

# International Internal Discussion Bulletin

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## CORRESPONDENCE CONCERNING THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION RESOLUTION ON PORTUGAL

Submitted by the Coordinating Committee  
of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction

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**1. JANUARY 14, 1976, LETTER TO THE  
STEERING COMMITTEE  
OF THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION**

**FROM MARY-ALICE WATERS**

*To the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction*

Dear Comrades,

As of today, 29 of the 34 members of the faction steering committee (or seated replacements) who were present at the August meeting of the faction have responded to the November 28 poll concerning the line of the document "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution." All 29 concur that the general line of the document published in the October 20, 1975, issue of *Intercontinental Press* is the

general line approved by the Leninist Trotskyist Faction steering committee.

The five comrades who have not responded are three comrades of the PST-Argentina, one comrade of the PST-Venezuela, and one comrade of the GCR-Italy.

The results of the poll therefore unambiguously reaffirm that the line of the "Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" is the line of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction.

Comradely,  
Mary-Alice Waters

**2. NOVEMBER 28, 1975, MAILING TO THE  
STEERING COMMITTEE  
OF THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION**

**a. Letter to the LTF Steering Committee from Mary-Alice Waters**

November 28, 1975

*To the Steering Committee of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction*

Dear Comrades,

Enclosed is a letter to the faction from the Political Bureau of the PST of Argentina, dated November 5, 1975. Some of you have already received a copy of this letter and its attachments.

Also enclosed is a reply to the PST Political Bureau from Joe Hansen.

As you can see, the accusation raised by the Argentine leadership is extremely grave. It calls into question whether the document published both internally and publicly accurately reflected the report, discussion, and unanimous vote for the general line of the draft document presented at the last faction steering committee meeting in August, 1975.

The coordinating committee of the LTF discussed the letter from the PST leadership at a meeting held November 22, and three motions were adopted.

1. The coordinating committee felt it had an immediate

responsibility to express its opinion on this question. Had the majority of the coordinating committee agreed that the document published in the name of the LTF did not express the general line voted for by the steering committee, then members of the LTF on the United Secretariat would have been obligated to inform the United Secretariat immediately.

The coordinating committee adopted the following motion: The coordinating committee affirms that the general line of the document *Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution* accurately expresses the general line approved by vote of the last steering committee meeting. The vote was 8 for (Alan, Ed, Gus, Jack, Joe, Benson, Mary-Alice, Melan); 1 against (Mario); 1 not voting (Eddy).

Comrade Eddy explained that since he was not present at the steering committee he was not in a position to judge whether it accurately reflected the general line adopted.

2. Comrades felt it was of extreme importance to rapidly resolve any ambiguity concerning the status of the resolution by polling the members of the steering committee who were present at the last meeting. (This would include comrades who were seated with voice and vote to replace members of the steering committee unable to attend.)

The motion adopted unanimously was the following: that we immediately poll the members of the steering committee present at the last faction meeting and ask them if they concur that the general line of the document *Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution* is the general line approved at that meeting.

3. The coordinating committee also unanimously adopted a motion stating: Since the letter from the Political Bureau of the PST has already been sent by the PST to some members of the steering committee of the LTF, Joe Hansen's reply should be circulated to the same comrades who received the original.

For your convenience we have enclosed a copy of the

motion on a separate sheet so that comrades can indicate their opinion and return the poll *immediately*.

As soon as the results are in we will inform the faction steering committee.

Meanwhile, the vote of the coordinating committee affirming that the resolution *Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution* is that adopted by the last steering committee stands.

Comradely,  
Mary-Alice Waters  
for the coordinating committee

**b. Letter to LTF members, and three attachments, from  
Political Bureau of the PST-Argentina**

Buenos Aires  
November 5, 1975

*To the Comrades of the Leninist-Trotskyist Faction*

Only last week we received a copy (sent from Mexico, because the copy the Socialist Workers party sent us did not arrive) of the document, *The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution*, with the final editing given to it by the comrades of the SWP leadership after the discussion and agreements reached last August.

What was voted on unanimously was the initial draft presented by the SWP (which we published in our Boletín de Discusión Interno [PST Internal Discussion Bulletin] No. 2 with the addition of the criticisms of that document, which should have been turned into the final document, to have been drafted by comrades Hansen, Moreno, and Roberto. Because comrade Hansen was ill, that drafting commission could not meet. For that reason, we submitted our additions in writing, fundamentally the introduction, which summarized the essence of our position. (We published the Introduction and the additions in the Boletín No. 3, pp. 14-17.) According to Comrade Mario, this Introduction was approved by Comrade Gerry Foley speaking for Comrade Hansen, as he indicated in his letter of September 4, 1975. Prior to that, during the August gathering, Comrade Moreno had read a letter from him dated August 21, 1975, to comrades Joe Hansen, Barry Sheppard, and Jack Barnes. That letter was to have been read and published at the meeting we mentioned.

The comrades of the SWP leadership told Comrade Moreno that it was technically impossible to have the letter published, because there was only one day to do so and the necessary apparatus was not available. Moreover, the comrades said that it wasn't necessary to publish the letter since there was complete agreement on it. It was agreed therefore that Comrade Moreno would explain the position orally during the faction meeting. The SWP would propose to the faction meeting the drafting of a final document, on the basis of the letter and the oral presentation by Moreno, with a drafting commission composed of comrades Hansen

and Moreno. Afterwards, Comrade Hansen suggested, and Comrade Moreno agreed, that it be proposed to the faction meeting that the drafting commission be broadened to incorporate Comrade Roberto onto it.

We are studying this document carefully, because after a first reading it appears to us that it does not reflect the agreements we believed had been reached—synthesized in the letter by Comrade Moreno we referred to, and especially in the introduction, in the modifications of the text that were accepted, and in the oral explanations of Comrade Moreno. We continue to be firmly convinced of the correctness of our positions, expressed in those documents. Independent of formal questions of editing or terminology, we have the impression that in the final document, drafted by the comrades of the SWP leadership, the essence of our position—with which the comrades seemed to be in agreement—is not put forward: The central strategy in Portugal today is to see how we are going to push forward the development and centralization of the embryos of dual power that have arisen, and how we are going to help in the creation of such embryos of organs of dual power among sectors that do not yet have them.

You have the pertinent documentation to be able to study the document, since we sent you all the materials from the faction meeting, which we published in our Internal Discussion Bulletin Nos. 2 and 3. This week we will also send you Bulletin No. 4 with the Spanish translation of the SWP document, the statement approved by the faction on the general situation of the Fourth International, a statement of the International Majority Tendency on the same things, and the summary of the oral presentations at and before the August meeting.

To facilitate a quick study of the resolution and its supposedly unanimous character we attach three essential additions or observations, which were apparently accepted by the comrades of the SWP leadership or by Comrade Hansen, but which—in our opinion—have not been incorporated in the final document.

We consider it of fundamental importance that you reread the documents of the SWP comrades, the comments about them from other comrades, and all our amendments

and additions, so that we can adopt a position that is reliably documented.

For our part, we have voted not to approve or reject the document *The Key Issues*. . . until we carry out such a study and our National Committee decides, because if what we fear is the case—that the agreements were not respected—we would find ourselves facing a new situation.

Given the gravity of the situation, we ask that you approach a study of all of the existing documentation as we are doing.

With fraternal greetings,  
THE POLITICAL BUREAU OF  
THE PARTIDO SOCIALISTA DE  
LOS TRABAJADORES

*Attachment No. 1*

*Moreno's August 21, 1975, letter to Joe Hansen, accepted by comrades Hansen, Sheppard, and Barnes, which, as we have already made clear, was not published at the August meeting for technical reasons.*

August 21, 1975

Dear Joe:

The purpose of this letter is to give you our observations on the draft *The Key Problems of the Portuguese Revolution*. When we received your latest letter to us, we decided not to respond to it in order to concentrate on the discussion of the key questions and avoid any polemical detour. We are telling you this because we plan to clear up some of the assertions in your letter in another response, although in general we agree with your letter.

Before making our observations we would like to point out to you that we would like to see the Portuguese document have a structure similar to your national resolution. The fact that Portugal is now going through a revolutionary situation makes it more important than ever that we define the essential features and overall strategic lines of the period we are now in. We say this anticipating the possible objection that the resolution on the United States is structured the way it is precisely because you are not in a prerevolutionary stage. We believe that in a prerevolutionary stage, where the situation, slogans, and tasks change from day to day, it is more important than ever not to swamp our strategic bearings and general definition of the period in immediate tactical questions.

**I. Four points of principle on which we have total agreement among ourselves and disagree with the majority.**

Jack was the first one to put forward a number of ideas that we want to stress. If our memory does not deceive us, he pointed out that we have seen that the three major themes of the debate that has been going on for the last seven years between the majority and minority have been synthesized, revitalized, and magnified around the Portuguese revolution. Concretely, the old differences have been transformed into explosive ones.

These three major themes of the discussion, which have again been raised in Portugal, have been the following:

1. That, in a fundamental sense, the discussion around the guerrilla warfare strategy in Bolivia and Argentina, as well as in Latin America, which began the struggle between tendencies, involved another problem: it was the expression of the majority's strategy of creating phantom groups, "peoples' armies," guerrilla groups, "rank and file" bodies which it counterposed to the unions and mass organizations and mass mobilizations. Today this same difference, magnified to incredible proportions, has developed in Portugal. The discussions around *República* and the "rights of the Socialist party" is a repetition of the old discussion. To counterpose future soviets or bodies like the Popular Assemblies, which were created by the MFA for its own counterrevolutionary objectives, to an existing mass organization like the Socialist party and its rights, is to fall into the same old error, but in an even worse way. It is worse because the peoples' armies and the guerrilla groups were strictly an expression of the ultraleft, while in the case of Portugal these "phantom" organizations are a directly counterrevolutionary expression, in which the ultraleft plays the role of the "useful idiot." In other words, it is a much more serious situation: the majority has gone from supporting "phantom" organizations of the ultraleft in Latin America to "phantom" organizations of the Bonapartist counterrevolution.

