

To the Masses — To the Shops! Organize the Masses!

EXTRACTS FROM THE REPORT OF THE POLITICAL
BUREAU TO THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE,
13th PLENUM, C.P.U.S.A., AUGUST, 21

By EARL BROWDER

THE Party is working under conditions more favorable than any we have ever known, for the growth of the Party and the growth of the mass organization under the Party leadership. We must say, however, that in spite of the favorable conditions, in spite of the upward development of the working class activity and definite signs of the progress in the work of the Party, the revolutionary trade unions and other mass organizations, yet the main characteristic of the present situation is the continuous lagging behind of our Party and the revolutionary organizations, far behind the objective possibilities that exist and behind the developing movement of the masses. Not only are we lagging behind but in spite of what progress we made the opportunities for work grow faster so that the gap is continually widening.

At our 12th Plenum in characterizing the situation existing at that time, we spoke of the development of "various elements of the political crisis in the United States." This was an error, as we have explained to the Party. It is not a waste of time to speak of this again so that we can appreciate it from many angles, and understand what such an error means. It is one of the concrete examples of a tendency which the Party has to constantly guard against, of jumping over immediate unfinished tasks and trying to establish new tasks and new perspectives before we have accomplished the tasks that were set by the old perspectives. It is worth while to quote the words of comrade Manuilsky regarding this tendency in a speech made in the American Commission, September 18, last year. Comrade Manuilsky said the following:

"What are the problems outlined by the E.C.C.I.? Unemployment and strike struggle. Is there any need of revising these fundamental problems at this time? One American comrade said that it is necessary to sum up the total of the stages of the crisis and unfold new perspectives and new problems. This is called jumping before accomplishing the old tasks. The crisis in the U.S.A. is entering a new phase, the despair of the masses is growing, but we have not yet developed any strong strike movement or movements

of unemployed. And yet there are comrades who demand new tasks. This skipping, this inventing of new tasks every three months, characteristic of small parties, is extremely dangerous. It is this tendency of creating new tasks, which creates obstacles for the fulfillment of old decisions which have not been carried out. The opening up of new stages, more resolutions about new stages, but the wagon will remain in its old place."

This was spoken almost a year ago. There have been some changes since that time. I think we can say that the wagon has not remained in the same place since the 12th Plenum. We have moved our wagon. But we have not moved it so far that the words of comrade Manuilsky do not still apply to us. We still have to guard against the tendency to jump over unfinished tasks and try to formulate new ones as a substitute for actual solution of the old ones.

The wagon has moved since the 12th Plenum. Let's review the situation in the Party as it was at the 12th Plenum. Conditions of our movement were described in the resolution of the E.C.C.I. on the American question which we had before us then as follows:

"After the sympathetic response of considerable masses to the call of the Party on March 6, the number of participants in the subsequent mass demonstrations, despite the growing militancy of the workers, has been declining, the membership in several of the red trade unions has sharply declined (textile, mining, needle, shoe), more than 50% of the new and many old members have fallen away from the Party, very slow progress has been made in the formation of new unions in the most decisive industries, the T.U. U.L. remains an organization chiefly embracing the Party members and a small circle of sympathizers, while the Party has made very little progress in gaining a foothold in the factories in general and in the most decisive industries in particular, and the mass work of the local organizations and factory nuclei still remain unsatisfactory. All this clearly shows that the Party is still far removed from the every day life and needs of the masses, has weak connections with the broad masses of workers, and has not yet become the organizer and leader of the daily struggles of the working class. The principal weakness of the Party is to be found in the fact that *the Party was and remains a good propagandist organization which has not yet understood how to mobilize the masses for struggle for their immediate needs and especially for their economic demands.*"

Comrades, if we had to characterize the situation in the Party today would we apply those words? No, I think we would have to give a somewhat different description today. We would have to deal with certain positive accomplishments in the development of our work in the Party since the 12th Plenum. These positive accomplishments are very important for us because they prove the correctness of our line. They give us some hint of the tremendous

possibilities before us when we develop methods of work in such a way as to really take hold of the situation and develop the struggles of the masses.

We can speak about the positive developments in our work particularly on three fields: the trade union and strike struggles; unemployment; and the Negro work. I want to say just a few words about each, characterizing the positive aspects of our work since the 12th Plenum.

In the trade union field, we have had beginnings of mass strikes in basic industries under Communist leadership. Lawrence, woolen textile; Pittsburgh area, coal miners; New England and Paterson, textile; California, cannery and agricultural workers. Besides these mass strike struggles, we note that this year in the total of 200,000 strikers registered by government statistics, approximately one-third were directly organized and led by our Party and the red unions, including the most important ones, while in almost all the other strikes, especially the large ones organized under A. F. of L. and independent reformist auspices, the Communists played a role of independent leadership through an organized opposition, one of the outstanding examples being the Allentown silk strike.

A whole series of small strikes are rejuvenating some of the small unions (needle trades, shoe workers and recent small strikes of the marine workers). All these movements, these advances in the field of strike struggle, mobilization of the masses for struggle for their economic demands, were based upon and were the results of the work of our 12th Plenum.

