

REPORTS OF NAT KAPLAN AND MAX SHACHTMAN TO THE THIRD SESSION OF Y. W. L. CONVENTION

(Conclusion of Convention Report)

Report of National Executive Committee of League.

Comrade Max Shachtman, reporting for the national executive committee of the league (in behalf of the former majority of the executive), reviewed the situation at the beginning of the formation of the league and traced its development up to the present time. He said that the league had its origin in the Young People's Socialist League, which had been merely a social organization. At first the inheritance of the traditions of purely social activities from the Y. P. S. L. were added to by the traditions of a purely sectarian nature acquired during the days of the underground existence of the Communist movement in the United States. The combination of these two extremes, said the speaker, had not made for the advantage of the Young Workers' (Communist) League, but with the aid of the Young Communist International an excellent basis had been laid in the form of resolutions for mass activities. But because the inherited traditions and old forms, the excellent resolutions for mass activities remained in the form of excellent resolutions. Comrade Shachtman said that the youth league had needed some great blow to shake it out of the sectarian and social atmosphere and into a genuine Bolshevik atmosphere. However, there had been some improvement. A struggle arose within the league which brot some realization that it was necessary to carry the resolutions for mass activities into actual practice. There came a division in the league, not on a political question, but on questions of organizational policy.

Comrade Shachtman reviewed the history of the differences between the majority and the minority of the N. E. C. of the league and the appeals made to the Young Communist International and its decisions, declaring that Comrade Kaplan's appeals to the International had not been accepted but had been rejected by the Y. C. I.

The decisions of the International had not been followed by a lessening, but on the contrary, by a sharpening of the struggle within the league.

The struggle changed from one on organizational questions to a struggle on a political line of division.

Labor Party Issue Divides League.

The division, said Comrade Shachtman, came then on the question of the party's position on the labor party issue, and the struggle sharpened to great intensity in the league. This, he said, had proven to be the great blow which had been necessary to bring the league to a realization of the necessity of real mass activities.

The mass character of the league's activities became something that could be noticed, said Comrade Shachtman. Actual contacts were obtained with the masses of young workers thru the factory campaigns that were initiated. The membership began to understand that its activities were to be something different from the mere organization of dances and of educational classes on the A. B. C. of Communism.

All of this, he said, was connected with the building up of shop nuclei.

The shop nuclei of the league, he said, were as yet only a small handful, but there exists the very big idea that we cannot become a truly Bolshevik mass Communist organization unless we reorganize on the basis of shop nuclei.

Comrade Shachtman then reviewed the course of the factional struggle within the league as it reflected and duplicated the factional struggle in the party on the labor party issue.

He reviewed the world development of the Communist youth leagues from the time of the active part which was played by the young members of the social-democratic parties during the world war, declaring that the youth had at first, in the days of Zimmerwald, Kienthal, etc., played the role of the organizer of the revolutionary elements against the opportunist leaders of the Second International. Only later they came to the role of carrying out special youth work as distinguished from the general participation in party work.

The Young Workers' League, said the speaker, despite the complete absorption of its membership in the party controversy over the labor party issue, has now come to the point where it can say it is on the road to real mass activities.

Comrade Shachtman maintained that the league has gained in membership, citing figures covering the past two years.

He spoke at length on the necessity of Bolshevization of the league, the anti-militarist struggle, the necessity of reaching the youth of the farms and the Negro youth.

In summing up, Comrade Shachtman said that in the course of being Bolshevized the league would eradicate the conception of "no maneuvers."

He said that the absorption of the youth leaders into positions of responsibility in the party would tend to obviate the danger of the youth organization and the party taking antagonistic positions on policy. He said that the youth would always take its position in party struggles, but it should always be sure to let its position be a Bolshevik one.

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Wrap your lunch in a copy of the DAILY WORKER and give it (the DAILY WORKER, not the lunch) to your shop-mates.

Kaplan Reports for Former Minority of N. E. C.

