

YOUNG VANGUARD

- - A Section Devoted to Problems of the Working Class Youth - -

The Last Plenary Session of the Y. C. I.

Note: The author of this article is a member of the Young Communist League in New York, whose name cannot of course be revealed. At the time of our expulsion from the Party, he voted with the majority of the Party and League. Recently, he has written to us after a thorough study of the question, he has decided to support the Communist League (Opposition) working as much as possible inside the Y. C. L. and Party for our viewpoint. The course of comrade R. is only a sign of a steady movement inside the official Party in our direction.—Ed.

A most remarkable document, indicating the trend of development in the Communist movement, and therefore deserving of the close study of every sincere Communist, is the theses adopted at the last enlarged Plenum of the Young Communist International (Daily Worker, 1-14 and 15-30). If the members of the Y. C. L. would give some deep thought to these theses many of them would see in the depths of the Communist stream much that they fail to see on the surface. It would enable them to begin the process of breaking through the thick shell of deception in which they have been steadily encased. They might then observe in the face of the Party, lines and features of a strange and peculiar nature—lines that run crooked, features that reveal sharp distortions.

The theses speak of "the unsatisfactory situation in the sections of the Y. C. I. which in some countries takes on a form of a crisis". The theses state that "there was to be observed during the past year an exceedingly dangerous lagging behind in the tempo of work of the Y. C. I. compared with the general tempo of revolutionary development". We are informed that there has been an average decrease of 20% in the number of members and factory nuclei in most countries and an even sharper decrease in some countries ("serious political and organizational crisis" in Czechoslovakia, England, Norway, Austria). We are made to understand that the decisions of the Fifth Congress of the Y. C. I. have suffered the fate of merely remaining decisions.

The Cause For The Situation Is — The Situation

What is the cause of this deplorable situation? "The main reason for the unsatisfactory situation in the Y. C. I. should be sought in the sectarian isolation and separation from the basic mass of the working class youth which dominates in the organizations of the Y. C. I." Can this be the reason? It must be plain to every intelligent Communist that what is stated here as a reason is no reason at all, but only the consequence of a wrong line. They have substituted the results of an ultra-Leftist policy for the cause. This is standing matters on their head. Why don't they explain the reason which has led to this sectarian isolation, and not tell us that there is an unsatisfactory situation and the reason for this is sectarian isolation?

The whole situation as described in the theses must lead every Communist to serious thought. And a series of questions must loom up in his mind:

How does it happen that the sections of the Y.C.I. reveal such a stubborn inability to adapt themselves to the "general tempo of revolutionary development"? Why is it that the sections are lagging behind, continue to lag behind and still lag behind? How does it come that this lagging behind has become such a universal phenomenon? Does this not lead one to believe that the roots reach deeper than is apparent to the eye? Is there not reason to believe that the cause of this crisis is not merely that there is no will, no determination on the part of the Leagues to accomplish their tasks in accordance with the necessities of the situation, but that there is something politically unsound at the bottom of the structure? The theses tell us that we lag behind. But what does it propose? It says: we must not lag behind. It tells us that the situation is unsatisfactory. What must be done? More of this kind of work and more of that kind of work must be done!

How does it happen that the Y. C. L.s

show such a sterility that they cannot create the forces to conquer their shortcomings and assure their growth?

What kind of a situation have we reached when leaders of the Leagues must be threatened like two-year olds to carry out their Communist duties? "The enlarged Plenum of the E. C. makes it mandatory for all Leagues to create in the immediate future strong working factory nuclei in the large enterprises employing many young workers. The failure to carry this out must bring with it a change in the composition of the leading organs of the League". Does this not resemble the last, strained efforts of people who feel helpless before a hopeless situation? And should this not put a spur to every Communist to start thinking seriously, and to stop shouting in chorus: "Trotskyist renegades"?

