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(The following two resolutions, which were adopted at the Tenth National Convention of the Y.P.S.L., are being re-issued at the request many comrades who have joined the League since that convention and want to have the opportunity to read them for discussion on the coming convention of the Y.P.S.L.)

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THE SOCIAL CRISIS OF AMERICAN CAPITALISM
AND THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH

I

The central fact of American capitalist economy today is the unmistakable demonstration that it has definitely entered its phase of general decline, that along with the entire capitalist world it has exhausted its progressive potentialities. Whereas all preceding recovery periods marked a further advance beyond the top of the preceding boom, the present crisis broke even before the 1933-37 upturn had neared the 1929 peak, and the resulting decline was characterized by a steepness and rapidity which surpassed even the 1929-1933 period. This marks no cyclical fluctuation but a stage in the development of a permanent and general crisis in the economic and social relations of American capitalism.

The perspective that faces American capitalist society excludes the possibility of any general advance or revival. Any temporary period of revival can only be feverish, brief, yielding to deeper crisis and more grinding depression. Mass unemployment, increasing insecurity and lowering of the general standard of living have become chronic and inseparable features of American economy and insurmountable without the destruction of capitalism itself. The relatively dominant position of the United States in world capitalism and the international interlocking of its economic roots have only accentuated the impact of the crisis, linked it up more closely with the destiny of world capitalism as a whole and are driving American capitalism to play a leading part in the preparations for the new imperialist war, in its attempt to extricate itself from the crisis by a new redistribution of the world market.

The new crisis, superimposed upon the economic crisis of 1929-1933, produces an uneven but ever deepening and all-embracing social crisis, the continuing character of which is made certain by the insoluble nature of the economic crisis. The desperate attempts to prop up the sagging foundations of capitalism by means of government expenditures are nullified by the realities of capitalist decline. The army of the unemployed has once more risen to thirteen million. Despite the show of "special attention" to the youth by the New Deal government, the number of youth 16-24 locked out from the possibility of a job by capitalism has risen to at least seven million. While sections of the working class have sought a way out in militant economic struggles such as the sit-down strikes and in their gropings for independent political action, sections especially of the youth, are overcome with despair and hopelessness. The task is to link the youth to the developing struggles of the workers; involve them in the coming class battles of the working class in movement; organize them for struggle around a program, based upon the objective demands of the social crisis, which leads out of their present economic and moral stagnation and points the way toward finding their place in society, in a society controlled by the working class.

II

The program of transitional demands conceived by our Party, proceeding from the recognition of the tremendous disparity between the maturity of the objective revolutionary conditions and the immaturity of the proletariat and its vanguard. This is a concrete program of action. These demands of the transitional program issue from the

conditions of capitalist society today but immediately lead over the limits of capitalism. It is not the reformist minimum program which never included workers militia, workers control of production, etc. These demands are transitional because they lead from the capitalist society to the proletarian revolution. It is not only a matter of helping the masses in their daily struggles to find the bridge between immediate needs and the Socialist program of revolution; it is also a matter of preparing the masses and preparing the party for the direct struggle for power.

All the factors which necessitate the application of this program for the working class in general apply with equal force to the youth. The marvelous technological development of capitalism has crased the economic distinctions between young and adult workers. The same economic conditions, crisis, etc., imposed upon the adult workers prevail with identical force upon the youth.

But if American and capitalist technology in general has removed the economic distinctions between adult and young workers, it has not removed social distinctions. Rather has the general crisis of capitalism intensified these social distinctions. This is manifested in the new strata of de-classed youth, and is accompanied by a series of problems, not the least of which is the problem of regimentation and the creation of a social factor for fascist development.

Because of these social distinctions, it is necessary that we advance also a program for the youth, subordinated to the general program of transitional demands, which will on the one hand complement the activity of the Party, and on the other hand will prepare our membership and the young workers for the struggles for the proletarian dictatorship. It is not merely a matter of advancing these slogans to catch the imagination of the young workers; it is also aimed at achieving a complete and strategic reorientation of our youth movement, in the spirit of the transitional program, to enable us to project ourselves into every situation which our modest forces permit, and to gear our youth organization for bold, militant, mass struggles.

There is no special "youth program" which can solve the fundamental problems facing the youth. For these fundamental problems are exactly the same as those facing the working class as a whole. The transitional program developed by the Party is therefore also as much a program for the youth, just as the Party program of social revolution also is as much a program for the youth. It is the task of the YPSL to act as the arm of the Party in harnessing the militancy and spirit of the youth in the fight for the revolutionary transitional program. We propose to the youth that they fight for these demands side by side with their older brothers and fathers:

WORKERS CONTROL OF INDUSTRY, to extend the implications of the sit-downs and prepare for their own future management of industry under social ownership, through the organization of broad shop-committees through which the independent strength of the workers can be organized.

RE-OPEN THE IDLE PLANTS, for operation under the control of the workers within the given field of industry; wages with trade union scale as the minimum; rent, interest and profit, and

provision of capital reserves suspended; federal funds for financing.

EXPROPRIATION OF SEPARATE INDUSTRIAL MONOPOLIES, railroads, public utilities, etc., and their operation under workers control.

XXII TWENTY-BILLION DOLLAR PROGRAM OF PUBLIC WORKS AND HOUSING.

XXIII SLIDING SCALE OF WAGES AND HOURS.

XXIV DEFENSE OF THE WORKING FARMERS AGAINST ABSENTEE OWNERSHIP AND MORTGAGE BONDAGE: moratorium on all rent payments of any type, prohibition of evictions, cancellation of tax indebtedness; cancellation of all mortgage indebtedness on owner-operated farms; expropriation of all lands held by non-operators and their transfer to tenants and sharecroppers.

The youth can play an especially important role in the struggle against fascism and war. It is especially toward the youth that we must look for the forces to organize the militant WORKERS DEFENSE GUARDS, for defense against the violence of vigilantism and fascist bands. It is especially the task of the youth to carry on the STRUGGLE AGAINST THE WAR PREPARATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT, for the transfer of all war funds for unemployment relief and education; for a popular referendum on any military or naval action against any other country with all those from the age of eighteen upwards eligible to vote; for abolition of the ROTC and the CMTC; demilitarization of the CCC camps; for the immediate withdrawal of all armed forces of the U.S. from the Far East and immediate freedom for all American colonies and possessions; for abolition of secret diplomacy; for nationalization under workers control of the armaments and munitions industry.

XXV THE YOUTH AND THE STRUGGLE FOR TRANSITIONAL DEMANDS

But in addition to the struggle for these transitional demands in alliance with the working class as a whole, youth faces its own special problems, which grow out of the general decline of American capitalist economy but which take peculiarly vicious forms on the youth field. The struggle for mobilizing the youth for the transitional program must begin with these, their most immediate pressing problems.

While the capitalist crisis has had disastrous effects upon the economic status of the workers in general, and has produced an unemployed army of at least seven million youth, it has had especially important effects upon the social status of youth. These unemployed youth, many of whom have never been permitted to have jobs at all, are increasingly regarded by capitalism, not as independent workers with the right to a life of their own, but as mere dependents upon their families, wards without the right to work for their own livelihood on the same basis as other workers. While the government at least theoretically admits its responsibilities for providing jobs for unemployed workers, it is its policy to consider aid to the youth as "supplementary" aid to the family, thus eliminating the necessity of providing regular jobs for them, and thrusting upon the shoulders of the helpless youth the burden of contributing toward the support of the family. While a healthy economic system would provide the possibility for the youth to learn a trade, to learn to work, in connection with the process of production itself, the lock-out of youth from industry by the capitalist system has deprived them of this

right, and still further emphasizes the continuing DEPENDENT status of youth. Youth under 21 are deprived of a voice in political life for the solution of these problems. At the same time, the possibility of a full term of education for the youth who are not working is one of the first retrenchments of the government.

WE DEMAND THAT EVERY YOUTH WHO WANTS TO WORK BE RECOGNIZED AS HAVING THE RIGHT TO AN INDEPENDENT EXISTENCE, TO AN INDEPENDENT JOB, TO LEARN A TRADE, and not to be treated merely as the wards of society... THAT EVERY YOUTH WHO WANTS TO GO TO SCHOOL BE RECOGNIZED AS HAVING THE RIGHT TO AN EDUCATION AS THOROUGH AS SOCIETY IS ABLE TO GIVE, AT THE EXPENSE OF THE GOVERNMENT.

A continuation of the present status of youth means their progressive demoralization, their deprivation of the possibility of marriage and independence, the formation of strata of de-classed youth at the bottom of, if not outside, society, which can only bear the greatest dangers to the economic and moral health both of the youth and society. We therefore propose the following program of demands around which the youth can be rallied.

A. THE RIGHT TO WORK

We demand the elimination of the "supplementary relief" status of youth, and call for THE RIGHT OF EVERY YOUTH WHO WANTS A JOB TO WORK FOR HIMSELF without having the additional support of his family thrust upon him. Any unmarried youth old enough to work has the right to economic independence.

We demand the conversion of all "supplementary relief agencies" such as NYA, CCC, etc., into YOUTH WPA PROJECTS.

Wages for such work shall be paid with the trade union scale as a minimum.

No youth shall be kept off because he or she is single and regardless of whether any other member of the family is on WPA or any other Federal or State relief agency or has any other job in private industry.

We demand that such Youth WPA Projects be sufficiently extensive to take care of all the unemployed youth, not merely the small fraction who are now given "supplementary relief".

Aside from government aid, we demand a policy of EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK FOR YOUTH. It is the policy of the employers to create an artificial division between the employed youth and adult workers, with the aim of lowering wages to youth because of their alleged lack of experience. Many industries employ young people as "learners" to do unskilled labor at less than the customary wage, and dismiss them if they demand the regular rate. In those industries in which a period of apprenticeship exists, we demand the complete control of the apprenticeship system by the trade unions.

EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK! NO DISCRIMINATION AGAINST YOUTH IN THE FACTORIES!

YOUTH WPA PROJECTS FOR ALL YOUTH WHO WANT A JOB, AT THE TRADE UNION SCALE AS A MINIMUM, CONSIDERING THE YOUTH AS INDEPENDENT OF THE FAMILY!

B. THE RIGHT TO LEARN A TRADE

Unemployment not only closes to the youth the possibility of working, but also of learning to work, in fields which require a degree of trade education, and thereby doubly blocks their normal development to economic independence from their family and the possibility of marriage. It is the right of every youth to learn a trade and to receive support during this period at an adequate living standard to enable him to pursue his studies under the most favorable conditions.

WE DEMAND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF TRADE SCHOOLS open to all youth who want to learn a trade, at government expense. These schools are to be supervised and controlled by the worker-students and the trade unions. The students are to be maintained by the government while studying.

To teach the youth trades and then throw them into the ranks of the unemployed will not solve anything. It is necessary that the trade schools be attached to factories, which are under workers control. These factories can immediately recruit their help from the schools. This will enable the youth to be placed in industry upon completion of their training.

For those youth who are already employed and who wish to increase their skill and knowledge, we demand the right to ten hours attendance per week at trade or commercial schools at the employers' expense.

