BOSTON-

• THE YOUNG VANGUARD • Struggle of the Boston Shoeworkers

OUR YOUTH THESIS

contained the thesis on the youth question proposed for our pre-conference discussion by the National Youth Committee and the National Committee. To date we have had only one discussion article

on it. What do the other youth comrades think about the thesis? Is it adequate? Are we too modest in our proposed steps? How about the adult ocmrades? Are they frankly disinterested? or perhaps skeptical about all youth work?

Both youth and adult comrades should send critical articles on the thesis to the Militant. In this way the coming Conference will be in a better position to make plans for our activity among the young workers.

THE Y. C. L.

apparently served as a substitute (!) for of the young workers. a youth thesis. It makes one sick to read this letter (Young Worker-8-31-31). identical repetition of the Y. C. I. letters of the last few years. The proposals are the same. For example: "The 'arm chair' system of work, the making up of unpractical bureaucratic plans of

work must be done away with. At the

same time it ts necessary to decisively

remove from the leadership those ele-

ments that have become bureaucratic and

are incapable of struggling in practise

for the line of the Y. C. I."! A novel suggestion indeed! Everyone was frightened. Some districts started "plans" without figures! The Chicago district put for itself the goal, among numerous other things, of 150 new members in the next three months. The N. E. C. criticized this as too modest. If the number is substantially increased at least one blessing will result: The members of the N. E. C. will

not function in the Chicago district! Neither the Y. C. I. letter nor the Chicago district plan says as much as one word on the need of the education ing employment of young, virile fresh of the youth inside and outside the

Our youth comrades especially in New York and Chicago should get busy Speak to the Leaguers; organize them into study groups in Communism, youth problems, or the platform of the Left Opposition. -JOS. C.

Day?

What is International Youth Day? The "El Obrero Del Caribe", official organ of the Carribean sub-committee of the Latin American Trade Union Federation (affiliated to the R. I. L. U.), re-

"The 6th of September, 1914, one month after the commencement of the war, the revolutionary socialist youth held a conference in Switzerland with the participation of Liebknecht, Russian Bolshevik representatives, and other revolutionists, who in face of the treason of the social democracy, set themselves the need of mobilizing the youth in the struggle against war and imperialism, for the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. Since then, this date has been dedicated by the international proletariat to the youth, having been converted into International Youth Day". (August 1, 1931).

Can one believe his eyes? Can this appear in a press edited by Communists? How can this be explained?

Day", we read:

"The anniversary of the founding of the Young Communist International on September 8, 1919, is a fitting time to sharply point out the shortcomings of the whole revolutionary movement in neglecting the task of winning the working class youth to their own class side of the class struggle and to initiate an energetic correction of this remnant of opportunist blindness toward youth problems."!

So! In Latin America, the proletarian youth celebrate International Youth Day as an anniversary of a meeting of socialist youth on the 6th of September, 1914, in Switzerland, while the "Daily" calls upon them to demonstrate for the same holiday but as "an anniversary of the founding of the Young Communist International on September 8, 1919" in Berlin!

And such ignoramuses head the Communist movement! The most elementary knowledge of Communist youth history would suffice for one to know, that:

The conference of the socialist youth took place at Berne, Switzerland, April 1915, while Karl Liebknecht was in

prison. At that time, the first Sunday of every September was established as International Youth Day. Why the 8th, a Tuesday, was picked this year, is hardly ex-

but in November 1919.

prise us!

youth notes The Question of Youth in Industry

In the front ranks of the recent; economic position, today they are in the The August 15th issue of the Militant On the picket line, on the pit commit- such as coal, the youth formerly were tees, in the locals and on the General to a large extent engaged in auxiliary Executive Board, the young miners were work-outside the mine itself; today a playing active and leading roles. By large section, if not a majority, (the them. The fact that they are members their presence and integral participa- latter has still to be determined statis of the Left Opposition implies that they tion, the strike was assured of heroic tically), of the young miners do the already understand the historic role that militancy, determined battles, iron-clad solidarity.

