

# SWP

# discussion bulletin

Published by the  
**SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY**

116 UNIVERSITY PLACE  
NEW YORK 3, NEW YORK

Vol. 23, No. 7

December 1962

## Contents

### PLENUM DISCUSSION OF WORLD MOVEMENT

#### Part 4

	<u>Page</u>
1. Summary for Minority	
-- by Tim Wohlforth	1
2. Summary for Majority	
-- by Joseph Hansen	9

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Editor's Note

This is the fourth and last of a series of bulletins containing the resolutions, reports, discussion and summaries dealing with the world movement at the June 1962 plenum of the National Committee.

It contains the majority and minority summaries which have been transcribed from a tape recording of the proceedings.

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## Summary for Minority on World Movement

by Tim Wohlforth

First I would like to say that I don't feel that the comrades will find that the minority, whatever disagreements and strong ones, one may have with it, is going to be or has been playing with theory. Secondly, I think that any suggestion that our minority is maneuvering is simply completely out of the question. What is involved here is clearly, openly, fully presented before the party: a political tendency with a clear and full program wherein any political differences that comrades have in this tendency or between this tendency and comrades we're in basic agreement with, as in England, we present and present clearly and fully and openly. That is correct, that is proper and any other course on our part would be blind sectarianism. Would it not? You should reach and work with people close to you. Shouldn't you?

The same situation exists in the majority as all comrades fully know. I don't consider the majority unprincipled for its combination on the international question with Swabek who simply has given up a Trotskyist program on China because I feel that the majority has central agreement with Swabek on an approach toward the International question in other respects. The same can be said for the minority except I feel that we can make a somewhat better case. The agreement within the minority is somewhat greater than the agreement within the majority with the Swabek grouping. Perfectly correct. Perfectly proper.

The division which has brought about the majority and minority is also clear. People can call it what they will. They recognize this division and they recognize that this division is an important one. You can say it's between subjectivism and objectivism. You can say it's between sectarianism and opportunism. You can say it's a division between positive attitude toward unification and a negative one. However you define it (and one defines it according to one's own analysis, one's own political outlook), it exists. In my opinion, the comrades in this country and internationally are approaching it in a correct and principled way. If there is any hiding of political program on the part of comrades of either the majority or the minority (and there are plenty of differences within the majority in my opinion -- far more than within the minority) that would be bad. That would be playing games and maneuvering against the cadre.

To me the central question which we have been discussing today in one form or another is the role of the working class in the revolutionary process. It is our contention, our feelings that there is a tendency on the part of the majority in its international resolution, in its approach toward Cuba, in its current Political Committee draft, to see other forces substituting for the role of the working class. I mention here the working class and not the party. I think we were a little off previously in emphasizing simply the party. It is not -- our dispute is not simply over the necessity of the party anymore but more basically over the necessity of the class in the conscious form, whether or not that takes the precise form of the party. That to me is the difference. This flows from an empiricist outlook on the part of the majority which I went into and which will have to be gone into much more thoroughly and much more competently than it has been done here in a literary discussion.

Secondly, on the question of Cuba. We've been accused of ducking the Cuba question. This to me is really shocking. I thought we were discussing essentially the international question which I discussed and which I recall went into quite a bit of detail on Cuba in relationship to the international question. We had a whole lengthy discussion for six months on Cuba. We had a discussion in the youth for another three months on Cuba. Yet you're saying we're ducking the Cuba question. Obviously you're saying that because that's the only thing you want to discuss. You feel we are reticent to discuss Cuba because we have a weak position on it. Perhaps your reticence to discuss anything else means you have a weak position on everything else. Perhaps you have a weak position on the question of Pabloism -- on the question of entrism -- on the question of political revolution -- on the question of Stalinism. So if you want to make a deal, we'll give you Cuba and take the whole world. This is not behind the backs of the cadre, it's openly with the cadre.

Now I can't go into a detailed analysis of the current Cuban development but I want to say a few things because I think they're very important. I've been reading the material I get (the speeches of Fidel Castro, etc.) and I've been watching the developments in relation to Escalante and other current developments in Cuba. My own opinion and attitude -- I feel that Castro will go down as one of the most remarkable figures in history. I feel that he is an extremely sincere revolutionist. I feel he fulfills every criterion established in the international resolution for a

revolutionist. I feel that if the Cuban revolution had to depend on any one individual it would be difficult to find a better one for it to depend on. The whole crisis of Cuba today, the crisis of its future -- not so much of its present (though it is already beginning to show up) -- is whether or not the individual, the greatest individual can replace the working class. That is the crisis.

Faced with a real threat in Cuba of bureaucratization, a real threat of the distortion of the revolution by the Stalinist hacks in Cuba, Castro reacted. I think he reacted because I don't think he wants any bureaucracy. I don't think he wants that in Cuba. I think he wants an unfettered revolution but he relies on the only instrument he really trusts to counter the Stalinists -- himself. So he carried through the reorganization of the ORI through a central committee which he controls. He carried through a struggle against Escalante within the top committee of the ORI and never before the masses -- never a debate before the masses.

