

INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION BULLETIN

No. 6

April 1969

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(Published as a fraternal
courtesy to the United Sec-
retariat of the Fourth In-
ternational)

20 cents

SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY

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Draft Resolution

THE ALGERIAN REVOLUTION FROM 1962 TO 1969

I.

Six months after the coup d'état that overthrew Ahmed Ben Bella, the Eighth World Congress of the Fourth International, meeting December 1965, analyzed the situation in Algeria in a resolution, "Progress and Problems of the African Revolution." This analysis singled out the following aspects in the development of the Algerian revolution from 1954 to 1965:

(1) Before independence, the Algerian revolution took the form of a deep-going mobilization of the masses. The political instrument of the revolution, the FLN, took form as a politically ill-defined multiclass front.

(2) Following independence, the FLN literally burst into fragments at the time of the crisis in the summer of 1962, which developed along very unclear lines.

(3) A new stage characterized by a dynamic of growing over into socialism opened with the exodus of the French colonists. The rising curve in the revolution reached its highest point with the March 1963 decrees and continued up to the expropriation measures in October of the same year. Observing this process, the United Secretariat of the Fourth International took note of the fact that a workers and peasants government had been established in Algeria. At that time the process had already slowed and a pause had set in.

(4) Algerian society remained marked by the coexistence and conflict of different and antagonistic forces and sectors. A significant Algerian private capitalist sector continued to exist, including in the countryside, as well as a powerful foreign capitalist sector (oil and gas). Furthermore, imperialist aid continued to be important and Algeria remained dependent on the franc zone. An administrative, economic, and military state bureaucracy developed which enjoyed a privileged share of the national income.

(5) The coup d'état of June 19, 1965 was the outcome of the deterioration in the situation which Ben Bella could no longer forestall. The coup d'état was supported by the most well-known representatives of the state and army bureaucracy. Its result was to encourage those forces most hostile to a socialist conclusion to the Algerian revolution.

In adopting these conclusions, the World Congress, however, left discussion open on the Algerian question. Moreover, an amendment judging that the characteri-

zation of the Ben Bella government had been premature and had caused a certain confusion as to the tasks of revolutionary Marxists was rejected by only a relatively narrow majority. Superimposed on this difference in evaluation was a difference with the comrades who had worked in Algeria over the assessment of the June 19 coup. They held that the coup only replaced one Bonapartist team with another, changing the form but not the content of the government.

II.

Today, however, we can say that in coming to grips with a general analysis of the policy the Boumédiène government has followed for more than three years and an analysis of the present situation in Algeria, these points of disagreement seem secondary and of purely historical importance.

Immediately after June 19, 1965, two factors favored a temporary misunderstanding of the nature of the coup d'état:

(a) The fact that the coup eliminated only a relatively small number of figures, while a whole series of ministers in the Ben Bella government joined Boumédiène's "Council of the Revolution."

(b) The support which the Chinese leadership gave to the Boumédiène regime in the weeks following the coup and which was motivated by considerations of a factional nature linked to the way in which Ben Bella and his team had been preparing the Afro-Asian conference.

Today these factors are no longer operative. In Algeria as well as elsewhere the nature of the Boumédiène government is clear. After having overthrown Ben Bella, Boumédiène adopted a completely different orientation from that of the Ben Bella government.

But while the revolutionary vanguard is no longer affected by hesitation, Moscow and not Peking is making conciliatory moves toward the regime, accompanying this with an attempt on the ideological level to paint up the Boumédiène regime as "anti-imperialist." This line is being followed by the PAGS,* in which former members of the Algerian Communist party are active. In addition, after the Algerian leaders assumed verbal "leftist" positions in the Israeli-Arab conflict,

* PAGS: Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste, formerly ORP (Organisation de la Résistance Populaire) founded after June 19.

Fidel Castro, who had very severely condemned the authors of the coup d'état, went back on his condemnation, doing this in the form of self-criticism.

Thus it is necessary to reaffirm the position of the revolutionary Marxists on the present regime in Algeria without any ambiguities.

The June 19 coup d'état was a victory for the reactionary forces, a qualitative expression of the erosion and the molecular changes occurring both in the state personnel and organization and consciousness of the classes -- thus it clearly represented a qualitative change. After a period of deterioration it became relatively "easy" for Boumédiène to register this change in the relationship of forces qualitatively which the revolutionary party had not been able to counteract. The contradiction between the capitalist state and the socialist orientation of the workers and peasants government was then eliminated by Boumédiène and his army, "the only force in the country capable of protecting the Constitution and the national institutions." (El Djeich, organ of the army, June 1965: "Why June 19?")

During the first period extending from 1965 to the end of 1967, which still reflected an equilibrium of forces, there was an increasing drift to the right. At the end of 1967, a second period opened, which continues to the present, with the rise of Kaïd Achmed (former Commander Slimane) to the second highest political post in the country, to the position of head of the "party."

As the background for this shift in the balance of forces, a dual phenomenon should be noted:

(a) The development of a state capitalist sector in the economy in close osmosis with imperialist interests.

(b) The steady loss of momentum by the UGTA trade-union apparatus. This apparatus thought it could maintain its independence and serve as a center for a new mobilization of the masses by limiting itself in the interval to a defensive struggle to preserve self-management, if not to a purely economic struggle.

