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F. FUERNBERG

# WHERE TO BEGIN?

HOW TO BUILD A MASS  
YOUNG COMMUNIST  
LEAGUE

PRICE 10 CENTS

YOUTH INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHERS





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## How to Build a Mass Young Communist League



*By* F. FUERNBERG

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## CONTENTS

WHAT IS YOUR TASK, YOUNG COMMUNIST?..	3
OPEN SELF-CRITICISM .....	4
WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS OF THE YOUNG WORKERS? .....	6
AND WE, THE YOUNG COMMUNISTS .....	7
THE CHIEF OBSTACLE .....	10
INTO THE BIG FACTORIES .....	12
A COMMUNIST IS A COMMUNIST EVERYWHERE	14
RECRUITING AND EDUCATION .....	16
ORGANIZED STRUGGLE AGAINST OUR ENEMIES .....	18
POLICY FOR THE YOUTH .....	18
WHO SHALL LEAD THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE? .....	19
OUR RESERVE FORCES — THE COMMUNIST CHILDREN'S MOVEMENT .....	22
THE "SHOCK TROOPS" .....	23

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## WHERE TO BEGIN?

### HOW TO BUILD A MASS YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

#### *What Is Your Task, Young Communist?*

FOR half a year, for a year, perhaps for several years you have been a member of the world organization of revolutionary youth, a member of the Young Communist International. Why are you a member of this organization? What is your task as a member of this organization? How simple it is to answer this question! I am struggling with the other young workers, with the entire working class for the interests of the workers, but above all, for the interests of the young workers.

This answer appears to be correct and yet it is not entirely correct, because it does not say everything. Of course, it is the first task of the Young Communist to struggle for the interests of the working youth. But is not the young worker, who is not a member of the Young Communist League, but who stands shoulder to shoulder with you in strikes, is he not also struggling for the interests of his class? When you joined the Young Communist League you set yourself an additional task, namely this: To become fully class conscious, to study the class struggle in order to get a clear understanding of the tasks and aims of your class, to cooperate as part of the organization which leads these struggles, and finally (with the help of the organization) to develop yourself into a leader of the workingclass youth in your district.

Your entire work, your activity inside the League and your struggle outside, must be carried on in such a way as to bring you nearer to reaching this end. Only if every member of the Young Communist League works in this direction, can the League become the leader of the working youth in the struggle against the bosses for its own interests; only then can it really become a mass school of Communism for the working youth.



But this makes it necessary for you to know your own organization, its method of work, its defects and shortcomings, and to cooperate in abolishing them. When you once clearly recognize that only the Young Communist League can struggle and is struggling for the interests of the working youth—you must draw the conclusion that since you are a part of this organization and jointly responsible for the struggle of the entire working class, *that you must devote your entire energy to making our organization as militant and as strong in the struggle as possible.*

### *Open Self-Criticism*

Every political party praises itself. Only in the Communist Party is this *not* the case. Why? Because the Communist Party is *fundamentally* different from all other parties. The Communist Party is the representative of the working class. It organizes the workers for a struggle against the bosses, for the overthrow of the capitalist class. In order to do this, the Communist Party must know its weaknesses, where it has failed and why, and what can be done to correct the errors. Self-praise would weaken the Party; self-analysis, self-criticism strengthens the Communist Party, permits it to work more effectively in the future.

For this reason the Communist Party and the Young Communist League sharply analyze their mistakes and sharply criticize their own activity. This self-criticism is made openly and fearlessly before the entire working class, regardless of the howling of our enemies who try to use this self-criticism for their own aims.

A session of the Plenum (Enlarged Committee) of the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International took place recently in Moscow. Without fear, all weaknesses and shortcomings of the YCI—and there are many—were openly discussed. We know well enough that our enemies, particularly the Socialists, these agents of the bosses in the ranks of the workers, the labor-fakers and the renegades of Communism, will attempt, this time too, to utilize this open self-criticism for

their own political ends. They will be chuckling over the "breakdown" of the Young Communist International. Let them prattle. We know that we will not be weaker for such merciless Bolshevik self-criticism in spite of all our enemies. We know that on the contrary we are growing stronger by this criticism because it enables us to begin ridding ourselves of defects and weaknesses, for building up the YCI.

