

PCTP / MRPP.

Revolution and counter-revolution in Portugal

Interview with a representative of the Central Committee, November 1974

Published: 1974 Reproduced at <https://vivelemaoisme-org>.

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Question: What about fascism? Here, part of the press seemed to indicate that this matter had been settled by April 25th.

Answer: our movement has always said, it even said it from the early hours of April 25, that this military coup would not put an end to fascism, given its class characteristics.

A blow from the forces of monopolies and imperialism to prevent the revolution could not upset the economic and social bases of fascism.

It is because the people took to the streets, hunted down the fascists, the Pides [the forces of the secret police, the Polícia internacional e de defesa do estado], the legionnaires, that the bourgeoisie had to take measures such as the dissolution of some of the police and fascist organizations of the pre-April 25 regime.

But we have always pointed out that the monopolies and imperialism continue their conspiracies, their preparations to overthrow the popular movement by fascist counter-revolution, as soon as favourable conditions arise.

In reality, the bourgeoisie, the monopolies, the imperialists are using the provisional government and the military junta as the democratic curtain behind which they are preparing the fascist counter-revolution.

Before September 28, it was no coincidence that the fascists were openly conspiring, forming their political parties, publishing their newspapers, bringing weapons into the countries through specific points of the border, which the government knew, while the Marxists-Leninists, our movement, its newspaper, its activities, its director were prosecuted. The bourgeoisie needed to silence the far left and our movement while it actively prepared the counter-revolution.

There is no contradiction between the existence of a seemingly democratic provisional government and these preparations. The bourgeoisie and the monopolies control the provisional government and the junta. It is a way for the bourgeoisie to take over the state, to deceive the popular masses; a means of disarming them and actively preparing the armed counter-revolution.

What we were saying came true: the fascists organized themselves, they launched their press campaign, they armed themselves, and they were preparing for September 28 a first and important demonstration of force. They had no intention yet of making a military counter-coup; they were only preparing a big demonstration, and September 28 was the first clash between the popular forces and the forces of the counter-revolution.

It was the masses who took to the streets, who organized the roadblocks, who marched by the thousands in the streets, at the call either of our movement, which was the only organization to call a counter-demonstration on the very place where was going to take place the fascist demonstration, either of workers' commissions, in a spontaneous way, etc.

So the Marxist-Leninists (with our movement in the lead) and broad popular masses took to the streets by the tens of thousands, to deprive the fascists of the right to speak, the right of assembly, the right of association. It must be said that on September 28, the revisionist forces, those of the parties of the government were completely paralyzed, because the popular masses had understood that the ML had been right to say that the counter-revolution was preparing behind the curtain of the government .

So they were completely isolated, the popular masses denounced them, understood their complicity in the preparations for the counter-revolution; and during the first hours, on September 28, and even on the 29th, there was total paralysis among the parties of the bourgeoisie. But with the revisionists in the lead, they attempted a great maneuver to try to regain the initiative, the leadership of the popular movement which they had entirely lost.

Throughout the previous months, during the strike of the TAP (Portuguese Air Transport), the Journal du Commerce, during the great political demonstrations of the workers of the Lisnave (Lisbon Shipyards), and in all the main popular struggles that had taken place until then, the popular masses had had the revisionist party as their main enemy, the main agent of the repression of the workers.

The day after September 28, the revisionists announce that they have discovered a great fascist military coup, a huge conspiracy, which in reality did not exist (not yet at that time), and they declare "The saviors of the people, the heroes of the nation, it is us, it is our patriotic officers who have prevented fascism from returning. »

And they carried out a real counter-coup, a real assault by the revisionist forces, inside the state apparatus, the MFA, all the organs of the state, where they reinforced their positions; they thus created the material bases of a social-fascist coup d'etat.

As far as we are concerned we have said: "Abandon your illusions and prepare for the struggle; September 28 was a first fight, but not the main fight. Some fascists have been imprisoned, some measures have been taken against them.

The popular masses have imposed the closure of some of their newspapers, but it is an illusion to believe that fascism has disappeared; the political, social and economic base of fascism persists, and they did September 28 to protect the bases of fascism, that is, the bosses, the monopolies, imperialism; therefore to fool the masses with a few superficial, formal measures, and so that the popular, democratic, anti-fascist movement cannot reach the roots, the social, economic base of fascism; the monopolies and imperialism continue to be masters in our country, and are actively preparing the counter-revolution. »

What happened after September 28 confirms the analyzes of our movement.

Indeed, shortly after, the members of the small fascist parties banned after September 28, regrouped in a new party, the "Democratic and Social Center" (CDS), one of whose leaders is a former collaborator of Marcelo Caetano, fascist legal theorist: Freitas do Amaral, also known as one of the most active agents of fascism in suppressing the student movement.

The other executives are former police chiefs, former legionnaires and leaders of banned parties. They changed tactics a little, they set up a legal party, a "social-democratic" party, which claims to respect the program of the Armed Forces, which reassures. Behind this facade, they are preparing the counter-revolution.

We know (they are public knowledge), the connections of this party with the CIA, the checks it receives from American banks, and we also know that weapons continue to enter Portugal through known border points of the Armed Forces.

The fascists are preparing a few thousand mercenaries and agents trained by the CIA; we already have information on the fact that they are preparing commando actions against "precise objectives", as they say. The preparations for the counter-revolution are therefore once again under way: the events of November 4 are significant in this respect.

On November 4, the CDS, after a cautious but active campaign, supported by one of the main American advertising agencies, called through its "centrist" youth, its first meeting in Lisbon in the Saô theater Louis.

Our movement immediately denounced the significance of this meeting: the fascists raised their heads; the fascists, as before September 28, were measuring their strength, trying to regain the right to speak, under the flag of the "Centre" and "Democracy".

So, the revolutionary and progressive youth organizations, the Ribeiro Santos Committees, grouped for a few weeks in the Revolutionary Federation of Portuguese Students, called for a counter-demonstration to take away their right to speak.

