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For Members Only

Results of the Discussion and Voting on the
Plenum Resolutions.

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The membership referendum on the decisions of the Plenum showed the following results:

1) The International Resolution received general approval, with none voting against and 9 abstaining (all abstentions being in the New York Branch).

2) The Resolution of the Majority on the Situation in the New York Branch received 65 votes with 29 voting against and 12 abstentions. The minority resolution on the same question received 27 votes in favor with 25 against and 24 abstaining. The votes cast against both resolutions as well as the abstentions were all in the New York Branch.

3) The Resolution on the Toronto Branch received a majority of the votes, with 30 abstentions in the New York Branch and some members of other branches not recording themselves specifically.

5) The Proposal of the Plenum to Co-optate comrades Basky Gordon and Clarke in the National Committee received 59 votes in favor, 65 against and 10 abstaining. The Chicago Branch which recorded itself against the co-optations by a vote of 9 to 4, with 2 abstaining, declared in favor of the formation of a political committee of five members to be composed of Cannon, Swabeck, Oehler, Shachtman and Abern or Glotzer. The voting on this proposal was 9 in favor, 1 against and 5 abstaining.

The membership discussion and referendum on the Plenum decisions revealed a number of salient features which give the key to an understanding of the present internal crisis of the League which, instead of moderating, has become more aggravated since the Plenum. These features may be summarized as follows:

1) The decisive majority of the members supported the standpoint of the National Committee on all the resolutions of the Plenum -- all these resolutions, without exception, were endorsed.

2) The co-optations to the National Committee, which were proposed by the Plenum majority as an alternative to the formation of a political committee which would reflect the majority of the Plenum, failed of a majority by 6 votes. The Carter group in the New York Branch, which was condemned by both groups of the NC at the Plenum, cast the deciding votes against the co-optations. Other comrades who are in conflict with the NC on important political questions, (Boston Br.) also voted against the co-optations.

3) A group of nine comrades in the New York Br. following the lead of comrades Carter and Stone, abstained from voting on the International resolution on the ground of "insufficient information" -- the only members in the entire League who required more "information" to take a positive stand against the disintegrating elements in the European sections. Since then comrade Carter has openly attacked the International resolution at Branch meetings.

4) This failure of the Carter group to support the most important resolution of the Plenum did not draw the minority of the NC closer to the majority in the struggle against the influence of this group, as political seriousness and consistency would dictate. On the contrary, ever since the Plenum the minority has combined forces with the Carter group and other elements in the New York Branch who are out of line with the basic policy of the League, to fight the National Committee. Outside of New York the minority of the NC forms a close factional unity with comrades of the Boston Branch who are in conflict with the NC as a whole on questions which have a principle character, and utilizes this Branch for the adoption of factional resolutions against the NC.

It is this disregard of all principle considerations which intensifies the internal crisis, poisons the atmosphere and paralyzes the external work of the League. It can be said now with certainty, in the light of what has transpired since the Plenum, that the chief obstacle in the way of a real development of the external work of the League at the present time is the factional struggle against the NC in which no semblance of a separate platform, or even of a serious difference on a single important question of external policy, has been brought forward.

Not only is the practical work of the League (especially in N Y) hampered and disrupted by this state of affairs, but the internal work of assimilating inexperienced comrades and training them in the understanding and the spirit of communism has to make its way slowly and with the greatest difficulty through a veritable fog of demagoguery, poisonous personal accusations, and political cynicism. But

But, on the other hand, the elementary communist education - the training of the comrades to motivate themselves by fundamental political considerations - which is achieved in the face of the present obstacles is all the more firmly grounded and sinks all the deeper into the consciousness of the comrades and arms them for the future. Lessons learned in struggle are not easily forgotten.

5) The New York Branch remains as before the focal point of the internal crisis, although it must not be denied that the ~~members~~ ~~of the~~ ~~branch~~ ~~have~~ ~~been~~ ~~discussing~~ ~~the~~ ~~same~~ ~~basic~~ ~~weaknesses~~ ~~and~~ ~~contradictions~~ ~~throughout~~ ~~the~~ ~~League~~ ~~as~~ ~~a~~ ~~whole~~. In this post-Plenum discussion has uncovered a number of the same basic weaknesses and contradictions throughout the League as a whole. In this is reflected the fact that between the formal acceptance of the platform of the Left Opposition and a genuine assimilation of it there is a long way to go. The international experience of the Left Opposition all goes to show that this distance is not to be travelled without difficulty, especially when some of those who are regarded as leaders set obstacles in the path. It is in the New York Branch, in which the resident members of the NC directly participate, that the results of this conduct manifest themselves most clearly. For that reason the situation in the New York Branch brings out the real essence of the conflict and requires now the closest attention of the entire League membership, and of the International organization of the Left Opposition as well.

