

NATIONAL REPORT

Vol. 3, No. 22

August 7-20, 1975

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FOR I.S. AND RED TIDE MEMBERS ONLY

HELP WANTED:

TO BE FILLED IMMEDIATELY.

The NO is looking for a comrade to work full-time for the organization in the NO handling the business of the organization, distribution of books, and circulation of WP. The fulfillment of these tasks is absolutely critical to the functioning of the I.S. It is essential that someone is found immediately to take on this job. Please send in your applications by August 12 in writing to the Nat'l Sec'y. Same paltry, minimal subsistence level rates paid (health plan included), and comrade will have the thrilling opportunity of working in the center of the organization and being in the Detroit branch.

PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE

To all Branches from the N. O.:

- 1) All communication between branches must be from organizer to organizer.
- 2) Starting with the next National Report, we'll be doing branch reports from the national office. The practice of sending branch reports to other branches must cease. From now on, branch reports are to be sent to the NO only.

EC Meeting -- July 23, 1975

Present: GW, MD, GS, KM, MP
Also: JL

Item:

Implementation:

1. Responsibilities of NO personnel. Presentation by GW.
A. Pairing of NC members with EC members (covers
NC members and alternates)

BW-MD	JF-GW	FH-JG	KB-GS	SK-JW
CW-JW	MS-JW	WT-MP	ML-MP	BR-MD
DF-JG	JN-GW	EE-GS	HK-KM	JL-GS
JT-JG	EH-MD	KP-KM	MF-MP	ML-KM

2. Busing. Presentation by MP. Fall busing plans: Detroit,
Louisville and Philadelphia.
MOTIONS: All points PASSED

- 1.) Subcommittee of MD, MP JW to develop specific plans for Detroit,
Louisville and Philly.
- 2.) Produce pamphlet on "Why Socialists Support Busing" and
building a defense.
- 3.) General propaganda campaign which the rest of the
organization will implement.
- 4.) Extra coverage in WP (Black Commission to help)

JW, MD, MP to implement
(MP on pamphlet)

3. Presentation and Discussion on Red Tide by MP.

4. Branch reports by GW: New York, Pitts, Cleve. Brief report on
Indianapolis by MP.

5. Budget

MOTION: Budget on special projects for industrial fractions
expanded as per discussion at Post-Convention NC. PASSES

6. Resolutions tabled from the Convention.

A. Chicago: (1) In all action or interventionist campaigns
EC minutes and votes will be disclosed in the period of
evaluation. (2) All votes will be disclosed on
theoretical and political discussions.

MOTION; Reject. PASSES

- B. MP Amendment on Branch leadership referred from Convention.
Referred to MP and KM for action.

7. Presentation by KM on Louisville, Future of WCP.
MOTION: Nothing to happen to FH gets back. PASSES

GW to make assignments for
trips to Louis. and Chi.

8. AFT Motion: Tabled to Industrial Commission (with MJ) and
brought back to EC with recommendation. PASSED

9. Integration of New worker members document and
presentation by GW. Document as amended circulated
in next National Report.

EC Meeting --- July 31, 1975

Present: GW, KM, GS, MP, MD
Also: JL

~~Item: Implementation:~~

1. Portugal: Presentation by DF. Document and Discussion. 2 parts: Current Crisis, Our strategy and intervention here.

MOTION:

1. Fact-sheet on Portugal to be sent to branches to aid comrades in writing articles, etc. for bulletin (withdrawn)
2. Write individual we know of and find what kind of network we can send things to. PASSES
3. Draft an article for a r&f bulletin to be sent to branches, and that it deal with question of SP and the union bureaucracy. PASSES
4. Ask comrades now to investigate within their unions possibility of sending delegation to Portugal (companies, ie., with plants in Portugal) FAILS
5. Political line of document be passed, and document be sent out to branches. Amendment: Move points 1-8; rest of document, plus stuff on Angola be rewritten in light of events which are about to take place. PASSED

DF to implement,

2. Dealing with other groups on the left. Presentation by MD.

MOTION: NO to send out specifics to branches on this question. (the SL) PASSES

DF to implement. Ask
Bob P (CL) to help.
JL to get out to branches.

MOTION: 1. Our aim is to politically defend our work;

2. On implementation: refer to security commission to come up with concrete plan for physical defense.

Amendment: Ask BA to write up their experiences for the bulletin.

Amendment: All incidents of physical threats should be reported to the EC. PASSES

3. Presentation and discussion on Auto Fraction by MP.

4. Presentation by MP on the role of the Black Commission.

5. IBT report and discussion, KM. Our work on the contract was slow in starting; moving well now. Number of rank and file militants involved continues to grow. Prospects look good.

6. NC meetings.

MOTION: No more MC's on 3-day weekends, traditional holidays for workers and their families. FAILS

MOTION: Postpone labor day NC 1 week -- will be a 2-day/GW to get letter out. NC. PASSES