This demonstration brought together several thousand people in the center of Lisbon. There were banners with the slogan "Death to fascism, the people will win". The crowd moved towards the place where the fascist demonstration was held, and it was then that the shock police, the police whose disbandment had been announced by the government, brutally charged. The police first used batons, then dozens of tear gas canisters, and finally they opened fire with machine guns.

However, November 4 had a very important effect: it demonstrated the depth of the crisis as well as the will to fight and the combativeness of the masses. They resisted with great courage the bursts of machine guns and tear gas; for several hours, they erected barricades in the access streets to the theater where the fascist meeting was taking place; they armed themselves with stones and iron bars, elves faced and firmly resisted the brutality of the fascist police.

During this struggle, the police injured more than thirty people, eleven of whom were shot.

As this demonstration unfolded, part of the crowd, nearly a thousand people, marched against the headquarters of the CDS which was about 1 kilometer away. The masses invaded it, destroyed the propaganda material, archives and material infrastructure of this party.

At the headquarters of the CDS, unheard-of things were discovered, such as printing equipment, worth tens of thousands of escudos. Correspondence, visitor list, and undeniable evidence of close, conspiratorial ties between CDS, fascists, CIA, etc. were discovered. ; important Portuguese industrialists, men closely linked to the Portuguese monopolies, paid sums, some valued at 700,000 escudos per month, to the CDS. Moreover, the demonstration was received by armed mercenaries, "gorilas" as they say in Portugal, who opened fire and injured two comrades.

November 4 showed that the popular masses are ready to take violent action. It also made it possible to clearly demarcate two camps: on the one hand the fascists, the liberals, the reformists and also the neo-revisionists; on the other, the popular masses and our movement.

Indeed, on November 5, the bourgeoisie tried to counter-attack, to take advantage of the struggle that had unfolded to launch a major campaign against our movement, and to try, when the crisis began, to bring down the vanguard of the working class.

On November 5, we witnessed a very significant spectacle: on television, at the time when there is the most listening, around 9 p.m., we saw first of all the government spokesman, followed by the general secretary of the fascist CDS, then the general secretary of the PPD, the general secretary of the PS, the second secretary of the revisionist party.

They had all come on television to condemn our movement, to call for repression, to defend the fascist CDS. The whole counter-revolution showed itself united to stifle the mass movement. The main figures of the government and the parties have come on television to denounce what they call a small group. Not so small as that since he forced them all to move!

The repression started during the night. You should know that at the Ministry of Justice, there is a "great defender of individual freedoms", who during fascism never stopped writing articles on the right of citizens not to see their residences ransacked during the night by the forces of the Pide.

During the night, therefore, the men from Copcon entered the homes of people whose names they knew because they had given their identity to the hospital. They imprisoned twelve to thirteen people; now there are eleven left in prison, because two of them were obviously not involved in the events; out of these eleven people, ten comrades who were put in one of the worst military prisons in the country.

Comrade Maria José Morgado, who had been imprisoned under fascism and savagely tortured and who, under torture, had shown heroic behaviour, worthy of our movement and of the Communists, had again been imprisoned during the demonstrations of August 8 when our newspaper was banned.

On November 5, she was imprisoned again, and they wanted to put her in the cell where the Pide agents who had tortured her were.

Our comrade immediately told the director of the prison that it would be her or the women of the Pide who would come out of this cell alive.

Then she started a hunger strike which had great popular support, a great mass movement that we started. After three days of hunger strike, she was transferred, but she is isolated.

She demands her release, or at least to be placed near the other imprisoned comrades. There was also another serious provocation; the police said that during the events of November 4, they did not open fire, or that it was in the air, or even that it was the demonstrators who fired at the police.

This is exactly the same argument that the fascists used, that the “democrats”, let's call them that, used when they assassinated Victor Bernardes in the MPLA demonstration in August.

They repeated this argument now: they had not fired, quite the contrary, it was the demonstrators who had fired at them, but curiously, there were eleven wounded by bullets, and one of the most seriously injured, the comrade Jose Abrantes, had been shot in the stomach.

He was still in mortal danger when Copcon troops entered the hospital, claiming to take him away.

These are the facts. Our movement has triggered a great popular movement, demanding the immediate release of anti-fascists in prison, calling on all progressive forces in Portugal to stand in solidarity against this imprisonment.

I take this opportunity to renew here this appeal that we launch to all the truly democratic and anti-fascist and progressive forces to join their efforts with ours to demand the immediate release of the men and women who are in prison. , for having fought against fascism.

In the present situation, we continue to warn the people: “Have no illusions; behind the curtain of the Junta and the government, it is fascism which is arming itself, it is the counter-revolution which is preparing; the bourgeoisie uses the government and the Junta to deceive the people, to demobilize them, to convince them that there is no problem. In this way they hope, when the time comes, to be able to curb the crisis by bringing down a bloody counter-revolution on the people. Only the development of the revolutionary struggle can root out fascism. The popular revolution is the only force which, in our country, can oppose the counter-revolution which is preparing. »

Question: your movement was the object after November 4 of attempts of prohibition and annihilation on the part of the provisional government.

Faced with this offensive, you have developed a response that has had a great mass response. Could you tell us about it?

Answer: All the united reaction forces tried to take advantage of this opportunity to ban the legal activities of our movement, close its newspaper and arrest its main leaders. It was the revisionist party that took the initiative in this campaign of repression.

Question: do you know for sure?

Answer: We have absolutely certain and direct information. Through the mouth of its general secretary, the revisionist party asked the Council of Ministers of November 11 or 12 to ban our movement. He also did this through his officers in the Armed Forces Movement.

Our organization in the barracks where one of the main forces of the Copcon is installed also informed us that on the evening of this same November 12 a unit of the Copcon the RAL 1 (Light Artillery Regiment n°1) was preparing to march on the headquarters of "Luta Popular".

Why didn't the bourgeoisie do it? Because popular support for our movement, and especially the popularity of the November 4 action, prevented it. The neo-revisionists who applauded the repression and who said of us "they are adventurers", these neo-revisionists claimed that our action was isolated.