2. Our faction's European document clearly pointed out the difference with the majority regarding where to orient our work. While the majority faction was orienting toward the new vanguard, the ultraleft groups, trying to come up with a common program that would mobilize these sectors and permit us to carry out exemplary actions, the minority faction was putting forward the traditional Marxist position of orienting towards the masses with the method of the transitional program in order to mobilize them. This theoretical, political, and programmatic difference has turned into a difference in the streets in Portugal. While, on the one hand, the majority, with Alain Krivine and his swarms of "revolutionary tourists" in the lead, is marching through the streets of Lisbon arm in arm with this new vanguard, carrying out various "exemplary actions," for example demanding the dissolution of the Constituent Assembly and supporting COPCON, the MFA, and their peoples' assemblies; we, on the other hand, would have and could have taken part or intervened in the mobilizations of the Socialist masses, who were defending their democratic rights. More concretely, politically we were in opposing demonstrations: with them going with the new vanguard and us going with the movement of the socialist masses.

3. The third major difference between us was around defense of bourgeois democratic rights and institutions in Argentina. With the confusion that characterizes it, the majority has operated on the principle that bourgeois-democratic rights should not be defended, that the only ones worth defending are working-class democratic rights. When they were cornered by us, they grudgingly accepted the idea that certain bourgeois-democratic rights can be defended, but not the institutions that concretize these rights. This is what they say although we confess that we find this position almost impossible to understand and explain since we do not understand how one can be for divorce and not for the law that sanctions it, i.e., for the bourgeois-democratic institution of "divorce." But this is what they have said, and this the line we have been

fighting. The majority has quite correctly pointed out that we intransigently defend bourgeois-democratic rights and institutions against any attack by bourgeois reaction. This difference has also been seen in Portugal, in the streets, and around the chief institution of bourgeois democracy—the Constituent Assembly. While the ultraleft and the majority support the fight against the Constituent Assembly using the argument that it is a bourgeois institution, playing ball with the MFA's counterrevolutionary plan to suppress it, we defend the Constituent Assembly, we fight against the pact, we defend the right of the people to elect their government through the vote, as well as freedom of the press and the rights of the Socialist Party, and we oppose the MFA-CP counterrevolutionary totalitarian plan.

4. To these three questions of program and principle that we have debated with the majority and that have taken on an explosive character, in Portugal has been added a new question of principle: *the character of the Portuguese government.*

The fact that the MFA government, because of the colossal rise in the mass movement, is the first extremely weak imperialist government vis-a-vis the mass movement in the last thirty years, has had various consequences. The first consequence is that this government has been forced to carry out all sorts of demagogic, splitting, and diversionary maneuvers in order to slow down or divide the mass movement with the concrete objective of defeating it. The second consequence is that the majority has confused the government's weakness vis-a-vis the masses—its maneuvers and demagoguery—for positive actions that change the imperialist, counterrevolutionary character of the government or of certain wings of it. The third consequence is that the majority has stopped fighting against the present Portuguese government, and all its wings, as the main political enemy of the Portuguese workers, which it is as imperialism's repressive body.

And even at the time of the counterrevolutionary coups the government did not lose this character, although we would change our tactic of struggle against it at such times. In lieu of orienting its agitation and propaganda towards denouncing this government and all its wings as an agent of the imperialist bourgeoisie, we have begun to hear expressions from the majority such as "vacuum of power," "the unconscious, revolutionary left wing of the MFA," "which could turn towards workers power or some similar variant."

As I pointed out in my July 16 letter, to be a Trotskyist today one must agree with your characterization that "the MFA is a bourgeois government whose real objective is to maintain capitalism in Portugal," and also imperialism, as suggested by other points in your letter.

So if we agree on these four points of principle, where can the differences be? We have had to answer the various comrades who asked us what the basic differences between us are in this way: "We do not know if these differences exist." In hopes of making the positions clear, we will point out to you the questions that we feel are not sufficiently elaborated in your draft.

## II. Strategy and tactics in the Portuguese workers' revolution

We believe that we are in agreement—although the draft does not say it explicitly—that since the putsch of April 25

of last year what we are seeing in Portugal is a workers' revolution in progress. That is to say, the stage that began mainly since the last coup in March is nothing more and nothing but the socialist revolution. Portugal has entered a stage of a few months or years that has occurred only as an exception in some imperialist countries every twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years. It is an exceptional situation. It is of no interest whether we define it as revolutionary or prerevolutionary. The important thing to confirm is that the workers movement with its mobilizations, accompanied by the mass movement as a whole, has achieved a power of mobilization that has the bourgeoisie and its representative, the government of the MFA [Movimento das Forças Armadas—Armed Forces Movement], in check. Concretely, it is an acute prerevolutionary or a directly revolutionary situation because the working class together with the broad masses have begun a process of general mobilization for different objectives and necessities. Therefore, what is involved is to do the same thing that you did in your national document, that is, to point out the broad strategic lines for the stage that has begun—the stage of the generalized mobilization of the Portuguese masses.

From a reading of the draft one could get the false impressions that the big strategic objective of the stage that has begun in Portugal is the defense of the present Constituent Assembly, that is, defense of the highest bourgeois-democratic institution. We don't have to discuss whether we should defend it or not, because we are in agreement that it is a principled question to defend it, to promote it against the attempts of the MFA to liquidate or limit it.

We don't think that is what you believe, but if you do, it must be stated with absolute clarity—the essential goal that we propose to the masses for the present historic stage is the establishment of a free, sovereign Constituent Assembly. If this were to be the position, we would have a difference.

We believe that the Constituent Assembly, like democratic rights, is one of the primary or principled political goals—the only one or almost the only one—that can mobilize the masses at the present moment. But strategically, for the whole stage that has begun, our main objective is to push the masses toward forming their own organs of power against the MFA and the bourgeoisie. This means to propagandize under all circumstances the possible organs of workers' power. Said in another way, for us it a Trotskyist principle that, when you have a situation of generalized mobilization of the masses of a country, that is, when you have a revolutionary or prerevolutionary situation, the essential axis of our strategy is push the masses to develop their organs of workers power, so that they can take power and make the socialist revolution.

We believe it appropriate to point out in one way or another the following points:

1. That this long-term principled Trotskyist strategy is the one that is applicable today in Portugal which is passing through a prerevolutionary or revolutionary stage.
2. That there is no possibility to develop this strategy without a tactic designed to mobilize the masses around all of their present needs and aspirations.
3. That the correct tactic at the present moment fundamentally is to defend democratic rights, to defend

the rights of the SP, to struggle to establish a sovereign and free Constituent Assembly, and to break the pact. Without these political struggles there is no possibility of carrying out the strategy.

4. That these tactical necessities should not and cannot make us forget the strategic necessity of developing the organs of workers power.

5. Such a strategy for this stage is always combined with our fundamental historical strategy of constructing mass Trotskyist parties. We did not put this in the point as our main strategy precisely because it is not the specific strategy for this stage—the strategy of developing workers power. Rather it is the strategy permanently existing above the different stages. In this sense we can say that in relation to the historic task of building the party, the strategy for the stage of developing the organs of workers power is a historic tactic and as such is subordinate.

These points are of fundamental importance although they may seem very general and although the disastrous policy of the majority is apparently hidden behind such strategic affirmations. We should make our agreement about these points explicit. If there are no differences on them, it is not redundant to single them out.

We are working up a memorandum of our observations on the draft and a few small modifications of it. We felt it was indispensable to send you these very general thoughts because these are more important than anything else in the memorandum.

Un abrazo,  
Hugo

P.S. This whole strategic question may seem a bit overblown to comrades who have only recently come into our movement. However, at all times it is of decisive importance for activity, as you and the SWP know better than anyone. Let us take an example from present-day Portugal: the Socialist demonstrations. The only way to strengthen or initiate our relations with the possible organs of power and directly with the class, as well as to strengthen our party and weaken the Socialist party leadership's maneuvers was by participating in these demonstrations. Let's look more closely at this policy. The leadership of the Socialist party does not want lots of demonstrations in the streets or a permanent mobilization of the workers (and is even less interested in the mobilization of the other parties) in defense of its rights. It wants a limited mobilization to defend and counterattack in order to impose its Popular Front government on the MFA. It is a tactic of limited pressure on the government in order to impose its Popular-Front-government strategy. In intervening and marching a short distance with the Socialist Party and its members, we have different objectives, which are reflected in our own tactics. Before all else we disagree on the methods for achieving the common objectives of defense of their rights. While the Socialist party only wants to hold demonstrations that are separated from each other in time and space, city by city, we want to mobilize first the socialist masses and then the whole mass movement in order to confront the government and defend the rights of the Socialist Party. This means that in this type of intervention with the Socialists we reach out to join up with the working-class socialist activists. This contact, this dialog with their activists must have a clear objective: the aim must be that these activists

return with us to the work places, to the workers' commissions if they are real bodies, to their union to call for an assembly to discuss doing what their leadership does not want to do; to agitate in the ranks of the working class against the military dictatorship, to try to get the rank-and-file comrades in their factory, union, or commission to come out for the rights of their party and to take part in the demonstrations around this. If successful, this policy can put us in the position of being able to put forward the slogan that the SP—with the workers' commissions, the ad hoc committees, and the unions that support democratic rights of the SP—should organize a general strike in defense of those rights. This policy would enable us to come into contact with hundreds or thousands of socialist workers, dozens of activists, and promote many factory assemblies in which it would be possible to orient the workers' commissions towards the struggle against the government, something that would help to revitalize these workers commissions. The possibilities for growth and penetration in the workers movement, as well as for pushing forward or propagandizing the rank-and-file organizations, would mean a colossal leap in the construction of the party.