Confusion on Right and Left Danger

The theses speak of the Right danger. Then they go on to say: "Along with this danger there is also the so-called 'Left danger', namely: a tendency towards petty bourgeois radicalism leading to the divorce of the leadership from the masses and the mass organizations, its transformation into narrow groups of 'Left' phrasemongers." Then it goes on to say that this danger is either not seen or underestimated, "that they do not want to or are unable to carry on the struggle against it". Why is this so? Why cannot the Left danger be seen and fought against? The answer is: for the same reason that Lovestone saw the Right danger in "Trotskyism". He himself was the most typical and consistent representative of the Right danger in America. The enlarged Plenum looks into the

The Disruption of the Canadian Youth League

It is now one year since the first group of young Communist League Members in Canada challenged the arbitrary methods of forcing decisions down the throats of the membership. Since that time the leadership following out with servile obedience instructions from the Young Communist International, have plunged the league from one crisis into another till today the Canadian League is fighting for its very existence. The Y. C. L. membership continues to shrink; its influence wanes with dangerous rapidity; the Young Worker as a bi-weekly comes out at rarer intervals than when it was supposed to be published once a month. It is time the members of the Y. C. L. began seriously considering the reasons for the failure and degeneration of the League in Canada and also the Young Communist International.

Responsibilities With Y. C. I.

Basically responsible for this condition, of course has been the failure of the leadership of the Young Communist International and the Comintern on an international scale which undermined the revolutionary movement throughout the world, and contributed to the revival and growth of the socialist Reformism. Until the first fight inside the Y. C. L. about six months previous to our expulsion, a more homogeneous organization could have hardly been imagined or found in the Y. C. I. The progress of the League was good. We were able to strengthen the National Executive, organize sport units and form a National Workers Sports Association, increase the membership, and take on more activity in the trade unions and on the cultural field.

In spite of these redeeming features, the ideological level of the membership remained very low. Factional fights were practically unknown, and so far as political differences there hardly seemed to be any. The expulsion of comrade Spector on the issue of "Trotskyism" came like a bolt from the blue. The opposition squabbles of the American Party had been always regarded with disdain and cynicism. The fight inside the Comintern, the Anglo-Russian Committee, the Chinese Revolution, the differences inside the Russian Party, didn't directly bother anybody and were never discussed.

The issue inside the Y. C. L. had arisen from the insistence of the Toronto membership to criticize the N. E. C., and, while it led to the expulsion of 77 active members, had been confined solely to Toronto. There

mirror and cannot see who is reflected there.

Many comrades will see in the theses the virtue of fearless self-criticism. But this in itself can lead us nowhere. Self-criticism which is not subordinated to Leninist political analysis is meaningless. It would be like the doctor who has the "courage" to inform you that you are suffering from a curable disease without telling you how to take measures to remedy it. The theses have the "courage" to inform us of an unsatisfactory condition in the Y. C. I., but they can give no political analysis for the basis of this situation, and can only propose artificial measures for the elimination of this situation.

What stage of political paralysis and stagnation has been reached in the Y. C. I. can be clearly seen from the methods by which the leaders hope to uncover the cause of the crisis. They are going to make an investigation in the Czechoslovakian, British, Norwegian and Austrian Leagues! Doesn't this show complete political impotence? Not to be able to analyze the political factors which are the cause of the unsatisfactory situation but to make an investigation as if trying to detect some technical irregularity! Yes, they have arrived at a blind alley, and do not know how to retrace their steps. The seeds of the struggle against "Trotskyism" have ripened into a pernicious plant.

It is plain. The poisonous opportunist course of the last six years could result in nothing but political demoralization. The road of bureaucracy, forgery and falsification, mockery of self-criticism, elimination of inner-party democracy, expulsion and exile of the Leninist vanguard could lead only to confusion, bankruptcy and disintegration. No number of revolutionary phrases about the brave young Communists can help. The brave young Communists can find a solution only beneath the banner of the Bolshevik-Leninists. Along this path they will find their way, even if at the present moment its direction is not yet clear to them. The course of events is bound to illuminate the road.—R.

had been no political principle at stake. The ideological reign of terror and provocations to which the expelled were treated, had, unfortunately, been a lesson only to the Toronto membership.

The Hypocrisy of the Stalinists

In the narrow development of the Canadian League, it is not at all surprising that the leadership was so easily able to force the bogeyman of "Trotskyism" down the throats of the membership. Instead of trying to raise the political consciousness of the rank and file, who were crying for discussion, the leadership demanded under threat of expulsion machine-like obedience. Those who protested were expelled. The leadership, playing on the ignorance of the League was able to defeat and deaden the fighting spirit of the membership. For the Smiths and the Bucks to come out now and blame the League and Party rank and file for passivity and disinterestedness in the fate of movement is sheer hypocrisy. They themselves are responsible. The League and Party membership repeatedly demanded discussion on the issues that were splitting the world Communist movement.

