

Marxist Bulletin No. 3

Part I

The Split in the Revolutionary Tendency

**DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE ON THE 1962 RUPTURE BY PHILIPS, WOHLFORTH
AND HEALY OF THE MINORITY TENDENCY OF THE SWP**

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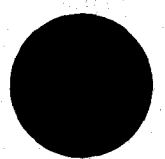




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PREFACE

In a dispute within the revolutionary movement, no serious revolutionist would take sides without recourse to the documents wherein both parties argue their positions. Nor, for a revolutionary, is it simply a question of who is right and who wrong. (For example, the political issue at dispute in the 1962 SWP Revolutionary Tendency split -- the degeneration of the SWP as a revolutionary party -- has been clearly resolved in our favor over the course of time.) Rather, it is also a question of knowing, in detail, the "how" and "why" on both sides in the dispute -- the development of the struggle, why one side presumably was led to evolve an erroneous position, the methods by which the parties conducted their struggle -- so that we may strengthen ourselves in the face of our vastly greater revolutionary tasks on the morrow. It is for this reason that the Spartacist League is publishing a series of Marxist Bulletins presenting the various documents and correspondence of both sides relating to the Revolutionary Tendency (RT) split. We believe the documents speak for themselves.

1962 Split Aided Rightwing

The unprincipled split in the SWP revolutionary minority tendency, conceived by Wohlforth and technically engineered by A. Philip: -- despite the fact that the latter's own membership in the RT had never been formally resolved -- with the aid of Gerry Healy of the British Socialist Labour League (SLL), had far-reaching consequences. First, a number of precious cadre were lost from the revolutionary wing of the party. These were mainly older comrades whose experience in many cases went back to the Communist Party of the 1920's and early 30's. By and large these comrades held in the inner-tendency dispute the Wohlforth view that the SWP remained a revolutionary party; but they were disillusioned and demoralized to see once again a leader they had trusted resort to lies and the most unprincipled organizational methods -- a repeat of their experiences in the Communist Party and, more recently, in the SWP. Given this final disillusionment they left the tendency and the party.

Secondly, the split, which was obviously politically unfounded, had the effect of making both wings appear unserious, and detracted from the consideration that rank-and-file party members might otherwise have given to the revolutionary viewpoints then being advanced by both sides of the now-split minority. This ultimately rendered those with revolutionary politics in the SWP far less effective than would otherwise have been the case in carrying through their task of polarizing the party membership around a revolutionary working-class perspective and exposing the revisionism of the central party leadership.

Finally, the breach in the revolutionary forces which was initiated within the SWP was perpetuated after the exclusion of both wings from the party, and led for a time to the grotesque and confusing spectacle of two hostile and competing public organizations (the Spartacist League and the American Committee for the Fourth International, "ACFI") with similar political lines. This breach continued for several years until the organizational contradiction was eventually resolved politically when the ACFI (currently calling

itself "Workers League") assumed adaptationist positions not fundamentally different from those of the SWP. But, from the initial moment of the split and for as long as it was politically principled, Spartacist consistently attempted to heal the organizational breach in the revolutionary forces.

Nature of the SWP

Unity is one of the principle weapons of the working class in its struggles. Only the most fundamental and irreconcilable programmatic differences justify an organizational split in the revolutionary vanguard -- or even the formation of an intra-party faction. Certainly an assessment of the political character and direction of the SWP was a necessary and important question for the minority tendency. But, given the overwhelming agreement within the minority that the road to Socialism can be opened only by workers' revolution under the leadership of a revolutionary vanguard party, as opposed to the revisionist concept of the SWP leadership that vanguard leadership is nonessential and that the road to socialism can be opened by non working-class forces, the just-unfolding dispute within the minority primarily had tactical implications and was certainly not a legitimate split issue.

In any event, the contention of the wing around Shane Mage, James Robertson and Geoffrey White that the SWP majority had become centrist and had adopted the theoretical revisionism and political program of Pabloism, as opposed to Wohlforth's position that the SWP remained revolutionary and would be "the main instrument for the realization of socialism in the U.S." (see Document #10, point 3) was clearly evident by the 1963 SWP Convention to anyone claiming to stand on the basis of a Trotskyist world outlook. At the Convention the SWP majority voted to rejoin the Pabloist International Secretariat from which the party had split in 1953, and also accepted a resolution on the Negro struggle totally capitulating to Black Nationalism -- for the first time applying the essentials of Pabloism to the class struggle in this country. Had the political nature of the SWP been the real issue in the RT split, it would have then been possible to effect a reconciliation between both wings of the tendency at this point. That this never was the real reason for the Wohlforth-Healy split from the RT majority was plain by Healy's publication, prior to the split, of the document "Trotskyism Betrayed -- The SWP Adopts the Political Method of Pabloite Revisionism" and by the 22 May 1963 statement of Healy: "By February 1962 it had become clear that to all intents and purposes the policies of the SWP were indistinguishable from those of Pablo and his group" (our emphasis). In fact, Wohlforth himself had declared verbally only a few weeks prior to launching his splitting attack within the tendency, "The SWP is centrist from top to toe."

Wohlforth's Real Reason

The real reasons for the split were far less savory -- the question purely of "regime", in its most narrow and inadmissible sense. Basic was Wohlforth's perception that because of his past mistakes (see Preface to MB #2), his de facto leadership of the RT was being challenged, and he went into an organizational frenzy when

he realized that on the issue on which he had chosen to make a showdown, the nature of the SWP, he was about to receive a minority vote within "his" tendency. This led him to oppose democratic-centralism within the tendency such as was called for and justified by the tendency's program and tasks. (See Document #9, "Thus when the differences on our fundamental attitude towards the revolutionary party come up in our tendency they cannot be resolved by majority-minority vote and discipline...").

In addition, the witch hunt atmosphere created by the SWP leadership against the minority was affecting Wohlforth, never noted for his resistance to pressure. By offering a conciliatory and non-struggle position (see Documents #3 and #6 of Marxist Bulletin #2, and especially Document #10 of this collection), Wohlforth hoped to crawl back into the good graces of the Majority leadership and to retain his position as "party leader" (Wohlforth was the only minority member on the SWP leading body, the Political Committee). To this end he was prepared to sacrifice his political co-thinkers. This is the clear meaning of the statement "Call for the Reorganization of the Minority Tendency" presented to the party on 13 November 1962 and of his discussion with "Farrell" (Dobbs -- National Secretary of the SWP) as described in the first two paragraphs of Document #9, "Of course I made it clear to Farrell..." Wohlforth desired and, through a series of provocations, prepared the expulsion from the SWP of the Mage-Robertson-White wing with which he was in fundamental political agreement, by the Majority with which he was in fundamental political disagreement, in order to end the challenge to his personal leadership both of the minority and within the SWP. This is the subject of MB #3, Part II.

Mechanics of the RT Split

Wohlforth's desire for organizational control at no matter what cost meshed with Healy's (then International Committee head) desire for puppet-like agents internationally rather than for vigorous, disciplined national sections. The manner in which the split was carried out is most instructive in itself. Philips, a co-thinker of Wohlforth on the SWP, was invited to England by Healy, allegedly to consult on trade union questions but in actuality to make final preparations for the split. The cover purpose for the trip was advanced in order to secure financing from the entire tendency, a bit of literally criminal financial fraud characteristic of the whole unsavory spirit of the split. The RT majority, while suspecting that something more than "trade union consultation" was afoot, nevertheless acted in good faith, raising most of the money for Philip's trip but also sending along with him, by vote, a statement that his views on issues of controversy within the American group were not necessarily those of the majority.

Philips returned from England with the ultimatum to the tendency presented in Healy's name (Document #5), which contained an assessment of the political nature of the SWP contradictory to that held by the tendency majority. Had such an assessment been adopted by vote at a meeting of the proper international body to make such a decision at which a representative of the U.S. position had been present to argue its views, the RT would have accepted the decision.

However, such was not the case. An ultimatum was disloyally cooked up and presented; signatures affirming the false position were demanded; no discussion or vote was permitted; and all not signing were automatically "expelled" from the tendency. Under such conditions to affirm to one's comrades positions one considered false was tantamount to surrendering one's revolutionary integrity; to so affirm would have forfeited one's ability and right ever after to argue one's real views within the organization -- absolutely essential to a revolutionary organization and assured under genuine democratic-centralism. The overwhelming majority of the American section, whether agreeing with the analysis presented in the document or not, refused to go along with such tactics. Over two thirds of the tendency were thus "expelled," with the remaining eleven going on to form "The Reorganized Minority Tendency."

After the refusal of the majority of RT comrades to sign the ultimatum, Wohlforth went to party National Secretary and Majority leader Dobbs with an edited version of the document, implying that the leadership of the RT were disloyal party members. His method in this business ironically anticipated that used a year later by the SWP leadership in expelling the RT leadership from the party. At the Tendency meeting of 3 November 1962, Wohlforth had to admit he knew of no actual acts by tendency majority members in violation of SWP discipline but that "disloyal" ideas were sufficient, and it was the duty of loyal party members to inform the party leadership of "disloyal" members. Immediately prior to the 1963 SWP Convention in a continuation of his unprincipled bloc with the revisionist party leadership, Wohlforth presented them with his document "Party and Class" (in MB #3, Part II) containing lying allegations against the Mage-Robertson-White tendency, including the charge that they had a "split perspective" towards the party -- a contention proved patently false by a time 8 months later when M-R-W still remained in the party (see our reply then, "Discipline and Truth," MB #3, Part II made as part of our struggle to stay in the SWP). On the basis of Wohlforth's document as evidence, Harper, Ireland, Mage, Robertson and White were suspended, then expelled, subsequently forming the Spartacist League.

Wohlforth Cracks -- Again

With the larger minority out of the party, the full pressure of the Majority fell upon the very small and pressure-prone Wohlforth grouping, doubly upset by the successes of Spartacist outside. Almost immediately Wohlforth became demoralized, and only four months later, in October 1963, was proposing within his own tendency that they leave the party. When this was opposed by Philips and other surprised tendency supporters, Wohlforth first broke with Philips then, with Healy's aid, provoked his grouplet's own exclusion from the SWP. Following their departure from the party they went on to form the ACFI.

Time has made clear who was right and who wrong on the nature of the SWP. The Wohlforthites now go so far as to claim the SWP never was revolutionary! (See, for example, Wohlforth's "Struggle for Marxism in the U.S." in which he proves the first genuine American Marxist is...Wohlforth!

