

THE YOUNG VANGUARD

The Y. C. I. Letter Is Brought to Light!

Now as a sort of climax to culminate the whole wretched ultra-Left course and expose the bankruptcy of the Centrist bureaucracy in sharp relief there appears the latest letter from the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International to the Young Communist League of the U.S.A. The letter is of deep import to every young Communist. There will be more than one member of the Y.C.L. who after its perusal will be jolted into seeing matters in a new light. The letter, intended to placate the dissatisfaction of the membership the failures and steady decline of the Y.C.L. and to make of the N.E.C. a scape goat for the opportunist line that emanates from the Y.C.I. will act as a double edged blade to the more serious and thoughtful member of the Y.C.L., cutting into the very roots of the situation.

Amateur and Skilled Suppressors

The letter was sent by the E.C.Y.C.I. on April 13, 1930, but the membership has become aware of its existence only now—four months later. The Harveys, the Steubens, the Greens and the other marionettes who so slavishly endeavored to impose the Stalinist line on the League, have kept it hidden from the eyes of the League. No doubt they felt the letter to be a piece of the basest ingratitude for their obedient services to Stalinism. To gain a proper appraisal of these people, one need only read sentences like "the information which we have at our disposal concerning the present situation in the American League and the recent plenum results are very scant..." and "we have not received a copy of the Young Worker for months".

The Lovestone group, which of course has always been famed for upright and open dealings with the E.C.Y.C.I. is triumphantly circulating the letter wholesale among the members of the League. The League leadership has suppressed the letter, they cry with righteous indignation. But in truth, the Harveys and Steubens are only the clumsy pupils of the Herbergs and Zams, who were much more refined, proficient and adept at this particular kind of manipulation. These present crude imitators can never hope to attain the high degree of skill and the fine and intricate methods of their predecessors. The present bunglers merely suppress the document. But their teachers when they received an embarrassing Y.C.I. letter, first withheld it from the membership for a certain amount of time, as long as this was feasible—but no more. Then they proclaimed their heartfelt conviction of the correctness of the letter, meanwhile conspiring with Lovestone and Pepper for the Polcom to appeal against it. Oh, it was really most complicated, but it was a genuine piece of Machiavellian machination.

The Y.C.I. Estimate of the Y.C.L.

The Y.C.I. letter chastises the League leadership severely. In particular it criticizes the Y.C.L. Plenum held last January. The resolution adopted is condemned in no uncertain terms. "We must frankly tell you," the letter states, "that of all the resolutions of League Plenums yours is one of the worst." This is said despite the fact that the resolution was patterned almost entirely on the thesis of the last Y.C.I. plenum. (See the Militant, Feb. 1, 1930).

Our own estimation of the resolution has been strikingly confirmed. "The resolution adopted reveals the miserable situation in which the Y.C.L. finds itself—but explains nothing, and lays the basis for further decline." (The Militant, March 8, 1930.) The responsibility lies with the Stalinist regime.

The letter criticizes a false estimate of social reformism contained in the resolution. This erroneous conception was formulated in the N.E.C. resolution as follows: "The radicalization of the young workers takes away the base of the social reformists among the young workers and while social reformism remains the chief ideological barrier, which we have to overcome amongst the young worker, there can be no real growth of reformist youth organizations—but only disintegration, providing the Young Communist League plays its role." In criticism of this we said: "It is false to say that radicalization takes

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International Youth Day

As it Should Be

Tremendous demonstrations of youth, streaming out of factories and mines, off the fields, out of the ranks of the armies to show their spirited, active hatred of the capitalist system and all it means to the wage slaves of capitalism.

Mighty assemblages to signify their desire to struggle against the slave system, against long hours of automaton motions, low wages, prostitution, child labor, hovels, the dope dispensed by the dopesters of capitalism—church, school and press; against the mental and physical degradation forced upon the workers by the hunger system.

Particularly, to fight against the bosses war, the struggle against which the First Sunday in September, sixteen years ago was dedicated by the small band of loyal, revolutionary, young "Left" socialists as the Day of International Youth; to fight for the revolutionary fraternization of the young masses in different uniforms.

LENIN AND THE YOUTH

TRAINING THE YOUTH

The Tasks of the Young Communist League

(A speech delivered at the Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, October 4, 1920.)

Comrades, I would like today to talk on the subject of the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League, and in connection with this, the form the youth organizations should take in a socialist republic.

The New Generation Will Build Communism

This question should be dealt with particularly for the reason that, in a certain sense, one may say that it is the youth particularly which is confronted with the present task of constructing Communist society. It is clear that the generation of workers brought up in capitalist society, at best can fulfil the task of destroying the foundations of old capitalist conditions built up on exploitation. At best this generation can fulfil the task of creating such social conditions as would help the proletariat and the working classes to maintain power and lay a firm foundation upon which only the generation commencing the work under new conditions, in circumstances where there are no relations of exploitation between men, can build.