In the field of unemployed work, in this period, the struggle and organization of the unemployed workers has been raised to a higher level, as shown in the state hunger marches which were organized and led by us in 11 different states, actions which involved in each case hundreds of workers, extending in time from 2 to 6 days, and drawing into the movement along the route of the hunger march, tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of workers, penetrating new territory, and leaving behind a certain degree of new local organization. Local unemployment councils and branches have in some of the localities begun to take root among the masses on the basis of detailed day-to-day work, attention to the needs of individual families and conditions of starvation, dramatizing typical cases, organizing practical work of feeding, food collections and kitchens for their members and for the most desperate cases. Especially important results in the unemployed movement have been achieved in the *struggle against evictions*. The work of the unemployed councils in putting back furniture into the houses of evicted workers has stirred a most

profound movement among the masses and has already resulted in some significant partial victories and large scale mass actions, a special example being in Chicago, and also to some degree, in the South. In some cities, the city unemployed councils have, by their work, forced recognition as the leaders and spokesmen for the mass of the unemployed in their city.

In the field of Negro work, we must say that a profound change has taken place in the character of our work since the 12th Plenum. Whereas, before the 12th Plenum, our work was almost entirely of a propagandist and agitational sort, in 1931 we have engaged in mass political actions in the field of struggle for Negro rights. We can point out the most significant points in this development, beginning with the Yokinen trial in New York, early this year, which dramatized the struggle against white chauvinism within the ranks of the white workers. It is this trial which can be taken as marking the sharp turn which the Party began towards the struggle on specific concrete issues.

The Scottsboro case was seized upon by the entire party without hesitation largely as a result of the educational and agitational effects of the Yokinen case. I think that we can say that without the prelude of the Yokinen case, the Scottsboro case would never have been heard of. This is very significant for us to realize in order to understand the far-reaching importance of events in the internal life of our Party.

You remember the Yokinen case was one of probably 100 one could mention in the life of our Party, a simple and unfortunately not unusual example of white chauvinism penetrating the ranks of the workers. The Party took it up as an internal Party question and transformed it into a mass political agitational question, putting a member of our Party on trial for the crime of white chauvinism. From this beginning, came the Scottsboro campaign, which is stirring the entire world. The Scottsboro case would have been missed without the beginning of the Yokinen trial.

The Scottsboro case has been, in some of its most important aspects, a great political success for our Party. It has roused hundreds of thousands of Negro and white workers in protest and struggle against Negro oppression. In the Camp Hill share-croppers case we deepened and broadened the struggle, linking it up directly with the Scottsboro case and fundamental programmatic questions—agrarian relations, the agrarian revolution, semi-feudal forms in the South. Fundamental questions of our Communist program were brought forward and dramatized in a concrete form by this case. Further, the Chicago massacre of August 3 combined and unified two fundamental currents—Negro rights and the struggle against evictions,

dramatized the unity of white and black workers. We made steps in other cases in fusing the different currents developing among the masses and thereby raising them to a higher political stage. For instance, in Detroit, the demonstrations of June 19 against the Alien Registration Bill and against the Scottsboro executions in a joint mass action.

The deep-going nature of the movement that has developed in this whole series of struggles has exposed before the Negro masses the treacherous nature of their petty-bourgeois misleaders and thereby has begun a historic process of class differentiation and a consciousness of the class differentiation, among the Negro masses, which is of the most profound importance for us and one of our basic strategic objectives in the struggle for Negro rights.

The mass response of the Negroes to the Communist liberation program has been so great that it has thrown demoralization into the camp of the Negro bourgeoisie. The Negro press, even that part most bitterly against us, is forced to speak respectfully about the Communist program. It finds it necessary, even our most bitter enemies, to put on a mask of a respectful attitude towards the Communist program at the same time as it is attacking our work. And it is significant that the larger Negro bourgeois papers, which, in their first confusion, on the issue of the Scottsboro Case, before the class differentiation had clearly begun, took up a sympathetic attitude toward us, when they found it necessary to sharply turn and attack our campaign on account of their class interests and subjection to the ruling white imperialist bourgeoisie, in order to carry out this change they had to carry out in many instances a cleansing of their staffs. So deep had our slogans penetrated the petty bourgeois writers of these papers, that they could not carry out their policy of direct attack against us without this. These incidents of the Negro press are significant because, while small developments at the top, they are the straws which show the deep currents which are beginning among the Negro masses and also, to a lesser extent, among the white workers, on the question of Negro liberation.

These positive features in our work since the 12th Plenum prove that our Party in certain specific instances and to a certain degree has learned how to mobilize the masses for struggle for their immediate demands in the three most important fields of work. But the results, comrades, considered in relation to the possibilities objectively before us and which are growing, are still very, very small and entirely unsatisfactory. We must emphasize that in spite of this progress in certain fields, we have almost complete lack of progress in other fields.

