

INTERNAL BULLETIN

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CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
1. Report to the New York Local Convention for the City Committee Minority, August 1, 1953	1
By Mike Bartell	
2. Report on May Plenum for National Committee Minority (Delivered before New York Membership, June 11, 1953)	18
By George Clarke	

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REPORT TO THE NEW YORK LOCAL CONVENTION
FOR THE CITY COMMITTEE MINORITY
August 1, 1953

By Mike Bartell

I. Why the Majority Insisted on a Post-Plenum Struggle in the N.Y. Local

Here we are assembled at this City Convention after an intense and furious struggle. Let us ask ourselves to begin with, what was the purpose of this struggle? Why was it necessary, and what was it supposed to accomplish?

No sooner was the Plenum over and a truce arrived at, then we began to head into a serious conflict in the New York Local over the City Convention. The Minority offered a peaceful settlement of the question of power in order that the truce might not be endangered, and that real collaboration could begin. The Majority refused. The Majority insisted on breaking heads for votes. Why? What did the Majority hope to gain by an abortive struggle at this time? It was not necessary for the Majority to prove that it was a majority, because this was recognized by all, including the Minority. We concluded that the Majority had decided that its majority was too slim and that by an all-out offensive it could substantially alter the relationship of forces in the Local. I say, we deduced this at the time. Comrades of the Majority have denied it. All we want, they said, was to "count noses" and "establish the exact relationship of forces."

The confirmation of our deduction is now at hand. To settle this question once and for all, I will quote to you from a report by Farrell Dobbs to the Majority caucus on June 22nd. He said as follows: "The City Convention will probably be held late in July. According to present estimates we seem to have about 11 probable delegates, as against 9 for the Cochranites. This is a dangerously slim margin, as I think you will agree. We must leave nothing to chance in seeking to increase our majority in the convention. That means, among other things, that the National Committee members in New York should get into the pre-convention campaign also and help in every way that they can. The National Committee comrades have certain special responsibilities with regard to the press, and other national functions, but to the maximum extent possible they should help the local comrades in this campaign."

There comrades, was why we had to have this slugfest in New York, to see if the Majority by a "campaign" could change their "dangerously slim" majority to a substantial majority.

II. The Balance Sheet: What the Struggle Revealed

And what did they achieve? When the final balance is drawn now, when we finished breaking heads, you know that the relationship of forces remains essentially the same as before the "campaign" was launched. Out of 132 members in good standing represented here, there were 70 Majority votes to 54 Minority votes, 2 Marcyites and 6 abstaining or not voting. The Majority has a 16-vote margin over the Minority and an absolute majority of 8 (even counting the Johnsonite). If the relationship of forces in the membership were accurately reflected in the size of the delegations, the convention would be

divided 11 to 9 -- just as it was before. In Brooklyn where the vote was 11 for the Majority and 6 for the Minority, the Majority took all 3 delegates by counting, in effect, the 2 Marcyite votes, not to speak of the 1 Johnsonite who found himself in "essential agreement" with the Majority. I don't know if you consider the Johnsonites part of your forces in the "relationship of forces" or not. We have yet to hear. So what did you prove by insisting on this shambles? We told you that you would demonstrate nothing other than that you had a majority, that we recognize it, and that we didn't need a struggle to decide that. All you have actually demonstrated for all to see is how slim your majority is.

III. What is the Purpose of this Convention?

What kind of a convention have you organized? There is really only one point on the agenda, and there could only be one point under these conditions: the settlement of power divorced from a settlement of any issues, national, international or local, because there has been no discussion prior to this convention of any of these questions. Nor could there have been under the conditions dictated by the Majority. There has been no discussion of local policy, no discussion of a program of action. As I predicted, the membership didn't know until after the vote was in and the delegates assembled, whether or not you propose to repudiate the course followed by this Local for the past year. You adamantly refused to reveal your program for the Local, the only program this convention could act on. We heard it today for the first time and my prediction has been borne out to the hilt.

We have a repudiation of the line unanimously adopted by this Local at its 1952 convention, a line whose correctness was so forcefully demonstrated in action that the Majority has not dared to challenge it. And what is it to be replaced by? I predicted that the Majority would replace our line of realistic propoganda activities suited to the needs and possibilities of our Local with the whirling dervish line of Clara Kaye's report in Seattle, which was avowedly based on the motto of the Red Queen in Alice in Wonderland: "Sometimes you have to run faster in order to stand still." Actually, Stevens went Clara Kaye one better. He proposes to send us running at breakneck speed in all directions at once in pursuit of the "masses." The only previous report in our history that I can compare it with was the famous report by Nate Gould for the YPSL in 1938, known as "Bulletin #4," which all ex-YPSL'ers will remember, and which has been recognized ever since as the classic example of adolescent, adventuristic, out-of-this-world, fire-cracker politics -- labeled as "YPSLism." The only thing lacking in Stevens' program is Gould's fife-and-drum corps.

But this convention cannot act on Stevens' program of action, because it has not been presented to the Local either for discussion or for a vote. It was deliberately concealed, and then sprung on the membership after the votes were counted.

So what is this convention actually going to decide? It can only decide one thing: how to divide the spoils of your power fight. Instead of a convention, you have arranged for the settlement of power as after an imperialist war, to draw the boundaries and collect reparations.

And what did you expect would be the result of all this? You come here, dripping with honey, offering big concessions. My, what generous concessions! Number 1, the Organizer is to be removed. Why? Because he is a member of the Minority. You reveal here your monolithic, power politics conception. Incidentally, we haven't yet heard whether the office secretary is also to be purged, but it's a pretty safe bet. Some of the younger comrades may think that this procedure is perfectly natural, just as when the Republicans take office after the Democrats have been in power, it's taken for granted that there will be a general turnover. All the officeholders appointed by the Democrats are fired, and they are replaced by Republicans. But bourgeois politics operates openly and unashamedly on the "principle," to the victor belongs the spoils.

You think this is Bolshevik politics? I refer you to the struggle in this Local in 1940, which you can read about in The Struggle for a Proletarian Party. You know what happened? At that time Comrade Cochran was the Organizer, and he was a member of the national majority faction, the Trotskyist faction. There was a petty-bourgeois, Stalinophobe majority in the Local, who won the City Convention by an overwhelming majority of 2 to 1 and promptly proceeded to toss Cochran out, and put in their own man, Abern. Was this considered normal and proper? On the contrary, Comrade Cannon denounced this kind of politics. He accused the Shachtmanites of punishing the Organizer for his political views. But we find the same procedure repeated here now.

More "concessions" are offered. We are offered 4 representatives on the City Committee to 8 for the Majority, although the actual proportion in the ranks is revealed to be 5 to 6-1/2. On the basis of what traditions? We have heard many references to tradition lately. We know of different traditions, it seems. The tradition I know of is proportional representation for minorities on all leading committees and bodies. The Shachtmanites were granted proportional representation at the split convention of 1940.

The Majority, which has against the Minority some 56% takes 2 to 1 on the City Committee. Furthermore, it is considered an act of bad faith on our part that we won't agree to this outrageous proposal. Ah, but there are concessions. We are offered two spots on the ticket in the election campaign and Comrade Gold may continue to volunteer his services to the Party.