However what we have seen is the enormous popular support that has manifested itself in many forms. Elements of the masses came to our headquarters to congratulate us, to express their support. Our movement, its communiqués in the following days, its meetings in the streets of Lisbon, Coimbra, Porto, etc., the great mobilization campaign it launched, were supported by the masses. We have learned that other popular, spontaneous attacks against CDS headquarters and premises took place after 4 November.

This campaign is part of the tactics of our movement which, at the same time, convened an enlarged meeting of its Central Committee, where it defined the tactics to be followed in relation to the elections for the Constituent Assembly, studied the question of the foundation of the Party, triggered a strong mass mobilization for the meeting in Lisbon where these decisions were announced.

This meeting was, in a way, the culmination of this process. He brought together in Lisbon in the Sports Palace ten thousand people to support the policy of our movement. It was a mass response that completely blocked the reactionary offensive of the bourgeoisie. This meeting was held on Friday 22 November. The bourgeois press itself was obliged to give wide coverage to these events.



Question: you spoke earlier of a fascist coup d'etat, or a social-fascist coup d'etat. For you, does this represent the same danger?

Answer: Yes, we believe that there are two dangers that await the popular movement in Portugal. One is the fascist coup prepared by American imperialism and the fraction of the Portuguese bourgeoisie linked to it. Yankee imperialism is preparing the fascist counter-revolution against us in Spain, where it is training its brigades, as well as in Portugal, where it is plotting inside and outside the state apparatus. Another danger, in a more formidable sense, is that of a social-fascist coup against which the popular masses would be less well prepared to retaliate.

It may happen that, citing the pretext of a fascist threat, the social-fascists take over the state apparatus. This eventuality also arouses a certain concern within other bourgeois circles and parties. As far as we are concerned, we tell the people that fascism and social-fascism are the same and that the second is an even worse dictatorship in certain respects.

Question: you spoke earlier of September 28, the date of the great demonstration called “of the silent majority”, called by Spínola. What was its significance in the tactics of the former head of state?

Answer: the forces which supported this demonstration were linked to American interests and to those of that fraction of the bourgeoisie which had suffered the most from the April 25 coup. In other words, the fascists allied with the Americans. As of April 25, they had been able to win support in the military junta itself.

There were notorious fascists supported by Spínola. He hoped that this demonstration would allow him to concentrate power in his hands to put it at the service of the counter-revolution. September 28 was to provide popular support for fascism and prepare public opinion for what was to follow.

Question: one has the impression that September 28 marks the end of a first period, that of the compromise made the day after April 25 between the various bourgeois and revisionist forces. Didn't the failure of the September 28 operation mainly benefit the revisionists, with whom Spínola was in conflict?

Answer: the military coup of April 25 was made on the basis of a program common to several bourgeois forces interested in the adoption of some political and economic measures essential to prevent the development of the revolution and to consolidate the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

It is the MFA program that expresses this agreement. There are strong contradictions in the ruling bloc which oppose the fractions of imperialism which dispute our homeland. April 25 consolidated the positions of European imperialism and opened the door to Russian social-imperialism, which threatens the hitherto preponderant interests of the United States. A new (unstable) balance has thus been created between the imperialist forces which dominate our country and are trying to ensure the exclusive domination of the state apparatus.

The successive crises are due to the development of the revolution to which each bourgeois fraction opposes its program. One cannot know in advance which force will win the lion's share. The vicissitudes of this acute struggle are a striking confirmation of the law of the uneven development of imperialism.

The detachments of the bourgeoisie are unified only when the revolution rises. It can also happen that when the popular struggle has gained momentum, these contradictions become more accentuated and confuse the camp of the bourgeoisie. But when it is seriously threatened (as during the crisis of November 4) all its tendencies unite on the essential, the repression of the popular movement.

Now it is the turn of social-imperialism to take advantage of the situation. European forces are maneuvering between him and US imperialism.

Question: Since April 25, the class struggles have developed uninterruptedly. Can you trace the great moments and define the current trends?

Answer: what you say is true, but the rise of the struggles precedes April 25 and conditions it. Since October 1973 a huge strike movement has swept the country. About twelve hundred thousand people walked off the job, particularly in electronics and metallurgy. There was also the Marinha Grande glass strike.

These struggles, economic as to their immediate objectives, were at the same time political, because under fascism any strike posed the question of power.

April 25 intervened to prevent this development of the labor movement, obviously without solving the problems of the working class and the people because it did not touch the roots of class power. Today revolution is the order of the day. Great revolutionary storms are coming.

The bourgeoisie can no longer govern but the working class is not yet in a position to take over. The bourgeoisie cannot impose its programs. Political and economic crises follow one another; revolutionary struggles follow one another. So far there have been four major popular attacks:

– The first, in May, was fundamentally characterized by economic demands. The workers believed that the Provisional Government would solve their problems. There was a powerful wave of strikes. Political issues were obviously present but the working class demanded more money, fewer working hours, an end to fascist slavery. It was not difficult for the bourgeoisie to absorb this crisis with the help of the revisionist party. This is the ultimate means to which the bourgeoisie in difficulty has recourse.

Through him and thanks to the illusions that existed after April 25, the bourgeoisie was able to face up to the situation. It was the time when the revisionists said: “Comrades, you have to have patience, everything will be resolved, it's a matter of time, now fascism is over, you have to wait; you mustn't ask the sky, you have to be careful, the reaction is waiting; to demand too much is to play into reaction. »

This propaganda slowed down this first wave of assault. The fundamental characteristic of this period was the multiplication of struggles, but politically, their level was not very advanced.

The struggle developed practically throughout the country, all the factories went on strike not simultaneously, but practically all of them at one time or another. It would be interesting to ask the neo-revisionist groups what became of their thesis according to which the revolution in Portugal was in ebb.

Virtually the entire working class has engaged in struggles, and other popular strata as well. We then said: this is the first crisis, but others will follow. Each will be deeper and will more seriously undermine the foundations of the bourgeois state; the working class deepens its experience, learns to distinguish its enemies from its friends, to know its adversaries.