We have to examine, for example, very critically the situation

of our Party with relation to the penetration of the shops. What is the development of our shop nuclei? What is the development of the grievance committees? The shop committees? The shop groups of our revolutionary unions? Here is a fundamental question and it is very difficult to find any positive aspects in this work, except in most recent big strike struggles, where we cannot say the results have been consolidated. Nowhere can we point to consolidated features in the field of penetration of the shops. In the question of shop nuclei, for instance, I have just received from the Org. Department on the basis of most recent reports from the districts (some of them received this morning), what can be taken as the last and most favorable word about the condition of the shop nuclei. We have the comparative figures of the 7th Convention, the 12th Plenum, and today. At the 7th Convention, a little over a year ago, we had 61 shop nuclei with 574 members. At the 12th Plenum, 92 shop nuclei with 673 members. Today we have 125 shop nuclei with 1,025 members, which includes 36 new mine nuclei in Pittsburgh with 568 members, as reported on August 5. I understand there has been a big increase in Pittsburgh since then. This shows that over half the members of the shop nuclei today are in the new mine nuclei in Pittsburgh. The number of shop nuclei excluding Pittsburgh remains approximately the same. The membership has actually declined in these nuclei. While we can be very glad that we have more beginnings of mine nuclei in Pittsburgh, this still has to be consolidated and we cannot yet accept it as verified and established. Aside from this in Pittsburgh, we have a positive retrogression of shop work. This is a real danger signal for our Party. If at this Plenum we do not succeed in bringing about a sharp and profound change in the direction of penetrating the shops, the whole future of our Party is in danger. It is impossible to over-emphasize the importance of this question. What is true of the Party is true to approximately the same extent of the revolutionary trade unions and we must emphasize that what we say about the life-and-death necessity of this work in building the Party applies with the same force to the building of the revolutionary trade unions.

In the Unemployed Councils, while we have registered some advances, there are relatively few examples of positive achievements. The main characterization of our organizations is that they remain narrow cadre organizations which do not have intimate day-to-day contact with the masses, which have not yet established themselves as permanent centers for work among the masses and in most cases, with the removal of two or three comrades assigned by the Party,

these organizations would actually collapse. This is an intolerable situation in our unemployed work.

The struggle for Negro rights also shows the sharpest weaknesses in the extremely limited organizational results. We still have something less than 1,000 Negro members in our Party. I am sure we haven't more than two or three thousand Negroes in the revolutionary trade unions, and as for the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, to be built up on the basis of the mass circulation of the *Liberator*, this still remains largely loose local groupings with perhaps six or seven notable local and neighborhood exceptions.

This situation of organizational lagging, especially in the shops, is so extremely serious that it requires a sharp turn by the entire Party in our methods of mass work and organization. What do we mean by a sharp turn? We have used this expression—"sharp turn"—so many times in the past year that I am afraid it begins to lose a little of its meaning for the comrades. Let us make very concrete what we mean by "sharp turn." We mean that the task of this Plenum is to begin such a serious and fundamental transformation of our whole Party life, a change of our whole approach to our work, a change in our hour-to-hour and day-to-day methods of work, a change in our organizational practice, a change so complete and so deep-going that the entire Party from top to bottom and the working class around our Party will shake with the realization that this change is going on. That is what we mean by "sharp turn." We mean a drastic period of transformation of the entire life of our movement. That is what we mean and that is what we want to register here in this Plenum.

The main task of this Plenum is to mobilize the entire Party for this fundamental change. What is the nature of this change? Is it merely a repetition of slogans that we emphasized so much at the 12th Plenum? No. At the 12th Plenum we said that the immediate link that we must grasp in order to control the whole chain of developments was—immediate demands, less high-falutin' phrases more simple every-day work. This is no longer sufficient, comrades. We have developed, still inadequately, still only in its beginning, but we have certain positive experiences in the application of the main slogans of the 12th Plenum. These experiences prove the correctness of the slogans of the 12th Plenum and the line of the 12th Plenum. But these experiences also bring us face to face with the problem that these slogans are no longer sufficient to solve the questions that are before us, that must be solved before we can take the next steps forward: penetration of shops, building of the Party, building of the revolutionary unions. We have got to find now what is the link at the 13th Plenum that we must seize upon

and put in the forefront as that link which must be grasped at this moment in order to move the entire chain, to move the wagon the next mile along the road.

I think that we have to say, as the resolution before you says, that this main link now is finding the proper methods of *mass work and organization*, that the main obstacle to this is *lack of faith in the masses*. Within our movement in our methods of work this expresses itself in the form of a *tendency to bureaucracy*, to bureaucratic methods, bureaucratic relationships between the Party leading committees and the membership, bureaucratic relationships between the Party and the masses, bureaucratic practices and relationships in the mass organizations especially—all of them flowing out of a lack of faith in the masses and reliance upon spontaneity. This fear of the masses is opportunism, poisonous opportunism no matter what form it may assume. In some cases it tries to show itself as very “left,” hoping thereby to cover its opportunism. You can hear quite often in our movement the expression—“We have no forces, all of our comrades are backward, uneducated, they don’t know Lenin, they can’t quote from the decisions of the 11th Plenum—we mustn’t give them any responsible work.”

Is this an exceptional attitude in our Party? Our experiences in the national office indicate to us that this is a disease that penetrates the Party from top to bottom. In the Central Committee and in the Polburo and in our departments in the national office we constantly find ourselves hampered and hemmed in by the limitations of our own methods of work and our own approach to the problem, which distorts the leading work of the Party—a tendency to have no faith in the forces of the Party except those that have been tried and tested over long years, the fear to draw in new forces. This fear has existed in the Central Committee; it has existed in every district committee, in every section committee and in every unit. And in the units it takes the form of resistance to recruitment to the Party.