Postpone labor day NC one month. FAILS

STEPS IN THE INTEGRATION OF NEW WORKER MEMBERS

- 1) All new members must have a clear understanding of what membership involves before they actually join. All the responsibilities are laid out on the joining form attached. These are not a great burden, but they should be made clear and concrete. The practise of comrades getting their membership responsibilities a little at a time after joining must end. People should be approached with the form early on, they will sign up by the third attempt.
- 2) All new members must be given responsibility for assignments as early as possible. They must be real assignments and even if they appear trivial must be fully explained so that comrades know why doing them will take us forward. The area of work will most often be an existing fraction. A worker joining from outside that framework must be worked around immediately, and a clear perspective for that work must be stated from the outset, only in rare cases will a new member go into a fraction that has nothing to do with workplace.
- 3) Every new member must be assigned a more experienced one who has the responsibility for integrating them. Particularly this comrade will have to talk about the internal workings of the group (often the biggest mystery to new members) and talk politics on every level as much as possible. It remains a fact that the majority of political education comes from informal raps. A social relationship between the two can be extremely important, though friendship cannot be a substitute for political development. The new member has to be consciously, socially integrated into the whole branch, there must be the sort of functions at which this can happen.
- 4) As early as possible workers have to be brought into the leadership. This does not necessarily mean that this is stated openly by the branch to be the intention, but it must covertly happen. Workers join us because they are impressed with us. It is natural that they often feel not good enough to give a lead. But we need to take the lead they can give us. It is not a question of an option. The early "granting of titles" should be avoided as this is often only the formal seal on a general informal tendency to wrongly place new*members on a pedestal. *worker
- 5) All new members should be under discipline to regularly attend internal political discussion groups. The groups should be small, but not one to one. The other members of the class should also be new if possible. Until later in the summer articles from Workers Power (N.B. talking about socialism) should be used after that we will have the new Basic Education Programme. Our worker members will often have to be encouraged to read, even news mags, papers and socialist novels should be pushed delicately.
- 6) A way must be found to give all new members a sense of the national organisation. Preferably thru visits to conferences, other branches etc but also thru the fraction bulletins, meeting national leaders etc. All new members should be introduced to all the most impressive members of the branch and get a feel for other areas of work.
- 7) There will be no integration of workers without smoothly run child care and an orientation to the whole family. The nuclear family is not ideal but it is the revolution rather IS which should destroy it.
- 8) The basic units of the organisation must be small, and therefore comfortable to workers. In some cases this will mean down-grading the branch and up-grading the fractions, bringing our politics and previous branch responsibilities into the fractions. In other cases it will be necessary to split the branch into one or

more smaller branches which will not always be functionally or geographically based.

9) New members must be turned into recruiters immediately, they should see that as their main job. The danger of losing members is greatest when they are the newest members and don't feel responsible to someone else they have brought into IS.

10) All branch execs must go thru this check-list for every new member and turn it into a specific strategy for each individual. Even now our growth will not be so massive that this is impossible. The key for us is to keep the new recruits we have. Any problems with even one new member must be reported to the NO as early as possible.

11) We must also develop ways in which the organisation as a whole changes to be habitable for workers. Training and education must be radically revised. The classes must take the form of discussion groups with the teacher becoming the leader and drawing in the day-to-day experiences of workers into the class. Branch meetings must be organised well and efficiently and kept short (a maximum of 2 hours) in which only those items which need to come up are brought up. If there is no reason to hold a meeting, then one should not be held - we must end the practice of having meetings just to have them. Child care must be provided for branch meetings. All political discussions at the meetings must proceed from the concrete to the general. Mailings will also change. We must end the procedure of sending out unintelligible minutes. In their place full reports by the organizer(s) with calendars in which care is taken not to use shorthand IS terms that only older members are familiar with and understand. All documents must be brief (500-1000 words) and to the point. Again care must be taken to avoid internal IS terms. Socials, picnics etc can be important ways to integrate new members. But in order to do this we must be certain that a social is the kind (i.e. time, music, drinks, etc) that our new members and contacts want rather than what we think they should want.

12) As branches change and learn lessons about the integration of new members and becoming habitable for workers, the experience (both positive and negative) must be written up for the national report. We all have a lot to learn, we must learn it quickly, the lead must be given from all sections of the organisation.

Glenn W and Marilyn D for EC Aug 1, 1975

The following is a joining form which is to be reproduced by every branch and used in the recruitment of new members. For security reasons, once the new member has joined they must be referred to only by first name and the form should be destroyed.

INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISTS

I agree with the political aims of the International Socialists, ^{+ perspectives} and wish to ¹ join the ~~become a member~~ and work under the direction of the organisation to assist in building a workers revolutionary party.

I agree to sell every edition of our newspaper, Workers Power, pay my monthly dues which are worked out according to my income and attend the necessary meetings of the branch, branch fractions, etc.

signed

date.....

Important Notice to All Members

SPECIAL ATTENTION OF NC MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES

The next National Committee meeting will not now take place on the Labor day weekend as originally announced. It will be held instead one week later on Sat., Sept. 6th and Sunday, Sept. 7th. The EC felt that with two NC meetings scheduled before Xmas it was not necessary to have a three day meeting for the September NC. It was therefore unnecessary to hold the meeting on a holiday weekend. We will also make every effort not to hold the November NC on the weekend of the Thanksgiving Holiday.

The provisional agenda is 1) Busing 2) The worker membership campaign and weekly WP 3) The contract campaigns and industrial work 4) NC role and new sub-ctte structures and 5) Sub-ctte meetings 6) Portugal.

There will be an organizers conference the day after the NC on Monday, September 8th. Any organizer who may be unable to attend should inform the National Secretary's office as soon as possible.

National Secretary

DISTRICT REORGANIZATION: THE DETROIT PLAN

Madison D.

Introduction

Many of the older and larger branches are facing problems. These include the integration of new members, especially worker and black members, overseeing of numerous areas of work, development of new leadership. These problems are no surprise, because while we have been changing many aspects of the organization during the turn the organization has been involved in, very little has changed with regard to local organization of branches. The branches, especially how they are organized, what they do and how education takes place is not very different than it was two years ago. Thus the branches still reflect the IS of 1973 or earlier, while our work and activity have deepened and changed substantially. It is clear if we are to continue these changes in the organization, they must also be reflected in how the local units of the IS are organized. On the other hand, we are still in a transitional period. The class struggle, our intervention in it, and our leadership have not developed sufficiently that we can go directly to the way the revolutionary party will organize its local work - around functional work units - factory branches, plant cells, fractions.

