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"RETURN TO THE ROAD OF TROTSKYISM"

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"International Executive Committee  
of the Fourth International"  
politically associated with the  
Socialist Workers Party

for cadre education

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## INTRODUCTION

The following article, Peng Shu-tse's Return to the Road of Trotskyism, was originally submitted as a dissident minority document to the 1969 Congress of the revisionist "United Secretariat of the Fourth International". We are reproducing it in the present Marxist Studies format, as we have recently reproduced several other buried or hard-to-get items, largely for the internal use and education of Spartacist League comrades; by publishing it we certainly do not take responsibility for Peng's views, which in any case are not our own. Indeed, we consider Peng's politics as expressed here an expression not of revolutionary Marxism but rather of left centrism--a species not uncommon to the American left--although this alone still places him far to the left of the Pabloist United Secretariat and its kindred reformist ideologues in this country, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP).

Peng's inability to break with Pabloist modes of political analysis and his deeply ingrained distortion of Leninism are clearly evident in his present work. To pose opposition to the United Secretariat's uncritical enthusing after Castroism and "guerilla warfare" on the grounds that Castro does not "understand" Marxism or democratic centralism is grossly inadequate and only begs the question; Castroism is clearly a question of and analogous to the whole problem of the deformed workers states like Eastern Europe, China, North Viet Nam, etc., and the bureaucracies which run them, and any analysis of the political line and strategy of Cuba and Castro which does not begin with an evaluation of the nature of the Cuban state has a built-in guarantee of being defective. Similarly, Peng's misevaluation of the meaning of the Chinese Revolution and Maoism is not only in itself disorienting, but also leaves him open to "reasonable"-sounding attacks from the fully-developed opportunists who preach their views while still pretending to ride Trotsky's coattails. Thus, Peng is unable to generalize his specific criticisms of the United Secretariat's "errors" to a point where he can draw revolutionary political conclusions from them. Like the United Secretariat/SWP theorists, his method is spotty and empirical, but unlike his comrades, he is an old Trotskyist who remembers some Trotskyism and knows something is wrong. Only an extension of the politics of Trotsky into the new problems posed by post-war Stalinism can provide a positive refutation of the revisionism of the Pabloists. Peng, however, does not go beyond Trotskyist orthodoxy. Nonetheless his orthodoxy is sufficient to give a devastating demonstration of the SWP's departure from Trotskyism. Although containing fundamental flaws, Return to the Road of Trotskyism has great significance as the product of a left oppositionalist struggling against the political degeneration of the United Secretariat, fighting however inadequately for a return to some of the elements of revolutionary Trotskyism. Consequently, his attack cannot but be a savage and fundamental one, even if couched in moderate language.

### Long-Time Trotskyist

It is important that the reader understand just how extraordinary Peng Shu-tse's political credentials are, and until recently what tremendous authority he wielded in the world Trotskyist movement.

He is one of the very few surviving founders of the Chinese Communist Party; along with its first leader, Chen Tu-hsiu, he was expelled from the CP in 1929; he was imprisoned by Chiang Kai-shek from 1932 to 1937; during World War II he fought both against Japanese imperialism and for a socialist revolution in China. When the Chinese CP came to power in 1949 he along with other known Trotskyists was forced into exile, since Mao Tse-tung had proceeded against Leninist-Trotskyist oppositionists in the same murderous manner and for the same counter-revolutionary reasons as did his mentor Stalin in the Soviet Union two decades before him.

