

The American League and the Y. C. I. Bureau Session

By MAX SHACHTMAN.

TO understand thoroughly the decision rendered by the sessions of the Enlarged Executive of the Young Communist International on the work and future tasks of the American League, it is necessary to review the work of the organization—with which the membership is more or less personally familiar—and the fractional struggle in the League—with which the membership is not so very well acquainted. The latter point is all the more important since the decision of the Y. C. I. is quite decisive in its categorical appeal that the fractional struggle shall henceforth be considered at an end.

The Fourth Congress.

It will be remembered that the fourth congress of the Y. C. I. rendered an exhaustive decision on the American League almost year ago. It stated that the N. E. C. had applied the decisions of the third congress on economic trade union work "in a hesitating manner, which can be accounted for by lack of experience and by the difficult situation existing in America." The representative of the minority, who had based his opposition to the N. E. C. in the general phrase of accusing the national committee of "accepting Y. C. I. decisions in theory and sabotaging them in practice" was told that "altho there is a healthy kernel in the criticism of the minority the accusation of 'sabotage' is unfounded and must be rejected, the more so as the N. E. C. tried hard to carry thru the decisions and the Y. C. I. can therefore have full confidence in the N. E. C."

Upon the basis of this decision the Y. C. I. called for the cessation of all factional disputes. All the comrades will recall that immediately upon the return of the delegates, the League entered into a period of mass activity which was unprecedented in the American youth movement, and which proved that the ideological campaign of the N. E. C. among the membership for mass activity had had its effect among a broad section of the organization. Under the slogan: "The masses are in the factories! Build a mass organization by going to the factories!" we initiated the factory campaigns which are now a standard in this work thruout the International. Practically for the first time the League appeared as the representative of the needs of the young workers in the industries, as the foremost fighters for partial, everyday interests of the working youth. In numerous cases, the young workers looked to us for aid in any attempt they might make to better their conditions. "How will the Young Workers League help us if we go out on strike?" was not an unusual question asked of us, and it was symbolic of the change that had come over our organization.

And this work had an electrifying effect upon our own organization as well. More clearly than ever was realized the necessity of having the correct organizational form in order successfully to carry out these campaigns; with greater energy did the comrades begin to organize nuclei. Another result was the hastening of the process of transforming The Young Worker into a mass organ by having it reflect the lives and struggles of the young working masses whom we were beginning to reach with our drives. For the first time the energies of the League were thrown into two or three important strikes where we appeared not merely as a Communist organization, but as a young Communist organization. Our anti-militarist work took on a concrete form, and not solely a press propaganda. The Junior groups movement began to enter into its real functions, its legitimate field of work, the school struggle, and with appreciable success. We showed our understanding of the tasks with regard to the Negroes by entering energetically in the Negro Labor Congress movement as a youth organization.

Even the most superficial comparison of the condition of the League at the second national convention and thereafter with the activity, membership, and political maturity of the League in the recent period is enough to show the remarkable advances we have made. This is said despite the fact that we have covered only a short distance of our road to a mass organization; that we have made many mistakes during our development; that our shortcomings are even at the present moment not to be denied. For, as the Y. C. I. stated in its report to the recent session, "We place on record that our American League occupies first place among the Leagues which have made a beginning with practical work among the masses and have taken the first steps towards Bolshevization."

Attempts to Unify the League.

BUT this work did not meet with recognition by the comrades of the so-called minority grouping. Not for one moment was the factional struggle stopped by them. On the contrary, it was intensified, and the leadership of the fight soon rested in the hands of the leading members of the District Executive Committee of the New York League. Seeing no basis for continued division in the League, the representatives of the N. E. C., Comrades Williamson and the writer, before our departure for the Y. C. I. sessions remained in New York for a number of days in order to come to some agreement with the comrades of the minority, on the basis of both groupings maintaining the

League's work that it is capable of being the leader of the American youth league in full agreement with the E. C. of the Y. C. I. We are con- right of having differences of opinion on the party question at the time, of a common fight against Loreism by both groups, and a cessation of the factional struggle in the League on the basis of the plan of work proposed in the statement of the N. E. C. printed in The Young Worker.

