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# Program of the Young Communist League of America: Adopted by the First National Convention, early May 1922. †

A document in the Comintern Archive, RGASPI, f. 515, op. 1, d. 152, l. 4.

The Young Communist League of America, as the officially recognized Section of the Young Communist International in this country, declares itself in complete agreement with the program and tactics of the YCI as expressed by its 2nd World Congress [Moscow: June 9-23, 1921].

Centralized leadership is an essential factor for the success of the proletarian revolution, nationally as well as internationally. Therefore, the YCL of A places itself under the political leadership of the recognized Section of the Communist International, the Communist Party of America.

The aim of the YCL is the attainment of the Communist Society. This can only be done through the complete forcible overthrow of the capitalist state and the establishment in its place of a transitory working class state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, as expressed in its history form of Workers' Councils (Soviets).

The role of the YCL, in particular, is to win over the large masses of the working class youth of America for revolutionary action through vigorous communist educational and propaganda activity, and through par-

ticipation in the everyday struggles of the workers, thus in reality becoming the revolutionary vanguard of the young.

Political and economic conditions have compelled the YCL of A as an organization to function underground. This condition makes it difficult to reach and influence properly the masses of young workers. In view of this, legal apparatuses must be established through which we can gain the necessary contact.

The YCL of A shall at all times endeavor to attain an open mass movement of the revolutionary youth. The organized mass movement, under the guidance and leadership of the YCL constantly becomes more revolutionary in thought and action, assuming more and more the functions of a YCL. When sufficient strength has been achieved openly to function as a Communist organization, the open organization, merging with the YCL of A, becomes the YCL of A; but until the proletariat has obtained political supremacy — the dictatorship of the proletariat — capitalist society compels the maintenance of an illegal apparatus.

†- According to Theodore Draper in *The Roots of American Communism*, the founding convention of the Young Communist League was held Thursday, April 20, 1922 in Bethel, Connecticut. (pg. 344) This date differs from what is stated in the archival document here, however, it reading "Adopted by the first National Convention, May, 1922." The archival constitution here is attached to an extensive set of resolutions, seeming to indicate a convention of more than a single day's duration. The founding convention of the parallel "legal" organization, the Young Workers League of America, is known to have been held in New York City from Saturday, May 13 through Monday, May 15, 1922 — some days after the termination of the YCL convention. If Draper is incorrect with his April 20 date, as now seems probable, it is most likely that the YCL founding convention was held for some number of days terminating on Friday, May 12, 1922. The YCL was an "underground" organization, however, and this historical detail was carefully concealed by the participants for security reasons.

*Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.*

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