The attempted counter coup d'état of El Affroun, led by Tahar Zbiri in December 1967 and supported by a section of the trade-union militants, was a desperate attempt to reverse this drift. The masses did not intervene in any way.

III.

The essential feature in the changes which have occurred in the Algerian economic structure has been the strengthening of the "mixed" (state capitalism and

foreign capital) fuels sector of the Algerian economy. This is the main sector of the economy from the standpoint of export and has undergone constant expansion (39.7 million tons produced in 1967 as against 26.1 million in 1964). The fuels sector is dominated by Sonatrach,* a state company created originally to manage the third Hassi Messaoud-Arzew pipeline completed in 1966 but which has developed into one of the principal petroleum producers. The activities of Sonatrach, which is aided by American and Soviet experts and collaborates closely with foreign interests, have expanded to such a degree that this enterprise constitutes a veritable state within a state. The basis for the collaboration between imperialism and the state sector is still the 1965 oil agreement concluded shortly after the June 19 coup d'état and ratified in the French parliament by a UNR-PCF majority. Algerian state capitalism has been collaborating with imperialism without any major conflicts. The "nationalization" of the American oil companies distribution network in September 1967 was, in appearance, an anti-imperialist measure in response to the Israeli aggression. In reality it was a purchase agreed to by the companies involved. The same was true of the purchase of the other distribution centers in May 1968. While collaborating with imperialism, the state sector seeks to assure its control over the transfer of currency and to impose its conditions with regard to export prices. These are minor conflicts in which the primary objective is "getting into position" for the renewal of the 1965 agreement in 1969.

It must be added that the Algerian left forces have never advanced specific demands for this sector, limiting themselves to declaring that nationalization of mineral and energy resources was a "long-term goal" (1964 Algiers Charter).

As against the constant expansion of this sector, the modest self-managed industrial sector, composed in general of old plants, is steadily losing momentum. Its social weight is minimal. The workers in this sector are calculated at less than 15,000 (6 percent of the Algerian working class). Moreover, the new investment code freezes the limit of development of this sector. It guarantees that there will be no nationalization of the foreign capital invested in Algeria for ten years time and that after that it can be nationalized only with payment of 100 percent compensation.

The nationalization of French plants in June 1968, planned by American and Swiss "experts," was carried out according to this schema. These plants were turned

* Sonatrach: Société National de Transport et de Commercialisation de Hydrocarbures.

over to state companies that were not self-managed. Some of them were previously self-managed plants returned to their former owners (Norcolor). In other cases, the "nationalization-purchase" was made long after these concerns had brought the enterprises in the self-managed industrial sector to their knees (oil works, soap factories).

Parallel to the industrial sector, peasant self-management has had to struggle constantly against sabotage by the authorities combined with difficulties on the French wine market (wine import quotas).

As for the "agrarian reform," adopted in 1966 but left unimplemented, it itself is nothing but a caricature of the reform drawn up under the Ben Bella government. Matching the appetites of the state bureaucracy, it is limited to an area producing a net annual income equal to the state payroll.

IV.

Given the social and political weakness of the Algerian bourgeoisie, this state bureaucracy has proved to be more of a danger to the Algerian revolution than the bourgeoisie itself.

In order to understand the reasons for the behavior of this new bureaucratic layer, we must examine the elements making it up, its international context, and the international social forces on which it bases itself.

We can define three layers in the Algerian state bureaucracy. These layers are based on the social interests they have represented in post-1962 Algeria, independently of the social origins of the bureaucrats themselves. According to this criterion, a bureaucrat may drift imperceptibly from one stratum to another.

(1) An initial layer which made it possible to maintain a "well functioning" state apparatus between the cease-fire and the formation of the first Ben Bella government. It is composed of a certain number of functionaries, who were old and recent collaborators with the colonial regime, coming from the famous "Lacoste promotion." It is made up both of Algerians and reformed and cooperative Pieds-Noirs.* This stratum is the most faithful supporter of the leaders who want to maintain a state of the bourgeois type. By its inertia and its sabotage of revolutionary measures, this layer plays an important braking role. It hides behind the mask of "technical competence" in order to maintain itself. But it is being subjected to criticism by the most conscious cadres,

who demand that it be purged. The continually promised removal of this stumbling block is always indefinitely postponed. This stratum takes advantage of the delay to consolidate its privileges and it exercises a pernicious influence on the opportunistic nationalist cadres who are slipping into reactionary positions.

(2) The national bourgeoisie was extensively represented in the first Ben Bella government. These cadres based themselves in the state apparatus on a bureaucratic layer of high functionaries (cabinet members, prefects) whose actions then and since have been guided by the same class interests. M. Khider, the secretary of the FLN, worked in the party apparatus to consolidate the power of these strata, if not for a seizure of power by them. Representatives of this layer were to be found in the successive Ben Bella governments. A few were unmasked, but these bourgeois bureaucrats remained throughout the machinery of state. Certain bourgeois technocrats remain also in the Boumedienne government.

(3) The third layer in the state bureaucracy, and the most numerous, formed as a bureaucratic layer in the FLN administrative apparatus during the war. It emerged from the agrarian and urban petty-bourgeoisie which flocked to the FLN and the ALN. This layer rallied first to Ben Bella and then to Boumedienne. It includes the majority of the army and men in the ministries whose opposition to the June 1968 "nationalizations" tends to show that some of them, too have slipped into the first group. The vast majority of the intermediate-level functionaries in the ministries and the local administrations have come from different strata of the petty bourgeoisie -- small and middle tradesmen, middle peasants, petty functionaries of the colonial era. The ANP officers are almost entirely representatives of the petty bourgeoisie.