We demand the abolition of the CMTC whose only purpose is to militarize the youth, and its replacement by a system of summer vocational training schools, providing the free vacation features which the CMTC now uses to attract recruits, together with trade school education.

THE RIGHT OF YOUTH TO LEARN A TRADE MEANS: GOVERNMENT-MAINTAINED TRADE SCHOOLS ATTACHED TO FACTORIES AND SHOPS UNDER WORKERS CONTROL -- TEN HOURS TRADE EDUCATION PER WEEK AT THE BOSSES' EXPENSE FOR EMPLOYED YOUNG WORKERS -- A SYSTEM OF SUMMER VOCATIONAL TRAINING SCHOOLS TO REPLACE THE CMTC!

C. THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

The economic crisis has forced millions of youth every year to abandon their education, after completing elementary school or part of it, or a few terms in high-school, in order to seek employment. Government retrenchment has made it impossible for millions of youth who want to continue their education to do so.

WE DEMAND THAT THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDE FREE EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES FOR ALL YOUTH THROUGH HIGH-SCHOOL, AND FOR ALL YOUTH WHO WISH TO CONTINUE THROUGH COLLEGE. This is not merely a matter of fighting retrenchment; if the real needs of the youth are to be satisfied, what is required is a tremendous expansion of the present educational facilities.

But the demand for educational facilities alone is not enough, in view of the fact that the main obstacle preventing the youth from securing a full education is, even more than the lack of facilities, the inability of the youth or their families to maintain themselves while going to school.

WE DEMAND MAINTENANCE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ALL YOUTH WHO WISH TO GO TO SCHOOL, OR COLLEGE, and who cannot be supported by their families during their studies. The present "supplementary student relief" by the NYA nowhere approaches this, by merely provides incidental expenses for those already attending school.

The more serious problem is those youth who do not even start attending school for lack of support. For the youth who does not now even think of attending high-school or college because he must get a job to support his family, for him THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION means government maintenance for himself while attending school and a job for the workers in his family.

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION MEANS GOVERNMENT MAINTENANCE OF EVERY YOUTH WHO WANTS TO GO TO SCHOOL, ECONOMIC SECURITY FOR HIS FAMILY, AND A TREMENDOUS INCREASE IN THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES!

D. THE RIGHT TO VOTE

While capitalism arbitrarily fixes 21 as the age at which young workers are permitted to participate in its political decisions, it has drawn no such line of demarcation as far as its economic life is concerned. Capitalist industry has drawn young workers below 21 into its orbit just as it has the older workers, and subjected them to the same, if not greater, exploitation as their fathers and brothers, if they are employed; and to the same if not greater insecurity, if unemployed. It considers them to have reached the age of maturity at eighteen sufficient to face the economic responsibilities of life, while attempting to deny them the possibility of participating with their older comrades in meeting their joint problems on the political field. It has no compunction about forcing them to don a uniform to give their lives at the call of a government in whose structures they are forbidden to have a voice.

But under the conditions of capitalist industry and the threat of war, young workers below 21 are increasingly being driven to take a vital interest in the political life of the country, to seek to have their voices heard through whatever channels they have been able to find at their disposal.

We propose that this desire be recognized. WE DEMAND THAT YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE THE RIGHT TO VOTE AT EIGHTEEN!

OLD ENOUGH TO WORK -- OLD ENOUGH TO FIGHT -- OLD ENOUGH TO VOTE!

In raising these demands for the youth, as is the case with the transitional program in general, we do not base ourselves on what we consider to be practically possible within the framework of capitalism or upon the present state of mind of the youth. We base ourselves upon the objective needs and requirements of the youth which arise from the present crisis of capitalism. The aim of the program is, starting with the immediate pressing problems of the working class and the youth, to lead them outside the bounds of capitalism in the very course of struggle for the demands.

The summation of this goal of the transitional program is the slogan for the Workers Government, raised in connection with our insistence

in principle that only a Soviet Government, not a Labor, Social-Democratic or People's Front Government, can carry through the transitional program, abolish capitalism and institute planned Socialist economy. We raise the slogan of the Workers Government as the highest point of alliance with the working class toward which it is our task to lead the youth.

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RESOLUTION ON THE ROLE OF THE YOUNG PEOPLES SOCIALIST LEAGUE

INTRODUCTION

A. In reviewing the work of the organization during the past year it is necessary to record a general dissatisfaction with the state and functioning of the organization, from the national center through to the circles. The past year, despite progress in numerous fields, is represented, not in numerical growth but in relative stagnation and even retrogression. Primarily responsible for this condition, is the national center. The stagnation accompanied by a low morale and the loss of circles is an alarm signal for the entire organization.

B. The May 1938 Plenum of the YPSL, in applying the Transitional Program to the sphere of youth, drew the conclusions that the realization of the objectives of the youth program ("The Social Crisis of American Capitalism and The Tasks of The Youth"), was wholly inconceivable without a concomitant reorientation in the organizational structure, forms and methods of our movement. The Transitional Program gave added if not decisive impetus to already existing factors demanding a change. The Plenum called for a sweeping reorientation -- political and organizational. In the sphere of organization, however, it failed to present to the membership concrete proposals for the desired change. The Plenum itself was groping and unclear as to exact details of the change and the means of achieving it. The resolution on the Role of the Y.P.S.L. is therefore the necessary corollary to our resolution "The Social Crisis of American Capitalism and the Tasks of the Youth".

C. It is necessary to declare that misconceptions of Party-League relations are present in our organization, expressing themselves spasmodically in vanguardistic traits, in hostility toward and contempt for the Party, and even, as in some extreme cases, a Menshevik contempt for Bolshevik methods of organization. The achievement of the organizational transformation set forth in this resolution is indissolubly linked with the realization of harmonious relations between the Party and Youth -- a harmony flowing from a thorough understanding and application of Lenin's conception of Party-Youth relations. These conceptions are clearly set forth in this resolution as well as in the resolution on "Party-Youth Relations" adopted by the International Youth Conference.

D. The resolution on "The Social Crisis of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Youth" establishes the necessity for converting the YPSL into a political fighting youth movement representing and extending the struggles of the Party in the

youth sphere. This resolution seeks to outline the character of the change and concretize the forms in which the change may be achieved.

Truly, we must admit that our organization in the past has been anything but a vigorous, fighting, bold, colorful, organization. There is too conspicuous an absence of the spirit of self-sacrifice in our organization. Any and all manifestations of smugness, cynicism, pseudo-intellectualism must be uprooted, as inimical to revolutionary morals. Devotion and the spirit of self sacrifice as the expression of the idealism, the seriousness, the determination of our movement, must prevail. It is necessary for organization to become the fighting instrument of revolution among the youth. This calls for a mass organization; sensitive to the problems and needs of youth; projecting itself in their struggles; organizing, leading, guiding them; marching in the forefront of their struggles; giving expression to their needs and will in proper and attractive slogans coined in the struggle itself. "With the Youth"; in the factories, in the schools, in their mass organizations, among the unemployed, in the streets. A revolutionary organization is a fighting organization. A revolutionary organization is a serious organization. But all this is both meaningless and impossible unless we can offer the raw youth whom we win in the struggle an organization that can hold him and educate him.

In line with this we reject the concept that the color and spirit which we propose to give the organization are "external trappings" designed to artificially "lure" the youth. Rather are they the inevitable expression of the regenerated idealism, the comradeship, the self sacrifice, the solidarity of a movement of struggle, Just as these expression (uniforms, rituals, drum and bugle corps, etc.) appear incongruous in relation to the prevailing mood of our organization, so will they be the natural expression of the spirit which we must generate.

E. We do not think that it is possible to convert our present isolated youth organization into a mass organization of tens of thousands in the period of one year. But we wish to establish that it is necessary and possible to increase the membership of the New York YPSL to between 700 and 1000 and the national organization to between 3,000 and 5,000 in a period of one year. The accomplishment of this formidable task is possible only if we proceed from an objective appraisal of the mistakes of the past and an honest review of our present status. This resolution does not pretend to deal with the past. We wish here to place our emphasis upon the future; to present to the comrades a practical picture of the kind of organization we want with suggestions of means of achieving it. We are confident that the membership of the organization and our district and circle executive committees will implement this resolution with innumerable suggestions based upon their own experiences and knowledge.

Comrades -- we must win for ourselves the reputation of being the fighters for and the leaders of the youth instead of contenting ourselves with verbal consolations.

I. Historical Analysis of Role of Youth Movement

The practice of the revolutionary youth movement has been in conflict with the theories upon which it was founded for virtually the entire period of its existence. The creation of a special youth organization resulted from the recognition of the following:

1. The problems of life and manner of living of youth created an outlook and psychology that differed from that of the adult;
2. Capitalism created special economic problems for youth and during the social crisis, sociological distinctions between youth and adult workers;
3. The fact that youth form the bulk of the armed forces of the state gave the youth organization a special role in anti-militarist work.

An organization of socialist youth, approaching the problems and activities of youth with a socialist understanding, could, therefore, attract masses of youth whereas the party could only win the few intellectually advanced youth through a direct political appeal.

From this it followed that the youth organization was to be an auxiliary of the party, created for a specific purpose. It was to be politically subordinate to the party but organizationally autonomous. Since it was to educate youth for the party, its requirement for membership was to be no more than interest in and sympathy with the aims of the organization. Its discipline was to be the self-imposed discipline of young people inspired by the common fight for an ideal rather than the rigid discipline expected of politically matured party members.

Historical factors, however, prevented the revolutionary youth from realizing this theory in practice.

During the decade preceding the World War, the revolutionary youth were drawn into the front ranks of the struggle against the opportunist and social patriotic degeneration of the Social-Democratic Parties. The revolutionary youth could not regard themselves as politically subordinate to the party bureaucracy without betraying their class. The defence of Marxism demanded that the youth counterpose themselves as a political opposition to the party. The political struggle, therefore, took precedence over all other activity.

The Comintern found great difficulty in re-educating the youth to a correct understanding of the role of the YCL's during its early period. The youth movement of the Second International, which went over to the CI almost in its entirety, sought to continue its

political independence out of a feeling that the youth were capable of greater initiative and less susceptible to opportunism and should, therefore, be the vanguard of the party.

The attempts of the C.I. to uproot these views were handicapped by the presence of opportunist parties in Norway, Czechoslovakia and elsewhere which sought to subordinate the youth because they fought for a rigid adherence to the decisions of the C.I.

Though the Third Congress of the C.I. adopted the now classic resolution on the role of the youth movement and its

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relation to the party and laid the basis for the creation of mass youth leagues, the factional struggle that broke out soon after Lenin's death prevented any serious efforts in this direction. The Stalin machine converted the YCL's into weapons against the Left Opposition. The revolutionary education of the membership was replaced by stereotyped "lectures" on Trotskyism and hoodlum attacks upon Opposition meetings took the place of cultural work. As a result, the YCL's outside of the Soviet Union, remained small and uninfluential. The building of a Stalinist mass movement was only possible upon the present basis of an open adoption of the patriotic policies of the ruling class. This was accompanied by a bureaucratic depoliticalization of the YCL, imitative of the pre-War Social-Democratic attitude toward the youth, in an attempt to prevent the youth from opposing the turn to the right after the Seventh World Congress.

