

E 1. Contacts

(In the first instance, many of these are not to be approached without consulting us)

TUs:

Antonio Martins dos Santos

1. Avenue Marques do Pombal, 41-1^o, Dto, Amadora (tel. 93-24-44)

2. Sindicato dos ~~Metalurgicos~~ Metalurgicos do Lisboa, Calçada de Santos, 3-2^o Esq.

- metalworker TU leader & MES

Anilal Boavida, pro-sindicato CTT, Rua San Jose 164.

- post office TU leader

Sindato Nacional dos Estivadores do distrito e porto de Lisboa, Rua do Alecuim 25-1^o
(tel. 32-38-59 and 32-17-13)

(cf. also BL's list for draughtsmen, electricians.

Politicals:

Jose Dias, Movimento Esquerda Socialista (MES), Avenida Don Carlos 1, 146-1^o, Lisboa
(tel. 67-71-27) - MES fulltime organiser

Jorge Ivo M Gomes, Rua 9 de Julho, 199-2^o, Porto - MES Political Commission in Oporto

João Amaral Barrote, Rua do Bolamo 113/5^o Dto, Porto

(Publicos Escorpio, Apartada 158, Vila Novade Gacia)

- independent, publisher close to IS politics

Partido Socialista Portugues - Rua N San Pedro de Alcantara 81-2^o (tel. 36-88-87).

Isabel do Carmo, Partido Revolucionaria Proletaria - official address (as Revolucion)

Rua Gil Vicente lote A, r/c, Parede (tel. 24-75-051)

(clandestine HQ: Rua Pedro Ivo 5, 1 Esq., Lisbon - tel. 71-09-82).

João Cardos Cabral Fenans(?), Liga Comunista Internacionalista (FI) - tel. 76-92-93.

Robin Fior, Rua du Duque 27, 4 Dto, Lisboa 2 (tel. 38-84-43) - former English IS member.

In Britain:

Vic Richards (Cadoxa) - 0904-23589 (wrong) - Constantine House, Room 207

Bruno - 49 Colebrook Rd (tel. 01-359-3002)

Alvaro Miranda

Joaquin Andrade, 21 Grena Rd., Richmond (tel. 948-2011)

Action

SW/IS - and any other relevant material to be sent to:

Isobal do Carmo (PRP) - plus material on role of British Labour Party

Jose Dias (MES)

SW to be sent to Robin Fior - with bill in 2 months time.

PRP and MES to be asked to send fraternal delegates to our Annual Conference, and request for same invitation to their fongresses - PRP in July, MES in October/November.

I. Portugal is clearly in a pre-revolutionary situation. Workers, unconstrained by prior traditions, have moved quickly to the most radical forms of fighting, to the creation of national fighting unions (as opposed to union bureaucracies) and to some participation in ~~ppp~~ politics. The armed forces are also under strain, with some evidence (leaflets, participation in demonstrations) of soldier involvement in politics and agitation inside the army. The ruling class remains deeply divided - between the old capitalist-imperialist segment, oriented in the role of transmitting African raw materials to West European capital and dependent on military control of the colonies and a backward Portugal; and the EEC oriented segment. Spinoza floats between the two, at the same time as trying to carry an army deeply disaffected with the war and a working class exploding ~~at its own~~ in its new found freedom.

By September, the severity of the difficulties should be apparent to all - a massive wage inflation, worker interruption of production, the bankruptcy of smaller business, no end to the colonial war, a flight of capital. Spinoza cannot liquidate the backward sector of Portuguese capital (which is probably strongly entrenched in the upper strata of the army, the colonies and the metropolitan bureaucracy - despite the purge of fascists) without a wide-ranging social programme that would simultaneously affect the progressive sector. He cannot repress the workers' revolt ~~without risking a vast split~~ while there is such a profound split in the ruling class and the danger of military disaffection. He cannot ensure army loyalty without settling with Frelimo etc, and he cannot do this ~~without risking~~ while the ruling class is split.

