

C. Y. I. Condemns Factionalism!

Urges Development of League Activity

LETTER OF THE COMMUNIST YOUTH INTERNATIONAL TO THE AMERICAN LEAGUE

THE present depression in the United States, which touches a series of basic industries (mining, textile, clothing) and expresses itself also in the growth of unemployment and in the capitalist offensive against the present standard of living of the proletariat has its direct consequences in activating the young workers of America.

The growing contradictions between the United States and England, the sharpening of the competition on the world markets will sooner deepen this depression than liquidate it. The working class youth which is involved more than ever in industry on "a basis of equality" with the adult workers, goes through all the effects of depressions, unemployment, increased exploitation and reduced wages. Furthermore, the working youth is suffering even more from depression than the adult workers, because on the labor markets of the working youth, there are always new growing reserves and new competitors. Therefore, one is justified in saying, that rationalization and its effects, far from improving the position of the working youth, have made it considerably worse. This worsening is so considerable that it activates the "American young workers who politically were up till now completely apathetic" as was pointed out by the C. Y. I. in 1926. The worsening of the position of the working youth, which became more noticeable only last year (1927), enabled us to declare: "We cannot say that the working youth of America is an almost inert mass" (from the letter of the C. Y. I. to the American League, 1927), and now when the worsening of young workers' conditions is becoming more evident to the largest part of the working youth, we can say today—"the working youth is no more the most backward part of the American proletariat, and is in many cases the most advanced and conscious part of the proletariat." The latest mining and textile strikes etc., in which the working youth played to a great extent a leading and organizing role, can serve as a good example.

Another result of the growing contradictions between America and Europe on the one hand, and America and the movements in the colonial countries, on the other hand, is the War Danger. The United States is feverishly preparing for this struggle and the plans for the militarization of the whole population are being put into practice first of all among the working youth.

These two basic features of the political life of your country will be a determining factor of the American C. Y. I.

To win and organize the working youth, to fight against war—these are your basic tasks for the nearest future. In the process of fulfilling these tasks you can develop into a real mass young Communist organization. The Fifth Congress of the C. Y. I. laid down a series of tasks, which also apply to your country. One cannot make an exception for the United States in regard to the general tactical tasks of the C. Y. I. In this letter we want merely to stress the special tasks, which could not be included in full in the decisions of the C. Y. I. Congress—the internal situation of the league and the factional struggles. Factional struggle is the main characteristic which distinguishes your League from all other sections of the C. Y. I. Your League is embarking on its tasks with factional strife in its ranks and a whole series of obstacles with which its composition and national traditions are fraught.

At present the changes which are taking place in the whole world, and particularly in the U. S. A., and the accentuation of the class struggle places the whole C. Y. I. under the obligation of aiming its main blow at the "Right" danger. The Sixth Congress of the Comintern points out that the "Right" danger is the main danger for the Communist movement at

"THE attitude of a political party towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest criteria of the seriousness of the party, and how it fulfills in practice its obligations towards its class and towards the labouring masses. To admit a mistake openly, to disclose its reasons, to analyse the surroundings which created it, to study attentively the means of correcting it—these are the signs of a serious party; this means the performance of its duties; this means educating and training the class, and, subsequently, the masses."

LENIN:—"Left Wing" Communism"—page 41, London Edition.

the present time. Not one of the groups can claim the title "real Left" or accuse the other of being "Right". So-called Right errors were committed by all the groups. The Right danger is the main danger in the American Party. In your fight to win the working youth and against the War Danger you must not forget the objective Right obstacles which will be in your way in the form of traditions and old methods of work, under-estimation of the degree of activation of the working youth and of the role of the C. Y. I., over-estimation of the Opponent's strength and of the inertia existing among the working youth.