– The second crisis was clearly political; it ended with the resignation of the first provisional government. In the face of the situation which showed no signs of improvement, in the face of the economic crisis, the working class began to struggle again. And not just the working class. This second crisis begins at the end of May-beginning of June. The colonial question is posed there, with the unanimous demand for the end of the war.

There were very significant struggles where the revisionist party appeared as the cop, the main agent of repression. Strikes such as that of the transport of Garris, in Lisbon, that of the bakers and especially that of the CTT (Posts, Telegraphs, Telephone) were the first great shocks which allowed whole sectors of the working people to know the true nature of the revisionism.

***Question:* is it true that the revisionist party tried to organize the population against the CTT strikers?**

Answer: it is true. Not in large urban centers where the strikers could count on significant popular support mainly organized by our movement, but in smaller centers like Marinha Grande.

The revisionists not only organized meetings against the postal workers but also launched social-fascist commando expeditions against them. Through the radio and the press they called on the population to rise up against the strikers. Their central watchword was: “The strike plays into the hands of reaction. »

The strikers held on as long as they could. They even kicked out of their premises revisionist leaders who came to, let's say, "advise" them.

This second crisis ended with the resignation of the first provisional government. The peace, however, did not last long. This second provisional government reinforced the positions of the revisionists by bringing to the post of Prime Minister an officer (Vasco Gonçalves) whose sympathies for the revisionists are notorious. Illusions spread and the bourgeoisie obtained a small truce, but now, in the months of August and September, a new crisis broke out.

The anti-colonial movement then asserted itself around the slogans: "Total independence and complete separation for the peoples of the colonies, this is the only way to peace", and "not a single embarkation more for the colonies ! », « return of the soldiers! ". The bourgeois power was forced to hastily recognize the independence of the colonies. This a few days before a large mass demonstration called for the last days of July.

This great popular anti-colonialist movement unmasked the demagogic maneuvers of the bourgeoisie (proclaiming the right to independence for the colonies, announcing that the war was going to end, that everything was over).

Our movement and the popular anti-colonial movement (MPAC) have organized the struggle against war, for the complete independence of the colonies, for the return of soldiers, against the embarkations. Ten thousand people rallied to their appeal on July 30 in Lisbon. It was an important victory.

At the same time the democratic movement also took off in response to the development of the fascist conspiracy. This movement set itself the goal of uprooting fascism by its roots and for that purpose of overthrowing the power of the monopolies and imperialism. Most of the workers' struggles of this period are not essentially of a protest nature but have anti-fascist targets.

This is the case of the TAP strike in August-September. The workers demanded the departure from the company of the fascists responsible for the repression of July 12, 1973 which left one dead. They also presented economic demands but the political objectives were the main ones. The strikers of the "Journal du Commerce" have put the resignation of a fascist at the top of their demands.

Similarly at Lisnave, thousands of workers took to the streets to demand the expulsion of the fascists from the company. The most significant struggles also carried an anti-imperialist connotation. For example, the workers of Sogontal fought against the dismissals decided by this French multinational. These struggles pitted the working class against the bourgeois state and the revisionist party whose local cells boycotted all these strikes.

This period was also marked in September by the mobilization of the peasants. They demanded the restitution of the "baldios", communal lands expropriated under fascism by the State, especially where there were forests to put them at the disposal of the cellulose monopolies. South of the Tagus, an area where agricultural workers are numerous, they also entered into struggle.

Faced with this great popular movement which posed the questions of peace, land, the consequent fight against fascism, the provisional government tried to retaliate by banning our

newspaper (which reappeared in hiding) and by promulgating a series anti-grassroots laws. That on the press is identical to the law drawn up by Caetano but which he was unable to impose.

September 28 put an end to this crisis. The imperialist-fascist fraction of the bourgeoisie wanted to take the situation in hand by organizing a coup d'etat for which September 28 was the preparation. A few days earlier we had said: "Great class clashes, great popular struggles are preparing! The revolution and the counter-revolution will know their first confrontation. »

This is what happened on September 28 and the crisis was apparently resolved. The revisionists claimed that fascism had been defeated, that a new era was about to dawn. A certain truce intervened again but it too did not last long. All the measures taken by the government were formal.

Monopolies and imperialist interests have not been affected. The Provisional Government continues to sell our country to all factions of imperialism who dispute it. The political, economic and social situation has not undergone any profound change.

Right now we are in the middle of a fourth crisis. It is conditioned by the crisis of world capitalism. Massive unemployment acts as a detonator. Officially, there are 150,000 unemployed. They will be twice as many by the end of the year. There are layoffs in entire branches such as construction, textiles, electronics. The working class opposes it with strikes and occupations in accordance with our slogans. The unemployed are also beginning to organize themselves.

At the same time, inflation is enormous. The demagogic character of the minimum wage granted by the revisionists in the month of May is clearly apparent to the working class. This minimum wage has been completely eaten up by rising prices. There is also the question of working hours, which is becoming a political question: the struggle for 40 hours is the main weapon possessed by workers, those made redundant, the unemployed.

Home occupation movements have been recorded in Lisbon in the last week; everywhere, the masses who live in the slums marched on the city and occupied several houses, from where they were expelled by the Copcon forces. So here is the situation in its general features, with, again, the peasant movement which, for its part, did not know a truce at the time of September 28th.

Unemployment in the peasantry is dramatic. The struggle for the "baldios" [common land] and the wage struggle remain very much on the agenda.

A major crisis is therefore brewing. It is characterized by a sharp struggle within the state apparatus and the military apparatus between fractions of the bourgeoisie and their parties.

Everywhere there is division, public denials are multiplying. As I speak, the working class is beginning to side with our movement, to lend it its support by coming to discuss its problems in our headquarters, by unmasking the inter-union.

During an important fight led by the dockers in Lisbon, an inter-union delegate was thrown out with this insult: "Inter-unionist, cut yourself up! »

Question: the laws against the press, the anti-strike law, can you give us the content?