It was necessary and essential for Fidel because of his limitation in having a truly independent revolutionary outlook based on the working class, to hold back his struggle, not to complete the struggle with Stalinism because of the extreme dependence of Cuba on the Soviet Union. So he has to make a deal. He gets rid of Escalante. Escalante goes to Czechoslovakia. Hoy is made the official organ of the ORI. Pravda supports the dumping of Escalante. And the struggle is incompleted. Our approach to Cuba should be to complete that struggle, but to begin to completé that struggle we have to recognize that it is incompleted. The party at every stage in Cuba has recognized it as completed. In other words that everything that has happened there is fine. This is empiricism. Everything is good, it is developing on its own. Fine. Our job is to simply comment on what has happened. Not to predict what will happen and therefore to present before the Cuban and the international public the real, real dangers that can occur.

I was attacked by Joe six months, a year ago, at the last plenum for just talking about disaster, disaster, disaster -- danger, danger, danger. That was because I raised the threat of Stalinism. I mentioned that there was a danger of Stalinism in Cuba. This danger exists and it still exists. And the danger of Stalinism isn't the danger of an individual. We know what it is. It is the danger of the isolation of the revolution, of the lack of working class control over the governmental apparatus. It is that element

of consciousness of the necessity of working class control which Fidel does not yet have and at least our approach should be to point that out and carry out a campaign to do that. So that's my analysis of Cuba. It may be wrong. It may be crazy, but that is my analysis.

Now you say, have events vindicated your analysis. I would say that events have fundamentally not really vindicated any analysis yet because the thing is still in process. If the governmental apparatus, without the creation of real workers control as a result of the struggle of the working class itself -- should this apparatus prove capable of leading Cuba onto a new course of an undeformed workers revolution, then we will have to reevaluate our whole analysis, reevaluate our whole concept of working class rule. We will go back and reevaluate Debs' ideas that only the working class can rule for the working class, that only the workers can rule in their own name. We will have to reevaluate that and recognize that a benevolent bureaucracy that is pro-working class can substitute as the rulers of an undeformed workers state. That I do not see. But, if that happens, we will change our position. We will have to. But in the meantime your position is not vindicated. Our position is not vindicated. We both have different analyses of an unfolding event.

Similarly no position was vindicated in Yugoslavia for several years -- two or three years. We can go into the Yugoslav question. It's related. I want to make it very clear what my position is on Yugoslavia in 1948 and 1950. That is that Yugoslavia was a deformed workers state at the time that it broke from Stalin. The only possible way you can understand Yugoslav developments is to recognize this. And the Yugoslav bureaucracy could not reform itself. Why? Because we do not look upon leaders of a bureaucracy simply as individuals. They represent the interests of a social caste which must be overthrown by revolution precisely because social castes as castes do not reform themselves just like classes do not reform themselves. This is Trotsky's position. Does it apply to Yugoslavia? I say it does. Therefore we could say emphatically that it was impossible for Yugoslavia to have become an undeformed workers state, to evolve that way, except through the intervention in a revolutionary capacity of the masses.

The perspective of the International at that time was all wrong because it did not orient toward the independent intervention of the masses in Yugoslavia. The events

proved that it was wrong. If it had evolved in another way you would have a basis today to say that Cuba, Cuba too will evolve into an undeformed revolution without the intervention of the masses. You would be correct in your line today. But it didn't, so at least you ought to put a question mark over the application of the identical method today -- as if we had not gone through an experience and as if Pabloism had not been completely repudiated by history itself.

The question of Stalinism happens to be one of the most important questions that has come up today. The concept that Yugoslavia carried through a political revolution, Yugoslavia which is today a deformed workers state where a political revolution must be carried through; the concept that Mao's China carried through a political revolution where today it is a deformed workers state where a political revolution must be carried through is a gross distortion of the theory of the political revolution. Gross distortion of that theory.

Secondly, some comrades here seem to be saying that the question of political revolution is an open one. They are saying that it is possible that you will need an insurrection, but it is also possible that the bureaucracy will reform itself. This is a defensive position if you want to argue it. It has a name and its name is Deutscherism and we know its Deutscherism. If you think Duetscher is a simple advocate of reform, that he doesn't believe that it is possible for a revolutionary overturn, then you haven't read Deutscher. Read his best, don't read his worst. Read his "Russia in Transition." This is what he says. He says it's possible that you're going to have to have a revolutionary overthrow but it is also possible the bureaucracy may evolve in a different way. That's Deutscherism. Deutscherism is identical to exactly what Weiss and Deck wrote in that article and what in an even more open and blatant way Myra defended at this meeting and what Dave defended in relationship to Yugoslavia. That's Deutscherism. That we have struggled against and that is not our view. That is not the Trotskyist attitude toward Stalinism. And we ought to make that clear, we ought to clear up these concepts. That's our task.