Throughout the cold-war years Peng was one of the few major international collaborators of the SWP's particular "orthodox Trotskyist" political line. When the SWP broke with Michel Pablo in 1953 and an implicit division of the world Trotskyist movement became a fact, Peng stayed loyal to the same politics as the Americans, who at that time were in a close working anti-Pabloist bloc with Gerry Healy's forerunner to the Socialist Labour League in Britain. Later, in the 1960s, when the SWP and their international collaborators began to capitulate politically and maneuver for organizational "reunification" with the very same Pabloists they had been struggling against for a decade, Peng went along again. This time he joined with the agile intellectual technician Joseph Hansen of the SWP to spearhead the fight against the still would-be-revolutionary SLL's attempt to prevent unification except on the basis of a Trotskyist program. (The later course of the Healy grouping--softness to Maoism, shameless gangsterism, vulgar theoretical posturings, a quasi-theory of "Trotskyism in One Country", which taken together approximate third period Stalinism--has provided the Pabloists with their greatest weapon against the anti-revisionism formerly represented by the SLL.)

So what Return to the Road of Trotskyism represents, then, is the attempt by a loyalist, long-time leading theoretician and spokesman to repudiate--if far too late, incompletely and only to a point--that opportunism which metastasized and destroyed the Fourth International in its whole raison d'etre of functioning as the world party of communist revolution. It is ironic but important to note that the views of which Peng gives only a glimmer were presented in finished form in documents by our predecessor in the SWP, the Revolutionary Tendency, as early as 1962: see especially our statement on the world movement, For the Rebirth of the Fourth International, printed in SPARTACIST #1 and our Marxist Bulletin #2, "The Nature of the SWP--Revolutionary or Centrist?", and also our M.B. #8, "Cuba and Marxist Theory".

### Castroism or Trotskyism?

Peng's central concern in Return to the Road of Trotskyism is the guerilla warfare strategy and apologetics for the Castro leadership which has become an overwhelming bandwagon of the Pabloist SWP. We should point out here, therefore, that the SWP's adaptationism to the petty-bourgeois nationalist leaders of the colonial countries--Cuba and, even, Algeria under Ben Bella--was the key international embodiment of its revisionist degeneration. This reorientation away from Trotskyism was codified in the 1963 document, For Early Reunification of the World Trotskyist Movement, which was described by SWP leaders Dobbs and Hansen as a "charter" of the reunification with the

United Secretariat. The SWP's capitulation on the Cuban Question represented for them what Stalin's theory of "Socialism in One Country" did for Stalinism--a theoretical justification for and codification of departure from the revolutionary road. To quote section 13 of the reunification document:

"Along the road of a revolution beginning with simple democratic demands and ending in the rupture of capitalist property relations, guerilla warfare conducted by landless peasant and semi-proletarian forces, under a leadership that becomes committed to carrying the revolution through to a conclusion, can play a decisive role in undermining and precipitating the downfall of a colonial and semicolonial power. This is one of the main lessons to be drawn from experience since the second world war. It must be consciously incorporated into the strategy of building revolutionary Marxist parties in colonial countries." [our emphasis]

The Spartacist tendency within the SWP was initially based politically largely on the recognition of Cuba as a deformed workers state which must be defended militarily against imperialism but which requires a workers' political revolution to establish workers democracy and the preconditions for socialism. We resolutely opposed the substitution of Castroist goals for Trotskyist goals and the embracing of the guerilla warfare strategy, for much the same reasons as Peng now argues. Our document, Toward Rebirth of the Fourth International, written six years ago in direct opposition to For Early Reunification, states:

"Experience since the Second World War has demonstrated that peasant-based guerilla warfare under petit-bourgeois leadership can in itself lead to nothing more than an anti-working-class bureaucratic regime.... Marxists must resolutely oppose any adventurist acceptance of the peasant-guerilla road to socialism--historically akin to the Social Revolutionary program on tactics that Lenin fought. This alternative would be a suicidal course for the socialist goals of the movement, and perhaps physically for the adventurers."

In the light of the tragic fate of Guevara, our analysis seems almost uncannily apt and parallels Peng's observations on pages 4-5 below.