Answer: apparently, the press law says: "We are in a democracy, prior censorship is over. But in fact, they have set up an "ad hoc" commission of soldiers (the "colonel censors") which has full power to impose fines and suspend any newspaper found guilty of having written anything hostile to what they refer to under the vague term "Armed Forces program".

Express yourself from a revolutionary point of view, Marxist-Leninist, hostile to the provisional government, to the movement of the Armed Forces, popularize the struggles led by soldiers and sailors in the barracks, you will see your newspaper suspended for one, two, three months or subject to a fine payable within twenty-four hours of up to ECU 500,000. Unable to appeal.

With regard to the anti-strike law, the first article authorizes the strike but it is followed by the enumeration of all the cases where this one is not allowed and the conditions in which the strike applies. authorisation. First, you need the agreement of the Intersyndicale with thirty days' notice.

Strikes are prohibited in fundamental sectors of the economy. It is only possible after several days of mandatory negotiation. It follows that you can almost never go on strike. Moreover, the working class has never accepted this law: practically all the strikes which broke out after its promulgation violated it. Finally, you cannot go on strike with an occupation. However, lockouts are permitted.

Assembly and association laws require that officials be appointed and that a pre-application be filed before any protest. They grant the authorities the right to prohibit any assembly when "the general interests" are in any way "threatened".

Question: You alluded to the struggles of sailors and soldiers. How have they developed in recent months?

Answer: the peasants, the workers, mobilized by force in the colonialist army led, even under fascism, struggles against the war, the embargoes, the militarist discipline. Desertions have been very numerous, as you well know in France. After April 25, our movement remained at the head of this struggle. The MFA calls itself a movement of the whole army. In reality, he only represents the officers of the permanent cadre.

So he did not change anything in the discipline and the militarist hierarchy. In the barracks there were dozens of fiercely suppressed struggles. They were directed by our clandestine organization within the army "the Popular Anticolonial Resistance" (RPAC). Two comrades accused of belonging to this organization are currently in prison. Comrade Etelvino was arrested on his return to the barracks after the November 4 demonstration.

They discovered that he was injured and locked him up in Fort Elvas. The other comrade was denounced by revisionist officers who recognized him in a photograph taken during an anti-colonialist demonstration.

We encourage soldiers to refuse to leave for Mozambique or Angola. We are determined to continue this fight and we accept the risks. Besides, she won us the sympathy of the soldiers.

When our newspaper “Luta Popular” was hit with a fine of 50,000 crowns, among the first people who came to our headquarters to donate the few crowns collected around them, there were numerous groups of soldiers. They told us: “Comrades, we don't know each other, but your newspaper is our newspaper. »

In our meetings, despite the risks, we make it a matter of principle to have army comrades in uniform among the speakers. Only the revisionists who are united with the officers but not with the soldiers oppose it, and also the neo-revisionists who are afraid. The latter are almost all supporters of the MFA.

Question: what do the four stages of the labor movement that you spoke of represent from the point of view of the progression of the forms of consciousness and organization of the proletariat and the popular masses?

Answer: in our country the petty bourgeoisie has a considerable weight and ideological influence further reinforced by the fact that the working class was led for fifty years by the revisionist party which disarmed it politically and ideologically.

Today a growing part of the advanced elements of the working class are beginning to lose their illusions and, noting the behavior of the revisionists, they are gradually beginning to follow our slogans, to support the positions of the Marxist-Leninists.

Struggles like those of the CTT, the TAP and the Lisnave were schools of political consciousness for many of our current executives. The development of the crisis, the fact that revisionism appears as a counter-revolutionary force and the experience of the masses in their struggles of the positions of the various parties, have been the determining factors in the evolution of political consciousness.

Until now many workers, especially petty bourgeois, wavered. When the crisis came, they supported our movement; as the crisis receded, they supported the power in place. With the ripening of revolutionary conditions this oscillation begins to stabilize. The workers choose their camp and stick to it.

The growing awareness of what the nature of revisionism and state power is becomes clear when comparing April 25 and September 28. April 25 was a party. The people were in the street; it was freedom, fascism was defeated, a new society was about to be born. Many were under the illusions. On September 28, this great joy no longer existed.

The demonstrations were strongly framed by the revisionists and the broad masses said: “Essentially nothing has changed. Low wages, unemployment, such is our lot. We saw this clearly on October 1 when the Intersyndicale organized a meeting to support "the action of the democratic forces victorious on September 28".

It was a failure because this meeting only brought together a few thousand people. This awareness of the masses was made on the basis of their own experience. They were able to verify what we were saying.

As far as the organizations are concerned, the position defined by the first national conference of the MRPP at the beginning of May is still current. When it comes to bringing thousands of people onto the streets in a relatively short time, you have to be able to count on connections.

These are ensured by the organizations of the popular will: the workers' commissions, the neighborhood commissions, the peasants' associations. It is significant that none of the major struggles that have taken place since April 25 (at TAP, at CTT, at Lisnave) has been led by the intersyndicale but by the workers themselves, organized by their front -keep.

In addition, we also insist on the need to militate in the unions. The masses flock there because they still have illusions about them. They realize it is true that the inter-union is a repressive bureaucratic apparatus. Nevertheless, to solve their problems, the masses join the trade unions. So we have to be there.

We do not, however, neglect our work in the workers' commissions which have been created spontaneously in almost all the factories. We strive to put combative workers at their head, our comrades, because they constitute a mass bond and it is vital that the vanguard be at the head of the workers' organizations in a situation where the revolution is on today's agenda.

Question: what are the relations between the workers' commissions and the trade union structures?

Answer: there is none. In the factories the workers elect their commission proportionally. She can take charge of all the affairs of the factory. It is an organ of their will. The inter-union fights to put its delegates in the factories but the workers oppose it. We fight to impose that the delegates are elected at the factory, by the base.

Question: it is necessary to underline the particular character of the trade union experience of the Portuguese working class. Until April 25 there existed fascist, corporatist trade unions, in which the revisionists participated. After April 25, the union question does not arise in the same terms as in other countries that do not have the same history.