We have no reason for hiding anything from the masses of working youth. We not only declare our political opinions and political aims openly, but even show up our own mistakes and ourselves draw attention to the situation in our organization. At this Plenum, we had to state that the Young Communist International had suffered a loss in membership during the past year. Furthermore, we declared that certain important Leagues were going through serious crises! We stated that the Young Communist International in almost all countries was not at the head of the struggles of the working youth but lagged behind its activities, i. e., the working youth is carrying on struggles of its own and participating in the struggles of the adult workers, while the Young Communist Leagues either do nothing, or come on the scene too late.

If the leaders of the Socialists and A. F. of L. want to use these statements of ours to prove that the Young Communist League is not the only representative of the working youth, we will reply to them as the situation calls for. We say this with a view to carrying on the struggle better in the future. We admit that we have not yet done enough to unmask the treachery of the Socialist leaders toward the working youth and to show up their betrayal of the industrial and political struggle of the young workers. The most serious charge which we have against ourselves is that in the struggles against this bitter enemy of the working class we were too weak. Everything we do must make our organization more militant in this direction. We will then be really at the head of the masses in the struggle for its interests. Let the Socialists and the A. F. of L. fakers jeer at our self-criticism! We are sure of our road. We are learning from



our mistakes. We are forging the weapons for the greater struggles which are ahead.

*What Are the Conditions of the Young Workers?*

At the present time when the American bosses are faced with a crisis in industry, they are more determined than ever to remedy the situation at the expense of the workers. They cut wages, lengthen working hours and throw millions of workers out on the streets to starve. Particularly the young workers feel these attacks of the bosses; the young workers who already get lower wages than the adults, work longer hours under greater speed-up and worse conditions, will be forced by the bosses to accept even lower wages and even worse conditions.

This is capitalist *rationalization*—a high sounding word: but a word which conceals within it many practical effects. Capitalist *rationalization* means more profits for the employers. Capitalist rationalization means more sweating and exploitation for the workers. This word means more pleasures, more feasting for the ruling class—the bosses. This word means unemployment for thousands, terrible poverty and hunger for thousands.

The struggle against capitalist rationalization and its effects, this is the main issue before the working youth of the present day.

But the oppression of the young workers does not end here. Capitalist militarism in all its forms weighs on the young workers like an iron weight.

In most capitalist countries the youth are given military training from childhood on. They are being prepared to serve as soldiers in the imperialist war in the interests of the bosses. Even where there is no conscript army, as for instance, in the United States, the bosses are making all efforts to train the working youth in the spirit of militarism. Special organizations are being created, huge funds are being expended solely for this purpose. 83c out of every dollar spent by the U. S. Government goes for militarism. In 1929 the Boy Scouts had 816,418 members. In the same year the National Guard had grown to 176,988



recruits. The armies of capitalism the world over total more than 34,000,000 men at the present time of so-called "peace."

But all this is not enough. Capitalism needs willing slaves. It must control not only the worker's labor power but also his mind, his spirit. The bosses make every effort to prevent the young workers from thinking for themselves, from thinking of better conditions, of organization, or from carrying on a struggle for their own interests. The schools, the churches, the newspapers, the movies, the many hundreds of sport and entertainment organizations (Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., A.A.U., etc.), all are used by the bosses for this purpose.

In spite of all this the working youth has built up its own organization of struggle; in spite of this it is struggling with its class for its own interests. In spite of the exploitation and oppressions of recent years, especially of the last year, in fact, *because* of this exploitation and oppression, we see a tremendous growth in the activity of the working youth. Not only do they take part in the struggles of the entire working class, but independent youth strikes are also on the order of the day! Capitalist rationalization has drawn thousands of young workers into the process of production. It has greatly increased the role of the young workers in this process and has consequently increased the capacity and readiness of the young workers to struggle. This situation confronts the Young Communist League with huge tasks. Is the Communist Youth the real leader of the working youth in its struggle against capitalist exploitation and oppression, against spiritual slavery? Is the Young Communist League leading the young workers in struggle against capitalist militarism, against the oncoming imperialist war, for the defense of the Soviet Union?