The negotiations carried on between the leading minority comrades and the N. E. C. representatives were finally broken off. We had reached a stage where the minority comrades agreed to sign a statement calling upon their supporters to cease the factional fight, endorsing the N. E. C. statement, so far as the organizational part was concerned, and declaring that they had complete confidence in the N. E. C.; but they were willing to sign this statement only if the N. E. C. representatives would also sign a statement saying that the N. Y. district executive committee had never committed any mistakes, that we had been laboring under grave misapprehensions as to their activity, that they had done the best work in the League, that they were, in short, the most efficient, capable, and praiseworthy group of comrades in the movement. This absurd whitewashing we declined to sign. Instead we offered a statement which spoke rationally of the development of the work of the New York League, pointing out its achievements as well as its shortcomings. Then the minority comrades balked, and refused to sign the statement of unity.

At the membership meeting that followed the D. E. C. presented its resolution of condemnation. In the face of the growth and achievements of the Young Workers League in the past period, recognized by practically everyone in the country as well as by the comrades of the Y. C. I., and in the face of the fact that only a few hours before they had been ready to sign a statement declaring their complete confidence in the N. E. C. and recognizing the progress of the League, the first sentence of the reso-

will avoid the pitfalls of opportunism and sectarianism.

Yet, we need not despair. Far from it! The stabilization of capitalism is confined to a few countries only. It is of an illusory, temporary nature. While Germany is quiet, Bulgaria is in flames. The Balkans and the Baltic lution introduced by them read: "The outstanding characteristic of the period since the Second National convention of the Young Workers League is undoubtedly the extremely slow development and lack of growth of the organization." And further: "By and large our organization has not advanced in membership. . . All thru the work of the League nationally seems to have sunk into a swamp of stagnation. . . Since the Fourth Congress. . . there has been little evidence that the decisions of the Y. C. I. are actually being carried out on a national scale." And so on and so forth.

In spite of this obvious lack of sincerity on the part of the comrades, who one moment condemned the N. E. C. as having led the Young Workers League into a swamp of stagnation, and at the next moment were willing to say that they had complete confidence in the N. E. C. if we would give them a good whitewashing, we attempted against to achieve a spirit of unity. But this time the comrades were even more stubborn. Comrade Zam, representing the minority, when we had declined once more to sign the statement they proposed, arbitrarily broke off the negotiations by "wishing us a good trip across!"

The Decision of the Y. C. I.

It was this incident, together with many others of a similarly fractional nature, which convinced the comrades of the Y. C. I. that there was absolutely no basis for the continued existence of the minority grouping with the League. The decision stated decisively that where the minority has "re- proached the central committee of the Y. W. L. with not having done enough towards making the League a mass organization, we declare that there is no justification for such an accusation." And "the central committee of the Y. W. L. of A. has shown lately,

by the way it is conducting the vinced that it will be able also in the future to lead the Y. W. L. in accordance with the lines laid down by the E. C. of the Y. C. I. . . "

It is on the basis of this decision that we may now make the demand: "No further fractional struggle within the League!" The continuation of factionalism at this time is an open violation of the Y. C. I. decision and will be accorded the treatment it deserves.

Our Tasks Now.

With the final settlement of the internal difficulties we can now go ahead with unified energies to accomplish the next tasks before us. The chief tasks outlined in the resolution of the Y. C. I. were fully agreed to by the delegation and by the National Executive Committee. They form the basis of our activity in the coming period of our existence. Their achievement means the achievement of a mass young Communist league in this country.

