

YCI Letter to Sixth National Convention

The Sixth Convention of the Young Communist League of U. S. A. meets at a time of the greatest economic crisis in the history of capitalism. The main burden of this crisis falls on the shoulders of the workers and poor farmers and especially upon the youth. The extremely acute crisis in America expresses itself in unprecedented mass unemployment, in the brutal offensive of capitalism on the conditions of the working class, in more intense rationalization, in a deep-going agrarian crisis, in the sharpening of the preparations of American imperialism for a new war. The crisis has greatly aggravated the capitalist contradictions inside the country, as well as, and particularly, the contradictions between "decaying capitalism and construction of Socialism" (Thesis of the XI Plenum, ECCI).

It is especially now that the whole capitalist world is intensifying the preparations for new wars and in the first place the war of intervention against the USSR (as sharply stressed by the XI Plenum of the Executive Committee of the Communist International), has become especially grave. The ECCI Plenum has given an estimation of the present situation of capitalism, has pointed out the ever-growing tempo of revolutionary activity and the growth of the pre-requisites of a revolutionary crisis in a number of countries (Germany, Poland), which places before all Sections of the CI and YCI most responsible tasks. In the first place the task of maximum intensification of the work of the Sections, bringing up this tempo to correspond with the development of the revolutionary activity of the masses and the sharpening class struggle.

In view of the war danger and the ever-growing importance of the role of the youth in the class struggle, the fight for the youth is becoming now exceptionally grave, hence, the task of winning the majority of the toiling youth becomes the chief and decisive task of the YCI. This task is organically linked up with the problem of winning the majority of the working class to the side of Communism.

The YCL of America has not shown itself as the organizer and

leader of the daily struggles for the most vital interests of the toiling youth, even at the times of the sharpest struggles of the working youth, during strikes, the YCI was in most cases absent, lagged behind the masses, or failed to give the necessary leadership. It has shown extreme weakness and neglect of the unemployed youth, failing to put forward a platform capable of rallying the youth in the struggle against unemployment and to organize them into the unemployed councils. The program on unemployment presented at the Plenum of the League is not one which is able to rally the unemployed youth because it does not reflect their immediate demands and needs and contains contradictory demands. As a result only a small number of unemployed youth participated in the demonstrations on the 10th and 25th February. The youth committees of the unemployed councils are insignificant and where they exist function very badly.

In many units of the YCL there is no understanding of and resistance to youth work in the trade unions and the outstanding task of drawing the youth into the revolutionary trade unions and into the TUUL is entirely underestimated and in many places is a side issue in the work of the League. As a result of these facts our youth sections in the TUUL and revolutionary unions are weak and insignificant.

The Young Communist League must clearly understand that these conditions are an expression of the chief weakness in the work of the youth—failure to place into the foreground of the daily activity of the League the task of organizing and mobilizing the youth for economic struggles on the basis of the most immediate interests of the toiling youth. The YCL has failed to draft youth demands for the basic industries to popularize these demands and to rally the young workers in struggle for them as a means of raising the level of struggle of the youth and the working class as a whole.

The basis of the work of the League as an organization of the revolutionary youth must be the factory. The decisions of the Nov. 1929 Plenum of the YCI on this

question were not carried out, nor was the necessary struggle conducted against the sabotage and ignoring of these decisions. The nuclei that exist are mere skeletons and impermissibly small, they conduct no youth work in the factories, and in most cases are passive.

The YCL as a whole has contented itself with general propaganda, by no means considerable, against the war danger; has not organized the real anti-militarist struggle and has not made the question of the war danger a burning issue among the youth. Moreover, we must state that in the YCL of America there is a great underestimation of the danger of war against the USSR and of the importance of anti-militarist work, which is one of the most glaring expressions for the Right danger in the YCL.

The YCL continues to underestimate Negro work and to display a number of incorrect tendencies in its approach to the Negro youth despite the first beginnings that have been in this field of activity. This is especially marked in the failure to give independent leadership to the struggle of the youth for Negro rights (Scottsboro campaign); in the hesitation to recruit young Negro workers directly into the YCL (Young Liberators); in the failure of practically all districts to fulfill the shock task of recruiting 20 per cent of their new members from among the Negro youth and in the absence of energetic recruiting of Negro youth for the LSU and revolutionary trade unions. There was also shown the dangerous tendency of confining Negro work, and the struggle for Negro rights to the Young Liberators, the branches of which, despite contrary decisions, were being composed mainly of Negro youth, so that the majority of our white comrades would remain aside from the struggle for equal rights for Negroes. The YCL has not sufficiently drawn the Negro comrades into the work and leadership of the League or made the Negro work the task of every white league comrade.

(To be continued)