The Spartacus Youth League was founded upon the line laid down at the Third Congress of the CI and with a correct understanding of the role of a youth organization. However, its brief period of existence as an independent organization did not allow it to put the SYL to the test of realizing its goal of a mass youth movement. The momentum of previous activity made it difficult to rapidly break from the channel of oppositional work to the YCL.

The Young Peoples Socialist League experienced its re-birth in 1930 as a result of the economic crisis and the Stalinized character of the YCL which repelled discontented youth rather than attracted them. As the youth section of a reformist party, the YPSL was faced with the same political task which confronted the youth in the pre-war era -- the fight for a revolutionary party. Its role in this fight, particularly after the entry of the SYL, is one of the brightest pages in its history. Like the youth of Liebknecht, it was in the forefront of the struggle against the "Old Guard" and later against the Thomas-Claridityite leadership.

During the past year we have discovered, however, that, also like the Liebknecht-trained youth, the period of political struggle against the reformist party leadership developed habits and methods which run counter to the Bolshevik view of the youth movement and its relations with the party. As in the YCI in 1921, these views were permitted to persist because of the lack of unity and decisiveness on the part of the youth leadership in dealing with them. In the New York District, nurtured by an organizational slump in the Party, these vanguardist concepts gave rise to a periodically recurring friction between the party and the youth. Moreover, the debate on the Labor Party question, involving a legitimate dispute on a tactical question, gave vent in New York to a bitter hostility and antagonism of a personal kind which was inimical to the kind of organization which we wish to achieve as well as to the intelligent discussion and decision in this debate. This atmosphere which also encouraged and created artificial hostility in relation to the party and vanguardist conceptions of our organization could only arise under the conditions of low morale, isolation and a false concept of the role of the youth organization. In Boston, provoked by a tactical error on the part of the party in dealing with the youth, these concepts gave rise to a conscious violation of Party discipline by Party members in the YPSL. This indicates that the growth of vanguardist views have spread to such an extent as to obscure the basic principle of jurisdiction of party discipline over its members in the YPSL.

Although it is necessary to establish that the youth organization must participate as actively as possible, under the direction of the party, in the political life of the Party, the concept of political subordination defines the limitation of these rights. Participation in the political life of the Party is an important vehicle in the education of the youth, but can in no way imply the assignment to the youth of the right to make decisions for the Party or to act in its decisions with equal rights.

It would be incorrect, however, to regard these Party-youth conflicts as merely resulting from false concepts developed during the factional fight against the SP leadership. In reality they are an extreme manifestation of what has, unfortunately, become to be considered the normal role of the YPSL, that of a political party for youth workers standing on a par with the SWP as the party of the adult workers. The convention will not rectify the Party-youth relations until it has uprooted this "youth party" concept of the role of the YPSL.

This concept of a youth party is born out of the decades of experience during which political tasks within the movement prevented the youth from playing its real role -- that of a fighting, mass youth movement. It envisages the role of the YPSL to be that of a "youth party", in every way emulating the SWP, except that the latter works among adult workers and the former works among youth workers and students.

The result of this view is that the YPSL today is solely a political organization, with little or no special appeal to youth. It recruits members almost solely on the basis of an intellectual conviction of the correctness of our program. The fact that the overwhelming majority of our recruits would just as soon have joined the party is conclusive evidence of our failure as a youth movement.

We have failed to grow numerically during the last year because our appeal and our activities could only attract the small percentage of intellectually developed young people who were politically mature enough to interest themselves in advanced questions. We offered virtually nothing to attract and hold the average young worker and student.

While we have shown slight gains in certain localities and fields of work, the YPSL, on the whole, has only managed to hold its own. This is cause for the greatest alarm. Lack of progress in this period when world shaking events are hastening down upon us means relative stagnation and retrogression.

Evidence of this situation is to be seen on every hand. The lack of progress has had its effect upon the morale of the membership. The almost purely political character of our activities and the purely theoretical education given the members has led to the assimilation of book knowledge without the building of a revolutionary character and morality. This finds its result in the alarming evidence of cynicism, pseudo-intellectualism, and a blase and smug know-it-all attitude. Such an atmosphere, acceptable to a certain type of bohemian student, is absolutely alien to a revolutionary youth movement. Its effect upon the willingness to sacrifice, both in personal effort and financially, as well as upon discipline and organizational efficiency

has been devastating.

II. What is the Role of the YPSL?

The struggle with reformism, within the YPSL and between YPSL and party, is over. We are now the youth section of a revolutionary party. This means that we can now turn our attention toward molding the YPSL into a revolutionary youth organization to fulfill its real role.

The role of the YPSL, considered in general, flows from the reasons given the above for the existence of the youth organization as a separate section from the party. It may be accurately summarized in the form of the following tasks:

1. Making the YPSL a youth organization in appeal, in spirit, and in its activities; breaking down the youth-party concept and practice we have in effect based ourselves on heretofore.
2. Projecting the organization into mass activity and the struggles for the interests of youth -- carrying out the transitional program into action.
3. Educating our members and training them for membership in a revolutionary party.
4. Anti-war and anti-militarist work.

All four of these are vital and indispensable in a complete view of the role of the youth league, but IT IS IMPORTANT TO MAKE CLEAR THE RELATIVE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH OF THESE TO US, NOT JUST IN GENERAL, BUT NOW, CONSIDERING THE NATURE OF OUR PAST AND THE PRESENT CHARACTER OF THE ORGANIZATION.

Anti-war and anti-militarist work, it is true, remains an important element of our very reason for existence, and such activity must not be allowed to be shoved aside in the midst of concentration on other tasks. But we feel that this fact is sufficiently present in the consciousness and present approach of our members.

With the lowering of our age limits and the adoption of the proposals in this resolution, the education of our members and their training for their future place in the revolutionary party obviously becomes, if possible, even more important than before.

Our role in carrying through the transitional program is absolutely vital if the YPSL is to fulfill its role in the coming period, and it is elaborated upon in a separate document of the Convention. We must make clear to the League the full importance to our work of the fact that for the first time we have a real youth program to present, and the possibilities which this affords. But here the general type of activity which this represents is already by and large appreciated by our membership.

BUT EVEN IF THE ABOVE THREE TASKS ARE CARRIED OUT ADEQUATELY, WE WILL NOT EVEN HAVE BEGUN TO MAKE THE SWEEPING CHANGE WHICH IS IMPERATIVELY DEMANDED IN THE LEAGUE.

This entails the drastic revision of our organizational methods and forms, our internal life and external appeal which is proposed in this resolution. It is this which will mean whether our organization will, at the best, muddle along as it has, or whether we will develop into the mass youth movement. More than that: it is a question of the life or death of the League as any meaningful factor in the coming events in America.

Yet while this is true, our membership is at present completely unprepared for this change; all its past habits constitute so many barriers militating against the achievement of this reorientation; the dead weight of sheer inertia is against it; the very attitudes condemned in the resolution--cynicism, smugness, etc.--will rise up from every crevice to block progress.

It is precisely for this reason that we must spare no energy in hammering home this task into the consciousness of the membership. Together with our adoption of the transitional program, it becomes the key to the work of this convention.

It is to this that we therefore devote the following pages of the resolution.

III. The kind of movement we must become

Our organization must transform itself into a combination of the following:

1. A fighting political movement;
2. A youth movement;
3. A mass movement.

1. We will either be a fighting movement or nothing. The movement that is not steeped in the fighting mood to which the youth must be stirred in the coming period will vanish from the scene. The militancy in action of the fascist organizations is a pre-requisite to their success. If our own militancy is limited to our revolutionary program and not expressed in action then we have lost the youth to fascism even before the fight has started.

Only if we back up our boldness of program with a boldness of action will the masses of youth take us seriously. The fighting spirit of the revolutionary youth is not synonymous with an adventurism that can only disillusion the members in the long run. The danger in the present period is not that of erring on the side of boldness, but rather on the side of hopelessness and conservatism.

Our fighting spirit must flow from the high idealism and unbounded faith in our power to conquer which must pervade the entire revolutionary movement but above all the youth. The great defeats which the revolution has suffered in Europe, and above all in the Soviet Union, has not only disheartened the labor movement, but has also dulled the revolutionary idealism of our movement and given rise to evidences of a demoralizing scepticism, cynicism and a Menshevik contempt for revolutionary, i.e. Bolshevik, forms. This atmosphere can neither attract nor hold a young person who comes to the revolutionary movement out of an idealistic revolt against bourgeois society.

An organization of combat, cemented by the conflict with its enemies, develops an internal cohesiveness, a spirit of comradeship, a brotherhood of arms, that gives it a power of attraction to youth that can never be equalled by enemy organizations that merely rely on greater material resources. If our organization develops in this direction, all the material resources of the bourgeois and the Stalinist youth organizations will be no match in power to attract youth. The color of the fascist organizations can attract youth only in the absence of a fighting, socialist youth organization which offers the youth a program which meets their needs, which the fascists cannot solve.

The fact that we are a fighting organization, infused with a willingness to struggle and a determination to conquer, must find its expression in all aspects of our movement. First of all, we must be organizationally geared for combat. We must, in effect, become a semi-military organization.

The structure must correspond to this. The use of the term "circle", arising from the study circles of the pre-war YPSL, must be replaced by a term for our basic unit that denotes our fighting character like "combat group", "squad" or "patrol". The number of members in each such unit should be limited to make possible its quick mobilization and a constant check upon each of the members. Experimentation will decide whether 10, 15 or 20 is the most practical. The purpose of the small unit is that of carrying on the elementary work of the organization.

The mass agitational activity must be conducted on a larger scale. For this purpose a number of units must be combined into a section in Districts large enough to make this feasible and on a much more highly centralized basis than we have known in the past. In other places the district must be more centralized to combine the activities of local units. There must be at least one membership meeting per month on this scale. These must become really inspirational affairs. Members must attend in uniform. Singing, presentation of colors, presentation of awards and citations to individuals and groups, induction of new members, induction of newly elected officers, must be part of the program. Mass meetings, both indoor and outdoor, must be conducted on this section or district scale.

The discipline of our movement will rise with the rise of its fighting spirit. It will not flow from a fear of being reproached with a reminder that discipline is a task of a responsible revolutionist. It will, rather, be primarily a discipline that flows from the very spirit of the organization, from the moral pressure of a comradeship of arms.

The colorful appearance of our organization cannot be achieved as so many external trappings draped around it. It must be the outward expression of our fighting spirit. To "dress up" the present organization, without a simultaneous regeneration of idealism, would make it an incongruous spectacle.

Uniforms, salutes, banners, rituals, emblems, come naturally, not artificially to a fighting organization. But it would be just as artificial to wait until the spirit of the movement has changed before changing its appearance. The spirit and appearance act and react upon one another.

The uniform of the organization and its effective use is of vast importance. The present blue shirt and red tie, really not a uniform but an excuse for one, has proven its value upon the few occasions we have utilized it. The uniform must at least consist of shirt, tie, jacket, Sam Brown belt and cap. A fighting organization will find a hundred and one ways of putting it to effective use during the year besides May Day.