Our whole political orientation and strategy is summed up in the following simple proposal our Trotskyist militant would make to the rank-and-file socialist worker that we would come into contact with in the demonstrations. We would say to this worker: "Socialist comrade: we are with you to the death in defense of *República*, in your right to have your press, your radio and television stations. Do you not think you should raise this question with your comrades in the factory? What do you think about raising it together? What do you think about our carrying out a joint campaign to get your comrades to the next demonstration, to get them to support our struggle for the rights of your party? Would it not be good to hold a factory assembly as was done during the two Spínola coups? Wouldn't the same thing happen with *República* as happened with Spínola?"

This is the only way we will take our strategy into the workers' movement. Is this workerism? As far as we are concerned it is the exact opposite, it is the tactical application of the principles of Trotskyism.

#### *Attachment No. 2*

*Draft Introduction officially accepted in the drafting commission by Comrade Gerry Foley speaking for Comrade Joe Hansen.*

What we are seeing in Portugal since April 25, 1974, judged by its dynamics and its perspectives, is nothing other than the first socialist revolution that has occurred in an imperialist country in the last 30 years.

Like all revolutions of the workers, accompanied by the mass movement, it poses the urgent need for the masses to achieve forms of organization that express the revolutionary, massive character of its mobilizations and power. For the working class to be able to carry out the socialist revolution they must develop organs of power—be these soviets, factory or soldiers committees, revolutionary trade unions, workers militias, or whatever other form of revolutionary organization of the masses.

The Portuguese revolution is no exception. Each stage in

the mobilizations and victories of the workers and mass movement—first, against the fascist apparatus, later against Spínola's two coups—has advanced forms of workers and people's power, from the factory and vigilance committees to the assemblies and committees of soldiers and sailors. To encourage these or other forms that are expressions of the mass movement in struggle against the bourgeoisie and its government of the moment, as well as to centralize them so that when the moment arrives they can topple the MFA government and install their own power, is our main objective in the Portuguese revolution—an objective that we should have before us at every moment of our activity.

Having said this, we should bring the application of this principled policy down to earth. It is not a question of debating our main objective of reaching out to build true soviets in Portugal. It is a question of knowing how, and with what policy we will attain the formation, development, and defense—if embryos already exist—of those forms of workers and people's power.

And this need for a correct policy that would permit us to unify and drive the Portuguese masses forward—the only way to manage to express in organizational form the unity of the masses in struggle—takes on even more importance than ever. The Portuguese experience seems to confirm that of the Spanish revolution in the period before the war and the experiences that have occurred in the postwar period in the backward countries. The reformist parties, particularly the Stalinists, have learned from the Russian revolution, and they resist the creation of true soviet organizations, categorically opposing the development of the slightest attempt at autonomous workers' and people's power and organization.

As a result of this, the Portuguese Trotskyists will not have the enormous historical advantage that the Russian Bolsheviks had, of finding, from the beginning of the February revolution, a powerful soviet organization institutionalized and generalized throughout the whole of Russia, one that was recognized by the reformist parties as the organization of the masses as a whole. Everything seems to indicate that it will fall upon the shoulders of the Trotskyist movement and its program to develop and establish true soviets. There does not seem to be any possibility that we will be accompanied in this task, even for a short while, by the reformist parties of the Portuguese revolution. This obliges us to pose more than ever this task as the most important and fundamental one of this stage. At the same time we should not search for shortcuts or fool ourselves thinking that other parties—much less the MFA, agent of all wings of the imperialist bourgeoisie—are capable of carrying out this colossal historic task. It is more and more apparent that the soviets will be the mass organization of Trotskyism for the seizure of power. To this colossal disadvantage we must add another just as great or even greater: The Portuguese Trotskyists like all other Trotskyist organizations in the world, are not as closely linked to nor do they have the prestige in the workers movement that the Bolshevik party had. While this was a party with tradition, truly rooted in the mass movement, our parties are—with a few exceptions—propaganda parties, recently organized and with no roots in the workers movement.

These two disadvantages of the Portuguese revolution when compared to the Russian revolution basically come

down to one: the lack of a strong mass Trotskyist party. When we say this we take into account the relationship that ought to exist between the organs of workers power and the revolutionary party. Without organs of workers power the revolutionary party cannot seize power. Without the Trotskyist party to give them a revolutionary orientation, the soviets, or any other similar formation, cease being the organized expression of the masses in struggle, and instead are transformed into a tool of the reformist parties or of the bourgeois state, that is, precisely the opposite of what they should be.

This is what is happening in Portugal today. The MFA or one of its wings, the reformist parties, and the ultralefts are playing around with the beginnings of workers power that exist, and not satisfied just doing this, are using soviet slogans or slogans of workers and people's power to cover up attempts to impose a bonapartist government and to crush all the democratic and working-class gains that have been achieved.

The attempt to make the whole of Portuguese political life revolve around the false alternative 'for or against workers and people's power' has two clearly counterrevolutionary objectives, despite the good intentions of the useful idiots of the ultraleft. The first objective is to divide and deflect the mass movement from struggle around its present needs and tasks—confronting the MFA government as its main enemy, defending the democratic rights and working-class victories already gained, preventing the workers from working more than ever in the imperialist 'battle for production.' The second is to conceal the most pressing need of the vanguard and the Portuguese masses—the construction of a mass Trotskyist party. This attempt is counterposed to the objective needs of the masses and their greatest subjective lack, the building of the party.

Without mobilizing the masses around a clear program that responds to their most urgent needs at the present moment, and without building a mass Trotskyist party, there is no possibility that the embryos of dual power, which have arisen and which will continue to arise with the progress of the struggles of the Portuguese masses, can be developed, centralized, and take power. For that reason, any attempt to conceal or minimize the importance of democratic tasks, or the importance of confronting the counterrevolutionary plans of the government—including its left wing—is to go against the possible development of the organs of workers' power, which will only develop through the struggles of the Portuguese masses to defend and extend their gains, particularly their democratic gains.

#### *Attachment No. 3*

*A fundamental modification of the original draft accepted in the drafting commission by Comrade Gerry Foley speaking for Comrade Joe Hansen, which was not respected in the final draft of the document.*

a) The original draft, at the end of the next to last paragraph, third chapter, said:

"The future of the mass movement depends on the way the present democratic gains are defended by the mass organizations of the working class and peasantry, utilized in struggles to better their conditions of life, and emphasized in educating the masses and promoting their self-confidence, and in developing revolutionary cadres."

b) The amendment accepted by the drafting commission said:

"The future of the mass movement depends on the way the present democratic gains are defended by the mass organizations of the working class and peasantry, utilized in struggles to better their conditions of life, and emphasized in educating the masses and promoting their self-confidence [so that they can defend, centralize, and push forward the embryos of power that exist (committees that exist, the SWP suggested) and develop revolutionary cadres that will make possible the seizure of power by the above named organs], and in developing revolutionary cadres."

c) The final draft of the paragraph is as follows:

"The political process in Portugal has centered on issues that became explosive because of the concern of the masses over their democratic right to freely consider all alternative points of view and to assert their will as the majority of the populace.

"The fight to defend and extend democratic rights in the factory, in the barracks, in society as a whole, is indispensable in advancing toward the establishment of a workers and peasants government. This fight for a workers and peasants government constitutes the decisive axis of struggle in Portugal today."

### c. Letter from Joe Hansen to the Political Bureau of the PST

New York  
November 25, 1975

Political Bureau  
Partido Socialista de los Trabajadores

Dear Comrades,

I did not receive a copy of your mimeographed circular letter "To the Members of the Leninist Trotskyist Faction" until a few days ago, although it was dated November 5, 1975. Also I wanted to consult with the Coordinating Committee of the LTF. Hence the delay in replying.

Inasmuch as you were not present at the meeting of the Steering Committee of the LTF that discussed the draft of "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," it is obvious that your judgment of that meeting is not based on your own personal experience but on the reports of the three members of the PST leadership who were able to attend. Even if their reports were unanimous in all details, it appears to me that before circulating your letter it would have been advisable to check with the other participants on what happened at that meeting.

If a misunderstanding was involved, it would have been much easier to rectify it if that procedure had been followed.

The main assertion of your letter is that an "agreement" was reached between Comrade Moreno and me on the general line of the resolution, and that after Comrade Moreno left I (or the "leadership of the SWP") broke this agreement.

However, you may not have given due weight to the following points:

1. For Comrade Moreno and me to make a secret agreement to vote for one line in a meeting and then replace it with a different line in an editing committee would be self-defeating. Leaving aside the violation this would represent of the most elementary principles of revolutionary Marxism, it is obvious that a general line can be put into practice only if it is thoroughly understood and agreed upon by all those for whom it constitutes a guide.

2. The same consideration would hold if the body as a whole had reached agreement on a general line and I individually had then sabotaged the decision, slipping a different general line into the edited resolution. All the participants would have already begun to apply the line they agreed on; and they could not be switched by the publication of a fraudulent document.

3. It would have been the height of stupidity to think that upon publication of a false resolution such a swindle would not be seen immediately by those who were in attendance—about ninety comrades, if I remember correctly. The net result would have been to shatter the LTF instead of strengthening it, as was our purpose.

4. Aside from these three considerations, the trickery could be exposed by a very simple procedure: taking a poll of the participants at the meeting.

\* \* \*

In support of your charge, you have circulated the original draft resolution, amendments proposed by Comrade Moreno, and introduction submitted by Comrade Moreno, and other materials, including a contribution by Comrade Peng Shu-tse and one by Comrade Chen Pi-lan.

But this material does not prove the existence of two opposing lines or an agreement between Comrade Moreno and me to get together in the editing committee and adopt a line contrary to the one voted for by the participants. The documents published by you prove only that in the preliminary process leading up to the meeting some tentative positions were voiced on points of varying importance. This was completely normal, particularly on the assumption that the differences were not at all of a basic character and were subject to modification in the light of the discussion at the meeting.

*Most important of all, the entire oral debate at the meeting itself must be considered. What was said there was decisive. It was this discussion and the vote in the light of that discussion that determined the general line.*

Finally, by challenging the import of the discussion and

the meaning of the vote you place yourselves under obligation to prove that your differences are in reality so deep as to constitute an *opposing* general line. This can be done only by analyzing the *political* differences and showing their depth.

