

- THE YOUNG VANGUARD -

Y.P.S.L. Appeals to Young Babbitry

The Young People's Socialist League represents the interests of the petty-bourgeois youth. These interests are hostile and dangerous to those of the young workers. They run counter to each other, and clash irreconcilably. The petty-bourgeois youth aspires to establish himself comfortably and securely in some well-paying profession. In the Yipsels he can pursue his personal ambitions of well-being congenially and at the same time retain his "ideals". His interest is to preserve the capitalist relations which permit within its confines the fulfillment of his small-minded desires. Revolution and revolutionary working class activity is abhorrent to him. But capitalism with its innate contradictions refuses to run smoothly, and often disturbances occur which menace the attainments of the puny aims of the petty-bourgeois youth. Then he talks fiercely against capitalism, and indeed becomes terribly radical.

We have before us an appeal of the Y.P.S.L. entitled "Young Man, Young Woman—What are You Going to Do With Your Life?" which is eloquently expressive of the nature of this organization. It begins by saying that every young man and woman has two big things to think about. "The first is important... It is how you are going to make a living. But the answer to the second is even more important, for upon it depends the way you are going to live your life." Truly this could be said only to people to whom the question of earning a living is a matter of slight concern, something about which it is not necessary to worry, not a life and death question. And indeed, are we not all to be dentists, doctors or lawyers. Join the Yipsels not because it will help you to fight for better working conditions in your shop or factory, but in order to learn how to spend your money "culturally" and your leisure time "ideally".

Socialist "Doctors and Dentists"

Then America's future doctors and dentists go on to say, "Every young man and woman who is at school or college every youth who knows that school days will soon be over and that the struggles for a living are looming just ahead (this probably refers to the less successful dentists—G.R.) has to make a decision very soon as to how his life is to be led". Yes, indeed, we forgot all about our college education. There are apparently millions of college graduates working in factories for 14 dollars per week. But the poor fools have only themselves to blame. Who asked them to become B.A.'s. They should have become M.D.'s and D.D.S.'s.

The Yipsels perhaps do not know that one out of every four children who enter school never reach the sixth grade, that almost one half never reach the eighth grade, and that less than one third of the school age population enter high school, and that but one in eight graduates. It is not worth speaking of the number who graduate college. How can such facts concern petty bourgeois Yipsels?

And now listen to this most illuminating outlook on life—revealing the true soul of the American Yipsels: "Now after you are earning a living (such an unimportant and simple matter, you know—G.R.) or pursuing a course that will lead to such an honest and decent living (it's either the one or the other, of course,—G.R.)—what next? What are you going to do with yourself and your life?"

"Are you going to establish a home, sit back, enjoy life to the extent of your means, and call it a day? Are you going to blind your eyes to the world around you?"

"Most men and women realize that merely earning a living and then going to the movies and motoring does not constitute a complete and wholesome life.

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Ten individual holding each ranging from 250,000 shares upwards control the General Motors Corporation through the ownership of 20,000,000 shares.

The DuPont powder interests combined with the management interest controls 75 per cent of the 15 million shares. Under these circumstances, what substance can the point have that there has been an increase of "165 percent in the number of small shareholders? (from 83, 415 on Feb. 16, 1929 to 218,413, Jan. 24, 1930)

"There must be something else."

The Conditions of the Working Youth

There are over ten million toiling youth in the United States, of whom more than five million are exploited in industry. There are over two and a half million child laborers. The average wage of the young worker is about \$14, and his working day is about 10 hours under very bad conditions. Since the war there has been an intensive rationalization process which has drawn millions of young workers into industry and increased his importance in industry. There are some industries which employ exclusively or very large proportions of young workers. And amidst all this the Yipsels shout "There must be something else." As if in mockery of the bitterly and miserably exploited working youth who of course establish homes, sit back and enjoy life, go motoring and other such delightful pastimes, the middle class philistines advise "So while we do not suggest even for a moment that you give up any of your good times, that you cease enjoying yourself, we ask you to turn your thoughts to those questions that face your elders, and will face you."