The banners of our organization must be used for other purposes than to accumulate dust in headquarters. Each local unit must possess at least one large red flag with its name inscribed upon it. District and section organizations should possess enough to make an effective color guard possible at all large meetings. The banners must have a real symbolical importance to our organization. Its red colors must be regarded as a constant reminder of our martyrs who fell beneath it and of our willingness to emulate them in the struggles that lie ahead.

An emblem is an immediate necessity for our organization. For example, the upraised clenched fist, denoting a fighting determination, could well be expressive of our character. Our emblem must appear on all our printed and mimeographed material until it becomes a familiar symbol to the mass of young workers and students.

A salute is the external expression of our unity and comradeship. The upraised fist is excellent for mass salutes. It is equally important to have a word of salutation and an accompanying gesture for use in greeting and departing. The word "Salud", used by the Spanish workers, was expressive of the spirit of comradeship and militancy engendered by the revolution. We must find a similar expression.

The ritual is a formalization of organizational procedure and symbolization of beliefs. It is part of the procedure of every serious organization. It has traditionally been part of the trade union movement. The pass word was a means of impressing a new member with the serious purpose of a trade union. We must develop our own ritual for the opening and closing of meetings, induction of officers, initiation of new members, honorary awards for members and units, graduations into the party, and other events. The mere symbolical posting of uniformed guards at the doors of our meetings impresses the young workers greatly with the seriousness of purpose of our movement.

Every new member should take a pledge on induction into the YPSL membership. The basis for the pledge should be:

I hereby pledge that I shall do all in my power toward bringing about a better world through the Socialist Revolution; that I shall never dishonor the banner or uniform of the Young Peoples Socialist League nor betray any of its ideals.

The name of our organization must also be changed to conform to our changed character. The word "people's" must definitely be dropped.

The training of our members for self-defense is indispensable if we are to become a fighting organization. Youth will respect us if we show an ability to defend our right to hold meetings, sell papers, and distribute literature against Stalinist and Fascist thuggery. Young women as well as young men should master the elements of jiu-jitsu,

boxing, and of fighting as a disciplined unit.

Singing must become much more of an expression for our movement than at présent. The declining spirit of the movement is almost to be measured by the decline of singing at our meetings and affairs. The fact that our new members do not even know the songs of the movement beyond the "International" is an alarming symptom. The organization is in need of one particular song that will become the song of our youth movement in addition to the "International". Every meeting should begin with this youth song and end with the International. The organization must also publish its own song book.

Music can become an even more organized expression for our movement through the organization of bands, orchestras, drum and bugle corps, and choruses. The period immediately after the convention must see the organization of at least a drum and bugle corps in every important district.

2. We must become a youth movement. At present we have nothing special to offer youth beyond the possibility of mere association with other youth, and even then, other youth who are much more mature and with less youth interests than the average person of their age. Life presents youth with many needs than an organization devoting itself to political and economic questions in a narrow sense can never meet. The fine instincts of youth are shocked during the period of adolescence when the sordidness of bourgeois society is revealed to him. He seeks refuge in an ideal to which he can attach himself. It might be religion or Babe Ruth or the current heavy-weight champion. It is rarely a political figure for politicians are part of the sordid "adult" world about him. This is why the German Social Democracy lost the youth to the C.P. and, still more, the Nazis. We must appear before youth as more than "just another political organization!" We must furnish youth with an ideal, the achievement of which will change the world about him and also solve his own economic problems.

Youth stands greatly in need of a spirit of comradeship which gives him much greater self-confidence. He particularly needs confidants and trusted friends of a slightly older age than himself, who will interest themselves in his development and help him in the solution of personal problems, like relations with his family, sex adjustment, etc. Until our movement can furnish this to a youth, it is not fulfilling its role as a youth movement.

We must not forget that it is our primary task to train young people for a lifetime of revolutionary service to the party. Our chief function is, therefore, an educational one. Not, however, in the narrow sense of book learning. It must be educational in the broad sense of building and training young people in knowledge, character and morality. An abstract book knowledge of politics, devoid of the revolutionary morality which the class struggle instills in a Marxist, is one of the greatest causes for cynicism on the part of our youth. The development of character for a revolutionist cannot be easily gleaned from a book. This must result from the patient efforts of older comrades who make themselves the companions and unofficial teachers and guides of newer comrades.

Since the bulk of the youth members are learning, preparatory to being admitted into the party, only the necessary core of leading members of the youth organization should be permitted to maintain dual

membership. Twenty-one years should become the upper age limit of the youth movement. Application to the party for admittance is mandatory at this age. Dual membership may be maintained for a transitional period not to exceed six months. Leading members of the youth movement may maintain dual membership only with the permission of the party. The party may in special circumstances admit members of the youth movement at the age of eighteen after a consultation with the proper body in the youth organization.

The admittance of members of the youth into the party must become an important and formal event. Admittance should be in groups at regular intervals. Party membership, symbolized by the presentation of Party cards, should be bestowed upon the "graduates" at membership meetings of the youth organization attended by selected representatives of the party.

The youth of High School age, overwhelmingly proletarian in composition, offer our movement great opportunities for recruitment. But the organization of youth of this age level also presents many serious problems which can only be overcome if we fully realize the value of such a movement and seriously apply ourselves.

Everything said about youth in general at the beginning of this section, holds true with double significance for youth of H.S. age. They are affected by all the problems of adolescence, family difficulties, the economic misery of home life, need of companions, need of confidants and advisers, etc. But they, even more than older youth, respond to a fighting movement build on comradeship, idealism, and physical activity.

Their problems differ to such an extent from those of the age of 18 to 21 that the organization of both age groups in the same local units may become highly impractical. It is necessary to investigate the advisability of organizing a separate section for youth of this age level.

The headquarters plays a tremendous role in the life of a youth movement. The appearance of our headquarters usually attests to the fact that we are not a youth movement. No basement youth clubs, no matter how rowdyish or demoralized its members may be, permits its headquarters to look as cyclone-struck or as drab and dirty as ours. The explanation is to be found in the fact that the neighborhood club headquarters is the real home of its members. Their other "home" is where they go to sleep, eat, and hear the nagging of parents who chide them for their inability to find work.

Our headquarters must change in appearance. Even if their size is modest we must seek to furnish them in a way that they become more than a mere meeting room. A radio, reading chairs, ping pong, and pool tables, gymnastic equipment like parallel bars and punching bag, should become part of the furnishings of every youth headquarters. The headquarters must be decorated with posters, banners, slogans, and pictures. Our members will also regard such a headquarters as their real home. The problem of maintaining it in order will then present little difficulty.

A summer camp is an indispensable institution for a real youth movement. Even our limited experiences with summer schools held at camps in Ohio and California have proven their value both in recruit-

ing and education and in raising money for the organization.

A summer camp for every district organization by next summer will only sound impossible to those who envision a camp as spacious grounds with substantial buildings, tiled swimming pool, asphalt tennis courts, and the other facilities of a commercial camp. Our camps must start with virtually nothing more than an improvised shelter for a kitchen, tents and determined young comrades to develop it.

Every district should build a Camp Fund during the winter months and look for suitable grounds that are conveniently located and available for leasing.

Athletic activity, in one form or another, is a means of releasing physical energies for every normal youth. Athletic skill improves bodily poise and contributes to the development of self-confidence. That our athletic activities are confined to a baseball game at the annual hike is almost the most conclusive proof of all that our present movement has very little in common with a real youth movement.

If the organization takes the task of building a sports movement seriously, it will place it in the hands of its competent organizers and not in hands of someone whose sole qualification is an interest in the work.

This winter should see at least the development of boxing classes in every district. Boxing offers two advantages as the beginning of a sports program: one, it is very inexpensive, all that is needed are the gloves and possibly a floor mat; two, the training is of immediate and direct value in our political work.

Since boxing classes will hardly be co-educational, fencing, basketball, field hockey, or some other sport should be developed for the girls.

The organization should prepare an extensive program of soft ball activity in the spring. Every possible effort should be made to enter tournaments sponsored by labor sports federations. If political groups are barred, we can enter as a workers sports club.

Our sports activities, as with similar activities, should not be limited to members. Every effort should be made to involve contacts and use this activity as a means of drawing them into the organization.

Cultural work has been on the agenda of our movement for a long time, but little serious effort has been directed toward developing a real program of cultural work. On the rare occasions when competent people were placed in charge, they found no encouragement from the leading bodies. As a result the membership never took it seriously.

The lack of competent people for this work, as for athletic activity, is the result of the narrow political appeal of our movement in the past. Recruits were for the most part, serious young people in whose lives cultural and athletic activity played a very minor role. If our appeal is that of a broad youth movement, we will recruit an increasing number of youth who will quickly supply us with the leadership for these activities.

As the starting point in a program of cultural work, every dis-

district should organize at least one cultural evening a week. This can take the form of discussions on current literature, music and art appreciation evenings, theatre and movie parties followed by discussions and a variety of similar activities that will spring from the initiative of the participants. In larger districts these might be organized on a section basis. Every large district should undertake the organization of at least one dramatic group during the winter.

Recreation, in the form of almost uniformly bad socials, has been virtually our only real youth activity. And here too, there was no importance attached to them except as a source of income. In addition to the latter, our recreational activities must become a necessary phase of inner-organization life and a means of attracting youth to our movement.

Our present socials are usually attended by members out of a sense of duty. When attended by contacts they rarely inspire them with a desire to belong to our movement.

The key to successful social affairs lies in a carefully worked out program for the event, and a group of people to take the lead. With the vast literature on the subject to be found in any public library, and a little imagination, if not ingenuity, our social affairs can become events to which youth will flock and come back with their friends.

Social affairs in rural communities and among national groups has demonstrated the tremendous value of the folk dance as a means of drawing everyone into the activities of the group and breaking down the feeling of isolation which strangers usually feel in our midst. If youth are too sophisticated to participate, they are already too old for the movement.

The recent custom of selling alcoholic drinks at our affairs, and the presence of comrades who have imbibed too much, marks a tragic break with one of the oldest traditions of the revolutionary youth movement. Marxists are too realistic to become fanatical opponents of drinking, but we should at least endeavor to set an example to the workers by our own conduct.

Drunkenness on the part of a revolutionist, above all a member of a responsible body entrusted with the confidences of the organization, should be regarded as a crime against the movement.

Our recreational program should be varied since even good socials can become monotonous if held too frequently. They should be interspersed with skating parties in winter, beach parties in summer, hikes, outings, and the variety of activities which a real youth movement will develop.

3. The mass character of our movement will have been guaranteed to a large measure by the adoption of our program for a fighting movement and youth activities. But this program will only be successfully carried out if we understand how a mass movement functions.

The internal meetings on a unit, section, or district scale, must be scheduled with an understanding that eleven o'clock is a late hour for working youth who must be at work by 7:30 or 8:00 A.M. The source of course, the failure of meetings to start on 23

time. This habit is the curse of the radical movement. But this bad habit, like others, is to a great extent a reflection of the low morale and the non-proletarian composition of the movement. If we are to build a mass movement it is imperative that we correct this. The following is one remedy; Start the meeting on time regardless of how few members are present. Station a seargent-at-arms at the door and admit late-comers only if they have a valid excuse and on the vote of the group. This can also be applied to committee meetings.