Is this exaggeration, comrades? No. We have dozens and dozens of examples that have been forced upon our attention from so many districts that we are sure it is not just a district problem, it is a national problem of the Party. Good workers, militants, leading fighters in the working class movement, following our Party, working under the leadership of our Party, loyal to our Party, supporting our Party in every way, want to join our Party. They try time after time. They put in their applications. They speak to members of the Party. But nothing happens. They come to Party offices (usually when they come to Party offices, especially in the big cities they are unable to see anybody but a stenographer) and

the office force is so busy and has other things on its mind, the result is that the only contact of this worker who is trying to break his way into our Party is a contact by mail. He has to send in his application by mail and follows it up two, three, four, and five times. And finally he writes a letter of protest to the *Daily Worker* saying he is determined to break into this Party if he has to spend years doing it. And by that time we usually come to the conclusion well, this fellow has passed a pretty good test and we can take him in. When it gets that far he usually gets into the Party. The obstacles are not entirely insuperable. The very best elements succeed, they overcome all these obstacles.

But how about the weaker ones? How about the hundreds and thousands who put in one application, follow it up by a second, then they get discouraged and stop? I think we must recognize at this Plenum that our Party is in the unheard of position of being surrounded by a broad circle of workers who are anxious to join the Party and don't know how. The Party keeps them out.

Is this an exaggeration? No. It is not an exaggeration and it is not a question of individual cases. And the proof of it lies not only in this attitude toward the workers who don't get in, although they want to, but in what happens to the workers after they get into the Party.

Here again I want to say that what applies to the Party—I am going to speak mostly about the Party—applies with only variations of detail to the life and work of our revolutionary unions, our language and cultural organizations, our workers clubs, the mutual aid societies and every other organization that we lead.

What happens to these workers when they do join the Party, those that do get in, in spite of all the obstacles that we place before them? We know from the study of the vital statistics of our Party that they don't find their home in our Party. There is a tremendous fluctuation of our membership. What does this mean? What does it mean when in order to have a net gain of 25 members for the Party we must recruit 100?

It means that the inner life of our Party does not correspond to the needs and desires of the workers who are closest to us, who follow us, who believe firmly in the line of our Party, who are convinced loyal supporters of the Communist International, who are ready to make any sacrifices for the revolution. They don't find what they want when they join our Party. Why is that? Comrades, I think that we have to say that this is because of this tendency towards bureaucracy, towards formalism, which as comrade Kusinen developed at length in the American Commission last year, is a characteristic American social disease. It penetrates into our

Party. Its specific nature is bureaucratic tendencies. Everywhere these bureaucratic tendencies arise. We must make it very clear that these are alien tendencies that find their origin in the ideology of the bourgeoisie and especially of the petty bourgeoisie. They force their way into the life of our Party through all of those channels by which bourgeois ideology and practices generally penetrate into the ranks of the working class. It is an alien class force.

We must draw a sharp line of distinction between the bureaucracy of a reactionary union and the bureaucratic tendencies which we have to fight within our movement. Both represent the influence of alien class forces. But there is a fundamental distinction between them. In the reactionary trade unions bureaucracy has an organized economic basis and upon this basis it performs a certain conscious political function hostile to the working class. In our case bureaucratic tendencies have no economic basis within our movement. Their basis is the pressure of the whole social atmosphere in which we live. It is the pressure of the dominant class upon us that penetrates our minds and our habits. This tendency coming from the enemy class finds a soil in our main political weakness which is lack of faith in the masses. Everywhere where we have lack of faith in the masses, there bureaucratic methods of work and a formal approach find fertile soil, develop and grow and threaten sometimes to choke our organizations.

In our draft resolution we give some examples of how this expresses itself in certain ideas formulated almost like slogans among our members. Yet though these bureaucratic tendencies have no organized expression, unconsciously they carry out campaigns in our Party—subterranean campaigns. I am not accusing anyone of factionalism but a slogan springs up, it is caught by another, it comes into a third unit, it passes into the trade unions, already it begins to create an ideology and an atmosphere. Such slogans as those we list in our draft resolution. "American workers are especially backward and therefore will not struggle." Everyone has heard this slogan. What is the political meaning of this slogan. The political meaning of this slogan is a social democratic program. Any comrade who talks about and emphasizes the political backwardness of the American workers and gives this as a reason why they will not struggle, is unconsciously an agent of social-democratic political theory.

"Our Party is too weak to lead broad mass struggles." This is also such a slogan and it is very effective. How many district bureaus can report that half of their time is spent not in working out plans but in overcoming the hesitations of these comrades who raise the objection to plans that are proposed that the Party is too

weak to lead such broad struggles? I think we have to say that this is true of a majority of our districts. What does it mean, this slogan? Lack of faith in the masses, and at the same time reliance upon spontaneity. If our Party is weak, how is it going to become strong? There is only one way, and that is to lead broad mass struggles. And this slogan means to wait until the Party grows stronger and then we will lead the broad mass struggles. This is reliance on spontaneity, dragging behind the masses.

