
Communique to the 2nd Convention of the Young Workers League of America from the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International, April 10, 1923

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Dear Comrades:

The 2nd Convention of your League [Chicago: May 20-22, 1923] will be confronted with many important questions which you must discuss very extensively and thoroughly, for upon the manner in which you will solve these questions will depend the further development of your League.

The Convention must put before itself the task which will serve as the basis for the development of your League into a mass organization. In this connection it is particularly important that you pay the greatest attention to the question of the reorganization of the League upon the basis of the shop nuclei. Only if your League is in daily and close contact with the masses and participates in the everyday life of the working youth and discusses all their questions, will it be possible to win the masses of the young workers.

It is a pleasure to us too know that in regard to the decisions of the YCI there exist no differences within your ranks and that you consider the YCI as the only international organization of the revolutionary working youth. We are proud of the fact that your activity has been carried on in the spirit of the YCI and that you are connected with our organization through the ties of fraternal affiliation.

We look forward to the time when the workers' movement in America will be strengthened to such an extent that you as a mass organization of the young workers will affiliate with the YCI as its American Section. You can at all times depend upon the fraternal support of the Young Communist International. We will assist you through our experiences and upon the basis of our experiences help to develop and build up your League. We therefore greet your Convention and in fraternal spirit call your attention to various important questions necessary for your consideration in the development of your League.

We have already pointed out to you that as a means for the development of your League into a mass organization, the emphasis must be placed on your activity at the points of production. We have seen from your press that this principle is enthusiastically accepted by your League. There is one question, however, (so it seems to us) you have given too little attention to the activity on the economic field. This, alongside with the educational work — which must be carried on hand in hand with the economic struggle — is one of the most important activities of your League, for the economic struggle must become the starting point for the entire activity of the Young Workers League. We are very glad to note therefore that this work is to be considered by your convention.

We believe the task of your organization — as the organization of the working youth in America — is to represent the interests of the young upon the economic field.

It is certain (generally speaking) that the situation in America is not as complex as in Central Europe. We know, however, that child labor in America has taken on such dimensions that your League can no longer remain inactive in this field and must find ways and means to enter same. You as the organization of the working youth must give out concrete slogans against child labor and carry on the struggle in this field. You must also gather material regarding the economic conditions at the present time. It seems to us that in a country where 2 million children are employed, the situation of the young from the ages of 14 to 18 is in many respects not particularly bright. By carrying on your activity on the basis of concrete demands and needs of the working youth and keeping in steady and daily contact with them in the struggle for better conditions will you be able to gain the sympathy and interest in your League and thus become a mass organization.

For this reason your convention must center the discussion upon the economic situation of the young and their struggle for better conditions as a means of developing your League into a mass organization. "To the Masses" must be the slogan of your Convention. To convert this slogan into action through the daily petty work in the shops and industries is the vow which every delegate when leaving your convention must take home with him and in turn he must make every member of the League understand the slogan. Only if every member of your League becomes active in this work will the decision of your convention be effectively carried out. Every member an agitator should become the slogan for your League from now on.

The question of the educational work is another important subject to be considered by your convention. If your League wants to solve its tasks,

every member of the organization must fully understand the aim and purpose of the League. He must further understand the entire movement of the workers. The educational work cannot be divided from the other activities of the League, but it must become a part of the activity as a whole. We are convinced that you too will acknowledge this principle and that your entire educational activity will be such as to tie up the theoretical schooling of your members with the educational work of the masses of the working youth. Educational work has practical value only if it is closely connected with the daily and petty work in the shops and industries.

In addition to these questions your convention must take a position on such an important subject as Children's Groups, Sport, and with the latter the struggle against reaction.

We are very glad to note that you have placed the question of the Children's Groups on your agenda and are fully convinced that the decisions you will reach regarding same will result in the formation of a Children's Group Movement on a national scale. It is especially here where your League is offered a great field for activity and limitless possibilities and our experiences in the Children's Movement internationally should serve as a great help to you.

