

# THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

## Resolution of the Plenum of the Y. C. I. on the Young Workers' League of America.

### Introduction.

The Y. W. L. of America has extended its activities in the last period, despite the extreme difficulties which face it due to the peculiar conditions of American imperialism. In the field of economic struggle the League has developed new activity such as the campaign for a trade union organisation of the young workers (Plumbers helpers, Painters, Textile) participated in mass strikes, such as Passaic, Needle Trades in New York and Miners' Strike, and commenced to organise Youth Conferences. It has developed its educational work and carried on activity during the elections on the basis of its own programme. Further it has commenced propaganda against the war danger and the C. M. T. C. During these activities, the League has made many errors from which it must learn to improve its work still more. Despite a certain broadening of League activities, the composition of the League membership is still largely outside of heavy industry and mainly foreign born elements. Therefore the previous directives of the Y. C. I. still remain in force as the basic task of the League (Resolution of the VI Enlarged Plenum).

### The Character of the Y. W. L. of A.

The Y. W. L. of A. still remains a small group separated from the masses of young American workers. This gives rise to pessimism in the ranks of the Y. W. L. itself. It therefore is necessary to clearly define the actual condition of the American proletarian youth to-day. We cannot say that the working youth of America is an almost inert mass. The mass of young

workers of the U. S. are politically apathetic. Further, great numbers of them are to a greater or less degree under direct bourgeois influence through bourgeois youth organisations. A small section is organised in the trade unions, a very small group is following the various political working class organisations, and even a much smaller section is organised in the American Y. W. L.

While it is true that the vast mass of the American working class youth are politically dormant, nevertheless, such events as the **active participation of the youth in various strikes** and the organisation of small youth strikes show them to be eager to defend their interests.

Our general perspective cannot admit of mass revolutionary struggles in the immediate future, but on the other hand, it is necessary to emphasise that relatively small inroads on the traditionally high standard of living of the American workers and also ultimately the war policy of American imperialism can and will set large masses in motion. The task of the Y. W. L. for the immediate future is to adjust its character and methods to this situation. This means above all that it develops broad methods of genuine youth work without mechanically repeating the work of the Party. It is further essential to carefully build a cadre of American young workers, and the educational work of the League, especially district schools, must be based on this principle. In the American class struggle the American working class youth plays the especially important role of a connecting link between the foreign born adult generation and the American workers.

The E. C. of the Y. C. I. is compelled to repeat the warning of its previous decision on the American question regarding the impossibility of the League's development so long as it devotes most of the time to international Party affairs.

The Y. W. L. while utilising to the full the experience of other Sections of the Y. C. I., must not endeavour to transplant mechanically the method of other Leagues into America, but must understand how to apply these experiences to American conditions. In this sense the Y. W. L. can play an important role in the American labour movement.

### The Forms of Mass Work.

The most important field of League work is in the **industries and the trade unions** in which the chief task is the special campaign for the organisation of the unorganised young workers. This must be carried out in conjunction with the general programme of the T. U. E. L. Therefore the League must have special representatives in the leadership of the T. U. E. L. who are industrial workers with a knowledge of the conditions of the youth of the various important industries. The League should set up a special youth department in the National Committee of the T. U. E. L.

In addition to specific demands for the industries, the League must propagate a clear-cut **general programme** on behalf of the young workers in accordance with the resolution on the American question of the VI Enlarged Plenum of the E. C. of the Y. C. I. and the resolution of the last Plenum on the question of rationalisation. The question of child labour, school age, etc., now play a particularly important role in the U. S. A. The Y. W. L. must present a definite answer to middle class reformist propaganda. The League must develop its practical economic activities as commenced in the case of the plumbers helpers, youth strikes and the organisation of youth conferences. The League has not yet mastered the art of immediately reacting to all events in this field and its hesitancy in the miners' strike as well as its failure to immediately enter the struggle as an organisation with a definite youth programme is regrettable. The League must always come forward with a clear programme of special and practical youth demands. The E. C. of the Y. C. I. is of the opinion that special forms of trade union youth work are especially necessary in the U. S. A. The League must organise young workers' clubs, the exact character of which must be based on the concrete situation, youth conferences, committees of action, etc., wherever this is possible. In this work it is necessary that the American League possesses the greatest elasticity in all forms of trade union youth work as for instance the organisation of **youth committees** on the basis of **youth conferences** of more or less lengthy duration. In those instances where the T. U. E. L. organises independent unions, the Y. W. L. must actively participate in organising the young workers in them. The League must