Changing nature of Pabloism. What can you say? The problem is simple. It is this. It is simple in this sense. The problem is not the question of the changing Pabloism but of the changing SWP. I don't claim that there is no political basis for the regroupment of the SWP majority and the Pabloites. I think there is a strong political basis because the SWP majority has adopted the essential views of

the Pabloites. Now I don't have to argue with you about this. All you have to do is what I did in my document. Some day when you have a spare evening, go back and read the views of the party at the time of the Open Letter and read what you're saying now. It's a different line. That's all I have to say. Now maybe you were right to change your line but it's a different line and if there is a new world reality which requires a change in line it can't be the whole past 15 years. It's got to be the period since 1953. It's got to be the period after China, after Yugoslavia, when we said, despite these events, we still maintain this particular line as against Stalinist conciliationism which we analyzed in the document "Against Pabloite Revisionism" -- 50 or 60 pages in detail -- accusing the Pabloites of the identical formulations and identical views that can be found in the 1961 International Resolution. There has been an evolution. The evolution has been in that direction.

I don't want to argue about Belgium except that I will. The problem in Belgium is this: in the first place the key question to be posed in Belgium is not -- and if I said so before I didn't formulate it correctly -- simply workers to power but to pose those slogans and those transitional slogans that will in essence objectively push the workers in that direction, that have that objective direction. Such a slogan which has been essential to our movement since its very beginning, as for example is "For a Workers and Farmers Government." That doesn't say simply "Workers to Power" but it poses immediately the conception of governmental control by the working class. Another such proposal would be to pose the need for democratically elected workers councils, workers committees, which did to some extent exist. There were workers committees that spread up in that situation. There was, in many ways, a situation in Belgium which objectively posed the question of power even though the subjective elements were not there.

These types of transitional proposals were not proposed by the Pabloites who consciously said they will not propose anything unacceptable to the present leadership. That is exactly what Germain said. That is what he said and what he did. He did not propose any slogans which could not be accepted by that leadership. He had no conception, no even long-range program of really challenging that leadership. He wasn't in a position to do it even if he wished to, even though for for our movement in Europe, he has had some growth. He wasn't in a position to do it because he wasn't oriented in that direction. He was very deeply in a centrist paper he publishes.

Now on the question of reunification, Comrade Alvin raises the analogy of the 1903 period, the 1928 period, the period when he said essentially Lenin and Trotsky were defending a new program. That's not true. They were defending an old program. In those periods, the periods of the organization of a party and the period after 1928, Lenin and Trotsky were essentially trying under different conditions to coalesce together the revolutionary forces, the revolutionary Marxist forces as against all the other tendencies and trends. These were periods of turmoil and confusion within the international movement. In both cases turmoil within an international movement which adhered to a common -- so-called common -- Marxist outlook. In 1903 it was a matter of assembling the real Marxists from the phonies. In 1928 it was assembling the real revolutionary communists. That was the problem in both cases. Periods when it was necessary to carry on a dual process of pulling in forces -- and they did it in those periods -- and breaking from centrists.

That's essentially the problem today. Anyone who holds that we have today a theoretically cohesive -- theoretically and politically cohesive -- international doesn't know what they're talking about. Our problem today is precisely to coalesce the essential Trotskyist forces on an international basis. This coalescence must be done through the two processes of the pulling together of every sincere revolutionary element in the Trotskyist movement and a struggle against every centrist and revisionist element within the Trotskyist movement. If there weren't such revisionist elements how come there was the split in 1953 to begin with? That is essentially the dual process.

The party majority has proposed only one of these two processes. No longer is there a question of struggle. It is only a matter of figuring out organizational formula to pull everyone into. Into what? And around what program? The central Trotskyist program? Well, what is the central Trotskyist program? That has to be defined, has to be defined in a political and ideological struggle. That is what is under discussion today in the international. Not simply how we can get people together but around what do we get them together. And, that is why the discussion of organizational formula has already gone over into the question of political program.

Now my own feeling is this. What we need and what we're going to have is a full and thorough international discussion aimed at precisely this: defining the Trotskyist

program and around that basis reunifying and pulling together the international. Now it goes without question that this will be a very complex, a very long process.

Our position is this: we feel that the Socialist Workers Party is adopting a political outlook, an international outlook, which is in contradiction to its traditions, and to its own methods of work in this country. That's our opinion. We may be wrong. We believe this. This is our opinion. Flowing from that opinion, it is our conviction that with future developments in the US especially and internationally our outlook will be verified. In which case, in our opinion, the whole business of a minority-majority division will no longer be necessary. It is this approach and this attitude that we take. Perhaps -- of course you think we're dogmatic and sectarians and will never recognize reality -- but perhaps as these developments occur in this country and internationally your outlook will be vindicated in which case believe it or not we may even change our minds though it is difficult for you to conceive of that idea.

Now I think I have posed several questions, several historical happenings which if they do occur will mean that, as far as we are concerned, a fundamental change in our whole outlook. One would be to be shown in reality that the Stalinist bureaucracy can be reformed. This would require a new orientation and we would have to abandon ours. To be shown in other words that other forces outside of the working class with its own consciousness, its own actions, in its own capacity, and with its own party can make revolutionary change of a fundamental socialist nature in our society. Then we would change our outlook. I don't think that that outlook is going to be vindicated and people who see in Cuba a vindication of that outlook had better remember what they say today, next year. You can also remember what we say. We'll see what happens.

