a.m.

City Club

Downtown Cleveland

Initiated by Spartacus Youth  
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# SWP and the Senator from Boeing

## Anti-Communism at Cutbacks Rally

NOVEMBER 22—The ruling-class offensive against the New York City labor movement is now centering around a broad assault on social services available to the poor and working people. In recent weeks this assault has focused in particular on the City University system (CUNY) and wiping out major educational gains won over years of struggle. The free tuition and open admissions (for graduates of New York high schools) policies of CUNY are a major target for the tirades of right-wing politicians from Gerald Ford on down. Some \$55 million has already been cut from the City University budget by New York's rulers.

The cutbacks already implemented—and the wholesale axing of entire programs, colleges and every significant advance toward free higher education which is now being threatened—have provoked demonstrations, rallies and teach-ins. While the Spartacus Youth League (SYL) has been in the forefront of the fight against cutbacks, calling for militant united action by NYC workers and students, various reformist forces have sought to divert the struggle into more respectable channels. Never tiring in its efforts to find a niche as a social-democratic brake on the "mass movement," the ex-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party (SWP) has jumped into the fray with its bottomless grab bag of schemes for class collaboration.

The SWP is currently employing the National Student Coalition Against Racism (NSCAR) as its vehicle to cozy up to student government careerists and the leadership of the Professional Staff Congress, CUNY's faculty union. Recently NSCAR pulled out all the stops in building a November 19 demonstration in Washington to pressure Congress into providing federal assistance to New York. Although it was billed as the biggest thing since the National Peace Action Coalition (NPAC) peace crawls of the late 1960's and the University Student Senate provided free bus transportation, the march drew only a few thousand students.

This liberal protest rally was dominated by bourgeois politicians and student government leaders. In one of the most unsavory combinations in a decade of SWP-led popular frontist formations, NSCAR honcho Sam Manuel found himself sharing the platform with veteran cold war sabre-rattler Senator Henry Jackson, in an orgy of anti-communist patriotism. Always eager for an opportunity to stump for the Democratic presidential nomination, Jackson decried budget cuts while attacking Ford's "détente" maneuvers from the right. "Ford," said the senator from Boeing, "is more concerned with Red Square than with Times Square."

The SWP's favored representative of student power, Jay Hershenson (head of CUNY's student senate), announced at the Washington demonstration that "there are 25,000 veterans in CUNY. They fought for their country... we will stand behind them." Manuel, the ostensible leftist from NSCAR, did not raise a single criticism of the vile reactionary Jackson. Instead he attempted to compete in social-patriotic rhetoric: "Over 12,000 blacks... 50,000 Americans died in Vietnam... and we didn't get anything for it."

The SWP consciously builds protest rallies as substitutes for militant struggle. In the fight against CUNY cutbacks, the SWP-dominated NSCAR has consistently opposed attempts to win student support for campus occupations and sit-ins. While hobnobbing with cold warriors and lobbying Congressmen in Washington, they have boycotted militant demonstrations in New York like last Thursday's 2,000-strong Wall Street march sponsored by the November 20 Committee (which included the SYL). On the CUNY campuses NSCAR representatives harped on the fact that rallies and sound systems are not permitted in Wall Street by the authorities, and therefore the



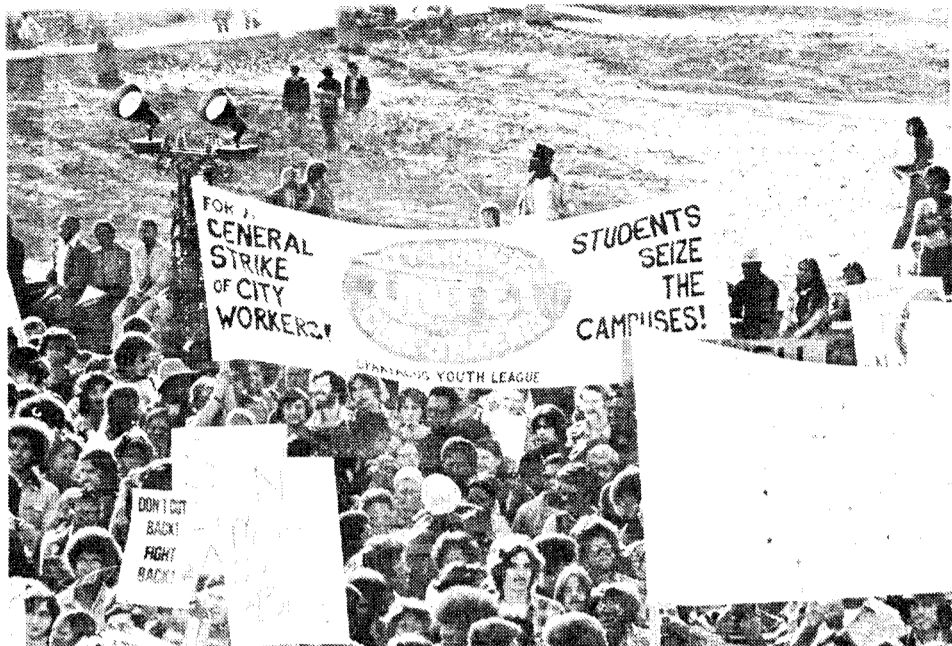
New York Times

Senator Henry Jackson

proposed demonstrations would be potential confrontations with the cops. The reformists promise that they will only participate in strictly peaceful and legal "mass actions."

At rallies, NSCAR speakers have related the cutbacks only to the racist anti-busing drive, deliberately ignoring the bourgeoisie's union-busting and cuts in social services for all working people. While racism is indeed a factor in Ford's anti-urban campaign, this "single-issue" liberal criticism is, in this case, a clear diversion from linking the defense of CUNY and the social services needed by the poor and oppressed minorities to the mobilization of the NYC labor movement in a city-wide general strike.

This hard opposition to militant union action is proof positive that the SWP's "turn" to the labor movement is in no sense a turn to the left. Rather, they offer themselves to the liberal labor leaders as specialists in keeping the pressure of the ranks confined to blowing off steam. In order to establish their credentials as reliable bootlickers



WV photo

Spartacus Youth League banner at Washington, D.C., demonstration against cutbacks, November 19.

of the bourgeoisie and lackeys of the union bureaucracy, a *pas de deux* with "Scoop" Jackson serves a purpose. Leading militant demonstrations and fighting for a general strike doesn't.

The SWP's reformism is not simply a question of tactics. In the NYC cutbacks fight these seasoned class collaborators have pushed the same type of gimmicks as the labor bureaucrats, who have gone from token protest rallies to a short-lived bank boycott, court suits, lobbying for federal aid and now requesting a seat on the Municipal Assistance Corporation (MAC), a cabal of financiers and corporate tycoons which has taken direct control of New York City government in recent months. Instead of fighting for a city-wide general strike against layoffs and cutbacks, and to cancel the debt and expropriate the banks, the SWP tries to pressure liberal politicians to declare a moratorium on bank debts and cut the military budget in order to provide money for the city.

The state legislature has, in fact, now acceded to just such a moratorium. Last week it authorized MAC to postpone principal payments on its debts for three years. The swap of \$1.6 billion in outstanding city notes for long-term MAC bonds is another aspect of this moratorium which, according to MAC officials, could be extended as long as necessary until the city is solvent. Debt moratoria do not even begin to challenge the capitalist structure. Like default, which was initially advocated by the labor bureaucrats, a debt moratorium leaves untouched the bourgeoisie's savage union-busting, social-service-cutting attack on the working people.

Of late, the SWP has concentrated on the other axis of its propaganda, cutting the military budget. Typically, they present their demand with the "guns or butter" rhetoric of the liberal politicians and labor leaders. SWP spokesman Ray Markey, a librarian, testified before the Joint Economic Committee of Congress on November 10 that the money needed to bail out New York:

"...should come out of the \$100 billion a year now appropriated by Congress for the Pentagon. These huge expenditures for bombs, missiles, and other instruments of war are waste—worse than waste. They are inflationary. They are the main reason for the crushing burden of taxes" [our emphasis].  
Militant, 21 November

Nowhere in this pacifist speech did Markey ever mention that these bombs and missiles are used to suppress the insurrections of workers and peasants and to encircle the deformed workers states.

Several weeks ago New York state governor Hugh Carey gained attention

with his advice to Ford that, if he did not send federal funds to NYC, federal troops would have to be sent in order to put down its outraged population. Ford and Carey both understand the fact that this is what the bourgeoisie needs its military budget for. So does the SWP, but in order to pursue its opportunist machinations its first task is not to tell the truth but to obscure the class line, in the NYC cutbacks fight as on every other question. ■

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## "Teamsters for a Decent Contract"

# Another Lesson from the I.S. School of Labor Reformism

As part of a sudden, frenzied effort to transform itself into a mass party overnight, the left social-democratic International Socialists (I.S.) is going out of its way to promote the most reformist possible bureaucratic blocs in the trade unions. The 7 November issue of the I.S. paper *Workers' Power* announces in a banner headline, "Revolution In Teamsters," a statement which will no doubt come as a surprise to most Teamster members, especially since the disappearance of James R. Hoffa, who was the only serious opponent of International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) president Frank Fitzsimmons.

The "revolution" referred to is a group called Teamsters for a Decent Contract (TDC), which surfaced this last August. Centered in Cleveland, this grouping is a self-described "contract bloc" containing many former supporters of the now-defunct Teamsters United Rank and File (TURF) as well as Hoffa supporters. The TDC "program" is a set of barely reformist contract demands which propose some improvements to the present over-the-road contract, but without a hint of the necessary class-struggle program going beyond narrow trade unionism. The TDC calls for a better cost-of-living formula without demanding a sliding scale of wages and hours to combat inflation and make jobs for all. While seeking economic improvements for Teamster members, the TDC completely ignores the need for solidarity with other unions. Most notably, it fails to take a position on the United Farm Workers (UFW), which has been a victim of vicious raiding and sweetheart deals by the Teamster bureaucracy for years!