carry out a strong campaign for youth representation on all trade union committees. The drive of the bureaucracy is a move in conjunction with the offensive of the employers against the T. U. organisation of the youth. It is therefore necessary to increase the activity in the Left wing T. U. movement. Efforts should be made to establish youth work in the unions also by means of youth lectures, sports, youth sections in Union journals, etc., which must not lead to any neglect of the economic struggle. The E. C. categorically rejects the proposal to organise youth unions. The organisation of the youth into separate trade unions will only split the youth from the adults and leave them helpless at the mercy of the employers.

The workers' sport movement offers a further valuable field of mass work, particularly in the trade unions.

### The Struggle Against War and American Imperialism.

This question, in view of the colossal world role of the United States imperialism is a decisive one for our League. It is necessary that the League directs its struggle against American imperialism by a correct exposure of the liberal illusions about the "peaceful" role of American imperialism in world politics. "The attitude of America in the question of China, the speeches of its statesmen, and its loans to Poland and Finland show that America is not satisfied with the passive role, and that despite its disagreement at the present time with Great Britain, it undertakes in an increasing degree to defend the rear in the war preparations against the U.S.S.R. in order undoubtedly at the decisive moment to support Great Britain's war policy in an active manner, at the same time following its own endeavours to gain world hegemony." The struggle against the general war danger, and particularly against the offensive on the U.S.S.R. and the Chinese national revolution is the League's main political task in the next period, and the E.C. of the Y.C.I. calls the attention of the League to the resolution of the Comintern on the American question in this connection. Further the League must devote special attention to support the struggle of the peoples of Latin America against American imperialism. The anti-militarist work of the League must receive first attention in the present period. This work has been neglected, particularly on the occasion of the departure of American troops for China, but a continuance of this neglect cannot be permitted. In this anti-militarist work the League has unfortunately displayed a directly pacifist tendency which must be checked at all costs. The question of pacifism and the attitude of our League is particularly important, since pacifism is wide-spread in the American labour movement, and the Y.P.S.L. represents a purely pacifist organisation. Even the Y.W.L. of A. has expressed this tendency in a series of measures, such as the League election programme ("reduction of military expenditure"), the slogans for the C.M.T.C. campaign ("the appeal to the employees for 250 corporations") the mistakes made in the united front with petty-bourgeois pacifist organisations as pointed out in the previous Plenum Resolution and the proposal to restrict the anti-militarist work of the League. It is necessary on the one hand that the League quickly correct these mistakes and on the other that it devotes the greatest attention to the clarification of the question of the Leninist attitude to war, armaments, the workers' militia, etc., in its mass agitation and especially in the League educational work. The E.C. especially calls the attention of the Y.W.L. of A. to the resolution of the Plenum of the E.C. of the Y.C.I. for its instructions on these questions. Above all the League must commence practical work in the armed forces.

### The United Front.

Due to the objective difficulties of the League the application of the united front tactic is difficult. The League has committed a number of errors in this connection which are still not completely overcome.

The chief need of the League is a clear understanding of the necessity of complete independence and the right of full unrestricted criticism of all organisations with which we make the united front. No united front can be entertained with the non-Communist organisations without these rights and the League cannot restrict its criticism in the interests of the united front with other organisations, but must at all times clearly preserve its distinct identity. At the same time it must be emphasised that only through the united front can the Y.W.L. mobilise large masses of young workers. The Y.W.L. should

endeavour to establish the united front as a general rule with working class organisations, trade unions, trade union committees, defence committees, trade union Left wing committees, conference committees, etc. The united front with petty-bourgeois organisations must be an exception and at all times is only permissible on a local basis on concrete issues where these organisations have a large working class following.

### Pioneer Work.

The Y.C.I. notes with satisfaction the work of the Young Pioneers in the extension of its influence, the increasing of its membership, the setting up of children's corners, the drawing in of children into strike activity, etc.

The task of building the Young Pioneers into a mass Communist children's organisation must be greatly intensified however, and must receive even more help and direction from the Y.W.L. units than in the past.

