

Proletarian Youth Movement

Reorganisation of the Work of the Y.C.U.

By Chemodanov

At the Seventeenth Party Congress of the Bolsheviks of the vast country in which the toilers are free from capitalist exploitation, unemployment and fascism, in which the working class, under the leadership of the Leninist Party, is victoriously building up the classless society, Comrade Stalin, the leader of the international proletarian revolution, said:

"Some people think that it is sufficient to draw up a correct Party line, proclaim it from the housetops, enunciate it in the form of general theses and resolutions and carry them unanimously, in order to make victory come of itself, automatically, so to speak. This, of course, is wrong. Those who think like that are greatly mistaken. Only incorrigible bureaucrats and quill drivers can think that. As a matter of fact these successes and victories were obtained not automatically, but as a result of a fierce struggle to carry out the Party line. Victory never comes by itself—it has to be dragged by the hand. Good resolutions and declarations in favour of the general line of the Party are only a beginning, they merely express the desire to win, but it is not victory. After the correct line has been given, after a correct solution of the problem had been found, success depends on the manner in which the work is organised, on the organisation of the struggle for the application of the line of the Party, on the proper selection of workers, on supervising the fulfilment of the decisions of the leading organs. Without this the correct line of the Party and the correct solutions are in danger of being severely damaged. More than that, after the correct political line has been given, the organisational work decides everything, including the fate of the political line itself, i.e., its success or failure."

Comrade Stalin did not confine himself to these statements, which are of tremendous political and practical importance. With Leninist frankness he unsparingly criticised various types of functionaries who hinder work and demanded their removal from leading positions. The first type of these functionaries are people who have rendered certain services in the past, people who have become "aristocrats," who have become vain and believe that the rules of the Party and of its leading organs are not binding for them, that they need not carry them out in practice, that they can violate them with impunity. - The second type of functionaries which is to be found most in the Y.C.U. (although there is also no lack of the first type) is the honest chatterbox who talks a lot about the line "in general," on the shortcomings "in general," on a change and a turn "in general," but who, as Comrade Stalin said: "is incapable of organising anything, who would submerge every living cause in a flood of watery and endless speeches."

Comrade Stalin's report at the Seventeenth Party Congress of the C.P.S.U. provides all the Sections of the Y.C.U. with the Leninist instructions for their daily practical work.

It is the task of every League, of every Central Committee and of every local branch to study this report very thoroughly, to acquaint the broad masses of the toiling youth with it and, without waiting for special instructions from above, without waiting for an hour, immediately to overhaul their work and, proceeding from the instructions of Comrade Stalin, to reorganise their work in such a manner as to ensure the rallying of still broader masses of toiling youth round the Communist Party. Every young Communist must bear in mind that nobody will reorganise the work and the leadership of his organisation for him. Everything depends upon ourselves, upon our organising the struggle ourselves. And we are still organising our work, and consequently also the youth for the struggle for their economic and political demands, badly.

Let us bear in mind what Comrade Stalin pointed out: that everything, including the fate of the political line itself, its success or failure, depends upon the organisational work, and let us consider in this connection some aspects of our practical work.

Comrade Stalin teaches us: "Everything depends upon our organisational work," but many "honest" chatterboxes in our

ranks do not think so. Is this true or not? Yes, it is the bitter truth. In many Y.C.I. organisations there is much talk about politics "in general" but little is being done, that is to say, the realisation of the policy of the Party, of the League's own political decisions is not being secured in an organisational respect. Is this so or not? Let the comrades in the individual branches examine their work and consider what attention they are devoting to organisational questions, and then answer this question.

We do not wish to discuss the importance of organisational work "in general," but examine some fundamental organisational questions in our actual practice.

Let us begin with the most important question: the selection and promotion of cadres. It is a generally known truth that everything depends upon the human material, upon men and women, their selection, their capacity to realise in practice those tasks which they set themselves.