The heterogeneous composition of the New York Branch, and the lack of political experience and party tradition, would make its development into a genuine vanguard communist organization a protracted process in any case. But for all that a united leadership, working consciously to this end and co-operating loyally in a consistent and unyielding struggle against mistaken conceptions and false tendencies could educate and consolidate the Branch in a normal atmosphere and without serious convulsions.

The refusal of the minority of the NC to co-operate in this imperative and unpostponable task, despite the political agreement with us which they proclaimed at the Plenum, complicates the problem in the highest degree and counteracts the struggle at every step.

This conduct is leading the Branch onto a dangerous path which brings its majority more and more into conflict with the National Committee and undermines the basis for a common approach to the political tasks of the League and effective collaboration in the daily work. Rejecting collaboration with the majority of the NC on the basis of the Plenum resolutions, the minority is compelled by the logic of the situation to base itself on precisely those elements who stand in opposition to these resolutions as well as to other parts of our common platform. It forms factional combination with all these elements, not excluding even those individuals whose unbridled agitation against the NC bears an ugly taint, alien to communism and in reality directed against its most elementary conceptions.

The factional campaign of the minority against the National Committee boasts of a "majority" in the New York Branch. But the voting in the Branch on the Plenum resolutions, and some subsequent

political tests, show plainly what this "majority" looks like from a political standpoint. On the resolutions devoted to the situation in the New York Branch the voting showed the following: For the resolution of the NC 19; for the resolution of the minority 11; against both resolutions 16; abstaining 18. Here is revealed a sufficient diversity of opinion to show how sadly the "majority" is divided on one of the two most important decisions of the Plenum. Against the Carter group, which the minority condemned by resolution at the Plenum, it could not unite more than 11 votes. But against the NC majority, with which it recorded its agreement at the Plenum, it could unite its own 11 votes, plus the 18 who voted against any criticism of the Carter group, plus the 12 (with 2 or 3 incidental exceptions) who abstained from voting one way or another.

At the Plenum the minority joined with the majority in support of the international resolution. In the Branch voting, 9 comrades abstained on this decisive question. But in the Branch meeting, on practically every question - including the elections - this unit of the NC is nowhere registered. On the contrary, these 9 "abstentionists" are systematically included in the "majority" which makes sport of "condemning" the National Committee.

In the recent exchange with Weisbord the National Committee stood united in its policy, as indeed it has been from the inception of this issue. In the Branch a conciliationist attitude toward the views of Weisbord made its appearance, on the part of a few comrades who came to the League rather recently. One of them went so far as to violate discipline in the struggle of the League against the disruptive maneuvers of Weisbord. Does the minority join with the majority of the NC to correct his numerous misconceptions of which the conciliationist attitude toward Weisbord and the violation of discipline were merely reflections? By no means. He is included in the Branch "majority" and was rewarded, despite his short time in the League, by election to the executive committee - a body of 11 members out of which the supporter of the NC were allowed only two places.

With such displays of political inconsistency on the part of those who should be teachers, with the Branch in the control of a majority that is "against the NC" but which has never yet been to counter-pose a different policy against that of the NC on a single important question, it is not surprising that the political level of the Branch is low, that the atmosphere is poisoned with quarrels where personal insults take the place of political argument and that all kinds of factional excesses are committed.

It could not be otherwise. Communists have never yet been educated in the school of petty bourgeois politics. And with the same certitude it can be said that the Branch cannot emerge from the crisis without a catastrophe until a majority is constituted within in that is united in its political aims and governed in its actions fundamental political considerations. The NC will not relent in its struggle to raise the Branch, and with the League, out of the crisis on this, the only principled path. In this we are fully entitled to the support of the membership of the League and of the International organization of the Left Opposition, for we are fighting for the preservation of the League and for its future.

National Committee Exec. Committee