Then, this slogan: "Untrained workers cannot be trusted in leading positions." How many times have we heard this? How many times have we met the cry, "Give us forces?" You remember at the 12th Plenum every district in the Party was demanding that the national office incubator shall hatch out about 20 new Marxist-Leninist organizers for them. We answered that these persons don't exist yet, they still have to be created in the process of the struggle, and our task is not to have an incubator at the national office but to develop them right out of the struggle. The simplest worker who has the proper fighting spirit and the native capacity, is material out of which we must get these Leninists. We have to take this material and transform it into what we want. The greatest obstacle in this development of new cadres, which is one of the basic problems of the Party, is the idea that untrained workers cannot be trusted in leading positions. How are we going to train them if we don't trust them? All of our school training, all of our classes, all of our district night schools, full time schools, national training schools, etc., are not going to solve the problem of cadres for us as long as beside these schools we retain this slogan, "untrained workers cannot be trusted in leading positions." The schools do not always fully qualify leading cadres, they only do part of the work. The schools are necessary, the schools that we have developed have made a tremendous contribution to our movement. But we have learned in these schools, that just going through these schools does not produce a trained leader. Sometimes we find that on the contrary, school courses seem to have a bad effect on some comrades. Why is it? The type of comrade who seems to retrogress in school rather than develop is the type who has not been trusted in leading positions when he was untrained so far as school was concerned.

Those who have been already trusted functionaries who have shown responsibility, who have answered to these responsibilities, they come into our schools and emerge on a higher level, with tremendously enhanced possibilities of work. What we have to do to create the foundation for our schools and for our whole movement is to trust the untrained members, and train them in the pro-

cess of the work. We will find that we cannot solve a single one of our problems unless we have this as the first law of our work. Have confidence in the workers, place responsibility upon them and collaborate with them and help them in the doing of the work.

I am sure that once we begin to really break down in a decisive fashion this wall that we ourselves have built up between us and the masses, that we are going to find it a very simple matter and not a big terrible task to double the membership of our Party before next January first.

In the course of our study of shop work we found comrades give a peculiar explanation why the shop nuclei don't grow. They say that our comrades in the shops are afraid to work in the shop. "Kick them out of the Party — they are a bunch of opportunists." This attitude, I think, is responsible for a large proportion of the decline in our shop nuclei membership in the last period. We find a great readiness in our Party apparatus to charge workers in the shop with opportunism, but we find a great reluctance, comrades, to spending a few evenings with workers in the shop concretely discussing what are the problems of this shop and *how* we can work in this shop. Too often, when we do have the direct contact between our leading apparatus and these workers it takes on a formal character—the transmission of instructions that have already been worked out in the "secret chambers" of the committee and no discussion about the concrete problems of that shop.

Under such circumstances as this, with no kind of leadership except a circular letter that is based primarily upon the needs of street nuclei but which is absolutely useless for shop nuclei, with this as the only leadership that is given to the shop work, is it any wonder that the comrades in the shops feel a complete absence of organized assistance from the Party to solve their problems, that they become passive, or hostile to the pressure put upon them in a bureaucratic manner from above without concrete directives? They are given no leadership and when we force them to function by administrative pressure from above the comrades, being clumsy and inexperienced, expose themselves, they are fired, and the first thing we know our good nucleus is gone. The other nuclei then decide to aid the statistics of the district by preserving themselves from discharge through being inactive.

The only solution for this problem is organized leadership by the Party to solve shop questions concretely, on the basis of the concrete circumstances in each shop. At least comrades we must make a minimum beginning on this. I think that it would not be a bad idea to give the task to each district committee to select one shop nucleus which the district committee assumes the direct responsi-

bility for leading. The district committee should assume complete responsibility for acquiring a knowledge of the problems of that shop in the next sixty days, and working out for that shop such methods of work by the comrades there that they will successfully carry on some mass work in that shop and not get discharged. I think that the first district committee that can report to the national office that it has successfully done this, should immediately receive a gold medal of the Order of Lenin, to dramatize the fact for our Party that the greatest achievement that can be made is to establish a real functioning shop nucleus, that the greatest glory that any Communist can achieve is to be able to say he helped to do that job. That's the supreme job of the Party right now and I think if we begin in Pittsburgh, in Cleveland, in Detroit, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and even in New York (laughter) to solve the problems of one shop nucleus, we will suddenly begin to find this is not such a difficult problem when we go about it right. It can be done.

It can be done! And the only reason we don't do it now is because we sit back and expect it to be done automatically. Comrades, there is no step in the revolutionary movement that's done automatically. There is not a single step forward that we can make except at the price of concrete, stubborn, detailed, planned, systematic work.

I am afraid we use this word "concrete" too loosely, it is becoming one of the most abstract words we have in our vocabulary. What do we mean by "concrete"? We mean, when we give it the sharpest meaning, getting the specific details of a certain situation that exists in only one spot and nowhere else in the world and apply the general rules of Bolshevism, to that one peculiar individual case of which there is no duplicate in the world. Our comrades plan their work too much only in broad categories—between the different categories there is a sharp distinction, but within the category all is one. They have one general approach to all shop problems. But comrades, there is no such thing as a general "shop problem." Every shop is a separate problem and you cannot solve it by any general formula.

* * * * *

This Plenum begins a serious struggle against bureaucratic tendencies, for the establishment of correct methods of work and correct approach to the masses, for finding the road to the building of mass organizations. These aims can only be achieved and elaborated in the course of the work of the comrades in the field. It means nothing so long as it remains on paper. It becomes a political fact and political force only as it begins to guide the

thoughts and the work of the comrades in their work among the masses, and in their mobilization of the Party for this work.