The December Plenum of the E.C.Y.C.I. devoted great attention to this task and emphasised that

"A real Bolshevik, tenacious and not bureaucratic struggle for the masses of the toiling youth, for the systematic consolidation of the contacts established with it, by means of giving expression to all its wants and demands, by means of the capacity to organise the struggle against the offensive of the bourgeoisie and to mobilise the masses of the toiling youth for this struggle—this must be the activity of every Young Communist, of every cell, every Y.C.I. group and in particular of the leading cadres of the Y.C.L., sub-district committees, district committees, provincial committees and Central Committees."

Can we say now, two years after the Plenum of the E.C.Y.C.I., that the cadres have been selected and tested by the central committees, or the leading local organs, according to the instructions of the E.C.Y.C.I.? And have we not in our midst "aristocrats" who have become vain, who are not carrying out the decisions of the Party, of the League and their leading organs and hinder their work? And have we not in our midst those "honest chatterboxes" who only talk, draw up long resolutions, but who do not know in actual practice how to approach the Youth and to organise mass work, how the most simple thing is to be organised, not to speak of strikes and demonstrations, or the organisation of a factory cell or a group in a bourgeois mass youth organisation. Have we not people in our midst who at "their" meetings are used to talking a lot about politics "in general" and who have forgotten that the Young Communist is before all the organiser of the youth, who is responsible to the Communist Party for organising them?

Certainly we shall find such types in our midst, and not a few of them either. Why should we not put in their place in the leading committees other people, not "aristocrats," not chatterboxes, but organisers of the work and struggle, who know how to organise mass work not in words but in deed?

That is the first important question that every organisation and its members must raise. It is probable that some comrades will object to this and declare that it is not permissible to put the question in this manner. Some comrades will say that our functionaries are young and inexperienced and that we have very few people at our disposal. That is wrong. There are enough people available, but we lack a Bolshevik, a serious and proper method of selecting our cadres, of promoting them, we are not working properly with the cadres. And sometimes our comrades are afraid to promote new cadres to leading work or they promote in the first place those who know how to talk.

We can quote a very instructive example from the development of the German Young Communist League. The opportunist Neumann-Remmele-Kutschki group exercised for a time a strong influence in the C.C. There was not a question of principle in which this group, under the leadership of Kutschki, did not differ from the line of the Y.C.I. They replied to the demand of the Y.C.I. to promote fresh functionaries to the C.C., to the leading committees of the local groups, that there were no cadres and well-trained comrades. . . . The Y.C.L., under the leadership of Comrade Thaelmann, has shattered this opportunist group. It was then necessary to replace the whole leadership of the C.C., and the necessary number of comrades was found. Later the League was driven underground. The wave of fascist terror broke over it; hundreds of active functionaries, devoted to the Party, were bestially murdered; thousands were flung into the prisons and concentration camps. This was a blow dealt to the whole League, but

in the first place to its cadres. But new cadres have been set up, who, though they do not possess great experience, are nevertheless fighting heroically against the fascist dictatorship and acquiring experience of the class struggle. Contrary to the opinion of the opportunists, who do not know their cadres, underestimate them, and are of the opinion that the League will collapse without them, without the "dignitaries," who think that the decisions of the Party and of the Y.C.I. can be violated with impunity, without the chatterboxes, the German Y.C.L. is living and fighting.

There exist sufficient functionaries; it is only necessary to test their work and select them in a Bolshevik manner. It would be ridiculous to wait until the police, by arresting our functionaries, compel us to proceed more energetically with the promotion of our cadres. It is said that the comrades are young and inexperienced. But the Y.C.I. is not an organisation of old people. We are all learning in the work. Experience is acquired in the struggle. Therefore, it is of no use complaining about inexperience but to see to it—and the quicker the better—that in the leadership of every organisation and of the League there are less "aristocrats" and chatterboxes and more of such people as are recommended by the December Plenum of the Y.C.I.