The aim then is to find ways to reorganize the branches that reflects the other changes in the organization today - most importantly, an organization based upon activity and intervention, as opposed to one based upon discussion of ideas. To accomplish these the political goals must come first. These goals are: To develop units which most quickly and effectively integrate new worker and black members and train these new members, as well as older comrades to give leadership to the work and the organization. Involved in all of this is changes that will make the branches habitable for workers. These must be the goals of any reorganization. In order to do this the units should be small (10-15 members), have the responsibility for at least one area of work, take full responsibility for Workers Power in those areas, as well as recruitment and contact work, education and training, etc. The key is that in a smaller more functional unit all members of the branch or unit must feel collective responsibility for all the work, discussions of the work regularly must be concrete, political discussions must proceed from the concrete to the general and not vice-versa as has been our practice all too often. With these goals in mind, the Detroit branch has just gone from a single large branch of approximately 40 members to three smaller ones in a form of district organization. Below is the Detroit exec's proposal which passed unanimously at the last branch meeting (specific personnel proposal deleted for security purposes). In reading it comrades should be careful to keep in mind the political goals of the reorganization. This structure was developed to meet the needs and correct the specific problems of the Detroit Branch. It should not be followed blindly because the work and problems of branches vary greatly in this period. In some cases reorganization may take place along the lines of upgrading the fractions, giving them a number of the responsibilities that branches now have and downplaying the branch altogether. Other branches will require some modification of the Detroit plan. Lastly, these changes must be approached with great flexibility and consideration to new problems that will inevitably arise.

Detroit Proposal

I. ~~General~~ General proposal and motivation

The Detroit IS branch will be the first branch to be reorganized along district lines. The current branch will be split into 3 branches, each with its own executive committee and exec convenor. The three exec convenors, plus the district organizer (the present branch organizer) will make up the district committee. Each branch will have 12-13 members, will meet bi-weekly for no more than 2 hours, and will be responsible for 3-4 specific areas of work, as well as for contacts and recruitment from those areas, and Workers Power assignments, campaigns for branch members. The District Committee and the District Organizer will be responsible for

the general political work in the area, coordination, black work, public forums, and the women's caucus, which will remain district wide. Specifics of functioning will be taken up below.

The basic motivation for the new structure is twofold: 1) to make the branches more functional, and 2) to aid in the integration and training of new worker members as well as to develop the leadership talents of existing members and new worker members. It is clear that the old structure of one general branch is and has been for some time non-functional. The branch could neither discuss in any real way the work of its members in the several areas they were involved in (and thus have no ability to in any way direct that work), nor could there be good political discussions of general political issues. One reason for this is simply size, and the presence of most of the top national leadership at the meetings.

But in truth, the more basic reason is that while the organization has been changing in its orientation and perspectives (the turn to agitation, etc) the methods of functioning and organization at the branch level have not. This new structure, while seeming to be a radical change, is really only a transitional form of structure to what will become in the next year, the move away from local organization of the IS based on geographical areas to local organization based on functional work units (fractions, plants, factory branches, etc.) In many ways the area wide Detroit branch still reflected the discussion group organization of the past, which in all other means we have been moving away from. This current structure will begin to correct some of the problems, and most importantly provide an atmosphere and organization which can most quickly integrate and train our new worker members into the organization, and develop them as leaders of the IS at this time. There will be problems to iron out, and questions which arise, all of which must be approached in a flexible manner. Below are the specifics in terms of the different levels of organization as to functions, responsibilities, etc. followed by the concrete proposal for the three branches in terms of personnel and areas of work.

2. Function and responsibility of the branches and branch execs:

As stated above, the three branches will meet every 2 weeks for a maximum of 2 hours each. The primary purpose of the branches is to train and integrate new members, and to develop general political leadership. The branches and execs will do this through having the major responsibility for the areas of work assigned to them, including the development of the work, recruitment to the IS from the work, the use of Workers Power in the work, perspectives, etc. In addition, each branch will receive assignments from the District Committee for opening up new areas of work, for example, a new plant, or the major responsibility for a national campaign, for example, the Post Office campaign for the district. A typical branch meeting agenda should look something like the following:

- 1) Brief reports from the major areas of work (no more than 5 minutes, no discussion, factual questions only) 20 minutes
- 2) Short discussion/report on some aspect of business (Workers Power contact work, etc.)
- 3) One ~~major~~ major political discussion on one of the following: a) one of the areas of work, b) general political current issue, c) an article in Workers Power, and how to use it in the work, etc.

The role of the branch exec is to plan the branch meetings, which would include having a general political understanding of the major areas of work, the problems, perspectives, etc., and to make decisions for the branch in between branch meetings. Branch execs will meet bi-weekly, on ~~the~~ off weeks of branch meetings. Each exec will have a convener, whose responsibility will be to ~~plan~~ plan the exec meetings, make small assignments for the exec, and coordinate the activities of the exec. The exec convener will also be a member of the District Committee. Each exec will appoint

a branch member to be responsible for collecting dues and turning them over to the financial secretary of the District. The exec convenors will also be responsible for giving reports from the district committee to the exec and branch, as well as drawing up reports of branch activities for the district mailing which will go out bi-weekly. For those branches which have fractions wholly in the branch, for example CWA or IET, the execs will be responsible for the local functioning of the fraction. In the case of the UAW and CLUW fractions which are district wide, the local fractions will be responsible to the national fraction steering committees, which will coordinate with the District Committee, through the District Organizer.