### *And We, the Young Communists*

Where are we today, we the Young Communists who speak of the revolutionary advance of the masses, we who have theoretically learned that the Young Communist International is the only leader of the masses of working youth? Are we in a

position today to carry out all the tasks that face us today? We must answer frankly "No." We have not progressed so far. And what is still worse, we were pushed back a few steps in many countries last year. The Young Communist International can point to many successes. To be sure, thousands of young workers have struggled and are struggling every day for the demands and interests of the working youth. To be sure, the Young Communist Leagues in many countries have proven themselves tested as front line fighters for the Communist International against the renegades and traitors; but it is not *this* that we must bring out today, it is not *this* which is fundamental in the situation of the Young Communist International. What is most decisive for us at the present time, most important for our work and struggle, is the fact that the Leagues are lagging behind the activity of the working youth; and the fact that the Young Communist Leagues for the most part are cut off from the masses and are leading an isolated existence of their own. In spite of the generally favorable situation for the Communist Parties and the Young Communist Leagues, in spite of the struggles that are taking place and are still to come, in spite of all this, we have fallen back during the past years and have lost no less than 10,000 members in our legal Leagues. The Young Communist International has lost members in some Leagues and in others has not succeeded in winning any new members, but has stagnated. The Young Communist Leagues are not at the head of mass struggles. These are the most important points of the situation in the Young Communist International. What is the cause of this loss?

There is an iron law within the mass movement of the working class, which is and must be constantly gaining in importance. The organization which does not conduct continuous work among the working masses; which does not struggle for their daily interests, however small, which is not in a position to win the confidence of the masses thru lasting tireless work, will not be in a position to lead the masses at the time of great struggle, no matter how highly developed it is politically.



In times of revolutionary advance, the gap between the masses and an organization which fails to carry on mass work, must inevitably grow. This iron law holds true in connection with the YCI. In spite of all resolutions, the Young Communist International has not carried on this "detail" work, this seemingly insignificant daily work, and now we must pay the penalty. Today, in the acuteness of the situation, this fact becomes so evident that it has even lead to crises in certain Leagues.

As Communists we have a definite political line. Our political line as that of the Young Communist International has been and is, in general, correct. It has been and is the line of the Communist International. But our practical activity and the building up of our organization have not conformed with this political line. The Young Communist Leagues have often struggled very correctly and well for the carrying out of the line in the Communist Parties. *The Leagues have not understood, however, the translation of this line into youth terms and its application to youth work.* In this sense the political line has been and still is merely on paper. Only rarely has a serious attempt been made to put it into practice. But what is the meaning of the "political line" if we are not in a position to apply it also in practice to youth questions? This is no Bolshevik policy. An inseparable part of Bolshevik policy is the correct organization of struggle, the carrying of political knowledge into practice and the building up of the organization in accordance with this policy.

In our Young Communist Leagues we have *opportunism* in practice. This means that all the resolutions are adopted but not carried out into practice. We have *petty-bourgeois radicalism*, i. e. big words and little deeds. We have a form of organization which is taken over from the Social-Democracy (Socialist) and does not place the main weight of the organization in the factories but in the residential organizations, i. e. not shop nuclei but territorial units.

This fact was already established by the V World Congress which took place in September 1928. This Congress called for

a determined change over to mass work on the part on the entire Young Communist International. It called for carrying this change out in deeds instead of talking about it. It pointed out that our practice and our organization should conform with its policy. This fundamental change called for by the V World Congress has not been carried out in a single Young Communist League in the capitalist countries.

### *The Chief Obstacle*

Why is it that in the course of a whole year's activity, the Young Communist Leagues have hardly taken a single practical step towards carrying out the change? It is due perhaps to bad intentions on the part of the members of our organization? Are perhaps all the leading officials of the organization incapable, or just what is the matter? The cause is that our Young Communist Leagues have not recognized the chief obstacle in the carrying out of the change, that they have not concentrated their fire on this chief obstacle.

But what is this chief obstacle in the carrying out of this change? It consists in a lack of understanding of the partial struggles of the young workers and in neglect of the organizational tasks, and in the failure to understand the role of the Young Communist Leagues. This whole outlook, which leads to inactivity, is cloaked in phrases which sound very radical.