# # #

Summary for Majority on World Movement

by Joseph Hansen

First of all, I should like to welcome the fact that Comrade Wohlforth recognizes that the discussion is shifting over to the methodological level. I raised this question with him during the Cuban discussion, to which he has referred back, the one we discussed primarily in the New York Local. At that time I suggested to him that basically involved in this discussion was the whole problem of methodology -- how we analyze the character of the state, how we analyze its character in Cuba and how this relates to our positions on Yugoslavia, Eastern Europe, China, and so on. The fact that he has recognized that and now recognizes that we are going to move onto that level, I think is very good. And I hope that we will be able to unite with him in this coming period in a discussion on that level, so that we can leave aside the level of scandals -- who did what in what strike, who distributed leaflets or didn't distribute leaflets in some action in Paris or someplace else -- and get onto the level that really matters here, that is, our basic concepts. That is exactly where we will try to hold the discussion and we will leave a lot of the other questions to the side for the time being. Just because we don't answer every question does not mean that we are not interested in them or that we do not intend to have an answer. We merely think that the discussion has shifted to the level where it is necessary for us now to deal with our basic concepts and we intend to proceed in accordance with that.

Now this raises a little question. A discussion on methodology has its own method. I mean you just can't say we have methodological differences and therefore we are going to discuss them. There's a certain method that you must follow if you're going to discuss a methodological difference. You have got to discuss your basic concepts. The derivative concepts, the political questions, the organizational questions and the tactical questions have got to be subordinated and not raised onto the first plane and mixed up with basic concepts or your discussion on methodology will not proceed in the way that it should proceed; that is, towards a clarification of thinking on both sides.

I have the impression -- you may not share this with me -- that Comrade Wohlforth mixes up the various levels of discussion. Although he agrees that there is a basic methodological difference he nevertheless mixes in a secondary

level; that is, the political questions. And finally he mixes in the tactical level, so that it is very difficult, following him, to try to determine in what order he places them, where he thinks the greatest danger lies, on which of these levels he thinks the greatest danger shows, on the political level, on the organizational level or on the level of our concepts. I thought Comrade Dobbs made a very strong and very valid point when he suggested -- in talking about the contribution made by Comrade Philips -- that it is necessary to proceed on the most basic level now, to get ourselves clarified on where we stand on our basic concepts. I should like to stress that very strongly now.

One of the points that Comrade Wohlforth makes is that we are empiricists. He describes empiricism as being some kind of a philosophy where you sit up on cloud number seven and look down at this harsh [ Interruption: What cloud? Nine? O.K., I get my clouds mixed up. I'm not used to living up in the clouds, / That empiricism looks at things from the clouds, you see, and takes a shot of reality as it is at the moment, makes some generalizations about these and then extends them over the entire world. Well, it's not such a bad description of empiricism, that it takes one narrow sector of reality and then generalizes from that.

But I should like to stress in contrast to that the dialectical method which I'm not so sure that Comrade Wohlforth grasps, or fully grasps. The problem with empiricism is that it does not generalize in a consistent and logical way. I mean as far as it goes it's all right. I take the facts and I make a generalization and we can't quarrel with that. Where our quarrel comes in is in the series of concepts, the series of pictures of reality taken from cloud number nine or cloud number seven. We take various pictures of reality in various sectors and link them all together according to a series of concepts. That's the dialectical way of approaching the question; a certain logical order. That is what is completely missing in the presentation made by the comrades of the minority.

I attempted in my presentation to present a logical order. And if part of it was pretty dry it was because I wanted to stress the fact that there is a logical order to it and it is a dialectical order. It proceeds from our basic concepts, looking at reality over an extended period of time back to 1948, to '39 and '40 and '24 and I observed that the comrades did not meet my challenge that the discussion leads back to 1948 and even leads back to 1939 and '40. Pabloism seems to have been born from an egg, you see,

somewhere in that discussion of '48 or '50, but for some reason or other the comrades cannot link it with that discussion. There is a big gap now, in your position and you had better fill it up. Your French comrades are trying to fill it up by finding in that discussion something that went wrong. That is where you, too, are duty bound now to go. If you don't, you're only horsing around and nobody will pay any attention to you, at least in the SWP they won't.

It is on the basis of this consistent, logical order, taken over a long period of time, bearing in mind the qualitative changes and the quantitative accumulation of facts that we find a sound basis for intervening in the reality. What's your basis for intervening in the reality? Some impressions, impressions of the danger that the Cuban Revolution faces us with, impressions of the danger that Pabloism faces us with at the present time. Your whole approach is impressionistic. Ours is logical. We start from the reality as it developed over a considerable period of time and from that we derive our positions as to how to intervene effectively in the reality. That's the difference.

Now, when Comrade Wohlforth suddenly quotes me Shachtman ... In '39 and '40 I debated Shachtman -- You know, I like to debate people; I debated Shachtman; I debated Burnham -- This was one of the points of difference, that Shachtman was impressionistic. He took his impression of the reality and the dangers that this reality faces our movement with, political dangers. When we said, "Let's take the discussion to a basic level now; let's examine our concepts as derived from our analysis of the Soviet Union"; Shachtman said, "No, not interested; because we face grave dangers." He was not so interested in that kind of a discussion. You now take a position exactly like Shachtman's. This is where I came in at -- that's the impression I got listening to Comrade Wohlforth on giving me Shachtman's impressionism and then referring to empiricism and dialectics.