IV. The First Test of the Agreement: The Majority Shows its Hand

Now comrades, even if you offered us what we are entitled to, did you really expect after this vicious factional crusade that you imposed on the Local that we would fall all over ourselves shouting peace, brother, it's wonderful? You see, you tried that once before. We accepted it then for good coin -- only to find that virtually the day after the truce another "campaign" is launched against us. You came out of the Plenum promising a long peace, a leisurely, objective political discussion and collaboration. You immediately launched another war. Now you can think what you like about our political views, but don't make the mistake of thinking we're soft in the head, that we are going to engage with you in war or peace at any moment you decide to turn on one or the other, according to which you consider to be to your factional advantage.

We came out of the Plenum attempting to implement a truce in good faith. When we saw the conflict approaching in New York, we warned about it and proposed to the comrades of the Majority that we find a way to avoid it. Yes, it's true, New York was the first real test, not only locally but nationally, as to the real intentions of the Majority. And I tell you comrades we fully expected that the national leaders of the Majority who have the responsibility for the Party and for organizing the collaboration, would call upon our comrades of the Political Committee for a consultation, and say: "Comrades, there is a dangerous situation arising in New York which might endanger the truce. Let's talk it over and try to arrive at some settlement." But our PC Minority members saw with dismay that the Secretariat and the PC discussed nothing but routine matters while a storm was brewing in the New York Local. There was not a move by the "ordained leaders," not the slightest attempt to avoid it.

I could not quite believe that Stevens really reflected the attitude of the leadership of the Majority faction, so I took it on myself to approach Comrades Warde and Dobbs, and explain to them, in case they hadn't yet realized it, that the Local was heading into a serious factional struggle. I said that it should be possible to avoid it if we were both sincere in wanting peace. I made it clear that there was no problem of power involved as far as we were concerned, and that therefore there was no need for the struggle. I urged that we try to find some way out of it. All I got was formal replies. It was immediately evident that I was wasting my breath. There was no inclination to work it out. It was clear that the Majority was going to go through with the power fight whether we liked it or not, and for us this was, yes -- the first test of the collaboration.

But we still were determined to prevent you from throwing this Local into a shambles if we possibly could. We considered it indispensable if the truce were to become a reality and turn into a peace, that we avoid the struggle. How? Well, there was one possible way, the way that the Marcyite comrades later proposed. That was to freeze the situation as it was with the existing City Committee and administration. That was a possible solution since a new Convention Call was due in four months. It was not a proposal, however, for us to make, because we could not propose to maintain ourselves in office for even a few months without a mandate of the membership. The Majority could have made it. It did not. So we went all the way. We said, we'll give you the leadership, not because you can't take it by a fight, but to avoid a fight. You already have a majority of the City Committee. We will recognize the authority of this committee without reservation. We offered to resign all posts, and proposed that the City Committee be authorized to fill them until the next City Convention. We proposed an Active Workers Conference at which local problems and tasks could be discussed without a knockdown struggle for votes and power. In short, we offered every possible concession to avoid a reopening of faction warfare.

We reasoned that the Party needed a little time to test out the possibilities of collaboration in party-building activities. We also needed a little time to permit the political discussion to reopen on a new basis. Now if the comrades of the Majority had accepted our offer, there would be a different story to tell today. But I am not implying that this was an unfortunate slip, a blunder, that it could

have been different. No, I have come to the conclusion that it could not have been different. I believe now that it was not possible, because of the very nature of your faction, to have arrived at such a settlement.

The Majority had gotten the mistaken notion that there was some serious weakness in our ranks and decided to haul out the big guns in an effort to break through -- almost the day after the conclusion of the truce. Now we know of such truces, comrades. There is a variety of truce that is a mode of warfare, or a continuation of war by other means; a truce that is to be broken at any time that you think there are some gains to be made by a small war. That's what you thought you saw. Why? You got all excited about an exceptional situation in Seattle which you thought you could use as a faction club against us.

V. Stalinism in Seattle

Now, what about Stalinism in Seattle? There are a lot of tall tales and a lot of distortions about Seattle. As far as I know, a few rank-and-file comrades have become disoriented and have reached some dangerously false conclusions with relation to Stalinism. You got yourselves all worked up into a froth over this. Your faction leaders in Seattle proposed nothing less than to expel them forthwith from the Party.

You worked yourselves into a froth. Why? Do these few individuals constitute a danger to the Party? Nonsense! We don't see you getting half so excited about the Johnsonites, who are aggressively pushing their anti-Soviet views, and making a little hay in Chicago under your protection. The Minority offered the Majority a bloc in Chicago to do a little "quarantining" of Johnsonism. But the Majority turned it down. They preferred to remain in a bloc with the Johnsonites against us. Now, contrary to all false reports, it was the comrades of the Minority in Seattle who took the initiative in excluding these comrades from the caucus, but I tell you now that we will oppose any attempt to expel rank-and-file comrades for their views as long as they do not commit disloyal acts against the Party.

You hold us responsible for Stalinist deviations in Seattle. Then, comrades of the Majority, do you hold yourselves responsible for Grace Carlson? Carlson was not an obscure rank-and-filer, if you please, but a member of the National Committee and its vice-Presidential candidate, and she did not simply develop some dangerous deviation. She went straight to the nest of capitalist reaction, the Catholic Church. We could with equal justification have called Grace Carlson a graduate Cannonite, as your Seattle comrades are calling these rank-and-filers graduate Cochranites. But we didn't, because we didn't think it would be an honest statement even though she was a 100% supporter of your faction up until the day of her conversion. Furthermore, we didn't see all this ferocity against Carlson that we see displayed against a few rank-and-file comrades in Seattle. All we saw was a lot of sentimental moaning about a death in the family.

There is an additional factor involved in the Seattle matter. The Seattle rank-and-filers who are conciliators of Stalinism, (we don't even know them personally), are not products of our school, but

of the Weiss-Roberts-Clara Kaye school, and now have gone to the other extreme in rebellion against it. What they learned of politics, they learned in the Seattle branch which for the past six years has been the Northern outpost of the Weiss faction. What they learned about the meaning of Trotskyism, they learned for six years exclusively from the Weiss Nuncios who boast of their capacity to defeat Stalinism by their self-proclaimed tough methods -- but who have only demonstrated thus far the ability to produce a tiny conciliationist grouping within the Seattle branch. If you want to increase the likelihood that a few more Stalinophiles will appear here and there in the Party as a reaction to your vulgar anti-Stalinism, just let the Weiss crew take over the Party and inundate it with Stalinophobic prejudices.

No, comrades, you had better not talk too much about Seattle.

You say that it is not an isolated or peculiar phenomenon, that it will happen in New York. Cannon informed us that New York was the hotbed of Stalinist conciliationism. Where is the Stalinist conciliationism, the "Seattle types"? As a matter of fact, I wonder who it was you were talking about when Cannon referred to some traces of Stalinist conciliationism in New York? You know as well as I do. There are two comrades I know of that you had reference to. One was Ben Stone and the other Julie Daniels. That's the truth. Ben Stone, because he had developed the notion that we should enter the Communist Party, and you knew it and were trying to make something of that; and Julie Daniels whom you have been attacking for two years now as being soft and conciliatory to Stalinism. Those are the only ones I know about, and they could not remain in the Minority with their misunderstanding and disorientation on Stalinism. They wound up with the Majority.