This is by no means an unusual oohas found the youth playing an important and even decisive part. Witness the steel strike of 1919, the Passalo strike, New Bedford, the New York needle trades, Fall River, and Gastonia.

ism; how to win it for Communism-The Young Communist League districts these require careful and deliberate ance of such demands as: Establishment are again making plans. This decision study. Before this is done, one can of work schools in factories; abolition was arrived at following the letter of bardly expect much organizational re- of night work; an annual four weeks the Y. C. L. to its sixth Convention which suits from the spontaneous militancy vacation with pay; abolition of child

Such a study in order to be of real value, should begin with a statement Once again we hear about "'Left' and and examination of the most recent stat-Right deviations", "failure to" do this, istics on the youth in industry, discuss that and the other thing, incorrect lead- the specific problems of the young workership, "we must", etc., etc. It is an er, narrate some of the experiences in the organization of the youth and summarize by stating the general tendencies of the development of youth in industry - its numerical strength, strategic importance, growth or dimunition of special youth problems.

A recent attempt to fulfill this need falls short of the mark. ("Youth in Industry" by Grace Hutchins, International Pamphlets.)

Most of the statistics used are taken from the 1920 census. Although having some value for one who has never looked into the question, they are of little value for those who want to answer the points raised above. That is, for the practical youth organizers of today. The author tries to overcome this difficulty by referring to the increased mechanization process, the growing speed-up and the general tendency towards the simplification and intensification of the industrial process, which requires an increaslabor power. This means the growing

importance of youth in industry. portance, the numerical increase of the youth in industry is accompanied by a decrease of the special youth problems. problems of youth in industry and to Whereas formerly (and it is important draw the proper tactical conclusions. The to substantiate this statistically) the sooner this task is accomplished, the after the National Conference. young workers were primarily appren- greater will be the possibilities for the

struggle of the Pennsylvania and Ohio overwhelming majority in the less skillcoal miners was the proletarian youth. ed industries. Still more. In industries side work. From this we can conclude the Opposition must play in the Comthat the tendency at work is that of reducing the problem of the proletarian curence. Since the world war, practi- youth to that of the general unskilled cally every big struggle of the workers worker. This is seen in the textile, ism cadres. How can our young comautomobile, metal as well as the coal rades mould themselves into these cadindustry mentioned above.

Youth economic demands are being reduced considerably. They arise not from the special economic position of To understand the part that youth youth in industry, but rather from their plays in the class struggle, its problems physical and psychological characterisand needs; how it is to be attracted in tics. The physical and mental immaturgreater numbers to revolutionary union- ity of the young worker under 18, and especially under 16, calls for the issulabor under 14 with state support of these at present unemployed and similar demands which may arise under specific conditions. The demand for a six-hour day with no reduction in pay, (which the Party and Y. C. L call a stagger sys tem when issued for all workers), is still a slogan of the young Communical League. For us, it is a demand for the entire working class including the youth.

> The above are also the political demands of the young Communists, that is demands of the capitalist state. Added to this, is the demand for the right to vote for youth of 18 or more. They are applied as immediate industrial de mands when the concrete situation requires it. At the same time the more general demands of the workers (social insurance, Negro equality) are propagated among the youth.

The meaning and importance of youth sections of unions is hardly mentioned while the strength of the bourgeois youth organizations are given, those of the petty bourgeois ones, which although not influential, are by no means unimportant. The Youth League for Reconciliation the Young Peoples' Socialist League etc., are not as much as mentioned.

In summary, it can be said that the pamphlet has little value, either statistically, or as a substantial factual guide falls upon the youth of the Left Opposition to make the necessary study of the tices, and helpers, that is, had a specific growth of the Communist youth.

our tasks

The youth members of the Left Or position must realize that big responsibilities rest upon their shoulders. They must understand what their duties are and what the Opposition expects from munist movement in returning it to the road of Marxism. They understand that for this is necesary the creation of Marxres? How can they train themselves for the big tasks which they know will confront them?