Answer: yes, before the trade unions were fascist-revisionists. The revisionists already occupied very strong positions there. The masses, on the other hand, had no confidence in it.

They only went there at specific times, such as the revision of employment contracts. For them it was an organization sold. At that time our tactic was not to join the union and to unmask its fascist-revisionist character. We urge the masses to strengthen the workers' commissions.

After April 25 the transformed trade unions became "revisionist liberals". There is now freedom of association but the revisionists, taking advantage of their strong previous presence, have taken over the management of the Intersyndicale. They turned it into a social-fascist bureaucracy at the service of the bourgeois state and the bosses.

However, the masses join the unions because they harbor illusions that their problems can be solved with their help. We must intervene there, organize Marxist-Leninist nuclei to transform them from organs of the counter-revolution into organs of the revolution. This is a real possibility for us.

Question: When was the Movement for the Reorganization of the Proletarian Party (MRPP) founded?

Answer: the MRPP was founded on September 18, 1970, inside Portugal, in the strictest secrecy. It is a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist movement, in the sense that it follows the political,

ideological, theoretical positions of the great educators of the world proletariat, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Tse-tung; we consider the teachings of the GRCP (the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution) and the contribution of comrade Mao Tse-tung to the theory of the revolution as creative contributions.

For us, Maoism is the Marxism-Leninism of our time. Our movement was founded in opposition to all previous initiatives, opportunists, neo-revisionists, of breaking with revisionism. We consider that the revisionist party, the so-called PCP has never been a communist party. In his early days he was an anarcho-syndicalist; in the 1930s it was transformed into a right-wing opportunist and revisionist party. The attempts made in 1964 to break with revisionism only reproduced revisionism in new forms.

The small groups which appeared, particularly in emigration, after 1963 were neo-revisionists. Our movement aims to creatively apply the principles of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to the concrete situation of the class struggle in Portugal, to merge socialism with the labor movement of our country. Its foundation represents a new stage in the struggle of the Portuguese working class for its emancipation.

Question: your Movement is called “Movement for the Reorganization of the Party of the Proletariat”, so it sets itself the task of realizing the conditions for the foundation of the Bet?

Answer: We consider the founding of the Party to be the primary task of the Portuguese Communists. But in the specific conditions of the Portuguese workers' movement, where there is a revisionist party which for more than fifty years disarmed, deceived the working class, founded a new party by means of a split within the Portuguese "communist" party would lead to the reproduction of this party.

This is what happened in 1963 and after, with the appearance of neo-revisionist groups, several of whom claimed to have formed the Party. We believe that this cannot be founded by decree but in the class struggle by the fusion of Marxist-Leninist theory and the practice of the labor movement.

This Party will be forged in the flames of the class struggle during prolonged practice, from a Marxist-Leninist nucleus rooted in the masses. He will have to realize the necessary and sufficient political, organizational and ideological conditions for the founding of the Party.

We are talking about founding the Party because we do not want to take up the traditions, the "heroes", the practices of the revisionists. It cannot be of any interest, except as a negative example. It is a question of founding a party of a new type. This cannot be done by a decision taken by four or five people in the four walls of a room.

Question: What are the conditions for the founding of the Party?

Answer: They were formulated during a meeting of the Central Committee in October 1972.

1° to have developed a minimum program and a maximum program as well as the statutes. However, the program cannot be drawn up in private by half a dozen specialists. It must arise from the class struggle and respond to its needs. We have essentially fulfilled this condition and are preparing a draft program for the end of this year. We will publish the statutes at the same time.

2 ° To have drawn a line of demarcation between the Marxist-Leninists and the revisionists on the one hand, the Marxist-Leninists and the neo-revisionists on the other. We have waged an important ideological struggle in our country against false communists. We have in particular politically and ideologically characterized neo-revisionism, a phenomenon which has also appeared, we believe, in other countries.

3 ° Thirdly, we set the condition to have a clear, clear and firm position on the colonial question and on the question of the national independence of our fatherland. Our movement was the only one that adopted proletarian internationalist positions, launching the slogan "People's War against the Colonial War!" », transformation of the colonial war into a revolutionary civil war.

He led inside the country in the harsh conditions of clandestinity, a great mass struggle against the war and for the national independence of the brotherly peoples of the colonies. We have also characterized our country as a neo-colony of American imperialism, and designated it as the main enemy of the Portuguese people.

4 ° The fourth condition is to have strong nuclei in the main workers' centers and in some peasant centres. Our movement now has strong, stable, firm nuclei in the main industrial and urban centers of our country. On the other hand, our penetration into the peasantry is still insufficient. We must make significant efforts to ensure that this condition is fully met.

5 ° The fifth condition is the recognition of our movement by the enemy, as being its main enemy, and the recognition of the popular masses with regard to our movement as their vanguard. It is also necessary, although not an essential condition, that the international communist movement have at least an implicit understanding of the role of our movement. As regards the first two points, we consider these conditions to be sufficiently fulfilled.

As far as the attitude of the international communist movement is concerned, our movement is currently endeavoring to make its position known. We recently started a movement of study and rectification of the cadres and of mobilization with a view to the founding of the Party. This historical moment of the class struggle in Portugal is not far away.

Question: could you tell us about the mass organizations created on the initiative of the MRPP?

Answer: our movement has formed or supported the establishment of several mass political organizations, almost all of them under fascism.

– The “Mouvement Populaire Anti Colonial” (MPAC) which launched both inside and among emigrants a vast action against colonialism and war, for the complete independence of the brotherly peoples of the colonies.

– The Anti-Colonial Popular Resistance (RPAC), which brings together anti-colonialist and anti-militarist soldiers and sailors in the fight against colonialism and war and against fascist military discipline. Their watchword is to turn the arms against the bourgeoisie. The RPAC, which appeared immediately after our movement, is the first mass organization that we founded; it corresponded to a deep need for political work to mobilize anti-colonialist forces in the army.

The MPAC and the RPAC each have their central newspaper, the “Anticolonialist” for the first, “La Résistance” for the second. They are still in hiding.