The key insight one gains from reading Peng, above all else, is an understanding of the methodology of revisionism. Peng puts it rather well; speaking of the United Secretariat's capitulation to anti-Leninist, Guevarist politics he writes:

"Neither in the many articles appearing in our international press advocating and supporting guerilla warfare (by comrades Maitan, Moscoso, etc.) nor in the draft resolution mentioned above has the Transitional Program been openly and frankly declared to be no longer of any use. At the same time, however, one cannot find any mention of the Transitional Program for the backward countries. That is to say, the comrades have consciously or unconsciously discarded the Transitional Program and have replaced it with the strategy of guerilla warfare."

Now it is true that while the Transitional Program as Peng states is not Trotskyist "dogma", nevertheless one does not tamper with or revise programs sub rosa; programs are part of consciousness, and the struggle to change, update or maintain the program is equally a function of education and building consciousness. Thus political struggle is meaningless if it is not out in the open.

But such clarity would undercut the revisionists' game of trying to preach anti-Trotskyism under the rubric of Trotskyism. This has long been the politics and the method of the SWP, and Peng's real contribution to the continuation of Trotskyism is that he smashed one more fraudulent pose.

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We would like to thank the European comrade who kindly made available to American Marxists the Peng document from the international internal discussion.

-- Marxist Studies staff  
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## RETURN TO THE ROAD OF TROTSKYISM

by Peng Shu-tse

### I. Guerilla Warfare and the Transitional Program--Castroism or Trotskyism

In February 1968, at a meeting of the IEC, the strategy and tactics of guerilla warfare in Latin America were formally proposed for discussion in preparation for a World Congress resolution. At this meeting I made a sharp criticism of guerilla warfare as a revolutionary strategy for the backward countries and pointed out that such a strategy was in direct contradiction to the Transitional Program of the Fourth International. Nevertheless, I was in a minority of one at this meeting.

Since the above mentioned IEC meeting, the pro-guerilla-war tendency has become even stronger and more resolute. Guerilla warfare is no longer confined just to Latin America, but is now projected for many countries of Asia, the Middle East and Africa as is evident from the draft resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution". The section of this resolution entitled "Problems of the Resurgent Colonial Revolution" outlines the general perspective of guerilla warfare for such countries as Laos, Thailand, Burma, and Indonesia in Southeast Asia, as well as numerous countries in both the Middle East and Africa. Nor are Greece and Spain, two European countries, excluded from this same perspective. In other words, this resolution clearly projects guerilla warfare as the revolutionary strategy for almost all the backward--and even some semi-backward--countries, hence, the Transitional Program for these backward countries has either been discarded or completely forgotten.

Neither in the many articles appearing in our international press advocating and supporting guerilla warfare (by comrades Maitan, Moscoso, etc.) nor in the draft resolution mentioned above has the Transitional Program been openly and frankly declared to be no longer of any use. At the same time, however, one cannot find any mention of the Transitional Program for the backward countries. That is to say, the comrades have consciously or unconsciously discarded the Transitional Program and have replaced it with the strategy of guerilla warfare. Even the resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution", never calls attention to the decisive significance of the Transitional Program for the backward countries. The Transitional Program is only referred to once. In relation to certain shortcomings of the Cuban line, the resolution says that "still lacking is a revolutionary Marxist appreciation of the need for a transitional program for the city masses...." (p.29) That the author limited the transitional program to "the city masses" proves that he either does not understand the decisive significance of the Transitional Program for the backward countries or has forgotten it. The Transitional Program is not limited to just the city masses. "The central task of the colonial and semi-colonial countries is the agrarian revolution, i.e., liquidation of feudal heritages, and national independence, i.e., the overthrow of the imperialist yoke." (The Transitional Program)

The above poses a very fundamental question for the comrades of the Fourth International: Should we continue to carry out the traditional and fundamental programmatic line of the International--the Transitional Program--or should we adopt the new strategy of guerilla warfare?