The first thing they must understand is that their training for leadership in the Communist movement is not a matter merely of personal desire but a seryouth comrades must strive towards fitting themselves for leadership. Secondthemselves with the weapons of revolutionary knowledge.

In the past the education of our youth comrades has been left too much chance. There is no doubt that comrades have learned much and vanced themselves considerably in the time that they have been in the Left Opposition. The serious participation in all the activities of the Opposition largely assures this. But this is not sufficient. Better progress could be made, particularly in the sphere of theoretical knowledge, if a systematic supervision of the education of the youth comrades were introduced.

In my opinion, this function should be placed in the hands of the National Youth Committee. What would be its duties in this relation? First, it would have to protect, so to speak, the opportunities of the young comrades for education. It must prevent that all routine work be heaped on the young comrades, so that they are left insufficient time for study. Secondly, it must elaborate an extremely comprehensive course of study. Thirdly, it must demand regular acbe responsible for furnishing all docu- strike. But whatever it is, it seems that However, and this is of utmost im- for youth policies and activities. It ments and books necessary in cases we are divided by something like a "no where comrades cannot afford to buy man's land" from the real currents of them.

GEORGE RAY.

This work must begin immediately

What IS International Youth IN THE RANKS OF THE PARTY:

The Startling Turnover in the Party

One of our party comrades has sent; where the bulk of its machinery, press executed-they are brought to a "success- dues. But wait,-let us pick up the Daily ful conclusion" in the columns of "self-Worker of September 2. In the leading criticism" in the party press, where the editorial entitled, "September 8-Youth appointed leaders seek to prove that the plans was indeed a good one, only the membership did not carry it out properly. Never do these conscienceless offi- party is, what it stands for." How is cials endeavor to make an honest effort this possible? Who were these workers to explain to the party members why who joined the C. P. without know either they have such a miserable record to what it is or what it stands for? Where chalk up for their regime. A case in did they come from? Who fooled them point, which speaks eloquently and into signing a card about whose signifitragically about the state of affairs in cance they did not have the groggiest the party, is cotnained in "Attached Material: Fluctuation of the Membership" which is appended to the bulletin refrred to above. We quote the opening paragraph:

The Sharp Decline

"Since January 1, 1930, when all of the old membership books had to be exchanged for new ones, the New York District issued about 6,000 books. The number of new membership books made out in the District and not given out to the new members by the Sections for one reason or another, amounts to six hundred, duplicate membership books, about 200, altogether about 800. This means that we actually gave out 5,200 membership books during the period of January 1930 to June 1, 1931. Today we have in the party not more than 3,000 members. In other words, about 2,200 workers left the party in the period of 17 months." (Our emphasis.)

If a discount is made for bureaucratic figure-juggling and for passive members. the number of 3,000 members would The Young Communist International doubtlessly be even smaller. But assum. Browder, Foster and Co. Despondent and Max Shachtman Maurice Spector was founded, not on September 8, 1910, ing that there are 3,000 members in the discouraged, they seek the easiest way out was founded, not on september 8, 1910, at the first state of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of prestige and influence into which the state of prestige and influence into which the units when they tried to give the leadership's wrong course is constantly of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of prestige and influence into which the units when they tried to give the leadership's wrong course is constantly of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of prestige and influence into which the units when they tried to give the leadership's wrong course is constantly of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of prestige and influence into which the units when they tried to give the leadership's wrong course is constantly of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of prestige and influence into which the units when they tried to give the leadership's wrong course is constantly of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of the swamp of the swamp of defeats, blunders, loss of the swamp of the sw