It is not only necessary to select the cadres, but they must also be properly distributed and utilised. The question of the distribution of the forces, of knowing these forces, is not an organisational question of secondary importance, but a question of tremendous political importance. Very little attention is devoted in our ranks to this question, whilst at the same time there is much talk about politics. Ask the functionaries of the C.C. of the Y.C.L. of Sweden, France, England and also Germany, how many registered members they have and how they are distributed in the various towns and districts, and they will not be able to answer your question, but if you ask them their opinion "in general" on fascism, social fascism, militarisation, they will start to talk without a moment's hesitation and it will be difficult to stop them. Perhaps some of the comrades will answer your organisational question. Of course, for instance, the English comrades: They will tell you that the League has something over 1,000 members, of whom 500 are in London, 200 in Scotland, 60 in Lancashire, etc. That means that half of their members are in London. But in Lancashire, where the League has only 60 members, there are many factories. And how many cells has the League? Not a single one. That constitutes the distribution of the forces. The same can be said of the other Leagues.

But how can you work successfully, issue directives to all committees and organisations without concretely knowing who will carry out this line and these directives, and for whom they are written? The comrades in the U.S.A. or in France must not run away with the idea that they are any better than the comrades in England with regard to knowing their own forces and the distribution of their cadres. Both in the U.S.A. and in France, as well as in a number of other countries, there are many, and not even small, factories, not to speak of the rural districts, which have never even seen a live Young Communist. Perhaps things are better in the provincial, district and local committees? No, here they often know so little about their own forces, their circumstances, that they learn of the arrest of local committees or a factory cell only after two months. And while thinking over the distribution and consolidation of their forces they do not realise that there exists a Party cell in the factory, that young workers are engaged in the factory, but that there exists no Youth cell there. But how does the matter stand with the distribution and utilisation of the available forces in the local organisations? One not infrequently encounters local groups and cells in which actually only two or three members are working, whilst the other members are not drawn into practical work. These few people, who have to cope with a dozen tasks, are feverishly bustling round, but the results of their work are very insignificant; these results are not only insignificant but also harmful, because the members of the organisation who are not drawn into practical work, not only cease to attend the meetings but very often leave the organisation altogether. And it does not occur to those comrades, who are performing ten duties at once, that they themselves, the manner in which work is organised, are responsible for the fluctuation of the membership and nobody else.

What conclusions are to be drawn from this state of affairs? The fundamental conclusion to be drawn is that the comrades must have a good knowledge of their own forces, and that it is

necessary to carry out a proper, Bolshevik distribution of them, and make a proper selection from them for the leading cadres.

This means in practice that from an economic and political point of view it is necessary to consolidate certain important centres of the country with trained cadres; that the position of the lower organisational units must be thoroughly examined and particular attention devoted to the districts and factories in which our work has been weak; that the most important districts and factories must be singled out, and particular attention concentrated on their leadership, and the establishment of new, the consolidation of existing organisation secured. In this respect the experience of the Y.C.L. of U.S.A. and England must be utilised. In these countries districts of "concentration" were decided on, i.e., districts in which the forces of the League are to be concentrated. But hardly anything has come of this, because while there has been much talk about concentration, very little has been done in practice. It is not sufficient to adopt a decision on concentration, it is necessary to secure the organisational carrying out of the decision. This means the registering of the available forces in the given district, i.e., the groups, members, functionaries, their correct orientation and systematic, lively and not bureaucratic leadership.

As is to be seen here it is not a question of carrying out a recruiting campaign, but of reorganising the whole work of the League. And the reorganisation must lead to every Young Communist being drawn into the active work of the organisation and being brought to realise that meetings and voting alone do not exhaust his duties towards the Communist Party and the Young Communist League. The Young Communist will be able to fulfil his duties only when the Y.C.L. achieves in practice the realisation of the Party decisions, organises the youth and rallies them round the Party.