Healy's Incapacity

A far more important question than this, though, has since been resolved. The question of the ability of a leadership such as Gerry Healy's to rebuild the world Trotskyist movement was raised by his methods towards the American section in 1962 -- methods which repeated the worst organizational practices of the Comintern during the late 20's. In 1962 most comrades preferred to withhold judgment, hoping that Healy's actions were a single incident undertaken through the mistaken advice and lies of Wohlforth and Philips that the tendency majority had given up a struggle perspective within the SWP and was preparing to split.

Healy on a number of occasions made it crystal clear that "the technique of the lie" was quite admissible, and even necessary for his purposes, for temporary tactical advantage or to break the authority of possible opponents in a factional dispute. Thus, in his letter of 12 November 1962 (Document #9), Healy argued that the American comrades should have agreed to the false statement just as in a similar situation his own grouping had done in 1944 within the British Revolutionary Communist Party. He described the leadership of the RCP at that time as "a mixture of ultra-Lefts, opportunists and centrists" -- the classical definition of a centrist tendency. However, he goes on to state that to have characterized them in this fashion might have alienated the rank-and-file and therefore the politically correct characterization was withheld. At the London Conference in April 1966 (see SPARTACIST #6) Healy demanded the Spartacist delegation lie, confessing themselves to be petty-bourgeois American chauvinists, as a condition for IC membership. Again, in the interests of the revolutionary future of Spartacist, our delegation refused to do so and were once again "expelled" by this Healy.

Healy's total inability as an international Trotskyist leader was finally established at the London Conference where Spartacist was expelled although willing to accept democratic-centralist discipline and although the political basis for inclusion within the IC had already been admitted; "Voix Ouvriere," a large French Trotskyist group, was driven out; and practically all observers from other groupings were alienated (see SPARTACIST #6).

The political basis for these organizational methods had now become clear with the IC's adoption of a line of critical support for Mao and the Red Guards and their embracing of "the Arab Revolution" being led by Nasser and Syria. Healy had but shortly before been deeply immersed in the Bevan wing of the Labor Party bureaucracy. Then for several years he carried on a correct political struggle against Pabloism. Now he moves at full speed towards this political revisionism mixed, however, in his case by a characteristic compounding of sectarian Stalinist "Third Period" tactics and violence against working class and socialist opponents. Our conclusion is that Healy is an opportunist in motion, periodically adopting whole new programs for a temporary organizational advantage. The IC cannot go forward towards the task of reconstructing the Fourth International without first understanding and ridding itself of such a leadership. In contrast stands our own revolutionary consistency, over the whole course of our development, in principles, programmatic development and practice.

New York
October 7, 1962

Geoff White
Berkeley

Dear Geoff:

An enormous amount of urgent matters have accumulated since I returned from the Bay Area. On 9-27 and continued on 9-30 I wrote you an uncompleted letter which I'm appending to this present one. Then I fell sick for a week with influenza and at the same time Wohlforth then openly launched his splitting attack, orally in the NYC tendency meeting, and in writing in his 'Toward the Working Class.'

In order to finish writing you tonight, I want first to make a few basic observations about Comrade Wohlforth's current tack and then conclude with some points for your consideration and action.

1. The proletarian core/working class backbone of the SWP is doubly a straw man in this discussion. First because in the main it is only since Tim's document of this May that he discovered this proletarian core to fuse with. Yet having 'found' it, he also finds that those who know that this core is for some years no longer real are themselves petty bourgeois in-cipient renegades. The witch hunt and related attrition wiped out all the party's significant working trade union fractions. Left are scattered individuals in factories and pro trade-union oriented fragments in the party, such as the grouping around T. Kerry in the leadership. By no stretch of the imagination are these a party 'backbone' or 'core'--wish fulfillment to the contrary notwithstanding. Secondly, if the party with its centrist program did have an important TU base we'd have to place and/or win over supporters inside the factory fractions and give battle over relevant issues to the line of the party majority as we sought to win ascendancy fraction by fraction. Even in this hypothetical case, the way to proceed is at variance with Tim's line. But to play with the hypothetical case is to blunt the point of the relation between the loss of a working class base and proletarian orientation to the party and the winning out of centrism and degeneration of the core of the party cadre.

2. There is no principled way for Tim to avoid basing his case on the nature of this party. He can and does twist and turn, threaten and bluster, obscure and invent, etc. etc. But if the party is centrist, and it is, the basic line of the Robertson-Ireland document is, as an elementary reflex, correct.

Good Christ, with a pompousness and fraud that border on the mentally aberrant, he writes (to paraphrase since my copy of TW's document has not arrived, and I'm citing from memory the reading of another comrade's copy) that with his line (?)

the minority has in this past year fused with the proletarian core of the party in Detroit, Philly, San Francisco, and is on the way in New Haven! Obviously this is written for foreign consumption. What a 'flattering' way to describe Art and wife and child in Detroit, five longtime party members in Philly and S.F., and a person in New Haven who recently came back to the movement after being out 18 years. The comrades who were won solidly this past year were won to and signed a political document that is our joint 'property' and which was essentially a declaration of support to the IC world resolution.

3. It is painful to try to grapple seriously with Tim's position because it has switched on and off so much. In NYC two months ago we were told by Tim that perspectives differences were a fraud for purposes of empty factionalism. (But in May he said they were critical and that every comrade had to stand up and be counted.) Now again they are so paramount that Tim declares he is closer to the 'proletarian core' of the party majority than to his own petty-bourgeois co-thinkers--i.e., the NYC tendency majority. We have consistently declared the party to be centrist in character and have systematically and methodically sought to draw the proper tactical and perspective conclusions--while Tim has leaped around from one extreme posture to another. Now he's landed in a very bad position indeed. While he doubtless doesn't now mean all of the reconciliationist line he's preaching toward the Majority, it opens the road back for any of his followers who are uncomfortable with the episodes of struggle which are mandatory when Trotskyists and centrists coexist within one party. To assume even as a tactic a mask of conciliationism risks losing comrades when the disguise fuses with the face.

4. Tim gives every evidence of ardently desiring the Robertson-Ireland wing of the tendency out of the Minority and out of the party, and the sooner the better--as witness his concluding remarks at the last NYC tendency meeting: "Robertson's covertly for a split within a few months. If Jim goes, good riddance!" And of course there is the "break all ties, deepen the breach" tone and language of his document. Cannon wrote more mildly of Shachtman in 1940, though Tim obviously believes he and I are the exact reincarnations of those two then. So driven is he to create a panic mood of hate to consummate a split of the tendency that to add to the compound picture of a petty bourgeois grouping of the upper West Side's middle-class 103 St. fleeing the proletarian factory quarters at 101 St. that poor old Tim snarls and foams at any decent comrade daring to call the Shachtmanites of 1941-46 a left-centrist grouping. To cite Tim Wohlforth against Tim Wohlforth, however:

"We can now get an accurate picture of the political development of the Shachtman tendency. It was born in 1940 as a petty bourgeois opposition within the Trotskyist movement. It went through a "second split" with the mass exodus of those who rode the opposition bloc out of the movement altogether. It then launched a party and

attempted to compete with the SWP to be the Trotskyist party in this country. It contained at this time divergent tendencies which pushed it in different directions. It had within it tendencies which wished a reconciliation with the SWP by building a united Trotskyist party. It had other tendencies which forced it to the right-- to a definitive break with Trotskyism in 1946. We can characterize the WP of this period as a left centrist grouping of unstable composition which couldn't quite decide exactly where it was going. Then following the 1946 WP-SWP unity affair and with the opening of the cold-war witch hunt, it began to move to the right at an accelerated pace, transforming itself from a competing tendency within the Trotskyist movement into a centrist 'third camp' tendency which felt itself antagonistic to Trotskyism as well as to reformism. It stayed only for a relatively short time in this centrist limbo as it soon struck out in an open reformist direction, seeking today to become the loyal left wing of the social democracy." (page 22, What Makes Shachtman Run?, Tim Wohlforth, August, 1957.)

The characterizing of the WP is a small matter as it relates to our needs, but it is very big for one thing which is easily obscured by charges and accusations--who is serious toward our history and theory and who has bent and twisted them for petty factional gain and to try to make a wrong line look good?

5. So, my concluding observation is that Tim has entirely lost his head just now and is in a political sense deranged. He has managed to reproduce a set of charges toward some of his own Tendency comrades that are of the same kind as the accusations of the Majority against the Minority as a whole. But Tim is much harsher and more urgently split-oriented than Hansen has managed to be to date.

What I want you to consider and/or act on are the following:

(1) In any sharp flare-up of factionalism harsh tone and characterizations are inevitable, and I've no complaint. However, there are two limits that have been passed which must be reestablished, and I want your help in stamping out transgressions: (a) to combat most urgently accusations in writing which give the party majority a basis for charges against minority comrades. Tim wrote that Robertson-Ireland deny party discipline; are for breaking party statutes, and want to bring non-party members into intra-party factional meetings. These accusations I state for the record and for reasons of fact are false. You and I discussed and later I carefully singled out and repeated in the NYC tendency meeting my view that the position of our tendency had to be one of abiding by the discipline and statutes of the party. For Tim to continue writing in this vein would be to

commit a provocation against our party membership. (b) to create an intolerant attitude toward use of words and phrases which are only justified for creating a split atmosphere, such as the remark about "good riddance".

(2) While no one can stop Tim from a criminal split in the tendency if he's really hell bent for one, yet intervention by Bay Area comrades can make it difficult to carry off and give the time for clarification and proper discussion (i.e., to let the minimal fact sink in that after 2-3 months Larry and I are still in the party!). For our part, we have and do declare our willingness to function, if we lose, as a responsible minority in the national Tendency, but Tim shows no trace of a similar attitude.

(3) Closely related to the possibility of the Bay Area moderating what has exploded into a threatening situation is where you and other Bay Area comrades stand on the substantive matters of perspective. If the bulk of our Bay Area comrades (who are 40% of the Tendency) do opt for Tim's line--and he's doing his best to get a frightened stampede going--then that's that, he'll just freeze out the NYC Tendency majority and try to write us off. Likewise if you comrades adopt an 'isolationist' line of a curse on both your houses, Wohlforth will feel free to act, on the assumption that his connections and PC role will bring you around later.