The business meeting of the local unit should be short and to the point, consisting of report on week's activity, directives from the center, and assignments by the organizer. The educational meetings must not become a succession of long, badly prepared lectures. Talks should be very carefully prepared by members of the group itself. Outside speakers should be used only on special occasions.

The monthly section or district meeting has already been discussed under the heading of structure in the section on a fighting movement.

Directives from the national and district offices must not be long, involved documents. They must be written in brief, incisive style to clearly present three or four tasks.

In order to make the membership aware of the problems of the organization and their solution, the Y.S.R. must appear monthly, if financially feasible, in a printed form. Much of the material sent out in mimeographed form or put in Action can be included. Educational outlines, monthly action programs, reports from sections and districts, student directives, press promotion, financial drive material, and general organization and political information will make up its contents. If the sweeping change is to be carried through, such a magazine will be indispensable. Enough can be sold at 5¢ a piece to make its publication a financial possibility.

Our internal education, considering the highly politicalized character of our movement, has fallen short of the mark. Now comrades have quickly learned the slogans and phrases but usually without a sound foundation of Marxist fundamentals.

Every district must have at least one class of no less than five sessions on the ABC of Marxism, functioning at all times. This class shall be mandatory for all new members except those excused by a responsible district body. An advanced course on the strategy and program of the revolutionary movement shall likewise function at all times. Completion of this course shall be mandatory before members can become organizers of local units, or hold any section or district office.

The successful completion of such courses shall be indicated by proper markings on dues books.

Where the party maintains schools, these classes should preferably be part of them.

One of the greatest failings in our educational work in the past has been an assumption of too great a previous knowledge on the

part of the membership. The national educational committee has used the New York membership as their yardstick and in addition overestimated their knowledge. As a result, groups away from the center found most of the material impractical.

An educational outline must be aimed at the average member and not at the most developed. The development of the latter must proceed through their own reading and study circles on specific problems like dialectical materialism history of the C.I. economics, etc.

Every division of the organization, from national to district to local, must have an educational director.

Propaganda does not lose its importance when the organization becomes a mass movement. Such a counter-posing of propaganda group and mass movement is entirely incorrect. What does change is the character and emphasis of our propaganda. A propaganda group seeks to reach advanced workers with its principled position and regards current problems as a means of demonstrating its principles. A mass movement regards current problems as issues upon which it can rally wide masses of supporters.

Our propaganda during the coming period must revolve around the transitional program and the fight against war.

Our chief propaganda is our press--the Challenge of Youth. Despite a universal readiness to admit the tremendous role the press must play in a revolutionary movement, the membership and leading comrades still regard it as an adjunct rather than an essential of the movement. Our European comrades comprehend its importance to the extent of sacrificing all other activities to assure the appearance and sale of their press.

Our members have learned that they must regard their press critically and never feel that the maximum of perfection has been achieved. Unfortunately, however, there is too much of a tendency to feel that this is sufficient. There is something seriously wrong with an organization that cannot sell a 2¢ paper at a ratio of 15 and 20 times its membership.

Complaints that the Challenge is not suitable for students is indicative that many comrades still regard the Challenge as a paper to be sold to the radical periphery. If the student bodies are too politically developed for the Challenge, they must be ripe for mass sales of the Appeal and the New International. Yet the latter has not taken place. We can only explain this by assuming that many of our student comrades have not yet comprehended that our paper is for mass sale and not for the dilettants who hang around the radical movement and seek material for esoteric discussions on abstract points of theory.

The Challenge has shown considerable improvement in the direction of a mass paper since the adoption of the new format. But we must regard this as only a beginning. In order to meet the needs of a fighting organization, it is essential to publish the Challenge first as a semi-monthly, and then as a weekly. We need still more cuts, cartoons, and feature material. A greater number of comrades must be drawn into the preparation of the paper.

The present state of our organization is totally incongruous with the fighting character of the improved Challenge which anticipates the organization of the future.

The popularization of our transitional program requires the publication of a series of 1¢ pamphlets on the problems of youth. This must be undertaken immediately after the convention. The first pamphlet must appear no later than Christmas. They must be issued at regular monthly intervals thereafter. A revolving pamphlet fund must be set up so that the sale of one pamphlet finances the publication of the next.

Leaflets have been turned out by our organization in great number. But there is a crying need for better leaflets. With mass meetings held on a section and district scale, the number of leaflets distributed makes printing a financial practicality. It should be the aim of every district to acquire together with the party a small press. Its use in this period will be tremendous. But its real value will become even more apparent later on.

Chalk, stickers, and posters, presenting one simple slogan, must become a routine method of disseminating our ideas. Members should always carry stickers on their person and post them wherever they go. The mere chalking up of our emblem and initials is of tremendous propaganda value. A box of chalk should be kept in the headquarters and a piece sold to members whenever they leave. Working class neighborhoods usually present enough fences, boarded up buildings and other surfaces to make the pasting up of large posters practical and effective. Hundreds of them can be produced by the screen process method for a very reasonable price.

Mass meetings must become more than a long lecture followed by a discussion that deals with matters above the heads of the average youth. They must be held on a section or district scale. The program must be carefully planned. It should only include one or two short agitational speeches. The content of the speech must be directed toward the outsiders not the membership. It should include other features like mass chants, skits or a film. The hall should be decorated with slogans. The meeting must begin promptly. Every member must attend in uniform. Guards should be posted at the street entrance to the hall. Other guards at the hall entrance itself. The speaker or speakers of the evening should be conducted to the platform with a color guard. A guard of four should be stationed in front of the platform and others along the side walls and rear. The guards should be relieved at regular intervals with military precision. If a band, drum and bugle corps, or chorus exists, it should be used to open the meeting and in between other features.

These meetings must not be continually held at the same place. They must be rotated in different parts of the section or district in which a local group exists or it is intended to organize one. But the entire strength of the section or district must be mobilized for each of them.

Open air meetings must become one of the most effective ways of making the working class and particularly the youth, aware of our existence and our program. The tremendous energies expended every summer in street meetings hardly pays in results due to the manner in which we run them. The open air meeting must be a repetition of

the mass meeting described above adopted to the street. It must not be just another street meeting. It must be a demonstration of our strength and fighting spirit.

An amplifying apparatus is almost imperative for a successful outdoor meeting. It must be the goal of every district to own one.

All members must report in uniform and be assigned to their tasks. The musical auxiliaries of the organization should be used to attract the crowd. Banners and placards should inform them of the sponsorship of the meeting and our chief slogans. Guards should be stationed around the platform and throughout the crowd to take care of disrupters. The meeting should have a definite theme and speakers should arrange beforehand on a division of the subject. The meeting should start and end at an appointed time regardless of the size of the crowd. If there is an organization headquarters in the vicinity, an hour's social activity should be planned. The members should march there in formation after having invited all interested persons to attend.

It is essential that every section from the local unit to the national center, have a Propaganda Director to handle all matters pertaining directly to agitate outside our ranks. Every effort must be made to maintain a full-time National Propaganda Director.

Recruits to a mass movement are not asked to state their agreement with the theory of the permanent revolution. All we ask of them is an interest in our organization and a willingness to learn. Every youth who shows the least interest in our movement must be prevailed upon to join.

Our comrades on college campuses will play an important role in the transformation of our organization. Contrary to some opinions, the colorful fighting character of a movement has as great an appeal to students as to young workers. Our movement on campus will have the following four tasks as the point of concentration for their work:

- a. Becoming the vanguard of anti-war activity and the spearhead of the drive against jingoist movement;
- b. Becoming the leaders in the struggle to drive the fascist movement off the campus;
- c. Becoming the agitators for the economic and educational rights of students as set forth in our transitional program;
- d. Becoming a serious intellectual center to which students seeking information on Marxism will gravitate.

It is incorrect, however, to hold that students will show no interest in a fighting and colorful movement and that we must confine ourselves to an intellectual approach on campus. The lessons of Germany teach us otherwise. The study circle approach of the social Democrats and Communists permitted the Nazis to capture the student bodies.

Our fight against fascists and war mongers on the campus must be by both means, the dissemination of Marxist theory and bold actions against our enemies.

The racial composition of our movement will be much easier to change through our mass activities than was the case in the past. The three months after the convention must be the beginning of serious work in the Negro sections of our larger districts. We must utilize our changed character to expand beyond the circle of continual recruitment among the children of once radical Jewish immigrants. Our wide variety of activities should enable us to draw from the youth of national groups without a radical tradition. We must strive for a composition which will reflect a cross section of the youth of the country.

This requires the development of a program and organizational forms for rural youth. A great step will have been taken in this direction with the utilization of party branches in rural communities in Minnesota for the development of local units of our movement. The experiences gained will be more widely applicable than those of our California comrades whose experiences have been among rural wage workers. Such experimentation will permit us to develop a sound approach and technique for the organization of rural units of our organization.

The opponents work we have been carrying on will be greatly strengthened by our mass activities. It will give this work the positive side it lacked until now. We faced the difficulty of asking Stalinist youth to break with that movement without being able to counter-pose as an attractive force, a mass movement that exceeded, or at least equaled, it in activity and effectiveness.

The transformation of our organization in the direction outlined here in the shortest possible time will require the greatest possible efforts toward coordination of work between the national center and the districts and local units. In addition to the aforementioned monthly YSR, the two most important weapons for this task are the creating of a national organization bureau with a full-time functionary and full-time district organizers.

It will be the task of the national organizational secretary to keep in the closest possible contact with the activities of the districts and local units, criticizing, advising, suggesting, teaching by means of bulletins and correspondence. The work of the financial committee should be part of the work of such an organization bureau.

Full-time district organizers can only be maintained at a great sacrifice -- a personal sacrifice by the organizer and financial sacrifice by the membership. But in an organization which really inspires loyalty and devotion, these sacrifices will not be regarded as a burden. A movement with a determination to conquer will again and again find unexpected reserves of resources in its membership and those close to it.

Frequent seminars and schools will prove very useful in checking upon the progress made and shortcomings to be corrected.

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This program does not seek to be a blueprint. It seeks to point a direction. If this direction is not taken, if the movement goes through another year of stagnation like the last, a serious

and deliberate estimate of our future can only foretell decline, disintegration, and finally, the liquidation of the youth organization.

If this direction is taken, beginning with meagre forces and small resources, with a bad composition and worse atmosphere, we will develop with increasing strides into a genuine fighting, mass, youth movement. If we are not a fighting movement, if we are not a mass movement, if we are not a youth movement, we have failed in our purpose.

The revolutionary youth movement has a tremendous responsibility. If we measure up to our tasks we have a glorious future. The past has cleared the ground and given us the experience. In spite of all the weaknesses, we have grouped together a core of active comrades devoted to the ideals of the revolution. What we require today is a clear conception of the way to be followed in building the youth into a mass organization. This convention must lay the foundation upon which that future will be built.

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AN EVALUATION OF THE ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF THE Y.P.S.L.
SINCE THE TENTH NATIONAL CONVENTION (Including an Evalu-
ation of the Role of the Youth Resolution)

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PREFACE:

In the seventeen months since the last National Convention, world events moved at an ever quicker pace constantly changing our tasks, and forcing us into double-quick activities. When the contradictions of world imperialism burst forth into the Second World War, our movement reflected this with a crisis on the most important and immediate problems of the War.