To answer the above question we should first define the nature of guerilla warfare. As is evident, the present "theory" of guerilla warfare is taken from the Cuban experience. Comrade Moscoso, the leader of the Bolivian section, wrote, "In the prevailing conditions in Latin America, the results achieved by the guerillas in Cuba can be realized in any country. Therefore, I say that guerilla warfare is incontrovertibly the road which revolutionaries must take to liberate their peoples from capitalist and imperialist exploitation". ("Lessons of the Cuban Revolution" by Hugo Gonzalez Moscoso, International Socialist Review, March-April 1968, p.11) The ideas of comrade Moscoso are a direct reflection of the ideas contained in the OLAS General Declaration. (See International Socialist Review, November-December 1967)

What then is the Cuban experience? As everybody knows, Castro and several others, after having trained as guerillas in Mexico, stole surreptitiously to Cuba and launched a guerilla struggle in the countryside. After many months of struggle, the guerilla movement increased its power throughout the country, finally driving out Batista and taking over the government. The agrarian revolution, national independence, and the nationalization of the property of both foreign and native capitalists were then eventually and empirically achieved. This seemingly simple and "short-cut" road to revolution has attracted many people to the idea of duplicating the Cuban experience in their own country. Castro himself advocates the Cuban experience as the model to be followed. "We are absolutely convinced that, in the long run, there is only one solution, as expressed in the resolution: Guerilla warfare in Latin America". (Fidel Castro, "Speech to OLAS Conference", ISR, Nov.-Dec. 1967, p.28)

Despite Castro's and others' absolute conviction in guerilla warfare, one must, nevertheless, pose the following question: Can the experience of the Cuban revolution be repeated throughout Latin America, or, as Comrade Moscoso maintained, can "the results achieved by the guerillas in Cuba... be realized in any country"? In my opinion, one must answer this question in the negative.

First one must understand that the victory of the Cuban guerilla struggle is mainly due to the failure of American imperialism to intervene. Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, however, and especially since Cuba has become a workers' state, American imperialism has fundamentally changed its policy. It has not only helped all the reactionary governments in Latin America against the people, but has also directly intervened in the affairs of these governments and has even sent troops to suppress revolutionary movements, as in the Dominican Republic. In those countries where guerilla warfare broke out, American imperialism was responsible for arming and training special forces to deal with these movements, and the tragic defeat of Guevara is only proof of this change in policy by American imperialism and

its effectiveness. The decline and defeats of other guerilla movements as in Venezuela, Guatemala, Colombia, Peru, etc. are also the result of American imperialism's direct intervention. These facts should be taken into serious consideration by all those who advocate and support the strategy of guerilla warfare, and from them clear and unavoidable lessons should be learned.

If one advocates the strategy of guerilla warfare from the fundamental and historical principles of Marxism, Leninism and Trotskyism, this "new" strategy is even more thoroughly exposed. According to Lenin a revolution must base itself upon the worker and peasant masses, and the first task is the building of a revolutionary party which prepares the masses for the revolution. In the event of a revolutionary situation the party then takes as its fundamental task the preparing of the masses for the armed seizure of power. If on the other hand a revolutionary situation does not exist, any organization for immediate armed struggle can only lead to a disastrous defeat. This was, in fact, the strategy and result of Stalin's adventurist policies which he imposed upon the Chinese CP after the defeat of the second Chinese revolution. As is well known, Trotsky very seriously attacked Stalin for his adventurist policies at the time as can be seen in many articles, especially in "The Chinese Question after the Sixth Congress". (Problems of the Chinese Revolution, Trotsky)

At present in Latin America, on the whole, there not only does not exist any revolutionary situation, but many countries have suffered serious setbacks in the development of the revolutionary process--Brazil, Bolivia, Argentina, etc. To propose the strategy of guerilla warfare under these conditions is to propose an adventurous policy similar to Stalin's after the second Chinese revolution, and such a strategy can only lead to similar disastrous results.