us a copy of the bulletin issued by the and apparatus is concentrated. In the dred times and we repeat: the worker New York district of the party for a days of the "prosperity", of the "bour- does not feel at home in his own party. "Three Months' Plan of Work" issued geoisification of the workers", the New Let him say a word of criticism directed July 1, 1931. Since the Stalinist bur- York district had some 3,000 members. at anyone but the lowest official, at anyeaucracy in the Russian party, after hav- Today, in the period of "revolutioanry thing but the least important item in ing grudgingly adopted the essential upsurge" of "mass radicalization", of the "party line", and he will wake up arguments of the Left Opposition for a the "third period", the principal district outside the party with a feeling as if a systematic plan in economy, and having of the party has not one serious advance ton of bricks had hit him on the head. been taken completely by surprise by the in membership to record! Worse yet: At best he will be tolerated in his unit successes of planned economy which were instead of merely having stood still and only in the uncomfortable atmosphere of totally unexpected by them, a veritable gained no members, it would appear that glaring looks from the section organizer, mania for "plans" has swept over every hundreds upon hundreds (a minimum of sneering criticism from some agit-prop party in the Comintern. One year plans, 2,200) workers made their way towards flunkey with the constant threat of Consix months' plans, three months' plans, Communism and the Communist party trol Commission inquisitors hanging three days' plans-all of them are ad- in the last 17 months, but so radically over his head. Only the greatest devoopted, advertised hysterically, driven at wrong was "something" in the party, tion to Communism, to its principles, to fewer pitch and-having been bureau- that these 2,200 hardly remained in it its victory in the Soviet Union keeps the eratically conceived and bureaucratically long enough to pay their first months party member inside the ranks in spite The bulletin gives 13 "reasons" for

this calmitous situation. The first one is highly significant: "1. We failed to explain to the workers who made out application cards what the Communist notion? (We have no doubt that in the course of one of the "plans't during one of the tragi-comic burlesques misnamed "socialist competition," some of the harassed party comrades simply picked up new "applicants" by the yard, without either party to the bargain knowing much about what was up and probably not caring much, either. But surely that cannot account for the membership dropping in 18 months like a bullet-riddled bird. Nor can all of the other 12 "reasons"-all of them are typical of the official's contemptible endeavor to blame everything on the "ranks"-even if put together, account for the fall.

The Roots of the Evil

We believe the causes lie elsewhere. In the first place, it is a warning punishment of the party for the false policies of its leaders. The stifling, mechanical atmosphere in the party makes a healthy discussion of policies illegal for the members. They are obviously voting "with their feet" against the wisdom of statesmen of the regime are concenttated, Dulling them. In the second place and

inseparably connected with the first cause, is the internal regime of party U., by helping the W. I. R., etc.-a sort bureaucracy, the Stalinist translation of party democracy. We have said a hunof this state of affairs. But it does not keep all of them. The bureaucrats very "planfully" drive thousands away with a metal-tipped acourge.

The astounding, almost unbelievable decline in the New York district-unmiatakably typical of what must be a worse situation in the less fortunately situated districts-is a signal whose warning note can be ignored only by the totally deaf and hopeless. The drop has occurred in a period of favorable opportunities for extensive growth, the like of which the American Communist movemnt has rarely if ever seen before. What policies is the party pursuing that they produce such catastrophic results? What regime curses the party that drives thousands out of it? What sort of a leadership has been inflicted upon the party which, in party bulletin for members, is "opporthe face of such "victories", does not tunist and sectarian decision of the unit come humbly to the membership and ask bureau", "bureaucratic attitude of the to be removed from office as hopelessly leadership in the unit" and so on. incompetent, which-even were it called upon to render an accounting of its stewardship-would look with contempt and amusement upon the impudent followers who presume to question the authority of the inviolable idols consecrated by Stalin himself?