VI. The "Disintegration" of the Minority

So you got yourselves worked up about Seattle, and you saw a few weak people on the fringes of the Minority whom you thought you could bulldoze into doing violence to their political consciences by a high pressure campaign -- and you decided the time was ripe for an offensive. And what did you find? You found that all you succeeded in doing was whipping our caucus into fighting shape, eliminating any remaining illusions about you and your intentions, with the result that the Minority fought you to a standstill, and came out of this fight more disciplined, confident and determined than ever. Meanwhile, at the very time that Stevens was boasting that the Majority is invulnerable, has no defections, and won't have any, at that very time a member of your leading cadre, a candidate for the NC at the last convention, was re-evaluating the entire struggle and finding his way back to correct ideas and principled politics. I am proud to announce that the Organizer of the Akron branch, Lou Cooper, has broken with the Majority faction and joined with the Minority! Are you going to be so foolish now as to guarantee that this is the one and only, the first and last, and there will be no more? For our part, we have a better opinion of the Majority caucus. We refuse to believe that there was only one principled man in it.

At the same time, we are gaining throughout the country. In Minneapolis, Comrade Dave Swenson, a highly competent and experienced comrade is now with us. In Milwaukee, one of the leaders of the

branch, Bob Henderson, has joined the Minority and a group has been organized there. In Cleveland 2 comrades of many years standing in the movement, whom many of us know, Vince and Yetta, joined the Minority. In Youngstown, the most prominent of our leading trade unionists in the steel industry joined the Minority at the Plenum, and the Minority represents over half of the Youngstown branch, the rest incidentally, being Marcyites. In Frisco, the Minority tendency starting with a few comrades, has grown until it now represents close to half of the branch. And now the Akron Organizer has joined us. While, in the strongest proletarian base of the party, Michigan, the Majority remains completely isolated with 3 members, not counting their 4 Johnsonite allies. I say to you comrades, if this is "disintegration," we want more of it. You were laboring under a misapprehension.

VII. Some False Notions About the Plenum

While I'm on misunderstandings, you also misunderstood the Plenum and the reason for the truce. You say the Plenum resulted in a truce because the Majority proved that it had a substantial majority, and that the Minority was a minority. When we first heard this we had ourselves a good laugh. You must realize that we knew all along that we were a minority -- a substantial one, nevertheless -- in the party. There was never any question about that. Indeed, we proved to be a far stronger minority than we expected to be. The question actually was not whether we were a minority, but whether the Majority was a majority if you consider its own squabbles and divisions. But as far as we were concerned, ever since Dobbs ended his excursion into independence and neutrality, we considered that whatever differences you had among yourselves, you were united as a Majority against us, at any rate. We knew it and proceeded accordingly, and we didn't need a Plenum to find that out anymore than we needed a City Convention to find out what has been revealed here.

What happened at the Plenum was that the Minority fought the Majority to a standstill, and stopped its mad drive that was leading directly to split. What changed at the Plenum? Not the relationship of forces. What changed was that the Majority agreed to call off the war, re-establish collaboration, and open a more restrained discussion. We needed no change of line to accept those proposals, because these had been our proposals from the beginning, and we would have accepted them at any time before the Plenum.

There is another misconception about the Plenum that must be cleared up, since the Majority boasts of its great "generosity" at the Plenum. It is said that we were given more than we asked for, or expected. Pardon us. We got less than we asked for. I would not make a point of it if you did not continue to make this false claim. What were the generous concessions? That the Majority agreed not to call a National Convention? What kind of concession is that? We didn't particularly care one way or the other. The Majority said if you accept the authority of this Plenum, then we don't need a convention. However, if you don't, then we will have to call one. We said, no, we don't demand a convention. We accept the authority of the Plenum. We don't see any concession there.

But the real score, since the question is raised, is this: We asked for and expected 3 members of the Political Committee and got 2.

We asked for and expected 2 members on the full-time staff, to which we were fully entitled by any criterion, and we got 1. How much less generous could you have been? The Majority would not budge, so our comrades said: "You're driving a hard bargain, but we'll accept it." So, let's stop all the fanciful talk about generosity.

VIII. A Power Clique Without a Platform

Now we come back to this abortive convention. What got into you? What led you astray? It appears to me that you fell victims to your own propaganda about us being an unprincipled group, that therefore we must at some point begin breaking up. Of course, you never demonstrated how a tendency is unprincipled if it is based upon a written platform and documents which are defended in common without reservation by all leading members of the Minority. It is a common phenomenon in politics to attribute to ones opponents ones own vices. The Minority faction, comrades, takes full responsibility for every major document written by its leading members. Let us ask if the Majority can meet the same test. Indeed, let us ask is there a single major document of the Majority which appeared before the Plenum that can be put to the test of a vote in your leading cadre. I challenged Hansen in the downtown branch to submit his document for a vote in the Majority caucus. Let us see, if Comrade Warde, among others, can vote for it. Can you put the Dobbs document on "American Tasks" to the test? While this document was far from containing a sharp and clear line, there was at least a blurred line that one could discern: things were looking up, there were serious labor party trends developing, and the task of the hour was to build left-wing groups in the unions. Right or wrong, this is some sort of line with which one can either agree or disagree. What happened? By the time your faction "platform" emerged in your Plenum resolution, even this blurred line was eradicated. Can you put up the documents of the Third Congress for an honest expression of opinion? We shall soon see.

It is precisely because you have so many diverse views, because the only thing you all have in common is your hostility to the Minority and your determination to defend your "leadership," that is, your power, that you had such a devilish time arriving at a resolution that you could all endorse. That's why anything approaching a line had to be rubbed out before you could agree on a common resolution. The result is that your "political resolution" is an umbrella that anyone can get under, so long as he agrees to support the machine. The result is that you have a truly "rounded" resolution -- round and hollow -- with no line, no edge, and no substance.

And that's why all your talk about seeking a "political settlement" of the struggle in the New York Local based on your "political resolution" is a hoax and a fraud. In reality it is nothing but a crude mechanism, a formula for the consolidation of a power faction.

Have you educated a single member in the course of this "pre-convention discussion"? Has there been one report on political questions -- national, local, or otherwise? There has been plenty of discussion, all right, but it has nothing to do with politics. You threw all your National Committee members into the "campaign." How have they educated the rank-and-file on the correct and principled methods of choosing sides in an internal struggle?

We know what kind of "politics" you used in lining people up to vote for your "political" resolution. First, you dragged out the same old slanders that the Minority was heading out of this Party to enter the Communist Party, etc., etc. Secondly, you recklessly infused young comrades with a strong dose of Stalinist organizational concepts. Why should they vote for the Majority? Because "the Majority is the party," and the Minority are dissenters who should be shunned. Anyone who has the slightest doubt or confusion must give the benefit of the doubt to the "leadership," not the Local leadership, of course, which you were aiming to throw out at this convention, but the national leadership -- of your faction. That's why you need a national resolution for a local convention. Every new member must support the Majority faction. Why? Again, because the Majority faction is the Party. Thus, an identity is established between Party and faction. But if the Majority faction is the party, where does that leave the Minority? This Minority, therefore, or indeed any minority, is ipso facto "anti-party."

