New Ferment in the CP Youth Movements

LYL Leader Evinces Political Re-Thinking

BY EDWARD HILL

A discussion meeting at the University of Chicago last week brought to light some very interesting developments in American youth politics. Two speakers made presentations, William Jennings Jr., Illinois acting chairman of the Labor Youth League, and Michael Harrington, national chairman of the YSL.

The YSL changes began by endorsing the idea of the meeting and the whole conception of discussions between LYLers and various socialist groups such as the YSL. In his summary, Harrington grasped this notion, and reaffirmed the YSL's desire to engage in such discussions with the LYL throughout the country.

Efforts to arrange a debate with the LYL in New York had failed when the LYL representative turned down the invitation. At this time, the YSL was pushing for a "broad" kind of discussion involving a whole array of political problems, from the standpoint of various socialist organizations.

But this was not the most interesting aspect of Jennings's talk. It was his analysis of the YSL and its attempts to make the "ballast" do something to the community.

In discussing the congress, he spoke of the bureaucratic tendency of the YSL to be brought into line, of the pressure from certain leaderships, and of the attempt by the YSL to do something about the situation.

WELCOME DEVELOPMENT

However, this must be placed in the context of the fact that the LYL has suffered a precipitous decline in membership. Its membership in tolerant centers like New York is only a fraction of what it was only three or four years ago.

This was an important step in the shift of points of view in the past month (a "broad" kind of discussion in the YSL and Jennings's analysis of the YSL). Jennings, speaking for himself and for not the YSL, pointed out that...