You asked me some "embarrassing" questions and then you talked about my loving to debate. Isn't that what a debater does -- ask the other side embarrassing questions? Two embarrassing questions -- that the majority must answer. "What do we think about deep entryism? We've got to clarify that. What is our attitude on it?" Did it ever occur to you that maybe the comrades on the International Secretariat side are debating that? They have differences on this. They themselves are discussing this question. Some of them have got their bellies full of it, they want a change. They're arguing about it. What should we do, condemn all of them?

Or should we say, "O.K., comrades, let's get together now. Let's have a unified movement and discuss all the questions, leaving aside, for the time being, these differences. We may have something to say a little bit later about that." In addition, one of the comrades here made a very valid point, that the whole question of entryism is a tactical question and you can read into that tactical question certain differences on politics or on basic method if they are involved, but if they aren't involved then it remains a tactical question, and that's all it is, a tactical question. That's my impression of what it is right now. Especially in view of the fact that on the International Secretariat side they are beginning to discuss this question.

Another embarrassing question, "What is our position on the political revolution?" Well, we haven't changed on it, that's all. An article was cited here from the magazine -- the International Socialist Review -- an article written by Comrade Bert, and by Comrade Dick. They raise two questions. [ Interruption: O.K. it was Murry. I always like to get the facts straight. ] They raised two questions in their article. I listened to the reading of the questions here before the comrades, and the best I could make out of it was that this was Bert's and Murry's way of posing in literary style a basic alternative that faces the Chinese people and the Chinese Communist Party. That's all. They posed things sharply. I may debate with them as to the validity of this literary form. I may not think it is the best way to put things, I may think that it would be better to spell it out, and I might have said that for the article as a whole, I'd like to have seen more on the other side of this question relating to the Chinese Revolution. But I'm certainly not going to hang them with the charge that they are giving up the political revolution because of these two questions that they raised in their article. We haven't gotten that far yet. You're just reading too much into that article.

While I'm on this point, I'd like to explain something because it involves, I think, a certain misunderstanding. It was raised here by Comrade Kirk in the form of a suggestion that we should put into our resolution a statement reaffirming our position on the political revolution. Here's the problem: For many years we could get by very easily by just simply taking this very condensed phrase about a political revolution and where we stood and simply repeating it. That's all we had to do. It was simply a restatement of position and simply meant that we had not changed. But beginning with this whole process of de-Stalinization and

especially after 1956, we ran into the problem of talking with Stalinists, or former Stalinists, or people who were changing from Stalinists. They could not understand what we meant by this phrase. They got the wrong impression from our simple repetition of this phrase and we began to feel the necessity for spelling out exactly what we meant in terms that were more understandable to them at their given stage of development. We spelled it out in articles. And so we lifted this formula, this formula which we have had for many years, and we began to convert that formula into a whole explanation of what we meant by it. We began, when was it, about '57 or '58, wasn't it George, when we wrote that article in the ISR explaining what we thought we meant by the theory of the political revolution and where we stood? We haven't changed on that. We haven't changed on that anymore than we have changed on how we conceive Stalinism. We still conceive Stalinism to be counter-revolutionary to the core, but you see, something has happened. Stalinism has begun to degenerate in the sense of disintegrating. It has begun to disintegrate and it has faced us with a whole series of new tactical problems. We cannot intervene effectively in a political and tactical sense unless we now intervene with the idea of active participation among people who simply do not understand the mere repetition of formulas. Who have to be told and given explanations and the whole thing worked out as carefully and as well as we possibly can. So on those two questions, deep entryism and the political revolution I think you will discover that we haven't really changed at all. It's simply a question of recognizing what is happening in the reality and of giving us the opportunity of making tactical adjustments.

Let me turn again to the question of Cuba. I was quite surprised when Comrade Wohlforth, in response to my making an analysis of the British position on Cuba, suddenly said that all that was involved was only two episodic articles in their press. That was only their public press. It was only their best theoretician, Bryan Pierce. It was only what they're saying to all the British workers and all of Latin America. There are no other articles that counteract them. There is not a single editorial that puts these comrades straight. There is no other way of judging from their public press that they have got any other position on that, so I have no possibility of concluding anything else except that it represents their position. So why do you say it is only two episodic articles? Do you mean by that that is not the position of the British? That they have swung over to the position that it is a workers state? Let them state it then. That they are in a period now where they are changing, shifting their views? Let them state that then, publicly, where they have already stated their position. Explain in Havana, please, their positions. Only two episodic articles

in the public press of our British comrades! Meanwhile, that's a position. It's a public position. If they weren't sure, why did they have to write anything on Cuba? Better to dummy up and wait, instead of taking a public position of a character that is so damaging to our position -- our position in the United States, our position in Cuba, our position in all of Latin America, or don't the British comrades give a damn about those areas? That's the problem that faces us.