To these objective obstacles can be added those which arise from the national and social composition of Your League, and also the existence of factional struggle. The Fifth Congress of the C. Y. I. defined your tasks as follows:

"For struggle against the Right danger, the C. Y. I. must mobilize THE LEAGUES AS A WHOLE. IT MUST NOT ALLOW THE formation of unprincipled groupings in the STRUGGLE for leadership, on such grounds or under this cloak."

From this viewpoint one must CONDEMN THE REVIVAL OF GROUP STRUGGLE IN THE AMERICAN YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE. The C. Y. I., as well as the Communist Party of the United States, have been guilty of a series of Right, opportunist errors, but both contending groups are responsible for them. Therefore, neither of them can claim monopolist leadership. The C. Y. I. demands that both sides should put a stop immediately to group struggle, that they should break with the existing party factions and that they should establish complete unity based on the policy of the Comintern and the C. Y. I. and vigorous joint struggle against Right tendencies, especially against the Right errors of the Party Executive."

The direct cause of the renewed factional struggle in the Executive of the League is the revival of the struggle in the American Party. The American League made progress in regards to unity, and the successes in its work corresponded exactly with this period. But this unity was marred by the uncritical attitude of the Executive of the League to the Right errors of the Party. The N. E. C. actually condoned and shared the Right errors of the Party by its tacit agreement with them. The Y. C. I. condemns the existence of this factional struggle and proposes the following basis for its liquidation.

The general basis of the group strife is the political and organizational weakness of the C. Y. I., especially its unsatisfactory social and national composition. However, if factional struggle be the result of the weakness of the League, this weakness is certainly the result of prolonged factional struggle. There is a direct correlation between factional struggle and the weakness of the League. Therefore one of the chief means of overcoming factional strife is development of the League's activity, i. e. overcoming the existing defects and weaknesses of the League which are the result of its objective position as well as of its errors. Therefore, although the American League has made some progress (active participation in the textile and mining strikes, certain progress in Anti-Militarist activity, small growth of the League in the last period) we think that in the League situation the basic fact is the weakness and shortcomings of its leadership. Outstanding amongst these

are:

(a) Absence of real Party leadership in regard to the C. Y. I. which was frequently substituted by fractional leadership. The C. Y. I. must be under the general control of the C. C. of the Party, and not under the control of individual fractions of the Party.

b) A relative decrease of proletarians in the League in the last two years. In no other League of the C. Y. I. is there such a high percentage of students as in the U. S. A., where manual workers constitute considerable part of the population. Nearly all the organizations of the League which sprang up during struggles (Passaic, Pennsylvania) fell to pieces after a while. There are hardly any organizations of the League in the centers where serious workers' mass movements have taken place, where the working youth has played an important role. Most of the organizations in Pittsburgh—the center of the struggle—consist of employees and workers employed in small enterprises. The relative decrease of the working elements in the League expresses not only the organizational but also the general political shortcomings of the League, caused by the fact, that the League as yet has not got a correct line in regard to the working youth, both outside and inside its ranks. To take cognizance of these mistakes is the necessary pre-requisite for the further development of the League. The League must examine critically its past work, revealing its old mistakes.

c) The Executives of the League as well as a considerable part of its membership are tied up with Party factions. The C. Y. I. proposes to its American section not only to take up a critical attitude to the individual groupings and their mistakes, which is already partly done by the minority, but to break decisively and finally all fractional connections and come out in the inner-Party questions as a united whole, becoming one of the best interpreters of the policy of the Comintern in regard to the American question. Any uncritical attitude towards the Party groupings will necessarily bring about the revival and intensification of unprincipled group strife in the League, which is the main hindrance in its development.

d) Insufficient political activity within the League and uncritical attitude towards the Right mistakes of the Executive.

e) Inadequate work in trade union organizations. Less than 30 percent of the membership are organized in trade unions and there is practically no fraction apparatus in existence. No sufficiently energetic and systematic campaigns for the organization of unorganized working youth, even in place where a bitter class struggle is going on, (mining, New York clothing workers, strikers, etc.).