So if you are in basic agreement with our analysis of the party and resulting perspective, you'd better let it be known, soon and in a nice, mild, not anti-Wohlforthian way. This combined approach will cool off Tim more surely than anything else. I could raise the question of an amending process to create a final draft of our document, but I'd rather wait to find out whether you intend to be involved in it.

So that's the way things look from here. Feel free to show this letter to any tendency comrades in the area that you think it worthwhile.

Comradely,

Jim

(APPENDED)

New York
September 27, 1962

Geoff White
Berkeley

Dear Geoff:

Last night I had a meeting with Tim which will have far-reaching consequences. It was called upon my initiative to tell him of the just concluded trip by Lynne and me to the West Coast. After giving a brief run-down on developments in the Bay Area and Seattle, I referred to the several proposals that I've been raising in connection with perspectives of the tendency. In addition to those I presented while on the Coast, and as a result of additional reflection and in light of inquiries raised by you and by Danny, I'd made more precise the proposal that one of the implementations of our perspectives be the creation of a resident technical bureau. In particular I proposed that should we find a basic agreement on the tasks of the tendency, then the personnel composition of the projected bureau should initially have a parity character so as to remove the irritations of questions of 'power' or 'regime' from a possible process of healing the then apparently not very weighty differences. But should we find that a serious and objective division exists over the nature of the party, tendency, and our tasks, then we must have recourse to establishing majorities and minorities or else be plunged into either paralysis, arbitrary direction, or rupture. With this I concluded my initial remarks.

Tim then stated that he was in fundamental opposition to the line of the Robertson-Ireland document; considered the issues of the nature of the movement and our tactical approach of great importance; was himself drawing up a counter-statement; and would insist on a thorough and well-organized discussion leading to a decision as soon as possible, consistent with full treatment of the issues. He further stated that even any consideration of tendency organizational proposals was out of order until the discussion was concluded (when presumably the victorious majority would set up what bodies it saw fit); and that the only general technical or organizational matter that needed handling even informally in the meantime between us was to insure that enough copies of documents got around. Finally it should be noted that Tim said literally not a single word about the substance of his fundamental opposition, although it is doubtless related to his earlier views.

We spent another half hour or so dealing with lesser matters and then adjourned--a declaration of war having been politely given and politely acknowledged. The questions that are raised are what does it mean:

(1) Basically Tim is moving finally in a formally responsible manner, now seeking to consolidate his leadership on the basis of acceptance by a majority of a perspective and position. Previously he'd relied mainly on the application of evasive maneuver backed up by initiative and energy, which combination has brought him most of the forms of power and levers of control.

9/30/62

(2) Had I time three days ago to continue writing the next sentences, I was going to suggest that despite his recent ambiguous voiding of his earlier differences and/or of their importance, Tim would have to launch a renewed attack from more-or-less the same quarter as before. I expected him to launch an attack 'fighting the anti-party attitudes', together with more emphasis on the 'non-proletarian character and orientation' of his opposition. In a word, I surmised that he would bring the same flavor or attack against supporters of the Robertson-Ireland document that the Majority levels against the tendency as a whole. But now 3 days later these observations are not conjecture; rather they are the core of the accusation Arnold, Mazelis, and Wohlforth himself have been spreading privately and which will doubtless turn up in a document soon and in tomorrow night's tendency meeting.

(3) Although I've not yet heard anything about the role of Gerry, it seems likely that he has come down on Tim's side, and I'll bet is the one who has brought Tim's 180 degree turn in now seeking to fight it out sharply and openly on perspectives. We sent Gerry a copy of our document shortly after it came out, inviting him to comment on it if he cared. In three weeks we've heard nothing in reply, but Tim now moves to propound techniques and tactics of organizational work which are an exact replica of the SLL's, and belligerently announces that they are damn well going to be carried out.

The most serious thing about Gerry's intervention apparently taking place is not its siding with Tim, but its form of non-recognition of our existence, which coming from the comrade who is also secretary of the IC has a downright sinister quality. We must build a genuine section in this country. Even if some of us may seem mistaken about something in the eyes of a non-infallible fraternal section or international leader, interventions should be calculated with an eye toward minimizing destructiveness. Moreover, where are our international ties then left, should, as may well happen, our Robertson-Ireland document win a majority of the tendency to it? I would be cheerfully prepared to be proved wrong in these apprehensions, especially since the way in which the IC functions in instances such as the present will have a lot to do with its ability to give substance to our aim of rebuilding a functioning Fourth International (what I've been saying diplomatically is that if Healy intervenes roughly and using authority to try to shove a puppet regime down our throats, it opens up a lousy vista of the future of the IC).

(4) What this means to you comrades in the Bay Area is that you will unavoidably be drawn pretty fully into this controversy, probably with some local polarization. While there are large 'regime' or 'power' aspects to this dispute, there are real differences of substance involved. While I'll have to hold off in giving any details at all until we've seen something in writing by Tim, in broad outline he charges verbally that while he is loyal to the party, our document is a split document, and that in fact we've already split in our own minds from the party. While this is false as you personally know from my extended discussions with you recently, something is meant by Tim's charge and it is this: he feels a kind of continuum between himself and forces to the right of us in the party majority. We (R-I) not merely feel, but in our perspectives document, define the political gulf between us and the party majority (which also recognizes and acts on that gulf!).

Tim has a whole set of tactical ideas on his 'as if we're all party members together' approach, all of which try to wish away the division rather than act to strengthen us in the light of its existence. Since in some ways he doesn't really mean it--i.e., the incongruity that the tendency should be under tight centralized discipline to him--I characterize his line as a kind of pseudo-conciliationism.

(Jim)

Wednesday
17 October 1962

Dear Comrade Healy,

The discussion in the American tendency is continuing. Undoubtedly you will have received by now a copy of Comrade Wohlforth's statement, "Towards the Working Class". I am enclosing a reply entitled "What the Discussion is Really About".

Enclosed as well is a copy of Comrade Mage's note, "Theses on the Situation and Tasks of the Revolutionary Tendency in the American Trotskyist Movement." And soon, you should receive Comrade White's document "The Tendency and the Party".

A vote will probably be taken on these documents (with the exception of the Ireland polemic) in three or more weeks.

Although we have heard nothing except your isolated phrase urging "party patriotism", you and other comrades abroad are, of course, invited to comment even further on the discussion.

Best regards, and

Leninist greetings,

Larry Ireland

24th October, 1962.

Dear Comrade Ireland,

Thank you for your letter and enclosure of October 17.

Your criticism of the fact that we have not intervened in your discussion arises from a misunderstanding. Having had some experience in the construction of our own movement and in the course of this gone through many factional struggles of one description or another, we hesitate to intervene in a situation which is not yet clear.

We spoke of party patriotism from the standpoint that we do not believe that there is any other revolutionary organization in the US but the SWP. If you do not build the SWP, then it will be impossible to change its policies. We will be left with a sterile sect or group of sects juggling words. I am sure that no one in the minority wants to see this happen.

The procedure we will follow is to discuss with a comrade who is coming here in the near future and then suggest to all of you a policy for the next period.

I think there will have to be some compromise between you on this matter without, of course, interfering with your political opinions. The task in hand is to build and not allow attention to be diverted because of internal factional difficulties.

We had the same type of difficulties in our own faction in the old days, but we always managed to prevent them from disrupting the work of the tendency. In the long run, despite the fact that some people thought we were making undue compromises, we were proved right. Eventually we got the changes we wanted and preserved the cadre.

Please feel free to write to me and send any material that you wish from time to time.

Yours fraternally,

Jerry Healy

VM/H

4 November 1962

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE SWP MINORITY, THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY:

Last night the attached statement was read to the NYC section of the revolutionary tendency by comrade Albert Philips who had just returned from England. Philips, with comrade Wohlforth concurring, declared that this statement must be signed by any comrade in order to be in the "reorganized" group and that this statement together with signatures would be sent to the SWP leadership and submitted to the Party bulletin within two weeks. Philips further stated that the statement had been written by comrade Healy himself, acting in consultation with other comrades of the British SLL and also of the French IC group. Finally, Philips stated that the British didn't care if only two people signed, those two were going to be "the" tendency as far as Healy was concerned. Comrade Philips offered no evidence other than his own word, and the fact that he'd been called for consultation by the SLL, to support his statement that his interpretations were nothing more or less than the views of the International leadership.

After discussion the following motion was adopted by the New York comrades:

"The New York section of the Revolutionary Tendency in the SWP regards the document presented to us by Comrade Philips as a contribution to the discussion now under way in the tendency. The section states that, in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism, it will accept in disciplined fashion the decisions of the international conference at which it will be represented. The tendency reaffirms in general and in detail its adherence to the basic statement of principle, "In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective". "

The vote on this motion was: for-8, against-0, abstain-1, not voting-6 (two visitors from Detroit also "not voting"). Following this vote the local minority (Wohlforth) declared they considered the tendency split and dissolved. Locally what this means is that only five party comrades of the existing tendency will sign the document (the other "not voting" is not officially a party member), while the eight voting for the adopted motion are joined by the "abstaining" and the only absent comrade in refusing to sign and accept the ultimatum. In addition, our two close sympathizers in the YSA will doubtless stand with our local majority.

It is to the enormous credit of the NYC comrades that they stood fast and refused to bow to a device literally borrowed from the arsenal of bureaucratic-centralism which facilitated the downfall of the Communist International in the Nineteen Twenties--but a crime has been accomplished nonetheless; the eager, adamant splitting of our weak tendency into two parts by comrade Wohlforth. Politically, what it means, of course, is that a section of the tendency is receding in the direction of the party majority or, more exactly, trying to crawl into its good graces (and perhaps seeking to offer up our necks in the bargain!). Sadly, this takes place just at a time when the unstable equilibrium and unity of the central party leadership has been shaken over the Cuban crisis and a section of the leadership shows signs of moving toward the left.

What is completely and entirely intolerable and unacceptable is the method of intervention by the British leadership and their demand for a recantation of views on the SWP by us. Independent of the incorrectness of the British opinions about the revolutionary nature of the SWP and the petty-bourgeois nature of ourselves, their laying down the law without a completed discussion and vote by all of us is dead wrong. We have stated clearly that should we lose in such a discussion we would loyally abide by the decision. Wohlforth can't even abide by the process of democratic discussion and has instead inveigled overseas comrades into an ultimatic intervention. What we will not do is repudiate our political convictions--i.e., we will not capitulate. (The acceptance of this course, even as a "tactic", means the end of comrades as revolutionaries, since afterward one can never raise or act on one's real ((?)) views without being denounced and disciplined as a deceiver.)

