

# Tasks of Y.C.L., U.S.A. in the Fight Against Boss War and Fascism

(Extracts from Report of Gil Green, on Situation and Tasks of Y.C.L. at a meeting of National Committee held Feb. 10th-11th, 1934.)

In order to defeat fascism it is necessary to be on our guard to counter-act every expression and form of nationalism and chauvinism in the ranks of the toiling youth. Here it is necessary to understand the special features around which American fascist ideology is developing.

First, the fact that American Imperialism is the most powerful in the world; that the U. S. is one of the few creditor nations; that America is geographically separated from the other large powers; all create roots for Americanism which is already expressed in slogans such as "America First", "Buy America", etc.

In order to combat this ideology it is necessary to develop the spirit of proletarian internationalism. The failure to do this has been one of the chief weaknesses in our work. How else can we explain the little reaction to the Dimitroff trial, the Cuban revolution, the defense of the Chinese Soviets, etc.? Without internationalism it is impossible to combat hideous bourgeois nationalism.

## DEFEND NEGRO PEOPLE

Second, the existence of remnants of feudalism in the South with its oppression of a whole nation of people—the Negro people. Fascism everywhere unites with the most barbaric feudal remnants against the toiling masses. In the United States the ideology of white supremacy (white-chauvinism) is a most dangerous, fascist germ. Already the growing elements of white chauvinism are raising their ugly heads in the form of increased lynchings of the Negro people.

It must be understood that to the extent that we defend the Negro people to that extent we are also defeating fascist chauvinist ideology. Third, we must fight against all "anti-foreigner" propaganda which, already during the last war, was used to whip-up nationalist hatred against the foreign born workers. We must watch against the spreading of antisemitism which is openly being propagated by such organizations as the Silver Shirts.

Fourth, we must fight the activities of the various fascist movements among the youth of foreign birth and ancestry in the U.S. The various language youth movements under our influence must combat the activities especially of the German, Italian, Polish, Ukrainian and Finnish fascists in the U. S.

Fifth, we must expose those who appeal to the young generation to "change the world by the use of democracy" already being used by such people as Pegler, and has as its aim to blur the growing class consciousness of the working youth, to gloss over the class divisions, to make the youth believe that "the old generation" is responsible for their plight and not a certain class—the capitalist class.

## FIGHT FASCIST TRENDS

Sixth, we must react to every step of government transition to fascism. This means that we must create the broadest united front among the youth for the right to organize and strike, against government arbitration, for the right of free speech, against state control of youth organizations, etc. Every attack upon these rights of the workers, won through years of struggle, must be understood as a step towards fascism. Here especially we

must fight the Socialist theory of the "lesser evil," which means in practice to permit this transition to take place without arousing the masses of workers to stop every attack on their conditions and rights.

In fighting the preparations for war, it is necessary to constantly emphasize to the youth the aggressive role of American Imperialism. The U. S. still utilizes as the main cloak for its war program—pacifism. In fact, so clever has been this official pacifist propaganda that many youth favor increased armaments believing this is a guarantee to world peace. The Hearst papers are exceptionally active advocating a larger military force behind pacifist phrases.

It is necessary to constantly point out to the youth: (1) The aggressive role of the U. S. in Cuba, Nicaragua, China, Philippines, Haiti. (2) The sharpening contradictions between the U. S. and England and Japan. (3) The contrast between U. S. peace talk and its shipments of war material to the Far East. Of greatest importance is the explanation and popularization of the Soviet peace policy to the masses of youth; the difference between the Soviet peace policy and bourgeois pacifism; the revolutionary character of the Soviet peace policy, etc.

We must build the broadest united front movement against war and fascism around the "Youth Section of the American League Against War and Fascism." Up to date youth sections have been organized only in a few districts, while the vast majority have done little or nothing to broaden the movement after the U. S. Congress Against War. It is now necessary to build city and state youth conferences against war and fascism, reaching especially the youth in the factories, trade unions, and in the mass organizations controlled by the bourgeoisie (Settlement Houses. "Ys", Church groups) on a united front basis.

## PREPARE FOR N.Y.D.

Through the work against war and fascism, we must also broaden and unify the movement among the youth in the ranks of the YPSL and other reformist led organizations. All of this work must lead up to making National Youth Day (May 30th) this year an historic day in the struggle of the youth against imperialism war and for the defense of the Soviet Union.

Together with fighting the development of war ideology, we must in the Communist International states, "concentrate at the heart of the war machine." This means: (1) the war factories, (2) the military forces, (3) the forced labor system (CCC).

THE fight against war and fascism and for Soviet power, is not, as some comrades may think, a question of high-falutin' discussions. It does not mean, as some may think, that now the struggle for partial demands is over. No, comrades. It must be clear that war and fascism are not two abstract questions separated from the daily life of the toiling youth.

"On the contrary, every step towards fascism, every preparation for war, is carried through at the expense of the masses, is felt by the toiling youth in their daily life. Remember, that fascism is born in the womb of bourgeois democracy. It comes to power precisely because democracy can no longer serve the ruling class as the main instrument for further attacking the conditions of the masses.