In the U.S.A. where the masses of working class children are under bourgeois influence and are concentrated in bourgeois organisations, such as Boy Scouts — the task of fighting the bourgeois ideology and developing class consciousness and class independence of the working class children and their organisations is of the utmost importance. The trade unions and other working class organisations must be attracted and utilised in the carrying out of this task. They can help in the formation of working class children's clubs, summer camps, etc., on a local scale, with leading participation of children. The programme of such a movement must be of a working class character and directed against the Boy Scouts and other expressions of bourgeois influence (religion, patriotism, etc.).

In regard to the Pioneer Youth, which has trade union support, it is necessary to work inside this organisation, inside the trade unions for control, for the decentralisation of the organisation, for the leading participation of the children themselves, for a clear working class programme, directed against the Boy Scouts, etc., for the support of the workers' struggles (strikes, etc.) against reformist and reactionary leadership and politics (vague programme, high fees for camps, etc.). We must utilise it as one of the organisations through which working class children should be developed towards a clear working class position.

The main task for a Communist movement in the U.S.A., however, is we repeat, to develop the Young Pioneers (our organisation) and to transform it into a mass organisation.

In the Pioneer Youth of America, we must strive for leadership, build our fractions and recruit for the Communist Children's movement — the building of which into a mass organisation is the main task for the mobilising of the masses of proletarian children against the bourgeoisie.

### The Enrichment of League Life.

The course to brighten the League life is correct because this is an indispensable condition for the development of the League. The League inner-life, however, must not be developed at the cost of participation in the industrial struggles and the general mass work which must be the League's main work. All lighter League features should have a definite connection with political life. For example, the introduction of revolutionary songs and plays, revolutionary mock trials and literature, etc.

### Sports.

The E.C. Y.C.I. notes that a start has been made by the Y.W.L. in the very important task of building a labour sports movement in the U.S. The secretarian mistakes made in the past on this field have to a large extent been overcome and the League must continue this work on a broad basis.

However, since the workers sports movement has mainly attracted up to the present time the foreign born workers sports clubs; one of the most important problems of the movement is to reach and build the American workers' sport clubs (Trade Union Sports Clubs, Neighbourhood Workers' Sports Clubs, etc.).

The Y.W.L. must intensify its efforts to win the moral and material support of the trade unions for the labour sports movement and for the enrolment of the trade union sports clubs and teams in the movement.

We must organise wherever possible worker control factory sports clubs and teams and penetrate the existing factory clubs and teams in order to destroy the bourgeois leadership and influence in this field.

Above all it is necessary that the Y. W. L. build its fractions in the workers' sports organisations. It is necessary that larger numbers of League and Party members be drawn into the sports work so that it does not mainly remain the activity of some comrades from the top.

### Negro Work.

The E. C. Y. C. I. expresses its dissatisfaction with the work conducted among the Negroes and considers the main reason for the weakness of this work the under-estimation of the national-race problem by the League. The correct solution of this problem would make it possible for us to spread our influence over the Negro workers and farmers and their mass organisations and draw them into our ranks.

Therefore, the E. C. Y. C. I. considers it necessary to raise this issue before the League by thorough enlightenment of the practical and principle sides of this question in the League press, to set this question before the coming convention, to provide for a functioning apparatus and practise the calling of **Negro young worker and farmer conferences** or inter-racial conferences or other forms possible.

### Inner-League Situation.

1. The Enlarged Plenary Executive of the Y. C. I. correctly pointed out that the factional fight in the American League presents the greatest danger to the development of the young Communist movement in the U. S. A. and that the continuation of factionalism would be disastrous to the League. The line and action of the Y. C. I. for the unification of the League was correct and must be continued in the future.

2. Since the outbreak of new factional struggles in the Party and particularly since the death of Comrade **Ruthenberg**, new factional expressions have appeared in the Y. W. L. The entire evidence shows that these factional activities have no political basis and that there are no real political differences in the League. Mistakes have been made in the anti-militarist work, in the question of the C. M. T. C., and in the League election programme, which are the responsibility of the entire League N. E. C. The reason for the factional struggle in the League is chiefly the factional struggle of the Workers Party, and the factors which brought this about in the Party. The chief reasons of the Party factional struggle were essentially also the reasons in the League.

3. The minority of the League N. E. C., headed by Comrade **Zam**, has conducted a factional struggle to convert the League into a support for the majority of the Political Committee of the Party, despite the repeated decisions of the E. C. of the Y. C. I., that the League was to be kept out of Party factional struggles. The statement of the minority resolution to the Plenum of the E. C. that: "The basis for such a leadership does exist — in the elements that have shown the best understanding of the tasks of the League and of the correct policies to be pursued, that have maintained in spite of some mistakes, the correct line for the unification of the League and that have manifested the correct attitude in relation to the Party and the Party leadership. These elements are the basis for the development of the future leadership of the League", is out of keeping with the decisions of the Y. C. I.