3. Function and responsibilities of the District Committee and District Organizer:

The responsibility of the District Committee is to coordinate the different branches, provide general overall political direction for the branches and the district specifically to ensure that the black work is developed and taken seriously by the branches, to assign national campaigns to one or more of the branches, and to assign new areas of work to the branches to open up. Overall, it is the responsibility of the District Committee and the District Organizer to ensure that the new structure works, to iron out the inevitable problems that will come up, etc. The District Organizer will not be assigned to any one branch but will function as a member of all three. The Organizer will attend as many branch meetings as possible in the beginning, as well as the new branch execs to assist in setting up the new forms. The District Committee will appoint a **financial secretary for the entire area who will receive the dues** collected from the branches to pay for supplies for all of the branches, rent on the office, phones, and other bills. The District Committee will also appoint a District Secretary who will put out the district bi-weekly mailings which will include a District Organizer's report, a calendar of all district and branch events, and reports from the exec convenors of the branches. These last should be put on stencil by the exec convenors and turned into the District Secretary in that form.

The Women's Caucus will be district wide, and will continue to have its own steering committee which will coordinate the activities of the caucus with the District Organizer and the District Committee as it previously did with the branch exec and organizer.

Public forums will be district wide, and will be built by all of the branches. Branches will be encouraged to set up their own small events of a political and social nature as well.

4. Areas of Work by Branch:

Branch #1 will be responsible for two Chrysler UAW locals and CWA; Branch #2 will be responsible for three General Motors UAW locals and the Red Tide. Branch #3 will be responsible for 3 Chrysler UAW locals and the IET.

(The analysis and line of this report was discussed and adopted by EC meeting of 7/31).

1. The current political situation in Portugal is extremely explosive, even more so than is indicated in most newspaper reports. This is so on at least two counts: first, the present crisis is being played out against the backdrop of a frightening economic crisis. Second, perhaps more important, we have a situation where none of the major contending forces within the existing political structure up to now has been able to establish itself as dominant. None has been able to take decisive initiative and hold it - though in the past months several have tried. We must describe this and explain why it has happened.

2. Even before the current showdown, the crisis in Portugal has been extremely protracted. A pre-revolutionary situation of a more or less classic type developed almost immediately after the April '74 coup: now 15 months ago. The major political representatives of big capital were forced out of power last September, and since March '75 big capital itself is being slowly strangled. The length of the crisis in itself is extraordinary.

In part, the incredibly fluid situation is a result of the fact that big capital in Portugal has virtually no credible political expression or organizing center. It is of course true that there is a pro-capitalist, pro-West, pro-NATO Force in the SP/PPD axis (the Socialist Party and Popular Democratic Party). But these parties are apparently more representative (certainly more subject to the dictates) of western European capital than of the Portuguese monopolies directly. The latter staked their future on Spínola, whose organization - along with such other right-wing forces as the Christian Democrats, Social Democratic Center, etc.) has been broken. So while the SP and PPD are the "last best hope" of counterrevolution at this stage, this appears to depend on their ties to an external force, the western European ruling classes, who haven't yet determined for themselves when or on what ground to strike. The situation inside Portugal has created a very great breathing space for other forces to assert themselves. One by one they have attempted to take the initiative - and apparently failed.

3. For a period of several months it appeared to us that the force in the best position to drive for power was the Portuguese Communist Party. We are all familiar with its tremendous growth, its disciplined apparatus, its exceptionally clear understanding of the dynamic of the Armed Forces Movement and the totally class-conscious Stalinism of its leadership. In the period when things were most open, when working class institutions were organizing above ground for the first time in 50 years, the CP was there to seize every opportunity. It rooted itself in the unions, local councils, the media. Well before the coup it was penetrating the Army. With its strong anti-monopoly line it cut most of the ground from under the feet of the revolutionary left (at that time our comrades, the PRP-BR consisted of only 50 people and no one had thought of workers' councils). Along with developing a huge militant industrial base the CP proved to the military its ability and willingness to exercise discipline and organize strikebreaking against "irresponsible" strikes. One result was the strongly MFA-backed "trade union unity" law which created a single trade union federation, Intersindical, under CP control.

Of course, it was never the conception of the CP that it could take power without allies, without some social force outside its own immediate membership and apparatus. (This was true even in East Europe - a thousand times more true in Portugal, with no Red Army to enforce the takeover!). That force was the

petit bourgeois officer corps of the MFA, and the corresponding layers of the ~~pop~~ population as a whole from which that corps was conscripted. This includes types like civil servants, lower-level technicians, etc. who had no future in a society being ruined by the policies of big capital. The MFA was clearly the organized, dynamic expression of the political and social ferment going on in those layers of society. The CP's most spectacular gains were made at moments of crisis when it could come to the aid of its MFA allies - the street / barricades of September '74, the mobilization of the bank clerks following March 11, etc. The massive nationalizations following March 11, a month or more before the April 25 elections, dramatically strengthened the position of the CP as well. It meant the most active elements in the MFA regime had broken their ties to big capital - an almost, if not quite, irreversible process. The CP itself was never more than a junior partner in the coalition government with the officers - but its strength lay in its social program, its proven loyalty to the MFA and its confidence that the direction of the crisis would be to force the Army to strike out on the road to some form of bureaucratic collectivism.

Yet the fact is that in the last two months the CP's drive toward power has been blunted, possibly derailed. That does not mean it is permanently off the agenda. Certainly it is not because the CP has determined to shift gears and throw its weight into the scales to save capitalism in Portugal (e.g. because it is committed to "not upsetting detente" as some of the Trotskyist press has suggested). Rather, something far more complex has occurred within the dynamic in Portugal that has thrown the CP into a far more difficult position. In part - but only in part - this resulted from a mobilization on the right that showed, in many parts of the country, pro-capitalist forces to still be quite strong. But it also reflects some volatile developments in the Portuguese working class.