TDC literature also makes no mention of the central obstacle confronting

to provide a catch-basin for all sorts of cliques and bureaucratic factions at the same time. Chief among the latter are Hoffa supporters in Los Angeles who want to "democratize" the union with a referendum vote and a government investigation of the IBT over the question of Hoffa's disappearance.

At a West Coast press conference on November 2, TDC spokesman Mel Packer confirmed the sub-reformist nature of the group. When questioned by a *WV* reporter as to what position Teamsters for a Decent Contract takes

the UFW and come out for a "decent" contract, as if stolen contracts could be improved with minor patchwork!

Teamsters for a Decent Contract is no simple contract bloc, bad as that would be. Mel Packer is quoted in the pages of *Workers' Power* as saying, "We do not intend to fold up and go home after the new contract is settled. . . . It's clear that we now have the possibility of building a massive, well-organized rank and file movement in the Teamsters Union." By not supporting the UFW, the TDC threatens to reinforce all the worst

ples in general, it then proceeds to concoct a justification for not applying them in practice. In its pamphlet, *Class Struggle Unionism* (1975), the I.S. makes an explicit rationalization for a low-level recruitment policy for workers. Since, "To be a Marxist, one must understand broader political questions," and today, "few workers have the experience on which to really make up their mind on these questions—or the inclination to do the study necessary. . . ." the I.S. will neatly solve the problem by proposing to win workers to a "Marx-

**Teamster goons in the fields during summer of 1974. They served the growers in a terror campaign against the UFW.**



El Malcriado

on the UFW, Packer quickly excused this omission: "We formed positions just around the contract." The Fitzsimmons union-busting campaign against farm workers is of no concern to these "oppositionists"! Packer added that he personally supported the Farm Workers, and that the issue had been discussed at a national TDC gathering, but that it was decided that it was too controversial and "a lot of people inside the Teamsters wouldn't understand it"! Questioned on Hoffa, Packer denied any support for Hoffa on his own part, but affirmed that there were Hoffa supporters in the TDC.

Large numbers of Teamsters in California are quite capable of understanding the UFW issue, unlike the TDC and its promoters in the I.S. (*Workers' Power*, needless to say, omits any mention of the TDC's cringing opportunism on the UFW). Drivers Local 208 in Los Angeles and San Francisco Beer Drivers Local 888 (currently in receivership) have both defied Fitzsimmons by openly solidarizing with the Farm Workers. Both locals have incurred heavy attack as a result. In addition, rank-and-file Teamsters are frequently seen at Farm Worker demonstrations carrying signs such as "This Teamster Supports the Farm Workers." It is possible that a majority of West Coast Teamsters agree. For a national oppositional group to avoid this question is particularly disgusting. But to the TDC and its publicity agents in the I.S., support to the UFW might alienate Hoffa supporters and more backward elements in the Midwest. So they bury

attacks on the Teamsters Union as being a "bosses' union" or "fascist," etc., by creating the impression that even the most militant rank and filers support Fitzsimmons' backstabbing policies on the Farm Workers. Thus it is clear that if the TDC is "successful," it will merely serve to make the present bureaucracy more cynical, venal and hypocritical than at present!

But this is nothing new for the International Socialists. For the I.S., defense of this monstrous opportunism is fully consistent with both its past practice and present opportunist "mass" membership campaign. For years the I.S. has promoted a group in the United Auto Workers, the United National Caucus (UNC), which looked a little better on paper but was every bit as opportunist as the TDC. Claiming to have a program for a labor party and "30 for 40," the UNC never fought for these demands. Instead, it concentrated on getting its petty bureaucrats into office and looking for various new ways to take the union to court. UNC vice chairman Jordan Sims is so openly cynical about the UNC that even the opportunist I.S. found it necessary to slap his wrists on the occasion of his winning the presidency of Local 961 for a second term. After fulsome praise for this "important" victory, *Workers' Power* (3-23 July 1975) has the audacity to suggest that Sims should "strengthen his base by building a UNC chapter at Local 961!"

The I.S. long ago laid the "theoretical" basis for its present opportunism. "Agreeing" with various socialist princi-

ple" approach to trade-union questions. "We can base this on concrete experience." Here we have in its classic form the social-democratic division between a minimum program of economist reformism and a maximum program of abstract socialist platitudes.

In order to cover its nakedness, the I.S. also promotes "Network" groups in both the Teamsters and the UAW which make an effort to appear more political than the "broad" blocs (TDC, UNC) into which the I.S. expects the workers to flock. But the effort is purely token. *Teamster Network* (November 1975), for instance, hypocritically warns Action for Hoffa supporters against calling for a new government investigation of the union. But this same issue praises efforts of two locals to sue the union in order to get out of Fitzsimmons' trusteeships! *Teamster Network* gives "wholehearted" support to the TDC, while being careful not to closely identify itself with the TDC (a further precaution against alienating backward elements!).

The bankruptcy of such opportunism is obvious to anyone with the most elementary sense of class-struggle principles. Contrary to the beliefs of the I.S., the only way class-struggle oppositions can be built in the unions is by putting forward and fighting for a transitional program which does not cater to the present political backwardness of the workers but instead seeks to overcome this by demonstrating that their interests can only be fulfilled through the replacement of capitalist exploitation by workers rule. ■



The International Teamster

**Frank Fitzsimmons**

the union ranks on all issues, including the fight for a better contract: the Fitzsimmons bureaucracy. The main campaign of the TDC—a petition for a decent contract, to be turned over to the union tops—is nothing more than a weak attempt to pressure Fitzsimmons to go for a little "more" in the upcoming negotiations. By specifically renouncing any intention of struggling for power in the union, the TDC both serves to legitimize the present misleadership and

# Soviets and the Struggle for Workers Power in Portugal

On November 16 well over 100,000 people jammed into Lisbon's Terreiro do Paço square, reportedly the largest demonstration since a mammoth May Day march the week after the overthrow of Portuguese dictator Caetano in 1974. The Socialists charged the latest demonstration was "insurrectionary," part of the Communist Party's attempts to "take power" and aimed at the "demolition of the present organs of power and of the democratic structures." The Communists wrote that the "big weekend" would "play an important role in the coming evolution of the Portuguese political situation." The "far left" organizations of the "Revolutionary United Front" endorsed the march.

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The crowd was in a militant mood. This demonstration came two days after construction workers had forced the government to grant a 40 percent wage increase by holding the Constituent Assembly and Premier Jose Pinheiro de Azevedo captive in São Bento Palace for 36 hours. Celebrating their victory the workers repeatedly demanded, "Pinheiro de Azevedo, now is the time, you can leave now!" Another popular chant was "The sixth government will accompany Franco in the journey he is going to take!"

Yet there was no insurrection. The main speaker, a leader of the Provisional Secretariat of the Workers Commissions of the Lisbon Industrial Belt, proclaimed instead that "We did not come here to take power. But we want to transform the power; we demand ... the inclusion in the government and the Revolutionary Council of men and political forces ... which will ensure the defense and triumph of our revolution heading toward socialism" (*Diario de Noticias*, 17 November). Likewise, the central slogan of the demonstration was "Reactionaries out of the government now!" In other words its purpose was simply to increase the number of cabinet portfolios held by the Communist Party.

Since April 1974 six provisional governments have crossed the doorstep at São Bento Palace, five of them in both directions. The sixth, led by the Socialist Party (SP), its authority nil in the wake of the construction workers' victory and the massive anti-government demonstration, has taken the unprecedented step of going on strike. It has "suspended activities" until the Supreme Revolutionary Council, leading body of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), restores order in the country. No doubt the SP would like to return to the first government, when General Spínola commanded with a heavy hand. The Communist Party (CP), now in semi-opposition, simply wants to return to the fifth, when it was dominant.

But adding one more to the succession of revolving-door cabinets in Lisbon will not turn the clock back. As the days tick by reactionary forces are perfecting their plans for a bloodbath,

yet the masses continue to be tied to the "progressive" officers by the participation of the reformist parties (SP and CP) in a series of class-collaborationist coalitions with the MFA. The workers must demand not a cabinet reshuffling which eliminates the bourgeois Popular Democrats (PPD)—the CP demand—but that their leaders break with the MFA and leave the popular-front government. Counterrevolution can be definitively crushed only by a workers government, based not on the unreliable guns of the left-wing generals but on the secure foundations of independent organs of proletarian rule: *soviets*.

Only soviet power can crush the aspiring Francos and Pinochets in Portugal today, yet there are no soviets. How can they be built? Following publication last July by the MFA assembly of a "guide document" there has been a wide-ranging debate in the Portuguese left on "people's power" (*poder popular*). Almost every organization to the left of the CP has published an "organigram" depicting its model for how an "MFA-People Alliance" should be organized. In general there have been two poles in the discussion: those who view the existing workers and tenants commissions as the embryo of an alternative state power, and those who advocate founding entirely new organs cleansed of the weaknesses and reformism of the present committees. Both poles have gone along with the concept of an alliance with the officer corps, or at least with its "revolutionary" sectors.

In contrast the Spartacist tendency has constantly warned against placing confidence in any wing of the capitalist army and repeatedly called for the organization of workers soviets, in Portugal, not conjuring them up out of thin air or sowing illusions that they already exist, but beginning with elements of the existing mass workers movement. Thus during the strike wave of May-June 1974 we wrote that a

"central council of strike and factory committees must function as an alternative power, a workers government counterposed to the military junta and provisional government of the bourgeoisie. In other words, transformed into a *soviet*, the seeds of a future proletarian state, it will create a situation of dual power. But this will not occur spontaneously and requires above all the intervention of the revolutionary party, its winning over of the decisive sectors of the working class and consequently of the soviets."