We must realize that our task is not any easy one. We have the ever-present difficulty of revolutionary work in America, a country with little revolutionary tradition, without the tradition of a mass movement of workers, a wide section of the workers corrupted by imperialism, an extremely cunning, brutal, and experienced ruling class, and weak revolutionary forces; and on top of that we have the present world situation of a temporary stabilization of capitalist economy. In a situation which is not immediately revolutionary, we must know how to work in a revolutionary spirit, under conditions which are far from the final struggle for the dicta-

torship of the proletariat we must know how to work in a spirit which states are volcanoes. The Orient and the lowly Africans are rising against imperialist rule. The "accord" between England and America is riding to a fall. War threatens on the Pacific. The conditions of the American workers become daily worse, while capitalism "stabilizes" itself. And the young workers, the object of our work, are the first victims of the increasing greed of the bourgeoisie. A great field of work is open before us, and it will need every ounce of our collective work to cope with the problems that will confront us and the prospects of success that we can have.

WE can take advantage of the possibilities on one basis only: by the Bolshevizing of the League, which means the carrying on of mass work in the hearts of the working class, in the shops and mines, of rallying the young workers from the heavy industries to our League, of uniting the white and black youth, of gaining our allies in the agrarian sections of the country, of intensifying our activities until we are recognized as the representatives of the most militant young workers on every social and political field of struggle, of building a united League which will not tolerate for a moment any attempts, by any one or group, to dissipate the energies of the movement by petty fractionalism. With this in mind, our League will go forward along the lines which lead to a Leninist organization.

* * *

(In future articles I shall deal with the Y. C. I. session as a whole, with the Plenum session of the Comintern, and with the American question at the C. I. Enlarged Executive.—S.)

THE DUTY OF COMMANDERS

DURING the battle of Waterloo a staff officer informed the Duke of Wellington that Napoleon was in range of a battery in plain sight and asked the Duke permission to fire on him. Wellington refused, saying: "It is not the duty of commanders to be firing on each other." Fro proof of this read Siborne's "History of the Campaign of Waterloo."

TOILING YOUTH

By HARRY GANNES.

WAR AND THE YOUTH.

THE United States has not lagged behind in its war preparations. That it is the foremost capitalist nation in the world is not denied by anybody; and that in order to maintain its supremacy it must have a large army and navy is the opinion of every military expert in the United States.

During the past ten years the amount of money spent by the United States government for war preparations has doubled. The regular army has increased from 92,035 to 132,834; the national guard from 120,802 to 160,598, and the organized reserves from 0 to 78,338; the total army of the United States is now about 500,000 according to the report of the secretary of war.

Since the close of the war Reserve Officers Training Corps has been organized. This body seeks to enlist every student in the high schools and colleges of the country to prepare them as an officer class for the next war. Each year, an endeavor is made to recruit 270,000 possible soldiers for the Citizen's Military Training Camps. Thus far this section of the military organization of the United States has had but little success. Eighty three cents of every dollar paid in taxes to the government is spent for war purposes—that is, either past, present or future wars.

Not content with arming this country, the American government is backing the financiers and industrialist of the United States in their plan to arm the South American Countries. Thru the direct influence of American bankers and the state department, Argentina appropriated 9,500,000 pesos for modernizing its fleet. A Federated Press report stated on that occasion:

"Back of this big increase in armament may be seen the hand of the American armament companies and of the American state department. The most powerful country to Argentina in Latin America is Brazil, and there a commission of American naval experts is supervising Brazilian war preparation which means hefty armament sales there." It means a little more than mere armament sales; it means preparation for war and with the hope that America can use the South American countries as its allies.

There are organizations specially formed for the purpose of aiding to foster the militarist development of this country. Foremost among these is the National Security League which is backed by the leading militarists and capitalists of the United States. It is the endeavor of this organization, with the aid of the American Legion, and many other such institutions, to increase the armed strength of the country to 5,000,000, taken chiefly from the masses of young workers. General Lassiter, Asst. Chief of Staff, United States Army, in one of the Security League pamphlets says: "The units now being definitely established will provide a force of about 3,000,000 men; but, with the machinery established, we could then go on to keep the ranks of these units filled up during a war. . . . The essential problem for the future is . . . to provide the means for securing the personnel, as well as the equipment, required for rapid expansion on mobilization for war."

Evidently, the general expects a war soon.