4. One element in this had to be the election results for the Constituent Assembly in April. Aside from the SP getting 38% and the PPD 26% of the vote, they revealed that the actual solid base of the Communist Party - and even more important, its allies in the MFA itself - was very thin. At most 19% of the vote went to ~~the~~ CP and allied splinter parties, with another 7% spoiled ballots. This setback was only partly mitigated by the fact that the so-called "democratic" parties, SP and PPD included, had signed a declaration ~~in~~ turning their own Constituent Assembly ~~into~~ into a sandbox that would be a fig-leaf for military rule. Even more than the bare percentages, the results showed two things pretty dramatically: most of the petit-bourgeois support the CP hoped for did not materialize; and a very substantial section of the working class voted SP. Part of the explanation for this is certainly the one given by Socialist Worker, a degree of demoralization resulting from the failure of the CP to provide consistent militant leadership. But what SW totally ignored is the extent to which this vote represented anti-Stalinism as well as reformist illusions. At a time when the workers' councils had not yet emerged as a clear revolutionary alternative to Stalinism as well as capitalism, a good deal of this sentiment, some of it revolutionary, clearly channeled into the SP.

It goes without saying that bourgeois elections in this kind of situation hardly decide who holds power. But the political impact of the results, combined with some well-timed economic pressure from the Common Market, etc., seemed to give new backbone to the "moderate" bloc within the MFA. What this bloc stood for in programmatic terms is not very clear. But at any rate tensions between the SP and ~~the~~ CP clearly increased within the MFA, as well as between the two parties themselves.

There is at least one other factor. In a situation of growing instability, there were some crucial events whose timing was not controlled by the CP, and which brought into motion some forces not tied to the CP. It appears that one of these was the seizure of the Socialist Party - controlled newspaper Republica.

5. There is no question that the seizure of Republica coincided with the direction in which the CP and its allies in the MFA were moving. If nothing else, the election results created a situation in which the fortunes of the CP were even more closely tied to military rule. Republica was criticizing, increasingly directly, many of the MFA's policies and in particular the political influence of the CP. It is almost certainly that at some not too distant point an officially inspired crackdown would have occurred - that is shown if nothing else by the total support given by the CP to the takeover within days after it started. The resignation of CP journalists on the staff may even indicate that something of the sort was in preparation. But the actual circumstances of the takeover brought in forces not subject to direct CP control.

Various accounts now agree that the actual takeover was triggered by militants of UDP - one of the Maoist groups. (Whether it received some unofficial government sponsorship seems impossible to determine, though it's certainly possible). UDP reacted after Republica printed stories exposing the fact that Chairman Mao himself is taking a pro-SP, pro-NATO as opposed to pro-CP or pro-MFA line on Portugal! But this, if anything is secondary. More important is the fact that once underway the seizure of Republica received its backbone from troops under the command of COPCON, of which more below. Whether COPCON was acting on its own initiative or on official orders we do not know. But in any case it brought into the struggle a force which has been associated with the extreme left and which certainly is not under the control of the CP (it is also not under the control of the MFA leadership, or for that matter of the workers).

This factor gave the takeover both more muscle and more prestige. It is pretty clearly the factor that brought our comrades in Portugal, the PRD-BR, and following their lead the ISCB, to come out in support of the takeover.

The seizure of Republica was unquestionably a blatant act of censorship against the working class press. But it opened the floodgates of a far deeper political struggle. The circumstances of its timing brought out a massive response within the middle class, petit bourgeoisie and (we believe) large sections of the working class as well, against the government and the CP. It was the flash point that unleashed a series of events that the CP and government could not control and which in fact brought down the coalition government completely. What happened, roughly, was that as events got out of control almost totally, two forces emerged on the offensive at once. One of these was the Socialist Party. The other was COPCON, under the command of Carvalho.

6. In the rapid polarization of the last few weeks, one side has been represented by the mobilizations under the banner of the Socialist Party. These began of course over the demand for the return of Republica to the control of its SP publisher. However, as they were bound to do in any such situation, the demands soon went beyond this limited issue. As the SP gauged the extent and militancy of its support - and the legitimacy it gained from conducting a struggle which clearly lay within the stated aims of "the revolution", and which wide sections of the working class viewed as in fact a defense of the revolution - the struggle became a showdown over the whole question of the government.

It is tempting to see in the SP mobilizations a more or less pure case of counter-revolutionary organizing - to see it as an offensive by the bourgeoisie to put the Constituent Assembly in power and smash the workers' councils. Certainly the SP demonstrations opened up fantastic new perspectives for the far right, who are now out smashing CP headquarters in northern cities and re-organizing inside the Army. However, while there's no doubt that the SP would ultimately be the vehicle for exactly such a solution, that picture is too simple. First of all, there is little evidence that anyone involved, including the SP, actually takes the Constituent Assembly very seriously. Of course they issue plenty of rhetoric about it - but the SP has never disavowed or called for annulling the agreement handing over power to the military for the next five years! Second, at their present level of development (unfortunately) the workers' councils are at most an indirect threat to the SP; the real danger must appear to them to come from the CP and the MFA Left (in fact, as part of their ammunition against the CP the SP deputies are capable of making the most inspiring speeches about the need to extend real workers' control, etc.). This suggests that what the SP was aiming at is neither putting the Constituent Assembly in power or smashing the workers' councils - at least not directly. Rather, the SP understands very clearly where the real power lies - within the Army. The SP appeared to want to induce a solid "moderate" majority in the MFA council and to reflect this with pro-SP officers and SP ministers in the government. In the last phase before the set-up of the three-man junta this took the form of pressure for the removal of CP-supporter Premier Goncalves.

However we judge the details, it is evident that the SP took advantage of favorable timing to seize the initiative. It left the government at the moment when it was assured of the greatest popular support for such a move. It mobilized a series of demonstrations to try to prove it must be recognized as the leading political force in Portugal. And it failed.