THE MILITANT

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till last June, the shoe workers just accepted one wage cut after another with- or sympathizers of the T. U. U. L. Only out any resistance, in the absence of any a few remained, to answer the denuncialeadership capable of leading them in tions of the party and T. U. U. L. leadstruggle. The T. U. U. L. Shoe workers' group kept up its office on Washington Street, satisfied to maintain itself as a revolutionary "union" with its twelve stalwarts. A lot of talk still went ou, how to organize the unorganized? But no definite plans of approach to the work-

the Cutters' local in Lynn, a section of the old United Shoe Workers. All crafts in the industry were invited with the purpose of discussing ways and means of organizing a New England shoe workers' union. Over seventy rank and tile delegates attended. The initiators of the conference had made no preparations. They only proposed one question for discussion; when and how to call a broader conference. The T. U. U. L. delegates had an opportunity to bring forward ious obligation to the organization. All their program of action. Every single one of the T. U. U. L. representatives spoke and all the delegates responded ly, they must participate in the activities assentingly. The conference committee of the organization and in the movement was enlarged and three T. U. U. L. memgenerally under its direction. Thirdly bers were added to it. The situation and the T. U. U. L. are once again at they must engage in intensive study of was full of promise for the building of the bottom of the ladder. The work Marxism and Leninism, that is, equip a union on militant premises, despite of must be begun all anew. First of all, the few fakers that were behind the the policy of mechanical control of the move, such as Meed.

ers was laid down by the T. U. U. L.

June 7, a conference was called by

21, in Boston. The T. U. U. L. group circles of late in this direction, but nothcame to the meet with a definite stand: ing has actually been begun to bring Either to bring about a united front un- about a change in actual procedure. der the unconditional leadership of the Secondly, the Leninist united front tac-T. U. U. L. or else to leave the confer- tic, the tactic of uniting all the workers ence. At a time when the shoe workers in action while imposing merciless criticwere eager to hear what any group has ism in the course of struggle upon the to propose to them in relation with their temporary reformist allies, so that all conditions, the wage cuts, etc., the party workers involved may see with their own and Left wing forces made the main issue: Blanket endorsement of the T. U. tactic must be revived immediately, in U. L. and a guaranteed acceptance of its the shoe industry as well as in all the

forces for the conference. As soon as it workers be effected, only in this way became evident, that in this manner, the can they be led into militant struggle Left wing was in control of a majority, under revolutionary leadership. the leaders of the T. U. U. L. group opened fire against the leadership of the

is done away with.

the fact of our defeat in the coal strike.

When it came to the reorganization on

the basis of the "three months' plan",

This and innumerable other bureaucra-

tic attitudes at the top naturally give

rise to smaller bureaucrats at the bot-

tom, which, again as expresed by the

In the draft of the three months' plan

of work ending July 1, a thousand and

one failures were enumerated and not

one real reason given except on the

style of "self-criticism" with which we

have had such bad experience. But it

is easy to see that the questions: "Why

are we continually failing? Why do we

meet with one major defeat after an-

other? Why did we lose 2,200 members

and who cannot be satisfied with the hot

air of the "third period" explanations.

Lynn Cutters groups, McCaey and other From the time of the big strike up members of the rank and file Conference Committee, who were not members ers against their group. These also left, later on. The conference then elected a committee of fifteen to call a huge conference for August 15, to organize the Shoe and Leather Workers' Industrial Union. One meeting of this committee was actually held, which was at the same time the first and the last. The organization Conference never took place and the T. U. U. L. Shoe workers' group

slunk back into its isolationist snugness. The Lynn Cutters reorganized their local into the National Shoe Cutters Union. They have led a number of strikes in Lynn. In Boston, they have a great following among the cutters, as well as in other shoe towns. The leadership of this union is conservative, entrenched in the old craft union ideology. The shoe workers have little to expect from them in their struggle to better their conditions. All through their little strikes, at the meetings in which the workers assembled, nowhere has the voice of the Left wing been raised.

In the shoe industry, the Left wing party leadership of the T. U. U. L. must The second conference took place June! be rejected. Much has been said in party eyes who their real friends are-this other trade union work. Only on such The party had concentrated all its a basis can the organization of the shoe

-SHOE WORKER.