During this period our organization attempted to solve the following problems:

- a. Concretizing our transitional program and getting it before the youth;
- b. Changing the character of our organization so that it can get to, attract, and hold on to, the youth and;
- c. Participating in the internal discussion in our movement in an attempt to work out a correct political approach to the problems of the Second World War.

We have passed through a seven month discussion on the problems of the Second World War, which culminated in a split in the American section of the Fourth International with the organization of the Workers Party and the affiliation of the Y.P.S.L. to it as the youth section. Through this discussion, we have solved the first important problem arising out of the Second World War and laid a programmatic basis for the solution of the other problems that this period will bring. But as yet, we have only begun to solve the first two points.

We will in this document, attempt to analyze the problems of concretizing our program and changing the character of our organization: What was done; where we failed and why, during the last seventeen months. The question of what we must do after our convention will be taken up in a following document -- "Youth and the War - the Tasks for the Coming Period".

In analyzing the past, we will use as a basis for discussion, the Resolution on the Transitional Program for Youth and the progress we made with the Role of the Youth Resolution. We will, by analyzing our concrete experiences, attempt to answer

where that resolution needs amplification, changes and modification.

REVISIONS BY THE EDITOR

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INTRODUCTION:

1. We are confronting an important, perhaps a decisive, Convention. Though this may have been said many times before, the League members now understand that with the present developments of the War (America's entry so close, the stupendous preparations accompanied by hysterical war propaganda) this Convention may be our final meeting for discussion, criticism, check-up and decision. At this Eleventh National Convention, we must so organize our work as to be sure that our organization is the active anti-war youth organization and that we survive during the next period.
2. The tasks that confront our organization now have changed! This change is produced by the war both politically (the limited time we have and the need for popularizing our anti-war program), and organizationally (the split and the formation of the Workers Party which is a tremendous job of reorganization).
3. It is important for us to analyze the past. We must correct our errors. But the events of the past nine months makes an analysis of the past not as important as it usually is at conventions. Our tasks, our main task (especially if we realize that the split also left us -- and not only the Party -- with a new organization) is the preparation of the League to meet the tasks of War.
4. In light of the above, it is important to remember that our analysis must be viewed from the understanding that we now have a smaller organization that we started with after the Chicago Convention. Not only smaller in numbers, but more important, weaker, in that our parent organization has to rebuild a new Party with fewer forces, numerically and materially. Yet, in spite of these considerations, we must attempt to carry out as much work as we did in the past -- and much more.
5. Therefore, we can not come to this convention and analyze the progress of our League purely by the use of arithmetic -- at the last convention we had so many units, today fewer, so many members, today fewer, and so forth.
6. We should like to issue a warning: We can not go into too great detail on all the periods or phases of League activities or the work of the various departments. In a sense, this document is a guide for discussion. The individual comrades and the unit executive committees, the reporters for pre-convention discussion, should go to the original sources -- that is, the

the various documents, bulletins, directives, and other material issued since the Chicago Convention, for a more detailed understanding and analysis of the accomplishments and shortcomings in the various departments, campaigns, etc. As a matter of fact, in order to fully comprehend the matters discussed in this document, a reading of both the Transitional Program for Youth and the Role of the Youth Resolution, is essential.

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Before we discuss the actual period since the last national convention of the Y.P.S.L., it is of course necessary to describe briefly the problems faced at that convention and the steps taken to attempt a solution. Our youth organization came to its national convention in Chicago 17 months ago with considerable accomplishments, but also with difficult problems. The organization at the time before the Chicago convention was such that many members who have joined since, would hardly have recognized it as the Y.P.S.L.

Our organization then was a highly politicalized youth group. Much of the internal life, the color which we now take for granted, was then unknown. In a sense, we were a youth party. The Y.P.S.L. had the same highly politicalized approach as the party; there was very little difference with regard to the type and spirit of organization. The only great difference was the chronological difference of age. But we were not specifically a youth organization in approach, in internal life, in our propaganda (look up old issues of the Challenge, then in small tabloid size!). We did not know how, nor did we seriously try to approach "raw" youth; that is, youth who had had no previous contact with the radical movement but who were interested in fighting for better conditions.

In order to remedy this situation, "YSR #4" was written. It is difficult to describe the effect which this document had on comrades who have recently joined the League, because many of the things which the document advocated have now become commonplaces in the League. Essentially, the document was an attempt to turn the League outwards; to break with our old sectarian habits and to boldly proceed to build a youth organization that would capture the imagination and the spirit of American youth. We wanted a mass youth organization -- not meaning so much one with hundreds of thousands of members, since we realized the impossibility of that in the immediate period, but meaning rather an organization capable of attracting youth who had not been immersed in radical affairs and jargons for years. We wanted a colorful organization, which would look the way it spoke, which would sing of its determination to build a new world, which would have neat and attractive headquarters, which would know how to hold colorful and attractive meetings instead of the long dreary monologues which had previously been the rule. We wanted a fighting organization, with a discipline derived from common consent and enthusiasm and a spirit of sacrifice. In short, we wanted to "youthify" our organization. (Again we recommend a careful reading of YSR #4, which is reprinted in this issue) That was the task we set ourselves. Let us see what we have achieved.

FROM THE CHICAGO CONVENTION TO THE APRIL PLENUM:

The First Seven Weeks

The first four months after the Chicago Convention (November 24, 25, 26, 1938) were the most important and crucial in the development of the organization, in carrying out the decisions of the Chicago Convention. It was the task of the National leadership to reorganize the League, establish the Challenge, and give direction to the Divisions and Units on how to reorganize their internal and external life. This necessitated not only direction, but material with which to carry it out, and above all, to translate the political program into concrete terms for campaigns and activities.

During the first four months after the Chicago Convention, the League made tremendous strides forward. But only those comrades who were at the center in New York could appreciate how tremendous these advances were, for only the leading comrades who came back from the convention to take over the direction of the organization have a complete picture of what the center was like.

The first task was to reorganize the League on a new basis. But before this could be accomplished, all the elementary tasks of organizing the work of the League had to be done. There was no office, no records, no equipment; in short, everything had to begin from scratch.

Though the National Bureau had this tremendous job of rebuilding the apparatus of the organization, it did not confine its work during the first period (the first seven weeks - Dec. 5, 1938 to Jan. 21, 1939) purely to the work of reorganization, but outlined and carried through important activities and gave the League a political and organization guide for future actions.

During the first seven weeks the following was planned and accomplished:

1. On December 21, 1938, the first issue of the CHALLENGE OF YOUTH appeared. This issue marked an important political turn in the work of our organization, and of our whole movement as well. It was at this time that the Fascist movement in America was rapidly gaining in strength (capitalizing on the continued severity of the depression) and was indulging in acts of unprecedented audacity in the streets; beating up Jews, wrecking labor halls, provokingly selling their anti-Semitic and anti-labor literature in Jewish and labor centers. After a detailed discussion by the National Bureau it was decided that the main slogan of this first issue of the newly-renovated Challenge, would be "Smash the Fascist Gangs!" This issue of Challenge, selling unprecedentedly well, was the first blow our movement struck against the Fascists. Instead of the puny "defensive" measures advocated by the liberals and Stalinists ("Send postcards to the President")

we said to the youth and the workers: A bold offensive against the Fascists, a struggle to organize workers defense guards -- that is the answer to the Fascist provocateurs. This was to be the beginning of the tremendous movement against the Fascists, climaxed by the great demonstration which our movement led against the Fascists on Feb. 20, 1939 at Madison Square Garden. It was to be the beginning of our contact with masses of workers in the anti-Fascist struggle.

2. Directives were issued by the Challenge business department giving the first suggestions in the history of our organization, on getting into the streets with our agitational material and how to do it.

3. The National Office was built and furnished -- desks, two typewriters, mimeograph material and other necessary equipment for the efficient functioning of an office.

4. An emblem was decided upon. And we had a campaign for popularizing the emblem -- chalk ups, leaflets, national material.

5. Selected two official League songs.

6. We participated in the conferences of Avukah, American Student Union, and the Youth Committee Against War. This was the first time in this period that we introduced ourselves dramatically to these more politicalized movements, putting forward our position on war and gaining invaluable contacts. Especially significant was the picket line which we ran at a mass meeting preceding the ASU convention in New York, at which the League demonstrated its ability to mobilize quickly and act boldly and colorfully.

7. Initiated a National Registration to determine the real strength and composition of the League.

8. Organized the League into effective subdivisions: Units, Territories, Divisions, and issued instructions on how these were to function; types of officers, meetings, etc.

9. Since changing the face of our League and making our organization more attractive involved not only the activities of the units but also the face of the National Office, an important accomplishment was the issuance of the twelve-page membership book, attractive dues stamps, and application blanks.

A Guide to Action

The Chicago Convention contributed two important documents as guides to the future work of the League -- A Transitional Program for the Youth and A Resolution on the Character of the Youth Organization. It failed, though, to supply a connecting link between these two documents. The National Bureau undertook to span this gap by supplying the League with a GUIDE TO ACTION -- A Plan of Work (Y.S.R. Vol. II #1). Upon rereading it almost one and a half years later, we can say that even to this day, though a great deal has been learned from our experiences since, it represents an outstanding contribution to League work. This was a

hand-book which did not concern itself purely with quotas but presented a wealth of suggestions on how to reorganize the League and how to organize the work, campaigns, slogans, concretizing our transitional program, and making our organization a real youth movement, getting to masses of youth with color and action.

Besides initiating an intensive Anti-Fascist Campaign with the January issue of Challenge, the National Bureau organized and suggested other political activities for the consideration of all the units and divisions. The Guide to Action proposed campaigns on the following activities:

- a. America's preparation for war and the plight of youth.
- b. The fight for the Transitional Program for Youth.
- c. Refugee campaign in cooperation with the American Fund. It was at this time that the plight of the European refugees was being particularly brought to the attention of the American public. The failure of the Roosevelt government to contribute anything but crocodile tears, and the refusal of the Stalinist government to admit the refugees into its borders -- these factors gave our movement a particular opportunity to capitalize on this issue.
- d. Initiation of work in Negro neighborhoods in conjunction with the James tour.
- e. Unemployed and industrial work.
- f. Student work.
- g. L.L.L. Meetings. These meetings were the first occasions we had for the purpose of trying to hold our new kind of meetings -- with short snappy speeches, dramatic presentations, singing, etc. For the most part, they were highly successful.
- h. Tours.
- i. Propaganda around Roosevelt's military plans for the N.Y.A. and C.C.C. in relation to the campaign for youth relief.
- j. Initiation of work in outside youth organizations already mentioned.
- k. Color of the organization and overhauling the structure of the League.
- l. Beginnings of summer work, at least tentative plans.
- m. Finances for the League.

Almost every day, during this period, national directives and bulletins giving suggestions and instructions on various kinds of activities, were sent out. These directives concretized the general suggestions in the Guide to Action and were a medium for the exchange of experiences of the various sections of the Organization.

One of our most important accomplishments was the regular, consistent correspondence between the National Office and the Units. This served to solve the individual problems peculiar to the various sections and to keep the National Office constantly informed on progress and mistakes so that the League as a whole profited from the experiences of each section.