A part of this strata came from the working class in the cities or in emigration. Former working-class cadres in the MTLD and former CGT or UGTA unionists have risen to positions of responsibility in the state apparatus. Boumaza, Alia Yahia, and Zerdani represented this element. But in the context of the alliance that the petty bourgeoisie has concluded with the national bourgeoisie, this layer of the working-class bureaucracy, which is rather weak moreover has been buffeted about between the government and the mass pressure it is subject to -- insofar as it is conscious of the political weight of the pressure from the masses. This layer will never be capable (with very rare exceptions) of conducting a proletarian policy. It is being totally rooted out of the state apparatus.

* French born in Algeria.

The most characteristic feature of

this state bureaucracy is its heterogeneity. Representatives of the national bourgeoisie are found side by side with representatives of the working class, in the same ministerial and government commissions, in the Political Bureau.

The question which arises continually for each of these strata is, whom to serve. Such a heterogeneous bureaucracy becomes conscious of its social role only through constant confrontation with the social forces and classes which it claims to serve as a whole. This is why since 1962 all government bodies have been torn by clique infighting and struggles over immediate interests.

The pressures of imperialism on this bureaucracy must not be overlooked. French imperialism has brought pressure to bear through economic cooperation, continuation of the Evian accords, and the 1965 hydrocarbon agreements; British imperialism through mixed companies. American imperialism has exercised pressure through its not inconsiderable economic aid. And West German imperialism as well as others have been present. No less important is the considerable economic aid provided by the bureaucracies of the workers states -- the USSR, China, and Yugoslavia heading the list. Far from being provided in accordance with the principles proclaimed by Che Guevara at the Algiers Afro-Asian Economic Seminar, this aid has been accompanied by declarations favorable to the regimes in power and in the last analysis has favored stabilization of the state structures and the status quo. The same effect was produced by the ideological default of the former PCA (Alger Républicain) and later, after Harbi's arrest, of the ORP-PAGS (speculation on conflicts in the government team even today) assuming that a "socialist state" or a "noncapitalist road" had been achieved or was in the process of being achieved.

Enmeshed in this international context, the state bureaucratic structures have become allied with the retrograde social forces.

V.

The general political resolution of the Second Congress of the UGTA in 1965 listed the "bureaucratic layer being formed" among the "forces of counterrevolution" alongside the feudalists and exploitive bourgeoisie.

But the Oumeziane leadership of the UGTA, elected at the Second Congress timidly avoided drawing the necessary conclusions from this analysis. It tried to counter the dismantling of self-management by a defensive struggle, seeking support in the government. Its paper has been repeatedly prevented from coming out (May 1966, December 1967, and up to the pres-

ent).

In Algeria today, the workers' right to determine the rules under which their unions function, to elect their representatives freely, to formulate their program without interference from the authorities, and to decide their actions in complete independence -- that is, the four necessary criteria of trade-union independence from the state apparatus -- have been deprived of all semblance of reality.

VI.

At the present time, despite Cherif Belkacem and then Kaïd Ahmed's "reorganization," the "FLN party" is still nonexistent.

But on the side of the opposition organizations, the picture is not a reassuring one.

(a) The "CNDR" or ex-"PRS,"* was never able to develop after its initial "Menshevik-type" positions condemning the Ben Bella government's revolutionary measures as "premature."

(b) The "PAGS" or ex-"ORP"***became nothing but a vehicle of the Kremlin's foreign policy, under Alleg's leadership after Mohammed Harbi and Sahouane were arrested. This was shown by its turn on January 26, 1966, toward the formation of a broad "people's democratic" front demanding even the release of Ait Ahmed, who was imprisoned at that time, and proposing a front with the FFS. It has no mass base.

(c) Ait Ahmed's "FFS" and Mohamed Labjaoui's "OCRA"*** represent factions in the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois wing of the old apparatuses.

(d) The "Rassemblement Unitaire des Révolutionnaires" (RUR), which was born of splits from the ex-ORP and the OCRA, represents, from the standpoint of its program and its analyses, the tendency closest to revolutionary socialism. Its base in Algeria, however, is as limited as that of the other movements.

VII.

(1) In this context the fundamental strategic task remains the organization of a revolutionary Marxist vanguard and the

* Conseil National de la Defense de la Révolution, and Parti de la Révolution Socialiste.

**Parti de l'Avant-Garde Socialiste, and Organisation de Resistance Populaire.

*** Front des Forces Socialistes, and Organisation Clandestine de la Resistance Algérienne.

subsequent formation of a party of the urban and rural workers which would struggle for the overthrow of the Boumédiénne regime and the establishment of a government of the worker and peasant masses.

(2) Inseparably bound up with this task is the necessity of struggling to revitalize the trade-union movement and gain its complete independence from the state.

(3) This struggle can only be waged through and parallel to a revival of the mass movement. And the mass movement can be revived only through struggle for:

(a) Stimulation of the noncapitalist sector of the economy by putting the entire nationalized industrial sector under self-management and giving priority to this sector as regards fiscal advantages and the development of trade relations, etc.

