

PRE-PLENUM DISCUSSION

YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE U.S.A.

Six Weeks of the Shock Plan

By GIL GREEN

(Continued)

Despite the definite progress made in the carrying out of the Plan, there has been a number of shortcomings. (1) The T.U.U.L. and Youth Sections have not been built. (2) Shop nuclei, one of the most important points of the Plan, have not been built. Beginnings have been made, but very few actually organized. (3) There has been an uneven development in the carrying out of the Plan. First, in regard to the various fields of work—neglect of the industry youth conferences. Secondly, in regard to districts. Chicago for instance has not made the necessary progress. Superior has not been drawn sufficiently into the Plan, and Boston has not made one step forward since the Plan.

These shortcomings were clearly analyzed at the NEC Bureau meeting. The reasons for the slowness of the tempo of the Plan are: (a) Failure on the part of a large percentage of our leadership and membership to understand the political significance of the Plan. (b) Open and tacit resistance to the carrying out of the Plan in a number of districts (Chicago, Boston). (c) Too little attention from the center to the weaker districts (Boston). (d) Failure to understand that the Plan can only be carried out by a complete change in our system and methods of work, without developing methods that correspond with the present changed situation. And because of this, failure to activate the rank and file comrades and the strata of young workers around our League for the carrying through of the Plan.

The last point is by far the most important at this moment, precisely because it is understood so little and because it is the key to the Turn of our League to the young workers. Our League today is a small sectarian group. Our League members are not agitators and organizers among the young workers. They do not talk to young workers. Young workers who join our League are cut off from all connections among the young workers. They are "activated" by being put on some sub-committee.

Here is a picture of our League. A girl comrade in New York is an "active" member on sub-committees and other internal work. This comrade works in a shop where there are young workers. The comrade always resisted carrying on factory work because she could see no possibilities for winning over the young workers in her shop. One evening when this comrade was at an open air meeting, she saw the girl that works at her bench, listening to the speaker. Our comrade became so frightened at the possibility that this young worker would think she was a Communist, that she ran over to her and asked her what she was doing in the crowd, and whether she knew this meeting was run by reds. At the same time, she hastened to emphasize that she had nothing to do with the meeting, but was just passing by. The young worker from the shop, who was not a League member, answered that she knew the meeting was run by the Young Communist League, and further realized that the Y. C. L. was the only organization fighting for the interests of the young workers. Here was a non-League member who followed our League and was not afraid to admit it, and whom our League member had never thought of approaching in the shop. Sad to say, this example is not an isolated one. It is typical.

It must be understood that the Shock Plan cannot be carried out in its entirety until this entire sectarian system of work in our League is smashed. The leadership today is too much an office leadership of technical workers, and not a leadership that goes out and organizes the young workers. With this entire change in outlook—must come the development of new methods of carrying on work. Leaflets and open air meetings alone must give place to more concrete organizational measures. Comrades must be sent to factories with the definite task of talking to a young worker, making friends with him, going out with him some night, and then bringing him, in a certain period of time, to the union or to our League. In the city of Cleveland nearly seventy-five per cent of our League membership is unemployed. This is bad, but what tasks are given to these unemployed comrades? When they go out in the morning looking for a job, do they talk to young workers, do they organize them into councils? No! Our own unemployed comrades fail to win these jobless youth who feel the crisis most. We must tell the unemployed comrades. "Go to a factory for a job. Speak to a young worker there. Walk with him from plant to plant. Meet him the next morning and look for a job once more. Within a week bring him to the League meeting. Within a few days bring a few of them for the unemployed council. We must give our comrades con-

crete, simple tasks they can understand and carry out among the working youth. In this way we will develop agitators and organizers, we will develop mass workers, speakers and leaders, who understand the needs of the young workers, live their lives and speak their language.

The entire sectarian outlook of the League reflects itself also in our attitude to new members. We fail to give them any work. The comrades seem to feel that only the "tried and true" can do work. Putting them on sub-committees and making them listen to long speeches only drives them away.

At a meeting on the waterfront in New York, a young Negro worker came up to one of our comrades and said: "I have come to your meeting for the past three weeks. I agree with everything you say. Please, tell me what you want me to do now." The only answer our comrade could give him was to come back next week. Is there any surprise that this young Negro was not seen again. The new fresh elements that enter our League, join because they believe it is an organization of struggle. To keep them in the League we must give them work, of organizing the young workers for struggle. Is it surprising that 1200 members joined our League in the last membership drive and are out today? It is surprising that the Cleveland and Detroit districts took in two hundred new members apiece in the membership drive, and today the total membership of each of these districts is less than that? Not at all!

The NEC Bureau discussed concretely the new methods of work. It was clearly brought out that the districts have not sufficiently developed the methods of Shock Troop and revolutionary competition as a means of developing the individual initiative of the membership and the young workers in the auxiliaries. Only in Detroit were these methods developed to any extent.

The NEC Bureau also took note of certain wrong tendencies expressed in the carrying out of the Shock Plan. In Philadelphia leading comrades had developed a theory of "organized retreat" on the part of the Party and League. They started their arguments by asking why the change of slogan for August first this year. From this they developed the theory that our Party this year is retreating, and we must follow this "retreat" accordingly in the League. The NEC Bureau very sharply hit this form of pessimism. The Party has not retreated. The slogans for August 1st are based on the world situation. Any talk of retreat today is nothing more than a capitulation to difficulties, is a reflection of the failure to understand how, and with what methods, the League is going to cut down the gap that exists between its influence and the objective conditions. Such tendencies objectively lead to the right wing theories of Lovestone, who sees no revolutionary perspectives in the present world crisis.

A second wrong tendency manifested, was in the approach of certain comrades towards the leadership. In some districts the national shock troop had met open and tacit resistance to the carrying out of the plan. These comrades were overcome by the difficulties and developed the theory that in some districts we must destroy the present leadership before we can carry out the Plan. The NEC Bureau pointed out that the district as a whole had failed to understand the turn, and that no one particular comrade was alone responsible, but the District Bureau itself, the League itself. The turn in the League will have to be made through the present leadership and through the present poor membership composition.

The NEC Bureau at the same time correctly stated that those elements in the leadership who resist the carrying out of the Plan, must be mercilessly fought and removed from responsible leadership. We must use the leadership and membership willing to work for the carrying through of the Plan, show them the new methods of work, how to win young workers for the League, and use them as the instruments in changing the situation in our League. The Plan must become a test for the leadership nationally and locally, and on the basis of the results of the Plan, we must eliminate those elements who cannot work the new way, and draw in young proletarian elements to take their places.

The first six weeks of the Shock Plan clearly show the path for the League to follow. The shortcomings and mistakes of the first six weeks must be rectified as soon as possible. The last weeks of the Plan must see an increase in the tempo of the Plan, and a clearer understanding of how it is to be carried out. The entire membership must be drawn into the realization of the Plan. The membership and leadership must realize that only through the carrying out of the Shock Plan can the League make its turn towards becoming the vanguard of the young workers in the developing class battles.