For these and other reasons, the perspective assumed by much of the Left - that Spinoza will move towards a stable bourgeois democracy (municipal elections in September,

general election next spring) - appears absurd. Although he cannot resolve the contradictions, he needs even for survival a more or less repressive order within which Portuguese capitalism can begin to reach some new adjustment - and that means a greater or lesser curtailment of the right of free debate, publication, election and organisation; it means also a wage restriction. Clearly, Spínola would like also 'self-determination' for the colonies, not independence, for then there might be some chance of reconciling colon/backward capital interests with the independence movement - and so stabilise both the army and the metropolitan ruling class.

The two threats to any patch-up job are, then, the colonial independence movements (Frelimo is said to be under pressure from Russia to do a deal with Spínola) and the Portuguese workers. The workers are wide open to new ideas. Factory walls are covered with slogans and posters, and everywhere there are new experiments in self organisation and self-assertion. The problem is the Left. This consists of three components, neither of which fits the present situation - the Right (CDE) (CP) with a good record of opposing fascism and the strongest entrenched position ~~in~~ among older workers in older industries (particularly the two main industrial centres, Lisbon and Oporto), but now terrified of a counterrevolution and prepared to sacrifice anything and everything to upholding Spínola; a centre that lives in a dreamworld of stable bourgeois democracy, tolerant of present 'excesses' in the belief that it will all come out in the wash and time will solve everything (SP, some of MES); and a Left, ~~it~~ out of the clandestine armed opposition to fascism - Maoist-populist (with no lasting commitment to hard worker organisation ~~xxxxxx~~ nor to socialism, only 'the democratic revolution' in alliance with anyone) and the ~~PRP~~ non-Maoist (PRP, LCI etc), still trapped in the habits of clandestinity instead of making a bid for a mass workers ~~party~~ ^{party}. In all cases, the theoretical impoverishment of the Left stands out as a major weakness - the lack of a concrete embodiment of workers' power, a workers' power, and so a clear critique of Russia and China.

The strongest force among workers is the CP and particularly the stronghold of its right-wing faction in Oporto. ~~xxxxxxx~~ It is particularly strong among some white collar unions - its general secretary rose through the Bank ~~xxxx~~ Employees union to become Minister of Labour, and it appears that this and other CP unions are the means by which the CP exercises control of the Federation (the TUC). However, the CP lacks trained cadres in numbers sufficient to control the new unions. Perhaps it had 500 to 1,000 members at the time of the coup; perhaps it has 5-10,000 members now. But ~~this is very insufficient~~ the new recruitment takes place either alongside the old membership or in areas of less importance (eg students). In most of the new unions, the CP seems very weak, and its politics ensure that wherever workers are engaged in struggle, the CP is ~~the least~~ hated for its hard opposition. In the CTT (post office workers) with 35,000 workers, this is extreme. Some 8-10,000 CTT workers met a few weeks after the coup to set up a 22-man committee to organize a union. Almost immediately it moved into battle on wages and conditions. The CP alias the Federation moved into to try and take over the union and damp down the struggle. It was rejected, whereupon it and the CP began to attack the ~~E~~ leadership of the CTT workers as unrepresentative and pro-fascist - the few CP members in the CTT left the party in the wave of fury at the role of the CP. However, ~~it~~ the party still presents a credible force - 15-20,000 at ~~its~~ its last big rally in Lisbon - and because its base in important industries seems to be decaying, is trying to scuttle a little bit leftwards (by beginning to speak of the need for independence for the colonies, not simply self-determination; downplaying the 'agents of fascism' accusation to any militants). Spínola has also recently been distancing himself a little more from the CP, allegedly because the party has been planting its own men wherever fascists have been purged and has been trying to infiltrate the army. There is no chance of the CP leaving the Government, but it will work to smash the challenge to Spínola and then, having accomplished this, ~~it~~ have its own guts ripped out. (CDE)