There are the most tremendous possibilities open for us if we strike out boldly along this path. Our perspective is a revolutionary perspective. We have no reason whatever, while we are combatting the tendency to see the maturing of the revolutionary crisis without regard to the work of our Party and the maturity of the working class, to belittle those revolutionary perspectives which are based upon the development of the class struggle and the leadership of our Party at the head of these class struggles. To the extent that we develop and lead the rising struggles of the working class in the United States today, that is the degree to which we can later begin to speak in the United States of the development of prerequisites of the revolutionary crisis. Comrade Stalin was absolutely correct when already before the beginning of the economic crisis he gave us this revolutionary perspective. Comrade Stalin, in the American Commission in May, 1929, two years and 3 months ago said:

"I think the moment is not far off when a revolutionary crisis will develop in America, and when a revolutionary crisis develops in America that will be the beginning of the end of world capitalism as a whole. It is essential that the American Communist Party should be capable of meeting that historical moment, fully prepared of assuming the leadership of the impending class struggle in America."

I think that this is the spirit in which we should approach these practical problems now. We must have the consciousness and the realization that the necessity for carrying through these tasks that we set ourselves, is the necessity of preparing a Party capable of leading the working class in this struggle. This is the main significance of the work that we are doing today. We are forging the revolutionary cadres that will bear the responsibility for leading the struggle of the working class in the United States. The methods by which we are traveling along this road and beginning the solution of these problems are worked out for us by Communist International, and especially sharply and clearly expressed in these speeches of comrade Stalin.

I want to close my report with another short quotation from Stalin's speech. He said:

"The duty of the Communist Party is at once to begin the preparatory work for the coming class struggles and to prepare the working class and the exploited masses for new revolutionary struggles. The fight against reformism, against social democracy, must be intensified, the struggle for the winning of the

millions of the working masses on the side of Communism must be intensified, the fight must be intensified for the forging of real revolutionary Party cadres and for the selection of real revolutionary leaders of the Party, of individuals capable of entering the fight and bring the proletariat with them, of individuals who will not run before the face of the storm and will not fall into panic, but who will sail into the face of the storm."

This is the task, part of which we are tackling today, other parts of which we will tackle at our next meeting, and which before long we will begin to attack on the whole line. The opportunities for successful work have never been so great and we must reorientate the entire Party on new terms of tempo and numbers of masses. We must speak of building a mass Party and beginning to accomplish the building of a mass Party. And while "mass Party" is a relative term, when we deal with figures, I think we must say we haven't the beginning of a mass Party in the United States until we have a hundred thousand members in our Party. We must so organize, so adjust, so make use of all of the forces that we can draw into the work, that we will actually achieve this goal and the establishment of a mass Communist Party. Thus we will really be able to sail into the face of the revolutionary storms that are coming in the United States.

* * * * *

EXTRACTS FROM CLOSING REMARKS OF COMRADE BROWDER

Comrades, the discussion has all been upon the line of the 11th Plenum, E.C.C.I. and the specific application of that line contained in the draft resolution presented at this Plenum. It is not necessary to conduct any polemics against any one as being in opposition to this line. We are unanimous. However, there are certain questions of formulation, certain questions of emphasis and certain deviations here and there from the line that have to be dealt with very briefly.

Now, what is the general characteristic of the discussion which has taken place? I agree with comrade Weinstone that, while there was a distinctly higher level at this discussion than at any previous Plenum, particularly expressed in concretization (not "high politics" and abstractions, but a higher political level in the sense that the Party line was expressed in terms of work and facts and life), yet there were still many weaknesses.

I want to add one or two to those that were described by comrade Weinstone. The first weakness is that we did not find any one standing up to claim this badge of the Order of Lenin that we of-

ferred to any one who would come forward and give a description of how he formed a shop nucleus. The main characteristic of the discussion was that it revealed how far we are from the practical problems of organizing one nucleus in one factory. We must emphasize this. We are suffering from an underestimation in practice of shop work and this applies to the entire Party from the Central Committee to the lowest units. We have been writing and talking about shop work for a long time, but it remains in our Plenums and resolutions and our documents, and the word is not transformed into the deed.

I think that we ought to begin to develop another real campaign in our Party, beginning with the Central Committee, a real struggle against phrase-mongering. Every time somebody tries to formulate a task for us, let us give him the job of beginning. And we must begin to insist more, comrades, that our resolutions shall not remain on paper, especially the resolutions about shop work. A resolution that remains on paper becomes an obstacle to the development of the work.

Now, about the struggle against bureaucratic tendencies and the development of correct methods of work. I think that in the discussion there was demonstrated a certain danger that we may have some confusion with regard to the struggle against bureaucratic tendencies. We must guard against this confusion. Some comrade may say that he does not understand how we can separate the line from the practice, that we maintain the line is correct but we point out so many ways that it is not correct in practice that suspicion is in his mind that something is wrong with the line. Is the struggle against bureaucratic tendencies going to be allowed to develop into an instrument for struggle against the line of the Party? This is the question that is raised by such confused formulations.