Trotsky on the Grown-Up Yipsei

Permit me to quote comrade Trotsky's excellent and fitting description of this type of people. "In the United States there is a large group of successful and semi-successful doctors, lawyers, dentists, engineers and the like who divide their precious hours of rest between concerts by European celebrities and the American Socialist party. Their attitude towards life is composed of shreds and fragments of the wisdom they absorbed in their student days. Since they all have automobiles, they are invariably elected to the important committees, commissions and delegations of the party. And properly speaking they are simply variants of "Babbitt", who supplements his commercial activity with dull Sunday meditations on the future of humanity. These

people live in small national clans, in which the solidarity of ideas usually serves as a screen for business connections. Each clan has its own leader, usually the most prosperous of the Babbitts. They tolerate all ideas provided they do not undermine their traditional authority and do not threaten—God forbid!—their personal comfort!"

It would be an unjust slander to say that the post war generation of Yipsei Babbitts are in any way inferior to their Babbitt elders in the Socialist party.

—GEORGE RAY

Self-Criticism

The "self-criticism" of the ruling faction consists in making tardy admissions of the least significant of the errors they committed, without indicating any connection between them, or the basis upon which they arose. The important and more dangerous mistakes committed by them are "admitted" only under the most severe pressure and even then, in most cases they are falsely ascribed to the opponents of the very errors. The nature of the errors, the reasons and responsibility for them, are never repeated in the same form, or else they are repeated in an inverted form caused by irresponsible swings to the opposite extreme.

A genuine Leninist self-criticism is a primary requisite for the establishment of clarity, the raising of the ideological level of the Party and the elimination of the distrust and cynicism caused by its absence. Instead of self-criticism, the Party leadership has instituted a regime of diplomacy, concealment, distortion, and self-praise. Its own "achievements" are paraded and exaggerated in the most revolting shopkeeper's manner. A blank check of immunity from any error or crime is an automatic premium to any of its faction supporters.

— FROM THE PLATFORM OF THE COMMUNIST OPPOSITION ADOPTED (CHICAGO) MAY 20, 1929.

OPPOSITION RECRUITS YOUTH

In this issue of the Militant there appears a statement signed by a group of Party and Young Communist League members. This group represent the advance guard in the slow but steady march toward the Left Opposition which is bound to occur in the coming period among the Communist Youth now under the influence of the Stalinist regime or the Right Wing. Shallow-minded people may under-estimate the importance of this development because they do not see large numbers rushing forward to the support of the Left Opposition. But revolutionists, unlike opportunists who can base themselves only upon what happens under their nose have perspective and can project the meaning of immediate events into the future beyond the limits of tangible occurrences.

This declaration is not a detached and accidental event separated from the processes at work within the ranks of the Y.C.L. It is indicative of certain trends. These three comrades who have now proclaimed their adherence to the Left Opposition are by no means the only ones in the Y.C.L. today who are definitely for our platform. But for each one of those who are for us, there are many who are thinking and studying our viewpoint, and in due time will be with us.

Right Wingers Distortions

In the Y.C.L. there is a growing resentment and dissatisfaction, still weak and submerged, toward the prevailing course. The Lovestone opportunists are trying to divert this sentiment in their direction. But all young Communists are not to be deceived so easily. There are many who are not superficial or lightminded and will insist upon examining the platform of the Left Opposition. It is very significant that among those who are definitely for us today there are a number who were formerly supporters of the Lovestone group during the period when it constituted the leadership of the American Party. In the last issue of Revolutionary Youth under the query of "What is Trotskyism?" there is a whole page devoted to the distortion and misrepresentation of our viewpoint. There it is stated that "Trotskyism" is of very

the only reason they speak of it is for educational purposes. But for anyone in the least acquainted with the Lovestone methods, this is just so much duplicity. The truth is that the Right wing in their efforts to win the more advanced comrades in the Y.C.L. have detected a current which flows in our direction.

The Future to the Youth

Despite these favorable developments, we harbor no illusions about our future growth. We realize that our inevitable victory is not a matter of weeks or months but years. Today we are assembling our forces, slowly, in small numbers. We are creating the cadres which will play a big and decisive role in the future of the revolutionary movement. A large proportion of this vanguard will be formed from the youth elements of today. The regime of bureaucracy and political corruption which has dominated the Comintern in an increasing degree in the last seven years, has incapacitated forever for revolutionary leadership the greater part of the present Party cadres. These will have to be replaced from amongst the youth. Here lies one of the most important tasks of the Left Opposition: to educate the youth in the real spirit of revolutionary Marxism and Leninism.