To avoid the disastrous results of the guerilla warfare strategy and to prepare the victory of the revolution in Latin America, it is necessary to project a transitional program which should contain, among others, demands for: agrarian reform; national independence; freedom of press, speech, assembly, strike, etc.; and a "Constituent Assembly with full powers, elected by universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage". (Problems of the Chinese Revolution, p. 189) It is only through such a transitional program that we can reorganize and mobilize the masses against the military and oligarchic dictatorships and American imperialism. Only through such an organization of the masses can we approach the necessary armed struggle for power.

Perhaps some comrades will object to the above strategy by saying as they have already said, that "there is no possibility of a reformist period of legal struggles.... Therefore the perspective opened for the Bolivian people is one of direct struggle.... This struggle can only be undertaken by armed means--by guerilla warfare in the countryside, the mines, and the cities.... All others [perspectives] are utopian and can only lead to the defeat of the masses...." ("New Revolutionary Ferment in Bolivia", Intercontinental Press, Vol.6, No.22, p.546) Such a position is, however, only a repetition of the position taken by the Chinese CP under Stalin's leadership in the 30's. Trotsky characterized the CCP's policies at that time as



being adventurous and without perspective, and history has more than proved Trotsky's criticism correct. "Following the inevitable collapse of the Canton uprising, the Comintern took the road of guerilla warfare and peasant soviets with complete passivity on the part of the industrial proletariat. Landing thus in a blind ally, the Comintern took advantage of the Sino-Japanese war to liquidate 'Soviet China' with a stroke of the pen, subordinating not only the peasant 'Red Army' but also the so-called 'Communist' Party to the identical Kuomintang, i.e., the bourgeoisie". (The Transitional Program) The world revolution has paid a most heavy price for the experience of Stalin's adventurism. We must understand this experience and its lessons not only for Bolivia, but also for Latin America and the world as a whole.

Some of the comrades might ask, "But didn't the Chinese CP conquer power later on in 1949 with the strategy of guerilla warfare?" The taking of power in 1949 by the CCP, however, was in no way a result of the guerilla war strategy itself, but rather, a result of the exceptional historical circumstances created as a result of the Japanese invasion of China and World War II. First of all the Soviet Union's occupation of Manchuria, the most industrialized part of China, dealt a heavy blow to the forces of Chiang Kai-shek, and the modern weapons which the Red Army obtained from disarming the Japanese were used to arm the Fourth Army of the CCP commanded by Lin Piao. Most important also was the inability of U.S. imperialism to intervene. U.S. imperialism even cut off aid to Chiang Kai-shek's regime many months before its defeat. (This is, in fact, one of the major reasons for the defeat.) (On how the CCP was able to take power, I have explained in detail in my "Report on the Chinese Situation", published in Feb. 1952, by the SWP in the International Information Bulletin.)

Neither can Vietnam be used to justify the strategy of guerilla warfare. In fact, what is involved in the Vietnamese struggle is not a guerilla war, but in reality, a limited war between American imperialism and the workers' states. In spite of the insufficient amount of aid given to the Vietnamese by the workers' states, especially by the Soviet Union and China, it has only been this aid which has permitted the Vietnamese to continue their struggle. Neither is Vietnam's geographical position a negligible factor, in that it allows the Vietnamese to receive directly from the workers' states the all-important aid. The geographical position, however, of such countries as Indonesia, Malaysia, Bolivia, etc., poses insurmountable obstacles in this regard. To call for the creation of "two, three, or many Vietnams" is utopian. Such a slogan cannot only not be realized in reality, but it completely obscures the origins and nature of the present conflict in Vietnam.

To avoid any possible confusion between our criticism of guerilla warfare and that of the Stalinists in Latin America, we should briefly point out that we do not reject guerilla warfare as do the Stalinists in order to justify a peaceful road to Socialism or to justify a bloc with the liberal national bourgeoisie, but rather, we reject guerilla warfare as an adventuristic strategy which is opposed to our traditional program.

We do not reject guerilla warfare as a tactic, but rather as a strategy. Definitely, when the situation in any country matures to the point that we must immediately prepare the masses for armed insurrection to seize power, guerilla warfare by the peasants might be a most useful tactic.