All indications show that if the United States is not preparing to start

a war, is at least preparing to take part in one. The recent exclusion of Japanese immigrants is just one of the things that brings to a climax deeper economic differences such as exist between the United States and Japan over the division of the spoils in China. Japan wants the Philippine Islands; the United States wants a free and untrammelled field of exploitation in China, and neither country is ready to relinquish in favor of the other. That war may come about between them two any day is not a chimera but a fact.

Nor does the danger lie only between the United States and Japan. Every imperialist nation is the enemy of every other imperialist nation. They are all scrambling for the control of the world markets and the world resources. When the conflict become sharp enough, war is just a usual step in the project of expansion.

Max Shachtman in the Young Worker of March 1, 1924 points out the war danger when he says:

"Why this rush for oil?"

"The oil lands of the United States are being rapidly exhausted. Everyone scrambles for the monopoly of the oil lands of the world. But the three great competitors for the monopoly of the oil of the world are America, Great Britain and France. . . ."

"The antagonisms between the ruling capitalist nation grow sharper day by day. Seeking constantly a market for their surplus products. . . . and for their surplus capital, these various imperialist powers come into conflict with each other. . . . And in the meantime they sharpen their claws. They increase their armies, their navies and their airships. . . . Then comes the open clash."

And the youth are slaughtered again!

(To Be Continued.)

Come One and All to Chicago Picnic

The Committee on the Arrangements for the coming Young Workers League Picnic to be held at Beyer's Grove, California Ave. and Irving Park Blvd., met last Saturday and made all preliminary arrangements for the best attended and most interesting gathering of young workers and juniors ever held in the city of Chicago.

The committees for various tasks at the picnic were elected. Committees for entertainment were especially picked out to consist of the most active and inventive comrades. Besides the regular entertainment at the Picnic such as the various games and athletics, there will be a short musical program with mass singing, a few solos and a couple of good speakers.

The Juniors who are helping the League to put the picnic across, are instructed by the League to prepare an elaborate program and no doubt they will do that with their usual energy and enthusiasm.

The grove is easily accessible from every part of the city. Tickets in advance are 35 cents at the door 50. They can be secured at either the national or local office of the League, 1113 W. Washington Blvd., or 19 S. Lincoln St., and at every branch meeting of the Party or League and from every member.

Young workers at the factories where the League is carrying on campaigns will especially be invited to this picnic by special pluggers printed for that purpose.

Russ Kids' Colonies Convene in Moscow

MOSCOW.—At the first conference of homeless children held in the Home for the Blind Children in Moscow, about 200 children, delegates from children's colonies, took part. Kalina, the wife of the president of the Soviet Union, emphasized that the most important problem was the mutual relations between the children of the communes and the surrounding population especially the peasants in adjoining villages.

Then the children spoke. They de-

scribed how the peasantry at first regarded their colonies with mistrust, looking upon the children as street urchins and incipient criminals, but that now they are friendly and helpful. Several told how the children had saved property of the peasants from fire. After the conference there was a concert and fraternization with the Young Communists and pioneers.

POVERTY IS LOT OF PHILLY KIDS

By RUTH FERN.

About one-third of Philadelphia's population is under 21. Only about five per cent of the 430,000 families in Philadelphia contain more than three children. Yet the conditions are terrible. Industry is now the main support of Philadelphia's children, and it is shown that 85 per cent of gainfully employed persons are wage earners receiving an average wage of slightly over \$18 a week.

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics showed that in December, 1924, the cost of maintaining a decent living in Philadelphia (and these figures never exaggerate) was \$1,923.08. At the same time, the wages of the masses of men workers were only between \$1,000 and \$1,500 per year. Some families filled out the necessary income by sending their women and children to work. Others live in the direst poverty.

Professor Patten says in his "New Basis of Civilization": "There can be no permanent progress until poverty has been eliminated, for then only will the normally evolving man, dominant through numbers and keen mental powers, force adjustments, generation by generation, which will raise the general level of intellect and character. . . . Our children's children may learn with amazement how we thought it a natural social phenomenon that man should die in their prime, leaving wives and children in terror of want; that accidents should make an army of maimed dependents; that there should not be enough houses for workers."