

Now Shall We Make the United Front In America

By MAX SHACHTMAN.

In practically every country in the world, wherever there is a communist movement, the Young Communist League is always to be found taking a keen interest in the policies and tactics of the Communist Party, aiding in the discussions and in reaching a decision. And this is quite as it should be. The Young Communist League, it has been the proud and justified boast of the Communist International, have usually taken their position in party matters in accordance with the line of the international. The youth movement must take an ever increasing interest in the issues that involve the party, even if only for the reason that eventually the best elements of the youth, receiving their training and experience in the league will step into the adult movement.

These remarks are occasioned by the statement just issued by the central executive committee of the Workers Party with regard to one of its major policies—the farmer-labor party—and the statement of support issued by the national executive committee of the Young Workers League, printed elsewhere in this issue. It is important that the members of the Young Workers League, and, of course, of the party study these statements quite closely in order to get a clear and comprehensive view of the policy of our party.

The gist of the party statement is as follows: The victory of Coolidge and Dawes is the decisive victory of Wall Street and a plain indication of the reign of reaction in the United States for the next four years. Capitalist control of all the means of information and the molding of opinion—press, movies, radio, church, school—has manifested itself so forcefully as to serve the purpose of scaring away thousands of those who would ordinarily have supported LaFollette, thru the slogan of "Cal or Chaos," the threat of the closing down of industry. Added to this, the fact of the temporary revival in agriculture helped to draw away the vacillating support of the petty bourgeoisie and the more well-to-do farmers from the Wisconsin senator. In the meantime, however, the LaFollette movement had willy-nilly swallowed up the movement for a class farmer-labor party, submerging it in the midst of labor fakery, the petty bourgeoisie, small bankers and business men, farmers, professional people and ordinary politicians.

Irrespective of the ordinary merits of the case, the fact remains that the mass demand that formerly held sway over the minds of hundreds of thousands of workers, in favor of a farmer-labor party, now no longer exists. The party statement then states:

"The demonstrated weakness of the LaFollette movement, as compared to the pre-election estimates of all sides, not only seriously retards the development of the so-called 'third party' but also completely eliminates the immediate possibility of a growth of a mass farmer-labor party of industrial workers and poor farmers, distinct from the Workers Party. A general agitation campaign by the Workers Party under the slogan of 'For a Mass Farmer-Labor Party,' would not be profitable or successful. The policy of applying the united front tactic by attempting to form a mass farmer-labor party of which the Workers Party would be a part, is not adaptable to the present period."

Firstly, it is necessary to ask, in considering the problem, whether or not all parties have farmer-labor policies? The answer is, No. It is not the function of communist parties to engage in building farmer-labor parties where there are none in existence, except insofar as there is a mass demand for such a party. In England, Australia, New Zealand, etc., the Communist parties seek to enter the labor parties for the simple reason that the masses are within those parties, that it is necessary to maintain contact with these workers, to point out that "laborism" cannot solve the problems of the working class, cannot bring about the overthrow of the capitalist state, that, in fact, the labor parties are becoming the third parties of the bourgeoisie and in practice prove traitorous to the interests of the workers. We enter mass parties in order while maintaining the integrity and organizational form of the Communist party, to draw

as many workers as possible into the struggle for revolution.

In the United States, where there is at present no mass demand for a farmer-labor party, it would certainly be absurd for the Workers (Communist) Party to engage in a campaign to build a rival party which would rally to its standard only a very small number of workers other than those who are already in our party.

And, again, what kind of a party would we organize? The Workers Party is the revolutionary class party of the workers and exploited farm workers and any other party of the same nature would be dual to us. If it would not be a Communist party that we are going to organize, then it would be a party with an ideology of the defunct 2nd International, that is, a Menshevik party which we would be setting up with the knowledge that it would not gain any mass support, but would on the other hand oblige us to fight it. And if it is said that the farmer-labor party that we would set up would be under Communist leadership, we would have a still more anomalous situation: Two parties with Communist leadership, one of which frankly is non-communist. And why? In order to draw them into the struggle and then into the Communist Party (W. P.). But cannot the Workers Party itself lead the masses, cannot the Workers Party itself rally the proletariat to

struggle against the capitalist class, without ourselves setting up some intermediate party, which is non-Communist and of the same size as the Workers Party? Have we not enough faith in the ability of the party to lead the workers, have we not enough confidence in the correctness of our tactics and principles that we must rely on some not-so-red party to be our outpost, as it were?