Where did you learn this concept? From what tradition? Certainly not from the traditions of Trotskyism, nor Bolshevism in general. This is a concept alien to our movement, lifted bodily from the traditions of Stalinism.

To the extent to which you succeed in "educating" the Party in this concept, to that extent will you succeed in sterilizing the Party, in destroying all independence of thought, all ability to judge political questions.

Naturally, by such methods and such a "platform" you have assembled a very heterogeneous conglomeration. That is why it is no surprise to us to learn that the Majority faction has majority and minority tendencies within it. That is why the Majority faction must impose a "military discipline" to take the place of a natural, voluntary discipline arising out of a community of ideas.

That is why, like all other combinations of this sort, it is held together above all -- not by a distinctive platform -- but by common hostility to a principled tendency whose attempts to reorient the movement the Majority leadership can see only as a challenge to its power.

For this faction, the supreme question is the question of power, to which programs, platforms, and resolutions are strictly subordinate. Now we might have thought that the consolidation of power by the Majority faction at the Plenum would have satisfied its cravings. But the thirst for power is apparently not easily quenched. The clique plunges uncontrollably from one power struggle to another, like the man who slakes his thirst with salt water.

IX. The Majority Opens an Unprincipled Clique Struggle Against the International Leadership

No sooner was the Plenum over than the Majority extended its unprincipled factional operations to the international arena. No sooner was the Plenum over than the Majority launched a conspiracy against the most authoritative leader of the International, Pablo, whose authority they are out to destroy -- an authority that has been won exclusively by correct ideas and competent political leadership.

Yes, comrades, this is a terribly serious charge. But it is the unvarnished truth -- the bitter truth which I will prove to the hilt. The vendetta begun against Cochran and Clarke has now been extended to Pablo. This unprincipled power-mad faction, which originally had only one point in its platform -- for Cannon against Cochran, has now added a second point -- for Cannon against Pablo. All of the unsavory methods employed against the Minority in the SWP are now being duplicated in the international arena.

At this very moment, as the Majority mouths peace phrases to us, a web of intrigue is being spun in the International. A secret faction is being formed, recruited on the platform: "Bring Pablo to heel, or isolate and destroy him," or if you prefer, "quarantine" him. And in all of this there is not a shred of principle, not a pretense of a program.

The groundwork for this campaign was laid 2-1/2 months ago in a report to the Majority faction in New York by Cannon, which was mimeographed and circulated among its members. This entire lengthy report had one aim: to undermine the authority of the International and to discredit Pablo. The purpose of this report was to immunize the membership of the Majority faction against any possible expression of opinion by the International leadership, which the Majority feared might be unfavorable to it.

Now, it should be noted that the International has not intervened in the struggle in the SWP. It has not even indirectly indicated any sympathy for either side. Not a shred of evidence is adduced by the Majority to justify its fears of an unfavorable intervention. Their entire case rests on the following assertion made by Cannon in the above-mentioned report: "We have heard that the Cochranites are claiming in the Party that they have the support of what they call the 'International movement.'" Even if this were true, it in no way justifies Cannon's irresponsible, destructive factional attack against the International leadership. However, this is a manufactured assertion, with absolutely no basis in fact.

To whom "in the Party" were we "claiming" this? When and where? The fact is we never made such a claim even within the Minority caucus, let alone "in the Party." Ben Stone is the living and irrefutable proof of this, for in his statement of resignation from the Minority caucus he confessed that he had to guess whether Clarke or Warde truly represented Pablo.

We said that we believed our views to be the only consistent and accurate expression of the ideas of the Third Congress. We said that we had reason therefore to expect that if the International leadership should intervene, it would not be unfavorable to us. This is a statement of an opinion and a hope, to which we are entitled. The Majority has, in fact entertained the same expectation. Cannon said in the course of his report: "We hope to have the sympathy and support of the whole international movement."

Not only did we never claim any support; we said to the comrades of the Minority caucus that we were not asking for any intervention, and could not give any guarantees or promises as to what the International leadership would do. We insisted that we must stand on our own feet; that we were convinced that our ideas were correct and would

defend them regardless of Pablo or anyone else; that a tendency which is not self-reliant, and depends on support of authority is worthless and could not survive.

Why then are they so fearful of the opinions of the International, and so hostile to them? It has nothing whatever to do with any claims made by us. From a reading of the Majority faction reports and letters, we can only conclude that an attempt on their part to reduce the International to a docile instrument of the Cannon faction met with a well deserved rebuff. This was sufficient to frighten this power-mad clique into a calculated campaign to destroy the authority of the International.

Cannon's "Report" of May 18th begins by reducing the International to a Social Democratic type of loose federation of independent parties and its elected leadership to a clearing house for opinions and an agency for consultation. He states:

"The question of the attitude of the international movement toward us is an important one -- with this understanding: that we are a part of the international movement, despite the fact that we have no formal affiliation, and we are going to have something to say about what the international movement decides on the American question, and every other. We don't consider ourselves an American branch office of an international business firm that receives orders from the boss. That's not us. That's what we got in the Comintern. That's what we wouldn't take. And that's why we got thrown out. We conceive of internationalism as international collaboration, in the process of which we get the benefit of the opinions of international comrades, and they get the benefit of ours; and by comradely discussion and collaboration we work out, if possible, a common line."

Note, incidentally, the striking contrast between Cannon's conception of what the International should be -- a loose, decentralized, impotent institution without any authority and powers, with his insistence on the most extreme centralism for the SWP. Note also the disloyal and slanderous insinuations against the International; the monstrous comparison with the Comintern in its degenerate days (the Report goes on to recount all of the bureaucratic machinations of the Comintern in the Zinoviev era), and the indignant refusal to be a "branch office of an international business firm that receives orders from the boss."

Is this not a terrible disservice to the world movement? When has our International ever acted that way? And is it not a piece of transparent sophistry, not to speak of a wretched miseducation of the Party, to counterpose as the only alternatives either the organizational methods of Stalinist bureaucratic centralism (or of an international capitalist firm), which Cannon rejects, or a Social Democratic letter-box International, which he advocates? Why not Leninist democratic centralism, which takes into account the need for a uniform policy with authority to enforce and implement its decisions, while providing for the fullest democratic processes in arriving at decisions.

If Cannon were merely opining that the International leadership should not abuse its power, that it must exercise great restraint and discretion in any organizational decisions, that a weak and not fully representative International cannot exercise the authority of a world

body representing mass parties -- if that was what Cannon was trying to establish, there would be no argument. But that's not what he's talking about. He denies the International any power whatever. Indeed, he announces in advance that he will ignore and defy any decision the International may make which is not to his liking. He says in his Report: "...and if they (the International) should intervene with any kind of decision to support the Cochranites, we would have to tell them that we would pay no attention whatsoever." (Emphasis in the original.)

There follows a recitation of all the so-called "errors" of the IS for the past 7 years -- not to demonstrate a false political tendency, which would be entirely proper, but simply to arouse contempt for the International leadership, and Pablo in particular.

It is interesting that he is most furious over the intervention in the French section, where the IS was compelled to settle accounts with the disloyal, sectarian, and -- yes -- Stalinophobe Bleibtreu group. Cannon evinces the most tolerant, super-democratic and patient attitude toward this group, although he admits that they were "fooling around with the decisions of the Congress." (The French Majority also claimed to agree with the "general line" of the Third Congress. They merely opposed Pablo's "interpretation.")