One of the most serious implications of the mode of intervention of the SLL-IC is the question mark that it places over the capacity of these comrades to rebuild the Fourth International on a solid basis. We must reserve final judgement until more of the circumstances are clear. But no matter what the British were told or what they believe, they will be hard put to find justification in Leninist and Trotskyist precedent and procedure for their conduct.

There is little point at this juncture in trying to undertake a detailed repudiation of the mass of lies and slanders about "strikebreaking", "renegacy", "disloyalty", "betrayal", and "splitting" as regards the SWP that have been heaped upon our heads by Wohlforth and Philips (and presumably whispered into Healy's ear). Last night, when called to account for these charges and this language, Wohlforth stated that he didn't actually know of any actual act violating SWP discipline (but that "it was implicit in our line", etc.). This he said after presenting the syllogism, "We are loyal party members; you are disloyal party members; it is the duty of loyal party members to tell the party leadership when you know of disloyal party members."

As our enclosed letter to Wohlforth and Philips' presumed backers in Europe shows, we are prepared to go to any principled length to undo the split brought to us. Already in past weeks we have chosen to overlook the entire breakdown in common, responsible work in NYC. The Wohlforth local minority has repudiated the thought and practice of a common front to the Party Majority or of a democratic selection of our representatives in the movement. Likewise we went ahead to help finance Philips' trip to England despite his provocative open letter which wrote us out of the movement.

WHERE WE STAND

1. We will persist along these lines in seeking reunification of the tendency (as well as naturally seeking a common front and common work wherever possible with the other wing of the Minority). We must, however, face the realities of the situation. This split, lightly made, will not be lightly undone. We will do well if we, by our present stance, but plant a seed of doubt now in the minds of European comrades over the correctness of their arbitrary involvement backing Wohlforth and forcing a precipitate split.

2. We will, in any case, maintain our view on the nature of the SWP which was recently summarized clearly as follows: "...a majority of the tendency regards the Party as centrist, ourselves as the Bolshevik movement, the differences as ultimately irreconcilable, our taking power in the Party nationally as chimerical, and democratic centralism, or discipline in one form or another as essential."

3. We will do our utmost to remain in the Socialist Workers Party no matter what provocations we are subjected to. In addition to all of the compelling reasons and the perspective that we've unfolded in previous discussion and draft resolution documents, with the intra-Tendency split, it becomes a matter of political survival of our precious revolutionary cadre that we stay in and work in the SWP in the period ahead.

WE CALL UPON ALL COMRADES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY IN THE SWP TO REPUDIATE AND REFUSE TO SIGN THE STATEMENT WHICH ENDS "5. ONLY THOSE COMRADES WHO ACCEPT THESE CONDITIONS CAN BE MEMBERS OF THE TENDENCY"...BUT WHICH CONDITIONS NONE OF US WERE ALLOWED TO DISCUSS AND VOTE ON. NO LENINIST COMMUNIST WILL PERMIT HIMSELF THAT DEGRADATION !

L. Harper
L. Ireland
S. Mage
J. Robertson
S. Stoute
on behalf of the entire NYC Tendency Majority

STATEMENT PRESENTED BY ALBERT PHILIPS TO THE NYC TENDENCY, Nov.3, 1962:

1. The tendency expresses its general political agreement with the tendency of the International Committee which has agreement around the 1961 international perspectives presented by the Socialist Labour League. It must therefore begin from the standpoint of its responsibilities towards the political struggle of this tendency in relation to the construction of the revolutionary party in the United States.

The tendency recognizes that the building of the SWP as a revolutionary party depends on and derives from its adherence to the revolutionary international perspective and approach.

(All discussion and disagreement within the tendency is part of the discussion within the international tendency. Patience will have to be exercised so that while time is allowed for such differences to be adequately discussed internationally, the political aims and functioning of the tendency remain unimpaired.)

(For this purpose, there will be facilities available for all members of the tendency to express their opinions in a special international tendency bulletin to be published by the Socialist Labour League. This bulletin will have a limited circulation amongst leaders of the international sections who will be invited to comment and participate in the discussion inside the tendency. All written discussion must be carried out within this bulletin.)

2. The tendency must pay particular attention to the development of a perspective for work in the United States in relation to the trade union and the Negro movement. The main political work of the tendency within the party will be to patiently explain the nature of the Pabloite revisionism and liquidationism as a method, and its relation to the problem of developing a concrete revolutionary perspective for work in the trade union and Negro movements. (Such a policy must be carefully presented, not in an artificial factional way, but in a way that will make sense to the activists in the party. The elaboration of the policy is therefore a matter that can only be carried out by most careful preparation.)

(The more careful and thoughtful the preparation, the easier it will be to convince people in practice. If the preparation is carried out in a factional and subjective way, then artificial barriers can be raised between the tendency and the rank and file which will slow down the rate of clarification.)

(The main political fight of the tendency must be directed against the right wing elements in the party, the Weiss group and the Swaback tendency. This does not in any way mean that we make the slightest concession to the center element in the party who up to now have been trying to have the best of both worlds, but who have gradually shifted this position, for the time being at least, in a leftward direction. Because this shift to the left on pacifism is carried out empirically, it can easily become a shift to the right under different conditions. What it does is to open a favorable opportunity for a real struggle against the right wing elements.)

(An analysis of the Weiss position on pacifism and the position adopted by the Pabloites, especially the French Pabloites, on Cuba will show a very clear difference between them and the majority of the SWP.)

(Our strategy should be to establish a political cohesion of our tendency in a way that can effect a united front where possible with the center elements in the SWP against the right.)

3. The tendency must recognize that the SWP is the main instrument for the realization of socialism in the United States. There is no other organization outside that movement which can decisively aid the struggle for socialism at the present time. Our comrades must therefore work as loyal party members; contribute to all aspects of the work, literary and practical, taking part in all its electoral activity and sub drives and accepting the administrative decisions of the leadership even though we might be very much against them.

Members of the tendency must recognize that the SWP is their party, and they must speak as people who are responsible for their party. The difficulties of the party must not be exploited in a factional way. This must be seen as the overhead price for lack of political clarification. Since the responsibility for this clarification now rests squarely on the shoulders of the tendency, to make factional capital out of the party's difficulties would be nothing more than shelving that task which is the main purpose for the existence of the tendency.

The tendency must not make premature characterizations of the leadership of the SWP except of those groups such as Weiss and Swabeck who have clearly revealed their Pabloism in theory and practice.

The center group which is, of course, the majority can not be described as a finished centrist tendency in the same way as the Pabloites. To be sure there are elements of centrism in its thinking and activity, but these do not predominate. To characterize the SWP majority tendency as a finished centrist tendency is to give up the political battle before it has begun.

We must believe that by common work and political discussion it will be possible to win a majority of the party to adopt a correct line on Pabloism and for the building of the revolutionary party in the United States.

4. The present tendency shall dissolve and shall re-establish itself on the basis of the preceding point.
5. Only those comrades who accept these conditions can be members of the tendency.

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[NOTE: Portions in (-) were later omitted in document as presented to the SWP National Committee.]

4 November 1962

To the Revolutionary Tendency of the International Committee

COMRADES:

Last night comrade Albert Philips submitted a document to the New York Section in your name. The following motion was thereupon voted by the New York Section:

The New York Section of the Revolutionary Tendency in the SWP regards the document presented to us by comrade Philips as a contribution to the discussion now under way in the tendency. The Section states that, in accordance with the principles of democratic centralism, it will accept in disciplined fashion the decisions of the international conference at which it will be represented. The tendency reaffirms in general and in detail its adherence to the basic statement of principle In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective.

The vote on the above motion was as follows:

Members of the New York Section:		Visiting Members:
For	8	0
Against	0	0
Abstain	1	0
Not Voting	6	2
Absent	1	-

Although the comrades of the American Tendency financed comrade Philips' trip abroad, this in no way constituted comrade Albert Philips as our representative. This was made absolutely clear by the motion presented in the New York Section on 1 October 1962 which carried unanimously:

Motion by comrade Robertson:

At the suggestion of comrade Wohlforth the tendency financially help comrade Albert to consult. It is understood that giving this aid constitutes no special endorsement of views which may be controversial within the tendency.

Comrades of the Revolutionary Tendency, there is a right way for Bolsheviks to act! We reaffirm in the strongest possible fashion our determination to act in a disciplined fashion and abide by all decisions of regularly constituted international bodies at which we are represented.

We are determined to go to any length short of renouncing our political views to avoid a split. The document which it is demanded that we sign closes with two sections which constitute our ultimatic expulsion from the Revolutionary Tendency since it demands that we renounce our views on the political nature of the SWP.

WE HAVE THEREFORE THE FOLLOWING MOST URGENT REQUEST TO MAKE. WILL YOU, COMRADES OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE, HOLD IN ABEYANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DOCUMENT PRESENTED BY COMRADE PHILIPS -- THAT IS, THE LAST TWO SECTIONS -- FOR A PERIOD OF SEVERAL WEEKS IN ORDER THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF OUR WING, A PROBABLE MAJORITY, OF THE AMERICAN TENDENCY BE ALLOWED TO REPRESENT US AT A MEETING OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE? OR IS

THERE ANY OTHER MEASURE WHICH YOU WILL CONSIDER WHICH MIGHT EVEN CONCEIVABLY AVOID
A RUPTURE?

To repeat, Comrades, WE WILL GO TO ANY LENGTH SHORT OF RENOUNCING OUR
POLITICAL VIEWS TO AVOID A RUPTURE!

Comrades of the Revolutionary Tendency, if your decision to act without per-
mitting representation by the American Tendency is irrevocable, we must register
our most profound sorrow and anger at this treatment and once again REAFFIRM
OUR UNCHANGEABLE DETERMINATION TO REMAIN A VITAL PART OF THE REVOLUTIONARY MOVE-
MENT! If you remain convinced, without so much as a hearing from our side, that
our group is composed of Burnhamite and Shachtmanite elements pre-eminently hos-
tile to the working class, then let this document serve as the mark by which our
deeds and your arbitrary action may be judged in the coming years.