(b) The establishment of a monopoly of foreign trade and the introduction of mandatory national planning to avert strangulation of the self-managed sector.

(c) Nationalization of the petroleum-producing enterprises belonging to all the imperialist countries involved in the June 1967 aggression against the Arab revolution, and the establishment of workers control exercised jointly by representatives of the oil workers and the socialist industrial sector over Sonatrach and the other oil companies.

(d) Abrogation of the pseudo-agrarian reform of 1966 and implementation of a radical agrarian reform by means of expropriation of the large landowners and

severe limitations on the right to hold property in land. The starting consideration must be that it is of course incorrect to call only for the restriction of large and middle landownership independent of seeking the most productive use of the land. But it is not correct either to envisage agrarian reform as an attempt to put the most land possible under cultivation according to abstract criteria of economic efficiency, independent of social relationships.

(e) Amendment of the 1966 law on municipal government for a new definition of municipal boundaries guaranteeing that the municipalities will be economic units and eliminating interference by the FLN apparatus.

(f) Defense of the revolution by the creation of workers and peasants militias based on the big farms, the big factories, and the municipalities.

(g) Renovation and purging of the state apparatus, the creation of organs of people's power, and promotion of equalitarian tendencies in the struggle against bureaucratic privileges. Revival of the struggle for democratic demands -- emancipation of women, the struggle to keep Islam out of public affairs, the struggle against illiteracy and for education, the struggle against regional particularism.

(4) Particular importance must be accorded to work among the Algerian workers in Europe as well as work for the release of all the interned militants and leaders, especially Ben Bella, Ben Allah, Zahouane, Harbi, and Hadj Ali.

AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY CHARLIER AND GERMAIN TO THE RESOLUTION ON ALGERIA

(The following text should be inserted as point VI in the resolution, between what are currently points V and VI.)

Today the Trotskyist movement is unanimous in its assessment of the current situation in Algeria. After the June 19 coup d'état, however, the limited importance of the change in the government made-up led some militants to ask whether the character of this coup had not been exaggerated; since, after all, it did not exceed the dimensions of a palace revolution. Subsequently, the majority agreed that the coup was the qualitative expression of a molecular deterioration which had occurred in the last period of President Ben Bella's regime. But in view of the rapidity with which the state bureaucracy accentuated its right turn, a second question arose: Had the Trotskyist movement exaggerated the advances of the Algerian revolution in February 1964 when it characterized the Ben Bella government as a workers and peasants government? This is the question which must be answered now. And there is nothing academic in our taking up this question. Since 1954, the world Trotskyist movement has engaged in unconditional support of the revolutionary struggle of the Algerian people. After independence was won, a number of the movement's cadres put themselves at the service of the Algerian people and, until 1965, their government. At the World Reunification Congress in July 1963, although this work was directed by cadres belonging to a tendency that was subsequently to leave the mainstream of the movement, it was approved unanimously by the movement's highest authority. In undertaking this labor of self-criticism, the Fourth International is applying the Leninist rule that "The seriousness of a revolutionary party is measured by the attitude it takes toward its own errors."

These considerations are by no means intended to minimize the real advances which marked the development of the Algerian revolution during the first years after independence. They are not intended either to denigrate the real anti-imperialist and anticapitalist actions of the Ben Bella government and, more precisely, the limited team around Ben Bella, which on several occasions went outside the institutional framework to make concessions to the masses. The process of legalizing the conquests of the masses by decrees, going beyond the established institutions, is an example of this. This way of operating is comparable to that which any workers and peasants government must resort to in operating within the structures of a bourgeois state while not hesitating to come into conflict with them.

To answer the question concerning the nature of the Ben Bella government, it

is, however, likewise necessary to take into account the fact that the masses in movement that won self-management were the permanent workers on the large estates that later became self-managed farms; that is, the agricultural proletariat in the true sense of the word. After the summer of 1962, this agricultural proletariat was the only sector of the masses in motion. It was this mass that formed the Ben Bella team's social base. This relatively narrow social base enabled the Ben Bella government to play a Bonapartist role. The masses of poor peasants could have offered a broader social base, but they were atomized during the crisis of the summer of 1962. These masses have not been able to mobilize themselves to this day.

The Fourth International did not correctly weigh the importance of this void and therefore tended not to see this major difference between the situation in Algeria and the situation which led to the establishment of a workers state in Cuba less than two years after the Castroist team took power. (A comparable risk would have existed if the Cuban leadership had split into three or four opposing fractions in January 1959 and found itself unable to mobilize immediately all the exploited masses in the country through the rapid and radical implementation of the land reform, the urban reform, the major nationalizations, and the general literacy campaign, etc.)

In this situation, a revolutionary leadership possessing an adequate instrument, a revolutionary party, would have been able to quickly attempt to reestablish contact with the masses. But in Algeria, the FLN was never a "party" in the class sense. Moreover, it no longer existed after 1958, except as an organization in the federation of France and as a government in the GPRA. For all other purposes it had abdicated in favor of the ALN.