There is also, recently founded, the Revolutionary Federation of Portuguese Students. The FREP brings together a large number of Ribeiro Santos committees. It is a revolutionary and progressive youth organization. Ribeiro Santos committees also exist among non-student youth.

But the Ribeiro Santos student committees are united in the FREP. The last session of its founding congress, on November 7, was attended by 80 delegates from all over the country. The FREP publishes a legal newspaper: "October 12".

This is the date when our comrade Ribeiro Santos was assassinated in 1972 by the Pide with the help of the revisionists. His example inspired our revolutionary and progressive youth organization. It is especially among young students and high school students that the conditions are currently met for a regrouping in a vast mass political organization. The FREP currently has thousands of members.

It is a very popular organization. In all the cities of the country there are today Ribeiro Santos committees which are developing rapidly because they respond to the organizational needs of revolutionary and progressive youth.

Question: under what conditions was Ribeiro Santos assassinated?

Answer: it was during a meeting against fascist repression at the Higher Institute of Economics in Lisbon. Many students have been imprisoned and tortured. This meeting brought together several hundred students.

Shortly before it began, the students discovered an agent of the Portuguese Legion and the Pide near the room. They recognized him and led him in front of the assembly wearing a bag and his hands tied behind his back; they were preparing to make a popular judgment of this assassin.

Panicked, the revisionists who were at the time directing the association of students of the Institute of Economics went to find the secretary of the Faculty (who was himself an informant of the Pide) to call the Pide in order to let her say if it was indeed one of her agents. The students had already identified him.

The revisionists did so shortly after entering the room, followed by two Pide agents. The masses denounced the presence of the Pides and attacked them to inflict a just retribution. At the head of the young people was our comrade Ribeiro Santos, militant of the Federation of Marxist-Leninist Students.

When he rushed against the Pides, the revisionists held him back, shouting, "Calm down, calm down! and gave the Pide agents time to cock their guns and open fire. He died of a bullet to the lungs.

Another comrade escaped murder by grabbing the Pide, forcing him to lower the gun. He received several rifle bullets in the leg. Then he was imprisoned and tortured. The spirit of Comrade Ribeiro Santos, the spirit of serving the people and leading the masses, has inspired the work of our entire movement and that of our youth organizations in particular.

When on June 13, 1973 the shock police killed a TAP worker during a strike in this company, the student youth of Lisbon decided to organize themselves in the Ribeiro Santos committee to

support the TAP workers. Despite the clandestine conditions, this initiative had a great impact. Many young workers and workers from other parts of the country have organized themselves similarly.

There are also the March 8 committees which bring together anti-fascist workers. These committees do not yet have a centralized organization. They are established in neighborhoods and factories under the direction of the most advanced women. They organize the struggle of women for local demands, against the high cost of living, unemployment, the overexploitation to which they are subjected in their work, etc.

It is a different movement from the MLF. We believe that the liberation of women is inseparable from the emancipation of the working class. The women are doing a magnificent job of agitation-propaganda against the war. They gathered the soldiers' mothers, wives and fiancées in large demonstrations after April 25, demanding the immediate return of the soldiers and opposing boarding.

We also called for the formation of workers' commissions. Before April 25, they existed underground. Today they function in all factories as largely democratic bodies elected by the working class.

Peasant associations only appeared in a few places. We are currently working hard on this front. Agricultural workers and poor peasants come together in these associations to demand the expropriation of large landowners and the distribution of land. They also put forward claims relating to wages, product prices, land prices, etc.

There is also an organization built around the "Yenan" newspaper. It brings together intellectuals, revolutionary artists under the leadership of the proletariat. Their task is to produce the new culture, the culture of the revolution in the service of the people. The newspaper "Yenan", clandestine before April 25, appears today legally.

To these organizations are added others not integrated into our movement but linked to it. For example the Federation of Marxist-Leninist Students. It was the first communist organization we created.

It has taken the lead in several major student struggles in recent years. Its cadres soaked themselves in mass struggles and torture. It publishes a legal newspaper: "Red Guard".

Our movement has just launched a peripheral organization outside the country also for emigrants so that they support the Portuguese people and raise their political awareness during the struggles in which they participate abroad.

Question: could you tell us about the main watchwords of the MRPP?

Answer: the revolution in Portugal will have two stages: the first will be democratic and will bring to power a popular democratic dictatorship, a new type of state led by the working class in alliance with the peasantry and all classes and strata of the population exploited by the imperialism and monopoly capitalism.

It is the important role of the poor peasantry in the revolution that makes this stage of democratic and popular revolution necessary. This first stage will realize the conditions for the passage to the second, the socialist revolution.

A few major objectives sum up the program of the democratic and popular revolution:

– *bread* , that is to say the end of exploitation by monopoly capital and imperialism, the return to the working class of the means of production;

– *land* , ie the expropriation of latifundia and their distribution to poor peasants;

– *peace* which requires full recognition of the right to independence of the peoples of the colonies. There are still major tasks to be accomplished in this area. Indeed, the people of Mozambique won a great victory with the signing of the Lusaka Accords, but a new provocation from Portuguese colonialism and imperialism is still possible.

They are preparing a plot to prevent the Angolan people from gaining full independence. In Timor, Portuguese colonialism wants to maintain its domination with the support of American imperialism, which would like to make Portugal a policeman protecting its interests in this area of the East.

In the Cape Verde Islands, the Portuguese government is trying to obstruct the free decision of the people to unite with Guinea. In Sao Tome and Principe, colonialism is opposed to independence by means of the neo-colonialist maneuver of the referendum, the constituent assembly, etc., as in Angola.

We also denounce the provocations of which the minister of the so-called "court of Portuguese inter-territorial nations" was guilty by considering Macao as an integral part of the Portuguese State. Macao is an integral part of the People's Republic of China, and only the latter will decide when this territory will come out of Portuguese domination;

– *national independence* . It assumes that our homeland is free from any imperialist or social-imperialist influence. This is not the case today. We will achieve this goal when the proletariat and the people expropriate the property of the imperialists and expel the imperialist and social-imperialist agencies.