The CP up to the coup worked in a "democratic front" ~~with~~ with the Socialist Party and the MES (Movimento Esquerda Socialista - Left Socialist Movement) both for elections and in an anti-colonial campaign (CDE - calling for a ceasefire and negotiations; in contrast to the Left Front's ~~the~~ CIS calling for unconditional independence). The SP began with virtually nothing except emigre lawyers. It is now picking up some kind of base, both among young people and among some trade unionists. Its Left - organising in some factory-and-youth groups, GAPS - appears indistinguishable from the non-Party Left, campaigning against the Government on repressive issues (eg the press laws, the arrest of Sanches and the two MES army militants etc). However, the bloom of the coup is still fresh on every cheek, so there is probably no serious internal party struggle

at the moment, and because everything is still so ad hoc, no congress for which to organise. The SP leadership is clearly hoping to pick up what the CP loses, and is discreetly critical of the CP's right-wing attitudes. ~~xxx~~ Since Soares tends to use Britain as one of the models for his sort of Social Democracy, it is quite important we funnel information through to Portugal on the real role of the Labour Party in this country.

MES is an amalgam, not unlike the PSU in France before the purges of 1972, and with something of the flavour of the May Day Manifesto, Il Manifesto and PSIUP in Italy. It seems to consist of mainly professional people, with a "progressive Catholic" component, but claims worker support in textiles, chemicals, metallurgical and electrical industries. It ~~defends~~ defends its participation in CDE ~~as the~~ on an entrust basis as the only way to break out of the CP control outside Lisbon and to unify anti-colonial work. Because it is a "movement", it does not publish a newspaper - a fairly disastrous state of affairs in present conditions - nor recruit members systematically. It claims that after the municipal elections, they will move towards defining a programme, holding a congress and publishing a paper: the perspective indicates the lack of strategic urgency felt. However, MES has ~~xxx~~ supporters in the army (they are running a campaign around the arrest of two of these who supported the CTT workers strike), has some leading trade unionists (eg Martins dos Santos of the metalworkers), has some worker groups (it is involved in a Lip-style occupation of a textile plant currently) and is in most cases the only left-wing group operating outside Lisbon and Oporto. It also seems to have some strength among students. We should send our papers and other relevant material to MES, attend their Congress (if it happens) and certainly invite them to ours - Jose Dias, the MES fulltimer, was very keen on closer links and coming to our conference. Some MES members are very close - if not members of - revolutionary groups proper ~~xxx members are very close to the CP and some are in the CP~~ (in particular the PRP - see below).

The Maoists

A number of groups emerged from the split in the CP of 1964 (a split between the ~~xxx~~ pro-Moscow party with radio Free Portugal from Bucharest, and a pro-Mao armed guerilla groups supported by Algeria). The most-important Maoist ones now are the MRPP (publishing Luta Popular) which has attracted a number of the young workers in Lisbon industries as well as a strong student base in Lisbon. ~~It~~ The MRPP is Stalinist in ~~the strict sense, but populist in~~ identification, but populist in style - which is some consolation, ~~xxx~~ since its successes in recruiting are hopelessly outweighed by its inability to organize workers power, or see anything beyond "the democratic revolution". However, in Lisbon it is dangerous since it attracts some of the best people and diverts them into sectarian hysteria without any serious perspective of either building or forearming. It specializes in ultra-left blitzkrieg tactics, in inviting minority repression.

and Grito do Povo, mainly operating out of Oporto and along the flanks of the CP. Again, it seems to attract a significant number of young workers, to provide the main focus of the non-CP Left. MRPP claims to print 100,000 copies of their paper, but this is neither reliable nor, even if reliable, a clear indication of significance. Again, the general impoverishment of theory and knowledge aids and abets both groups.

and the Communist Prty of Portugal (Marxist-Leninist). This was the core of the original Algiers group, which then broke up after savage police repression interned most of the leadership. Accounts vary, but as I understand it, MRPP and GdP were the oung activists left after the repression; the PCP(ML) is the old leadership which emerged from gaol after the coup. Some people claim the PCP(ML) is large and significant, others that it is of no account. It either publishes or ~~there is~~ is involved in the publication of a newspaper circulated fairly widely - A Voz do Trabalhador - which regularly attacks the MRPP and GdP as thoroughly petit-bourgeois. However, we did not go into the differences between these groups.

There are other groups operating but none of significance at the moment, and most groups have some flavour of Maoism - eg the new paper, Combat, and another 1 Mayo.