Here again we are struck by the startling contrast between Cannon's attitude toward the Bleibtreu splitters and his ruthless assault against the Minority in the SWP, which is loyal to the world movement. There is no talk of "quarantining," of a "fight to the finish," or "no peace" or "no quarter and no compromise." There is only friendly criticism and sympathy against the allegedly heavy, bureaucratic hand of the International.

Cannon's Report concludes with the monstrous threat of an all-out fight against the International leadership. For what crime? Bureaucratic organizational intervention? No! The International leadership is threatened with war, should it dare to "withhold sympathy and support."

He states in his speech: "We hope to have the sympathy and support of the whole international movement. But if we don't have the sympathy and support of one individual here or there, or one group or another, that doesn't mean we give up our opinions and quit our fight. Not for one moment. That only means that the fight in the SWP becomes transferred to the international field. Then we take the field, and look for allies to fight on our side against anyone who may be foolish enough to fight on the side of Cochran. Then it would be a fight in the international movement."

Cannon concludes his report with the following remarkable confession: "We have no tangible evidence to prove that there is any conspiracy against us, or any actions against us, on the international field. But if a fight should come, we will be prepared for it. That is the way we size this thing up."

So here we have the National Chairman of the SWP inciting the ranks of the Majority caucus, mobilizing and preparing them for battle against alleged Cominternist machinations of the International

leadership, yet by his own admission, he does not have a grain of evidence on which to base his reckless adventure.

Now, you might think that with the agreement consummated at the Plenum, which Cannon assured us would inaugurate a long-lasting and beneficent peace, this campaign against Pablo would cease, at least for the time being. Exactly the contrary was the case.

Having settled affairs as best he could on the domestic front, Cannon proceeded promptly and energetically to extending his faction in the entire International in preparation for a power struggle against the International leadership. Virtually the day after the Plenum, Cannon, who had announced that he was retiring to write his memoirs and give a little advice now and then, took direct charge of the "foreign office," of his faction. Within one week, steps were taken to assemble an international faction with one solitary plank in its platform: "Get Pablo!"

I have here a copy of a letter dated June 4th, written 4 days after the Plenum, which will be recorded as one of the most infamous documents in the entire history of Trotskyism. To find anything approaching this utterly unprincipled intrigue, one would truly have to go back to the Comintern of the Zinoviev period. Abern was a small-time operator by comparison. This letter is addressed to a party leader abroad, appointing him the international, or European representative of the faction, with precise instructions to proceed with the organization of an underground faction against Pablo.

I will read to you now from a letter whose contents defy credibility. I confess I find it almost impossible to understand the mentality of the author. The first section of this letter is a report of the May Plenum and its outcome. This section ends with two amazing "conclusions." I quote:

"1. The party crisis caused by a factional struggle, which was instigated in Paris and which brought the party to the brink of an unnecessary split, was resolved by the inner resources and capacities of the SWP itself.

"2. A new flareup of factional struggle for a long time to come is impossible after the Plenum, unless it also is instigated from Paris."

When I read these "conclusions," I could hardly believe my eyes. I asked myself what the devil was going through the man's head? From what did he draw these "conclusions?" Had a case been established upon which to draw them? Well, believe it or not, in the entire description of the Plenum preceding these "conclusions," there is not even a single reference, direct or indirect, to Paris, Rome, Moscow or any other foreign center.

Does any evidence follow these conclusions? On the contrary, once more we have a confession that he has no evidence whatsoever! Indeed, as we shall see, the first assignment of the foreign representative is to try to get some dirt on Pablo in order to provide some semblance of a case. So what must one conclude? Only that this is an extension of the same devil theory of politics that we heard from Cannon in the fight in the SWP. You will recall that Cannon

informed is that Clarke and Bartell could never have constituted a serious opposition without the evil influence of Cochran, who was the real "instigator." Now, we learn that even Cochran isn't devil enough, and isn't the main culprit. (Doesn't Cochran have an apology coming?) The real evil genius is Pablo!

I now quote from the second section of the letter, which bears the quaint title, "Foreign Affairs":

"The entire majority leadership here has finally become convinced, against their will, that the SWP has been used as a guinea pig for experiments in duplicity and intrigue which characterized the later years of our experience in the old Comintern; but which we never expected, and for a long time could not believe were possible, in the international movement inspired by Trotsky.

"My letter to Jerome under date of May 22 (enclosed) could not fail to be understood as formal notice that we are aware of the maneuvers against us; that things are going to be different in this relationship from now on; and that any kind of monkey business is out of date as far as we are concerned. My sending a copy of the letter to Burns was designed to let him also know that we are on guard and ready to react to the first openly hostile move against us. Our people throughout the country have been fully informed of what has happened and our evaluation of it, and it is already too late for anybody to take us by surprise.

"Our next step, in the event of any overt act against us, will be an international roll call to find out who are our friends and who are our enemies. This roll call will not be confined to a few individuals who mistake themselves for the movement, but will be addressed to the entire world movement itself. I hope that Burns takes a firm stand on our side. Collaboration between him and us has been very beneficial to both in the past, and can continue to be so in the future. But, as you know, all collaboration, as far as we are concerned, has to have a firm and clearly-defined principled basis.

"If Burns, as we hope, is on our side, this is my first request to him, which you can transmit. I would like to have a full and complete report of everything he knows about the conspiracy against the SWP leadership from the beginning. Your letter indicates that he has had previous knowledge of these machinations. We have pieced them together by deduction, but we would like to have more detailed factual information."

Observe that Cannon is not simply filing his completely unfounded suspicions for future reference. He is acting upon them. And he is not waiting for some "overt act" before "calling the roll." He instructs "Dear Tom" to line up his good friend Burns -- and, of course -- Burns' "friends." Burns, furthermore, is engaged by Cannon to do a detective job -- a little snooping on Pablo.

In short, Cannon declared war on Pablo. But he does not issue an open declaration of war, does not "put his cards on the table" (to borrow his own expression), does not forthrightly set forth his grievances, demands and aims. No. He organizes a secret, Mafia-like conspiracy behind Pablo's back.

And what is the platform of this faction, or secret society? For what program and principles has he issued this call to arms? The same platform that we found in Cannon's call to arms in his secret faction letter of March 1952, sent to a number of his "friends." The platform then was -- for Cannon, against Cochran -- even though we had just adopted a unanimous political resolution. Now, the platform is -- for Cannon, against Pablo -- even though there was a unanimous vote on the Third Congress.

True, Cannon insists that the "collaboration" must have "a firm and clearly-defined principled basis." But this is strictly for the birds, since you will search in vain for the "principled basis" of the proposed "collaboration" against Pablo, whether "firm" or wobbly, "clearly-defined" or blurred. The only line of demarcation, is "who are our friends and who are our enemies," and after all, what does a little disagreement over principles matter among "friends"? Not much, as we shall see from the third and fourth sections of this incredible letter.

This is the most shocking and revealing of all. Now listen closely:

"I was surprised and disappointed at your impulsive action in regard to the Third World Congress documents. We accepted them as they were written. When they try to tell us now that we don't understand them, we do not reply by saying that we reject the resolutions. We say, rather, that we reject any special interpretation of them that is not clearly stated in the written language.