Further, must be mentioned the factional activities of Comrade **Zam**, the removal of Comrades **Don** and motions to remove **Williamson** and the attempt to remove **Schneiderman**, the conduct of a campaign in favour of the Polcom majority of the Party for an immediate Party convention and opposition to a meeting of the League N. E. C. to discuss the new situation.

4. The majority of the League N. E. C. represent a group of members of all Party and League groupings (**Ruthenberg** groups, **Foster** group and **Cannon** group) and is mostly the outcome of the line of unification of the League. It must be stated that the majority of the League N. E. C. has not completely possessed the understanding of how to achieve unity and has made a number of errors which have encouraged factional struggle rather than decreased it (for example: the fact that besides the cable of the majority of the N. E. C. comrades, which formally they had the right to send, **Kaplan**, **Don** and **Toohy** signed a special Party opposition cable, the endeavours of Comrade **Kaplan** to fasten sole responsibility on the minority for some serious League mistakes). Furthermore, there are elements within the majority who carry on a factional war against unity within the Y. W. L. and against the

Party, such as expressed by the joining of Comrades **Schachtman** and **Angelo** to the "National Committee of the Opposition bloc". The E. C. of the Y. C. I. condemns strongly such action which threatens the unity of the Party and the Y. W. L.

The E. C. of the Y. C. I. warns the majority of the N. E. C. against a repetition of these errors.

The Y. C. I. requests of the majority that it shall combat all factional activities and expressions within the majority (particularly such as **Schachtman**).

The Y. W. L. must learn from the decision of the C. I. about the majority of the Polcom of the Party which states that the majority of the Polcom of the W. P. "do not sufficiently know how to bring about an amalgamation with the forces which are today in opposition". The unification can only succeed in so far as it attracts all elements to joint participation in the leadership of all League work. The unification cannot be achieved by one group alone, but must be the joint work of both groups.

It is necessary that the minority and majority make all endeavours to unite the League leadership on a broad inclusive, collective basis. The E. C. of the Y. C. I. emphasise that there can be no unity without the abolition of all groups.

5. The first task of the entire League leadership is to unite the whole League in support of the resolution of the Comintern on the Party question, and the complete unification of the Party. The League or any section of it must not be the tail-end of any Party group. For this reason the E. C. of the Y. C. I. expects full support of the resolution by both League groups and regards it as the final basis for the complete liquidation of factions in the League.

It is the more easily possible in the League as some progress has already been made in this direction. The League N. E. C. must work in this spirit in preparation for the League Convention and make every endeavour to present joint proposals on all points at the League Convention.

In accordance with this the Presidium of the E. C. of the Y. C. I. decides on the following organisational steps.

1. The League Convention will take place one month after the Party Convention.

2. The resolution of the Y. C. I. shall be the basis for the Convention decisions.

3. The election of delegates to the convention shall be on the proportional representation system under control of the Y. C. I.

At the Convention the C. C. of the League shall be enlarged to 30 comrades by the addition of new young American proletarian elements, full representation shall be secured the minority according to convention strength.

## BOOK REVIEWS

### The Complete Edition of Marx-Engels

By D. Ryazanov (Moscow).

The first half volume of vol. I\*) of the complete edition of the historical and critical works, writings, and letters of Marx and Engels has just been published. The following is an extract from Comrade D. Ryazanov's preface to the complete edition, and gives an idea of its contents and arrangement. Ed.

The first aim of our edition is to furnish that objective foundation required by every student of Marx and Engels, that is, a reliable and synoptical reproduction of the whole legacy of thought bequeathed us by Marx and Engels.

We include in this edition not only the complete works in the narrower sense of the term, but all unpublished manuscripts, all unpublished articles and fragments. The preliminary studies of both authors (compilations of material, drafts, sketches, rough outlines, fragments not included in the works

\*) Karl Marx, Works and Writings up to the beginning of 1844, including letters and documents. Marx-Engels complete edition, I. Section, Vol 1, first half vol. Marx-Engels Archiv Verlagsgesellschaft Ltd. Frankfurt-on-Maine, 1927.