

The MEANING of this CONVENTION

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE
(Fourth Internationalists)

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New York City

The die is cast. The ASU has chosen the direction it will take. 84

We intend to state quite clearly what that direction is and where it will lead. We know that many of the delegates who also oppose the decisions adopted will disagree with our interpretation; we know also, however, that they will learn we are correct from the future development of the ASU.

The decisions of the convention, while clear in their general character, are actually only transitional policies. The ASU has set its feet upon a long road, and its speed along that road will increase in the course of the coming year.

1. WAR

The adoption of a collective-security program by the ASU is not merely a "regrettable mistake", just as it will not merely be a "regrettable mistake" when the US government plunges us into the coming war. By its action, the ASU leaves the anti-war movement, it goes over to the other side of the fence. The present pre-war period is above all a period of the mobilization of the consciences of the people for imperialist war, and the ASU, with its present policies and leadership, can be considered nothing else but one among the other recruiting agencies. The program of the ASU is now a pro-war program.

We take it upon ourselves to predict the following: that this course will lead, not slowly but surely, to the abandonment of the struggle against American war preparations--against the military and naval budget, etc. The fight for the abolition of the ROTC will be pushed more and more into the background and liquidated. We predict that not only will the militancy of the Anti-War Strike be dissipated, but that the strike itself is on the road to extinction; and where the strike remains as a vestigial form, it will more and more take on the character of a patriotic demonstration.

You do not think this will happen? Then save this leaflet and read it a year from now. This is the logic of collective security.

We, as well as other consistent anti-war elements, can no longer support the program of the ASU. The debate at the convention will be transferred to the general struggle in society between the forces of war and the fighters against imperialist war.

2. TOWARD A ROOSEVELT STUDENT UNION

In internal politics, the direction of the ASU is likewise clear. It is toward integrating the ASU into the Roosevelt machine.

The greetings sent by FDR to the convention for the first time in the history of the student movement cannot represent a sudden leftward swing on his part, but rather indicated that he was quite satisfied with the way the ASU was developing. Lash's report, which denounced the Republicans while omitting all condemnation of Roosevelt's actions in cutting NYA and WPA, etc., which endorsed Roosevelt's foreign policy as expressed in the Chicago speech, points the road. This is also the significance of the proposal of the majority to participate in party politics: the politics will be FDR's.

The ASU becomes the campus adjunct of the Roosevelt political machine, following it on the road of American People's-Frontism and imperialist war.

3. Militancy in action. While this general question was not prominent in the work of the convention, the trend that has characterized the ASU in the recent past will only be strengthened by the re-election of the present leadership and the adoption of policies facilitating the rapprochement between the ASU and the enemies of progress. Militancy is an instrument in the fight against the powers that be and when this fight is given up, the need for militancy likewise disappears.

For example: In the draft program for American Education, on the question of facilitating Negro Education, opposition of race segregation and Jim-Crowism is not even mentioned; all emphasis is put on the partial program of equal expenditures for Negro and white education. This is the path of conformity with race prejudice and discrimination rather than of militant struggle against it.

The tendency to sacrifice ASU militancy and action, policy and program, for the sake of "not antagonizing the administration", or of not antagonizing the more backward students, already so evident, will flower and consolidate itself. It may achieve "respectability" through this means, but it will not effectively defend the students' needs.

4. Democracy in the ASU. This convention has clearly established the character of the internal regime in the ASU. There has been no more repellent demonstration of majority steam-rolling than that exhibited last night on the war resolution. No alternatives to the collective security resolution were permitted on the floor!

At the risk of breaking the taboo on the subject, we must clearly indicate the responsibility. This disruptive procedure was pushed thru by means of the mechanical majority of the Young Communist League, the same organization which calls for the expulsion of the Trotskyites from the ASU for "disruptive activity!" The YCL proposes also the outlawing of all groups inside the ASU; it obviously considers that only a majority groups has a right to exist, denying that right to minority groups which even some of the most conservative trade unions do not question.

This regime exists inside the YCL itself, but its importation into the ASU menaces minority expression in the organization.

Our program. The fight against war will be carried on. It means a consistent fight against the "enemy at home", our own imperialist government. One cannot avoid the implications of this struggle. It is the struggle for the revolutionary overthrow of that government, to set up a workers' government which can really insure peace.

The fight against war will be carried on, and we set as our task the aim of the Young People's Socialist League (Fourth Internationalist) the rallying of all the anti-war forces on this basis.

The World War brought the collapse of the socialist parties of the Second International. Today, in advance, both the Second International and the Third International of Stalin, with its puppet communist parties, declare their readiness to support the coming imperialist war. That is why we join with the revolutionary socialists of all countries to build the new International to continue the struggle against war, and for the principles of Lenin.

The struggle against war is the struggle for the Fourth International, for revolutionary socialism. JOIN US IN THE FIGHT!