"If there is something in fine print that we overlooked; or if something was written in invisible ink, to be deciphered by a special caste of priests who have been secretly tipped off -- we don't accept that part. We don't admit the right of anybody to read into the documents anything that is not already there in plain print. We don't believe in priests. We don't need special agents, who know the secrets or special interpretations, to explain the resolutions to us the way the Catholic prelates explain the bible to ignorant laymen. It only confuses matters to admit, even by implication, that somebody has a special right to 'interpret' the documents; and that therefore, since we don't agree with some of the 'interpretations,' we reject the documents. We would be greatly pleased if you can see things this way and coordinate yourself with us accordingly...

"Our disposition here is not to withdraw our support for the written documents, but to watch alertly for the next stage of the evolution of the discussion on this question...

"The faction fight in the SWP was settled quite definitely, and for a long time to come, at the Plenum. Under normal conditions, this would lead to an attenuation of the factional organizations and eventually, probably, to their transformation into tendencies, rather than organized groups. The only thing standing in the way of this normal evolution is the threat of some artificial 'intervention' from Paris, which would feed the flames of factionalism, again call in question the authority of the majority leadership, and plunge us head-long into an embittered factional organizational struggle, with the implicit threat of split.

"We have decided to prepare for this possibility. For that reason, we are maintaining our caucus organization from top to bottom, on a military basis, and imposing an absolute discipline upon every member of the faction. This excludes the right of any individual to take any kind of action outside the faction, which might in any way cut across or compromise the line of strategy decided upon by the faction leadership. If you recognize the necessity for this strict procedure in this next period, and are willing to work with us on that basis, we will naturally be glad to include you in the majority faction and coordinate all our work with you, furnish you with all information, and give you precise instructions in regard to any procedure. I personally don't have the slightest doubt that you will find this agreeable, as well as necessary in the situation, and that you will confirm the agreement in your next letter.

"For the moment, at your own discretion, you are free to show this letter, and all or any part of the enclosed material, to Burns and his friends so that they can get an absolutely clear picture of our position."

Here we see a classic type of unprincipled combination in operation. You will observe that "Dear Tom" is an avowed opponent of the resolutions of the Third Congress -- as we well know in the SWP. Cannon, who is an avowed supporter of the Congress resolutions is "collaborating" with him against Pablo, the principal author of the political line of the Congress.

Now there are only two possible interpretations of this behavior, and they are equally odious.

1. Cannon really is a genuine supporter of the program of the Third Congress, as he says. In that case, we have Cannon engaging in a factional struggle against Pablo with whom he is in political agreement, in alliance with "Dear Tom" who is in political disagreement with both Cannon and Pablo. This is the simple, or elementary form of the unprincipled combination; or

2. Cannon is an opponent of the Third Congress line, who really agrees with "Dear Tom," but has a slick formula for concealing his opposition, and is explaining to his naive co-factionalist how this sleight-of-hand works. In that case, Cannon is flying under false colors, hiding his banner, in order to attack the program and its foremost exponent from ambush. This variety of unprincipled politics is more devious, but no less despicable.

But what kind of a faction can Cannon assemble for a fight against Pablo? Who will answer his roll call? Nobody in the world movement is chafing at the allegedly arbitrary rule and Cominternist methods of Pablo. But there are unfortunately a number of conservative and retrogressive elements who will see in this the long-awaited opportunity to go back to an outlived and sectarian outlook, i.e., to overthrow the orientation of the Third Congress. They will gladly enlist in Cannon's crusade against Pablo just as the Johnsonites have already in the U.S., and they will influence the course of its political development. A clique fight against Pablo must inevitably end as a political struggle against the present line and orientation of world Trotskyism.

Comrades, we weren't and didn't need to be instigated by anybody to take up the struggle for our ideas. If we were instigated by anybody, it was by Cannon and his vicious and unprincipled factional assault against us. But you can rest assured that we will not stand by and watch Cannon instigate this same kind of a struggle against anybody, and especially against a man who has made the biggest contribution in recent years to the ideological arsenal of Trotskyism.

We bring this underground clique struggle into the open, because if there is any possibility of calling the Majority leaders to their senses, it is by bringing the public opinion of the entire movement into play.

Lou Cooper rebelled against this monstrous course. It would be unrealistic of us to expect that many of you will draw the full conclusions immediately. Yet we cannot but believe that there remains among you a current of genuine internationalism, of loyalty to the ideas of the world movement, and a deep repugnance to any unprincipled attempt to smash it up.

We call on you again -- now, after the fiasco the Majority has made of the peace agreement in this caricature of a local convention -- to look back on the course you have been following and see where it is leading you.

Comrades of the Majority! Perhaps you understand now why we have no use for the hypocritical embraces that come after every knockdown fight. We have been judging you not by our suspicions, but by your deeds. And that is how we will continue to judge -- not by words, not by promises, but by deeds. The most important deed of all is to change your ways and call off this mad, disastrous struggle you have launched in the International. Turn back to responsible and principled politics, for only then will genuine and lasting collaboration be possible.

REPORT ON MAY PLENUM
FOR NATIONAL COMMITTEE MINORITY

(Delivered before N.Y. Membership, June 11, 1953)

By George Clarke

The agreement reached at the recent Plenum between the Minority and the Majority marks the termination of a stage of the internal factional struggle which raged for more than a year and ranged over a wide series of questions from international to party tasks. We believe that the Plenum came to this fortunate conclusion for two reasons. First, because it removed the threat of split which had been suspended over the factional conflict almost from the time of its outbreak, and which remained suspended over it until almost the third day of the Plenum. We are convinced that without the danger of split weighing on the party it can proceed not only with a discussion of its differences, but with the harmonious working out of the policies decided by the Majority. Second, we believe that the Plenum came to a fortunate conclusion because neither side felt crushed or defeated by the outcome. A majority was clearly established at the Plenum on the basis of the casting of a vote that represented, broadly speaking, the division within the party ranks as a whole. But this majority was not established on the basis of the old Roman slogan "Vae Victis" -- woe to the vanquished. Had there been such a conclusion to the Plenum, then it is clear that further co-existence of the two tendencies would have become insufferable for one or both sides. But in this case each side believed that it had won a victory, at least a partial one. That is always the case where a bitter struggle ends in a compromise.

I don't mean by this estimation to challenge the results of the Plenum, to question its outcome politically, or the formation of the present Majority leadership. On the contrary, the Minority proposes to carry out this agreement with full loyalty and responsibility as it said it would. I mean rather to convey the idea that although our tendency was a minority at the Plenum, it firmly believes that its ideas were proven correct and that the experience of life rather than that of fierce factional struggle will further vindicate our political conceptions.