\* \* \*

The procedure followed at the August meeting of the Steering Committee was the same as that followed at all normal conferences of the Trotskyist movement:

1. We sought the maximum preliminary consultation with all the participants. As always the object was to reduce—or clarify—differences in advance of the meeting so as to help avoid surprises and to permit everyone to think over any points in dispute and either begin changing or begin marshaling the best arguments for whatever position one held. In this preparatory process, the representatives of the PST, of course, played an important role.

2. In the meeting itself, it was expected that the participants—in accordance with the norms of Trotskyism—would present whatever special points of view they had, *especially those indicated in preliminary discussions*, and defend them to the best of their ability. Comrade Moreno played an active part in this, convincing the body of some of his points and apparently conceding on others. That the discussion was fruitful was shown by the vote, which was unanimous on the *general line*.

3. In the course of the discussion, the reporters indicated what points they found acceptable and what points they found unacceptable for inclusion in the resolution. Their views were, of course, subject to challenge and to a vote.

Some items, it was agreed by the participants, could best be developed in articles rather than in the resolution. On some debatable items, it was felt that the comrades were free, if they wished, to express their views in signed articles. (An example was the position of some comrades on the class nature of the MFA, which they held to be a petty-bourgeois *institution*. This did not involve the general line, since they agreed that the MFA government

was *bourgeois* in character.) This procedure was completely in the tradition of the Trotskyist movement.

4. Three participants were nominated to the editing committee, Comrade Moreno, Comrade Roberto, and me. Comrade Roberto had to leave immediately because of unexpected developments in his country; Comrade Moreno left for similar reasons within a couple of days; and I had a bout with a virus infection. As a result the bulk of the editing work fell to other participants, although I was able to go over the final draft.

The editing committee did what most editing committees do. Suggestions that were repetitious were either not added or were amalgamated. Points that had not been adopted by the body as a whole were rejected. New points that had been agreed upon were inserted where they logically belonged.

This is what happened with the introduction proposed by Comrade Moreno. If I recall correctly, I proposed that such points in his proposed introduction as were not already in the resolution should be placed where they belonged in the logical structure of the resolution. Those points in his proposed introduction that were already included in the resolution should either be dropped or amalgamated. Although Comrade Moreno argued for including the introduction as such, I was under the impression that he left the decision up to the editing committee. If this was a misunderstanding on my part, I certainly did not have any idea that the introduction represented a general line different from the one in the draft resolution.

In light of the above considerations, I would like to suggest that the Political Bureau of the PST reexamine this matter. A clarifying statement could be issued to dissipate the atmosphere of scandal. And if you are of the opinion that conflicting general lines are really involved, then your views on this ought to be stated clearly and frankly so as to make possible a discussion and differentiation on the political level.

With comradely greetings,  
Joseph Hansen

### 3. HANSEN-MORENO CORRESPONDENCE PRIOR TO AUGUST 1975 MEETING OF THE LENINIST TROTSKYIST FACTION STEERING COMMITTEE

#### a. July 4 Hansen to Moreno

July 4, 1975

Dear Hugo,

I hope you received the draft of the statement "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," which we drew up for discussion in the leadership of the LTF.

What led us to draw up this statement was the fact that it became obvious, particularly in the weeks following the closing down of *República* on May 20, that the analyses of the Portuguese situation made by the different currents in the Fourth International were so much at variance as to lead to conflicting political positions.

Thus at the United Secretariat meeting in May, representatives of the LTF were unable to present a common position. The IMT likewise appeared to be divided, although they succeeded in papering over the divisions. At the same time, the OCI, which refused to participate in the reunification in 1963 and which maintained a hostile attitude toward the United Secretariat up until recently, has taken a public position paralleling ours on at least two issues in the Portuguese revolution—the importance of the struggle for democratic rights and the characterization of the MFA as a bourgeois government whose real objective is to maintain capitalism in Portugal.

In our opinion the differences that have appeared on this question constitute a grave danger to the unity of the international. This is because the differences are of a *political* nature and therefore of unavoidable sharpness. In the case of *República*, for instance, they determine where one stands in demonstrations and counterdemonstrations . . . for or against? The differences can thus lead to comrades participating on opposing sides and finding themselves confronting each other in physical clashes. Moreover, it is impossible to stand aloof, since that would mean either being caught between the two sides, with blows raining from both quarters, or abstaining; that is, retiring from politics, at least on that issue.

The immediate problem is to determine the key issues and to clarify what position the Trotskyist movement should take on them. Because of this we have not attempted to present a rounded analysis of the Portuguese revolution, its origin, where it stands today, and what the perspectives are. A document of that kind may soon be required. However, for the time being, what is called for is a discussion among leaders who have been following the

events in detail and who are therefore in position to decide without having to undertake a preliminary study. Therefore, we have sought to make the document succinct, adding only such details as to make the points reasonably clear to leading comrades who have a general but not detailed knowledge of the events in Portugal.

The positions that ought to be adopted can be stated in a highly condensed way, in my opinion, about as follows:

1. Portugal is an imperialist power.
2. The MFA government is a bourgeois institution, its main tasks being to block a socialist revolution and to retain as much of the colonial empire as possible, utilizing neocolonial forms.
3. The Portuguese army remains imperialist in character. Its deployment in countries like Angola is intended to facilitate a neocolonialist outcome. Consequently its withdrawal should be one of the central demands advanced by the revolutionary movement.
4. The MFA is the political instrument of the army hierarchy. In the government it is playing a bourgeois bonapartist role. Individual members of the MFA may be of petty-bourgeois origin, and under certain circumstances, one or two, or possibly more, could come over to the camp of the revolution; but it would be a violation of principles for Trotskyists to base their attitude toward the government on the possibility of such shifts by individuals.
5. Both the Socialist and Communist parties are reformist formations that are vying in displaying loyalty to the MFA. Both of them are seeking to derail the revolution in Portugal.
6. A number of ultraleft formations are likewise playing the role of blocking the development of the revolution whether consciously or not.
7. The outstanding issue following the downfall of Salazarism has been the defense and extension of democratic rights.
8. This struggle takes shape around specific items such as freedom of the press (*República*), freedom of association (union organization), freedom to strike (MFA and CP strikebreaking), freedom of the people to choose a representative government (the Constituent Assembly).
9. The development of soviets could well take place around defense of democratic rights and swiftly develop into something much broader. But this has not yet occurred except in an isolated embryonic way.
10. One of the main immediate dangers is the perspec-

tive projected by the MFA of liquidating the Constituent Assembly, eliminating political parties, and subjecting the working class to its direct control by bringing the unions and similar organizations under state domination.

\* \* \*

From what I can gather from the arguments presented by M. and by T. here, the main difference that seems to have developed between us and you concerns the characterization of the MFA and what attitude to adopt toward it. Perhaps only a misunderstanding is involved. If a

genuine difference has developed, then, of course, it is necessary to bring it out in the open in the clearest possible way. I hope the question can be cleared up with the least possible delay, inasmuch as it is obviously very important.

In any case, after the document has been discussed and agreed-upon changes have been made, we would propose its adoption as the political stand of the LTF on the key issues of the Portuguese revolution as they stand at this point.

With warmest greetings,  
Comradely,  
Joe

#### b. July 16 Moreno to Hansen

Buenos Aires, July 16, 1975

My Dear Joe,

I got your July 4 letter at the end of last week. We think, as you do, that the Portuguese question is of enormous importance for the future of the International and we are very pleased over the way you are consulting with us about it. We consider this question of such importance that we added a 12- or 16-page supplement on the topic to last month's *Revista de America*. We were planning to publish Gus Horowitz's article, the two articles by Livio Maitan, the Ligue's Political Bureau resolution on *República*, and a long work of mine containing a fully worked out position on the question. Unfortunately, my article, which is extremely long already, could not be printed as our printing press broke down. For that same reason *Avanzada* came out badly printed and off schedule since we had to take it to another printshop. The delay has its advantages—it has given me a chance to read the horrendous article by Mandel in *Intercontinental Press*. We plan to publish it and reply to it thus bringing the longer article up to date by including the latest news. In a few days a double issue of *Revista de America* will appear and you will know our full position. Although it is not out yet, I am having a copy of the article made so it can be speedily sent to New York. Thus, you will know our position as soon as possible. Now, to the heart of the matter:

We are essentially in agreement on the points you raised with us. I want to emphasize some of the basic points of agreement with your letter in order to avoid any mistakes. We agree 1,000 per cent on "the importance of the struggle for democratic rights and the characterization of the MFA as a bourgeois government whose real objective is to maintain capitalism in Portugal." WHOEVER DOES NOT AGREE WITH THIS DEFINITION HAS GONE BEYOND THE BOUNDS OF OUR INTERNATIONAL AND OUR PRINCIPLES. Almost all the other basic points of agreement flow from this one. But we have differences on the following points:

"2. The MFA government is a bourgeois institution . . ." This seems to be a confused formulation, or it means the same thing as the quote I already cited: "a bourgeois government." If this is the case it should be clearly stated. On the other hand, we also agree 1,000 per cent with the

characterization, "its main tasks being to block a socialist revolution and to retain as much of the colonial empire as possible, utilizing neocolonial forms." We do not agree with the bourgeois institution formula because we think it is necessary to define it more precisely as an expression of Kerenskyism. Our formulation is "institutionalized Kerenskyism." That is, it fulfills Kerensky's role, but the agent is a group of officers. On point 3, we agree 200,000 per cent. In order to avoid confusion, we have to emphasize that we want "the withdrawal of the troops, with their arms, right now." We must raise this demand in order to combat the idea that the arms should be given to one of the guerrilla groups because it is more progressive than any other. During this year we have followed with considerable concern the position of *Combate Socialista* [newspaper of the Partido Revolucionário dos Trabalhadores—PRT] and the Ligue in Portugal on the colonial question. We have found that the problem didn't exist for the Ligue during its election campaign and unfortunately, not for *Combate Socialista* either; they only touch on the question three times. And, finally, to make matters even worse, we see that they raise the stupid and proimperialist demand to give arms to one of the Angolan organizations, exactly the same one the charlatan Rosa Coutinho favors and says has to be helped.