Since we were striving to change the face of the organization and to present our program in an attractive and understandable form, the publication of CALENDAR as the monthly educational and propaganda bulletin, was an important step. This bulletin was useful and effective in all the work of the League.

We will not stop to draw a balance sheet of these first seven weeks now, but will go on listing the activities and instructions for the period from January 21 to April, 1939. We shall then draw a balance sheet, as the April Plenum did, on the activities of the first four months of our new orientation following the Chicago Convention.

From January 21 to April 1, 1939

This period, until the Plenum, had as its task the carrying out of the instructions, directives sent out, and the campaigns begun during the first seven weeks. But from the experiences the League had already gone through in the first stages of its work, many suggestions had to be modified and many new campaigns suggested. The main problem was the further concretization of the Transitional Program and the changing of the character of the organization. After many discussions in the Bureau, the first big campaign it initiated nationally in the organization, concretizing our program, was the Jobs for Youth Campaign. This will be discussed in greater detail later. The following was done during this time:

1. The Challenge stabilized itself as a regularly appearing monthly paper (February, March, April) and laid the foundations for the drive that was to come for the establishment of the twice-monthly.
2. Up to the end of January, we had raised \$195.10 on the \$1,000 Fund Drive which had been decided on as the amount needed to rebuild the organization. At the end of this period, April 1, which was the end of the \$1,000 Fund Drive, we raised a total of \$683.63.
3. The Anti-Fascist issue of the Challenge (January 1939) proved itself invaluable when on Feb. 20, 1939 we witnessed the gigantic anti-fascist demonstrations in New York and similar demonstrations in Los Angeles, Cleveland, Philadelphia, and other sections of the country.
4. In connection with the \$1,000 Fund Drive, there was initiated nationally, after the first successful experiment in New York, membership sacrifice weeks which accomplished two things.

First, it helped to raise the money needed, efficiently and quickly. Second, the money was raised by spirited participation on the part of all the comrades.

5. During the end of February and at the beginning of March, the National Bureau held long sessions on how to concretize the Transitional Program for Youth as carried by the National Convention. After a series of discussions, it was decided to begin a campaign with an open letter to C.W. Taussig, Chairman of the National Advisory Council of the National Youth Administration. This open letter was published in the March issue of Challenge. It concretized the League program for jobs, education, trade schools, and the right to vote on the question of war. This article was also broken down into what our League members now know as the three-point-program for youth. In conjunction with this, the National Bureau decided to issue this Open Letter to Taussig, plus our program for the Youth of America, as an attractive leaflet. This pamphlet, published in 10,000 copies (8,000 sold by July 1st), was the first mass youth pamphlet selling for 1¢ which our movement had ever published. In addition, petitions for the youth to endorse the three point program for jobs, were issued. These petitions, the pamphlet, and the Challenge, became the main weapons for the first national campaign of our organization.

The final details of this campaign, though initiated during the month of March, with the pamphlets and petitions appearing about the third week of March, were discussed at the April Plenum of the League and were carried on during the next several months.

6. Directives went out to all divisions for the creation of committees to organize summer camps, schools and active workers conferences.

7. Directives went out on how to utilize high-school graduations during that year with effective propaganda. Many of the units responded with excellent leaflets and activities on this issue. The age level began to be lowered -- a specific indication that the organization was going in a desirable direction.

8. Divisions and Territories had been completely organized by this time, many of them having full-time functionaries for the first time.

9. Constant check-ups were made and directives sent out on industrial work and placing comrades in industry and recruiting young workers.

10. Directives for holding of Paris Commune meetings were sent out.

11. The circulation of the Challenge had grown from less than 2,500 before the Chicago Convention to over 5,500 with the beginning of the April issue.

Conclusions and Summary of the First Four Months

We are aware that we have already gone into a great deal of detail. We were even tempted to put in a great deal more. Briefly, the first several months taken as a whole, can be summarized as one of the best and most active periods of the League. From the National Office to the divisions, units and to the individual members, we were becoming the attractive organization with the program and internal activities that we had desired to create.

It must be said though, that a great many goals we had set for ourselves in the plan of work for the first four months, were not reached. The reasons for this can be summed up as the comrades at the April Plenum put it -- we set ourselves a pace that was too fast for an organization that was changing its face, reorganizing itself, popularizing its program, and doing all this from scratch. We all lacked the experiences from the ranks up to and including the leadership which had to carry it all through. Our enthusiasm for a mass, a colorful, youth organization, at the convention and after, carried us far toward establishing unrealizable goals for so short a period of time. Not the least of our difficulties was finances.

The Jobs for Youth Campaign

The campaign that we organized around "Youth Want Jobs" showed that the National Bureau had the correct orientation on the type of activity that the League should carry on, in line with the two documents adopted at the Chicago Convention. But the actual working out of the campaign showed that both the national and local leadership was as yet inexperienced and did not know how to organize a real live, functioning campaign. The jobs campaign that was initiated during this time and carried on until the beginning of July was lacking something fundamental all during its duration. We all knew what it was but did not know how to remedy the situation. The campaign lacked some dramatic goal for which to aim. It did not have a national goal though the petitions were addressed to Congress, nor did the local leadership develop local goals. Such a goal may have been the presenting of the signed petitions to Congress in Washington or some similar action on a small local scale. The National Bureau often thought of presenting the petitions to Congress, but with a small organization such as ours, we did not have the resources, financial or in mass contacts, to reach such a goal. Therefore, the campaign floundered without a definite objective.

It did, however, mark a definite advance in terms of general propaganda. We had, for the first time, concretely formulated a specific program for youth, instead of the vague generalizations about the plight of youth in which we had indulged in in the past. We learned to put forward our program dramatically, concretely. A re-reading of the Challenge issues which featured this campaign will show this to be true. That the campaign did not really achieve its objectives can be put down to the following three factors:

1. The general difficulty of a small organization as ours was in finding specific forms of activity around economic issues.

2. The inexperience of the ranks and leadership.

3. The inadequacy of the specific leadership provided by the Bureau. The Bureau made the error of delegating the campaign to a comrade not completely qualified for such a difficult and responsible task, instead of assigning it to one of its own members who was a full-time functionary with previous experience. The campaign suffered locally as well as nationally, since one of the main faults of the campaign was the failure of the National Director to coordinate the national campaign with the local activities. This last point was not the major reason for the failure of the campaign, but it was a contributing factor.

The campaign kept going until the July 4, 1939 Convention of the S.W.P. and then died an unnatural death when the Party initiated the campaign around "Let the People Vote on War", in which the League took an active part.

In spite of the above, the Jobs for Youth Campaign must be set down as a definite accomplishment in that the League, for the first time, participated in a nationally organized campaign in which there was supplied a pamphlet, petitions, and the Challenge. The League learned a great deal from it for its future work. Many of the units learned how to do effective house-to-house canvassing in their use of the petitions and obtained contacts through them. Many of the units were also able to speak at several organizations about the campaign. This was something we had not done before.

Challenge of Youth

One has but to go back and re-examine the February, March, and April 1939 issues of Challenge in order to see that the paper was really on its way towards becoming the kind of youth paper which the Convention desired to create. We will not go into a detailed analysis of the various issues that the Challenge raised in these copies, except to say that the paper reflected the points of concentration on which we had decided to base our main emphasis. The Challenge, by keeping the anti-fascist slogans in the foreground in its articles and editorials, was very effective in our anti-fascist campaign.

Without doubt, one of the most important and invaluable accomplishments of the League was the establishment of a regularly appearing, colorful youth paper.

Leadership

During this period, the League established a cohesive and collective leadership. The importance of such an achievement cannot be overemphasized. A collective leadership does not mean that

there are no disagreements, or that all the leading comrades are merely mechanisms of a smoothly functioning machine. It means -- and meant then -- that the comrades in the leadership made serious efforts to work together with each other, to supplement each other's work, to help the other comrade correct his failings, and to exploit for the best advantage of the League, the abilities of each of the comrades. A serious, and in the main successful, attempt was made to forget past differences in face of the common task which faced us then; and also, to work out our common perspective, despite any difference of method which might have, and did, arise during that work. It was at this period that the National Office had the greatest number of full-time functionaries in its history, at great personal sacrifice on the part of these comrades.

Other Printed Material

Although we had thought of issuing two pamphlets and several stickers, we found that we could only issue one pamphlet and one sticker. We did issue an emblem button for all League members.

The Membership

The membership of the League grew from the 322 that we actually had on December 5, 1938 to 495 book-holding members in this period. There were 601 registered members at this time but only 495 of these had received their 1939 books, the rest not having completed payment for their 1938 dues as yet. The League recruited a little more than 190 new members during this time. In addition to recruiting, several new units were organized. These were in Fresno, New Brunswick, Lynn, Rochester, and two in New York.

Tour

In March 1939, the National Bureau sent Comrade Bern on an organizational tour from New York to Minneapolis. All the units between these two points were visited. On the basis of this tour the National Office had a better picture of the League and the Units benefited from the discussions with the National Representative on their accomplishments and shortcomings. In addition to this lengthy tour, various comrades from the National Office took short trips to several eastern units.

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If we were to judge the work of the League in the first four months or even the first nine months, after the Chicago Convention, we could definitely say that the League had gone forward, had accomplished a great deal and was well on the road towards making a reality of the two resolutions carried at the convention (providing of course, that the pressure of the period in which we were functioning had not intervened). This can be said from all points of view, in spite of the acknowledged shortcomings and deficiencies

APRIL PLENUM TO JULY 1, 1939

After the detailed discussion at the April Plenum, the League set to work on three main tasks:

- a. The campaign to launch the Twice-a-Month Challenge.
- b. The continuation and intensification of the campaign around the slogan "Youth Want Jobs".
- c. Preparations of the League for the summer period.

Challenge

As soon as the National Bureau members returned to New York City from the April Plenum, an intensive campaign was launched to raise the \$500 needed to guarantee the publication of a twice-monthly Challenge. Beginning with April 5, the financial aspects of this campaign were worked out through greetings, special subscription offers, and quotas for the units in the League. When the twice-monthly was established on July 1, this campaign was more than fulfilled by the raising of close to \$600 in the form of greetings, subscriptions and other special offers.

The May and June issues of Challenge appeared as a monthly, regularly published and were coordinated with the activities of the national campaigns. The circulation of the paper was still growing during this time. Street sales and demonstrative hawking of the Challenge had already become a regular part of League activity. The subscriptions to Challenge grew from 100 in December 1939 to over 600 at this time.

Summer Guide to Action

Immediately following the April Plenum, the National Bureau set to work to write another Guide to Action for the summer period (July 15 to Sept. 15). This document was written, mimeographed, and sent out to all units of the League by May 20. Similar to the first Guide to Action, it contained invaluable suggestions and guides for activity. It attempted to gear the League so that it would not have a summer slump. It provided rules for leaves of absence, work of students during the summer, quotas for recruitment, uniforms, singing, and other suggestions for colorful meetings and summer schools and camps. It also contained political directives and the preparation of the League for future work, which was seriously undertaken by the League at this time. It is important to note that this was one of the first major steps ever undertaken by our League to prevent the situation of a "9-month" organization. We were determined to keep our organization going full blast even during the summer months and, to a considerable degree, we succeeded. (Again we urge the comrades to re-read this Guide to Action for the Summer Period.)