Because of the peculiar twist that this fight took, the reasons for which I will not develop, the debate at the Plenum revolved principally around a characterization of the nature of the struggle itself. The Majority in speeches by a number of its representatives, particularly by Comrade Dobbs and Cannon, declared that what was involved was a power struggle which had been occasioned by the formation of an unprincipled group which sought to overthrow the tradition and authority of the established leadership, and was engaged in this action because it was transmitting the pressures of a reactionary environment through the working class and trade union supporters of the Minority. This in general was how the Majority characterized the factional conflict. We considered then and consider now this conception as all wrong. In effect, all struggles for political ideas within political organizations are implicitly power struggles, because they are transmitted through the agency of human beings. But in all but Marxist parties they must necessarily be, and they usually are, from the very beginning struggles for power. Because the internal

relationships and the lack of democracy within such organizations do not permit any other kind of struggle, or because of the low level of consciousness of such organizations where individuals and leaders cannot abstract political ideas from the personalities who hold them. I say this is the case in all but the Marxist party, in which case, because of higher consciousness and superiority of doctrine, is able to place program first, is able to discuss political questions for a long time without raising the question of power in the organization -- and then postponing it until the very last extremity of the struggle itself.

Now, we did not believe this to be a power struggle because factions had been formed, or because we had formed our own faction. We thought that the factions, and particularly our faction, arose not because we wanted to change the leadership, but because it had been made necessary by the situation within the party and the manner in which the discussion was carried out. We rejected the concept that we, for our part, were engaged in any struggle for power in the party, because it conformed neither to the facts, nor to our own intentions.

Because of this difference, the very first conflict at the Plenum itself was over the agenda. This conflict followed a similar one in the Political Committee over the question of having sufficient time to consider the documents that would be issued by the Majority so that the members of the National Committee could make up their minds and draw up counter-documents, if they wanted to. We considered that the struggle over the agenda was of the essence of the matter because in a way it was symbolic of the struggle as a whole. We proposed that the agenda submitted by the Majority which placed the internal question first be altered, and that the political questions be put first on the agenda. That is to say, first a discussion of the objective situation in the United States and the party tasks flowing from it; second, the question of our attitude toward American Stalinism. And upon the conclusion of that discussion we thought we would all be in a better position -- having seen the nature and depth of the political differences -- to cope with any internal organization questions, which we believe must be derived from politics at all times. Organization, we believe, flows from politics. Leadership, we believe, is based upon program. Our proposal was rejected by the Majority at the Plenum. We never discussed at the Plenum the political resolutions, although it is correct to say that they were indirectly although insufficiently discussed under the heading of the internal situation -- the discussion of which lasted three days.

We contended from the beginning that what was involved was not a struggle for power but principally a struggle over political differences. We contended that this was caused by different conceptions of the world as it had evolved since the beginning of the cold war, as it is now divided into two hostile class camps, and as it will be in the approaching international civil war. In our document, The Roots of the Party Crisis, we cited a series of episodes since 1947 through which we traced the main source of the differences in the party. These were again debated at the Plenum. For our part, they were presented and defended far less to demonstrate who was right in this or that particular dispute than to show the essential political background for the opposing views. We contended secondly that the differences in the party were occasioned by different con-

ceptions of the American reality, as it is, and as it will be in the next period ahead -- and the party tasks flowing from this analysis. We believe that that was adequately demonstrated at the Plenum. We believe that it was also demonstrated that the struggle was not one over optimism or pessimism, or over the possibilities of the American revolution, or over the historic role of the American proletariat. We believe that the discussion adequately demonstrated that those questions raised were rather beside the main point of what the tasks of the party should be deriving from an analysis of the economic and political situation in the country.

We believe further that no matter how serious the differences, they were not sufficiently crystalized politically to justify a show-down struggle. Nor is it correct to act now in the faction fight on the basis of an anticipation of the outcome. We believe that to act on the basis of an anticipation could only cloud over the real differences, could place others in their stead which, strictly speaking, were not before the party, and could seriously impair a favorable outcome of the fight in the future. On the contrary, we believed that what was required was an objective discussion of these political questions in the party, and the working out of full collaboration in the leadership, or rather the restoration of a situation in which full collaboration would exist.

The facts show that we did not conduct ourselves in this fight as though we were engaged in a power struggle. I can assure the comrades that we would never undertake such a struggle unless it were politically necessary and based upon a solid political viewpoint, that if we did conduct such a struggle it would be on an entirely different basis from the way in which we conducted this one. I say the facts show that we did not conduct ourselves in any such manner. We never demanded any special rights; we never made any proposals to overturn the Majority, or to reorganize the National Committee. We organized our faction on the basis that I have described above, on the basis of a clearly stated and solid political program. We put it down in writing in our document, The Roots of the Party Crisis, which we then elaborated in other documents, and which we summarized specifically in six points at the conclusion of that document. It was on that basis that we conducted our struggle at the Plenum, and it is on that basis broadly speaking that we maintain our faction today in the party. Even though our faction is no longer organized for war in the party -- a war that was imposed on us -- but within the common agreement for discussion in the party, for the carrying out of the work of the party, and in the hope of an eventual resolution of the issues in conflict.

What did the Plenum reveal about the issues? The first big issue before the party and the Plenum arose from the world situation. We contended that it was necessary to finish with the conceptions based on an outlived world and hence upon an outlived strategy towards the struggles in that world, that it was necessary to reorient our conceptions and ideas in accordance with the conceptions and ideas set forth by the Third World Congress. We contended in the discussion and at the Plenum that the Majority had been disoriented on the new complex of world events, that it continued to think in terms of deals and counter-revolutions, that it had resisted the positions of the Third World Congress, that it had failed to educate the party in that spirit, and that it had not been guided by

these conceptions in its analysis and approach to political questions of the day and in the propaganda of the party. We believe Comrade Cannon was incorrect in stating that we charged that the Majority as a whole had been in opposition to the Third World Congress, and therefore we thought it unnecessary for him to cite a number of deeds in defense of some of the measures of the Congress. We believe, as Comrade Cochran said in his final summary, that it was rather a question of disorientation, a failure to make the proper reorientation.

This, to our mind, was confirmed at the Plenum in the manner in which Comrades Weiss and Warde interpreted the theses on the American revolution. To us these theses do not appear in the simple form of for or against the American revolution. In the context that they were raised, it involved actually a continuation of the old perspective of the development of the world revolution. That perspective was based on America solving the problem of the world revolution by being the first on the agenda of the decisive class struggles to be waged in the world, thereby disposing of all of the complicated problems raised by Stalinist leaderships in numerous countries. We believed that this conception did not conform to the reality and the position of the World Congress that the United States had become the bastion of world counter-revolution. At the same time, the opposing class camp to American imperialism was being led in large part by Stalinist or Stalinist-type leaderships. That it was the development of this struggle that would set off the dynamite that would lead to the social crisis in the United States.

The second issue before the party and before the Plenum was the question of Stalinism. During the struggle in the party we had urged a concrete tactic toward the Stalinists. In view of the alignment of class forces, and the internal difficulties within the Stalinist movement our intervention could produce beneficial results and would help us in weakening the Stalinist movement so that in the next radicalization we would face it as a less formidable rival. This was resisted during the fight and to a lesser extent at the Plenum by the Majority on the grounds that we wanted a new orientation away from the mass of non-political workers, an orientation that would be directed toward the Stalinists, and that we were exhibiting signs of Stalinist conciliation. No further attempt however was made to prove this case at the Plenum, or to attack our resolution on our attitude towards American Stalinism. We therefore felt that the Plenum had confirmed the reasons that we had given for the resistance of the Majority to working out a tactic towards the Stalinists. Our opinion was further confirmed by the Majority resolution. We remain opposed to the line and spirit of that resolution, but we will loyally abide by it as a disciplined Minority in the party.