—*Workers Vanguard*, 5 July 1974

### What Basis for Soviets?

In discussing the need for "autonomous organizations" of the working class, the New Left-syndicalist Proletarian Revolutionary Party (PRP) correctly noted that the several hundred existing workers commissions "have very different qualities and character from company to company," and that the majority are essentially "trade-unionist [*revindicativo*] and not directly political" (PRP leaflet, "The Autonomous Organization: The Role of the Party"). What the PRP proposes instead is the "election of new, purely political commissions," or alternatively of "Revolutionary Councils." The prototype of the latter are the "Revolution-



Workers demonstration in Lisbon.

Vida Mondial

ary Workers, Soldiers and Sailors Councils" (CRTSM), whose principal task is to arm the workers for "the taking of power" ("Platform of Objectives," *Revolução*, 23 April 1975). The PRP has a certain influence in key sectors of the Lisbon working class and in important barracks of the capital district, but with its abstract conception of creating out of a void "purely political" bodies—"electing new organs specifically for new objectives"—it has completely passed by the real mass movement of the working class, so that today the CRTSM continue to be nothing more than groups of trade-union and soldier supporters of the PRP.

These formalist schemes are closely linked with syndicalist "anti-party" rhetoric, such as the call for a "non-party revolutionary government," the statement that "the working class distrusts the parties, and naturally has reasons for doing so," etc. Magical properties are ascribed to the revolutionary councils, which are described as "organs of political power organized in such a form so as not to degenerate into a party bureaucracy."

The absurdity of such abstract ideal models was made clear by the CRTSM's proposal for how workers of the Lisnave shipyards should organize themselves. In a diagram (*Revolução*, 1 August 1975) that would put the IWW's "wheel of fortune" to shame, three different assemblies are proposed (economic control, political power, military power), which in turn would have numerous (17, to be exact) commissions (political, political-cultural dynamization, purges [*saneamento*], union coordination, in-

ternal military, external military, etc.). All this for a single enterprise! At least the Wobblies only saw their famous wheel as the model for a utopian "industrial government"—the PRP apparently thinks these fantastical "organigrams" are a means of taking power.

The utopian character of the "purely political" Revolutionary Councils is so evident that the social-democratic Left Socialist Movement (MES) has been able to make some valid criticisms of the PRP. The CRTSM, says the MES, are based on a "guerrillaist conception" which focuses exclusively on guns, "disregarding the fundamental tasks facing the working class, such as control of production, nationalizations and fighting unemployment" (*Esquerda Socialista*, 18 June). They "will not lead to the formation of Workers Councils because they disregard the already existing foundations, seeking to create parallel structures" (*Esquerda Socialista*, 25 June). The MES calls instead for "strengthening and linking" the workers and tenants commissions. However, it discounts the importance of the present economist policies of the reformist-dominated workers commissions, labelling them "embryonic organs of people's power."

On the key question of the ruling Armed Forces Movement, both left social democrats and syndicalist Guevarists grovel before the "socialist" officers. When the "guide document" calling for popular assemblies "recognized" (i.e., controlled) by the MFA was passed, the MES termed this "a historic decision, a revolutionary decision," and supported the officers' plans without a

word of criticism (*Esquerda Socialista*, 16 July). The PRP went even further, announcing that the "MFA-People Alliance" plan had "approved the dictatorship of the proletariat," quite a feat for "an assembly consisting of a majority of officers, most of whom are offspring of the bourgeois class" (*Revolução*, 1 August)!!

The PRP is so concerned to avoid the dangers of economism that it advocates totally new structures separate from the existing workers commissions. The MES is so committed to justifying working inside the existing organizations of the workers movement that it imagines the present commissions to be organs of dual power. But faced with the slightest attempt to integrate these organs into a corporatist scheme for reinforcing the tottering bourgeois state, both PRP and MES instantly fall to their knees.

### For a Transitional Program

The struggle for soviet power goes far beyond the imposition of an organizational framework encompassing the bulk of the proletariat and linking to it other exploited sectors of the population. It is above all the political struggle to win the masses to the understanding that only socialist revolution can make possible the solution of their most urgent needs. To awaken this consciousness a revolutionary party must raise a program of transitional demands leading from the present objective needs of the working class to the seizure of power. But none of the groups in Portugal which proclaim themselves revolutionary socialists and communists have done this.

The Socialist Left Movement, for example, is now building a "Workers United Will Win" (TUV) formation, evidently intended as a parallel to the soldiers' organization SUV, with the vaguest program imaginable. Although the MES declares the question of power to be on the order of the day, the TUV manifesto calls only for a "revolutionary government capable of firmly combating the capitalists" (*Poder Popular*, 23-30 October), something which every one of the parties to the left of the monarchists claims to favor and each of the six provisional governments has claimed to be. Typical of the demands are "for better working conditions" and "for a just workday." Under the heading "against unemployment," the only concrete proposals raised are opposition to overtime and organizing the unemployed; the demand for a sliding scale of hours, to provide work for all, is ignored. Likewise the program calls only for "reinforcing" workers control, already widespread, with no mention of the need for a planned economy under a workers government. Naturally there is not a word about the MFA in the entire platform.

This vagueness is deliberate. Not only does the MES fail to call for workers

power, and consequently for the need to break with the bourgeois Armed Forces Movement, but its recent pamphlet on "People's Power - A Political Plan?" speaks of dual power as "the ruling class gradually los[ing] parts of the total power it wields so that the other social classes involved in the revolutionary process can also exercise, in the same proportion, a certain part of the power." Such reformism is directly contradicted by the entirety of revolutionary history. Dual power is not a process of "power-sharing" but a life-and-death struggle between incompatible governmental organs representing the two principal classes, with no possibility of any but the most fleeting and unstable equilibrium. The MES, being unwilling to wage a class struggle against the bourgeoisie as a whole, including the officer corps, seeks to "fuse" with the "progressive sectors" of the MFA and thereby obtain "a certain part of the power." What is in fact obtained by such reformist policies is not a piece of the action but a counterrevolutionary bloodbath. Either the workers seize all the power or they will suffer ignominious and very painful defeat.

One group which ought to have something to say about a transitional program is the Internationalist Communist League (LCI), Portuguese sympathizing organization of the fake-Trotskyist "United Secretariat." However, throughout the past year and a half the dominant characteristic of the LCI's policies has been confusion, periodically supplemented by betrayals. Thus, for example, the 25 July 1975 *Luta Proletária* refers approvingly to "The decisions of the last MFA assembly, recognizing the embryonic organs of workers power in the enterprises and the neighborhoods..." But two months later the 19 September *Luta Proletária* remarks that the content of the resolutions of the MFA assembly (the "guide document") "has a vision of submission to the bourgeois state and not of its destruction."

The same is true, for example, of the LCI's use of the slogan of a workers government. Thus during the election campaign for the constituent assembly last April the LCI platform called for "a workers government within the framework of a capitalist state—within the framework of the maintenance of capitalist economic and social relations and the maintenance of a political apparatus intended to perpetuate it" as a "first step" on the road to proletarian revolution (*Diário de Notícias*, 12 April). Such a concept is identical to that held by social-democratic and Labourite forces and directly contradicts the Leninist theory of the state, which holds that the capitalist state must be *smashed*, not taken over. But as soon as the first popular assemblies were formed, the LCI suddenly changed its slogan to call instead for a "Government of the Workers based on the Popular

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# Racists Picket AFL-CIO in Boston

NOVEMBER 24—Fifty racist busing foes picketed a meeting of the Massachusetts State Labor Council executive board today as that body voted unanimously to bring its position on busing into line with national AFL-CIO policy.

The demonstration was prompted by George Meany's threats to discipline the state labor council if it did not reverse an anti-busing motion passed overwhelmingly by the thousand delegates at its November 7 convention. The controversial Resolution No. 61 placed the state body on record to "actively support in any way possible legislation and/or amendments to the Constitution of the United States, which would forbid the mandatory busing of school children."

The racists' picket was organized by the South Boston Information Center in support of Resolution No. 61 and to protest Meany's ultimatum. The demonstrators included union members carrying signs that said "Rank and file against busing." The previous Friday, a motorcade of 40 trade unionists left South Boston to take part in an anti-busing demonstration in Louisville, Kentucky.

The AFL-CIO president's wrath was not, of course, provoked by any desire to defend the democratic rights of black people or to further school integration. Instead, the threats to pull the Massachusetts council's charter or put it in trusteeship represented Meany's knee-jerk bureaucratic reaction to the expression of political differences within his federation. Usually, however, the hide-bound labor federation chief is to the right of less conservative local and state union officials.

Meany rules with an iron fist and has a long history of smashing insubordinate underlings. In 1962, when the Greater Boston Central Labor Council refused to recognize the expulsion of the Teamsters, Meany revoked its charter and expelled its officers. Stephen McCloskey, council president, barricaded himself in his office in an unsuccessful attempt to hold onto the charter. In 1972 Herrick Roth was ousted as head of the Colorado Labor Council for defying the national policy of neutrality in the presidential election and supporting McGovern.

Until the Massachusetts convention this month passed Resolution No. 61, co-sponsored by two leaders of the firemen's union, no AFL-CIO body had officially taken a position contrary to the national federation's tepid support to school desegregation. That policy, adopted in 1972 and reaffirmed at last month's national convention in San Francisco, states "We will oppose the constitutional amendment approach because it will do a disservice to the quality integrated education which we support." The 1 November *AFL-CIO News* notes that "...the federation has gone on record three times in support of school busing for the purpose of securing quality education for all children, when ordered by the courts" (our emphasis).

The national policy, which Meany defends with threats, bluster and imperious commands, is not an attempt to win backward white workers to support busing and school desegregation as a means of breaking down one of the main barriers to working-class unity. Instead, it merely puts the AFL-CIO on record for compliance with federal court orders

and protects the federation from public association with the racist lynch mobs that defy "law and order" in the streets of Boston and Louisville. It also provides a cheap veneer of liberalism for Meany and his social-democratic advisers, while they pursue their anti-communist crusade.