– *democracy, freedom* . They must benefit the people who will exercise the strongest dictatorship over the exploiters. We will have a "new democracy" based on the alliance of the peasantry and the working class with all the exploited classes under the leadership of the proletariat.

Bread, peace, land, democracy, freedom, independence for the colonies and for Portugal, these are the six objectives of our program.

Question: you are currently in the phase of democratic and popular revolution characterized by these six slogans. With the overthrow of the monopoly capitalist state, this phase ends, and the next stage begins, that of the socialist revolution, isn't it?

Answer: Yes, the people's armed revolution will establish a new, democratic and popular type of state. This power must be led by the working class. It is a condition for us to move on to the

stage of socialism, to the transformation of the democratic and popular state into a socialist state.

Question: with an adequate program for this new stage?

Answer: That is a socialist program.

Question: what does the Constituent Assembly represent in the strategy of the bourgeoisie?

Answer: bourgeois politics at the moment obeys two necessities: the first is to prevent through repression that the Marxist-Leninists can conquer the leadership of the struggles; the second is to end the crisis by imposing a truce in the class struggle through elections for the Constituent Assembly.

Whether these elections take place or not depends on future events. Revolution is the order of the day. The bourgeoisie can no longer govern, the working class is preparing for it.

We must be ready to face all future developments, whether they come from the counter-revolution or from the popular masses. It is nevertheless true that the elections will bring about a social truce. They are a maneuver of the bourgeoisie to check the popular movement. Strategically, the Marxist-Leninist position is that this Assembly, as well as the state, must be destroyed.

This is why we work for the development of the revolutionary struggle, for the deepening of the crisis. That said, tactically we must take into account the illusions that the masses harbor with regard to the Constituent Assembly.

They will be interested in the elections if they take place. Our duty is to take part in it, to take advantage of all the forums to present our program, to unmask the maneuver of the elections, to raise the consciousness of the masses. It would be abandoning them to the influence of the bourgeoisie not to take part in the campaign.

It must be said that the new laws that regulate elections and parties are as anti-popular and wicked as the previous ones. They are designed to eliminate Marxist-Leninists. Even if a party obtains a majority in one, two or three constituencies, it cannot be represented in the Assembly if it has not obtained 5% of the votes in the whole country.

Moreover, the bourgeoisie has fabricated a law that obliges political parties to give five thousand names to the police in order to register for elections. But the popular masses will offer to give these five thousand signatures and even more. Our party will thus be able to protect its backbone, its central political apparatus, against the attempts of the bourgeoisie to know it in order to destroy it.

The question of the legal legalization of our movement or the party (in case it exists at this time) has nothing to do with the question of the founding of the party.

The latter is a political question to be decided by the working class and is not subject to the conditions of the bourgeoisie. Our movement will be transformed into a Party when the political conditions established by its CC are met.

Question: Tell us about the campaign you launched to collect the signatures needed to legalize your movement.

Answer: we started this popular membership campaign in a large mass meeting on Friday November 22 at the Sports Pavilion in Lisbon. After explaining our policy in front of more than ten thousand people, we asked them to subscribe to membership forms that we had made available to them. There were more than two thousand adhesions. We are confident that we will be able to collect far more than the necessary five thousand signatures during the meetings which will take place throughout the country.

Question: You spoke of the popular uprising and the preparations for an armed counter-revolution. The revisionists make a big hype comparing the Portuguese situation and the Chilean situation. What about mass revolutionary violence, from the current stage in Portugal?

Answer: with the development of the revolution will appear the need to arm the people and to organize their violence. We envision the time when the revolution will cease to develop peacefully. At this time the Marxist-Leninists must be ready to lead a people's army. In Portugal the revolution will not prevail in a short time as in Russia. We will have a protracted people's war, mainly because at this stage the intervention of imperialism is inevitable.

Question: what do you think of the fight of the two superpowers for Portugal?

Answer: a new Munich is being prepared following the "European Security" conference. The development of the revolution in countries dominated until then without sharing by the United States (Greece, Spain, Portugal) reduced their influence while that of social-imperialism was reinforced.

The danger of an imperialist or social-imperialist coup awaits our people. The two superpowers are united to prevent revolution while fighting over our homeland. Kissinger threatened the President of the Military Junta to pull the rug out from under him. He told European leaders that the United States would intervene "in case the situation becomes very serious".

If such an eventuality were to materialize, the Portuguese people would need the fullest support of the other European peoples in their patriotic struggle. This is already of the utmost importance.

Question: you hypothesized that this aggression could come from Spanish military forces?

Answer: yes. We cannot know how this intervention will be triggered in practice. One thing is certain, to defend "American interests and citizens", there are several ways to intervene: landing marines, bombing, invading with Portuguese mercenaries, etc.

CIA agents are currently preparing and arming thousands of Pide agents in Spain who are training near the border in conjunction with mercenaries from other countries. They benefit from the complicity of the Spanish authorities. The possibility of an invasion from Spain with the help of the fascist army, or its direct intervention, should not be excluded.

Question: Faced with this situation, what internationalist support do you expect from European progressives, revolutionaries and Marxist-Leninists?

Answer: the revolutionary storm is approaching in Europe where revolts are constantly breaking out against capitalist exploitation, American imperialism, social-imperialism.

The magnitude of these struggles, fruit of the general crisis of imperialism, will increase. Our country occupies a special place in this situation because revolution is the order of the day there. The class struggle has reached a very acute stage there where the working class must consider being able to govern while the bourgeoisie is no longer in a condition to do so.

Our struggle can hold lessons for the entire European labor movement. The outcome of the decisive battles which will be fought in Portugal will affect the class struggle in Europe. Since the creation of our movement, the Portuguese working class has been able to fulfill its internationalist duties and has the firm intention of continuing to do so.

In return, we are sure to be able to count on the support of the working class and that of the Marxist-Leninists who lead its struggles in Europe. This support will be of the utmost importance for the revolution in Portugal. In turn, the victory of this revolution will make a great contribution to the development of the proletarian revolution in Europe and in other parts of the world.