

Left Wing Carries YPSL Convention

Huge Majority Prevails As Gerrymander Flops

The Young People's Socialist League of America becomes the first organization of the Second International to go over to the banner of the Fourth-Internationalist movement by action of its Ninth National Convention last week-end.

By an overwhelming majority, with a discredited handful of right-wingers and centrists walking out after the failure of their vicious campaign to disrupt the organization, the convention endorsed the Marxist principles for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and enthusiastically laid plans for rooting the YPSL among young workers and all the organizations of youth.

The convention met in Philadelphia from Sept. 3-5. Up to the last day, the "Clarity" maneuverers tried every trick to gerrymander the convention. Falsification of dues records, fantastic apportionment of delegates, invalidation of legitimate elections, sale of dues stamps to Clarity circles on credit—every shady device long known to every labor faker was part of the administration's repertory.

Frantic Centrists

But even with all this they could not make a majority out of a small minority, and were compelled in a last frantic measure to start expelling the majority two weeks before the Convention. In New York mass expulsions of the left wing Yipsels began for the sole purpose of lopping off a large section of the left wing delegation.

The centrist administration made its last desperate stand at the meeting of the outgoing National Committee. Although the convention had been called for

Thursday, they postponed the opening while their majority on the committee, elected over two years ago, attempted to fix the composition of the convention. But the Committee had to work in the face of a large audience of over a hundred left-wing delegates. That already showed who had the majority of the convention.

The first question the committee took up was for the record—a motion against the endorsement of La Guardia. But when National Chairman Ernest Erber amended it to call also for condemnation of all deals with the A.L.P., for reorganization of Local N. Y. for violation of discipline, and for a democratic City Convention of the Party, the centrists sidestepped by tabling it.

The Key Questions

The second point was the crucial issue—the expulsion of the N. Y. left wing. It came up as a choice between recognizing the left wing District Committee represented by Hal Draper or the splitters' District Committee led by Barshop, author of the notorious dues-falsification letters. Here the pretext for the expulsion—the sale of the Socialist Appeal—was ripped to pieces and the political and organizational bankruptcy of the Clarity group concretely demonstrated, in a lengthy discussion. But by the machine vote of 5-2 (in the very face of the great left wing majority of the convention!), the NEC voted to recognize the Barshop committee, thereby expelling some 250 Yipsels. This job finished, they then adjourned, setting the opening of the convention for 10 A. M. the next morn-

By Hal Draper

National Secretary
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ing, Friday.

They met again in the morning for a "short" session, at the S. P. headquarters, taking up the case of the suspension without a hearing of the California Party. Erber's motion to condemn Ward Rodgers and demand the reinstatement of California, backed up by photostatic evidence of Rodgers' criminal charges against the California comrades, was met by a motion to—investigate! This debate took till 12:30. At that late hour, with the convention already more than a day over due and with all the delegates tense for the opening of their convention, the centrists made a motion to adjourn till the afternoon to take up still more credentials!

They backed down on this on our vigorous protest. We demanded that Hamilton present his whole report on credentials so that the situation would be clarified. Hamilton refused to make this elementary report, obviously following the tactic of lopping off one section after another piece-meal. Thereupon Comrade Gould demanded to know whether the Barshop delegation from New York, which was contested, would have the right to vote on its own contest.

Only Convention Can Decide

It is a longstanding rule that the NEC can seat only uncontested delegations, the convention itself voting on the contests. Obviously any other procedure means the hand-picking of the delegates by the outgoing NEC.

At this moment the question was clearly posed: Was the old NEC going to substitute itself for the Convention? The cen-

trists had gone too far to draw back now. By the same mechanical vote of 5-2, they ruled that Barshop's inflated delegation of 58 (the total number allotted to New York) would vote on whether or not to seat themselves! And since Hamilton refused to present a full credentials report, we did not know in how many other cases this procedure would be repeated.

The NEC had exceeded the limit of its powers. The convention was waiting eagerly to swing into action.

The National Chairman of the League, and by his office chairman of the NEC meeting, Ernest Erber, thereupon declared the meeting adjourned and called the convention to order with the singing of the International. The old headquarters rang with the delegates' response, everyone (including the Clarityites) standing up and joining in. When the clenched fists were down, Hamilton jumped up and called upon his loyal cohorts to walk out with him and go to the Young Women's Christian Association. Gathering up his papers, he led the retreat of about a dozen delegates out of the hall, followed by two individuals named Lazarus Becker and Mendel Mendelson.

Splitters Exposed

In this way, the splitters made clear to the whole world who are the YPSL. They walked out. They walked out of the S. P. and YPSL headquarters where the convention was being held, to foregather in the more genteel halls of the Y.W.C.A. girls. They walked out, after the National Chairman had opened the convention, in accordance with his duties, long after the time set by the organization. After they walked out, the hall, crowded before, still was crowded to the doorway and the window-sills. And as they walked out, the

walls again resounded to the International, louder than before.

The convention got down to business immediately with the election of Erber and Blackie Palla, West Coast seaman, to the chair, and the election of convention committees. The first sessions took up the political problems around which the pre-convention fight had revolved.

Convention Decisions

The main resolutions on Spain and on the International question were passed unanimously.

The Spanish resolution, declaring for the struggle of Socialism against Capitalism, set forth the Marxist position for which the left wing in the Socialist Party and League had been fighting.