This erroneous analogy with the Cuban situation subsequently led the Trotskyist movement to minimize the seriousness of certain events, such as the Khider apparatus' gangster-like attack on the UGTA congress. The falseness of this analogy was made worse by a wrong assessment of the nature of the ALN, especially after the application of the Evian agreements, and by the conception, maintained primarily by the Pablo tendency, that in the concrete Algerian situation of 1962-3 the army could play the role of the party. The grave consequences of the delay in organizing an Algerian revolutionary vanguard were seriously underestimated. In

view of the qualitative difference between the limited mobilization of the Algerian masses in 1963 and the general mobilization of the masses in Cuba in 1959-61, the analogy with the Cuban revolution was methodologically false.

It was the narrowness of the Ben Bella team's social base also which little by little, as no other sector of the masses moved in to reinforce the agricultural workers, resulted in Ben Bella's becoming a prisoner of his own state apparatus.

The Trotskyist movement never used this category in the Algerian context as a synonym for a dictatorship of the proletariat. Such a variant of a workers and peasants government is only one among others. The state structures were always correctly analyzed as bourgeois, except by the comrades of the Pablo tendency. These comrades used confused formulas like "anticapitalist state" or "semi-workers" in the press of the International. They underestimated the weight of the bourgeois apparatus and its ability to halt or reverse the dynamic of permanent revolution. This capacity proved decisive.

But although the International correctly applied the designation of workers and peasants government to the Ben Bella regime, it did not sufficiently stress the imperious necessity of establishing independent organs of political power by the urban and rural proletariat. Such bodies, moreover, would have been the best instruments for a general mobilization of the masses and the sole means for making the process of permanent revolution irreversible. It was primarily the comrades of the Pablo tendency -- who at the time controlled the journal of the French section -- who made this incorrect analysis of the dynamic of the Algerian revolution. They assigned the mass mobilization essentially the role of supporting the Ben Bella tendency and realizing the FLN program, failing to understand that their

hope for a gradual change in the nature of the Algerian state was a utopian and non-Marxist conception.

A concomitant error was committed in May 1964 when the International Executive Committee set the task for the revolutionary Marxists of collaborating in the formation of a revolutionary socialist left "led by the FLN" (the IEC resolution, "The International Situation and the Tasks of the Revolutionary Marxists," QI, July 1964) instead of stressing the need to work among the ranks first to create a revolutionary Marxist organization linked to the Algerian masses.

The lesson of the events in Algeria is of considerable importance. The victory of the socialist revolution in Algeria was possible. But a decisive factor was lacking: the revolutionary party.

Within the frame of this self-criticism it must be added frankly that if the participation of the Trotskyist movement in the Algerian revolution, its support to the struggle and to the most progressive tendency after 1962 were considerable, too little was done in carrying out the specific function of the Trotskyist movement -- to form the nucleus of a future Algerian revolutionary party. The work of training and recruiting Algerian militants was considerably neglected for work at the top.

Doubtless, during an initial phase, in view of the smallness of our forces, it was correct to concentrate on a campaign of practical support for the revolution which was creating a climate favorable to the spread of our ideas. But after a given point the formation of an organized nucleus should have been given priority. The International recognized this at its Seventh World Congress. It did not, however, make the necessary effort to impose this line. Thus, it shares the blame for this error with the comrades of the Pablo tendency, who were the main ones responsible for this work and for the false orientation as regards building a revolutionary nucleus.

THE POSITION OF THE MEXICAN DELEGATION TO THE NINTH CONGRESS
OF THE FOURTH INTERNATIONAL ON THE UNITED SECRETARIAT
RESOLUTION ON LATIN AMERICA

The Draft Resolution on Latin America which the United Secretariat has presented for discussion preparatory to the Ninth Congress gives principal consideration, in its political aspect, to the concrete problems related to armed guerrilla struggle. This type of struggle is on the order of the day in several countries on this continent -- Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, etc. However, the United Secretariat document completely overlooks the acute problems faced by revolutionary Marxist organizations where the stage of the movement calls for the most elementary organizational and political preparation.

As the draft resolution clearly recognizes, the debate over peaceful and violent roads to revolution in Latin America is concluded. Following the victory of the Cuban revolution, the debate on this question was one of the bases for the recruitment of a great number of members to the revolutionary Marxist organizations (comprising, in this context, the Castroist, Trotskyist, and, to a certain extent, Maoist organizations -- that is, only some of those who joined the Maoist tendency were revolutionary Marxists). Many organizations did not limit themselves to theoretical discussion of this question. The guerrilla forces and various armed groups which arose in the cities in Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, etc. put into practice the conclusions drawn from the experiences of the Cuban revolution and of many years of struggle in the other countries of the continent.

We might add that this period of ferment and assimilation of new political lessons, which the impact of the Cuban revolution produced in the revolutionary circles that sprang up under its inspiration, lasted until 1967, specifically until the tragic conclusion of Che's guerrilla experiment. During that period, the most enlightened section of the vanguard carefully weighed the experiences of the Latin-American struggle since 1960, and began to develop analyses and to undertake a critical reevaluation of what had really been accomplished. The successes, which were rather limited, and the failures, much more frequent, had led to different situations in various countries. In Guatemala, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Brazil, and Argentina, events had occurred which were crucial for the understanding of the revolutionary tendencies on the continent. Throughout the entire revolutionary movement there was a profound thirst for theoretical explanation and analysis of those convulsive years. The appearance of Debray's famous book in 1966, the heated polemic which it aroused, and the speed

with which it was forgotten -- despite the sensational adventures of its author -- attested to this eagerness to find a theoretical and political guide. And this analytical fervor highlighted all the changes which had occurred in the revolutionary movement in Latin America since the victory of the Cuban revolution. Such analysis was sought, not out of any academic obsession, but with the aim of providing a better focus for militant revolutionary action.