We don't agree with the way point 7 is formulated. It is one of the "outstanding issues" but not the only one. The other has to do with soviets. This is where we think the only fundamental difference between us lies. In our opinion there is no soviet process in Portugal, but there certainly are massive factory occupations and an important development of workers commissions. All reports agree on this. THIS IS FOR US THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT ABOUT THE ONGOING PORTUGUESE REVOLUTION. THIS SIGNIFIES A KIND OF DUAL POWER—NOT THE SOVIET TYPE, ANOTHER LESS RIPE TYPE, BUT STILL DUAL POWER. The advance of this process is as important as the other and they are both intimately linked together. THE MFA AND THE CP HAVE OPENED A COUNTERREVOLUTIONARY OFFENSIVE AGAINST THIS PROCESS: THIS IS THE KEY TO MANY PHENOMENA THAT ARE INCOMPREHENSIBLE IF THIS IS NOT TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. This is how we view the situation: The MFA-CP very much resembles the Largo Caballero, Companys, Negrin govern-

ment in one single respect: their objective is directly counterrevolutionary on all fronts; with regard to the relationship between expressions of dual power at the factory, establishment and regimental level as well as in the area of democratic rights. At this moment the main task of revolutionists is to expose the MFA-CP role as agents of the imperialist counterrevolution in all areas, but mainly in the fields of dual power and democratic rights.

I intentionally left for last one major difference we have on a characterization. We don't agree with the first two sentences in point 4: "The MFA is the political instrument of the army hierarchy. In the government it is playing a bourgeois bonapartist role." For us the MFA represents Kerenskyism, and the government is a typical popular-front government, that is, in keeping with Trotskyist terminology, a Kerenskyist class-collaborationist government. You cannot say, as Gus Horowitz did, that the biggest danger is a Pinochet-style coup and define the MFA and its government as bonapartist. Then, what kind of coup is it that might occur? Fascist or bonapartist? And what was Spinola's coup: bonapartist? Such a definition would disarm the movement. This leaves aside the fact that we don't believe such a danger exists at the moment. The main and immediate danger is the MFA-CP.

With regard to the following sentence: "Individual members of the MFA may be of petty-bourgeois origin, and under certain circumstances, one or two, or possibly more, could come over to the camp of the revolution," we also are in disagreement. But only with this part of the sentence, not the rest. For us the entire MFA is of petty-bourgeois origin, not just some individuals. We base ourselves on the social-political characterization of the army as a structure, not on the social origins of the lower officer layer, that is, not on whether their parents were bourgeois. According to Trotsky, the lower officer layer of the army is the expression of the modern middle class and the armed forces reflect in their structure the whole of society. Because of this status the radicalized lower officer layer can play its role as the great conciliator of the classes, or as the imperialist agent of counterrevolution inside the mass movement utilizing the reformist parties. Once again—playing its Kerenskyist role. If it were merely an instrument of the top military hierarchy and of bourgeois origin, it could not serve as the intermediary between the bourgeois parties and the reformist workers parties. That is why we agree with the last part of the sentence, except we would change government to MFA, or put in both words: for this reason "it would be a violation of principles for Trotskyists to base their attitude toward the government (and the MFA [added]) on the possibility"—and here we would replace the remaining words with these: "that it could come to have a working-class or revolutionary orientation since as an expression of the modern imperial-

ist middle class it is a perfidious counterrevolutionary agent of imperialism." And we would add: "this is not to say that some individuals or sectors could not move toward left positions, but, with some exceptions, these positions would also be in the service of bourgeois counterrevolution. This, however, does not mean that we should not take advantage of these positions and bring pressure to bear behind them."

We are also worried about what T. and M. may have said. Although we can find an explanation in the memorandum of one of my very hypothetical contributions that was sent to M. and A. But it was made very clear to them that this was not to be used for anything and that we only wanted to give them an incentive to send us documents. This memorandum, along with telephoned comments by M., was known to T. It may be that all of this has caused confusion. . . .

I personally have not made one telephone call nor written one letter. I have limited myself solely to writing the article and now I am thinking of polemicizing directly with Mandel. On the other hand, I think you are right; if we don't have a clear and definite principled position on Portugal, the dissolution of the faction and the call for the formation of another faction is justified. Mandel's line is POUMism of the worst kind and must be fought without quarter. But, in all frankness, we must be precise on the significance of the factory occupations, the soldiers committees and the workers' commissions. Is there or is there not a duality of power? Should they be encouraged or not? Are they, or are they not the greatest gain of the workers movement and the Portuguese masses, along with the constituent assembly and democratic rights? With regard to these we believe we have to defend to the death freedom of association. But we have to just as fiercely defend the existence and development of the Intersindical and the industrial unions. Taken in isolation from defense of the Intersindical and the industrial unions, the demand could be used only by reaction. This does not mean that we should refuse to unite with no matter whom to fight for freedom of association, and only for that. But as Trotskyists we are for the Intersindical and the already existing industrial unions unto death. Just as we are also against their bureaucratized Stalinist leaderships.

I think there is sufficient common ground for arriving at a faction program on Portugal.

[Handwritten marginal note: Ah! I forgot. Your document has not arrived. Please make an effort because we need it urgently. I repeat, I think there is ground for a principled agreement. If you think so too, let me know so we can go on to concretize it. It would be a great pleasure. With the same abrazo as always.

Hugo

### c. July 17 Moreno to Hansen

Buenos Aires, July 17, 1975

Dear Joe,

After the *compañero* left who was to deliver my letter replying to you I reread it and came to the conclusion that it was not sufficiently clear. I am afraid we may have given the impression that we are eager for a conciliation with you, underplaying differences and seeking a united front against the majority without paying sufficient attention to questions of principle. I say this because Mary-Alice's observation that we are not a united front against anyone and are in a principled faction formed on a clear program seems correct to me. The next faction meeting should provide a political-organizational example for the entire world Trotskyist movement. We should continue united if we are truly in agreement on a principled program on the Portuguese revolution. If not, it would be best to separate, more fraternally than ever, in order to facilitate coming together again after reality shows who was right. One part of this example should be a clear definition of the differences and separation of those that would justify a break—the principled ones—from those that do not justify a break.

It has occurred to me that we probably do have differences which we consider principled on points you do not mention. My observations on this aspect in my last letter do not now seem sufficiently clear to me. They deserve further elaboration.

You do not mention, nor develop in any of your points, the specifically working-class or state-power tasks. Is it because you think these are obvious? We shall clarify these points because they are not so obvious to us.

In your basic points you do not say a single word about the great conquests won by the Portuguese workers movement or about the embryonic forms of dual power. The Portuguese mass movement has won much more than just democratic rights and a Constituent Assembly. It has won industrial unions and the Intersyndical and very much more than that; the extremely important and widespread embryos of dual power: the workers commissions; factory, business establishment and house occupations, as well as soldiers committees and assemblies with their purging of officers. What is involved is knowing whether the reports and articles by Gerry Foley, all Trotskyist commentators, and the world press are correct regarding the occupation of business enterprises, the existence of workers commissions, and—what is decisive—the soldier assemblies and committees, the purging of officers. Do these exist or not? If not, and if they haven't attained the size stated by the reports already mentioned, you have to begin with a discussion as to the facts. Did the Trotskyist soldier exaggerate or lie to Gerry Foley? If so, why did Foley not say so, adding new facts to indicate the falsifications or exaggerations? Until the contrary is proven these are the facts and they allow one and only one interpretation: we have entered a stage in which the mass movement has attained its greatest

victory—the birth of autonomous, independent dual power that cannot be reconciled with the capitalist and imperialist regime. Our world movement paid with 25 years of disasters for not recognizing, when it occurred, that a dual power regime had arisen in Bolivia. The same thing might occur today if we don't realize in time that this is what we have had in Portugal since March 11. Defining the situation this way does not mean that the dual power is exactly like that in Russia, Bolivia or Spain at the beginning of the Civil War. It is more embryonic and does not have Soviet characteristics, but it exists. Trotsky warned us against fetishism regarding soviet forms and pointed to the manifestation of dual power in other forms. Thanks to him we were the only ones to point out at the time that there was dual power in Bolivia, even though it was expressed through union organizations and their worker militias. These militias, which at one point constituted the only armed forces in the country, provided the key. Today in Portugal if we consider the armed forces and the workers in the factories in their totality, there is no doubt that there is atomized but widespread dual power which expresses itself everywhere, and not as a sporadic and episodic phenomenon.