In recent years Meany, whose base of support is in the job-trusting, "white only" building trades unions, has made mild attempts to clean up the AFL-CIO's public image on racism and other social questions. The 1972 resolution on busing was one such effort. At the following year's convention, the federation reversed its long record of opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment and pledged aid to the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa. This year the AFL-CIO threw its weight behind extension of the 1965 Voting Rights Act and Meany put in an appearance at the



Matt Herron/Black Star

### George Meany

NAACP convention.

But this is essentially window dressing for the bureaucracy's reactionary policies. This paper support to school busing "when ordered by the courts" is similar to the abstentionist stand of the United Auto Workers leadership on desegregating Detroit's decaying school system. For years the Woodcock bureaucracy maintained a discreet silence. Only when the Supreme Court last year ruled against cross-district busing in Detroit did the UAW come out with a statement that, while it of course supported cross-district busing, it could not back a plan for busing within the majority black city itself.

Like the rest of the labor bureaucracy, Meany requires a politically backward working class, atomized by craft, racial, sexual and other divisions, to maintain his stranglehold on the unions. Wedded to the racist capitalist order, the bureaucracy is organically incapable of politically struggling against racism within the labor movement. Afraid to unleash the tremendous social power of the proletariat lest it overstep bourgeois legality and property rights, in the process ousting the present pro-capitalist union officialdom, the Meany and Woodcocks must support the capitalist system, along with the unemployment which intensifies competition for jobs and thus fuels the fires of racial hatred between black and white workers. Only a class-struggle leadership, committed to fight to overthrow this oppressive system, can prevent fratricidal racial conflict in the U.S. ■



Syndicalist PRP's "Revolutionary Councils" demonstrate in Lisbon.



# Portugal Soviets

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Assemblies, responsible to a National Popular Assembly." Meanwhile, it speaks interchangeably of workers power, people's power and workers and people's power. Evidently, for them it makes no difference—all that counts is to be with the "broad/new mass/workers vanguard."

The most definitive test of where the LCI stands was the formation of the "Revolutionary (or Popular) United Front" (FUR) with the signing of the August 25 communiqué. This propaganda bloc of eight (now six) left parties, originally including the CP, not only was *not* formed for the purpose of common action—such as demonstrations, formation of workers militias or soviets—but its founding document was openly popular-frontist, giving support to the fifth provisional government headed by General Vasco Gonçalves "until the conditions necessary for the formation of a government of revolutionary unity are met!"

The communiqué also called for support to Gonçalves' governmental program, one of whose key planks was a call for an austerity program, and to the so-called "COPCON document," which like the "guide document" calls for the MFA to "recognize" people's assemblies, as the concrete expression of the corporatist scheme of an "MFA-People Alliance." Although it had numerous criticisms of major points in the statement, the LCI signed on the dotted line (as did the PRP and MES, without criticisms). Since that time, although the Communist Party has left (and been expelled) from the FUR, this popular-frontist bloc has repeatedly been the vehicle for the subordination of the "far leftist" groups to the pro-Moscow Stalinists. The latest example was the FUR's support for the November 16 demonstration called around CP slogans and one of whose main chants was "Vasco! Vasco! Vasco!"

## Lessons of the Bolivian Popular Assembly

Portugal is not the only nor the first place that the question of soviets has arisen in recent years. The Portuguese left press has carried numerous stories about such experiences as the *cordones industriales* in Santiago, Chile, in 1973, for example. But the sharpest debate internationally has centered around the Bolivian Popular Assembly, a body which was formed on May Day 1971, held its only substantial session in late June and was destroyed by a right-wing coup d'état on August 21 of that year. Did the Bolivian *Asamblea Popular* have a "soviet character" as claimed by Guillermo Lora's POR (Revolutionary Workers Party) and its international backers, notably the French OCI? Or was it a "national parliament" as Gonzalez Moscoso's POR, affiliated with the USec, maintained? What would have been the tasks of Trotskyists toward such a formation?

It is agreed on all sides that the Popular Assembly was far from being composed exclusively of elected delegates; numerous union delegates were simply self-appointed or selected by other union officials. This was partly due to its origin not as the evolution of a strike committee but as a creation of the leadership of the COB labor federation along with the pro-Moscow CP, Lora's POR and Juan Lechin's nationalist PRIN. Consequently, although 60 percent of the Assembly was composed of workers' representatives, there was a high proportion of bureaucrats among the 132 delegates.

This undemocratic selection procedure is an obstacle to becoming a soviet, which is an organ of workers democracy, elected and recallable at any time. However, these origins would not inevitably prevent a body such as the

Popular Assembly from acquiring a truly democratic character. Already in June the 18 miners' delegates had been elected in meetings of the local popular assemblies, a significant fact given the key position of the tin miners in the Bolivian proletariat. Clearly, a Bolshevik party would have agitated for immediate elections to the Popular Assembly, the means by which the revolutionaries can rapidly expand their influence against the rightist bureaucrats.

In fact, the 1917 Petrograd soviet was extremely undemocratically constituted in its initial stages, essentially consisting of Menshevik members of the Military Industrial Committee recently liberated from prison, trade-union and cooperative leaders, Menshevik deputies of the Duma and other well-known "names." Trotsky wrote:

"The organisation created on February 27 in the Tauride Palace, and called 'Executive Committee of the Soviet of Workers' Deputies,' had little really in common with its name. The Soviet of Workers' Deputies of 1905, the originator of the system, rose out of a general strike. It directly represented the masses in struggle....

"[In February] the Executive Committee was self-constituted, in advance of the Soviet....

"...The real leaders of the workers had not yet left the streets. They were disarming some, arming others, making sure of the victory....

"It required months of new conflicts and struggles in new circumstances...in order that the soviets...should become organs of struggle and preparation for a new insurrection."

—L.D. Trotsky, *History of the Russian Revolution*, 1930

The Bolivian Popular Assembly had not broken politically with the nationalist regime of General Juan José Torres. Not only was it *not* struggling to take power from the bourgeois government (apparently no group in the body had raised the call for "All Power to the Popular Assembly"), but none of the decisions taken during its session constituted a serious challenge to the government's rule. The most "audacious" decision was to call for 51 percent (majority) workers participation in the state tin mining monopoly! This, of course, gutted the transitional demand of workers control of its essential content—taking production out of the hands of the bourgeoisie—and was simply a form of pressure on Torres, who had called for minority worker participation.

Lora and his apologists explain that the time had not yet come to challenge the government. The OCI claims that, "At no moment did the process attain the degree of maturity necessary to launch these slogans ['Down with Torres' and 'All power to the Popular Assembly']" (*La Correspondance Internationale*, March 1972). Actually the masses were considerably in advance of their centrist and reformist leaders, and were already eager to confront Torres. At the May Day celebration prior to the convocation of the Assembly, the crowd demanded arms and a socialist Bolivia. When Torres began his speech by referring to a promise made in his oath of office, the workers shouted back "Arms yes, promises no!" When he talked of defending "our revolutionary nationalism," the crowd replied "Socialism!" And the masses refused to allow Torres to walk at the head of the march to the Popular Assembly meeting.

More important is what the complaint that the situation was not "ripe" means. The OCI adroitly amalgamates two different slogans. Was it time to agitate for overthrowing Torres? Not until the revolutionaries were prepared to replace him. Until then it is necessary, as Lenin wrote in his "April Theses," to "patiently explain." But *what* are the communists to explain? Precisely that "the Soviets of Workers' Deputies are the *only possible* form of revolutionary government," or as Lenin put it in the form of a slogan: "Not a parliamentary republic...but a republic of Soviets of Workers', Agri-

cultural Laborers' and Peasants' Deputies..." ("The Tasks of the Proletariat in the Present Revolution," April 1917). The centrist POR did not breathe a word about transferring power to the Popular Assembly, precisely because this would have upset its non-aggression policy toward Torres and its alliance inside the Assembly with the Communist Party.

The leader of the USec POR, Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, concluded from these facts that, "The Popular Assembly is hardly more than a sort of national parliament where the most important social sectors are represented...and it has been 'accorded' an official status by Torres." He also remarked in an interview that, "The POR comrades in the Popular Assembly...had no illusions. They simply are using the Popular Assembly as a forum, as a platform. That is all" (quoted in *La Correspondance Internationale*, March 1972). This abstentionist policy is just as wrong as the Portuguese PRP's insistence on building new organs beside the workers commissions.

It is evidently the case that the Bolivian Popular Assembly had not yet become a soviet because it did not yet constitute *in fact* a dual power. On the other hand, it was certainly not a parliament for it was not integrated into the existing state structure (rather being barely tolerated). Had it continued in session instead of disbanding after five days, never to meet again (despite an almost two-month interval before the Banzar coup), it *could have become* a soviet. But there was no revolutionary Trotskyist party to intervene along this axis.

## Three Conditions: A Party, A Party, A Party!

It is perfectly possible to have a genuine soviet that never takes power or even seeks to. The German workers and soldiers councils in Germany in 1918-19 are an example of this. The Russian soviets of 1917 so long as they were dominated by the Mensheviks were another. The difference between Russia and Germany was that in the former there was a revolutionary party which had been steeled in more than a dozen years of combat against opportunism and was prepared to drive forward to take power. In Germany the Spartakusbund only transformed itself into the Communist Party a few weeks before counterrevolution struck; since it had functioned as a faction of the Independent Socialists until then it was not represented in the Congress of Workers and Soldiers Councils, so that the reformists and centrists had a free hand in strangling the revolution.

Portugal today is at a less advanced level than Germany (where there was an organ of dual power which however refused to topple the bourgeois state) or Bolivia (where there was an organ which could have become a soviet). But the workers commissions, tenants commissions, workers militias, soldiers commissions, popular assemblies and various other independent mass organizations of the workers which have sprung up during the pre-revolutionary period are elements which could be united and transformed into a soviet. For this it is above all a revolutionary Trotskyist party that is necessary. Without it these commissions will continue to be limited to militant trade unionism and pressure tactics.