COMRADES, WE ARE GOING TO REMAIN IN THE SWP AND CONTINUE OUR STRUGGLE AGAINST
REVISIONISM REGARDLESS OF YOUR ACTION. IF YOU PERSIST IN OUR EXPULSION LET OUR
ACTIONS CONFOUND YOUR ERROR!

With Bolshevik Greetings,

L. Harper

L. Ireland

S. Mage

J. Robertson

S. Stoute

ON BEHALF OF A MAJORITY OF THE NEW YORK
SECTION OF THE REVOLUTIONARY TENDENCY OF
THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY.

New York, N. Y.
4 November 1962

Dear Comrade Healy,

I write to you in shock and disbelief. Last night comrades Phillips and Wohlforth, claiming to act in your name and on your instructions as given to Phillips last week in London, in short declaring themselves to be your direct agents, carried out a criminal split from the majority of our tendency. Slandering the other comrades present with words like "renegade," "strikebreaker," "petit-Bourgeois," and "disloyal," they presented a document that previously had been kept secret from the members of the tendency and delivered the ultimatum that those who refused to sign it would immediately cease to be members of "their" tendency. When the majority of the tendency in New York voted to regard this document as a discussion contribution, Phillips and Wohlforth announced that their split from the tendency was henceforth in effect.

I find it nearly impossible, comrade Healy, to believe that the Wohlforth-Phillips claim to your full endorsement is accurate. The ultimatum presented last night is one which no sincere and thinking revolutionist could possibly accept. The Phillips document makes a large number of statements and proposals on questions currently under discussion and on which many comrades have expressed diverse opinions. Disagreement even one of these points makes it an act of perjury and political suicide for a comrade to sign the document. Particularly since all of these controversial points, if adopted after full discussion by a majority of the tendency in accordance with the normal procedures of democratic centralism, would be accepted in disciplined fashion by every member of the tendency, this ultimatum can have no purpose except to split from comrades with whom no avowed fundamental difference exists (or exists as yet - there are indications that Wohlforth may be preparing capitulation to the SWP majority by way of certain formulations in this document.)

You have undoubtedly been told, as we were told to our face, that the majority of the tendency in the U.S. is preparing to split from the SWP. I can give you the most categorical assurance that this is a lie. If we were willing to falsify our views, we would have no qualms about signing this document, either. When all of us have stated that we have no perspective outside the SWP we meant every word. What then are the main disagreements with the substantive line of the Phillips document? Speaking for myself, (and leaving aside its introduction as a split ultimatum, which would make it impossible for me to sign it even if I agreed with every word and comma otherwise,) I would state that these differences are essentially only two:

1) I disagree with the proposal to centralize discussion among members of the tendency in the U.S. through a bulletin published in England. This proposal could only tend to obstruct the healthy political and organizational development of the tendency. Moreover, as far as I can see it would be a direct violation of SWP party discipline and certainly would be a disloyal act toward the party!

2) I believe that the entire SWP leadership, by its political methodology, outlook, and practise, is fundamentally Pabloite. Like all centrist tendencies it is heterogeneous, and splits within it can be counted on to provide us with concrete chances to intervene. But I would give weight to differences among individuals within this leadership only in the context of their basic political identity.

But what it is most difficult for me to accept in the Wohlforth-Phillips claim, comrade Healy, is the light in which it casts your letter, dated Oct. 24, 1962, to comrade Ireland. In that letter you wrote "I think there will have to be some compromise between you on this matter without, of course, interfering with your political opinions." Could this wise and correct orientation be more drastically belied than by the Wohlforth-Phillips document which makes no "compromise" whatsoever with the majority opinion of the tendency and "interferes" in the most reprehensible way with the "political opinions" of the majority, by demanding their public recantation?

I cling to the hope that your words of Oct. 24 continue to express your true position and that your views have been as thoroughly misrepresented to us by Wohlforth and Phillips as ours have been misrepresented by them to you. If this is the case, then little is permanently lost, and the discussion within a united tendency can continue in a constructive way. We would, I am sure, do everything possible to assure this and, notably, would make all sacrifices necessary to send representation of the tendency majority to consult directly with you and other European comrades.

I anxiously await your reply in the earnest hope that healthy political collaboration between us can be restored.

Comradely,

Shane Mage

Copy to Paris

12th November, 1962.

London

Dear Comrades,

We have received a letter dated November 4 in the names of L. Harper, L. Ireland, S. Mage, J. Robertson, S. Stoute written on behalf of a majority of the New York section of the Revolutionary Tendency of the SWP.

There appears to be some misunderstanding amongst you about the proposals which we submitted through comrade Phillips. You appear, for example, to be labouring under a misapprehension that these proposals were drafted after we listened to an attack upon you by comrade Phillips.

This, of course, was not the case. If we had any criticisms to make of your good selves, we would do so in writing. We would certainly not listen to any kind of gossip in relation to your activity. We start from the assumption that you want seriously to construct the revolutionary party in the US and we would like to assure you that we are only too happy to discuss with you about the best possible way to do this.

We ourselves have, as you know, a long experience of working as a minority faction inside the British Trotskyist movement. We began this work in 1943 and it lasted for seven years. We did not assume leadership rights in England until 1950.

The proposals are based upon experiences we had during that time and are certainly not dictated by comrades Wohlforth and Phillips. During this period we accepted on a number of occasions advice with which we ourselves disagreed, but which we operated in practice because we accepted the revolutionary integrity and rich experience of those comrades who gave it to us. In this way we began to understand the real value of international collaboration.

Between September 1943 and March 1944, we fought a sharp struggle for the unification of all the Trotskyist groups in Britain. At the conference of our organization the Workers International League in September 1943, I was in a minority of one supporting this proposal. Then advice came from comrades in New York which laid down the terms for unification. These terms were presented as final and could not be debated or discussed. They had to be accepted or rejected as they were by all the parties concerned, including our minority.

Since the unprincipled majority of our section wanted to deprive us of an opportunity to continue the struggle against them, they immediately opened up relations with the opportunist elements in the other groups and decided to accept the terms. Their reasoning was that by moving towards acceptance of such terms they could isolate us by an unprincipled combination. They did just that. When the unification congress took place in March 1944, we were deprived of minority rights on the National Committee of the fused organization, the Revolutionary Communist Party. Prior to this conference we raised the matter with the comrades responsible for the fusion terms but they told us that we could not insist on any rights and that we had also got to accept the terms as they were.

So reluctantly we accepted the terms and went ahead to make the fused organization work. History has since revealed that the fusion was in our favour and not on the side of those who were manoeuvring and intriguing. If we had not accepted the terms and split from the fused organization because we were not given any rights, then surely our tendency would have been destroyed.

I might add that we did not receive minority rights on the National Committee of the Revolutionary Communist Party until almost two years later. Everything was done to persecute us as a faction but we refused under any circumstances to split no matter what the differences or to be driven out of the party. Our people were the best workers and nothing could be done to take this right away from them.

Early in the fusion it became clear that the leadership of the Revolutionary Communist Party contained a mixture of ultra-Lefts, opportunists and centrists, but we resisted all attempts to characterize them as a centrist tendency since a premature characterization of this description would have acted as a barrier between ourselves and the rank and file. Many comrades in our own tendency felt very strongly about the politics of the majority but they had to resist their feelings in order to undertake a long term perspective of work to equip them to become what they did at a later stage - the leadership of the party.

The international struggle against Pabloite revisionism which resulted in the split of 1953 has now taken on a new form. Due to the lack of political clarification about the nature of this revisionism, the leadership of the SWP are tending to succumb to it as an approach to world problems. But this is by no means a clear-cut development. We know from reading the documents and publications of the party that certain elements such as Weiss, Swabeck, Warde and Hansen have now developed a rounded out Pabloite approach. Others are, however, still very unclear and hesitant because amongst other things the SWP has a long record of fighting for a principled Trotskyist position, although it cannot, because of the Voorhis Act participate in international activity.

Unfortunately, the activity of the Pabloites has been to some extent successful in provoking a factional atmosphere between ourselves and the majority. A good percentage of the activity of people like Dowson during his visit here was taken up with misrepresenting small factional points which were then relayed to the US in order to sharpen up the differences. We know only too well the harm that this kind of thing can do. The longer we have to discuss with the SWP, the more opportunity we will have to expose the Pabloites and assist the party to clarify itself. Our policy is to speak up clearly and sharply on the political differences and maintain a collaboration with the SWP for as long as possible.

For this reason we have been opposed to any attempt to sharpen up the internal faction struggle inside the SWP no matter what the provocation. Our proposals are designed towards this end in line with our past experience. We do not want to impose them on you. If you do not like to accept them, then there is no need to accept them. All those comrades who do accept them will be considered as part of an international tendency, as we were in the early days of our movement here. Contrary to what comrade Mage said in his letter, it is perfectly permissible for this international tendency to discuss its affairs internally either in writing or oral discussion. We are part of a world party and not separate national groupings. The SLL as part of a world movement has every right to establish tendency relations when it feels these are necessary.

You can decide whether or not you want to be part of this international tendency. The SWP in the past has constantly spelled out its advice - and correctly so - not only to ourselves but to comrades in many parts of the world who have supported it in the various struggles. It is perfectly permissible for you to contribute to an internal tendency bulletin all the opinions which you have about the centrist nature of the SWP leadership and we will seriously discuss them with you.

We do want to bring to an end the internal struggle inside the minority so that comrades can bend their entire efforts towards clarifying the party and helping it in this struggle. We feel sure that if you can see your way to do this we shall make important gains in the future.

We would like to ask you to accept these terms and continue a written discussion with us here. If it were possible you may be able to arrange to visit us some time in the spring or earlier if it could be managed.

Acceptance of the terms does not mean you give up your political positions. We are asking you to do what we had to do in the past, that is to accept the lessons of international experience and work together with us as part of an international tendency fighting against Pabloite revisionism for revolutionary Marxism.

We are asking you to put the international movement and the building of the party first, before any factional considerations. No one amongst us wants to lose a single comrade as a result of a misunderstanding. What you do is being decided not by us but by yourselves.

The political differences which comrade Phillips has are in some respects much more serious than yours, yet he has decided to accept these terms. We again urge you to do the same.

Awaiting your reply.