Of course not! The unconscious ideology of such a position is in effect a liquidation of the Communist party as a direct, leading factor in the class struggle.

Does this dropping of the farmer-labor party slogan as an immediate possibility mean the giving up of the united front tactic? Not at all. The united front tactic is applied in Germany and France without a farmer-labor policy. It is applied thru shop committees, thru the rank and file struggle for the amalgamation of the craft unions into powerful industrial unions of struggle, thru the fight against open-shopism, against the lengthening of the workday and the cutting of wages, thru the UNITED FRONT FROM BELOW on the basis of the everyday needs and demands of the workers in the shops and mines and fields.

The statement adopted by the C. E. C. of the Workers Party calls for the building of this united front from below. It calls for the concentration of all of our energies into the building of the

Communist party of this country, the Workers Party. Its analysis of the elections and the problems of the revolutionary workers of America is clear, and uncompromising. It is the line of policy that is being followed now by the Communist International which is fighting against new illusions for the working class. At all time, when the struggle all over the world is becoming sharper, when in the United States the hysterical inflation boom prepares a terrible break in the national economy of the country thru a widespread and hence dealing period of unemployment and financial crisis, the Communist International cannot be a part toward creating a new illusion for the American workers, the illusion of the labor party! We must particularly be on our guard against any idea of the Workers Party making a drive for a "real, revolutionary, class farmer-labor party," as it has been expressed by one comrade in an extremely confused article, for that can be only the Communist party and hence a substitute for the existing Communist party, the Workers Party.

The situation calls for clarity and confusion is only made worse confounded with ideas which run counter to the fundamental principles of the Communist movement. At this time the statement of the party makes for clarity. The endorsement given it by the Young Workers League will add to the growing political unity of the American Communist movement.

Schueller and Bammatter at the Y. C. I. Congress

We are herewith printing the complete stenographic report of Comrade Schueller's speech on the American league at the last Y. C. I. congress, together with his closing remarks. We have also added to it the speech of Comrade Sigi Bammatter, in opening and in conclusion.—Editor.

CONGRESS SPEECH OF SCHUELLER.

Remarks Concerning the U. S. A.

AMERICA: There it is also important that we have obtained an active youth league. And there also, this league is upon the best way to become a real proletarian youth organization. You will remember that at our III Congress we had differences with the American League. It raised a certain opposition with regard to the mass-work, particularly the trade union economic work, and in actual fact it has also carried out this work in a rather hesitating fashion. At the Congress in May, hard discussions were necessary in order to carry thru the line of the Y. C. I. But the league has commenced the work. This work it is true has been carried on in a rather hesitating manner, but nevertheless it has been seriously begun. It is true that the comrades have very often discussed whether these directions were correct. They were of the opinion that in America the directions should be very much altered. But the league has nevertheless accepted our directions and has carried on mass work upon various fields, for instance upon the field of the trade union economic work.

In the recent period, comrades, a difference of opinion has shown itself in the American league. An opposition has formed itself which accuses the leadership of the league of not carrying thru the directions and decisions of the Young Communist International. This opposition is as can be understood, also the reaction to the somewhat halting progress of the American National Executive Committee in this connection. There is a healthy kernel in this opposition, it is however not correct when it says that the leadership does not wish to carry thru this line. The comrades have taken pains to carry out this line and have achieved successes. But it is to be understood that in America with its lack of experience, the development into a communist youth league cannot proceed so swiftly as in the other countries. We must always think of this and therefore have more patience with the American league and its leadership than with the leadership in other countries. We are of the opinion that the comrades must understand that there is no ground for the maintenance of their differences.

We hope and believe that the national executive committee of the American League will take the same pains in the future as in the past to carry out this work. And we also hope that all the comrades will work actively together upon the basis of the directions of the Young Communist International.

Extract from Closing Speech of Comrade Schueller.

Remarks Upon The U. S. A.

SIMILARLY, Great Britain and America have taken this year a more active part in the discussion than at previous congresses. This shows that they are being drawn more into the international movement. The agreement which they express, is also good progress compared with the previous year when for instance we had to struggle against a certain opposition amongst the American comrades.