In connection therewith there arises the serious question of leadership. Many central committees, local committees and local branches lack the capacity to operate, lack a concrete, systematic checking up of the carrying out of their own decisions in daily work. There is a superfluity of committee meetings, discussions on politics in "general" and paper resolutions. If one attentively observes the work of various central committees of those Y.C.L. which are working under conditions of legality—and in fact not only of the central committees but also of the lower organs—then one can frankly say that they are not working like an operative organ but like a "session organ," and the functionaries in the C.C.s are distributed accordingly. The political leader stands at the head of the C.C., then there is a second functionary called the organiser, in addition there is the leader of trade union work, who is not a member of the C.C. and does not work in the C.C. but in the trade unions and only attends the meetings of the C.C. Then there is the editor of the newspaper, who likewise only attends the meetings of the C.C., then there is the leader of the Agitprop work and some other comrades who are entrusted with this or that work or are working as instructors. The comrades working in the apparatus of the C.C. are attached to the secretariat of the C.C. or the Bureau of the C.C. As a result, there are only two or three really practical working functionaries in the C.C., whilst the other comrades, whose main work in the Y.C.L. consists in attending committee meetings, are not performing any practical work. It frequently happens that this or that question, instead of being settled without any meeting, is first discussed in the secretariat of the C.C. and then transferred to the bureau of the C.C. The secretariat and bureau adopt a decision which very often does not reach the lower organisations. The C.C. as a rule does not supervise the carrying out of its decisions, and inside the C.C. the idea seems to prevail that if a question has been discussed, a resolution drawn up, then the matter is settled, and they therefore proceed to the next business. It very rarely happens that the C.C. or other leading organs invite representatives of lower Y.C.L. organs, for instance of local branches or of a factory cell or of district committees, to report. It is very seldom that this or that leading committee concretely discusses the question where a new Y.C.L. cell is to be organised, who is to organise it and when, what concrete help is to be accorded to the local and lower organisations and when this question must be discussed again by the leading committee in order to supervise the carrying out of the decision.

Apart from much talk about the fascisation and militarisation of the Youth, many leading committees have practically done nothing in order to ascertain what bourgeois mass youth organisations exist in their district, what organisational structure they have, what forms and methods they are applying to their work

and how work among the youth in these organisations is to commence in a practical manner, how the Young Communists who are already members of this organisation but are not performing any political work in it as they do not know how to carry it out, are to be assisted.

This, of course, does not mean that in our leading committees there is no discussion of the work in the bourgeois mass youth organisations, of work in the lower organisations, of fluctuation, recruiting and other matters; there is talk enough about all these things, but very little is done in practice in order to convert this talk into deed. It would be good if every leading committee examined from this point of view what practical questions were discussed and carried out in an organisational respect, i.e., what questions have in fact been settled. It would likewise not be bad if the so-called organiser, and together with him the whole committee, examined how often they have discussed the question of the organisational structure, and while in practice having no concrete idea of the character of the lower organisations, paid no attention to their practical work but instead, talked more on politics with them.

If our Leagues are examined from the point of view of their organisational structure, one gets a very variegated picture. As a rule the basis of our organisation is the local Y.C.L. group; in spite of all the demands of the E.C.Y.C.I. the factory cell has not become the basic lower organisation.

The local organisations have not yet acquired a uniform character. In various towns in which there exist only two or three groups they are headed by a district or regional committee. In other towns where there are relatively more young Communists, there are district committees, street cells, local groups, factory cells and one or two fractions in auxiliary organisations. And in countries where the Y.C.L. is illegal there often exist in addition amorphous groups of the revolutionary youth. It is quite understandable that the C.C. as well as the leading committees have to approach these organisations in a differentiated manner, i.e., that concrete assistance and leadership must be accorded to those organisations which possess only two or three groups in the whole town, as well as to those organisations which are more or less consolidated and in which the factory cell is beginning to play the leading role. This does not, however, obtain in practice. In our Leagues, resolutions are drawn up on the question of the struggle against the social-fascist influence, but it is not sufficient to draw up resolutions; their organisational carrying out must be secured. One and the same question, for instance, the question of the struggle against fascism; war and social fascism, must obviously be put in a different manner in every local Y.C.L. organisation, taking into account the position and the available forces of this organisation. This is mostly overlooked by our comrades. They usually draw up "general" directives, but very little work is done to reorganise the work of the local organisations in order to draw all Young Communists into the work which has to be carried out not only in the streets and in the tenement buildings but inside the factory and inside the bourgeois mass youth organisations.