What is the meaning of all this? We wish to give an example. One member of our League, an official in a local group, votes for all the resolutions submitted by the Executive. But he is not passive with regard to these resolutions, he comes out actively at every meeting with short and long speeches (mostly long) in which he mainly raves against opportunism and always talks about big struggles. Gradually, he becomes a great "speaker," who is always very enthusiastic about himself. But when the question comes up of whether he will distribute newspapers or leaflets in front of a factory on such and such a morning at 6 o'clock, then he turns down this "detail" work as not suitable for him.



This man is a petty-bourgeois phrasemonger. He is the obstacle on our road to the masses. Most of these people will not stand by us on the barricades. They have always left our ranks early. But among them are good proletarian comrades who have not always realized that we can lead the struggle successfully only if we succeed in winning over the masses. Many of them have not learned the iron law that we must constantly and without interruption carry out this insignificant "detail" work in order to be able to lead great struggles.

Our chief obstacle is inclination to put radical phrases in the place of action, which is part and parcel of such comrades as we have described above. But this tendency is not only to be found in these comrades whom we have brought up as an example. The tendency is hidden in each one of us because it is much easier to use long radical words than to carry on daily practical work. Therefore, we must concentrate all our efforts on the struggle against this obstacle which exists in our organization. Away with the gap between words and deeds! *Less talk, more work!*

Here the spirit of self-sacrifice comes in. The spirit of sacrifice is shown in carrying out this daily detail work, which does not involve any great "honor," but which brings us victory. All comrades, all members of legal organizations, must show a real spirit of sacrifice in this situation. If the members of the legal organizations take as an example the heroic struggles of the Young Communists in the countries of fascism and white terror, such as Italy, Yugoslavia and many others, they are bound to show just as much impersonal spirit of sacrifice in their organization work among the masses, as the Young Communists in the illegal Young Communist Leagues.

This detail work, which the whole Young Communist International is carrying on, conceals within itself the danger of degenerating into merely being "practical." It conceals within itself the danger that thru the detail work of the daily tasks the great aims will be lost sight of. There is the danger that organizational work will be carried on as an end in itself. The

Leagues are likely to fall into the error of forgetting the meaning and significance of Bolshevik detail work. This we must never do. Our aim is to make by every means possible a more decisive and stronger struggle against the rule of capitalism.

In the Communist world movement at the present time the Right opportunist danger is the main danger. It arises from the situation of capitalism, from the present stage of the class struggle and expresses itself: 1) in underestimation of the radicalization of the working youth; 2) in the underestimation of the necessity for sharpening the struggle against Social Fascism and Social Reformism; 3) in the attempt to reduce the activity of the YCL to purely cultural work, and 4) in the underestimation of the growing role of the youth. The view of the Right opportunists leads directly to the liquidation of the YCL and finally to Social-Democracy.

The Young Communist League is struggling against the Right danger in a most resolute manner. It is carrying on its struggle on two fronts: against the opportunism of the "Right" and the "Left."

### *Into the Big Factories*

For us to be the leader of the masses, means to be leader of the working youth in the big factories. That is just what we are *not* at the present time. In most countries we have only a very small number of factory nuclei and these factory nuclei exist for the most part in small and middle sized factories and do not operate as real Communist factory nuclei. The social composition of our organization is very bad. Only a very small percentage of our members is from the big factories. Therefore, the main task that faces us today is to win over the young workers in the big factories.

To penetrate into big factories—this means to struggle for the economic demands and daily needs of the young workers in these factories, this means permanent work lasting over weeks and months in order to penetrate the factories and get a strong footing in them.

Above all, we must establish factory nuclei wherever Young



Communists are employed. There must not be a single Young Communist who does not devote all his energy to the establishment of a YCL nucleus in his factory. Wherever there are several members together the nucleus must be established at once. The work of the factory nucleus must be directed "outward," it must not devote itself to the questions of the street unit in that locality. It must really work as a *factory* nucleus, i. e., it must put the factory questions *in the center of its work*. It must take up these factory questions from the political standpoint of the Communist and link them up with the existing situation. It must bring out the demands of the young workers of the factory and start to struggle for them. It must constantly work to enlarge its ranks, to bring in new members and to gain influence over the entire working youth of the factory.