In recent months one of the biggest obstacles to the formation of Portuguese soviets has been the sharp party division among the workers commissions, with at least three different left groups (the syndicalist PRP, the Maoist MRPP and the Stalinist CP) having at least 40 enterprises each in their respective coordinating committee or secretariat. With the decline of influence of the Communist Party-dominated Inter-sindical union federation, however, the

CP has heavily shifted its efforts toward the workers commissions and its Provisional Secretariat of the Workers Commissions of the Lisbon Industrial Belt now includes 115 commissions representing 50,000 workers. Revolutionaries would naturally seek to work inside such an organization, but their goal must be to reach the Communist workers and break them from their treacherous leaders who only resort to organizing the commissions and reluctantly sanctioning militant tactics for fear of losing their base.

The entire Portuguese "far left"—including the ostensible Trotskyists—has failed to construct the intransigent Trotskyist party that is so urgently needed today. Instead they have capitulated politically either to the CP or SP, or directly to the bourgeois MFA. Many subjectively militant Portuguese workers, repelled by the opportunism of the party formations, are no doubt drawn to the syndicalists' anti-party propaganda and their projected alternative of "non-party" "popular councils." But as we have shown in discussing the MFA's plans for co-opting "people's power" and the policies of the PRP, this attempt to sidestep the political struggle against reformism is only another way to capitulate to the left-posturing officers.

As Trotsky wrote in discussing the role of soviets in the Russian and German revolutions:

"Without a party, apart from a party, over the head of a party, or with a substitute for a party, the proletarian revolution cannot conquer. That is the principal lesson of the last decade... We have paid far too dearly for this conclusion—with regard to the role and importance of a party in a proletarian revolution—to renounce it so lightly or even to minimize its significance."

—L.D. Trotsky, "The Lessons of October," 1923

For the formation of a Trotskyist Party in Portugal! Forward to the rebirth of the Fourth International! ■

## CORRECTIONS

The article "Rizzo Strongarms Philadelphia Elections" in *WV* No. 85 (14 November) contains some minor factual errors. Rizzo's boast that he would "make Attila the Hun look like a faggot" followed his victory in the Democratic primary, not the mayoral election, as we had indicated. The article states that black liberal candidate Charles Bowser had run in the Democratic primary; in fact, he did not run because his bid for support from the anti-Rizzo Democratic Party machine failed. The teachers strike referred to in the article took place in early 1973 not in 1972.

A photo of striking miners in Charleston, West Virginia, that appeared in *WV* No. 86 (21 November) was incorrectly credited to *WV*. It was actually a *Charleston Daily Mail* photo.

In the same issue, the article "In Defense of the Rosenbergs!" refers to "the pre-trial record" of the case as containing "the record of government conspiracy." It is rather the secret files of the prosecution and government that contain the record of government conspiracy.

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# Spínola...

(continued from page 2)

July. The SL speaker also pointed to the absence of the Maoists—logical enough since their Portuguese counterparts were hailing the attacks, often led by elements of Spínola's MDLP, against Communist Party headquarters, and China is supporting the imperialist-dominated FNLA UNITA forces in Angola. In short commentaries between rounds of chanting, the SL speaker emphasized the fundamental crisis of revolutionary leadership in Portugal, pointing to the role of the CP, which participated in the first and second provisional governments in 1974 over which Spínola presided. He also criticized the LCI—Portuguese section of the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec), which helped found the Revolutionary United Front (FUR) whose program called for support to the fifth provisional government. The speaker ended by calling for the rebirth of the Fourth International.

## Boston

Spínola's Boston speech on November 21, scheduled to take place at the "World Peace Foundation," was at the last moment moved to the Union Club. Despite the switch and undeterred by a driving rainstorm, 70 demonstrators were on hand. The militants burst into the Club shouting and chanting until the cops arrived. The SL had initiated the call for the demonstration and mounted the largest contingent; other groups participating included YAWF, the Somerville Tenants Union, the Cambridge Tenants Organizing Committee, the I.S. and the Portuguese Workers Committee. The demonstrators chanted: "Smash Spínola—No More Chiles" and "Break with the MFA—Build Workers and Soldiers Councils."

## Toronto

On November 23 some 300 left-wing militants picketing Spínola's talk at the St. Lawrence Center in Toronto faced a hostile crowd of nearly 1,300 right-wing Portuguese. The right-wingers had been refused entrance to the Center; only 800 tickets were sold to a select audience although the hall could have seated a far greater number.

There was no advance publicity for Spínola's talk. However, upon learning

of this provocation the Trotskyist League of Canada (TL) immediately issued a call for a united-front protest demonstration which was widely distributed throughout the large Portuguese immigrant community. The day after TL members distributed this leaflet at the Communist Party-backed Center for a Democratic Portugal, the CP-supported Portuguese Democratic Association announced a separate demonstration, from which Trotskyists were to be excluded, for the same time! But the TL did not allow the Stalinists' sectarianism to prevent a forceful showing of united opposition to the butcher Spínola. When the TL showed up with a powerfully-organized presence—clearly the largest single contingent at the demonstration—the Stalinists backed down. The TL chant, "Break with the MFA—Workers to Power," was taken up by the crowd.

The TL banner proclaimed "No Pop Front Illusions—Split the Army, Arm the Workers." In contrast the Revolutionary Marxist Group, which supports the USec majority, liquidated its organizational presence in response to the threatened Stalinist exclusion, and marched as individuals without signs or banners. As was the case with the American SWP, the League for Socialist Action, which supports the USec minority, did not show up at all.

As we go to press, Spínola is continuing his tour, with appearances scheduled in the San Francisco area for the week of November 27. It is the urgent internationalist responsibility of socialists to express their concrete solidarity with their Portuguese class brothers by continuing to expose the bloodthirsty rabble-rousing and reactionary intriguing of Portugal's aspiring Pinochet, wherever he shows his monocle. ■

# Lisbon...

(continued from page 1)

both cases, however, contact with soldiers from leftist units afterward convinced the paratroopers that they had been deceived by their superiors as to the purpose of their orders. The resulting ferment was concentrated in the "mother" unit of the training school, and as privates and sergeants began to discuss orders virtually the entire officer complement of the base (123 in all) walked out, demanding to be transferred to another unit. In response the air force command placed the rest of the base (some 1,600) on indefinite furlough. Rejecting the order, the troops stayed on.

The revolt today seems to be an outpouring of anger in response to this treatment by the command structure, tied in with generalized opposition to the discipline-minded Azevedo government among the armed forces ranks. The Communist Party, which has been calling for the resignation of the sixth government since Friday, may have sought to take advantage of this moment to push its demands for a new cabinet. But it is highly doubtful that any of the principals intended anything like the insurrectionary assault on state power which the government charges them with. Militarily it was poorly planned, with the revolt isolated in a few easily definable targets.

It is not just Premier Azevedo who is "sick of playing games," and militantly leftist soldiers may well be tempted to pull a coup. Marxists must be prepared to bloc militarily with leftist units and officers against the "moderate" government's purge attempts—ultimately aimed at building up a coherent strike force to massacre the workers. But the

militant workers must not place the slightest political confidence in the demagogic "socialist" generals. It should be remembered that "Otelo" at first sided with the "Group of Nine" against CP-backed Premier Gonçalves last summer, and if he follows the advice of one of the leftists' chants—"Act Otelo, the people are in the streets"—it is not at all clear against whom he would move.

As has been proven repeatedly over the months, the working class cannot rely on the MFA and must break politically with this political expression of the bourgeois officer caste in order to unite in independent organs of proletarian power. In the last month elected soldiers commissions have sprung up in most of the Lisbon units, usurping the role earlier played by the unit delegate assemblies (which included officers). The organizational forms themselves are empty, however, without the revolutionary leadership to politically prepare the conditions for successful struggle by mobilizing the mass of the workers and their allies behind a unified Marxist vanguard. Lacking this, the militant workers and soldiers will eventually fall prey to the Communist Party's treacherous reformist illusions or be driven to strike out in some desperate adventure.

Never has the crisis of revolutionary leadership been posed more sharply than in Portugal today. To defend the rebellious soldier ranks against the MFA tops' plans for a massive crackdown against "indiscipline," to prepare the working masses to resist the onslaughts of the forces of reaction, to unify the working class around a revolutionary program leading toward the seizure of power—what is required is above all the forging in struggle of a Portuguese Trotskyist vanguard, section of a reborn Fourth International. ■

## Victimized in Florida Frame-Up...

# Defend Delbert Tibbs!

Delbert Tibbs, a 36-year-old Chicago black writer, has become yet another victim of a vicious racist frame-up. Last year Tibbs was hitchhiking through the South to revisit his Mississippi birthplace and gather material for a novel he was writing. He was arrested while in Florida in February 1974, accused of raping a white woman and murdering the woman's male companion. After only one hour and 20 minutes' deliberation an all-white jury found Tibbs guilty and "recommended" the death penalty. The judge complied, so today Tibbs sits on death row in Florida's Raiford State Prison. An appeal was filed with the Florida Supreme Court last July.

The evidence presented at the trial shows that Tibbs is utterly innocent of the charges!

- The rapist was dark-skinned with a pock-marked face. A composite sketch was worked up by the rape victim and local police; the woman evidenced an unclear memory during this work.

- Tibbs has light-colored skin and a smooth complexion. When confronted with this the woman said, "maybe he

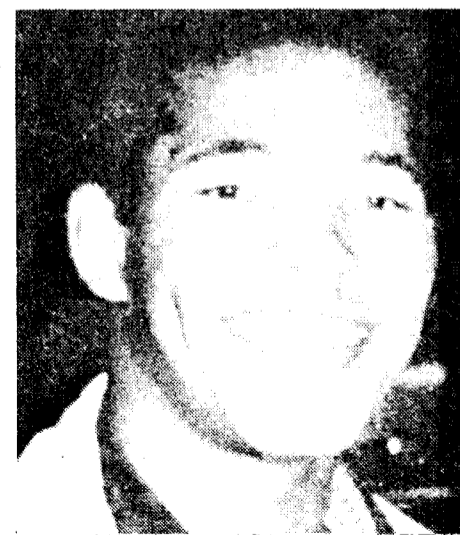
changed colors." The composite sketch bears no resemblance to Tibbs.