Third, there was a considerable discussion at the Plenum -- all under the heading of the internal situation -- on the present objective situation in the United States and the mood of the American workers. This discussion was conducted principally by the comrades of the Minority who constitute the chief proletarian cadres of the party in the auto and steel industries. Their contributions on this subject were made from the vantage point of rich experiences in the class struggle. They discussed the moods of the workers, their sentiments, the level of the class struggle, the manner in which struggles over grievances were conducted in the plants, the considerable difficulties faced by militants, and particularly by the revolutionists.

They discussed them most concretely, and put correctly the relationships between the old and experienced worker militants and the younger people in the plants with less seniority. It was from these comrades that we got our first real picture of the actual differences in the various strata of the workers.

To us this was the brightest part of the Plenum. To us these contributions represented the merging of Marxist thought with effective operation in the class struggle. For us this was the best omen for the future of the party. The conclusion that these comrades from Michigan and Ohio came to was that the mass of the workers were not yet interested in our leadership because of the prevailing reaction and the prevailing prosperity, but that small though significant groups of workers were becoming interested in our ideas. They were particularly pointed in stating that the party would break its head if it attempted to get out too much in the forefront of shop struggles. This justified the primary emphasis placed by the Minority on the propagandistic activities of the party in the present period in the unions and factories, and wherever else it can conduct propaganda to find its way to that small but significant group of workers. These conceptions, in our opinion, were not refuted by the Majority at the Plenum. And here again I wish to state that we do not believe that the Majority resolution conforms to the needs of the party in the objective situation today, but again I state that we will loyally and responsibly abide by it as a disciplined Minority until experience demonstrates the validity of our respective positions.

The Majority also contended in the recent period of the struggle -- and in this it accepted one aspect of our analysis -- that there was corruption or conservatism among the workers, although they added an amendment, that this corruption and conservatism had penetrated into our party via the proletarian cadres of the Minority, particularly in Michigan. And this was responsible for our so-called pessimistic outlook and attitude towards party tasks. Now, we believe that this theory was effectively demolished by the Michigan comrades, and particularly by the outstanding Negro Marxist and the trade unionist of the party, Comrade Drake. Proceeding on the basis that the truth is always concrete, Comrade Drake accepted the proposition that corruption did exist, that it could penetrate into the party, but he demanded evidence of its manifestations in life. He said, to use his pointed phrase, that the Majority should produce the "corpus delicti." It has to demonstrate concretely from the activities and reaction of the Michigan comrades to the great events of the struggle that this corruption and degeneration was manifested in its ranks. He showed that on the contrary, in the 1947 fight with Reuther it was the Michigan comrades on the side of many of those now in the Minority who opposed the bloc with Reuther -- the bureaucrat who soon became the State Department's foremost agent in the trade unions. Drake said, secondly, that in the 1950 UAW convention it was the Michigan comrades who, in the teeth of the war propaganda, fought for the withdrawal of the troops from Korea, for the Labor Party and for proposals on the Negro question -- that flew in the face of the bureaucracy in the unions. He cited, thirdly, the magnificent struggle conducted by the Michigan comrades against the Trucks Law, and cited the fact that Dobbs had but a short time before declared that there was no better place for the party that this struggle could have developed than in Michigan.

Comrade Cummings, in discussing the matter, explained that it was true that the German Social Democracy through their trade unionists had been a transmission belt for the conservatism of the aristoc-

racy of labor, but this came primarily through its rich and well-paid functionaries, and contrasted strongly with our position as a rank and file minority not only on the outs in the unions, but also constantly hounded by the FBI at every turn of events.

The Majority never refuted this case. It never went from the general to the concrete, except for a small quarrel incited by Comrade Lang on what must be considered petty disputes on aspects of branch work in Michigan. I believe that one could take almost any position on these questions and find great difficulty in coming to general conclusions, although we, for our part, didn't see much sense in Comrade Lang's proposals. But the Majority position on this major analysis of the party struggle remained totally abstract. It was, as Trotsky said, like a knife without a blade. The Plenum demonstrated that the best part of the party's proletarian cadres, built up with so much effort and in such great struggle since the 1940 split, were with the Minority.

The party had been on the verge of a split, or a showdown struggle that would have led to a split up to the third day of the Plenum. The reasons for this were debated with considerable heat and vigor at the Plenum. There is no purpose to go into it at this time. The Majority has its views as we have ours as to the causes and the responsibility for the split danger that hung over the party. But one aspect of this does deserve comment, and that was the Majority's contention that no compromise was possible. Because the Minority, it was claimed, had defeatist views and orientation so far as the party itself was concerned, and that therefore it had to be "quarantined." We took this characterization objectively and contended that it could not be substantiated -- and it was not at the Plenum. In fact, between the composition of our tendency and what we consider to be a vindication of our ideas -- the very contrary, in our opinion, was established.

But we also thought that to follow such a course, based upon this analysis, could only aggravate the struggle and might prove fatal for the party. We insisted therefore in our resolutions and our speeches at the Plenum that the discussion had to be moderated, that the danger or threat of split had to be removed, and that the Minority had to be accorded its full rights as a Minority, and that collaboration be restored within the leadership. We on our part declared from the beginning of the struggle that we were prepared to work with complete loyalty and responsibility as a Minority. We were therefore pleased at the end of the third day of the Plenum to hear the proposals of the Majority which have been described here by Comrade Dobbs, and incorporated in the resolution and the various measures that have been taken, and I will furnish you with the secret information that it took us relatively little time to arrive at an agreement in our caucus in accepting these proposals when they were made by the Majority.

We believe that the Plenum agreement has a good chance for success and we on our part will do everything that we can to assure its success. This is not because we have come closer in our political views. The conflicting resolutions analyzing the objective situation and tasks and our attitude towards American Stalinism indicate the wide range of differences that still exist. We believe however that

that the agreement has a good chance of success because a proper atmosphere will be created in the party so that the confrontation of ideas can occur on a more objective basis with the possibility for the interpenetration of ideas, and the healthy effects of experience and life itself in the common tasks of the party and in the class struggle. We believe that the agreement has a good chance of success because the re-establishment of collaboration in the leadership itself will provide a corrective from the top which, if properly carried out, cannot fail to affect the party ranks as a whole.

However, in view of the sharpness and the tension of the struggle, the agreement as well as the collaboration will probably be subjected to many tests. We have reason to believe that with good-will and good faith on both sides, it will successfully meet these tests and so more firmly cement the common agreement established at the Plenum.

To a certain extent the situation now opening within the party is an entirely new one in our history. In the past, tendencies and organized factions have existed but only on the basis that we were on the verge of a split. The situation today is quite unique. There is an actual recognition by both sides in the party that two tendencies exist and will continue to exist for some time within the party. The danger of a split is removed because, basing themselves on the rules of democratic centralism, these two factions, or tendencies, can co-exist for an extended period within a common party until events themselves resolve the outstanding differences, either by further clarifying the differences, or by bringing the two sides closer together.

To face this new situation within the party requires a certain readjustment, to be sure, on all sides. There is no reason to believe that American Trotskyism cannot clearly face the new reality not only in the world but within its own ranks and successfully cope with it.