For this reason every active factory nucleus must under all circumstances establish a shop committee. This shop committee must take up all factory questions and must become the organ of struggle for the working youth of the factory.

The factory nuclei must not content themselves, however, with carrying on work only within the factories. The class struggle requires more than that. They must be conscious of the fact that they are the decisive organs of the League. They must be conscious of the fact that the struggle must be carried on beyond the walls of the factory over the broad front of the class struggle against the bosses. Our entire organization must be built up accordingly: the basis is the factory nucleus. In the entire organization, the factory nucleus must have a decisive influence. The factory nucleus must collaborate in making the bulk of the entire League activity based on the factory nuclei, i. e., they must see to it that the factory nuclei and their representatives in the League gain the necessary influence. They must see to it that the leading bodies include representatives of the working youth in the factory, as well as the factory nuclei. They must see to it that the League be reorganized thoroughly on a factory nucleus basis.

In many places we have no membership whatever in the big

factories. Here it is the task of the local organizations to concentrate their forces on systematic penetration of the big factories. Comrades must be appointed to carry on the work of winning over the young workers in this or that big factory. A local organization, which is not in a position to organize its work of concentrating on a big factory within a given time, is a Communist youth unit only in words and not in deeds.

The reorganization of the League on the basis of factory nuclei must be carried on in the process of activity and struggle in the factories. For instance, the following procedure is to be avoided: The district committee takes the list of members and divides them very neatly on paper into factory and street nuclei, every member receives a letter that from now on he belongs to such and such a factory nucleus or street unit. Furthermore, the next higher body receives a letter in which it is stated that the reorganization has been carried out. Such a reorganization is not worth a penny. On the contrary, it is injurious. It is carried out in a mechanical and opportunist manner.

The reorganization we need is the beginning of work for the conquest of the factories, it is the assignment of tasks to each individual member. In practice, it means that the committee systematically goes about setting the members to work and assigning them definite tasks, first of all the tasks connected with penetration into the factories. In the course of this struggle and in the course of the work, the factory nuclei must be built up thru permanent practical cooperation on the part of the committee. The remaining comrades must be organized into street units. In this case the work will be incomparably harder, but this is the only road to real Bolshevist reorganization and this road must be followed.

### *A Communist Is a Communist Everywhere*

Many of our members are Communists on Thursday from 8 to 10 p. m. On this day there is the local meeting and on this day a Communist report is heard, and Communist convic-



tions are expressed from the heart. On all other days, the comrade is a private individual.

On the part of most members however, this is not conscious. In the Socialist Party the task of the member is limited to this activity and this corresponds to its policy. It does not want to have the young workers carry on a struggle. It is completely in accord with such activity of the members. It even allows the member to sing the "Red Flag" at the meeting;—but please, don't let it go beyond that.

Our policy, however, is the opposite of the policy of the Socialists. We are for the struggle of the young workers and we want to lead the struggle ourselves. But we can only do this if every single member helps, in other words, if every individual member, everywhere and at all times, does Communist work.

This of course does not mean that from now on, every member of the league is to hang a sign on himself, saying, "I'm a Communist." Of course our members do not have to say all times and everywhere that they are Communists. It is not essential to be continually striking our chests and shouting out loud, "Oh, what a good Communist I am!" *The essential thing is that every member really works as a Communist.*

In this connection the leaders have just as important a task as the other members. The leaders must know how to put the individual members to work and how to arrange the work so that every member will take a part. Remember—you young Communists must understand that the struggle of the working youth can only be carried on if every member of the Young Communist League does his share of work. Of course this must be in accordance with his capacity and knowledge. The young member who is just beginning to work with us must not be overburdened with big tasks immediately. But on the other hand, it is absolutely necessary to draw in new forces into responsible positions. The more new blood we succeed in bringing into our leading bodies and our most important activities in general, the more new blood we shall have in our organization.

