



VIEWS and REVIEWS

by

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AT the New York State conference of the YCL held the past week-end, I spoke on only one question. I tried to impress upon all comrades the need for giving attention to the personal problems of our members if we are to overcome the large turnover in the ranks of our League and if we are to develop more young comrades for leadership.

That this is no idle question can be shown by quoting from a letter which came to us yesterday from Comrade H. in Chicago.

"In preparation for a District Conference, we were going over the list of members of the District Committee with a view to making certain replacements. The list was about 18 months old and the course of events had shown that some changes were necessary. One of the replacements proposed was that of a certain young comrade, a packing-house worker. Why? Because he was not taking so active a part in the life of the League.

This New Member of Ours

"OUR comrades did not bother to find out what had happened to this fellow. The question of his functioning had never been taken up at the time. They merely allowed him to get along by himself.

"What had happened to,—let us call him Al? To understand this we must understand something of his background. Al was born and raised most of his life in the neighborhood, 'back of the yards'. His step-father had run a little saloon and boarding house across the street from the stockyards. Al spent a good part of his early childhood slaving for his step-father after 12-14 hours. Soon, however, the family broke up. Al and his kid brother were put in a Catholic orphanage. Al then went to work on his own, and worked all the time, except for one year, while unemployed, he went to school to attempt to catch-up on his studies.

What Happened to Al?

"WHAT had happened to Al? Well, he had gotten married. This meant a change in his life, a change which would take him time to get adjusted to. We must remember that his marriage meant more to him than it might mean to others, since never before in his life had he had so much affection. Soon later, some other factors were added to his life. He was bothered by an occupational disease and was compelled to stay at home evenings to rest.

"As soon as he recovered and was pronounced 'cured' he lost his job through a lay-off. Here again he was at sea. He couldn't stand the idea of his wife supporting him. He got a job in another plant, working 12-14 hours a day—still unable to participate in general YCL work.

"By that time a year had passed. The comrades had forgotten that he was a District Committee member and ceased to invite him to meetings.

But now, Al had weathered the storm. Were it not for the little attention some comrades paid to him and his wife they might be far from the movement, so active as they were to the wrong attitude many comrades took towards them.

Today they are both more active in the movement and eager for their further development.

Should We Remove Al?

"THIS was explained to the comrades and the proposal to remove Al from the District Committee was withdrawn.

"But this is only the beginning. Al is as solid as a rock with the movement. He is a patient, persistent plugger in his real work. He lacks sufficient aggressiveness. Someone must work with him, help him overcome his weakness, help him to study, to solve his personal problems, in short, help him to mold himself into the real proletarian youth leader, the type of which we need so much among our cadres.

"There are hundreds of such Als in our YCL. Unfortunately, many times we allow them to disappear into the background. We must realize that the development of our cadres will not come about automatically. Our comrades in the leadership, each must make him or herself the patron, the buddy, the guardian over such Als. Then will we show that we have learned how to develop proletarian leaders."

I believe the above story eloquently speaks for itself.