Pamphlet

A pamphlet on "What Is the YPSL?" was assigned and written during this period. It was not published because we were already having financial difficulties and the entire orientation of the National Bureau was to sacrifice everything in favor of the regular appearance of the twice-a-month Challenge.

Membership

At the end of this period (the beginning of summer), the League had about 650 members who had obtained 1939 membership books, already subtracting about 25 members who had joined the Party between the Chicago Convention and July 1.

JULY 1 TO OCTOBER 15, PHILADELPHIA PLENUMChallenge

The Challenge appeared regularly as a twice-monthly during this period with a circulation of about 4500 per issue, which meant that 9,000 Challenges were sold each month as against the 5500 copies sold monthly during the preceding period.

Membership

Most of the units kept their own during the summer period and several gained in membership.

Summer Work

The decisions on leaves of absence and the general activity of the League during the summer period was maintained, by and large, throughout the country. The League was in the streets more than ever before, selling Challenge and holding street-corner meetings. Slowly but surely, the social composition of the League was also turning in the direction we were striving. This change, however, was not phenomenal, nor did it accomplish the complete turn we desired. The proportion of comrades who were leaving school for jobs and the number of young workers and unemployed youth in the organization was definitely greater than the League. We must repeat, however, that the composition of the League was still far from what was desired.

Camps and Schools

Four regional schools were held during the summer period. These were on the East Coast, in Ohio, Chicago, and California. There was an exchange of students and National Representatives at these schools and camps. There was a National Representative at the Ohio camp and several exchange students from New York and Chicago. The Chicago camp had a National Representative and several exchange students from New York and Ohio. The California camp had a National Representative but due to the distance, there were no exchange

students from the other camps. The New York camp had National Representatives plus comrades from Philadelphia, Ohio, and Chicago.

These camps were extremely important in the development of our organization. Not only did they serve the obvious purposes of giving the comrades an opportunity for more formal types of education in Socialism, in being able to take vacations together, and acquainting the comrades of different localities with each other, but more important, it gave us the chance to concretely live through and experience those concepts of comradeship, of working together for a common goal which we had been trying to drive home.

Tour

Immediately following the July Convention of the SWP, the National Secretary undertook a coast to coast tour. This took him first to California, where he stayed for an extended period and then the other units of the League, which he visited on his way back to New York.

As we mentioned before, concrete steps were already undertaken in relation to future work and during this trip, many of these were concretized in all the localities.

The Anti-War Campaign

Immediately following the July SWP Convention, a national Anti-War campaign was launched around the slogan "Let the People Vote on War". The League issues a special youth petition entitled "We, the Generation Marked for Death". Though this was the first national campaign initiated by the Party with a pamphlet (5¢) and petitions, the League, having learned from the "Jobs for Youth Campaign", attempted to once more dramatize and simplify our propaganda for "new" youth.

Though we obtained more signed petitions on this campaign than before and held many more spectacular open air and indoor meetings, the campaign also lacked a goal, which had the same effect on our work as in the "Jobs for Youth" campaign.

One important step was taken. In working together with the Party in a campaign of our entire movement, we did create a special youth appeal (the separate petitions). Another 1¢ pamphlet and sticker was planned, with a youth angle, but finances once more intervened.

When the Second World War broke out on September 1, Comrade Gould was already back in New York and Comrade Bern had just arrived from his visit to the Chicago camp. The comrades know that the outbreak of the war caused an immediate dispute in the SWP. But in the first days and weeks of the war, steps were immediately undertaken to prepare the League, internally and externally, for the next period.

In an appeal for finances, the League responded very well with contributions totaling \$263 for the Anti-War Fund Drive which was conducted during the first 6 weeks after the outbreak of the war. Though the organization was geared for action with the membership eager for work and sacrifice, the faction fight already had its paralyzing grip on our members when we came to the October Plenum of the YPSL in Philadelphia.

OCTOBER 15 TO APRIL 5

PLENUM

The October 15 Plenum at Philadelphia had some very fruitful discussions analyzing the previous activities of the League and the work for the coming period. At this Plenum, there were present about 40 comrades who had been specially invited in addition to the regular members of the National Council. These comrades represented the League from coast to coast.

ACTIVITY

But as we already know, the 6½ month period from October 15 to April 5, was dissipated from the point of view of active, external work, as a result of the serious factional struggle that the movement went through at this time.

Practically all that the League could do was to attempt to maintain the gains in membership and the publication of the twice-monthly Challenge. Although this was not seen by all the comrades at the beginning of the factional struggle, particularly those out of New York, it was soon apparent as the struggle spread to the localities.

CHALLENGE

The Challenge maintained its regular publication during this period. With the beginning of 1940 and the increase of the inner struggle, the National Office began to feel the seriousness of the situation in that the circulation of the paper began to fall off, new subscriptions became scarce and the income of the National Office was greatly reduced. Were it not for the \$250 we had collected at the outbreak of the war, the Challenge would undoubtedly have gone under during this period. This financial pinch and lack of external activity was felt concretely when we were forced to skip the Challenge issues of January 15 and March 15, 1940.

MEMBERSHIP

The membership of the League not only stood still during the period of the factional fight, but many of the new comrades throughout the country who had not yet been intergrated and educated politically, dropped out. The transfer of many comrades into the Party during this period also decreased the membership of the

League without the addition of new recruits.

The largest membership of the League had been in the summer of 1939 with about 675 book-holding members. When we approached the April Convention of the SWP, the drops and transfers to the Party left the League with a membership of about 500. The total 1939 membership books issued were 750.

Before the factional fight broke out, all sections of the League reported excellent possibilities for growth and activity for the fall and winter months -- 1939-1940. But we can see, this was snipped in the bud by the factional struggle.

SPLIT TO REORGANIZATION AND FORMATION OF WORKERS PARTY

At the time of the split, we estimated that our (Minority youth) membership was about 225. Recent figures (May 15, 1940) indicate that we have a little more than 300 members in the League today. This includes the new members recruited since the split. We have recruited 33 new members since the split and expect more new members to receive their books within the immediate period.

Due to the smallness of our number and resources, we have been forced to abandon the twice-monthly Challenge and change its frequency to a monthly.

From the reports we have been receiving, however, the plans for activity, recruitment and other projects seem to indicate a surging forward with good possibilities for growth and with most units engaging in fruitful activity. Special emphasis is being placed on Negro work in many localities. In general, the morale of the comrades seems to be higher than it has been in a long time. We can say that on the whole, though we are smaller than we were a year ago, the morale of our organization compares favorably with the high spirit that prevailed in the League during the first months following the Chicago Convention.

Detailed and accurate charts on membership will be submitted separately from this document. The charts on membership will include figures on how many members remained in the League after the Chicago Convention, how many new members were recruited since then and how many members were dropped from the League. The number of comrades transferred to the Party will also be listed. A financial report on Challenge and the National Office will be included with this report on membership.

DEPARTMENTS

Education and Propaganda: Undoubtedly between the Chicago Convention and the present period, some of the greatest gains made by

our organization was in the initiation of new, more attractive and simpler propoganda methods. Though by no means can we say that we have solved the problem, the comrades in the entire League are aware of the problems and are making real efforts to simplify and make more attractive our propoganda education. The comrades have been experimenting in this field with gratifying results and have been exchanging their ideas throughout the League.

The issuance of a regular educational bulletin (Calendar) and various other material that this department has been in charge of, was undoubtedly a definite step forward and very helpful in the educational work of the units.

Challenge: We have already discussed Challenge in detail under the various periods of League activity. We can only add the following: Our organization solved the problem of a regularly appearing paper and a real youth paper for the first time. Financially, the problem of our publication has not been solved yet, since throughout this time and for the coming period, we will be publishing the Challenge at a deficit. Other means will therefore have to be found to cover this deficit.

Student: This field was placed in charge of a comrade who was not a student, but a worker. And from the point of orientation, we got more fruitful results. Regular directives and campaigns were initiated in the student field but we must say that many of these came too late, due to a certain neglect both on the part of the director and the National Bureau. Since we were not emphasizing this work, there was a tendency to neglect it to some extent. But on the whole, it must be said that the general orientation of the Bureau in student work was correct.

Industrial Work: We need not spend much time on this point since this was discussed in a previous point.

Color of the Organization: This field has always been the neglected child of our organization in the past and still is. Though more steps were taken during the last 17 months in this field than during any other time -- singing, dramatics, sports, hikes, etc. -- it was still a neglected field. This was due to a lack of finances in a large measure, since this field requires an initial investment and experience. But it can be said that our organization is conscious of this type of work and we have had more singing, outings, and spirit than at any other period.

Officers: For the first time in the history of our organization, we had 3 regular functionaries in the National Office and full-time functionaries in most of the divisions of the League. Without doubt, it can be said that this period of the last 17 months had more fruitful, active collaboration and collective leadership. This was no doubt due to the fact that all the leading comrades on the National Council and the National Bureau agreed on the basic political orientation of the League and our movement as a whole.

GENERAL SUMMARY

As can already be seen, during the first 9 months of the League, after the Chicago Convention, the League took definite steps forward in becoming the kind of organization we had in mind when we passed the two resolutions at the convention. We were growing -- by the fall of 1939 we had laid the basis for large scale recruitment and had the factional fight no intervened, we undoubtedly would have had more than 1000 members by this convention.

We have now entered a period in which it is most probably, that due to the limited time we have left for open work, and due to the fact that the faction fight left us numerically smaller, our orientation as seen in the role of the youth resolution must be modified to a great extent during the coming period. But that question is left to the second document which the Bureau is preparing: The War and the Tasks of the Youth.

But we face the task now answering the question: What has been the value of YSR for the past period since the convention? Formally, we have of course, not achieved the objective which we set ourselves: a mass youth organization. But the real, basic objective of YSR #4 was not primarily the creation of such an organization. It is probably impossible, in any case to build a mass youth organization without a mass party as a firm supporting base.

The real, basic, objective of YSR #4 was breaking out of our sectarian past, the creation of an organization capable of attracting "raw" youth, that is: ordinary young American workers and students who have had slight or no previous contact with radical organizations. For that we felt that we needed an organization of color, of spirit, of fighting quality. That we have, in large measure -- much more than many comrades who are not aware of the past, achieved in large measure. We have built an organization in which, for the first time, the individual comrades think seriously about their relationship to the movement; in which they consciously think in terms of self-sacrifice and devotion to the movement; in which they seriously attempt to develop their capabilities for the purpose of building the organization. We have caught -- comparatively speaking -- something of the spirit of American youth in our propaganda and in our press. We have dropped a good deal of the old radical jargon in favor of plain and simple speaking, though this objective has by no means completely been achieved.

Perhaps we did not take fully into account the impact and nearness of the war when YSR #4 was written. But even if many of the specific objectives of YSR #4 were not achieved; even if many of the objectives that were achieved will be increasingly difficult to retain in the coming period -- the general transformation in the face, the esprit de corps of our organization has been achieved. Exactly what specific changes will be necessary we leave to the next document; we are sure of one thing: as many of the gains achieved through YSR #4 as possible must be retained by the organization. The gains we have made we shall not willingly surrender.