We are not taking up the struggle against bureaucratic tendencies because we have learned any lessons on this question from the Lovestoneites and Cannonites. They use the slogan of struggle against bureaucracy as the instrument for the struggle against the whole line of the Comintern. Everybody knows they have no interest whatever in strengthening our Party. Their interest is in destroying our Party. Will there be any danger that the struggle against the bureaucratic tendencies in the Party will become an aid to disgruntled elements who do not like the line of the Party? I think there is such a danger. I think we have got to guard against this very carefully. Are the defects in our work the result of some defect in our line? We must say, "No, emphatically no." The line is correct and only by standing firmly on that line will we be

able to make any effective struggle against bureaucratic tendencies. Any one who begins to depart from that line, no matter how much he shouts about bureaucratic tendencies, is helping to reduce the effectiveness of the Party.

Now we must remember the necessity, while conducting the struggle against bureaucratic tendencies to break down the wall between us and the masses, of always clearly understanding the necessity of fighting against deviations in policy, fighting on two fronts against right and "left" deviations. This remains fundamental and anybody who tries to leave this slogan in the past history of the Party and says now we have only the struggle against bureaucratic tendencies is wrong.

On the Negro question, we have had some interesting contributions in the Plenum, not only from experiences, but theoretical analysis of these experiences. Comrade Heywood made a very interesting contribution to our discussion. A great deal of what he had to say was a good contribution but I think he spoiled much of it by turning it into a polemic against comrade Minor. He argued for the greatest attention to understanding the role of class differentiation among the Negroes and accused comrade Minor of having objections to this. And he even declared our mistakes themselves constitute our line, and that we have been dragging behind the bourgeoisie due to these mistakes.

Now we have made mistakes. These mistakes have been generally of the character described by comrade Heywood. But shall we say that these mistakes constitute our line and that as a result we are dragging behind the petty bourgeoisie? I think we have to reject that estimation, we have to reject it very definitely. These mistakes do not constitute a line and we did not drag behind the petty bourgeoisie. We did not always handle our problems in a thoroughly efficient Bolshevik manner. But in spite of these mistakes, the main characteristic of our work in this field during 1931 was its brilliant political success that resulted in our first sharp offensive against the petty bourgeois and bourgeois leadership among the Negroes. These main characteristics we must not allow to be obscured. Was this done in spite of comrade Minor? No, on the contrary, under his direction. Comrade Minor has made mistakes, I have made mistakes, other comrades have made mistakes, but it does not help to try to construct a line from these mistakes when no one tries to defend them. And when comrade Heywood quoted from comrade Minor's article as proof that Minor does not know there are classes among the Negroes, or does not understand the role of these classes, he carried his polemics too far. I have re-read this article and while it is true that there is no mention of class in the

paragraph he quoted, comrade Heywood seems to have overlooked other paragraphs in the same article. Let us see if Minor has overlooked the classes entirely. Minor said:

"A growing discontent, militancy and tendency to seek organizational methods of struggle on the part of the Negro *proletariat*, is accompanied by sharply increasing discontent among the Negro *petty-bourgeoisie*, and peculiar, petty-bourgeois projects for a way out."

Thus, right in the very beginning of his article, comrade Minor raised the question of classes very sharply, the whole issue of class differentiation within the Negro masses, one of the most important phases of which he was studying in this particular article.

Comrade Minor incidentally in his article, also points out that the main factor determining the line of the Negro bourgeoisie is their submission to the imperialist policies of the white bourgeoisie. Comrade Minor showed that this is the main factor to explain the treacherous role of the bourgeois and petty bourgeois, their treachery to the national liberation of the Negro masses. Comrade Heywood seems to think this is wrong, and that we must find the explanation in the separate economic class base of the Negro bourgeoisie separate from the white bourgeoisie. It is quite true that it is the separate economic base of segregated districts and Jim-Crowism which makes the Negro bourgeoisie an instrument of the imperialist white bourgeoisie. But by making them the instrument of the imperialist white bourgeoisie it changes entirely the form of their policy and their relation to the masses of the Negro people. This facilitates very much our struggle against them, and helps us to expose them, because the Negro bourgeoisie is unable to carry on an independent policy, and must take its policy directly from their white imperialist bosses.

This is very sharply expressed in the article published recently by DuBois. This is the first real programmatic article produced by the intelligentsia of the Negro bourgeoisie in answer to the Communist offensive among the Negro masses. And what is this policy of DuBois? Very frankly and openly, this most characteristically Negro-bourgeois program that has been elaborated, attacks even the camps of the reformists, the Socialist party, etc., speaks respectfully about some aspects of the Negro program of the Communists, and then says: but all gains that the Negroes have made so far in America have been presents given to the Negroes from the financial interests of America, from the upper imperialist circles, and calls for a policy of non-solidarity with the white workers, a policy of separation of the Negroes, under the direction of the big bankers,

as the best way to gain concrete economic advantages for the Negroes out of the situation in the United States today.

I think that we have to say that this article of DuBois is a very concrete evidence proving the correctness of comrade Minor's statement that the imperialist political parties are the main factor directly determining the policies of the Negro bourgeoisie. Their direct submission to imperialism, white imperialism, is the main factor.