The importance of the Sport question need not be emphasized by us now. You are confronted with a great task and we are convinced that the work in this field will be of great benefit to your League as well as for the entire movement of the workers. It must serve as a means to win the working youth away from the capitalistic sport organizations and thus win them for your League and the working class movement. And further, the Sport movement must be utilized as a means of drawing the working youth away from the claws of militarism, for the capitalist sport organizations serve as nothing more than military preparation of the youth for future wars of the capitalists for new markets or else for the supervision of the

struggling working class. It is for these reasons that the question of Sport is of the greatest importance in the United States.

We note that you are also considering the question of the foreign-speaking young workers. This is a sign that you do not differentiate as to nationality or race and we are glad to note that also in the future you will pay the closest attention to winning this part of the young workers. We do not believe that it will be necessary to organize the foreign speaking young workers into special groups, but to the contrary the efforts of the League should be directed to drawing these comrades more and more into the English-speaking groups in order that your League may become an entity. In this respect the tendencies for language groupings, especially among the Jewish [Yiddish-speaking] comrades, are entirely out of place. We hope that you will be able to convince the Jewish comrades as to the necessity of the unification of the movement and that your convention will reach its decisions in this direction. In special instances, the necessity of propaganda committees for work in such fields should be considered. If this [arises] it is necessary that the pro-

paganda committees must be under the control of the National Executive Committee; this is absolutely necessary from the standpoint of centralization. We believe that you are in agreement with our conception regarding this question and that there are no differences of opinion regarding same.

We wish the convention the best of success. The working youth of the entire world, united under the banner of the Young Communist International, are with you and watch the outcome of your convention. May the decisions be such which will open the way for the Young Workers League to further develop into a mass organization of the young workers of America.

Greetings to the 2nd Convention of the Young Workers League of America!

Long live the Young Workers League of America, the vanguard of the working youth of America!

Executive Committee YCI:

[Richard] Schüller,

[Lazar] Shatskin. †

Moscow, April 10, 1923.

† - Richard Schüller (1901-1957) was an Austrian-born Communist who represented that country at the Founding Congress of the KIM in Berlin in November 1919. He reported on youth problems to the 1st Enlarged Plenum of ECCI in Feb. 1922 and again at the 4th World Congress in November 1922, where he was elected to ECCI as a representative of the KIM, to which he was re-elected at the 5th World Congress in 1924. Schüller returned to Austria from the USSR in 1929, where he joined the editorial staff at *Der Rote Fahne*. After the Feb. 1934 civil war, he fled to Prague, where here was arrested, jailed, and expelled from the country. He lived in the USSR from 1935 to 1945, working in the Soviet press and preparing wartime broadcasts to Austria from 1942 onward. In 1945, Schüller returned home, where he was an editor of the Communist daily *Volksstimme*.

Lazar Abramovich Shatskin (1902-1938) was an ethnic Jew born in Russia who joined the Bolshevik Party in May 1917, soon emerging as a Komsomol leader in Moscow. He presided with Willi Münzenberg over the debates held at the Founding Congress of the KIM in Berlin in November 1919. Shatskin was variously Secretary of the KIM and the representative of the KIM to the ECCI, elected at the 2nd World Congress in 1920. Shatskin was re-elected to ECCI by the 4th World Congress (1922) and became a member of its Presidium. He delivered the report of the Executive Committee of the YCI to its 3rd Congress in December 1922. Shatskin was again elected to the Presidium of ECCI as KIM representative by the 7th Enlarged Plenum of ECCI in December 1926. He was elected to the Central Control Commission of the RCP(b) at its 15th Congress in December 1927. In 1931, Shatskin was expelled from the Central Control Commission as an adherent of the Syrtsov-Lominadze opposition. After being cashiered from political activity, Shatskin worked as a functionary in the trade union movement. He was finally expelled from the RCP(b) in 1935 for "anti-Party and anti-Soviet activity" and was arrested and died during the Ezhovshchina of 1937-38. Shatskin was posthumously rehabilitated following the 20th Congress of the CPSU. (Source: Lazitch & Drachkovitch, *Biographical Dictionary of the Comintern: New, Revised, and Expanded Edition*. (Stanford, CA: Hoover Institution Press, 1986).

Edited with a footnote by Tim Davenport.

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