It didn't fail completely, of course. The SP proved and solidified its base. It showed that base to be a more than credible striking force, although it's probably unarmed and unstable. It showed it can unleash forces far to its right which are a real threat to the regime, and demonstrated to its NATO masters that there are allies for the West who are able to mobilize in Portugal. But it didn't get what it wanted - pushing the CP/MFA Left out of their commanding positions. It didn't get the symbolic ~~victory~~ victory of the return of its paper, a concession which the government recognized very early on it couldn't afford to make. The SP offensive was blunted, not only because of the continuing strength of the CP and its allies, but partly because there was another force in the field at the other extreme: COPCON.

7. COPCON is the section of the Army under the command of General Saraivo Otelo de Carvalho. It is responsible for internal security, having originally been set up for the purpose of dismantling counterrevolutionary organizations last year. It is by far the most radical sector of the Army at this point; its rank and file is almost unquestionably revolutionary; and at least indirectly it reflects the power of the revolutionary organizations of the working class, the workers' councils.

COPCON representatives attended the conference in April which launched the national movement to organize revolutionary workers' councils. COPCON's relation to the revolutionary workers' demonstrations has generally been one of toleration, if not support. (There is another side of the coin - according to at least one report COPCON forces clubbed workers at a metalworkers union meeting in Lisbon in May when they were voting against a contract settlement). It is evident that Carvalho has taken a friendly stance toward the workers'

councils and sees them as a base for support outside the CP.

None of this should lead us to any illusions. COPCON is also the force which jailed militants of the ultraleft MRPP. COPCON is a political machine as well as a military unit; it has its own press releases, etc. and is quite capable of supporting demonstrations calling for a government of revolutionary councils one day and denouncing the organizers as ultraleft adventurers the next. Carvalho is a former Portuguese commander of psychological warfare in Guinea; he has been exposed to and absorbed a lot of the ideology of Amilcar Cabral (anti-working class to the core); he is not a babe in the woods and he's not playing games.

About one thing Carvalho has been consistent: he calls for a government in which there would be no political parties, since they represent only "sectarian" interests, but rather a form of direct military rule implemented at the base by neighborhood and workers' councils or committees. If this is taken literally, it is of course reactionary. If parties ~~xxxxx~~ were in fact banned from these committees there would be no workers' democracy at all - but an unorganized base to be manipulated and intimidated. However, the slogan of "councils without parties" has also been raised by the revolutionary left, and we do not know exactly what its content has been. In any event, this was the general thrust of the counter-offensive which Carvalho launched in response to the SP. Since it was clear with the resignation of the SP from the government that coalition government with civilian parties had collapsed, the MFA High Council of the Revolution actually went as far as announcing that a new government would be formed in which political parties would be "by-passed" in favor of non-party technicians and some kind of local committees (the CP was floating its own version of this, based more on the Cuban Committees for the Defense of the Revolution).

The polarization between SP mobilizations on the one side, and the extreme radicals on the other, represented by Carvalho and enjoying support from the workers' councils, appeared to catch the CP in a pincer. According to a number of reports CP industrial strength is declining - in terms of militancy it has lost some ground to the revolutionary left, electorally it has lost support to the SP in industrial areas. The emergence of a serious force on its left ~~xxx~~ cut the CP's room for maneuver in that ~~xxxxx~~ direction. The crisis appeared to reach its height on the weekend of the monster SP rallies in Oporto and Lisbon. When CP militants went into the highways to set up barricades to stop SP supporters, COPCON troops stood by and watched 70,000 demonstrators sweep the barricades aside and burn them. COPCON even stepped in as a kind of buffer to prevent any effective CP retaliation. For a couple of days it even looked possible that, in an incredible orgy of opportunism, the extreme anti-party elements in MFA ~~would~~ might bloc with the right to get rid of their common enemy, Premier Goncalves.

However, just as the CP and SP in turn had failed to establish effective hegemony, Carvalho's drive also failed to put him in the driver's seat. The essential reason is that despite all talk of dissolving or "bypassing" parties, the struggle between the parties goes on. The fight went on not just in the streets, but in the Army. It could not be contained in either the 240-man general council or the 4 High Council of the Revolution. As these elements continue to neutralize each other, raising the threat of a collapse of the whole MFA structure, a three-man junta was set up consisting of Goncalves, Costa Gomes (the pro-SP president), and Carvalho. After two weeks this new committee had been unable to set up a government or publish a platform. At this arrangement it is staggering from day to day, its future survival very much in doubt.

8. It must be understood that so far, the three-man setup does not seem to represent a "freezing" of the situation. If anything it is more volatile. The political

base of support of this government is incredibly thin. Essentially it rests on three forces: the Army, which came close to cracking up and may still do so; the CP, which remained disciplined and loyally pro-MFA but is a minority party now under violent attack; and at least to some degree the workers' councils, which are at present part of Carvalho's base. It is hard to see how this can survive.

9. The description ~~xxxx~~ thus far is still incomplete. If left at the level of the various currents which have been jockeying for power, it might appear to be a series of maneuvers and power struggles in which the working class were largely absent. It must be understood that this ~~is~~ is decisively not the case. The working class has been a central actor in the crisis from the beginning. Its militancy meant that capital could no longer get along paying starvation wages. It smashed/ the original plans to keep Portuguese colonialism alive in Africa under Spínola.

Furthermore, it has been the tremendous power of the working class that has prevented the crystallization of some type of repressive regime by the forces that have been contending in the Army. The workers' councils, even in their so far primitive stage, must be understood as having fantastic significance in keeping the situation open. While not yet a contender for power, they have helped open up revolutionary perspectives in the Army. They have emerged as a revolutionary force which prevented the CP from capturing the left. They have posed the potential of an alternative against both the SP and CP. And, at least in their class direction, they represent the answer to the demagogic radicalism and inevitable treachery of Carvalho.