Best wishes,

G. HEALY

On behalf of the Organizing Committee

VM/H

Nov. 14, 1962

San Francisco:

Dear Bertha,

The enclosed statement was submitted last night to Farrell. It will be formally reported to the PC at its next meeting--probably this weekend.

Of course I made it clear to Farrell that the fact that the Bay Area comrades did not sign it did not necessarily mean that these comrades agreed with Jim and Shane and were now part of their group. Rather it meant that while a number of these comrades agreed with us in our assessment of the party, they did not feel that the differences with the Robertson-Mage faction necessitated an open break in the party.

The signers of this statement have broken irrevocably from Robertson-Mage and will not of course cooperate with them as there is no political basis upon which we can cooperate. We disagree on the most fundamental question of all--the party. However, we issue this statement not as an announcement of a newly formed tendency but rather as a call for the reorganization of the tendency along the lines of the statement. This means that we do not take the same attitude towards the Bay Area group as we do towards Robertson-Mage. We are of course willing to cooperate and work with the Bay Area comrades wherever possible and do not view the Bay Area group as part of the Robertson-Mage faction. We recognize that you will be watching the evolution of the two groups and working in your own principled political fashion according to your own assessment of the differences in our forces. We are convinced that you will soon see that this step was not only necessary but if anything should have been taken earlier. Should we prove incorrect and there is a real basis for unity of our forces then, since we are all members of the party, it should not be difficult to unite once more. But, quite frankly, we do not see this as a realistic alternative.

In fact Robertson does not either. He called me Monday night and gave me the following 'unity' pitch--he stated that he recognized that a split was inevitable between us but felt that the political basis was not clear for it now. Well, we are not interested in playing games with Robertson. We have no intention of going through a phony unity with people who make it clear that they have no faith in the viability of the unity anyway. It is best that our comrades devote their energies to constructive work in the party and the construction of a tendency rather than spending ourselves struggling in interminable internecine factional warfare until that moment when Robertson will feel that the split is properly prepared for him. From the very beginning the central characteristic of the Robertson group has been lack of seriousness. Well the games are over because we ain't playing.

It is my opinion, judging from the pattern of events over the past week, that our step was taken not a moment too soon. The comrades must realize that factionalism has its own vicious logic. It is not something easily turned on or off like water from a faucet. At a certain point the spiral of action and counteraction reaches such a point that even if one side pulls back it may not be possible for the other side to pull back. It is my opinion that we came very, very close to that qualitative point, and only the drastic action we have taken has made it possible for us to pull partially back from a process whose logic was leading swiftly to a rift from the party.

You are of course aware that the factional tensions in your area are at an all time high because of the demonstration business. Of course it was correct for the comrades to protest and protest loudly over the betrayal of the majority to the pacifists.

But at the same time caution must be used to avoid all organizational attacks and it must be understood that what is needed is a long term political struggle not a short term factional gang war. At the same time as things got very tense in your area, Shirley decides unilaterally to move to Philly despite the request of the New York organizer that she await a clearance for her transfer. Carl informed me that if she went through channels they would certainly let her go. I informed Shirley of this and she went anyway. As a result Shirley's own relation to the party is endangered and the Philly branch has tightened up in a factional way which has seriously hindered the work of our fine comrades there.

To top it all off Ross is expected to return in a day or two and to give a report to the PC. We can fully expect, that in the normal course of things this would have led to a sharper attack on us as a reflex of an attack on the IC tendency. Thus the pattern--increasing factional conflicts within the party between majority and minority and increased steps towards a break internationally--the logical outcome would be a split if there were not steps taken to reverse the process.

Let there be no doubt about it--we do not want a split internationally or domestically. Such a development would only strengthen the grip of Pabloism on the American party. Our international tendency would gain nothing from it. We must not and will not hand over the American party to the Pabloites without a serious struggle. And that struggle necessitates an open clear break on our part from the spiral of increasingly severe factional conflict within our party. Those comrades who sit back and 'predict' a split are in reality contributing in their own way to the preparation for a split. It may very well be that our action at this time has saved for a while even the Robertson-Mage group.

The comrades must realize that we are a tendency. We do not seek to build a party within a party. Thus when the differences on our fundamental attitude towards the revolutionary party come up in our tendency they cannot be resolved by majority-minority vote and discipline without transforming the tendency into a party within a party--and furthermore a party which is hopelessly paralyzed by internal factionalism. The comrades must face the reality--neither the Bay Area nor New York group has had any substantial growth over the past year. The only serious additions to our cadres came in the period of the issuing of our basic statement with the pulling in of the old party cadre in SF, Detroit, Philly.

In any event we have taken this very necessary step. We will continue to work in collaboration with the Bay Area tendency despite our differences over evaluation of the necessity to break with Robertson-Mage. We are not declaring ourselves at this time to be the minority tendency but rather a group seeking to reorganize the minority tendency around this statement. Under no conditions, however, can we collaborate with the Robertson-Mage faction.

Comradely,

Tim

cc: Danny, Art, Philly, File

CALL FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE MINORITY TENDENCY

1. The tendency expresses its general political agreement with the tendency of the International Committee which has agreement around the 1961 International Perspectives Resolution presented by the Socialist Labour League. It must, therefore, begin from the standpoint of its responsibilities towards the political struggle of this tendency in relation to the construction of the revolutionary party in the United States.

The tendency recognizes that the building of the SWP as a revolutionary party depends on and derives from its adherence to the revolutionary international perspective and approach.

2. The tendency must pay particular attention to the development of perspective for work in the United States in relation to the trade unions and the Negro movement. The main political work of the tendency within the party will be to patiently explain the nature of Pabloite revisionism and liquidationism as a method, and its relation to the problem of developing a concretely revolutionary perspective for work in the trade union and Negro movement.

3. The tendency must recognize that the SWP is the main instrument for the realization of socialism in the U.S. There is no other organization outside the party which can decisively aid the struggle for socialism at the present time. Our comrades must therefore work as loyal party members; contribute to all aspects of the work, literary and practical, taking part in all the party's electoral activity and subdrives and accepting the administrative decisions of the leadership even though we might be very much against them.

Members of the tendency must recognize that the SWP is their party and they must speak as people who are responsible for their party. The difficulties of the party must not be exploited in a factional way. These must be seen as the overhead price for lack of political clarification. Since the responsibility for this clarification now rest squarely on the shoulders of the tendency, to make factional capital out of the party's difficulties would be nothing more than shelving that task which is the main purpose for the existence of the tendency.

The tendency must not make premature characterizations of the leadership of the SWP, except for those, such as Weiss and Swabek, who have clearly revealed their Pabloism in theory and practice.

The center group, which is, of course, the majority cannot be described as a finished tendency in the same way as the Pabloites. To be sure there are elements of centrism in its thinking and activity, but these do not predominate. To characterize the SWP majority as a finished centrist tendency is to give up the political battle before it has begun.

We must believe that by common work and by political discussion it will be possible to win a majority of the party to adopt a correct line on Pabloism and for the building of the revolutionary party in the United States.

4. The present tendency shall dissolve and shall re-establish itself on the basis of the preceding points.

5. Only those comrades who accept this outlook can be considered a part of the tendency.

Jack Arnold (New York)
Martha Curti (New York)
J. Doyle (Philadelphia)
Danny F. (Seattle)
Edith F. (Detroit)
Steve F. (Detroit)

Margaret Gates (Philadelphia)
Fred Mazelis (New York)
Sylvia Mazelis (New York)
Albert Philips (Detroit)
Tim Wohlforth (New York)

November 13, 1962

San Francisco Bay Area

November 14th, 1962

Dear Comrade Healy,

Since your letter to me of October 25th, Comrade P. Phil ips has returned with what he and you consider to be a solution to our internal difficulties. It is admittedly a drastic one, amounting as it does to the effective expulsion of the majority of the New York tendency.

The first question raised, therefore, is the desirability and necessity of disposing of these comrades. Comrade P. was extremely firm about this, and also quite definite that he was speaking in your name as well, which fact gave weight to his arguments that they would otherwise have lacked.

I am convinced, Comrade Healy, that on this question you are mistaken.

Comrade P., during the discussion here shifted his grounds for demanding this action. His initial position was that the New York comrades had characterized the Party as centrist, and therefore would, by a process of logical necessity, be led to an attitude of indiscipline, of split, and would in fact become destroyers of the Party. However, when it was pointed out to Comrade P. that Comrade J. and myself are also on record with the same characterization and that many of the comrades here support this view, and when he was asked if we too were to be "disengaged" from the tendency, he vehemently denied any such intention. We had not acted as wreckers, he said, but the New York comrades in question had.

The discussion on this point then shifted to a series of specific charges of misconduct brought against the leaders of the New York tendency majority. After an ample presentation, not a single one of the sixteen comrades present stated that he regarded these charges as proved and as the basis for disciplinary action. All but two, one of whom did not speak at all, expressed themselves as opposed to action on the basis of these charges. I think this response is eloquent testimony. No responsible organization would tolerate such drastic action on such a flimsy case and without the accused being granted the right to appear in their own defense. I am sure you would never permit such a procedure in the League.

Thus it seems to me that both bases for the removal of these comrades must fail-- that based on political opinion because it is not to be applied uniformly, and that based on overt acts because, on the basis of the evidence presented, they must be regarded as unproved. I have always considered these comrades as key members of our tendency. Not only is my opinion in this respect unchanged, but my regard for these comrades has been increased by the manner in which they have responded to what I must consider an unprincipled attack accompanied by an abuse of command of the lines of communication to you.

Before leaving the question of New York, there is one other observation I would like to offer for whatever it may be worth. I have known Comrade R. Robertson since 1958, and worked with him in the Oakland-Berkeley branch in 1958 and 1959. We were then on opposite sides of most political issues, whose merits are irrelevant to the present case, and our relations were generally rather hostile. Therefore when I first heard, this summer, through Comrade W. Wohlfortn, of the open factionalism existing in the New York tendency, I was not predisposed to view R's role favorably. Being sceptical and forewarned, I do not think I could have been easily bamboozled. Comrade R. hits hard in a fight, and I am sure he has in this one. However, after the most careful scrutiny of the situation, or such elements as were available to me here, I found that Comrade R. :

1. gave no indication of attempting to spread and deepen the factionalism in the tendency
2. at no time in his dealings with us advocated or carried out undisciplined acts or attitudes
3. at no time advocated or sought to lay the groundwork for a split from the SWP
4. in all cases where I could check made reports which were not only factually correct but what is more to the point, conveyed an accurate impression of the real situation, which same I cannot say in all cases for his opponents.