Nobody can reject revising the Transitional Program in principle. As Marxists we do not regard our program as a dogma. If there is a new reality which can be proven both theoretically and factually by the comrades, then without question, we must make all the necessary changes in the Transitional Program to adapt it to the new reality. But, we are and must be against any unprincipled revision of--and especially any underhanded attempt to revise--our traditionally accepted program. If the comrades think that part (or even all) of the Transitional Program is no longer valid or should be replaced by something else, then they should openly and frankly present their ideas to the International to be discussed and then accepted or rejected by the International.

Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, Castroism has had an influence upon certain radical elements, not only in Latin America, but also elsewhere throughout the world. The influence of Castroism has even made its way into the Fourth International. The adoption of the strategy of guerilla warfare by sections in Latin America and even by the International leadership is a direct reflection of the Castroist influence upon the International. This situation raises the logical question of the relationship and differences between Castroism and Trotskyism. While our movement has given much praise to the Cuban leadership, it has never made any serious criticism of this leadership. Castro, on the other hand, has maliciously attacked and slandered Trotskyism (at the 1966 Tricontinental Conference).

Trotskyism is not only the direct continuation of Marxism, but also the inheritor of the traditions of Bolshevism. In addition, Trotskyism represents the development of the theory of the permanent revolution, as well as a Marxist analysis of the phenomenon of a degenerated workers' state. Comrade Trotsky was also the first to concretely analyze the phenomenon of fascism and to draw the necessary conclusions from the serious defeats suffered by the world working-class movement in the 1920's and 30's. All of this is concretized and summarized in the basic programmatic document of our movement--the Transitional Program.

Castroism, on the other hand, has made no theoretical contribution to Marxism. Castro's program is merely one of action based upon his own experiences in the Cuban revolution, i.e., guerilla warfare. It is clear that Castro does not understand some of the basic tenets of Marxism or some of the most important lessons and experiences of the world working-class movement, such as the Bolshevik revolution, the struggle between Trotsky and Stalin, etc. This lack of understanding is expressed practically in Castro's politics by the lack of any democratic-centralist party in Cuba itself, by the lack of any democratic government in Cuba based upon workers' and peasants' soviets, by the support of a guerilla war strategy in Latin America, etc. We, of course, support the Cuban workers' state against imperialism like other workers' states, and we can on certain specific is-

sues even give critical support to the Cuban leadership against this or that tendency, such as, giving critical support to their attack on Moscow's line of peaceful co-existence and the peaceful road to Socialism. On the other hand, we must thoroughly criticize all the Cuban leadership's weaknesses. We must criticize such things as their support of the guerilla war strategy, pointing out that this is not an alternative strategy to the peaceful-road-to-socialism strategy advocated by the Stalinists, but that objectively in the long run, the strategy of guerilla warfare will only help the opportunism of the Stalinists as well as American imperialism.

## II. Toward the Working Class

In the past period the International, on the whole, has found itself working in and recruiting from primarily petty-bourgeois strata, especially the student movement. To a great degree, of course, this area of work was determined by the objective conditions; nevertheless, our past work in and orientation to the working class had not been what it should have been. Therefore, the reorientation toward and integration into the working class is the most urgent task facing our movement today.

Perhaps some of the comrades would object to the call for such a reorientation of our movement, by saying that our orientation toward the working class has always been understood if not explicitly stated. But the concrete reality of our movement will not support such an objection. We have only to look at the sections in the most industrialized countries of the world, as in Western Europe, to discover that in none of these sections do we have any real basis in the working class. If such a situation is permitted to continue for any length of time, these sections cannot but degenerate.

Of course, our past work in such areas as the student movement has brought us many valuable cadres as well as allowed us to expand our influence by participating and leading important struggles. But we must realize, that a movement such as the student movement is not and cannot be a constant or stable phenomenon, and that this movement does not constitute (and cannot even be considered as) a basis for building a revolutionary (mass) party. The only basis on which we can consider building a revolutionary (mass) party is the working class. The student movement must be considered secondary and subordinate to this orientation.