Now a word about the question of an insurrectionary perspective in the South. There is some confusion on this with regard to comrade Heywood, who spoke about the possibilities of uprisings, etc. I think possibly we have to deal here with a certain lack of preciseness and discrimination between the question of sharp class struggles on the one hand, and on the other hand the question of the nature of these struggles. But I think that with another formulation that has been made we have to deal not with a question of confusion, but a question of wrong perspective, which raises the question of insurrectionary perspective in the immediate struggle of the Negro South. We deal with immediate perspective, with that degree which we can see in the future and thereby regulate our tactics and slogans of the moment. And are these to be given their form and character by the acceptance of insurrectionary perspectives in the near future? I think we must say, no. An insurrectionary movement is the climax of the development of revolutionary struggle, when the oppressed class goes over onto the offensive in the struggle for power. And this is not in the immediate perspective. On the contrary, the movement is just beginning, and especially in the beginnings of this movement, our main slogan for the Southern Negro is not "prepare for insurrection," but "defend yourself, organize the defense against the offensive of the bourgeoisie."

The white bourgeoisie in the South is conducting the sharpest offensive against the Negro masses. The masses are only beginning to defend themselves. We must rouse this defense and give it sharper and broader forms as the best means for developing a revolutionary perspective.

I think we must say that comrade Amis' "Letter to the Negro Press" was a mistake. I personally called it to the attention of comrade Amis the moment I saw it and told him that it was entirely wrong and discussed it with him. I know other comrades did the same. I know comrade Minor did. But is it correct to say that this mistake, this deviation of comrade Amis, represents a line? No, that is not correct. Particularly in view of the fact that comrade Amis has not defended his mistake. I wish that other comrades would be as easily convinced of their mistakes as comrade

Amis was; these mistakes would then not be so dangerous.

I think in comrade Minor's speech there was one unclarity. At the end of his speech what he said about the inevitable connection of Negro liberation with the proletarian revolution might be open to some misinterpretation. I don't think we can say that national liberation is dependent upon the proletarian revolution. It is inextricably woven into and is dependent upon the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat but to say that there can be no national liberation except as the by-product, as the fruit, of the victorious proletarian revolution is not correct and is to make the slogan of self-determination dependent upon the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat, and this is theoretically incorrect. It is quite true that in the vast majority of cases the practical realization, and certainly the full realization, of this slogan will only come as the by-product of the successful, victorious proletarian revolution, but theoretically it is not correct to make this a broad generalization.

Another word about comrade Minor's article. I think comrade Heywood makes a mistake when he objects to the tone of high indignation of comrade Minor's article, which comrade Heywood interprets as surprise on the part of comrade Minor that the bourgeoisie should betray, and he accuses comrade Minor of believing that the bourgeoisie would not betray the Negro masses. I think this is an incorrect criticism. I think it is precisely in this that the strength of comrade Minor's writings lies, that he infuses in every line of his writings the greatest indignation at the betrayals of the bourgeoisie, black and white. We should not attack this. We should encourage comrade Minor to write in this way. Write just as hot as you can, comrade Minor, against the betrayers of the workers, white and black!

* * * * *

The form of the slogan contained in comrade Gebert's report and which we also noticed in the leaflet, when they put forward the slogan of struggle against the Communist Chest business: "Don't contribute a penny to this fund but join the fight for social insurance," is a wrong formulation comrades. Against the concrete action of the bourgeoisie pretending to meet the immediate needs of the masses we are bringing forward only our general slogan. I think we should say: "Not a penny to the Community Chest. Give your money to the Unemployed Council." "Against Hoover's stagger plan. Fight for social insurance." Balance our concrete slogans against their concrete slogans, our general slogans against their general slogans—something along that line. Whether they should give the money to the Unemployed Councils or special forms of self-help of the unemployed, organized under the direc-

tion of the Unemployed Councils, should be discussed, but the general contents should be along that line.

* * * * *

In spite of all weaknesses, we can say the line has been hammered out sharp and clear and this Plenum has been just as important in the development of our Party to a higher stage, as the successful work of our 12th Plenum.

REMARKS IN CLOSING THE PLENUM

We have finished the work of the Thirteenth Plenum of the Central Committee. I think that we should take note of some very important aspects of the work of the Plenum. The Plenum has marked a new stage of the development of the work of the Party. The Plenum has demonstrated that the Party is maturing, is going through the process of bolshevization, and is more and more adequately facing its problems. It is more and more justifying itself as a Section of the Communist International. This Plenum has not only been a practical, working Plenum. It has also demonstrated the complete integration of our Party, the practical consolidation of the Party in terms of the every day life. In this Plenum we have had for the first time in several years almost all of the leading comrades here participating with us. For almost two years, comrade Weinstone had been away. Now, this is the first Plenum since October 1929, that he has been here to take his natural and normal part in the work of the Party here in the United States. We have also had with us in this Plenum comrade Bittelman, who has been away for a long time, and I am sure that I am expressing the sentiment of the entire Party when I say that we welcome him back to the United States to resume his place in the leadership and work of the American movement. (Applause).

Comrades, from this Plenum we are going out to do a hundred times better work than we have ever done before. We are going out not only in a formal way to talk about the decisions of the Plenum. We are going out to transform our movement from top to bottom and start the process that is going to bring us in a short time to the realization of a mass Communist Party in the United States, prepared to lead the millions of workers in the United States in the struggle for power.