The platform of the Left Opposition will surely attract the Communist youth. It is permeated through and through with the spirit of revolution. It clashes with and repels everything that is narrow, provincial, and nationalistic. It is the antithesis of opportunism. It forms a harmonious whole in which all questions are linked to the main question of world revolution. That is why it is entirely in accord with the bold and revolutionary spirit of militant youth. It is necessary to reach them with it. We must shatter the barriers of prejudice and deception built for years by the Lovestones and the Fosters.

We are marching forward. The bureaucratic walls are showing signs of decay. To continue our work more effectively among the youth we are now faced with the question of the formation of an organization of the Opposition youth as a faction of the Y.C.L. Its outlines can already be discerned. In due time it will become a reality on a national scale.

License for Shriners Clubs for Workers

An object lesson in the uses of capitalist laws can be gained by the working class in examining an event that has just taken place in Toronto.

An organization known as the Ancient Arabic Order of Noble Mystic Shriners annually holds a convention, each yearly convocation being celebrated in a different city. This year Toronto was chosen as the place of meeting, the main attraction no doubt being the alluring glimmer of sparkling beer and whiskey. The Shriners, as this organization is usually known, is a branch of the Masonic Order; to become a Mason one must have affluence, influence and money; to graduate from a Mason into a full-fledged shriner further affluence, influence and money are the pre-requisite.

The first day of the Convention finds Shriners bedecked in outrageous medieval costumes thronging the streets, bands roam around, and headed by mounted policemen processions march through the main thoroughfares disrupting traffic and dislocating the routine of the day. Throughout the three day convention these antics continue sporadically, and according to capitalist laws they violated practically every municipal traffic regulation. Were they arrested? No, nothing is mentioned, they are unheld and condoned by their paid servant, the chief of police. Disgraceful scenes are perpetrated in the open street, vagrancy and loitering laws are plentifully broken. Were they charged with committing breaches of the law? Certainly not, the Shriners are just frisky and besides "this is our convention and we have the freedom of the city," they say. The police put the telescope to the blind eye when breaches are committed. Dacchus reigns and prostitutes reap a golden harvest. Practically every law was broken (and how!). Was punishment meted out to these Shriners? Why, says Chief of Police Draper, the budding dictator, we all had the time of our lives, no laws were broken and everybody enjoyed himself.

A fitting climax to the convention was a "peace" parade in which hundreds of Legionnaires in full uniform, steel helmet and guns with fixed bayonets marched. The 1930 version of peace.

License for "Shriners", Clubbings for Workers

Now let us look at the other side of the picture. The Communist Party calls a meeting in a park where incidentally, even capitalist laws are hard to break. The mounted police are present here also, and the workers feel the clubs as proof of their presence. No speeches are allowed and workers are refused the right to assemble. What have they done? Why, says Draper, these Bolsheviks have committed sedition, are vagrants, scoundrels, etc., etc., and immediately places these charges against the workers.

An unemployed delegation is met at the City Hall by the same police who met the Shriners. But what a difference in manner of greeting! Welcome for the parasites; clubbings and arrests for the workers by whose means these parasites are enabled to live in luxury. But when a worker at an election meeting says "Long live the Indian Revolution" he is arrested and a sedition charge placed against him. And now an edict has been issued against the holding of workers' picnics.

These are common occurrences wherever capitalism prevails. The bourgeoisie rules; they can do anything they please, they are the masters. Laws are made to impose upon the workers in case they become infected with "dangerous thoughts" resulting from a dangerous social system. Bosses make the laws, for use upon the workers.

In the face of the police terror in Toronto the Communist Party is unable to mobilize forces to combat it. With its "third period" tactics it is isolated, impotent. All healthy elements are strangled; the real Party slogan today is Stalinism, not Communism. The future lies in the hands of the Opposition and the correctness of its programme will be proven in the coming struggles.