In Paris the situation at one time was as follows: there were about 700 Young Communists. In Paris itself the C.C., the Paris Committee and 37 district committees had their seat. If we divide the number of the Young Communists by the number of the leading functionaries we find that every member of the organisation is at the same time a member of a leading committee. All are "leading," all attend meetings, talk about politics, and there is nobody to do the work. This state of affairs existed up to the reorganisation, but even after the reorganisation the situation in Paris has not improved, because the French comrades have not considered the question, how many Young Communists there are in the various districts of Paris, what local groups exist, the composition of these groups, the contacts they possess, what factories exist in each district or suburb, and how the organisation in Paris must be built up in order to ensure that the main sections of the workers, the toilers and unemployed youth shall be brought within the organisational and political influence of the Y.C.L.

In London, New York and in other Y.C.L. organisations of the capital towns very little attention is paid to this question. The comrades are content with what they have achieved, they are afraid to introduce something new into the workers' organisations. The first task confronting every leading committee consists in their acquiring a knowledge of the structure of their organisations, their strong and weak sides, in order to be able to guide them in a concrete manner and to give them practical aid. All the central

committees have to devote their attention to this question, for without the transformation of the lower organisations it is impossible to conduct a successful struggle and to organise the main masses of the youth. The leading committees must pay the maximum attention to the lower organisations, the district committees, for they are the decisive link in the system of the leadership of the League.

Proceeding from this fact we consider the existence of a secretariat and of a bureau in the central committees to be absolutely unnecessary. It suffices to set up a bureau consisting of five to seven persons, who settle all the fundamental political and organisational questions. This fact alone will reduce the number of committee meetings to half. A secretariat and a bureau are still less necessary in the district committees. Under legal conditions a leading committee consisting of 10, at most 15, efficient comrades is quite sufficient. The leaders of the committees must consist of a secretary and several *instructors*, but not of the heads of this or that department who "work out" the questions and resolutions for the committee meetings but never visit the lower organisations.

Only those functionaries of the leading committees are of value who pass three-quarters of their time in the lower organisations and do not say what is to be done, but show on the spot how it is to be done. And the leading committees must see to it that they adopt only such decisions the carrying out of which can be checked, and that every lower organisation is aware of this supervision.

All organisations must be categorically forbidden to adopt declarations and resolutions for "internal" use. If the Y.C.L. consider it necessary to express their political opinion on this or that question which concerns the whole country or a given district or a given factory, this must be done in the form of an appeal to the youth, by leaflets, newspapers, placards, etc. The same question must not only be discussed from the political aspect, as is often done by our comrades, but it must be discussed in such a manner that every Young Communist shall know what his organisation and he himself has to do. It very often happens that comrades, who have to work under strictly illegal conditions, hold plenary sessions and conferences, discuss general political questions, adopt general decisions and leave the meetings without knowing what has to be done in practice. Or in other words, our leading comrades have given the representatives of the lower organisations the political line, but have forgotten to explain how the concrete struggle for the carrying out of this line is to be conducted in the locality from which the delegate has been sent to the conference.

Comrade Stalin teaches us: *it is not sufficient to lay down the political line, it is not sufficient to adopt unanimously a politically correct resolution; it is necessary to ensure from the organisational side that this line is carried out in practice, that the adopted resolution does not remain on paper, but is applied in practice.* But many honest chatterboxes overlook this fact because they fail to see the living reality and the processes which are taking place, i.e., the class struggle behind their political formulae.