CIS (Left Front)

This consists of four organisations - the PRP (Party of Proletarian Revolution), the Liga Comunista (the 4th International, US), URMIL (a non-sectarian Maoist group) and the LUAR (committed to guerilla warfare) - which are united in seeing the

socialist revolution as the next stage (not the 'democratic revolution'). Our arrangements to meet the LC ~~xxxxxxx~~ broke down largely because of their absurd clandestinity, but they seem to be very small (and very new, having started at the time of the coup), and despite one good meeting south of the river (ie in one of Lisbon's main industrial areas), severely hampered by being known as Trotskyists since, with the strong Stalinist ideological influence, the name of Trotsky ~~is~~ sets the dogs salivating. The other two groups seem to be even smaller. None of these three publishes a newspaper, but all collaborate with the PRP in the common anti-colonial front ~~(CIS)~~ and in a sort of rank-and-file movement known as the Socialist Base Organisation (Comissoes de base socialistas) which publishes Lutar pelo socialismo. Because of the clandestine flavour of this last operation and our limited time, we were not given any real chance to assess what it amounted to, but for much of the time it seemed the Socialist Base was effectively a small left front organisation rather than an independent rank and file operation.

PRP. The PRP was formed at a congress in September 1973 out of a group of people who split from the CP electoral front after the 1969 elections on the grounds that the CP was pacifist and only violence could win a way forward in Portugal. In 1970 the group began paramilitary work (a Brigada Revolucionaria) and established links with the Algerian Front (cf. above under Maoists) - they undertook operations from Nov. 1971 up to the time of the coup. The common position of the group was on the question of violence and in emphasizing the priority of independent self-activity of workers; under Caetano, they assisted various strikes, published bulletins, ~~and~~ tried to help the creation of workers councils, worked with Catholics and others in anti-colonial work.

They seem to have shifted over time to a greater emphasis on workers (although they still stress the need for ~~present~~ work among agricultural labourers) and on the need for a revolutionary party as, to quote, "the intelligentsia of the proletariat and a centre of initiative". They accept democratic centralism although what this means in practice is not clear. They do not as yet accept the need for an open mass workers' party, although the question is under discussion and might be settled in favour of opening the doors at the July Congress (the question of inviting observers from foreign organisations has not yet been settled). They regard Russia and China as socialist, but are critical.

However, on the important question - the immediate perspective - the PRP seemed much the most serious. They argued that it was impossible for the bourgeoisie either to continue in its old form or stabilise a new 'modernistic' order because Portugal was itself a colony of West European capital. The coup had been a limited operation, but the release of popular forces had pushed the armed forces far further to the left than was tolerable for the junta. The PRP expects ~~as~~ return to a non-fascist repressive order - or a socialist revolution - "in a few months". The CP could not play the role cast for it in a stable bourgeois order because Portugal could not itself develop.

The MES, according to the PRP, developed from identical origins to the PRP and up until the coup, the two had been very close. It had gained little out of its collaboration with the CP and SP and was in danger of being tarred with the same brush, but the politics of many of its members were indistinguishable very often from that of the PRP.

The PRP perspective is for the formation of workers committees which will become generalised until economic demands are changed to political, and Soviets emerge. In the next few months, they say, Soviets will emerge, and in some of the biggest industrial political committees are already operating (Lazear and shipbuilding generally). This is the context for the work of MES and the Left Front.

PRP claims half its membership ~~is~~ are workers and 'in services' (by which is meant usual in professions and white collar occupations). We had no way of checking these claims indeed, it took much sweat and tears even to track down the PRP because of their clandestine mode of operation. Secret operations are obviously important given the perspective ~~xxxx~~ of repression, but not at the cost of really growing and spreading the organisation. The PRP in general does not seem to participate in meetings publicly (we attended a TU Unity meeting called by the Social Welfare Workers TU to which the CP, SP, MES and PRP were invited; the CP boycotted the meeting because the PRP were invited; the PRP either did not turn up or refused to declare themselves).