The International resolution noted the bankruptcy of the two existing Internationals and of the so-called "London Bureau", and declared for the building of a new, Fourth International; the NEC was instructed to carry this out organizationally in collaboration with our party comrades. On the separated question of material aid to the Spanish Government a minority of seven was recorded. A resolution on our student tasks was passed almost unanimously, calling for a left wing movement in the American Student Union to fight against the Stalinist leadership's Peoples Front program: collective security, abandonment of militant strike action and keeping away from labor struggles.

The resolution on the labor party led to a vigorous discussion after which a pro-labor-party resolution received four votes; the minority comrades expressed themselves as gratified by the quality and tone of the debate. The resolution on trade unions puts this work in the forefront of our activities for the coming period, calling for concentration of Yipsels in the basic industries. (Continued on page 5)

Erber Surveys YPSL Progress In Five Years of Development

By Ernest Erber

National Chairman
Young Peoples Socialist League

Our Ninth National Convention brought us victory in our long battle to convert our organization into a revolutionary youth movement. The decisiveness of the victory is attested to by the pitifully small number of right wing and centrist delegates who walked out of the convention.

The left wing began the struggle in 1932. The Socialist Youth learned much under the terrific impact of the events in Germany, Austria, and Spain, as well as the growing class struggles in which they themselves participated on the industrial front in America. The program of the left wing continually moved in the direction of greater clarity and became ever more firmly based upon the principles of Marx and Lenin.

The personnel of the group changed in conformity with political development. Only a small core of the leading comrades of

1932 remain at the head of the left wing today. People like Altman, Larks, Smerken, Levenstein, and Gomberg have long since passed over to Stalinism, either during its "third period" insanity or its "fourth period" degeneration, or have found their berth in the American Labor Party or the job of a trade union bureaucrat. Others like Fischer, Fish, Friedman, and others have ended up in the camp of Clarity-Altman.

But as some members of the left wing became stultified in their development and dropped into the various opportunist and centrist channels, new blood was being added from several sources. In 1936, several hundred young revolutionists of the Spartacus Youth League joined the ranks of the left wing. To them goes a great deal of credit for the final stages in the training and development of the young Socialists fighting for a revolutionary program. Other hundreds came to the left wing directly from the struggles led by left wing members of the YPSL, on the industrial and student fields.

The theoretical clarity and organizational experience achieved by the membership during this struggle for a revolutionary or-

ganization was seen in the delegates who attended the convention and the high political level upon which discussion took place. Those who had attended several conventions and national conferences of the Y.P.S.L. could not help commenting again and again, as they scanned the assembled delegates, that this easily marked the most competent and best trained group of young Socialists who had ever gathered in a national meeting. This not only speaks well of work done to develop the membership but, of much greater importance, it indicates the work which such a membership can accomplish in the coming period of mass work.

As one of the group whose record includes participation in every national convention since 1932 and service in various capacities and upon various bodies, I cannot help repeating to the membership of the League what I said to the convention upon accepting re-nomination for National Chairman. I have never yet accepted a post in the movement with such confidence in those who go to make up the leading cadres and membership of the organization. We have come together through a severe struggle that has steeled us and taught us to work together. We now face confidently the task of building and guiding a movement that must establish its place at the head of the working and student youth of this country, to rally them around the banner of the revolutionary movement we are building, to struggle for workers' power and Socialism.

Leaders Elected by Y.P.S.L. Young in Years, Old in Work

ERNEST ERBER, was re-elected National Chairman, having served in that capacity for the last two years. At the age of 24 Comrade Erber has six years of full-time work in the Socialist movement to his credit. He stood at the extreme left of the Militant caucus during the fight against the Old Guard. In 1934 he was one of the leading members of the Revolutionary Policy Committee. He has served as Editor of the Challenge of Youth and the Young Socialist Review. The Y.P.S.L. sent him to Europe last year to attend the World Youth Congress at Geneva, and to confer with the leaders of the Socialist youth movements in Spain, France and Belgium.

HAROLD DRAPER is the new National Secretary of the Y.P.S.L. At the age of 23, Draper is known throughout the Socialist movement as one of the ablest of the younger writers and speakers on questions of Marxist theory. He has served the Y.P.S.L. in various capacities since joining in 1933; among his offices was that of Student Director in New York City. He has been a member of the National Executive Committee of the American Student Union since its

inception in 1935. He was the editor of "Out of Their Mouths", a compilation of quotations from Stalinist sources upon their changed line on the war question, which had an international circulation. The Old Guard leadership of local New York attempted to keep him out of the Socialist Party for adherence to the program of the Revolutionary Policy Committee which called for a dictatorship of the proletariat.

NATHAN GOULD, National Organizer, at the age of 24 has been in the revolutionary movement for 11 years, having joined the Young Pioneers in 1922. He was a member of the Young Communist League from 1928 to 1931, at which time he was expelled for "Trotskyism". He organized the Spartacus Youth League in Chicago the following year, and served upon its National Committee until it entered the Y.P.S.L. He served the S.Y.L. as National Secretary in 1935 and in 1936 he became district secretary of the Chicago Y.P.S.L. The Chicago organization has more than doubled its membership under his leadership. He has been a member of the National Organization Committee since last May.