In order to avoid any misunderstanding upon what I said in my

speech upon America, I will say a few more words upon the subject. The minority in the American League is a consequence of the situation in the Party and in the youth league. The minority accused the national executive committee of the Youth League of sabotaging the decisions of the executive committee. This accusation is ungrounded, exaggerated and we must reject it. What is actually correct however is that the national executive committee of the American league has carried thru this line rather slowly, haltingly and with a certain amount of discussion. However it has finally worked upon this line and has succeeded to show. We must have more patience with the American organization than with others. It is clear that the development there will not proceed so quickly, that the league will not develop so quickly into a real and a great Young Communist League. But nevertheless in this movement there is a healthy kernel because the comrades have desired a quicker and less limited carrying thru of the decisions of the Y. C. I. Today the situation is that we must regard both sections as valuable. Sections which we wish to see continue the work, now that the political differences have been liquidated thru the Comintern Congress. We may have confidence that the American comrades will continue to carry out this line also. We hope that in the future they will do it perhaps more quickly than in some cases in the past. As in the Party, so in the Youth also, both sections must amalgamate and give up their differences and work together in complete unity upon the basis of the policy of the Communist International.

(REPORT OF BAMMATTER)

NOW come to our league in the United States. First of all we had a small quarrel with our league there. I refer to the discussion at the III Congress. But today we can say that our league is already upon the way to carry out really excellent work.

It is excellent that our League can now be reckoned amongst those leagues which are about to go from the period of the propagation of general demands. It is true however that our league has missed various opportunities. There have been for instance several strikes, and our comrades, instead of entering these strikes, have simply declared, we have done good work, our comrades have taken part in the strikes, we have set up strike-posts, and that is the end of it. One day a strike breaks out, our comrades take part in the strike and then describe enthusiastically how they have done strike-work. But in this they have done nothing at all, for they have not put themselves forward as a Young Communist League.

At its second congress the league adopted a program with a number of economic demands based upon the international decisions. Then they have sent a letter to the American Federation of Labor, they have also had a discussion on with Gompers in which they put forward the methods to be adopted in order to organize the American youth. We have had discussions with the American comrades upon just this point of the methods and means to be adopted for the organization of the youth, because our American comrades were of the opinion that they should demand that the American Federation of Labor set up a bureau in order to organize the youth. We were of the opinion that is incorrect, that the task of organizing the youth falls to the league itself, and that it is useless to believe that the youth can be organized by a bureau in which Gompers, who is completely reactionary, works. It has also been demanded that this bureau

should carry on the work for the youth. It should issue a news service for the workers' papers, and material upon the organizational and educational tasks. We have given the American comrades the advice here to give up these ideas, as these tasks belong to the Young Communist League. The league has definitely commenced the practical work. Recently I read in the paper that in a strike in which 1,500 young workers took part, the league set up a program of practical demands and fought for their representation in order in this way to approach the youth.

It is a fact that they have set up a number of demands and incorporated them in a manifesto addressed to the young workers, and that is already considerable progress.

CLOSING SPEECH OF BAMMATTER

AND because we hold the German league dear, we have presented it with a sound beating. At our previous congress we did the same with the American comrades. The American comrades also believed that they were unjustly punished. But the experience since have shown that this punishment had a good result. It brought the league into the line of the Young Communist International.

I wish to deal with still a further point, which was particularly raised by the American comrades and which has a special significance for them. That was the question of winning of the negroes and the question of the independent unions, the unions which stand outside the great trade union movement. I believe that these questions have been clearly dealt with at the Profintern Congress and we need only point to their theses. We must stress here that in principle we can never advocate the creation of special trade unions. But naturally, if the situation in the various countries is such, that we can really see that there are no possibilities of uniting the great masses of the negroes, then we must also use the means of special unions. But naturally, the first and most pressing task is the work inside the existing organizations, for the acceptance of the negroes with equal rights. That is our first task.

Then to the question of the Industrial Workers of the World, the syndicalist organization in America. It plays a definite role and it is important that we win an influence upon it that we attempt to influence it both from inside and out. It is very important to work in these trade unions also which for the most part exist in the agricultural districts and in the lumber camps. I believe that the directions which have been given by the Profintern congress dealt very clearly with the work which should be performed there.

Send In That Sub Today

AND THEY SAY THE REDS WILL DESTROY THE HOME

COLUMBIA, S. C.—A mother forced by poverty to work in the southern textile mills is mourning the death of her child. Three year old Leroy Brantley of Columbia was drowned in the Congaree river while his mother toiled in the cotton mill. Left at home with an older cousin, he wandered to the river. He was pulled out dead some distance down the stream. Hundreds of children in southern mill villages are left at home alone while their parents work from 10 to 12 hours in the mills.

A 'Weekly' by the First