The PRP is small, but seems the most serious and least sectarian. It has no hope of contesting power unless it breaks with the small sect manner of operation appropriate to clandestine work and begins to learn some lessons of Leninism. We should send our

material, papers etc., especially on building the party, the relationship between the party and rank and file movement, on Social Democracy, and on China. We have asked to be invited to their Congress in July, and for them to send someone to our Annual Conference. They spoke vaguely of calling an international conference in Lisbon to which they would invite Avanguardia Operaia, ourselves, Revolution and Forbundet Kommunist, but no dates were suggested.

Objectively, the conditions in Portugal are peculiarly favourable ~~text~~ for the development of a workers revolutionary party since conditions are very bad, people are aware of it, the small hopes raised by the coup are exploding into great hopes, ~~and~~ there are no institutional traditions which inhibit development, the ruling class is split and its main instrument of repression, the army, even more divided, the world context is entirely unfavourable to the sort of economic boom required in Portugal to buy off some of the discontents. Yet, the prospects are not promising in the short term, simply because of the role of the CP and Maoists, ~~and~~ the small size of the independent left and its bad traditions of ~~secret~~ clandestinity in conditions where open mass work is required. If IS existed in Portugal even at a sixth of its present size, we could begin to think about posing a real challenge in the late autumn, but it doesn't.

~~However~~ The short term opportunity may be lost, but in the medium term, Portugal is likely to join the sick men of Europe (along with Italy and Britain) so that there will be other opportunities. It is important that our material is used to some effect in building there for the future - by seeking to influence the PRP and MES, by taking an interest in the affairs of Portugese workers here, by making regular visits and trying if possible to get an IS member to live or stay in Lisbon and liaise. We need also to sustain relationships with particular TUs - PO Workers, Draughtsmen, Stevedores, metalworkers etc - through BL & Alvaro Miranda.

Publications attached

MES

Statement (in English), translation of the MES Declaration of principles.

Open Letter to the Armed Forces

Miscellaneous leaflets

For Trade Union Action

The Student Movement and new conditions of struggle in schools

For a socialist society in Portugal

The struggle of railway workers

Student Declaration

Colonial War

MES and the anti-colonial struggle

Anti-colonial Bulletin (Nos. 2, 3, 4)

Class struggle and Portugese capitalism

~~CTP (Portugese Workers)~~ TUs

Communiques of CTP (PO Workers)

Appeal to the people (CTP)

Workforce in the service of democracy (United Workers of the South)

Metalworkers contract of work (24 May)

PRP

Revolucão - Nos. 1, 2 (2 copies), 3 (3 copies), 4 (2 copies)

Lutar pelo socialismo (Socialist Base) - Nov. 73, May 74 (2 copies)

Jornal da Sogantahal

Appeal to the workers on colonialism (statement of CIC - Left Front's anti-colonial front)

Maoists

MRPP - Luta Popular, No. 18 & 22.

People's War, May 1974 (on colonialism)

PCP (ML) - A Voz do Trabalhador

O Grito do Povo

CP

Avante, 14 & 20 June

Portrait of Cunhal (Vida Mundial)

Miscellaneous

Comercio do Funchal (Independent Left paper with the best industrial coverage) -

- last 7 issues

LC leaflet for Timex workers

6-

~~Revisão~~ Frelimo leaflet
Combate, No.1
Tempo Economico 24 May
Jornal do Centre
Noticias da Amadore(22 June)
Jornal do Fundao

6 copies of Quem sao os International Socialists?

Books

PAIGC : Historia da Guine e Ilhas de Cabo Verde
Coelho : A Resistencia em Portugal
Goncalves : Palavras Necessarias
Em defesa de Joaquim Pinto de Andrade
Capela : Mocambique Pelo seu povo
A Ocupacao
O Congresso sindicalista de 1911
Torres E : Portugal, uma perspectiva da sua historia
Oliveira : O Opera riado e a republica demoractica, 1910-1914
" : A criacao da uniao operaria nacional
A Raia de Portugal - a fronteira do subdesenvolvimento
Oliveira : O socialismo em Portugal, 1850-1900
De Sousa : O sindicalismo em Portugal
Angolanos no tarrafak
Castro - A dominacao ~~ingels~~ inglesa em Portugal
Bernardo Honwana : Nos matamos o cao-tinhoso