The cutting off of the Opposition has not strengthened the Y. C. L., as the leadership promised it would. On the contrary it has drained and continues to drain blood. It has opened up the organization to the attack of Police Chief Draper, which has ended in a miserable fiasco for the League and Party. Today the Party is not even able to organize an election campaign in Toronto, units don't meet, complete demoralization exists. The League has false policies due to the wrong estimation of the world situation. The Workers Sports of Canada has been completely wrecked due to the ridiculous irresponsible tactics.

In the trade unions the influence of the Y. C. L. has completely disappeared because of the adventurous Leftism of the leadership. The Socialist Youth Organizations, which had repeatedly met with failure in trying to organize the youth, has since our expulsion been successful in forming an Arbeiter Ring Club and a National Workers Alliance. In the Palestine affair, many former League sympathizers marched together with the Zionists and are today coming more under their influence. The main activity of the once leading Toronto League has been reduced to monthly social gatherings.

The answer to the question of what now is to be done is therefore more than ur-

The Curse of Mining Accidents

TAYLORVILLE, Ill.—Since the strike of December 9, after the underground wage slaves had been driven back to work by the united and unscrupulous forces of the Farrington-Fishwick gang, the Peabody Coal Co. officials, the tin soldiers of Governor Emmerson, the sheriffs and gunmen and the whole of the yellow press, two deaths by electrocution in the mines, several semi-serious and almost fatal accidents in which miners had their spinal columns fractured, have occurred.

Speed-up Causes Accidents

Let us see what is the cause of all this slaughter of the miners underground. The answer that any experienced miner will give is: the speed-up system, the arrogant handling of the men by the infernal officials and their lickspittles of the Peabody system, in conjunction with the Fishwick-Haywood officials of the company controlled union, the United Mine Workers.

The union double-crossers and the Peabody Simon Legrees know that thousands of miners are tramping the streets in search of work, and that those at work, who get only a scanty wage, fear to open their mouth to protest against the inhuman and brutal conditions and handling of the miners, for that would mean the loss of their jobs which is equivalent to a death sentence to many of them, as well as for their wives and children. If it is not direct death it is at least a slow death by starvation, since the jails and poorhouses are already overcrowded.

Now let us see the additional causes for accidents. In my experience, I have come in contact with men who have passed their examination before the Board of the State of Illinois, appointed by the Governor that did not know the rudiments of third grade arithmetic. Some of them had no or little practical experience in the mines. But they had a pull with the bosses who know that this ilk of numbskulls make good slave drivers. They generally pass the examination (we have some that can't even read or write) and then are turned loose to look after the miners' safety. Such violation of even the state mining laws and misconduct of coal company officials is general and rampant all over the Peabody system.

U. M. W. Officials Delinquent

The officials of the U. M. W. generally stand idly by and apparently don't care how many violations of the mining laws the coal companies commit, or how many deaths and accidents occur. They only watch the check-off system. So long as they can draw their fat salaries and hug and squeeze the fat lady, Miss Cellaneous Expenses, they are deaf and dumb to anything pertaining to the welfare of the hands that feed them.

The National Miners Union intends and strives to do away with this disgraceful and deplorable condition. But it has a tremendous front aligned against it, running from the officialdom of the old union to the state soldiers.

So the miners continue to be plucked and degraded with the aid of the invisible whips, Hunger and Starvation. The miners must wake up to the fact that the U.M.W.A. officials only want their dues and assessments to spend, as they are doing now, for court proceedings where they fight for the remnants of the loot that remains in the U. M. W. The U. M. W. treasury is virtually depleted, even the sick and death benefit fund is almost gone. The miners have nothing left to lose now, except bad mining conditions, but they have a new world to gain. A united battle by them, with the spirit of the old days of 1894 to 1898, when it was necessary to organize miners secretly, will win the miners their victory.

—FRITZ BODE, Sr.

gent. It is not yet too late to save the Y.C.L. if the rank and file begin immediate agitation for—

1. Reinstatement of all the expelled with full rights and positions held prior to the expulsion.
2. Down the arbitrary methods of the suppression of league discussion.
3. The full discussion of the platform of the Russian Opposition.

M QUARTER