"For this reason, we must see clear-

ly that to fight war and fascism means, in the first place, to fight for the daily demands of the youth, to fight against the attacks on their living conditions. And it is exactly by leading the daily struggles that we can teach the young workers, on the basis of their own experiences, who are their friends and who are their enemies, and why Soviet Power alone is their way out."

WE in America are just before a new wave of strike struggles. The disproportion between the low wage agreements and the rising prices, the general discontent with the codes, the effects on the youth of the "learners" and "apprentice" clauses, all are creating mass sentiment for strike struggles. The first indications of the higher political character of this new strike wave can be seen in the recent strikes—the transportation strike in Philadelphia; the hotel strike in New York; the cab strike in New York; the general strike in Centralia, Illinois; the rational character of the packing strikes; etc.

"In order to prepare to meet this new wave, it is essential that we critically examine the work of our League in the strikes of 1933 and how we are working today to lead the new struggles.

"First, let me again repeat what was said at our last Plenum. The leadership and the League as a whole, because of its isolation from the basic sections of youth, underestimated the radicalization in the shops. Thus, we were not oriented towards the upsurge and could not prepare in advance for it. "Second, and this flows from the first, the League was not concentrating at the key sections which would have enabled us to take the lead of the movement at the most decisive points.

## WORK IN A. F. of L. UNIONS

"But this is not all, comrades. Is it not true that we underestimated the influence of the A. F. of L.? For years we have ignored work inside the A. F. of L. under the theory that there were very few youth in these unions. Is this true or not? Our comrades in Chicago stockyards? Is it not true of our comrades in the Pennsylvania coal fields who for years believed the U.M.W.A. could never come back? It is true!"

WHAT were some of the most important shortcomings of our leadership and participation in strikes? First, the sectarian tendency of dividing the young workers into "ours" and "theirs." This played into the hands of the reformist leaders who were only too glad to split the ranks of the workers. In many places where the young workers were not yet ready to join the revolutionary unions and were vacillating between us and the reformists, we did not promptly put forth the slogan of "concentration" as a means of uniting all the workers into an independent union under rank and file control.

"Second, there were dozens of examples of right opportunism expressed in a fear of the masses and a tendency to hide the face and program of the YCL. The result in many cases was that the bosses and reformist needed only to raise the "red scare" to succeed in isolating us. If we had from the beginning correctly brought forth the role of the YCL, shown the youth how the YCL fights for their demands, consciously recruited the best elements into the League and Party, such results would have been impossible.

"Third, and this is true of nearly every strike, we failed to put forth youth demands and failed to create special youth methods and organs for leading the youth. There was little reaction on the part of our comrades to even such outstanding issues of discrimination as the proposals of the A. F. of L. to throw youth up to 18 out of industry; the special youth clauses of the codes; or to the question of "seniority rights" which is practiced in many unions and is aimed at placing the full burden of lay-offs solely on the youth.

"The failure to see the youth demands, logically led to the negation of the need for youth forms, for youth committees of strike committees and for youth sections. On this latter question, it is necessary to crush the bogey-word of separatism raised by our adult comrades and, sad to say, even some youth comrades.

"We do not intend to separate the youth from the adults. What we mean by a youth section, is simply the holding of a meeting of young union members at regular intervals—say, once a month. These meetings are called by the youth committee elected by the local union and take up the question of youth demands, why the youth should be active in the union, why they should attend local meetings, how to start cultural activity, etc.

"The local union gets reports regularly from the youth committee and acts on all proposals of the youth meeting. Where is the separatism here?"

## RAISE YOUTH DEMANDS

IN preparation for the increasing strike struggles it is necessary to raise before the whole League sharper than ever before the question of working in the trade unions, especially the reformist, independent and company unions. Not only is it necessary to see that our comrades enter the trade unions, but we must teach them how to work in these after they have entered.

"Many times in unions we defeat our own aims by our clumsy method of presenting questions. The problems of the youth must be raised logically, convincingly, and in a manner which will win both the youth and adult workers and show them the relation of youth demands to their other demands."

"In connection with developing the economic struggle, the question of concentration plays a decisive part. In practice as yet, we have no concentration policy. Although the number of our shop nuclei since the July Plenum has increased, the situation at our concentration points has not basically improved. Why? Because we have not concentrated. Let the comrades from the J. and L. the Otis Steel, Youngstown, Stockyards and Ford, deny this if they can. Yes, a little more work may have been carried on, but not concentration."

IN connection with concentration, let us ask how many districts have conducted a struggle to realize our Party and League slogan of: "A shop nucleus of the League wherever there is a shop nucleus of the Party?"

"What has been done to pick concrete factories, to assign forces, to constantly raise this question in the Party committees, and to check up and control the day-to-day work?"

The question of concentration, of sending our forces into the trade unions and in these using a very flexible approach based on the fullest application of the united front from below; these are the keys to the development of the economic struggle and the defeat of the influence of the reformists in the ranks of the working youth."