The class struggle is sharpening from day to day; events are developing with lightning rapidity. The most important political thesis of the Comintern, that we are *immediately* approaching a fresh cycle of revolutions and wars, is becoming more and more obvious to the broad masses. The bourgeoisie is no longer capable of retaining the youth under its influence by means of the old bourgeois-democratic Parliamentary methods. The bourgeoisie perceives the growth of Communist influence and the increasing resentment of the toiling masses; it is *making a turn* and is establishing the open fascist dictatorship. The process of organisational and ideological bankruptcy of the Second International is being accelerated, dragging with it the Socialist Youth International, the direct bearer of bourgeois influence among the toiling youth.

The class struggle confronts the Young Communist Leagues

with new, higher and more responsible tasks. It demands of them the readjustment of their work, before all their organisational work. It is this question to which Comrade Stalin has drawn our attention. On the basis of his instructions, and Bolshevistically taking into account the objective conditions of the class struggle every Y.C.L. organisation must commence to readjust itself without special resolutions and sittings. The Leagues must readjust themselves in such a manner that they rally ever broader masses of the youth round the Party and become in fact real revolutionary mass Youth organisations.

Book Reviews

American Imperialism in Hawaii

By Hy. Kravif (New York)

In Hawaii, a new 32-page pamphlet by Samuel Weinman, we have a smashing indictment of the history of U.S. exploitation in these centrally located islands in the mid-Pacific. Thanks to the propaganda of the capitalist press and movies in the United States, the Hawaiian islands are usually pictured as a kind of modern paradise. There are several reasons for this deliberate falsification:—

"First, it screens the slavery on the sugar and pine apple plantations. Second, it conceals military preparations for the next Pacific war. Third, tourists, readers, and movie fans pay millions for illusions of paradise."

Hawaii derives its importance to the imperialists from its central location in the Pacific Ocean. It controls the trade and determines the military manoeuvres of the Pacific. It is a stepping stone to the Orient. By making of Hawaii a two-crop country—sugar and pine apples—the imperialists have been able to wring super profits of 20 million dollars a year on a total export value of 100 million dollars. For this reason, Weinman can report 10 millionaires out of a population of some 380,000.

To-day a small clique controls the land and almost everything else. Some 21 companies, "almost all of them interlocked, own and lease a total of 303,980 acres." Finance capital rules the roost. It extracts profits from utilities, hotels, newspapers, food, transportation, and other industries. The monopoly of the Castle Cooke interests, descendants of missionaries who were among the first to bring "civilisation" to the islands, is nearly complete. They dominate the State machine. For example, William B. Castle, jun., Under-Secretary of State in ex-President Hoover's administration, was a member of the imperialist oligarchy.

For the workers on Hawaiian plantations, the employers have decreed low wages, starvation, unemployment. Against such conditions as these, significant strikes took place in 1909, 1920, and in 1924. In the 1924 struggle, 20 were killed in one day; 76 strikers were arrested, and others deported; this with the aid of the National Guard. During the crisis years, conditions have become even more intolerable for the masses. Yet for 1932 the government could report that "an average profit of 5.17 per cent. was made by 17 sugar plantations during the year."

The Roosevelt war programme gives special attention to Hawaii and particularly to Pearl Harbour at Honolulu, the most completely equipped war base in the Pacific. Under the N.R.A. "public works" fund, nearly 10,000,000 dollars has already been allotted to strengthen Pearl Harbour as a war centre. A total of some fifty million dollars has been spent to date on this one port. Another 100,000,000 dollars is required by the Navy Department to complete its programme, and Secretary of the Navy Swanson, who paid a visit to the islands last year, has referred specifically to the need to "further the development of outlying bases in the Hawaiian islands."

The factual character of Comrade Weinman's pamphlet helps us better to understand the background against which the anti-imperialist masses of Hawaii are struggling.

Published weekly. Single copies, 2d. Subscription rates: Great Britain and Dominions, 12s. per year; U.S.A. and Canada, five dollars per year. Remittance in STERLING per International Money Order, Postal Order or Sight Draft on London.

Published by WILLIAM MASSIE, 249, King Street, Hammer-smith, London, W.6, and Printed by THE MANSTON PUBLISHING CO. (T. U.), 44, Worship Street, London, E.C. 2.