Che's political testament advanced an elementary truth on a continent-wide basis, a truth which must be the first premise of all revolutionary action subsequent to the Cuban revolution -- the necessity of a socialist revolution. Previously, this principle was expressed only by the Trotskyist groups or parties and by the Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre [November 13 Revolutionary Movement] in Guatemala. Although the two declarations of Havana had posed the necessity of a socialist revolution implicitly, they did not spell it out with the clarity of Che's formulation. This basic confirmation of the revolutionary Marxist program did not fail to cause surprise in many revolutionary circles which had followed the Cuban experience very attentively. This was so because of the excessive importance that the Castroists throughout the continent attributed to the concrete problems related to armed struggle, above all armed struggle in the countryside. The theoretical and political weakness of many of the organizations which had arisen under the stimulus of the Cuban revolution began to be perceived. This weakness, moreover, was expressed in a real case of organizational rickets in all aspects except those strictly pertaining to armed struggle. Thus, before OLAAS, the main beneficiaries of the wave of radicalism that surged across the continent after 1960 were, paradoxically, the Communist parties, the classical bureaucratized parties which the Castroists so despised.

When Che went to Bolivia, his immense revolutionary prestige, the drama of his struggle, the extraordinary lessons of his experiment, and the assiduous preparation of his guerrilla movement made an indelible impression on Latin-American vanguard circles. The failure of the Bolivian guerrilla movement in 1967 emphasized the urgent necessity of taking a full balance sheet of the armed struggle in the countryside, of the relationships between this struggle and the struggle in the cities, of its links with the revolutionary parties, and of the importance of a revolutionary program. In his Bolivian experiment and in his theory, Che pro-

jected most of all the fundamental strategy that the revolutionary movement in Latin America should follow -- the creation of one, two, many Vietnams. All the tactical errors, all the organizational failings, all the gross errors of political judgement (the most outstanding of which was an incredibly naïve estimation of the pro-Soviet Bolivian CP, which betrayed and isolated Che and bears a large part of the responsibility for the failure of his guerrilla movement) that Che and his companions showed were counterbalanced by the potent factor of the strategy on which the whole experiment was based. The fundamental political and programmatic clarity of Che's guerrilla experiment more than excused all its deficiencies. In Bolivia Guevara was advancing, even if in a partial and limited way, the victory of the fundamental strategy of our times -- opening up new fronts of struggle on the order of Vietnam, or raising the crisis of imperialism to a higher level. No one can say that when Che died a hero's death in Bolivia he failed from this strategic point of view. Although the Yankee intervention which this action stimulated in Bolivia did not go beyond the stage of sending "advisors" and "Green Berets," it is obvious that he spurred the subjective forces of the revolution on this continent to a higher level. In a historical context, his failure was only a tactical one. The fundamental changes in Latin-American politics throughout the continent and, in fact, in world politics during 1968, cannot be explained in large part without taking into consideration Che's action in Bolivia.

Che's campaign closed the critical period that began in 1960. At the same time, his strategic conception was to climax all the revolutionary political experiences in Latin America. Above all, it explained the event which was the other great landmark, along with his Bolivian guerrilla experiment, of revolutionary political experience on the continent -- the Yankee invasion of the Dominican Republic. It was clear in 1967 that what Che was trying to achieve in Bolivia was aimed at provoking massive Yankee military intervention in that country. But he knew that the geographical and political conditions in that country would give this intervention a virulence which it did not have in the parallel case in the Dominican Republic. We stress that if Che suffered a tactical defeat in Bolivia, his example, his lesson, and his strategy were absorbed by the most principled revolutionists on the continent. This became clearly apparent in the year following his death. In 1968, the political life of the continent unquestionably entered into a new stage characterized by the beginning mobilization of the urban masses.

The fundamental weakness of the draft resolution on Latin America lies in

the fact that it centers its attention on the Latin-American reality prior to 1968. This incapacity to take account, theoretically and politically, of the coming repercussions on this continent of the "new rise of the world revolution" that characterized 1968 must be corrected if we are to have an adequate guide to action in the new period that opened up in this watershed year. In this new upsurge that began sensationally with the 1968 Tet offensive and showed the heights that it might reach in the "May revolution" in France, Latin America made its contribution with the mass mobilization of forces in Mexico City -- where passivity or near passivity had reigned for almost a decade -- as well as in Uruguay and Brazil. Also, as the draft resolution correctly states, we must expect the beginning of a revival by the very important sector of the masses on this continent represented by the working class of Argentina. But crises are on the horizon in other countries -- Peru, Colombia, Venezuela, etc. The resolution approved by the congress as the political guide for revolutionary Marxists in Latin America must consider fully the period which is opening up in which the activity of these revolutionists will be decisive.