Parenthetically, let me say that the picture of R. the anarchist presented by Comrade P. is simply too absurd to be taken seriously, and was so received by the comrades in this area.

The avowed purpose of your statement, the separation of these comrades from our tendency, would be reason enough to oppose your proposition. But your blow goes beyond this and strikes where, according to Comrade P., no blow is intended. According to points four and five of your declaration, and as confirmed by Comrade P., the tendency will in the future consist only of those who actually sign this document. Obviously there are statements in it to which a large number here, perhaps a majority, cannot subscribe. Much has been said to the effect that you and the European comrades are serious people, and this is very clear to us. Apparently it is not also clear to you that we too are serious people. Very well, it is up to us to demonstrate to you by our actions that we are, and we shall try to do so. However, no serious political person will commit political perjury, and that is precisely what you are asking of us. I, like all the others who have any differences with points one to three of your document, declare unequivocally that I will abide by its line if it is democratically adopted by our tendency. I would go further and say that if it were officially adopted by the I.C., even over the protests of an American tendency majority, this too, though I would consider it a bad procedure, I would accept. What we will not do is to lie, to perjure ourselves before our tendency comrades and the Party. If we did, we could never raise our true views, and no comrade, knowing what we had done, would ever in the future be able to give us his trust and confidence.

Therefore, regardless of the merits or demerits of your case against the New York tendency majority, we regard this technique as absolutely impermissible. I know that these feelings are shared by many, if not all, of those who would fully subscribe to points one to three of your document.

I have just heard, unofficially, that Comrade P. has suggested a possible alternative solution: an immediate vote on all the documents and the election of a national steering committee on the basis of proportional representation. I would assume that such a proposition would have two corollaries:

1. wiping the slate clean of past charges and counter-charges
2. the establishment of discipline on the basis of the line of the tendency majority, whatever that may turn out to be.

If I understand this proposal correctly, it may be a solution which could leave us with a viable tendency, and I most strongly urge it upon you.

However, should you and the others follow your present course through to the end, you will force a split. For myself, regardless of what may be your attitude toward the non-signers, I would do all in my power to hold together an organization, to seek

reunification of the tendency, and to attack loyally and energetically the tasks before us. I am sure that this attitude is shared by most and probably all the minority comrades here who under no conditions will sign this statement.

Finally, the sharp contradiction between your known aims and the actual effect of your last proposal I can only interpret to mean that you are deeply and seriously misinformed. In your last letter to me you called for moderation. I quite agree. Now I call for caution. How well informed are your sources? If they were well informed about the Bay Area would they have run head on into a 17-0 defeat?

It is my profound hope that the unanimity of our rejection of points four and five of your document will encourage on your part a reexamination of the situation in the American tendency, leading to a change in course which will make possible the most effective and rapid creation of a revolutionary tendency in America.

Comradely,

Geoff White

The Cuban revolution is now at its hour of greatest peril. The result of the round trip of the Soviet missiles has been to make a deal between Khrushchev and Kennedy at the expense of the Cuban people no longer merely a perspective but an immediate threat. U.S. armed aggression in the form of an all-out invasion of Cuba, though still not the optimum variant of U.S. imperialism, is now for the first time guaranteed the tacit support of the Kremlin if a formal "negotiated" settlement restoring U.S. hegemony in the Caribbean cannot be imposed on the Cuban people.

In this situation the duty of the Trotskyists toward the Cuban revolution only begins with demonstrations of sympathy and support for Cuba. The obligation of the Trotskyists, which no other tendency can even claim to fulfill, is to provide a political analysis, a political line upon which the defense of the revolution must be based.

The decisive point in the political line in defense of the Cuban revolution against all its enemies is explicit denunciation of the counter-revolutionary role of the Stalinist bureaucracy in the concrete instance of Cuba. The Cuban revolution cannot be defended by arms under the control of Kremlin bureaucrats whose only interest is to turn the revolution to the service of Russian foreign policy, including selling it out entirely if the price is right. The only defense of the Cuban revolution is the determination of the Cuban people to resist by any and all means, and the conscious solidarity of the international working class against all the enemies of the revolution. The false policy of the Castro leadership, its political bloc with the Stalinists, has gravely undermined this defense.

The International Committee of the Fourth International, in its statement entitled "Defend the Cuban Revolution" published in the November 3rd Newsletter, defined the basic lines of a Trotskyist defense of the Cuban revolution, particularly in its statements: "Installation of Soviet missile bases in Cuba is not for the defense of the Cuban revolution, but part of the diplomatic game of Khrushchev...the setting up of Soviet missile bases as a substitute for international working-class struggle cannot defend the revolution...the counter-revolutionary policy of Stalinism prepares the crushing of the Cuban revolution, not its defense." We ask the editorial board of the Militant to print this I.C. statement.

We furthermore ask the PC to adopt the political line of the International Committee declaration as the basic line of the party in its defense of the Cuban revolution. This should be the startingpoint of a campaign for international working-class solidarity with the Cuban revolution based on the establishment of workers' democracy in Cuba and full, open collaboration of the Cuban revolution with the international working-class movement in all phases, military as well as political, of revolutionary defense.

* * *

- Roger Abrams (New York)
Dorothy Bell (Oakland-Berkeley)
Emily Cavalli (Oakland-Berkeley)
Joyce Cowley (San Francisco)
Paul Curtis (Oakland-Berkeley)(1)
Maria di Savio (San Francisco)
Roy Gale (San Francisco)
Lynne Harper (New York)
Larry Ireland (New York)
Rose Jersawitz (Oakland-Berkeley)
Stanley Larssen (Oakland-Berkeley)
Ed Lee (Oakland-Berkeley)
Albert Nelson (New York)
Shane Mage (New York)
Charlotte Michaels (New York)
Roger Plumb (Oakland-Berkeley)
Tony Ravich (New York)
- November 30, 1962
- Leigh Ray (San Francisco)
James Robertson (New York)
Shirley Stoute (New York)
Marion Syrek, Jr. (Oakland-Berkeley)
Polly Volker (San Francisco)
Geoffrey White (Oakland-Berkeley)
Jack Wolf (Connecticut) (2)
- (1) "I take exception to the last sentence of paragraph three. There may have been no alternative for the Castro leadership. The policy, however, is a false one."
(2) "I favor publication of the I.C. statement on the Cuban crisis. I am in general sympathy with this statement."

DEFEND THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

Statement by the International
Committee of the Fourth International

The U.S. imperialists are bent upon the destruction of the Cuban revolution and have shown that they are even prepared to risk the danger of world war. The Cuban Revolution, expropriating U.S. capital in Cuba, makes it necessary for U.S. imperialism to take these measures in order that their strangle-hold over all Latin America shall not be threatened. Wall Street seized the pretext of Soviet missile bases to bring a showdown.

The working class of the world must act to prevent the Cuban Revolution from being crushed. Such action must be independent of the policies of Khrushchev and the Soviet bureaucracy. Their line of peaceful co-existence designed only to preserve their own privileged rule by diplomatic deals, is opposed to the spread of the Cuban Revolution and to independent workers' action, which are the only guarantees of Cuba's defence. Installation of Soviet missile bases in Cuba is not for the defence of the Cuban Revolution, but part of the diplomatic game of Khrushchev.

A heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of the official leadership of the Labour movement for their failure to support the Cuban Revolution by fighting the capitalists in their own countries.

The International Committee of the Fourth International calls on all its sections to take their place in all actions for the defence of the Cuban revolution from the U.S. imperialists.

Cuba, as a sovereign state, has the right to accept whatever military aid it decides. But the setting up of Soviet missile bases as a substitute for international working-class struggle cannot defend the revolution. On the contrary, it shows the dangers of the policy of peaceful co-existence in exposing the Cuban Revolution to enormous dangers, providing a pretext for U.S. intervention. In this situation, the counter-revolutionary policy of Stalinism prepares the crushing of the Cuban Revolution--not its defence.

Any policy of United Nations intervention or of summit agreements over Cuba must be opposed. Such methods will destroy the revolution, which only the international independent class action of the workers can defend.

We stand for the defence of the USSR and of the Cuban Revolution, but such defence means determined opposition to the Stalinist bureaucracy and its methods.

In the advanced countries, especially the USA, the working class must organise actions in full support of the workers and peasants of Cuba. End the blockade! End the invasion preparations!

In Latin America, a decisive struggle against U.S. imperialism and its agents, for the extension of the revolution, must be waged to defend Cuba. Without this action, and without defeat of the Stalinist policies of defence of Cuba, the fate of that revolution will repeat the story of Greece, Guatemala and Spain.

We call particularly on the members of the Communist Parties to oppose the policies of their leaders to break from the policy of agreement with the imperialists, to demand independent class action in defence of Cuba.

The sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International must take part in all actions in defence of Cuba, struggling within these movements to build an independent, anti-imperialist movement led by the working class.

28.10.1962

New York
15 December 1962

Socialist Labour League
Organizing Committee
London

Dear comrades,

We have given prolonged and thoughtful consideration to your letter of Nov. 12. We were particularly impressed by its comradely and serious tone. Unfortunately we are forced to recognize that in content it neither advances any solid arguments in reply to our original objections to the proposal conveyed to us by Philips, nor does it offer any constructive proposals toward the restoration of real collaboration between us. And in the meantime Wohlforth has politically as well as organizationally aggravated his split from the revolutionary tendency of the SWP.

The major part of your letter recounts your factional experience in the British Trotskyist movement between 1943 and 1950. We have always considered that experience a highly important one, and sought to learn from it. However the chief lesson you draw, that you "refused under any circumstances to split no matter what the differences or to be driven out of the party," is precisely what is not in dispute within our tendency! We have said consistently, and repeat once again, we will not split, we cannot be driven, from the SWP.

The point really at issue is whether we should recognize that by its politics the leadership cadre of the SWP has shown itself to be an essentially centrist tendency, an analysis perfectly consistent with the presence of "unclear and hesitant" elements in that heterogeneous cadre. And on this point your reasoning is puzzling indeed.

The document presented by Philips states categorically, in regard to the SWP leadership, that "there are elements of centrism in its thinking and activity, but these do not predominate." This sentence is the crux of the entire document: it directly repudiates our view of the SWP leadership as an essentially, though "unfinished", centrist tendency, and thereby precludes our signing the document. But this statement is nowhere repeated, let alone defended, in your letter. On the contrary! You now refer by name to Warde and Hansen and state that they "have now developed a rounded out Pabloite approach."