Our orientation toward the working class must, above all, be concretely based upon our work in the trade unions. The trade unions not only represent tens of millions of organized workers, but also one of the fundamental elements of the actual class struggle. The most unfortunate reality is, however, that in the past period the trade unions have not only been dominated by but completely controlled by the different reformist and even pro-imperialist leaderships. One cannot propose any real perspective of building a mass revolutionary party which can take the road to power, without first having struggled against and to a "certain" degree discredited the present leaderships in the trade unions. "It is impossible to capture political power [and the attempt to capture it should not be made] until

struggle [against the opportunist leaderships of the trade unions] has reached a certain stage". ("Left-Wing" Communism, an Infantile Disorder, Lenin, Chapter VI)

The central and most important part of the struggle against the present reformist leaderships can only be carried out by consistent work in the trade unions themselves. Of course, this work is very difficult and will pose for our movement its most difficult (as well as most important) tactical problems and considerations. But regardless of how difficult this work may be made for us by the bourgeoisie and the bureaucratic trade union leaderships, "we must be able to withstand all this, to agree to any sacrifice, and even--if need be--to resort to all sorts of stratagems, artifices, illegal methods, to evasions and subterfuges, only so as to get into the trade unions, to remain in them, and to carry on Communist work within them at all costs". (Ibid.)

Therefore, it is mandatory that the coming World Congress take this question into serious consideration and propose a concrete orientation to and plan for work in the trade unions and the working class as a whole. Only with such a concrete plan of orientation toward the working class can we envisage the construction of a mass revolutionary party capable of taking power. There is no other road.

### III. What we should learn from the Algerian Events

Boumedienne's coup d'etat in June 1965 not only marked the turning point in the revolutionary movement in Algeria, but also marked a setback for the revolutionary movement throughout the Middle East and Africa as a whole. This coup also represented a heavy blow for the Fourth International and its political position, not only because of the direct involvement and participation in the Algerian events on the part of several sections--France, Algeria, etc.--but also because one of the International's leaders, Michel Pablo, participated in Ben Bella's government. As a result, we must accept as much of the responsibility as anybody for the serious setback. For this reason, it is mandatory that we examine this setback and our own responsibility for it, in order to draw certain conclusions and lessons from the Algerian events. It was for the above reason that I asked the Second Congress after reunification (Dec. 1965) to discuss formally the Algerian events. But no formal discussion took place. Again at a meeting of the IEC in February 1968, I proposed the Algerian events be officially placed on the agenda of the coming World Congress and a formal position taken. At this meeting both comrades Livio Maitan and Sirio Di Giuliomaria objected to the proposal, although the majority at the meeting accepted it. Nevertheless, the objection by comrades Livio and Sirio to such an important discussion represents a most serious weakness of not wanting to discuss the mistakes committed by the International leadership. We must remind the comrades that the attitude towards our own mistakes (especially those on the magnitude of the Algerian events) is one of the fundamental tests of a revolutionary party. As Lenin pointed out, even "a little mistake can always be turned into a monstrous one if it is persisted in, if profound reasons are given for it, and if it is driven to its 'logical conclusion'". (Ibid., Chapter V)

The most important lessons should be drawn from the International's mistakes in relation to the Algerian events. One of the most important mistakes was the failure of the International to seriously criticize Ben Bella's government as well as the failure to propose any revolutionary program for the Algerian masses in order to advance their struggle. On the contrary, the International and the International leadership in their many articles, gave much praise to the FLN leadership, especially to Ben Bella and even Boumedienne.