If Gerry Foley's reports and articles are accurate by even one-third or one-fourth, there is necessarily a series of principled positions which you do not mention in your letter. We have some doubts about why. We have the impression that you don't give the phenomena the importance they deserve, that the only thing about the Portuguese revolution that interests you are the democratic conquests, and you ignore those that are specifically working class and related to revolutionary power. One example comes to mind. Gerry Foley has given us an exact definition of the *República* operation as an MFA-Stalinist "provocation." But he does not make clear or properly analyze the character of the "provocation." *Intercontinental Press* makes matters worse by publishing an article by Trotsky on freedom of the press which has nothing to do with the current Portuguese situation, but with a semi-colonial country like Mexico with a Bonapartist "sui generis" government. You have compared the Portuguese revolution to the Russian revolution, but when the moment arrives to make a comparison in connection with a concrete political event, you resort to a country that has never gone through the process of a working-class revolution in action as is happening in Portugal and as was the case with Russia in its time. Why didn't you quote what Trotsky said about freedom of the press during the Russian revolution? Why didn't you explain why the Stalinists campaigned for the government to take control of the reactionary press in Mexico and why, on the other hand, they occupied the official socialist daily in Portugal? The reason is very clear: Stalinism has utilized the dual power method now in vogue in Portugal—occupation of business establishments—to carry out a reactionary, antidemocratic maneuver. If we don't explain the combination of these two elements of the "provocation" and pick

out only one—the counterrevolutionary, antidemocratic objective of the MFA-CP, nobody will understand anything, or at best will understand very little. The Stalinists could not occupy the newspaper plants in Mexico because the period did not permit it since there were no embryos of dual power. Therefore the MFA-Stalinist provocation is more like the persecution of the Bolshevik opposition press by the Soviet majority. And outlawing the Maoists is “parallel” (to use your words) to what the Mensheviks, Social Revolutionaries-Cadets, headed by Kerensky, did against the Bolsheviks. But in defending themselves against these provocations by the Soviet majority the Bolsheviks were very careful to emphasize that the Soviets were the greatest conquest of the Russian workers movement and they kept up the struggle to win the leadership of them. You will give rise to religious-type confusions if you fight only for “democratic rights” as if you were in a normal bourgeois country. That is, unless you make it clear that today in Portugal we, the Trotskyists, support unto the death the occupation of all bourgeois enterprises including the newspapers, their control by the workers commissions, the expansion and centralization of these commissions, and the immediate expulsion of the MFA-CP-SP bureaucrats from their posts in the occupied or nationalized enterprises. In the case of *República* we support its right to be published freely because this is a provocation by the MFA-CP government and we explain that this provocation consists of using revolutionary forms and methods common to the entire Portuguese proletariat for counterrevolutionary purposes—to close down the opposition press. If we don’t do it this way it will be hard for us to distinguish our support for the return of *República* from the counterrevolutionary context in which the SP carries on its campaign. That is, they are against all the worker occupations anywhere in the country, against the anarchy provoked by the workers movement, for order and production in the establishments, for the return of the occupied and nationalized enterprises to their owners. This is the only analysis that can provide us with a correct and not an abstract and general policy. In the *República* case the big enemy is the MFA with its troops stationed at the door of the plant. We should have and could have proposed an agreement during the Socialist demonstrations in which we should have participated. That proposal should have been that a temporary agreement be made between the Socialists and the workers commissions in *República* and all other printing plants that we all join together to oppose any attempt at intervention or mediation by the government and its troops. This would have exposed both the parties since Rego, the *República* editor, just like the CP, used all his influence to get the MFA to intervene. That is, we should have been the worker and popular vanguard in the struggle for the return of *República* to the Socialist party. But in our way of carrying on the struggle we would have stood out as those defending the method of factory occupation and the workers commissions, tending to make it clear that the big enemy and the big danger was the MFA government and its agent, the CP, which tried to use the conflict for its counterrevolutionary policy of curtailing democratic rights. The other side of the same campaign would have been to fight all attempts by the Socialist leadership to transform its mobilization in support of democratic rights into a counterrevolutionary petty-

bourgeois mobilization against the workers commissions and the occupations.

The tactical openings could have been these or others. I only bring them up to point out the existence of dual power and the changes we are obliged to make in the formulation of our line and our slogans because of the existence of this phenomenon. To this end the following points should be combined with yours in order to have a principled position on Portugal:

First: The rise of serious embryos of dual power since March 11 oblige us to modify the entire structure of our slogans and our line. The most important aspect of our activity should be to defend, expand and centralize these embryos, defeating the counterrevolutionary maneuvers of the MFA-CP-SP to liquidate them or assimilate them into the bourgeois state power.

Second: The Portuguese masses know the names of the forms taken by these embryos. They are the worker and neighborhood commissions, the occupation of business establishments and houses, and the soldiers assemblies and committees. Our major task is to develop and attempt to centralize these revolutionary organs and procedures.

Third: The dual power that already exists has, for the moment, not taken on the form of organizing and developing soviets. The MFA-CP is meeting with relative success in its maneuvers to completely deprive these dual power embryos of the character of revolutionary power. Their maneuver is to accept them in order to assimilate them into the bourgeois state apparatus. The maneuvers consist of the following: place MFA bureaucrats in the nationalized or occupied enterprises; accept workers control only when it is formally subject to the government; accept some discussion in the soldiers assemblies and the existence of soldiers committees while demanding that they recognize military discipline. Finally, it looks like the MFA-CP is leaning toward a maneuver of greater scope—since it has proven very difficult to control the atomized and spontaneous dual power that exists in every corner of the country—the fomenting of parodies of soviet-popular organizations much broader than the workers commissions and soldiers committees so they can more easily control the latter and dissolve them into the broader ones.

Fourth: Against these maneuvers our slogan must be: Kick out the MFA and government bureaucrats from the nationalized and occupied enterprises. We should raise a similar slogan in the army: kick out of the assemblies all officers who do not accept the discipline of the assemblies and soldiers committees and who do not publicly break with the discipline of the MFA and the government.

Fifth: If the working class and the soldiers go into the rank-and-file organizations called for and promoted by the MFA-CP, it is our obligation to go along in order to fight the MFA-CP-SP’s counterrevolutionary policies. Our policies are not intended as commentaries solely to be read in newspapers, but should be brought directly to the rank and file in these organizations, no matter who promotes them, if that is where the workers and soldiers are to be found.

Sixth: The Portuguese armed forces are in deep crisis. It is our duty to accelerate this crisis until the army structure is reduced to dust. To this end we must expose the MFA as the main support to the imperialist and capitalist character of the armed forces. But this would be of little use if we did not develop the embryos of soldiers’ power and bring

about unity between the workers and soldiers so they can arm themselves. We have to advance audacious slogans that are understood by everyone in order to develop arming of the workers. One of these is to establish direct links between the workers in the factories and the soldiers. In the factories and barracks we should raise the demand that the soldiers work at least several days a week in all the factories and enterprises near their zone in order to increase their present miserable income. This demand would enable us to establish immediate contacts with the regiments since every workers commission conscious of this need will search for ways to obtain work for the soldiers and give them material aid. It must be shown by deeds that the embryos of workers power can begin to do what the bourgeois state is incapable of doing for the soldiers. On the other hand, the soldiers must be asked to use their arms and their barracks to train the workers in the use of arms or to keep them militarily prepared. This could wind up with the proposal that the arms be kept in the custody of mixed worker and soldier commissions.

Seventh: One of the most important modifications in our tactics because of the new revolutionary situation concerns the reformist parties and the united front. Now that the task of developing and centralizing the existing elements of dual power is raised to a much higher plane—offensive and not defensive—our united front tactic toward the reformist parties becomes secondary. Our position on the reformist parties becomes essentially one of denouncing their role as agents of the counterrevolutionary MFA. This urgent task should not be an obstacle to taking tactical advantage of the differences between the Socialist party and the MFA-CP in order to reach agreements with the SP and the Maoists in defending the democratic rights and demonstrating to the mass movement that the main immediate enemy is the MFA-CP governmental combination. But this tactical utilization and these limited agreements should go hand in hand with a systematic denunciation of the role of the Socialist party itself as the agent of imperialism and the sworn enemy of the embryos of dual power, like the petty-bourgeois ultraleftism of Maoism.

Eighth: Another important change concerns the Constituent Assembly and democratic rights. We must be the defenders of these more than ever, attacking the pact and proposing that the mass movement break with the pact, combining this with the defense of the present Constituent Assembly or proposing that another be called that is absolutely free and sovereign. But this intransigent struggle for democratic rights in general—not just for the working class—has to be combined with the proposition that only a revolution by the workers and soldiers commissions can guarantee a free and sovereign Constituent Assembly and complete freedom for all Portuguese. We must link and combine the democratic slogans with those for workers power. We can say the same thing about national self-determination for the Portuguese colonies and the neocolonial maneuvers. Without ceasing for one minute to struggle for the withdrawal of the troops and arms, we must point out that the only final guarantee for these democratic tasks is workers power.

Ninth: We should also change our line with regard to the Intersyndical. For us Trotskyists it is a matter of principle

at this moment to be active in the Intersyndical and the industrial unions in spite of their Stalinist leadership and in spite of the bourgeois MFA government's regulations in its favor and its attempt to form a union organization that serves its own ends. It is also a question of principle to fight inside the Intersyndical and the unions against any state regulation over the democratic right to free unionization and against the Stalinist bureaucracy that leads it. But this does not mean to fight against the Stalinist bureaucracy only from within the union, but also to fight against it inside the workers commissions. These have to be prevented from becoming a part of the Stalinist union apparatus and bureaucracy and thus being incorporated into the counterrevolution of the MFA in the government. Independence of the workers commissions from the union apparatus. Clean the Stalinists out of the workers commissions, where they use the pretext of forming a single industrial union organization in order to push forward the MFA government's superexploitation plan for the working class. Let the workers commissions be subordinate only to assemblies of their compañeros in the factory and not to any other self-declared workers organizations, whether parties or central unions. Today in every collision between unions and commissions we Trotskyists have already taken sides: for the commissions against the union.

Tenth: We must put an end to abstractions about the workers and farmers government. The counterrevolutionary utopia, at this moment, of an SP-CP-Intersyndical government should no longer appear in our propaganda. We must point out the only possible perspective that reality poses for us: **OUR BASIC SLOGAN FOR THE STAGE THAT OPENED ON MARCH 11 MUST BE: DEVELOPMENT AND CENTRALIZATION OF THE WORKERS COMMISSIONS AND SOLDIERS COMMITTEES SO THEY CAN TAKE POWER IN A GREAT NATIONAL CONGRESS AND GUARANTEE A FREE AND SOVEREIGN CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY.**

The purpose of this slogan is to "patiently educate," very, but very, patiently. But it is the only true one, the only principled one at this time. Comparison with the Russian Revolution again is called for. It was the main slogan of the Bolsheviks from February to October. For us it became the main demand in March, that is, when the buds of dual power appeared. But it is propagandistic; for the moment we cannot demand, "Down with the MFA government!" But a ferocious campaign must be undertaken against this government in preparation for the latter slogan which we will have to raise in the short term if the revolution continues to go forward.