To be a Communist everywhere means to work in all the mass organizations of the working youth; this means to carry on regular daily work in the trade unions, in the sport organizations, cultural organizations where young workers are found, etc. How many of our members carry on sports work, merely as sportsmen, without realizing that here too they have a task of the Young Communist International to carry out! Of course, the Communist sportsman must be active in sports. He must even be a good sportsman; but he must also know how to do work for the Young Communist League.

This holds true for all other mass organizations. In all these organizations Communist youth fractions must be established that know how to apply the policy of the Young Communist League in these mass organizations and know how to win leadership.

All these mass organizations must become reservoirs for the Young Communist League. Members must be recruited for the Young Communist League. Constant recruiting in these mass organizations is one of the main tasks of Young Communists who are members of them. Constant recruiting and education of the masses must be carried on by every member of the League and by the entire Young Communist League

### *Recruiting and Education*

To be a Communist at all times and everywhere means to carry on permanent recruiting and educational work among the masses of young workers. *There must be no activity, no struggle, no work of the Young Communist League or its sections, or its members,* in which systematic recruiting work for the organization is not carried on. We want to become a mass organization and we can do this only if we carry on constant recruiting among the masses.

Recruiting is at the same time education. We must carry on our recruiting in such a way that the youth join the YCL, because they recognize the necessity of struggle. This of course does not mean that the young worker who joins our league must



already be a mature Communist. Even most of our members are not yet that and cannot be that. Our organization is, to be sure, the educational organization of the masses. It is a school of Communism for the working youth. It is not an educational organization in the Social-Democratic sense, but an educational organization in the Leninist sense, linking up the struggle with education in the closest possible manner. It is therefore an educational organization in the true sense of the word.

Thus we have already explained how we conduct ourselves towards members who have not yet thoroughly understood the tasks of the Communist Youth. First of all we must attempt to give them a clear understanding and bring them to the correct viewpoint. In no case must we do as was done in one of our Youth Leagues, when former Young Socialists joined our League and our comrades soon began to say to them: "You have Social-Fascist deviations, and Social-Democratic traditions in general." This only succeeded in driving them out of the organization very rapidly. Such tactics result in our remaining a "pure" Communist organization; and also a small one, which is not in a position to educate the masses and which blames the masses for the mistakes which it commits.

If one of your functionaries gets up and says that the masses are opportunist, he shows that he is unwilling to carry on any educational work, or incapable of it. This man is either sabotaging or is an incapable phrasemonger who has not grasped the fundamental tasks of the Communist youth. In recruiting and educating the members and the masses of the working youth, we must adopt methods which are suitable and lively. This does not mean that they are to be artificial ones, but must be closely bound up with the life of the working youth.

A very important task in the recruiting and education of the masses must be carried out by the YCL newspaper, the *Young Worker*. This paper must be the mouthpiece of the needs of the working youth. It can only become this if the members, even down to the most inexperienced, contribute to this work, and if

the paper is built up on the basis of young workers' correspondence from the factories.

### *Organized Struggle Against Our Enemies*

A whole world of enemies is ranged against the Communists. Many hundreds of organizations are being formed by the bosses to bring the masses under their spell, and all these organizations are our bitter enemies. They are all being supported by the capitalist government and are all united against us. But we shall break thru this united front of the capitalists. But we can only conquer it if we carry on the work of disintegration within their ranks.

Our entire youth international has so far devoted little or no attention to the struggle against bourgeois youth organizations. But these organizations are mass organizations. They have influence among the working youth, and if we wish to become a real mass movement, we must carry on an organized struggle also against these organizations. This holds true especially for the religious organizations, which are very strong, for example, the Young Men's Christian Association; for the Boy Scouts, sports organizations, etc.

At least as important is the work in the so-called neutral organizations, first of all in the sport leagues. There are several hundred thousand young workers in these sport organizations of the bourgeoisie. The Red Sports organizations, the Labor Sports Union in the U.S., win over the masses without the support and leadership of the YCL, and the YCL's are doing almost nothing in this field. How many of our comrades have actually no work in the League? How many of these members could, for example, work in the sport organizations, fulfill their duty to the working class and strengthen the influence of the Young Communist League? The work in such organizations must be organized, and it must be done *at once*.

