

THE RESULTS OF THE JULY PLENUM

by Ben Gitlow

The Plenum of the National Council held July 4th and 5th gave very serious consideration to the organization question. The main task of the Plenum was placed squarely in the Plenum resolution when it stated:

"The central task of the July Plenum is to examine seriously the condition of the organization of our group, to devise ways and means of speedily removing the present weaknesses, of correcting mistakes, and ending the organization crisis."

The questions involved in a discussion of the organization question were discussed with brutal frankness and in a spirit of constructive self-criticism. The members of the National Council who were present felt very keenly that the position and influence we had gained to date in the mass organizations made it imperative for the group to function as a more responsible and better disciplined Communist organization.

The Plenum recorded the fact that despite the progress we had made ideologically, despite the fact that we had clarified our position on the most important questions, especially in trade union work, despite the gains we had made in the trade unions and despite the group's growth in political influence and prestige, the organization has not made sufficient headway, has been unable to keep pace with our political progress and is today not in as good a position as it should be.

The Plenum not only made clear the existence of an organizational crisis; it also made an exhaustive examination of the causes, objective and subjective, of this situation.

The Plenum, however, could not avoid recording the progress and successes of the group. We have defeated ideologically and politically the new line of the Comintern and the Party. The so-called unity maneuvers, the much heralded "change" in trade union line, the twists and turns of the Party bureaucracy attest to their frantic efforts to cover up and hide the bankruptcy of the ultra-left sectarian line of the Comintern and the Party leadership. Our group has every reason to be proud of the work which we have done on the ideological field especially in the contributions we have made to a Marxian analysis of important questions before the working class.

The tremendous significance to the working class of the application of our line in trade union work cannot be underestimated. Not only have we exposed the character and logical results of the Party's sectarian policy but we have been able to translate into life our policies in the trade unions. We have made the beginnings of left wing organization in the trade unions and have already, due to our correct policies, gained important posts in a number of unions (needle trades, miners, building trades, marine, etc.)

The enlargement and improvement of the New Workers School, the forum lectures and mass meetings held indicate the progress made in these particular fields.

The establishment and maintenance of the weekly Revolutionary Age is an achievement of which the group has every reason to be proud.

The development of our unity program and united front activities from abstract discussion to concrete application is bound in the immediate future to make our group a factor in mass struggles and to materially widen our contacts with the masses.

The out-of-town districts of the group are not in a good condition. The Plenum called attention to this fact and directed the National Bureau to send suitable organizers into the out-of-town districts to improve them and better their functioning.

The Plenum very seriously discussed

the International Platform in addition to the situation of the group and its tasks.

The following important decisions were made:

1. To constitute a New York district committee and appoint a New York district secretary.

2. To recommend to the National Bureau to change the name of the group.

3. To reduce the National Bureau to nine members and four candidates.

4. To give full power to the National Bureau to change the name of the Revolutionary Age if it finds it necessary to do so.

5. To establish a literature department which shall start the publication of suitable pamphlets for the group.

6. To tax our membership \$1.00 a year to pay our dues to the International Communist Opposition.

The Plenum viewed the situation in the country as very favorable for Communist activity and for increasing and broadening our activities. The Plenum recorded the fact that the economic crisis would continue and become worse, that the conditions of the masses would become still more unbearable, that the discontent of the workers would grow. The Plenum realized that a period of sharpened class war was before us as evidenced by the marked increase in spontaneous strike action, clear evidence of the rebellious attitude growing in the ranks of the working class. In these conditions the Plenum saw the opportunities for our group to give leadership and to gain influence and power, especially because our line applied in action is bound not only to vindicate our position but to win for us eventually the approval and support of the workers, the best guarantee for the liquidation of the crisis in the Communist movement and its unification.

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rings today when we observe the worldwide misery created by capitalistic greed.

In our "free" United States of America, millions of unemployed wage slaves are starving. Insane asylums give up the shrieks of proletarian mothers who break under the strain of hearing their children cry for bread and the cupboard bare. Banks and chain stores are doubling their guards in the faces of famished wage-workers growing daily more desperate. Penitentiaries are crowded with working men who were forced to resort to what the masters call theft as a means of feeding their young.

Prison fare is lean, comrades, and jail beds hard, but countless working men enjoying capitalistic "freedom" in the United States and elsewhere are not as well off as the so-called felon in the matter of food and shelter. And the master class of the United States find comfort in the knowledge that Tom Mooney is not at large to bring home that fact to the legions of suffering wage-workers.

Amalgamate all the prison wardens of the world into one huge man presiding over a vast prison, have this towering giant of a jailer stand up before the famished millions of the "free" proletariat and shout: "Come unto me all ye who are hungry and houseless and I will give ye bed and board. You'll be better off in than out."

That is the sum total of what capitalism has done for mankind.

From my dungeon I listen to sounds from without. My ears are keen from long barking in my solitude. And now I hear from the outside the drums of the revolution growing louder apace. I hear the fanfare of the red heralds of a brighter day. I hear the call of the Red Chanticleer announcing the approach of the