That trade union work is inadequate is borne out by such facts as the total absence of a regular connection with Left trade union organizations, for instance, the Trade Union Educational League; the badly organized young miners' conference in Pennsylvania (the center of the miners' struggle); non-participation in the work of the Left trade unions, for instance, garment makers and furriers in New York, clothing makers in Chicago and New York. Although all Left trade unions and their organizations are weak they constitute already a powerful means for work among the working youth and for gaining influence over it.

f) Negligent attitude towards the work among the Negroes and under-estimation of the importance of the Negro problem for the development of the revolutionary

movement in the United States. Also failure to understand that the main obstacle to work among Negroes is the existence of chauvinism in the ranks of the League which takes various forms. The prevailing form is—giving in to the chauvinism of the white population and feeble resistance to chauvinism among white workers. The fact that there are only a few Negroes in the League is convincing proof of the necessity of a radical reorientation in regard to the Negro question.

g) Struggle against pacifism which is still deeply rooted in the ranks of the League and among the working youth in general, is not of a steady and permanent character, as shown by the recent introduction of military training which was widely advertised in C. Y. I. training schools. It is of course admissible to introduce some sort of military drill there but it would be a mistake to provoke the pacifists and the police by military training. From boycott the League jumped to military training—although this jump does not indicate the relinquishment of boycott moods in the League, but only the policy of the Executive. The most suitable form for the popularization of the idea of forming our own detachments is propaganda and formation of defence detachments against strike breakers, looting, etc., together with regular work in the army and among the working youth which is being trained for the army, including the young unemployed.

h) The inability to carry out the directives of the C. Y. I. in regards to developing and training proletarian functionaries in the League. The leading group of comrades in the League remained almost unchanged during the last years, which signifies stagnation in the growth and development of new cadres.

Only by taking decisive measures in changing the existing situation in the League, will the League be able to carry out the tasks with which they are confronted. Firstly, it is necessary that the League be united on the line of the C. I. and C. Y. I. and that the League or any part of it shall endeavor not to be connected with either fractional group in the Party. The League must be alert and critical of all mistakes of the Party and League, fearlessly criticizing these and must participate and take a stand in the discussion of all political questions. Only by breaking down old fractional connections and traditions and by participating in working out and defining the new program as a united League, will a correct policy be worked out and united work possible. The line of the C. Y. I. given to the American League one and half years ago is still applicable today and this is the only real line of unity which can be followed in the League. There can be no conception that the leadership of the League is the monopoly of any one group. The monopoly of leadership belongs only to the proletarian membership of the League.

The basic tasks of the C. Y. I. is to develop its mass work, in the factories, unemployment activity, to develop the work in the army, among Negroes, creation of youth sections and the ECONOMIC ASSOCIATIONS OF THE WORKING YOUTH under the different forms of the transitional type, wherever there is no possibility to organize the young workers in trade unions. In all of these activities recruiting work must be linked up, so as to decisively increase the proletarian forces of the League. The most important task is the training of new proletarian functionaries and the involving of them into the leadership from the top to bottom.

The E. C. C. Y. I. makes the following organizational proposals for your League:

1) A partial renewal of the C. Y. I. Executive at the present time and preparations for more thorough renewal at the forthcoming convention of your League by drawing young proletarian elements into the Executive. All practical measures pertaining to the renewal of the Executive

(Continued on Page 8)

(Continued from Page 7)

sition of the national and provincial committees should be taken in agreement with the C. Y. I. if there be resistance on the part of one or the other group.

2) All comrades should be utilized for C. Y. I. work on the basis of their abilities and experiences, and not on the basis of fractional position. There must occur no organizational repressions against comrades of the minority.

3) The E. C. of the C. Y. I. welcomes the decision of the American delegation, that Comrade Williamson be a member of the Secretariat of the C. C. of the C. Y. I.

4) The date for the National Convention must be set in agreement with the E. C. C. Y. I.

E. C. - C. Y. I.