Eleventh: Only the Trotskyist party can consistently propagandize for these tasks and slogans. There can and should be many united fronts with factions and tendencies in other parties and in the army that have been affected by the situation and that go along with the mass movement. But these united fronts can only be organized and fostered by Trotskyists, the only ones who understand that what we have in Portugal today are buds of dual power; what this means, and what is the only correct line: develop them up to the liquidation of the bourgeois forces and bourgeois power.

I beg you to keep in mind, Joe, that I have gone so

deeply into these slogans in order to concretely show you what I am thinking. The important thing is whether we are in agreement on the general analysis and perspectives. As always, I anxiously await your reply. For my part, if possible, I am going to Portugal next week to see the reality with my own eyes. It's possible that I'll change

because journalistic reports never totally reflect reality. We shall see.

With my most fraternal regards,  
as always,  
Hugo

#### d. August 9 Hansen to Moreno

August 9, 1975

Dear Hugo,

Let me begin by noting the sequence of letters so as to eliminate what may be some accidental misunderstandings.

I wrote you a letter dated July 4, indicating in a highly condensed way the main points in a document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution" that was sent to you at the same time as the letter. The document is proposed for discussion, possible amendments or substitution, and a vote at the coming meeting of Leninist Trotskyist Faction. The document is what is important—not the accompanying letter briefly explaining its nature and purpose.

You wrote me a letter dated July 16 in reply to mine of July 4. In a postscript you mentioned that you had not yet received the document. That was already clear to me, because your reply did not deal with the document, but with the points noted in the most abstract way in my letter.

We immediately sent you another copy of the document. In the hope that this second copy would reach you quickly, if you had not received the first one in the meantime, I postponed answering your letter. I knew that once you got the document and studied it, you would direct your attention to that.

However, you sent me another letter dated July 17, which I received July 26. Your July 17 letter modified your letter of July 16 in the sense of your concluding that there might be more serious differences over the Portuguese situation and what course to follow than you had thought at first.

But you give no indication in your July 17 letter of having as yet received the document that we propose for discussion and adoption by the LTF. My impression, therefore, is that your July 17 letter constitutes an extension of your July 16 letter. Both your July 16 and July 17 letters constitute a reply to my letter of July 4 *without your having as yet read the document*. It may be that you still have not received a copy.

Consequently I remain in the dark as to your opinion of the document. I do not know whether you agree or disagree with its line, and—if you disagree—what the exact points of difference are and how deep you consider them to be.

Nonetheless, in your letter of July 17 you raise a number of questions on which you fear we may have differences and which you think ought to be clarified. You raise them because I did not mention them in my letter of July 4, and

this omission leads you to think that we have disregarded them. When you read the document, you may, of course, alter your opinion even though some of the points you have advanced are not included in the document. Meanwhile, it would no doubt be best for me to take up these questions and indicate what I, at least, think about them. I will try to follow the sequence of your letter.

#### 1. The existence of soviets and dual power.

In the reports published in *Intercontinental Press*, the commissions, committees, and assemblies organized by the workers and by some of the soldiers and sailors have been characterized as *incipient* forms of soviets. The reports have stressed that these formations have not yet developed beyond an *incipient* stage.

We have not been able to gain solid evidence concerning their extent. If they actually existed to such a degree as to constitute more than *incipient* dual power, the fact would hardly go unobserved and unmentioned on in the press. The absence of reports is significant, I think. Compare, for instance, the enormous publicity received by the People's Assembly in Bolivia during its short existence in 1971.

Even more in question is the *independent role* played by these incipient soviets. With the possible exception of isolated instances, they are dominated by political forces standing in opposition to the development of the revolution; that is, the Stalinists, the Social Democrats, and above all the MFA.

As a result, what occupies public attention is the political struggle—both the struggle among these forces and the struggle against them, whether it emanates from the extreme right or from genuine revolutionists.

This situation, of course, is to be explained mainly by the absence of a mass revolutionary party.

The *potential* of these incipient soviets is a different matter. The development of the incipient soviets into real soviets is crucial in the Portuguese revolution, as everyone who agrees with the Transitional Program understands. We assumed agreement on this in drawing up the document, since previous LTF declarations have affirmed the validity of the Transitional Program and its projection of the line of march toward soviet power.

The problem that confronts our comrades in Portugal is *how* to realize the potential of the incipient soviets. That can be achieved only through a correct *political* course. It is this political course that is of immediate concern.

The Bolsheviks, for instance, did not win the Russian revolution simply by proclaiming the virtues of soviets *per se*. Lenin, as you will recall, was at one point prepared to seek to mobilize the masses through factory committees instead of the soviets, which, although they existed on a huge scale, were dominated by the Mensheviks and Social Revolutionaries. In the concrete circumstances, Trotsky considered Lenin's view to be mistaken. However, what should be noted is that Lenin, much as he was for soviets, made no fetish of the form.

In any case, the Bolsheviks won their majority in the soviets through their *political* slogans and the actions they engaged in to show that they really meant what they advocated. The main slogans, as you well know, were summarized in the formula, Peace, Land, Bread.

The example of the Bolsheviks on this plane of struggle is worth recalling in considering the key political problems facing us in Portugal today. On the political level what fulcrum will best help us to apply leverage favoring the development of soviets and struggle for soviet power?

To find the correct answer it is not sufficient to repeat general formulas or to make general appeals for the formation of soviets. And it is an evasion of the question to magnify what exists; that is, to assume that the present commissions, committees, and assemblies have already developed into genuine soviets. The only fruitful approach is to seek a standpoint in the actual political struggle.

## 2. Role of the democratic conquests

It appears to me that the main axis of the Trotskyist political course must be defense of the democratic conquests. The best defense of those conquests lies in battling to extend them. (In considering this question, I am leaving aside the role of immediate and transitional demands. My assumption is that there is no disagreement in the LTF on their importance.)

The role played by the democratic conquests must be considered against the background of almost half a century of brutal totalitarianism. When the Salazarist regime finally caved in, the masses entered the scene. What they wanted was to sweep away every vestige of the old regime. They wanted the opposite of that regime—complete democracy. And of course they view democracy in a quite practical way. It assures exercise of their right to gain a better standard of living and to form a society offering increasing opportunities and abundance.

One of the most notable proofs of this determination was that the majority of the toiling masses knew the correct name for what they sought—socialism. They considered socialism to represent the *opposite of totalitarianism*. This was after decades of intensive and anticommunist propaganda dinned into them through every avenue available to Salazarism, ranging from the tightly controlled communications media to the services of a well-organized Catholic hierarchy.

On top of that, the masses began moving in a most direct way; that is, into the streets in huge demonstrations. Their practice conformed to their views. They began to organize in ways intended to help gain what they wanted; hence the appearance of organizational forms that we consider to be incipient soviets. By the tens of thousands they flooded into the unions, the Socialist party, the Communist party. They were willing to give a hearing to

any group, no matter how small, that appeared to voice their desires or to offer a plausible road to realize them. That was the political mood of the masses.

In this situation, I think that the following three basic facts are incontestable:

1. The masses in Portugal want the opposite of totalitarianism. They want complete democracy.
2. To achieve this, they began organizing on their own.
3. They turned for political leadership to the parties or groups that claimed to represent socialism.

In the light of these facts, we must next consider all the political forces that stand in the way of the masses achieving the socialism they want. Aside from the ultra-lefts and other muddleheads, these forces are consciously operating in behalf of Portuguese capitalism. Their aim is to divert the masses from achieving a socialist victory.

Consequently, at the present phase of the Portuguese revolution, everything we do should be calculated in accordance with two basic objectives: (1) to help impel the masses forward on the course they themselves have selected; and (2) to do everything possible to expose and to counteract the political forces seeking to divert them from that course.

It is the duty of our comrades in Portugal to work out the tactical side. The general framework for this is clearly indicated in the Transitional Program. In the concrete situation in Portugal, appeals to the masses should be couched in terms of mobilization through their commissions, committees, and assemblies—possibly their unions, too.

For instance, I would have expected that our comrades, in defending the Constituent assembly in which the two mass workers parties hold a substantial majority, would do everything they could to impel mass mobilizations. Appeals for action in defense of the Constituent Assembly would necessarily be accompanied by the demand that the leaders of these parties break their pact with the MFA and set up a workers and peasants government. That line would certainly have helped inspire the extension of the incipient soviets.

I cite this only as an example. The case of the Constituent Assembly may already have become moot in the fast-moving situation. In other words, the leaders of both the class-collaborationist mass workers parties may have succeeded in their efforts to help the MFA liquidate the Constituent Assembly where they held a mandate to form a workers and peasants government.

Such a course of defending and extending the democratic conquests of the masses has nothing to do with the situation in a "normal bourgeois country," to use your phrase. It applies to the present prerevolutionary situation in Portugal.

## 3. Republica and Trotsky's position on freedom of the press.

The closure of *República* offers another instructive example. Our view of its importance did not derive from any tendency on our part to convert the defense of democratic rights into such an absolute as to "give rise to religious-type confusions" but from the fact that it offered a most important opening for advancing the proletarian revolution in Portugal.

If our comrades had had sufficient forces to bring the incipient soviets into action in defense of freedom of the press as exemplified in the *República* affair, the outcome would have greatly stepped up the tempo of the revolution, perhaps opening a new stage in its development.

Our forces were too small to decisively affect the outcome. That did not relieve them of the necessity to take a correct position. In fact, it made it all the more imperative to move with political accuracy. They were confronted with the following choices:

1. To support the action of the Stalinists, who served as cat's-paws for the MFA.

2. To stand aside, taking no positions. Watered-down variants included minimizing the importance of the closure of *República*, assessing it as a passing incident, or deploring it as a "mistake."

3. To participate in the demonstrations against the closure, while differentiating themselves politically from the leaders of the Socialist party.