In the pre-reunification discussion in the International Committee, I made a criticism of the sectarian position held by the SLL leadership on the Evian agreement, in which I outlined a basic program for all revolutionaries concerned with Algeria. "To resolve this contradiction, [between continued French economic and military interests and Algerian independence] all revolutionaries in Algeria should unite behind the hard-won political independence as the starting-point for a Marxist program to mobilize all the working masses and poor peasants for further struggle. The program should include, in my opinion, the withdrawal of all French military forces, the cancellation of all French economic concessions in Algeria, a thorough agrarian reform, the nationalization of all the basic means of production, democratic rights for workers and peasants and the establishment of workers', farmers', and soldiers' councils and a workers' and farmers' government. All revolutionaries in Algeria should engage in the struggle to realize this program so as to bring Algeria into the path of Socialism. This should be the line we ought to take in Algeria. This should also be the norm for criticizing all measures taken by the Ben Bella government and also the platform on which to rally all revolutionaries in Algeria to form a Marxist party to carry on the struggle". ("Where is Healy taking the Socialist Labour League?--A Dangerous Sectarian Tendency", SWP International Information Bulletin, May 1963--I, p.18)

The mistakes committed by the International, as mentioned above, represent an adaptation to a petty-bourgeois leadership. Such an adaptation is not accidental or without precedent. The International, in the past, has displayed a tendency to adapt to reformist bureaucrats and the radical petty bourgeoisie. The International's past position on the so-called self-reform of the bureaucratic leaderships in the workers' states and of certain Communist parties, the International's opportunist attitude toward Tito in the late 40's and early 50's, as well as toward Mao's regime--which continues even today--the International's tail-ending Bevan in England in the 50's, and its past and present uncritical position toward Castro and the Cuban regime, is only a part of the historical precedent for the International's opportunist adaptation to the Ben Bella government.

Such adaptationism has nothing whatsoever to do with Marxism. The historical record of Marx's, Engels', Lenin's, and Trotsky's militant struggles against all petty-bourgeois leaderships in the working-class movement is clear enough. One only needs to point to Marx's serious criticisms of such people as Blanqui and Lassalle. If, however, these militants were active today, it is hard to believe that the International would take a similar critical stance. Or one can point to Trotsky's scathing criticism of the centrist POUM for a more recent example. One cannot doubt the general revo-

lutionary character of people like Blanqui or leaders of the POUM like Nin, but this did not change their objective political role or keep Marxists from seriously criticizing their political position. On the contrary, such people were all the more criticized in order to try to win them or their followers to a revolutionary Marxist position.

Recognizing our mistakes on the Algerian events, openly admitting them, and correcting them, is even more important in light of the International's record of many similar mistakes in the past. We must draw important lessons from the Algerian experience and apply these lessons to our present attitude toward the NLF in Vietnam, Castro, Mao, etc. In this way the lessons of the Algerian experience can (and must) play a most important role in the building of a revolutionary International.

### Conclusion

Replacing the Transitional Program with the strategy of guerilla warfare, neglecting the most serious work in the working class and its traditional class-struggle organizations, i.e., the trade unions, and continuing to adapt ourselves to different petty-bourgeois currents and leaderships, cannot only not build an International, but will lead our movement into a blind ally. The above represents a deviation from Trotskyism, and it is the most urgent task and duty of the coming World Congress to consider seriously these questions by taking a formal stand on them in order to return to the road of Trotskyism.

5 March 1969

P.S. The comrades will please understand that the above document was delayed as much as possible in the hope of receiving the pertinent draft resolutions for the coming congress. But as it was not possible to delay any longer, and therefore, the above document was written with only the draft resolution, "The New Rise of the World Revolution", at hand. In the last few days, we have received the draft resolution on Latin America. Time does not permit us to deal specifically with this draft resolution, nevertheless, it does not necessitate any change in the above criticisms. On the contrary, this draft resolution makes the above criticisms--especially on guerilla warfare--all the more pointed. We also regret not having been able to utilize for the above document the other draft resolutions on China, Western Europe, Algeria, etc., which, to date, still remain unavailable.

12 March 1969