Comrade Nat Kaplan, reporting on behalf of the former minority of the N. E. C. of the Y. W. L., said that the convention must face a review of the period from the second national convention up to the present time, and must face the real, vital tasks which are absolutely essential to a Leninist youth organization. He then proceeded to point out the basic role that the league plays in relation to the party and the general class struggle. He said that he felt that Comrade Shachtman had tried to drown under a flood of words the real problems which the convention must face.

The mere fact that Comrade Shachtman had made a distinction between organizational differences and political differences in the league, showed that Comrade Shachtman was not facing the differences which really did exist, said Comrade Kaplan. From such a false beginning, he said, Comrade Shachtman had been enabled to draw an entirely false characterization of the group which had been struggling thruout this period to bring the league to a correct political line, which today we all know to be the correct political line. Comrade Shachtman had stated that it was merely an organizational minority that grew up in the league, said Comrade Kaplan, while Comrade Williamson, on the other hand, had told the Fourth Congress of the Young Communist International that it was a political minority which was the reflex of the political struggle in the party between the Pepper-Rutenberg group and the Foster group. As a matter of fact, said Kaplan, the former majority of the N. E. C. had been permeated with the political misconceptions of the Foster group of the party. This had had something to do, he said, with a certain hesitancy in carrying out the decisions of the Y. C. I., to which the Y. C. I. had called attention.

On the matter of trade union work for the league, the former majority of the N. E. C. had taken an impossible position before the second convention, declared the speaker. In the beginning the former majority had been an opposition in principle against the struggle for economic partial demands among the young workers which had been set up by the Young Communist International. Comrades Abern and Edwards had argued against the program of the Y. C. I., said Comrade Kaplan, at the Third Congress, and to substantiate their arguments, they had compared the conditions of the American young workers with that of the young workers of European countries, claiming that the relatively high level of the young workers in this country made it unnecessary to carry on such a struggle. These comrades said Comrade Kaplan, had claimed that there was no difference between the conditions of the young workers and the adult workers. Both the adult workers and the young workers have the same conditions as equal wages and hours, they had argued, so why struggle for special interests of the young workers? When Comrade Bannister came over here for the Young Communist International, said Kaplan, these comrades had expressed strong opposition in principle to the setting up of special youth demands, and had contended that the role of the youth league was only to participate generally in strike movements. Comrade Kaplan cited as concrete examples cases relating to the struggles of the Chicago garment workers and of the cigar workers and miners and the case of the unemployment crisis of 1924, when, he said, the former majority of the N. E. C. were victims of what Comrade Varga had described as "the optimistic illusions of the American bourgeoisie."

Of a statement to Comrade Shachtman that the political level of the Young Workers' League had been raised and that the N. E. C. had entered into political activities, Comrade Kaplan asked what kind of political activities? The N. E. C. had been drawn into political activity against the labor party policy in the party, while the majority of the league membership supported the line of the Comintern behind the Ruthenberg group.

During the party convention the N. E. C. had published a hurried edition of the Young Worker carrying on the first page a big head-line: "Foster Group to Lead the Party," and this was another N. E. C. political slogan that was not realized in practice.

Comrade Kaplan reviewed at some length various campaigns which had been undertaken. He declared that these usually began and ended with publishing something in the paper. The comrades of the former N. E. C. majority would exhibit an issue of the Young Worker containing their articles, and would say, "Look at the campaigns which we have run!" When the campaigns reached beyond the limits of purely journalistic treatment it was usually like the campaign among the young miners; the organizers who started out for the coal fields went instead to Boston or New York. "What was the political line of the former majority?" asked the speaker. "Opposition to the labor party."

He quoted Comrade Shachtman as writing that the advocacy of a labor party and the creation of a new illusion and that the real danger to the party and the league was not Loreism

but the labor-partyism of the Ruthenberg group. Comrade Shachtman makes a strange impression, said Kaplan, when he speaks now of the former majority's "energetic, determined and merciless fight against Loreism in the league and the party."