It would be sectarian, however, to imagine that the activity of the working class at this point is being expressed only through the councils. They embrace so far only a minority, in which our comrades of the ~~PRP~~ PRP-BR have the main political influence. Their struggle for working class support goes on every ~~minute~~ minute outside the councils as well. The critical question of the revolution now is whether the revolutionary councils and the revolutionary party nucleus, the PRP-BR, can become the center of that struggle for the working class. That problem is easy to state, but fantastically difficult to solve in practice. It is worth repeating that this working class is the most revolutionary since Hungary; it is looking for a way forward and so far the councils have provided only part of the answer. They are a fantastically important revolutionary minority, not yet a broad-based movement.

It is clear that strong links have been created between the councils and the COPCON forces - ~~not~~ just rank and file COPCON troops, but the leadership. In the situation we believe these links have been tactically unavoidable. The workers' councils could not have been built rapidly enough in any other way. But a high price is also being paid for this. It kept the workers' councils and the revolutionary left from coming out in support of a free working class press in the Republica affair (where COPCON was very active) and in fact pushed it onto the wrong side. This is not by any means necessarily fatal. But unless our estimate of what took place is drastically wrong, it would appear that a large and at least semi-revolutionary stratum of workers was pushed away from the revolutionaries when this democratic struggle flowed exclusively through the SP. The struggle ~~xxxx~~ to free Republica from military control ~~was~~ built the SP, whereas in fact the SP should have been supported in that struggle precisely "as a rope supports a hanging man" - through a revolutionary appeal to the working class section of its mass base. Some workers in the Republica struggle may have seen the seizure as a blow for workers' management or for jobs. But against those illusions stands the fact that tens of thousands of workers may have been driven to social democracy.

Such setbacks need not be blown out of proportion. They are inevitable in a revolutionary working class where there is no party to lead. They can be overcome. But we cannot afford many more of them.

APPENDIX

(The following section was drafted following the EC discussion to update the report. At the time of the EC discussion the position of the three-man junta was not yet clear. Thus what follows has not been discussed by the EC but rather represents an extension of the thrust of the discussion. --DF).

At this writing (August 5) it does not appear that the three-man ruling committee can survive. It can be seen as another attempt to construct a "government of military unity", a coalition consisting of the political leadership of the major tendencies which were threatening to blow apart all the lower MFA councils. It may be the last such attempt - for if this one collapses, it is hard to see where the military can go unless one of the three main forces is decisively defeated.

At this point, a rapid drift toward civil war, or another right-wing coup, seems like a very real ~~poss~~ possibility. The demonstrations of the SP and PPD are now open mobilizations of the right. The SP's demand has shifted to a "government of national salvation" - which is always a code word for reaction - and as their absolute minimal demand they want Goncalves and his supporters purged. We have to understand that the pace of events is incredibly fast. There is no question that CIA agents and money are involved to the hilt. The mass right-wing demonstrations could provide a popular, "democratic" cover for a right-wing uprising in the Army.

But the right has not struck yet. It isn't sure of victory, and a statement from one of its officers explains why: "We could organize a coup, and we would be successful, but it would result in violence that would be a disaster for the Portuguese people." This translates very simply into: a right-wing coup would mean an explosive response from the working class. The right is still afraid of "violence" which it couldn't control. A very large section of the Army is now deeply penetrated by the revolutionary left. A right-wing coup is now one clear option, but it would not simply be the one-sided bloodbath of Chile.

At the same time it is now clear that the three-man committee hasn't been able to heal the splits inside the regime itself. One day Carvalho was grinning ear to ear with CP leader Cunhal at the Lisbon airport. The next day he was reported quarreling violently with Goncalves. Various combinations are possible. One, curiously ~~enough~~ enough, is that some formula might be found to allow for collaboration between the "moderate" officers and Carvalho, to force Goncalves out and try to restore ~~their~~ their popularity through some new opportunist demagogy. So far Carvalho has remained more or less independent of both SP and CP camps. But he cannot do so much longer. If the tide were running with the CP it's most likely he would cast in his lot for Stalinism. But he has seemed to be testing which way the wind was blowing.

It would appear that Carvalho is now the force which is being squeezed. That means that the breathing space ~~for~~ for the workers' councils and our comrades is rapidly closing down as well. If the military attempts to stabilise the situation through the current three-man directorate, it is virtually certain that ~~Carvalho~~ Carvalho will be forced to break with and turn against them. No kind of junta can

be constructed if one of its elements has an independent base controlling crucial factories and organizing demonstrations with revolutionary soldiers.

The tentative picture emerging from this seems to be leading rapidly toward either the brink of civil war, or an upheaval in the military which includes a ver sharp assault on the revolutionary councils. That attack may be spearheaded by Carvalho himself. The decisive question is going to be, in such a situation, exactly what the independent strength of the councils is. It is a question of how rapidly they have been able to grow, and whether they are able to act independently of the military and COPCON when the need arises. The situation is moving very fast and will probably be clearer within a few more days.

POST OFFICE CAMPAIGN REPORT

The most recent developments in the post office contract settlement can be seen in this issue of Workers' Power.

The most important development seems to be the face-saving campaign of the local presidents, led by Sombrotto and Biller in New York. Despite this widespread opposition to the settlement, however, there is as yet not the slightest indication that anything at all will come of this official vote no campaign.

All reports indicate that the rank and file, while sometimes angry, is most often confused and demoralized. There is much disgust with the settlement, but the action of the Jersey City workers is the exception. At a meeting of the New York APWU, for example, 300 stewards voted (with only one against) to reject the contract offer, but the mood of the stewards was reported as entirely passive. The only report of action we have heard is of a demonstration against the settlement of Newark postal workers just this week.

At this point, it is still too early for an overall summation of the campaign. Some comrades are still very active, and in a few places new contacts are still being made. Just this week, the LA comrades held a very successful meeting, and as a result a petition of mailhandlers is being prepared. Any comrades who work with mailhandlers should contact the center for a copy of the petition.