A Picture of the Party's Inner Life

The political life in our units is very needle trades strike and later on, in the counting from each comrade as to the dull. Sometimes, something flares up in coal strike. And that is a hopeful sign progress being made. Finally, it must the form of a Scottsboro case, a miners' in itself. political and trade union life of the country. For example, during the miners' strike, we heard from our unit leader-

How Articles «Happen» to Be Written ship that "the heroic strike of the min-

ers against starvation must be won." Readers of the Daily Worker may re-How? By throwing all our forces into call that a few weeks ago an article the strike, by building the N. M. U., by appeared by a certain Frankfeld, one helping the W. I. R. in its relief work, of the lesser wheelhorses in the apparby exposing the "social-fascist" Musteatus who is now "building" the party ites, socialists, etc. But when it came in Chicago. In the article, there were to the question of how to expose them. some revoltingly venomous attacks made we heard again that we must do it by upon the Left Opposition, and also a building the T. U. U. L. and the N. M. little "self-criticism" in which the author very thoroughly revealed that he has of a vicious article out of which the made nothing but mistakes and has been party does not seem to be able to issue, flagrantly incompetent and ignorant-up and from which it will not issue until to the time of writing the article. The that artificial, anti-Leninist isolation manner in which these two sides of the from the masses, kept up for the sake article were combined, and the insane of the "third period", "social fascism", fury with which the "Trotskyists" were "democratic dictatorship" and the rest assailed, were good cause even then to of the spell-binding outcries on the moon, suspect that more was rotten than appeared on the surface. Now, we receive Especially do things become bad when a letter explaining it all from a thorthe top kicks of the unit try to conceal oughly reliable Chicago correspondent:

It appears that this same person, Frankfeld, appeared one evening in the party bookstore, considerably the worse it was still worse. There and then the for an unsuccessful bout with Mr. Capbureaucratic attitude of our leadership one's principal commodity. Being usualshowed itself up. The time for the re- ly more loquacious and frank in this port on the very complicated questions state, Frankfeld proceeded to pronounce involved, was given between 15 and 20 himself as follows: "Who was right on minutes, time for questions and discus- the Chinese situation? None other than sion about 40, and all of this at the end Trotsky. Who was right on the Spanish of a lifeless, tiresome meeting filled with situation? None other than Trotsky. routine work, when everyone wanted to And who is the one that can turn out get out as soon as possible. As it was correct theses on Trotskyism? Why, stated even in the party bulletin: "The none other than me, Frankfeld." This low political level of the units, the mech- cynical hypocrisy aroused a League D. anical discussions without any prepara- E. C. member, who later brought charges tions, drive away very large numbers of against the party organizer, Gebert for workers." At the next meeting, another barboring a "Trotskyist" on the district topic for "discussion". Perhaps the dis- committee. The charges were finally trier office is working on the "three dismissed and Frankfeld was whitewashmonths' plan", but for our unit it remains ed. But one of the conditions for the Chinese, with the exception of one Chincoat of kalsomine was, evidently, that ese comrade, for whom it remains Greek. he degrade himself a few more notches. This is the task he accomplished with such skill in his Dally Worker article. He probably figures that he got off lightly.

P. S. The comrades who brought the charges has subsequently been expelled from the League himself! No comment!

L. Y. D. IN NEW YORK

Almost six hundred demonstrators participated in the I. Y. D. parade held by the Young Communist League in New York. Of these, more than half were adult workers. The party had called oif its various meetings in the city, and its members were told to participate in the League's demonstration. From this we in 17 months in the New York district can easily see that the League, which alone?"-are forcing themselves on those claims three hundred or more members of the party members who really want in New York, did not succeed in mobilto know what is wrong fundamentally izing the youth against capitalist militarism and war.

The singing and cheering of the demon-Especially is this state of mind be- strators, which was very poorly organized, was none too enthusiastic. Our own official explanation of our defeats in the cheered and sang heartily.