Of course, the draft resolution accepts a fundamental theoretical and political premise of the permanent revolution -- the key role of the working class and the urban masses in winning the victory of the socialist revolution, the only possible revolution in Latin America. But in the stage that opened up in 1968, we must not only recognize this basic truth but translate it into the language of day-to-day politics, of slogans, of organizational forms, of urban insurrectionary struggle (i.e., the form taken by the armed struggle of the masses in the cities), of preparation for people's war when massive military intervention by Yankee imperialism takes place. One of the most important aspects which Che's action in Bolivia highlighted was the importance of the role of the working class and the urban masses -- students, teachers, office employees, etc. -- in bringing about a generalized crisis of the system. If this is true for a country where the social and political weight of these sectors is not very great, what would happen in the large countries of the continent where their specific weight is decisive? In these countries, the stage which has begun is not completely separate from the preceding one. That is, it is very probable that there will be an interpenetration of both forms of revolutionary action. In fact, this has already happened in Venezuela, Guatemala, Bolivia, Brazil, and -- in part -- Mexico, where a "local" guerrilla movement arose in the state of Guerrero, one of the most turbulent states in the country. But what is also clear is that in such phases of the new stage, the role that revolutionists play in the urban

mass movements will be decisive. Even a guerrilla movement as backward in relation to its Latin-American sister movements as that led by Genaro Vázquez Rojas in Guerrero recognized, after the student struggle in Mexico City, that it had to have close ties with the urban masses. It now recognizes also the necessity of struggle committees and councils not only among the urban masses but among the peasant masses not directly linked to the guerrillas. And, as we said, Vázquez is still programmatically at the stage of "national liberation," that is, in the stage that was typical of the guerrilla movement before Che's Bolivian experiment.

In Cuba, the participation by the working class and the urban masses in the revolutionary mobilization which brought the guerrillas and the Rebel Army to power was diffused primarily in a movement of revolutionary solidarity with the struggle in the countryside. This was because of the very peculiar structure of the pre-revolutionary Cuban economy, which was characterized by minimal industrialization and by an extensive rural proletariat produced by sugarcane monoculture. It is extremely unlikely that the same thing will occur in countries like Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Peru, and Colombia. It is probably that the Cuban dynamic will be repeated in the Central American countries and that there the urban sectors will be mobilized on the basis of active solidarity with the guerrilla movement. But in the large countries, in which the urban contingents encompass millions and millions of men and women, mere appeals to solidarity with the guerrilla struggle in the countryside have not been, are not, and will not be sufficient. In other words, the victory of the guerrilla struggle depends on the support it gets in the cities, but this support must take a political expression. This in turn assumes organization on a party and mass level which takes account of the concrete and specific needs of the urban struggle. The dynamic of the movement of millions of workers who are the decisive factor in the urban centers arises not so much out of a consciousness of solidarity with the problems of other sectors -- with the problems of the rural masses -- but out of the specific class contradictions in those centers. Of course -- without denying the importance which the expression of solidarity by the urban masses not only with national but international struggles will have in any advanced program -- the task of revolutionists will be to give adequate expression to the dynamic implicit in the concrete problems of the masses, problems which will surely impel them to their most radical actions.

The ascendancy of guerrilla struggle in most recent years was not, of course, owing only to hasty and ill-considered extrapolations of the Cuban experience.

However absurd and even infantile, in some cases, these experiments in "meta-logical imitation" may seem (many were failures), they were justified by a profound contradictory reality. In any case, the Cuban example found fertile ground and there were many reasons to justify the rapid formation of guerrilla movements. The contradiction which sustained all these actions was the clear urgency of revolution on the continent and the relative passivity of the urban sectors from which the greater part of the guerrillas came who were anxious to put their countries in the revolutionary vanguard. But today this is no longer justified. It is evident that if the working class of the imperialist countries is beginning to awaken from its twenty-year torpor, we need not greatly emphasize that the Latin-American workers also have their scores to settle with the system and that there are more than a few of these.

The general strategy which Che outlined in advocating the creation of other Vietnams (and which the Fourth International has clearly recommended since 1965) remains valid also in the new stage where new tactical considerations assume a greater importance. Moreover, today, the prospect of creating a new Vietnam based on the urban crises is the most realistic one. For this reason the revolutionary Marxist organizations, which are composed primarily of urban elements, acquire a crucial importance. With the exception of Guatemala, Venezuela, and Bolivia -- although of course some other case may have escaped us -- the revolutionary Marxist organizations in most Latin-American countries are in a formative stage politically and organizationally. This is especially true in Mexico, Brazil, Argentina and Chile. Their primary function is to strengthen themselves as much as possible in order to be able to take on concrete tasks of leading the masses in revolutionary actions under their own banner, in actions capable of touching off another Vietnam.

The organizational weakness of most of the revolutionary Marxist organizations prevents them from being able to undertake independent armed action on their own initiative. Of course, if the possibility exists that one of the sections is able to undertake an armed struggle in the countryside, that its leadership and that of the International consider it opportune to begin a struggle of this type in a country where the conditions were ripe, then the entire movement must help, must redouble its efforts in support of the section taking this road. By the way, it may, of course, be said that such activity will be essential in order to bring about a qualitative increase in the strength of the International as a whole. But the draft resolution seems to indicate that such a case, exceptional at least according to

the information we have, is the rule. Logically, therefore, the draft resolution does not take into consideration the specific problems of building a political leadership, of creating a stable organization, and formulating a correct program (based on the Transitional Program, which is a real weapon that the revolutionary Marxist movement and specifically the Trotskyists have in comparison to the other groups and tendencies). But these are the questions that are on the order of the day in the majority of countries. In view of this, it seems paradoxical that a resolution whose objective is to orient the Latin-American revolutionary movement in its difficult situation considers the exceptional case the most important and devotes only secondary remarks to the most common and general problems which our movement faces. The resolution that is adopted by the congress must consist in its essential part of a guideline for the activity of the majority of revolutionary Marxists, or in any case, the work of revolutionary Marxists in the majority of the countries.