I noticed with interest the squirming of the comrades in the minority on this question of Cuba. There are a lot of reasons why they can't discuss it. We discussed it too much before, or it's not quite the key issue, or they're waiting... How many positions have they got on Cuba? One, that it is capitalist.. That's the SLL position, isn't it? Number two -- Comrade Mage's position. I'm not quite sure about it, but it is something like the British position. If I'm not quite accurate on it, we can read his document. / Interruption: It's in transition? Oh, okay. / I don't know what it's transiding from to what. You're involved again with basic concepts. Bring in the basic concepts and tell me what it is transiding from to what. In the process tell me what will constitute the decisive change, the qualitative point of change. All I can discover in your position is that the qualitative change is of a political character, not one of an economic character, but of a political character. Well, in any case, there are at least two positions. Comrade Philips, I think, is re-evaluating, at least that's what he said today. Just exactly what he is re-evaluating, I'm not quite sure, because in the brief period he had to tell us about his re-evaluation, it didn't become clear to me exactly what he was re-evaluating in relation to Cuba and how this re-evaluation tied in with Yugoslavia, China, Eastern Europe and all the rest of it. I'm left in the dark as to what his re-evaluation consists of. Comrade Wohlforth has another position, if I understand correctly -- that Cuba might become something like Yugoslavia. Exactly what that means remains obscure. Finally, there are some, I think, in the minority who really believe it is a deformed workers state. If you have a minority that has all of these different positions on Cuba, it's a rather fragile minority, at least on this question, isn't it? And therefore, it's better not to talk too much about it, especially in public, because you're vulnerable on that position. It may happen to be the most important question facing the entire international but the interests of your small minority, you see, require you to subordinate these differences.

That, comrades, is not principled. It's not principled when you're dealing with a question of such fundamental importance as a proletarian revolution. What a mass of confusion they represent on the question of Cuba. On this simple question of analyzing the Cuban Revolution they give us this entire mass of confusion and then begin on other complicated questions relating to the Cuban Revolution and start talking like real wise people, who are going to give us all the best tactics, just the way to proceed, here's the best thing to say, the best thing not to say. All the tactical questions. All the political questions, they're really sharp on that. But the fundamental question, the one concerning basic concepts -- a complete mass of confusion.

How can they get together, these people with all these different views on the Cuban Revolution? What ties them together? Something must tie them together. It's not just the color of their eyes. Something fundamental ties them together. What is it? Anti-Pabloism. On that they have identity. Everyone of them, without exception, will agree that the main danger facing our movement is Pablo, Pabloism. That's what links them together. That's the real cement. Here again, on Pabloism, we see a repetition of the same pattern visible in the case of our British comrades. First of all, a tendency to deny the facts. To deny that the comrades of the International Secretariat -- whether its a sector that is strong for Pablo or a different sector -- a tendency to deny that these comrades have changed their positions. They go to quite extraordinary lengths to try to prove it. But you're dealing with people who, if they can't read French in the original, can at least read translations; people who in any case are capable of following positions and who can therefore see where they have changed. So you get nowhere by denying the facts. You've got to admit them and then work out some way of handling them -- what's the best way to handle this changed reality?

Another thing they leave out. They leave out the possibility of the comrades of the International Secretariat changing in relation to two important developments. One, the Cuban Revolution and the other, our position in relation to unification. These are new factors. I thought it was a very fine point that one comrade made here, how our pressure in the case of 1953 and '54 had been at least one factor in causing them to change previously. It's a great mistake to exclude the possibility of comrades changing, especially if they are comrades who themselves are firmly convinced that they are revolutionary. They may be mistaken but they believe they are revolutionary; even further they believe

they are revolutionary socialists; even more, Trotskyists. A big consideration in connection with this should be the fact that many comrades on the IS side are new to the movement, completely new. They have known no Trotskyists except the ones they happened to meet on the International Secretariat side. You rule out the possibility of these comrades changing thru meeting with us and talking with us and getting into a common organization with us. Let me take up Bill's doubts here about their 1961 resolution because I think his point is important and I admire his honesty and his courage in stating his position. I know that it's not easy to stand before an audience realizing that you agree with neither side and say frankly where you stand. This, comrades, is in the tradition of our movement. You state your position as you see it. The question Bill raises is this: How is it possible -- and I'll use his words -- to take a soft line towards centrists, even if they're moving in our direction? How can you do that? It's not revolutionary, is it?

Here we can turn to the experience of our own party. I'm doing that in order to make an explanation as quickly as possible. If you will go back to the history of our party in the thirties, you can read in the Militant certain criticisms that were made of the American Workers Party. That was about the time I came in. They were sharp criticisms, analyzing them as centrists, etc. Very, very sharp. All at once out there in Utah where I was reading the Militant I noted that it suddenly changed. It suddenly seemed to go soft toward the AWP. I couldn't understand it at first. What happened? There was no explanation at all. The Militant suddenly reversed itself just like that without explanation and became very, very soft towards the AWP. Well, not knowing, I didn't make up my mind one way or the other. I just noted it and waited. Sure enough, pretty soon we were fusing with centrists. Imagine, we were fusing with centrists. There was no hard, sharp line drawn against them. There were no charges of criminal betrayals. There was nothing about the centrism. There was a fusion. That's all. After a while in the Salt Lake branch we got to meet some of these comrades. They were interesting comrades except it was clear that they were still kind of centrist. They were still kind of centrist and I think there are a couple of them right here at the plenum. / Interruption: I think that you have learned by now. -- O.K. / So what happened therefore? I began to think about this question a little bit. I thought that probably what had happened was that the comrades in New York thought that it was a good tactic to bring these people a little bit

closer to us and that what would happen to them afterwards would remain to be seen.