### *Policy for the Youth*

For some years we have been speaking of the so-called "youth policy" in the Young Communist International. What do we



mean by this? By this we mean the application of the general political line of the Communist Party to the youth question. By this we mean that the Young Communist League must not merely repeat in its political activity, everything the Party says, that it must not be a "young party," but that it must be in a position to formulate the demands of the working youth and carry on their struggle in accordance with the concrete situation.

Have we put this youth policy into practice in the most important Leagues? In general, we have not. Why not? Because such a youth policy can be carried out only if the entire activity of the Young Communist League is reorganized as we have outlined above. Only then can the Young Communist League have such class contact with the masses that it senses and knows at all times what the masses want and need. Only then is the Young Communist League in a position to speak the language of the young workers and to win them for our political policy.

The application of the Party line to the youth is absolutely necessary. The Youth League must carry out a youth policy. But both are inseparably bound up with the fundamental activity of the Young Communist League. Both remain but empty phrases if the Young Communist League is not in a position to organize its activity on a Bolshevik basis. *A youth policy taken from practical life, taken from daily struggles—this is the task of the day!*

### *Who Shall Lead the Young Communist League?*

Every year or so there is a convention; at every convention a National Executive Committee is elected. Every year there is a district conference; at every district conference a district committee is elected. The district committee and the National Committee send out in the course of the year a number of circular letters to the lower organizations. They hold meetings, send reporters to meetings and conferences, draw up resolutions, which are sometimes published and sometimes kept in the files. . . . this is the leadership. . . . of what organization? It seems that this

scheme applies to a large number of organizations. It applies to the Young Communist League, but it applies also to the Socialist organizations. There is no difference in the system.

But how is this possible? How is it possible that an organization which sets itself at the first main task the leadership of the working youth, should have the same system of leadership as an organization which has the opposite aim, namely, to sabotage and hamper the struggle? If we compare these facts, we see at once that with such a system of leadership the Young Communist League cannot carry out its tasks. We have taken the system over from the Social-Democracy and so far have not understood how to change it in the Bolshevik sense.

In all our resolutions dealing with the organizational structure, we speak of democratic centralism. This is understood to mean discussion of all questions by the entire membership, and upon the adoption of the resolution, unconditional carrying out of the resolution, and control by the leading elected bodies. But how is it in reality? In reality it happens that the mass of the membership knows almost nothing about the decisions beforehand and very little about them afterwards. There remains only the control and even this is badly conducted. But this democratic centralization is an inseparable part of Bolshevik organizational policy. The mass of the members must themselves decide the most important questions of the League, because only then can and will the members carry out the work of the League. But this is not the case with the old system of leadership, with the methods of circular letters, sent out from the National or District Office. Of course, we need circular letters, but they are only part of the leading work. More than 50 percent of the work of all leading comrades must consist in direct participation in the work of the lower bodies; not merely discussing the questions of the League with the membership, but also putting them into practice. This is a fundamental part of the work of leadership. Without this the entire work of leadership remains bureaucratic and mostly on paper.

Only in this way is it possible to awaken the initiative of the



membership; only in this way is it possible to organize self-criticism from below. And this very initiative, this very self-criticism is of utmost importance to us. Without this, it is impossible to carry out the change.

We need no commanders in the Young Communist League. The leadership must convince; it must be in a position to win over the membership to its views; otherwise it is incapable of leadership. This means that among the membership the work of the leadership must be discussed in connection with the change. In any case we do not need any philosophical discussion. We need discussion based on practical work. The Young Communist League is not a discussion club, and if we discuss it is only for a definite purpose, a definite end. When this end is attained, it is time to carry out the resolutions adopted and to transfer our energies from words to deeds. But only by this discussion can we convince the membership, and convince it we must.

The leading work among the Communist youth, like our work in general, must be systematically carried on. All parts of the organization must work according to a definite plan. What is this plan to be? If anyone submits to you a plan which is a poor copy of all possible political resolutions, containing nothing concrete regarding the work of the membership, then you are not only to reject this plan, but you must replace this functionary with another one. The plan must be short and concise and must state concretely who is to carry out what work. This is the only form of a plan of work. Anything else is merely an attempt to conceal one's own incapacity, by long words. This of course does not mean that general statements cannot be made in the introduction to the plan. But the most decisive and important feature of the plan must be its clear statement of what work is to be carried on, by which comrades in what space of time.