Warde and Hansen, however, are not second-rank figures. They are the established political and theoretical spokesmen, writers, and thinkers for the central party leadership! Their "Pabloite approach" was not developed as their individual viewpoints at variance with the viewpoint of the leadership - it was developed and expressed as the unanimous position of the SWP leadership on all major political questions. Considered together, how can these facts be taken otherwise than as prima facie proof that the predominant aspect in the "thinking and activity" of the SWP leadership is indeed a "Pabloite approach"?

The other points of difference are developed no more clearly in your letter. On tactical approach to the SWP you state opposition "to any attempt to sharpen up the internal faction struggle inside the SWP" while reaffirming that "Our policy is to speak up clearly and sharply on the political differences." With these propositions we have not one iota of disagreement. We have scrupulously avoided organizational factionalism or a denunciatory tone in our polemics against the majority. Indeed the single act which has most contributed to sharpening the factional atmosphere and which was most keenly resented by the party leadership stemmed not from us but from you: the choice of title for your reply to the SWP draft on the world movement, "Trotskyism Betrayed." In contrast, our reply to the same draft was simply entitled "Critical Notes!"

You seem to misunderstand our objections to the proposal for an American discussion bulletin to be edited in England. We in no way questioned the right of an international tendency "to discuss its affairs internally." What we did dispute was the advisability of organizing the discussion in a way uncondusive to the healthy development of the American section of the tendency and which, moreover, would certainly be regarded by the party leadership as a disloyal act (and thus would at the least enormously "sharpen up the internal struggle in the SWP") and very possibly lead to our expulsion from the party.

Finally we again fail to follow your reasoning when you write that "acceptance of these terms does not mean you give up your political positions." We were not asked to accept a democratically-decided line with which we disagree, but to sign, to subscribe individually and personally, to statements contradicting our position. These are clearly two different things! Your statement that "The political differences which comrade Philips has are in some respects much more serious than yours, yet he has decided to accept these terms" seems to us to stand the matter on its head. Philips completely agrees with the "terms;" would he have been so eager to sign if they had included a categorical disavowal of "state capitalism" and affirmation of the unconditional defense of the U.S.S.R.? The fundamental document of the tendency "In Defense of a Revolutionary Perspective," took a stand on the nature of the U.S.S.R. only indirectly and in passing, yet Philips was willing to sign it only if he could add a reservation expressing his disappointment on this point. We of course granted him that right--yet when he presented your document to us he demanded our signatures unconditionally and without reservation!

These, then, are the reasons why your letter has not led us to alter our decision not to sign the draft presented through Philips. There is, however, another factor to which you ought to give the most serious consideration in determining whether or not your original intervention was mistaken. We refer to the behavior of comrade Wohlforth during the past weeks.

In your letter dated Nov. 12 you asked us to "work together" with you "as part of an international tendency" -- and we are fully determined to do so. But only two days later, on Nov. 14, Wohlforth wrote the circular letter that you have seen, beginning with the statement that he and his group "have broken irrevocably from Robertson-Mage and will not of course co-operate with them as there is no political basis on which we can co-operate," and ending with "Under no conditions, however, can we collaborate with the Robertson-Mage faction." At the same time he is willing, he states, to collaborate with other comrades who refused to sign the draft! Moreover, even though he and Philips told us in New York that the draft would have to be signed absolutely unchanged and that, even if there were only two signatures, its presentation to the party would signify that the "tendency" was now composed of those two comrades, he now presents a draft reduced to half its original length, and calls his group merely "a group seeking to reorganize the minority tendency around this statement."

It is thus perfectly clear to us that in violation of your declared intentions, Wohlforth and Philips from the outset and in totally dishonest fashion have been using your intervention as a maneuver to split the majority of the tendency. Can you find a kinder interpretation of these actions?

Factional frenzy of the sort exhibited by Wohlforth usually has serious political causes. That this is the case was indicated by Wohlforth's proud proclamation that he had discussed the internal situation of the tendency (in what terms we can imagine--he

was careful not to invite or in any way inform us) with the National Secretary of the SWP. Leaving aside the descriptive phrases that naturally come to mind, how can we not conclude from this behavior that Wohlforth feels politically closer to the SWP leadership than to us?

But much more significant was Wohlforth's conduct in the discussion on Cuba in the N.Y. branch on Nov. 15. We intervened in the discussion to oppose the leadership's absolutely uncritical support to Castro and Khrushchev (while making the poor U.S. CP the Militant's scapegoat) and to support emphatically the line of the International Committee statement, which the Militant has refused even to print. Even though Wohlforth had before him at that moment the issue of the Militant reprinting and virtually endorsing the position of the Pabloite "International Secretariat," Wohlforth's intervention began with an attack on the tendency spokesman for failing to "appreciate" the need for military defense of Cuba (presumably because we had denied that missile bases in Cuba under Khrushchev's control could help the defense of Cuba) and went on to praise the party leadership for its "excellent" stand on the Cuba crisis! Wohlforth seems to be well embarked on a course that you will not long find tolerable.

In sum, then, this is the situation as we see it: a small group has split from the revolutionary tendency and is moving toward political conciliation with the party leadership. The rest of the tendency remains firmly committed to its professed political principles and will continue to work together to advance those principles. The comrades who have not given their signatures to Wohlforth now constitute the revolutionary tendency in the SWP. This is an accomplished fact. Though we are hampered by the fact that the one person allowed to represent our entire tendency on the party's leading committee has now led the split from us, this will not be permitted to prevent our continuous sharp and clear political intervention in the party.

Our solidarity with the IC is absolutely unimpaired. We are determined to take our rightful place in the international revolutionary tendency, to participate in its discussions and to implement all decisions democratically arrived at. We regard the present breach between ourselves and you as purely transitory and based on misunderstandings, not on fundamental differences. It can and should be healed in an instant. We remain prepared at a moment's notice to discuss with you the establishment of a new and mutually satisfactory basis for future collaboration, and reiterate our commitment to send representation to Europe if you are willing to hold such discussions with us.

Comradely greetings,

Lynne Harper
Larry Ireland
Shane Mage
James Robertson
Shirley Stoute

28 December, 1962.

Dear Comrade Robertson,

In your letter of December 15, you refer to the experience of the British Trotskyist movement between 1943 and 1950, and you conclude: 'We have always considered that experience a highly important one, and sought to learn from it. However the chief lesson you draw, that you "refused under any circumstances to split no matter what the differences or to be driven out of the party," is precisely what is not in dispute within our tendency. We have said consistently, and repeat once again, we will not split, we cannot be driven, from the SWP.' (Your emphasis). Unfortunately, this is not the case.

By not accepting the proposals we presented to comrade Phillips you, in fact, split from us. If you cannot remain in our ranks and discuss with us, especially since you claim to be closer to us politically, we fail to see how it is going to be possible for you to remain in the SWP unless, of course, you consider yourself closer to them in matters of method. You refuse to discuss internally within the ranks of our international tendency. What is more, you justify this on the basis of the most dangerous arguments. 'What we did dispute,' you say, 'was the advisability (your emphasis) of organizing the discussion in a way unconducive to the healthy development of the American section of the tendency and which, moreover, would certainly be regarded by the party leadership as a disloyal act.'

This is an argument straight from the revisionist baggage of the SWP.

We are concerned with the construction of an international revolutionary leadership under the banner of the Fourth International as founded by Trotsky in 1938. We are organized in an international tendency to fight for the principles upon which he founded this movement. By counterposing 'healthy Americanism' and the dangers of a factional conflict with the SWP majority to this great task you are reflecting symptoms of the reactionary nationalistic pressures which now exert themselves on the SWP.

The majority democratic opinion of our international tendency today resides in the British and French sections who are engaged in leading the fight against the revisionists. Your tendency apparently does not think it is worth its while to work within our ranks. The first time we ask you to consider seriously our proposals and accept them, you introduce all sorts of evasive measures to avoid accepting proposals which in fact represent the majority opinion of the movement. You counterpose your group as against the majority of our international tendency.

You inform us about the things you allege that comrade Wohlforth does, but please understand that you did not just split from him but from us. They were our proposals. In accepting them, comrades Wohlforth and Phillips have taken what in our opinion is the correct line. By rejecting them you have split and we again urge you, once more, to reconsider this split and the way it was carried out.

Classical centrist tendencies as we know them emerged in the 1930s in organizations such as the Independent Labour Party in Britain and the POUM in Spain. The SWP is not a party like these. Even if its leadership, and this is not in fact entirely the case, were to adopt centrist positions, surely our job is to clarify the ranks on these questions? If we say the whole party is centrist, then we fail to separate the rank and file from the leadership. We are convinced that the vast majority of these comrades want a Trotskyist party in the US and any premature characterization of the SWP as a centrist party will be used by the majority as a weapon to confuse the political issues in the struggle against us.

When we wrote the document 'Trotskyism Betrayed' we tried to place the political issues squarely in front of the SWP. As far as we know this document has not yet appeared within the SWP for the membership to study.

We are unconcerned about the factional heat which the leadership generated against this document. When we talk about reducing factionalism, we mean precisely dropping the struggle around organizational issues which can aggravate the day to day work of the party. The more this is done, the sharper should be the political struggle. We are unconcerned about the struggle as such and the protests that are made by the majority. Our aim is to develop the political struggle to the best advantage.

You try to convey the impression that we are responsible for factionalism in the SWP through our document 'Trotskyism Betrayed'. For two years we have been waging a struggle against this leadership internationally and this can only become more aggravated in the period ahead. This was the case in our own experience of the previous struggle in Britain but at no time did it mean that we toned down our political criticism.

We ask you once more to reconsider your split and let us have your opinion as soon as possible. The condition for working and collaborating with us is that you accept the proposals presented by comrades Wohlforth and Phillips.

Yours fraternally,

/s/ G. Healy

National Secretary, Socialist Labour League

VM/H

Marxist Bulletin No. 3

Part I

The Split in the Revolutionary Tendency

**DOCUMENTS AND CORRESPONDENCE ON THE 1962 RUPTURE BY PHILIPS, WOHLFORTH
AND HEALY OF THE MINORITY TENDENCY OF THE SWP**

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