The first position would have amounted to supporting a reactionary policy of the MFA aimed against the revolution. The second position would have amounted to abstention; i.e., withdrawing from politics, at least on this issue. This would have been equivalent to shame-faced support of the MFA and the Stalinists. The third position would have given our comrades the opportunity to influence and win over workers who are against totalitarianism in any form and who are strongly inclined to defend, strengthen, and extend the democratic rights they have already won.

To reach a correct political decision in the *República* case, our comrades obviously had to consider the problem from a general standpoint; namely, a correct calculation of the role played by the democratic conquests as a whole in the development of the Portuguese revolution.

In our opinion, the fate of the democratic conquests constitutes a key issue that has remained in the forefront of the political struggle in Portugal from the beginning. Proof of it can be seen in the entire series of instances similar to the *República* case on which all political currents have been compelled to say yes or no and to act accordingly.

That was the context for our publication of Trotsky's article, which you deplore. You write: "IP makes matters worse by publishing an article by Trotsky on freedom of the press which has nothing to do with the current Portuguese situation, but with a semicolonial country like Mexico with a Bonapartist 'sui generis' government."

But such narrow limitations cannot reasonably be placed on Trotsky's statement of principles in this question. Trotsky did not include any specification justifying a judgment of that kind; he did not say that the principles he was enunciating were limited to semicolonial countries with Bonapartist governments of a certain kind, although he would surely have done so if he had had that in mind. And the statement was not taken by anyone at the time as applying only to Mexico under Cardenas. Trotsky was *reaffirming* the general Bolshevik position on freedom of the press and the working class. He was reaffirming that position in opposition to Stalinism, and in opposition to those who argue that Stalinism in suppressing freedom of the press or in favoring suppressing it, is only continuing the theory and practice of Bolshevism. Trotsky was also trying to educate our own movement on

this question, not only in Mexico but internationally.

You argue further: "You have compared the Portuguese revolution to the Russian revolution, but when the moment arrives to make a comparison in connection with a concrete political event, you resort to a country that has never gone through the process of a working-class revolution in action as is happening in Portugal and as was the case with Russia in its time. Why didn't you quote what Trotsky said about freedom of the press during the Russian revolution?"

We did not "resort to a country that has never gone through the process of a working-class revolution in action. . ." We resorted to Trotsky, the leader of a working-class revolution and an authority on the positions of the Fourth International. We resorted to him for a statement on the general position of the Bolshevik movement—our movement—on "Freedom of the Press and the Working Class." (Trotsky chose that general title, not us.)

We did not quote what Trotsky said on this question in his *History of the Russian Revolution* because we wanted to present his final thinking on the question. Moreover, the 1938 article is superior because Trotsky explains the Bolshevik position—the position of the Fourth International—at greater length and, in my opinion, more clearly.

The argument that Trotsky said one thing in the *History* in 1932 and the very opposite in *Clave* six years later does not stand up at all. The main points in the two statements match each other, as can easily be seen if you study both statements in their entirety.

To me one of the most striking parallels is Trotsky's affirmation in the *History* and again in *Clave* that when a revolution assumes the character of a civil war, then the rules of civil war apply and these rules govern the functioning of the press. Freedom of the press is superseded by the needs of the class struggle. But this is only a temporary situation, as Trotsky makes very clear in his *Clave* article. After the civil war is won, freedom of the press is maintained for all tendencies that have not taken up arms against the workers state and that agree to accept the new situation even if they disagree with it.

If someone were to maintain that civil war has been raging for some time in Portugal, that the rules of civil war therefore apply, and that this justifies suppressing freedom of the press as well as other democratic rights, then it appears to me that such a person in all consistency would have to argue that the beleaguered power is a workers state, or at least a workers and peasants government.

I do not know of any Trotskyists who maintain that proletarian power has been established in Portugal, although some seem to be leaning toward the view that the left wing of the MFA, in collaboration with the Stalinists, may well go as far as establishing a deformed workers state in Portugal.

If we agree that whatever may happen in the future the present fact is that the MFA government is *bourgeois*, then it is obvious that the case considered by Trotsky in the *History* and in *Clave* does not apply. The restrictions on democracy now being imposed in Portugal have nothing to do with the temporary restrictions a proletarian government is justified in taking in the face of an armed attempt to bring it down. The restrictions are the product

of a bourgeois political course aimed at blocking the revolution and ultimately paving the way for restoration of a totalitarian form of capitalist rule in Portugal.

But let me continue with your objections concerning publication of Trotsky's article.

You ask; "Why didn't you explain why the Stalinists campaigned for the government to take control of the reactionary press in Mexico and why, on the other hand, they occupied the socialist daily in Portugal?"

First of all, a small correction. *República* was not the "official" socialist daily. The official organ is *Portugal Socialista*, which is still being published. *República* was a commercial newspaper whose editorial policy reflected the views of the Socialist party leadership. Because of this fact, the Stalinists contended that the closure had nothing to do with the exercise of democratic rights by a working-class party. According to them, the occupation of *República* was only part and parcel of the wave of occupations of privately owned enterprises. They appealed to the right of workers to occupy such enterprises, including newspapers. Some persons who ought to have known better were taken in by this slick demagoguery.

But all this can be left aside in our discussion, since we are agreed on the substance of the question—the democratic rights of a working-class party were violated in Portugal. To continue:

We did not consider it necessary to go into the difference between the Stalinist course in Mexico, which Cardenas vetoed, and the Stalinist course in Portugal, which the MFA approved. In essence the politics of the Stalinists was the same in both countries. In both Mexico and Portugal what was involved at bottom was: (a) The consistent Stalinist policy of violating and curtailing democratic rights. (b) The consistent Trotskyist policy of defending and expanding democratic rights.

Immense confusion reigned over the *República* case, including among the ranks of the Trotskyists internationally. As a step toward clearing up this confusion, a statement authoritatively presenting the position of the Fourth International was required. Trotsky's article, indicating where the Fourth International stood in its founding period on the question of freedom of the press and the working class seemed to us to constitute a good beginning. Naturally, we considered it only a beginning marking out the main lines to be followed on this issue.

I find it difficult to grasp the rest of your argumentation concerning the *República* case in which you try to find a parallel between the provocations of the Compromisers against the Bolsheviks in the period before the Bolsheviks won a majority in the soviets and the provocations of the CP in the *República* case. I agree with some of the things you say; but which of the forces involved in the closure of *República* can be considered analogous to the Bolsheviks? Certainly the Social Democrats must be excluded, as you indicate. So that leaves as analogous only the utilization by the Portuguese Compromisers of the incipient soviets for counterrevolutionary aims. However, the analogy limps in view of the fact that *República* was not the newspaper of a Portuguese Bolshevik party, but only of a sector of the Portuguese Compromisers.

It appears to me that more fruitful results can be obtained by considering the aims of the Portuguese Compromisers rather than the techniques they employed

to advance them; that is, utilization of the incipient soviets, the unions, and other formations.

I am sure that you will agree that they aim at conducting the "battle for production" in behalf of Portuguese capitalism. They aim at placing iron controls on the workers commissions, committees, assemblies, and unions the better to mobilize them in behalf of production. They seek to reduce democratic rights so as to be in position to gag the revolutionary opposition when it becomes a serious threat. The Stalinists seek to preempt the role of serving as a tool of the MFA. (This is where their role in the closure of *República* comes in.) And in all this, their main objective is to block the formation of a leadership capable of assuring victory in the struggle of the masses for socialism.

The political analogy between the Russian Compromisers of 1917 and the Portuguese popular frontists of 1974-1975 now leaps out. The analogy between the two sets of class collaborationists is a deadly one.

#### 4. Tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists.

In the final part of your letter of July 17, you list eleven points that ought to be "combined," as you see it, with the points mentioned in my letter of July 4 "in order to have a principled position on Portugal."

This raises once again the problem I referred to earlier. What about the document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution"? What is your opinion of that? Have you received it? And how should I respond to your eleven points not knowing your reaction to the document?

There are two additional considerations:

1. The document itself was not intended to be a rounded presentation. It was written on the assumption of common agreement in the LTF on a whole series of questions outlined in the Transitional Program. These include such items as recognition of the importance of soviets and the significance of the appearance of dual power in the development of a revolution. The document was intended only to outline the key political issues as they have emerged up to this point in the development of the Portuguese revolution—the issues on which it is imperative for the Trotskyist movement to take a correct stand.

We considered it obvious that the document would require amplification, particularly in the form of explanatory articles. The background has to be recalled; estimates of the various turning points have to be summarized and checked in the light of subsequent events; the applicability of the Transitional Program has to be shown in concrete terms.

2. The document does not include a section dealing with the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists, an omission that was deliberate.

We consider that the primary responsibility in determining the tasks of the Portuguese movement lies with the Portuguese Trotskyist leaders themselves in agreement with their ranks. If an outline of the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyist movement is to be added to the document "The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution," this should be done in consultation with at least those Portuguese Trotskyist leaders who are not opposed to collaborating with the LTF in a matter of such importance to them.

If collaboration proves to be excluded because of the

factional situation in the Fourth International, then it might be necessary for the LTF to consider what tasks—at least in broad terms—ought to be proposed for the Portuguese Trotskyist movement.

However, the necessary prerequisite for that would be a critical appraisal of the development of the Portuguese Trotskyist movement up to this point, including, of course, the responsibilities of the Trotskyists in other countries who may have influenced it.

This explains the cautious attitude we have taken in this question and why the document as yet does not contain a section dealing with the tasks of the Portuguese Trotskyists.

The eleven points you list include proposed tasks for the Portuguese Trotskyists. I would like to defer taking them

up until you have read the document “The Key Issues in the Portuguese Revolution.” In light of that document you might want to modify your proposals. (Or, of course, modify the document.) Also, I would like to know what the Portuguese Trotskyists consider to be their concrete tasks and what their reasoning is on the relationship between those tasks and the general political course that the developments up to now in Portugal appear to impose on the Trotskyist movement.

Finally, it would be very advantageous if we could get together soon to discuss these questions. I hope that this can be arranged.

With warmest regards,  
Joe