The membership itself must check up on the leadership in this connection. The Communists must be uncompromising with regard to all mistakes. The members must be uncompromising with regard to any sabotage in carrying out this change. The

members must struggle uncompromisingly against those who do not want to or cannot contribute to changing the system of leadership as outlined above.

*Our Reserve Forces—The Communist Children's Movement*

If the situation in the Young Communist Leagues is unsatisfactory, the situation in the Communist Children's movement is far worse. The chief fault lies in our Young Communist Leagues, which have done nothing to support the work of the children's movement. The seriousness of the mistake is most evident at the present time. If the Young Communist International had been able to establish a large children's movement from which new young forces could have been drawn, we should have been able to carry out the change much more quickly and more easily.

The importance of the children's movement, which is so clear today, will be still greater in the future. Every Young Communist League which does not devote the greatest attention to the Communist Children's movement is committing a serious political error. The YCL is responsible for the Communist Children's movement. It must place the necessary forces at the disposal of the children's movement.

In the Communist Children's movement too the question of the change comes up, and part of the change in the Young Communist League is the support of the Communist Children's movement. Every lower organization must set itself the task of training comrades as leaders of Pioneer groups and turning them over to the Communist Children's movement. In this work also, the final decision rests with the membership itself. The membership must develop the initiative of the units in organizing support for the Young Pioneers, in checking up on this movement and in carrying the principles of mass work over to the Communist Children's movement and in establishing the necessary conditions for winning over the broad masses of children.



### *The "Shock Troops"*

At the Plenum of the Young Communist International, the secretary of the Young Communist League of the Soviet Union called upon all the YCL's in capitalist countries to join in revolutionary rivalry. This is no empty phrase. The Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union which has 2,400,000 members, is carrying out a tremendous task in the building of Socialism. It has really understood how to organize Socialist competition so that all forces of the young workers should be directed toward the building of Socialism. The Young Communists in the capitalist countries owe it to the young fighters for the revolution and Socialism in the Soviet Union to devote their entire energy to the building up of the Young Communist International. Revolutionary competition not only between the Young Communists of the Soviet Union and those in capitalist countries, but also competition between comrades in the same Leagues—this is the most important way of beginning the change over to mass work.

The YCL of the Soviet Union has formed "shock troops" in the building of Socialism. These shock troops set themselves the task of increasing and improving production in the Socialist factories so as to increase the rate of Socialist construction. They are therefore struggling in the front ranks for the revolution.

Follow the example of the Young Communists of the Soviet Union! Form "shock troops" in the struggle to win over the majority of the young workers! Capitalism still holds sway in your country. Therefore the work of your "shock troops" is part of the struggle against this capitalist rule. It is the task of these shock troops to mobilize the mass of working youth and to increase the speed of carrying out the change over to mass work.

We are approaching new and greater struggles! A new revolutionary advance has begun. The class struggle between the bosses and the workers is becoming sharper and more extensive. In this situation the greatest responsibility falls on the leading organization of the working class, on the Communist Party and on the Young Communist League. The majority of the wor-

king class must be won over for the revolutionary struggle. As part of this great task it is the task of the Young Communist League to win over the majority of the working youth.

In winning over the majority of the working youth, the "shock troops" are of decisive importance. Every individual troop must perform the task which it sets itself. Thus these many small stones will form a great and splendid building. If you ask what to do and how to begin, the answer is clear: discuss this situation in your organization (in your shop nucleus or unit), form "shock troops" and assign them special tasks for carrying out the change. The troop will have the task of working permanently in a certain factory and carrying on agitation there until it succeeds in establishing a strong and properly functioning shop nucleus. Another troop will set itself the task of beginning work in a certain sport organization. Another troop will take upon itself another part of the work.

An attempt must be made to draw in every member. No one must remain on the outside or be passive, however small may be the task he performs.

All Young Communists, every member of the YCL must get to work. If we succeed in getting the work of the YCL organized on this basis, we shall not only have overcome the slowing down, but shall go forward and bring the majority of the working youth under our banner!







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