It was about this time that a similar thing then happened in relation to the Socialist Party in this country. The left wing of the Socialist Party began moving left. At first, the Militant had some very sharp criticisms of the left wing. Then there was a turn. A sudden softness toward the SP. In the party we began to hear rumors about selling out to centrism. This was it. I made my mistakes but I didn't make the mistake of lining up with Oehler. I don't have that in my . . . / Let's not say that. Let sleeping dogs lie -- All right. / The situation that faces us is this. In the world as a whole today we have opportunities much greater than anything before in relation to situations like the AWP and the SP. What is happening is situation of this character on a world scale. They relate to the de-Stalinization process in the Soviet Union. These are great new facts that compel us to modify our political approaches and our tactical approaches because the two are closely interwoven. Sometimes it's necessary to state a political line more softly than you would otherwise in order to take advantage of the opportunities. This is not anti-Leninist. We learned that in the school of Leninism. We learned this in that school so that we don't commit errors such as those made by the SLP. The Weekly People will give you beautiful descriptions of the dangers of centrist currents and where they can lead to. What we basically face, therefore, Bill, is a completely new set of political problems. Some of them require a lot of thinking. We may make errors in solving them but at least we've got to be very, very clear that we do have a new set of political problems and that they do require specific answers and not simply the repetition of formulas.

There is nothing easier in the world than to write a resolution in which you simply repeat the formulas. You can do it blindfolded. What's tough is to take the reality, analyze it in the light of the facts -- the facts are sometimes very hard to gather. Then in the light of the facts to determine what is happening and to adjust the political and tactical line so as to take advantage of it. That's the problem that faces us and we face it as a group and as a whole.

In relation to this we come again to the problem of Stalinism and Shane's reading us his statement that we used to insist on Stalinism being counter-revolutionary through and through. We still insist on that as I said; but this

ties in with one of our current problems. Stalinism as a major factor is breaking up. That's the great fact and if you leave that out of consideration you might as well give up politics. You can write very nice articles but you can't operate as a politician. That's an art, too. Let me take up this question of Pablo's position on Yugoslavia and whether we are following the same tactic in relation to Cuba as Pablo did in relation to Yugoslavia. I didn't draw the conclusion that Pablo's position on Yugoslavia flowed from any concept of an expanding Stalinism. I couldn't conclude that at all because as a matter of fact we worked out our tactic in relation to Yugoslavia in the SWP independently. The tactic was the same as that of the IS. I don't deny that. They were the same. But we have tried in every case to stand on our own feet because that's the only way a revolutionist can stand is on his own feet and work out things by himself. As we saw this new revolution, this new formation appearing, we could not exclude the possibility of our playing an effective role in helping it to move in a certain direction. Therefore, we took some very simple political moves. Standard political moves that we have utilized in every similar case. We applied it in small cases like the AWP and the SP and so on. This was much bigger. But our approach was basically the same -- not to deny the possibility, not to exclude the possibility that the Yugoslav revolution could move in a direction favorable to us. Consequently we approached the Yugoslavs with that kind of line. It was the same line as that utilized by Pablo and the other comrades in the IS but we don't determine our lines simply by what someone else does or doesn't do. We try to estimate it in the light of the political realities. To argue today that Pablo took a certain line in Yugoslavia and therefore we should take a different line in Cuba -- what could be more sectarian or more dogmatic than that? Two separate instances which have not only their similarities but also their differences and especially in the relationship of forces. Why if we took a course like that, deciding to follow a course in Cuba just the exact opposite of the one followed by Pablo simply because we wanted to be different from Pablo, we would simply hand Cuba to Pablo and if you're against him that would be quite a disaster, wouldn't it? If you're for him, well, it wouldn't matter so much. But if you're against Pablo that would be a very, very bad thing to happen and therefore it would be all the more important to depend on our own analysis, our own independent position instead of simply following a course that looks good because it is the opposite of the one taken by Pablo. It would be very, very stupid to do that.

Well, I'll run through these points very fast. I've got a couple more I'd like very much to make.

On Comrade Philips: I have the impression that Comrade Philips really tried to duck the question. He really didn't get into the fundamental question of his concepts and where he has changed. I'm very much interested in that because the state capitalist position is involved in this discussion. Whether you have given it up or not, there are other state capitalists around in the woods who might have a position on this and they represent a danger just as your former position represented a danger that we have to take into consideration. You could play a valuable role if you would point out the danger in relation to the state capitalists in England. How the position of the SLL plays into their hands. Why don't you play that role? Nothing is said about that at all. We are given some vague formula about some reconsiderations relating with merchants capital or something else that I can't make much out of and from that I incline to the conclusion that maybe only a new label is involved. I don't want to distort your position. I'm going to read it and study it. I'm simply stating how your present stand affects this discussion which is a very vital one, which involves basic concepts, which involves the state capitalist position which you have held for many, many years. You could play a very, very good role if you could point out the dangers of the SLL position at the present time and I take it that you don't agree with that position. So far as I could judge from your approach, on this whole question of Stalinism you still look at it as it was in the pre-expansion stage, before the disintegration set it. You make a sort of automatic transference of your position on it as it stood at that time to the present reality. That's why when I listen to you talk about this situation, you still sound to me like a state capitalist, like you really hadn't changed at all. So I'm going to wait and hear what you have to say further before I make up my mind definitely whether you still are a state capitalist or not.