Nevertheless, it should be clear that the campaign, despite the official vote no movement, is nearly over. At this point, therefore, the main task is to consolidate the work that has been done, and above all to recruit the best contacts we work with. This must be the major effort at this time. Any ongoing activity is dependent on recruitment. Similarly, in ongoing postal activities, we must look for those militants we can possibly recruit, for if we fail in recruitment we will have no basis for working with those militants who are mainly interested in the contract issues alone.

As of now, we work with groups in Louisville, Pittsburgh, LA, New York and Philadelphia. In every case, the groups are extremely weak. Nevertheless, each still shows great potential. In addition, we have contacts in Chicago, Cleveland, Seattle, and the Bay Area. And finally, outside of the branches, we have important contacts in Jersey City, Cincinnati, and Washington.

If we are successful in holding these groups and contacts together, if we can build them, and most importantly, if we can recruit a number of postal workers (thus far we have recruited only one postal worker), we can consider ongoing postal work, including a possible meeting once the contract business is entirely settled (now this would probably be in September). In the meantime, where possible, we should continue to be active where there is still activity, that is, where there are demonstrations, special contract meetings, and where we have groups, of course.

In addition, we still plan to produce a Workers' Power pamphlet summing up the campaign, the contract, and the lessons. To do a successful pamphlet, however, it is necessary that we have the help and cooperation of all those comrades who have been involved in the campaign. In every branch, someone must be assigned to sum up the local campaign, and this must be sent to the center immediately. At the same time, comrades should also gather information for the pamphlet, in particular information that will be helpful in developing a program for ongoing activity.

POSTAL CAMPAIGN REPORT (continued).

At this time, comrades should also spend time with those contacts who are most familiar with the specifics of the speed-up in the post office. If we are successful in building a network of rank and file postal groups, it will be based upon our ability to actually do something about this issue, including everything about Kokomo, harassment, forced overtime and transfers, supervision, and any work rules and standards changes. We need to know the exact specifics of each case. The more detail the better. And, just as important, we need to know actual examples of how the speed-up has been opposed, in particular how it has been successfully opposed. Send all this information to the center as quickly as possible.

We also need to know which national issues are most likely to win a response from workers, especially those concerning the unions, such as things involving union democracr, the national negotiations, amalgamation, and so on.

We want to continue Workers' Power sales at the post offices with this issue. For the next issue, we plan to have a national leaflet, concluding the campaign. It would be best, and the leaflet will call for this, if Workers' Power could continue to have a presence at the post office, through inside sales. We want to ask buyers if they are willing to take bundles of papers inside and sell them, and of course we will want members and contacts to do this. We can begin with this issue of the paper to do this, by asking interested workers if they will consider doing this, or if they will begin with this issue. Comrades should remember that most branches will not have the resources to continue selling at the post office, especially as there will be new campaigns. And it would be a great loss to not take advantage of the readers we have developed in the course of the campaign.

CW. August 5, 1975

ANNOUNCEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT ANNOUNCEMENT

IF ANYONE KNOWS THE WHEREABOUTS OF THE WORKERS POWER BANNER THAT WAS HANGING ON STAGE AT THE IS CONVENTION, PLEASE CONTACT THE NO OR THE ST. LOUIS BRANCH. THEY WANT IT BACK!!!

NATIONAL SECRETARY'S NOTES.

I am forced to admit that I didn't have the guts to let what follows go under the name of a National Secretary's Report, it is more a list of things I have to bring to the attention of all our members. A proper report will appear in the next issue and this one should be written off as a casualty of the unfortunate events which took place last week in Detroit. I am pleased to report that it was one of the few things that suffered and that through-out the emergency the vast majority of the work went on as usual.

Firstly I would like to remind comrades of the contents of a letter on security, etc that went out to the branches from this office last week.. One copy went to every branch, with an instruction to ensure that all members were aware of the contents. If you havn't seen it please contact your branch organiser immediately.

We now have limited facilities for conducting research into unions, companies, etc available to the branch and fractions. So let us know if we can give you any help. Don't all rush at once because the facilities are limited.

The next NC will take place on Aug 30th to Sept 1st and will probably be followed by a two day organisers conference. Details later. The tentative date for the NC after that is some time between the 27th and 30th of Nov and we have provisional plans for fraction meetings in that period too. While still on the subject of provisional dates there is a possibility there will be industrial ~~manufacturers~~ conference /conferences on the Veterans Day weekend and that the membership campaign national rally will take place the second weekend of Dec. Please note that most of these dates are provisional and will be confirmed later.

Members should be aware that an ex-member of ours is probably an agent of the Spartacist League. He is Dave E. of L.A. and should be avoided the proverbial plague. While on the subject of sects. The national office should be immediately informed (if it hasn't been already) of any threats or intimidation from the RU or USLP.

I will get all the unpleasant things out of the way ~~XXXX~~ at one time, so next.....money. The branches will now send \$10 per member to the National office, though please note that minimum dues for members remain \$7-50. Members at large will also now pay \$10 if it is possible. I should also report on the response to the appeal for income tax rebates. We received several thousand dollars but that came from well under half of the comrades who got rebates. Those who sent us nothing should think again because the organisation is now firmly in the middle of the summer liquidity crisis and needs help. Those of you who sent us cash might ask around to see who didn't and whether they might do it now.

Comrades, other than those who are already in direct touch with me, who are thinking of moving to another city should get on th this office before making any final plans. We need to have a say in where you go and where the organisation most needs resources. Certainly the practise of negotiating independantly with the branch of your choice must end. The general progress of the organisation and the specific figures on recruitment have continued to develop since the convention. Congratulations comrades...we will bring you details later.