- A prisoner serving life for a rape conviction said Tibbs confessed to the Florida rape and murder while he and Tibbs were cellmates.

- The prisoner has admitted to perjury in several instances and his testimony is an almost word-for-word repeat of the prejudicial pre-trial newspaper publicity. Tibbs was arrested *two weeks after* this "confession" allegedly occurred in jail!

- The rape and murder occurred in Fort Myers.

- Tibbs has never been to Fort Myers, and on the day of the crime, he



National Defense Committee for Delbert Tibbs

was in Daytona Beach—more than 200 miles away. A police lieutenant testified that the secluded field where the crime occurred could only be found by someone familiar with the Fort Myers area.

- The woman's companion was shot in the head; she witnessed the shooting.

- The autopsy report contradicted the woman's explanation of how her companion was killed.

- The woman stated she was running away with the murdered man, from a

man she had lived with up until the day of the murder.

- The woman's earlier companion was never even questioned.

- The murder weapon has never been recovered; the woman said the gun and her purse were thrown into a nearby lake by her attacker.

- There is no lake, not even a pond, anywhere near the attack site.

- The truck driven by the attacker has never been located.

- No evidence was introduced that Tibbs had access to a truck.

- Without notifying the defense, the prosecution presented as final evidence a Salvation Army Mission registration card from Orlando. This card bore Tibbs' signature and it "proved" he was not in Daytona Beach as claimed on the day of the crime.

- Handwriting experts had prepared a report which had determined the registration card's signature was a forgery. They were not allowed to testify at the post-trial hearing.

Tibbs is clearly right to claim: "I am convicted of a crime of which I'm innocent. I'm guilty only of being black and poor. Neither is a condition of which I'm ashamed..." The bigotry and racial bias of U.S. capitalism as reflected in its judicial system have made Tibbs one more frame-up victim among tens, perhaps hundreds, of thousands. Just this September Wilbert Lee and Freddie Pitts were released from Florida State Prison after serving 12 years for murders they did not commit. They remained in prison nine years after the real murderer had confessed.

Upon her acquittal Joan Little took up the cause of Delbert Tibbs, stating "A year ago I was basically in the same position that Delbert Tibbs is in.... In Delbert Tibbs' case there was not enough press and publicity and therefore it was a closed case" (quoted in the *Militant*, 10 October). Tibbs' fate must not be that of Lee and Pitts! Stop the frame-up now—Free Delbert Tibbs! ■

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# Angola...

(continued from page 12)

mad rush to see who can hoist his flag over Cabinda first.

The MPLA has responded to its reverses by ordering its southern troops to evacuate the towns and revert to the harassment techniques of guerrilla war. While the mercenary-led column has not stopped to conduct mopping-up operations in the wake of its successful *Blitzkrieg*, it is supplied by air, thus making it less vulnerable to attacks on supply lines. Instead it is the MPLA's guerrilla forces that are now cut off from reinforcement and facing a well-trained and highly mobile force. With the prospects for successful guerrilla warfare bleak, in Luanda the entire civilian population, including 8- to 12-year-old boys organized in the Young Pioneers, is being mobilized for a last-ditch resistance.

## South African Bases, Portuguese Commanders

Early scattered reports of white mercenaries leading the onrushing column have been followed by an avalanche of evidence of organized South African and ELP MDLP troops. As *Afrique-Asie* (17 November) noted: "Far from being a heterogeneous conglomeration of bandits and professional soldiers, this 'army of the West' has already attained a certain level of integration." Though South Africa has been understandably reluctant to admit its intervention, and there are reports of divided opinions in Pretoria on just how far to go, the facts are steadily coming to the surface.

The South African *Rand Daily Mail* published a blank space on the first page of its November 15 edition, censored for "news about Angola" that it had "not been authorized to publish." But the next day several Johannesburg papers reported the existence of an air-bridge between Rand airport and Sa da Bandeira in southern Angola. When a Reuters correspondent tried to question white soldiers in Benguela, they replied in English with heavy South African accents. The reporter described that "one Portuguese soldier 'working for UNITA' said to me: 'The South Africans do good work. They are professionals. It's their war'" (*Le Monde*, 16-17 November).

South Africa's decision to play its full hand by intervening directly in the

Angola fighting has been confirmed by British newsmen who report the establishment of a South African army logistics base camp 350 miles south of Luanda (*Sunday Telegraph* [London], 16 November). The *New York Times* (22 November), as well, reported from Zambia that "informed diplomatic sources said here today that South African regular troops were fighting many hundreds of miles inside Angola." All accounts agree that the South African army has entrenched itself in the border region of southern Angola it had occupied in August, apparently intending an annexation both to safeguard the Cunene dam project and to wipe out the base areas of South West African Peoples Organization (SWAPO) guerrillas among Ovambu tribesmen of the area.

The imperialist/colonialist strike force, now 2,000 strong, is well armed. It has rolled forward in French Panhard armored personnel carriers and AMX tanks supplied via South Africa and Zaïre. There have also been reports of machine-gun-equipped helicopters. Additional heavy equipment pours in continuously on unmarked Hercules C-130 transports flying into airfields at Benguela, Silva Porto, Huambo and Sa da Bandeira. Despite the thin veil of anonymity, the CIA's recently divulged backing of the anti-MPLA forces is being carried out with methodical efficiency.

In the north, organized Portuguese mercenaries are leading the FNLA half of the pincer movement on Luanda. Headed by "several hundred former Portuguese Army men" (*New York Times*, 21 November) the FNLA has advanced to within 12 miles of the capital. These shock troops are operating out of the FNLA's provisional headquarters at Ambriz, commanded by Colonel Santos e Castro (until recently an anti-guerrilla strategist in the Portuguese army, now a leader of Spínola's MDLP) and Major Alves Cordoso.

According to the MPLA commander Iko Carreira (now defense minister of the Luanda regime), earlier this year Santos e Castro and Alves Cordoso met in South Africa with Daniel Chipenda (FNLA deputy secretary-general), Tony Rodrigues (a former aide to Portuguese president Costa Gomes), South African military officials, bankers of Portugal's Espirito Santo concern and representatives of the Champalimaud family (former owners of Portugal's national steel monopoly). The agreement reached was for the current

mercenary project, financed partly by South Africa (*Diário de Notícias*, 17 November).

## Imperialist Subordination of Angolan Civil War

Now decisively subordinated to the imperialist scramble for Angola, the FNLA's Holden Roberto and UNITA's Jonas Savimbi are reduced to the role of puppets, mouthing the anti-communist tirades dictated by their paymasters while the fate of their forces is decided in Washington and Pretoria. Under the present conditions of imperialist-colonialist control, their victory over the MPLA would either set up an Angolan client state of the U.S., South Africa and Zaïre; or, more likely, partition the country with South Africa annexing the Ovambo regions, a South Africa/Zambia joint protectorate administered by

ing to congeal a bourgeois regime, inevitably hostile to Angola's toiling masses. An independent proletarian force struggling for power would be ruthlessly attacked by all the nationalist organizations. If there had been such an independent working-class organization in Angola it might have been constrained to propose episodic military blocs with the MPLA in the course of defending the plebeian population of Luanda, the social base of the MPLA which would certainly be subjected to a mass slaughter in the event of FNLA/UNITA victory. But it was only the imperialist power play that changed the situation and now justifies a policy of military support to the MPLA.

In contrast to the Spartacist League's materialist analysis of the changing realities in Angola, most of the left has blindly followed its opportunist appetites. The "United Secretariat of the



MPLA soldiers in Cabinda

Augusta Conchiglia

UNITA along the Benguela railway, a Gulf Oil fiefdom in the north and either outright *Anschluss* of FNLA-held areas to Zaïre or a Bakongo client state controlled by Mobutu through his brother-in-law Roberto.

Far more concerned with their own ambitions than with Angolan independence, both Savimbi and Roberto use anti-communism to shrug off accusations of imperialist mastery. Interviewed by an American correspondent, Andrew Jaffee, Savimbi boasted, "Before we lost because we didn't have enough weapons. Today I have armored cars with no drivers. If MPLA has ten bazookas, I have twenty." Pressed about the South Africans, Savimbi finally grew irritable:

"Here I am fighting Communism," Savimbi shouted at last. "Trying to stop the Russians from taking over Angola. And instead you hold me up to ridicule over the whites.... What's the matter—don't you want to live in a democracy?"