The draft resolution recognizes the need for every revolutionary Marxist party or group to develop a transitional program in accordance with the specific conditions they face. However, we must also take into account the very important common features that exist in Buenos Aires and Mexico City, in Lima and Caracas, in Rio de Janeiro and Santiago de Chile, in Monterrey and São Paulo, in Bogotá and Santo Domingo. Something like what was done in the document on the world youth radicalization must be carried over into the resolution that the congress adopts on Latin America. That is, if such a complex and varied problem as the world youth rebellion has certain common features which serve to orient the International, why cannot such features be established in the problems of the Latin-American region?

In view of the real possibility that the developments of 1968 indicated a tendency and were not a mere isolated or exceptional case, we in Mexico, for example, face the inescapable necessity of quickly preparing a minimal national organization. We must develop a national organization which could coordinate the movement that will arouse a multitude of people throughout the country and especially in the urban centers of Mexico -- Monterrey, Guadalajara, etc. If we do not exploit this opportunity, it is probable that guerrilla warfare will be the logical expression of a movement based more on the physical survival of the revolutionists engaging in it than on any immediate revolutionary perspectives. If the movement which is inevitably nearing in Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Mexico City, etc. fails, then a repression will sweep Latin America that will make the present one look pale in comparison.

Of course, the strategy that is to orient the revolutionary movement in Latin America must focus on the basic premise of a rapid, massive military confrontation with imperialism. A revolutionary movement embracing the overwhelming majority of the urban masses can checkmate the oligarchies, even when it is not led by a principled leadership. When the mass upsurges are led by revolutionary Marxist groups or parties the revolutionary crises will come to a violent explosion, to an armed confrontation, much more quickly. The 1968 developments in Mexico clearly pointed to that. The revolutionary Marxist groups will quickly go on to armed confrontations with the bourgeoisie in the urban centers. When the crisis, as we said, encompasses the majority of the masses, then victory at this level is assured. The Santo Domingo experience is very significant. No one can deny that the revolution had triumphed "nationally" in that country. Here we get to the nub of the question. In Latin America, a revolution in national limits is inconceivable. Since imperialism plays a fundamental role in preserving the existing structures in Latin America, imperialist intervention is inevitable. Thus, the victory of the revolution in Latin America will have to be an international victory -- that is, the revolution will have to find support immediately in other countries. In this period, when the revolution takes the form of a guerrilla movement, imperialism intervenes on the level of Green Berets and military "advisors." When the revolution defeats the oligarchies the imperialists intervene in the way they did in the Dominican Republic. But the political repercussions from the invasion of Santo Domingo were minimal in comparison to what awaits the imperialists in the rest of the continent. The invasion of Brazil, Venezuela, Peru, etc. would have repercussions that would raise the crisis of imperialism to a higher stage. It would be the prelude to the creation of another Vietnam, of other Vietnams.

The revolutionary Marxists of this continent are in a strategic position and if they prepare themselves adequately they can play a decisive role in promoting and quickening the revolutionary crises in the big cities. Of course, when that happens, when the imperialists intervene in one of the countries on the continent in the style of the Dominican intervention, the revolutionary Marxists of that country will require the resolute support of the international movement. Then the crisis will cease to be "national." The resolution must include an adequate conception of that. The tempo of struggle in Latin America will quicken steadily. If the organizational prerequisites are adequately met, this struggle will move on rapidly to higher stages of struggle.

The resolution must look ahead more

precisely to organized political action by revolutionary Marxists in movements which will embrace the broad masses of the workers and will mature in very deep crises where imperialist intervention will be inevitable. The example of Mexico where 500 students and workers were cold-bloodedly massacred and thousands of persons were wounded shows what a panic a crisis, even one which is not at all revolutionary in character, can arouse in the national oligarchies. This act, committed by one of the most "stable" governments on the continent, showed the profound strategic weakness of capitalism in Latin America. We need only translate this capitalist weakness into revolutionary strength in order to take advantage of its full magnitude.

Without overlooking the crises that will take place in those countries where rural guerrilla warfare will be decisive in the development of the revolution, the resolution must give full weight to the

crucial importance of the second stage which began in 1968. It must clearly state that in this stage, with the acceleration of revolutionary crises in the cities, Che's objective can be realized much more rapidly, although not exactly in the form he predicted. This will give decisive importance to the revolutionary Marxists who can draw upon a long tradition in which this type of urban struggle has been the principal form of combat. This is beginning to be seen. Many revolutionists in Mexico who had been content with the OLAS resolutions are beginning to seek new explanations to explain the 1968 events which changed the political picture here. Our task is to show them that our conceptions are the answer to their questions. In this way, we will be able to absorb the entire revolutionary generation awakened by the Cuban revolution. Since the Cuban leadership so far has no answers to the questions raised by the new stage opening in 1968, this generation is laboriously seeking a new focus for organizational and political regroupment.