Did we deliberately advocate a split with the FI in 1953? I heard a number of comrades state that and I would like right here and now to make the record straight. We did not advocate a split from the FI in 1953. We did not! All we proposed at that time in an organizational sense was the removal of Pablo as secretary. That's all we asked for. We had no intention of splitting the FI. We had no aim of splitting the FI. All we proposed was a faction within the FI and to this day that faction has never recognized its being thrown out. I'm speaking in the sense of ideological solidarity, of course, since we can't belong organizationally.

We didn't recognize that split at all and we still don't. We still consider ourselves part of the movement in a fraternal sense. It is quite wrong to say that we organized a split. We favored organizing a faction in which one of the aims was the removal of Pablo as secretary. That's all. Now for reasons that you're very familiar with, we could not intervene in that situation in an effective organizational way. We couldn't do it. You know all the reasons for it and why things therefore took the course that they did. But we shouldn't be blamed for starting out to split the FI when that was not our intention. The record should be very clear about that.

Now let me turn towards consideration of points relating to the proposed unification. Comrades raised a point here concerning the International Secretariat that they took some bad position in connection with handing out leaflets in France in some strike situation. I don't deny that might have occurred. It may well have. I do not know the facts. I do not know the circumstances. But I will surmise this, that on the IS side there are dead-end factionalists, too. I'm sure there are. The IS is not monolithic. It consists of various currents and among these various currents are sharp differences. I'm sure there are some of them who would not like to see a unification under any circumstances, who would do their utmost to not come into any common work with comrades of the International Committee. Being sure of that, and seeing some of them act as expected, what should my conclusion be? My conclusion is that they are dead-end factionalists. That particular grouping. But I would not hold it to be true of the International Secretariat in its entirety. There are differences on various questions. The question of entryism for example. There are differences on that among the comrades of the IS. There even may be differences, for example, over Germain's role in the general strike in Belgium. I don't know. There may be differences on that question and you may eventually find yourselves in some very strange company on some of these questions. I merely state that because when you approach a unification of this character you have to bear in mind that the other side is going to turn out to be variegated. There are various currents in there and you cannot condemn any current in advance until you know the exact situation.

In any case, whether this or that difference does or does not exist on the other side, another question is raised. Can't one exercise a more active role by participating in a unified movement instead of staying on the outside? What dangers does one run into fighting from the inside? You

comrades have no trouble presenting your position here at least a lot less trouble than if you were passing out leaflets at one of our doorways from the outside. You know that. It's much better to be right inside where you can discuss these questions and that's one of the advantages you should bear in mind in relation to a unified movement.

There is still another possibility. In a unified movement new events will come along that may bring new disagreements and new line-ups. Completely new line-ups, completely new disagreements. You've got to leave that possibility open for the coming period. It may not be soon but it would come eventually.

I'm very glad to hear the comrades of the minority say that they'll act in a responsible way but at the same time I must agree with the comrades who pointed to the very ominous note that was sounded when it was said that to unite with the IS means split with the British. What does that say about the British comrades. It says that they are dead-end factionalists, that they will not be moved, that they will not respond to any of our suggestions, or to any of our positions or stands. It means to rule out the possibility of working as a united group with the British comrades. That may turn out to be the way they see it. I don't know. But at this point I want to leave open the possibility that the British comrades will at least change their minds and join us in working for this unification because the truth of it is, comrades, that very great possibilities are opening up for us now, enormous possibilities. We have been given a foretaste of what can be accomplished. In relation to the Cuban revolution, for example, you know how it has helped us already inside the United States. I wish you could see how it helped our comrades in Latin America in the various countries. I saw it personally so I know how it helped them down there. And the opportunities exist not only in Latin America but in other areas. In Africa and all over the world the possibilities are opening up.

Similarly in relation to de-Stalinization, the other great issue. Most of you are aware, I am very sure, of what has been happening in the Italian Communist Party where the Italian youth are beginning to discuss Trotskyism. What should we do at this particular moment? Begin a wild knock-down drag-out campaign against the Italian Communist Party or should we adapt our tactics in relation to it to facilitate this regroupment, so to speak, this possibility of talking with the Italian Communists, of beginning to give them Trotsky's works, of beginning to give them a different outlook on the entire world?

If we unite, if our whole movement becomes united and we can end this dog fight between the two sides of the Fourth International, if we can pool our resources and work out all the possibilities of common effort, agreeing at least on the main line and leaving aside the secondary differences, then it is absolutely sure that in this next period the Fourth International and the whole Trotskyist movement on a world scale will experience a great new rebirth. I think that is what we should fight for and stand for at this plenum.

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