—*Newsweek*, 24 November

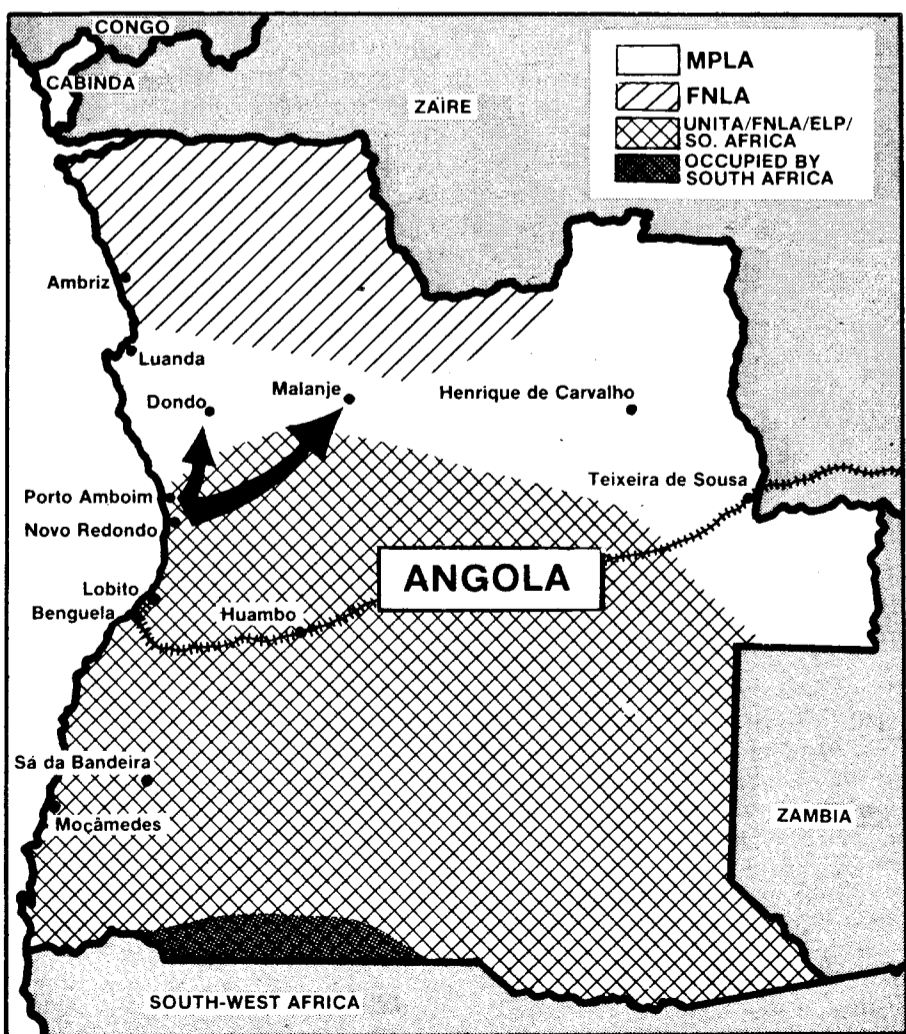
Because the "democracy" Savimbi and Roberto are preparing is in reality a neo-colony completely controlled by their dominating imperialist overlords, Marxists give military support to the MPLA. It is important, however, not to read today's conditions into the past. In the last year's three-cornered power struggle between the MPLA, UNITA and FNLA, support from various foreign powers to the contending sides had not yet decisively altered the intranationalist character of the conflict.

While Marxists would have militarily supported all the groups against Portuguese colonialism, the absence of any qualitative political difference among them dictated support to none of the bickering rivals when squared off against each other. Each was a petty-bourgeois nationalist movement aspir-

ing to congeal a bourgeois regime, inevitably hostile to Angola's toiling masses. An independent proletarian force struggling for power would be ruthlessly attacked by all the nationalist organizations. If there had been such an independent working-class organization in Angola it might have been constrained to propose episodic military blocs with the MPLA in the course of defending the plebeian population of Luanda, the social base of the MPLA which would certainly be subjected to a mass slaughter in the event of FNLA/UNITA victory. But it was only the imperialist power play that changed the situation and now justifies a policy of military support to the MPLA.

But the Marxist policy of military support to nationalist movements or to ex-colonial countries in independent struggles against imperialism always depends on evaluation of the concrete conditions. We defend the right of independence movements in colonial countries to obtain aid wherever they can get it (including from other imperialist countries), and would have called for military support to the FNLA in its guerrilla fighting against the Portuguese during the early 1960's, even though at the time Roberto was already being aided by the CIA. However, when it is no longer a question of mere aid but of decisive subordination to an imperialist power, then communists can no longer offer military support, for the outcome would no longer be to eliminate colonialism but rather to replace one overlord with another.

Thus, the Fourth International gave military support to Ethiopia against Italian aggression in the 1930's. But when the British occupation of Ethiopia in World War II transformed the anti-colonial struggle into merely a theater of the inter-imperialist war, the FI correctly withdrew its call for military support.



WV



Similarly, Marxists would have given military support to the Bangladesh independence struggle in early and mid-1971. But when India took control of the guerrillas and then invaded, transforming the conflict into essentially an Indo-Pakistani war, the Awami League became thoroughly subordinated to the Indian army and was no longer militarily supportable by communists (see "War, Revolution and Self-Determination," *WV* No. 4, January 1972).

During the 1930's Trotsky pointed out the difference between a war between two bourgeois states, where the purpose is imperialist conquest (whether or not one imperialism calls itself democratic and the other fascist), and a civil war between the camp of Spanish fascism and that of Spanish bourgeois democracy. In the former case Marxists would advocate revolutionary defeatism on both sides, as the Fourth International did in World War II; in the latter case the Trotskyists were for revolutionary defensism on the side of the Loyalists against Franco, while constantly struggling to create conditions for a proletarian revolution to overthrow the Republican regime. Trotsky did, however, admit the "historical possibility" that intervention by the imperialist democracies could transform the civil war into a mere "episode" of an inter-imperialist war ("Answer to Questions on the Spanish Situation," September 1937). A leader of the American Trotskyists, James Burnham, elaborated on this possibility and although Burnham later abandoned the Fourth International under pressure from petty-bourgeois public opinion on the eve of World War II, his conclusions here remain valid:

"If England and France should intervene on a large scale, if the Spanish struggle should thus be transformed into an inter-imperialist war, Marxists explain that under such circumstances, the dominant character of the Spanish struggle would be entirely changed; its aspect as a civil war would be subordinated to its aspect as one episode or phase in the inter-imperialist conflict... Marxists would go over to a position of *defeatism* with respect to the Loyalist armies..."

—*Socialist Appeal*, 2 October 1937

The criteria used by the Trotskyists in Spain, Ethiopia and Bangladesh apply also to the situation in Angola today. With the departure of the Portuguese the civil war has become internationalized. But here the values in the equation are the reverse of those in Spain. In the Angolan power struggle there was no qualitative difference between the competing bourgeois nationalists, so Marxists took no sides in that conflict; but with the decisive entry of the U.S. and South Africa, the FNLA/UNITA coalition was subordinated to the imperialists, and thus it is now necessary to call for military support to the Soviet-backed MPLA against the imperialist drive to install a puppet government. ■

## General Strike Threat Scuttled

# Ninety Teachers Jailed in New Haven Strike

NEW HAVEN, November 24—The outrageous jailing of 90 striking teachers and the threat of a general strike brought New Haven into the national news this month. But the strike, which had become a test case of teachers' right to strike and of the ability of city officials to penalize public employees for mounting municipal budget crises, ended yesterday in defeat. The teachers, under pressure by a labor bureaucracy loath to stand behind its general strike bombast, agreed to a two-year contract falling far short of their needs and demands.

About 900 out of 1,200 teachers respected picket lines during the strike which began November 10, following a year of fruitless negotiations and irrelevant mediation. With the mayor-appointed Board of Education refusing to negotiate as long as the strike was in progress and teacher strikes being illegal in Connecticut, Superior Court judge George Saden quickly issued an injunction ordering teachers back to work.

Saden began his strikebreaking arrests November 14, clapping the entire negotiating team of the New Haven Federation of Teachers (NHFT) in jail. The 12 NHFT leaders were released over the weekend for renewed negotiations, but when the miserly intransigence of the Board of Education produced a deadlock, Saden threw them back behind bars the next Monday.

With the strike continuing nevertheless, Judge Saden upped the ante the next day, hauling into court over 100 strikers from Lee and Cross high schools. Twenty-nine teachers, with union permission, were allowed to "purge" themselves, promising to return to "normal duties and not participate in any slowdowns, job actions, a sick-out or any other types of action to stop the functioning of the school system" for the remainder of the year. But 78 strikers who refused to comply with this union-busting stipulation were incarcerated at Camp Hartell, a World War II Air National Guard barracks north of Hartford.

Not content with this move, Saden then ordered the strikers to pay \$23 a day for "room and board" (!) in addition to a \$250 fine for each day the strike continued. This was on top of a \$5,000 per day fine being levied against the



James Meehan/New York Times

Arrested New Haven teachers at Air National Guard camp at Windsor Locks, Connecticut.

teachers union local.

Adding insult to injury, the arrogant judge self-righteously crusaded against "what amounts to anarchy" in a patronizing courtroom lecture:

"I think what some of you don't understand is that you have placed yourself in the category of lawbreakers... As lawbreakers it would seem to me that the Board of Education would have the right to dismiss you as lawbreakers. Freedom abused is no freedom at all..."

—*New Haven Register*,

19 November

The draconian imprisonment of strikers at a military base brought an immediate and angry response from teachers, forced to strike for the third time in five years, and from the rest of New Haven's workers. Nearly 1,000 custodial, cafeteria and craft workers struck in support of the jailed teachers, finally closing schools which the Board of Education had tried to keep open. At the State Capitol in Hartford 2,000 teachers demonstrated November 20, as leaders of the Connecticut Education Association (CEA) sought to co-opt rising teacher anger into a treacherous proposal. CEA leaders demanded legislation guaranteeing the right to strike or binding arbitration. Such a law would only land *more* teachers in jail, as they would be forced to strike against the decisions of never neutral arbitrators.

Growing indignation at the victimizations brought pressure on the normally hidebound New Haven Central Labor Council, representing 30,000 workers. Meeting on Friday, November 21, the Council voted to stage a one-day general strike—a "demonstration" as Council president Vincent Sirabella insisted on calling it—if the teachers were not released by 12 noon Tuesday. Leaders of the United Auto Workers and United Electrical Workers, outside the AFL-CIO, also promised to support the call.

But the labor leaders were saved from the disagreeable task of implementing their threats by the sellout settlement foisted on the teachers. The contract, in line with the national pattern, merely codifies the losses teachers have suffered in recent years. At a meeting in West Haven on Friday, one teacher noted how the union had whittled down its own demands: "Some time ago we asked for a cost-of-living escalator that would have meant at least a 25 percent increase. Then we asked for 15 percent, then it was 10, then 5, now we're down to

3.5 percent." Although by their own calculations the cost of living has risen 37 percent since 1971 while their wages have advanced only 7.5 percent, NHFT negotiators finally settled for even less than the measly 3.5 percent they had asked: a pitiful \$200 in the first year of the contract. Teachers fear that a \$500 raise in the second year may well be axed by a city wage freeze.