Kaplan analyzed the membership figures given by Shachtman and stated that these were hopelessly at variance with the facts.

Discussing the two major decisions of the Young Communist International in regard to the American section, Comrade Kaplan said that the former majority of the N. E. C. had shown a characteristic hesitation in carrying them out.

During the six months period between August, 1924, and February, 1925, said Comrade Kaplan, there had been some extension into mass activity, and this was due to some extent to the pressure and criticism of the former minority. The efforts of the N. E. C. to completely immerse the Y. W. L. into the fight against the labor party policy, which had absorbed nearly all of the league's strength and attention, was an expression of the effort to get away from mass activities again and into sectarianism.

Therefore, said Comrade Kaplan, this opposition to the former N. E. C. majority must not be falsely characterized; it was carrying on the role of fighting for the line of the Communist International and the Y. C. I., while the former majority was fighting against that line. Because this former majority group was organically connected with a similar group in the party from which it absorbed its ideas and misconceptions, the political life of the Y. W. L. suffered heavily.

The last decision of the Communist

International supporting the Ruthenberg group of the party, said Kaplan,

is in effect an endorsement also of the comrades who had been fighting for the line of the Comintern in the Communist youth league.

Comrade Kaplan reviewed the great

problems which the new National Executive Committee faces in the im-

mediate present and future. Organiza-

tionally, he said, we are but a

small group, but we possess the basic

prerequisites for carrying on the Y.

W. L. to a brilliant record as the

American section of the Young Com-

munist International. First and fore-

most must come a solidly united rank

and file, and second a united leader-

ship. However, he said, just as we

are obtaining the required unity of

the rank and file and preparing to

make the first steps toward carrying

on our new stage of work, we are

already promised an opposition, an

opposition not based on policies nor

upon a difference of point of view.

The promise of such opposition was

contained, he said, in the resolution

offered by Comrade Williamson on

behalf of the former majority of the

N. E. C., the present minority of the

Y. W. L., which undertakes to make a

realignment against the present lead-

ership of the party and of the league.

He asked that the entire membership

of the youth league be lined up solid-

ly behind the Comintern and the de-

cisions for mass activity laid down

by the Young Communist Interna-

tional.

A resolution in support of the re-

port of the former majority of the

N. E. C. was defeated by a vote of 23

to 28. The resolution supporting the

report of the former minority of the

N. E. C., the present majority of the

convention, was passed by 28 to 23

votes. In this vote, Comrade Cannon,

one of the party delegates, being re-

leased from the unit rule by the party

delegation, "voted in favor of the

former majority of the N. E. C.

Uncle Sam's Navy Builders Ask for Ten Cent Increase

WASHINGTON, Oct. 8.—An average

wage increase of 10 cents an hour is

asked of the government by the

workers in the Washington and other

navy yards.

When the machinists in the Wash-

ington yard last year asked that their

scale of 80 cents an hour be raised

to 90 cents, they got a compromise

of 82 cents. Since that time wages

in private employment in similar

work have risen beyond that figure.

Hearings will be held this month by

the wage board representing the

navy department.

French Iron and Steel Production Declining Again

PARIS, Oct. 8.—French iron and

steel production is showing a decline,

altho still higher than it was last May.

The last statistics available are for

August and show that month's produc-

tion of iron was 712,000 tons. It was

724,000 in July, 703,000 tons in June,

and 706,000 tons for May. Steel pro-

duction in August was 616,725 tons,

625,000 tons for July, 600,000 tons in

June, and 596,000 tons in May. Many

furnaces are damped, leaving 144

operating at the end of August.

Seaplanes Rush Antitoxin

NORFOLK, Va., Oct. 8.—Spread of

diphtheria in the village of Hatteras,

N. C., caused one death, that of a 12

year old girl. Seaplanes have taken

antitoxin to the village and physicians

have realized an increase in the

number of cases.

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derstand Communism—study it.

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