The issue of maximum class size was crucial in this strike, as it has been in many others. The NHFT had demanded a ceiling of 25, while the Board offered 32. The compromise at 31 provided in the first year of the contract not only will undermine the quality of classroom education, but will also allow the continued elimination of teachers' jobs. About 150 were laid off last year and further job cuts through layoffs and attrition are in the works.

New Haven teachers, like those across the nation, found themselves convenient scapegoats for the growing fiscal crunch hitting the cities. And—like teachers in Wilmington, Delaware, and Cahokia, Illinois, who have also suffered mass arrests—they are especially vulnerable to union-busting court attacks. Public employee strikes are illegal in all but a few states. Without a class-struggle leadership to counter these assaults, teachers are saddled with misleaders like American Federation of Teachers (AFT) president Albert Shanker who, faced with massive layoffs and abrogation of contractual agreements, has drawn a New York City blueprint for humble submission, throwing union pension funds away in reckless bond purchases for good measure. The AFT's narrow and bankrupt business unionism has proven incapable of mobilizing teachers for a militant fight, or of winning community support.

Escalating government rampages against public workers unions, reflected in the growing rash of prohibitive injunctions and mass arrests, can only be countered by a new, class-struggle leadership that welds teachers, the rest of labor and parents together in a fighting unity for better schools and teachers' needs: the right to strike, a shorter workweek and smaller classes to make jobs for all, full cost-of-living protection, labor's own political party to dump the strikebreaking capitalist politicians and judges. Such a leadership will ensure that the occasional blustering threats of general strikes by today's labor skates become a militant reality. ■

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## China Lines Up with CIA, South Africa in Angola

# Stop Imperialist Drive on Luanda!

NOVEMBER 24—When Portugal's last high commissioner in Angola, Admiral Leonel Cardoso, slipped out of Luanda on the night of November 10, he declared the former colony independent but handed over power to no one. Instead he simply walked out of his office, leaving his keys in the door.

With the departure of the Portuguese army the Angolan state entity effectively ceased to exist. The left-nationalist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) proclaimed a "People's Republic" in Luanda, while the virulently anti-communist National Front for the Liberation of Angola (FNLA) and neo-colonialist National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) established a rival "Democratic People's Republic" at Huambo (formerly Nova Lisboa) in the south central plateau region.

The civil war that has enveloped the country for the last year assumed a new character in recent weeks as imperialist forces (principally the U.S. together with its South African ally, aided by Portuguese reactionaries) moved in with an open bid for power, anticipating the final departure of the last 2,000 Portuguese troops. Meanwhile, since the MPLA gained control of the Luanda port and airport the Soviet Union has stepped up its aid to the MPLA. As the conservative London *Economist* (November 15) noted, "The war Portugal left behind... is no longer a matter of skirmishing between badly armed guerrilla groups... Angola has become a proxy battlefield between the major powers."

While the capitalist press has been ranting about 3,000 Cuban and 400 Soviet military advisors said to be aiding the MPLA, Henry Kissinger had the gall to assert in a Detroit speech tonight: "We cannot ignore the substantial Soviet buildup of weapons in Angola which has introduced great-power rivalries in Africa for the first time in 15 years." In fact it is precisely the U.S. and its allies, Zaïre (formerly the Belgian Congo) and South Africa, that have played the major role in creating this "war by proxy." All three, assisted by leading Portuguese capitalists and desperate colons seeking to recoup their losses, have aggressively leaped into Angola. Western military aid to the FNLA and UNITA, in quantities dwarfing that seen earlier in Nigeria (1967) and the Congo (1960-64), has now escalated into domination. Quantity has been transformed into quality as intra-nationalist rivalry is superseded by an imperialist adventure.

Ever since a secret 1970 National Security Council "Memorandum 39"—nicknamed "Operation Tarbaby"—U.S. policy in Africa has had a South Africa axis, combined with military and economic aid for preferred black leaders like Zaïre's Mobutu. Now, as Britain readies a pull-out from its Simonstown naval base, Washington is preparing to take an even more active role in "protecting oil supply lanes" around the Cape. But already in the 1970 Kissinger-signed document it is noted that "the biggest U.S. interest in southern Africa



UNITA soldiers

Syigma

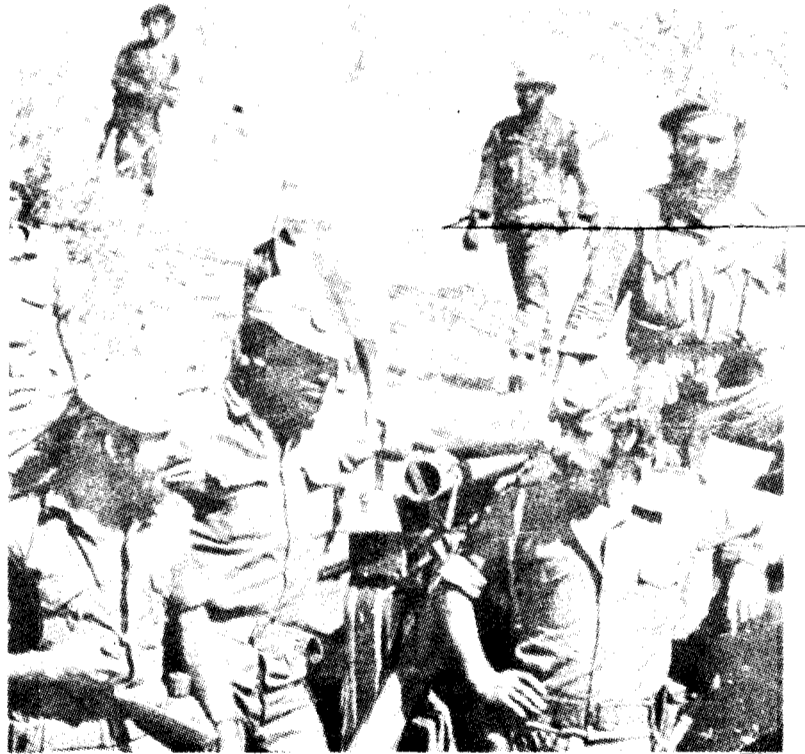
is in Angola" (*Sunday Times* [London], 20 October 1974). With the unanticipated Portuguese coup of April 1974 and the rapid "deterioration" of the situation in Angola, the U.S. has opted for military intervention.

The decisive internationalization of the Angolan conflict by American imperialism and its toadies compels Marxists to stand militarily on the side of the Soviet-backed MPLA against the U.S.-financed and -organized South African Portuguese colonialist-led drive on Luanda. Revolutionaries must also denounce the despicable policy of Mao's China in arming and training the FNLA (and earlier UNITA) forces now being used as catspaws by the imperialists and colonialists.

But a policy of revolutionary defensism on the side of the MPLA regime must be pursued without giving any political support to these petty-bourgeois nationalists or to the Kremlin bureaucrats' diplomacy. A changing of the guard in Washington (for example, the replacement of the conservative Gerald Ford by the liberal Edward Kennedy) would be sufficient to douse the MPLA's "anti-imperialism," and the Soviet Union is still intent on promoting détente. Rather than risk a major military showdown with U.S.-dominated forces, it may well supply the Luanda regime only enough to prevent a total rout and then pressure for negotiations. The Russians would like to split the U.S. from China, currently united behind the FNLA, and are perfectly prepared to use Angola as a bargaining chip.

### Imperialist/Colonialist Blitzkrieg

The MPLA is in precarious shape militarily, having suffered serious defeats on the southern front. An armored column spearheaded by white mercenaries of the Portuguese Liberation Army (ELP)—which is but another name for Spínola's Democratic Movement for the Liberation of Portugal (MDLP)—and South African troops has easily overcome MPLA forces in a lightning forced march. Racing 600 miles in just three weeks, the column seized Sa da Bandeira and Moçamêdes with little



Pro-FNLA white mercenaries

Time

trouble, then quickly overpowered MPLA defenses at the important port of Lobito and railhead at Benguela. (UNITA troops are reportedly marching on Texeira de Sousa in the northeast to complete control of the railway spanning Angola.) After taking Novo Redondo and Porto Amboim north of Lobito, the column split, one part heading for Dondo, source of hydroelectric power for Luanda, the other for the key MPLA-held town of Malanje.

The 22 November *New York Times* reports that UNITA, whose troops fill out the white-led column, has seized Malanje. If true, this would mean that Luanda is cut off from the MPLA forces in the northeast centered on Henrique de Carvalho. The MPLA's supporters in this region consist mainly of some 4,000 ex-Katangan gendarmes, who fled the Congo following the fall of Moïse Tshombé some 11 years ago. Though they have fostered a profitable relationship with the MPLA in controlling the illicit diamond mining of this area, their questionable loyalty may go to the militarily stronger bidder. This would reduce the MPLA's effective jurisdiction to Luanda and its immediate hinterland, and the Cabinda enclave.

Even in Cabinda the MPLA is in trouble. So far, the enclave, separated from Angola by a thin strip of Zaïre territory, has only been the scene of skirmishes, but the high stakes guarantee an outbreak of fighting sooner or later. Some 120 offshore wells make Cabinda a prize coveted by all. Mobutu supports a Gulf Oil-puppet secessionist movement, the Cabinda Liberation Front (FLEC), with obvious appetites to annex the area or set up an oil company fiefdom. Zaïre troops have been massed on the border and have clashed with MPLA defenders holding the enclave. While the Soviet-backed regime in Congo (Brazzaville) supports the MPLA, it also casts a covetous eye at Cabinda's riches, supports a rival FLEC faction and has posted its own troops on the enclave's border. Recent news reports speak of 200 Soviet T-54 tanks being shipped to Cabinda through Congo and of MIG-21's being assembled in Brazzaville, but it is an open question whether the Russian aid will be used to support the MPLA or its "benefactors" in the Congo. Should the MPLA's defenses falter, there will be a

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