The Task of the Youth is to Acquire Knowledge

Hence, approaching the question of the tasks of the youth from this point of view, I must say that the tasks of the youth generally and of the Young Communist Leagues and all other organizations particularly, may be expressed in one sentence: the task is to acquire knowledge.

Of course, this is just "one sentence". It does not reply to the principal and most essential question—what knowledge to acquire and how to acquire it? And here the whole thing is that with the transformation of the old capitalist society, we cannot adopt the old forms of teaching, training and educating the new generation which will establish Communist society. Nevertheless, the teaching, training and educating of the youth must start with the material left us by the old society.

We can build Communism only with the aid of that sum of knowledge, the organizations and the institutions, with the aid of the stock of human forces and resources which has been left us by the old society. Only by radically reforming the methods of teaching, organizing and training the youth shall we be able to guarantee that the efforts of the young generation will result in the construction of a society unlike the old society, i. e., a Communist society.

What to Learn and How to Learn It

Consequently, we must deal with the question as to how we should teach and what we should teach the youth, in order that they may justify their title of Communist youth; we must deal with the

The slightest scratching of the surface of the powerful potential force of young toilers by a weak isolated, poorly educated, divided, misled Young Communist League and International; passing unheard and unheeded by the millions of young workers, who do not, and can not, understand the slogans and demands that should inspire and electrify the youth into determined action; because of the methods used by the Y.C.L.

What is to be Done

Correct Leninist policy—aimed at world Communism: leadership in the everyday struggles of the young workers, Marxist education, vigorous anti-war action; abandoning the inane phrase-flinging that marches cheek-by-jowl with opportunism; the acceptance into the full comradeship of struggle of the Left Bolshevik-Leninist Opposition within the Party and the Y.C.L.—these will make future International Youth Days what they should be.

The Youth and the Elections

The elections this year give the Communists an exceptionally good opportunity for rallying the working youth under their banner. The growing willingness of the young workers to struggle, their greater participation in the struggles of the working class, the increased economic pressure on the young workers in the present economic crisis (unemployment, further lowering of wages, worsening of conditions of labor) serve as a substantial base for the growth of influence of the Communist Youth.

In participating in capitalist parliamentary elections, Communists aim to educate the broad mass of workers, rally them around the vital questions that affect them, organize them for the struggle against the boss class and its state power, and for the establishment of a revolutionary workers government, the young Communists must make special efforts to attract the young workers.

Winning the Young Workers

The task of winning the young workers is organically connected with the problem of winning the entire working class. The problems of the general working class are the problems of the young workers—since the latter are a section of the former. However, the young workers as such have certain different characteristics and therefore certain particular problems. Because of its physical and intellectual immaturity, the youth has special so-called social needs and requirements—educational, cultural etc. These must be dealt with in the attempt to win over the youth for Communism.

In the United States, as in all capitalist democracies, although the youth are drawn into industry at a low age, compelled by economic necessity (and at periods by law) to join the military forces, in a word are forced to take upon themselves the "social responsibilities" of an adult, they are deprived of the right of franchise. The millions of youth in this country between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one who are barred from voting can be rallied around the slogan of: A vote for every youth eighteen or more years of age! The pretensions of bourgeois democracy can thereby more easily be exposed. Even the socialists, the arch-defenders of capitalist democracy, have given support to this disenfranchisement of millions of young workers and students.

Youth Omitted in C.P. Platform

The Communist Party in its current platform does not even mention the position of the working youth; it raises not even a single demand for the young workers! The so-called leadership of the official Y.C.L. is too taken up with its "Plan of Action" (!) to occupy itself with such "trifles". Nevertheless, youth demands must be issued; a special effort must be made to reach the millions of toiling youth. The pivot point must be a contrast of the conditions of the youth under wage slavery and those under a workers' Soviet government.

The Left Opposition Youth, as part of the Communist League of America (Opposition) will participate in the ensuing election campaign, and support the Communist Party. Members of the Communist Party and Young Communist League should demand that those organizations accept our offers of cooperation in the elections. Young Communists should insist on definite youth election demands. Young workers, young students and young Communists should rally around the demands of the Left Opposition Youth:

The right to vote for all youth 18 years or over.

6-hour day, 5-day week for all young workers.

The abolition of child labor under the age of 16 with state maintenance for those at present employed.

The establishment of work-schools for young workers between the ages of 16 and up—modelled on the present system in the Soviet Union.

Two weeks vacation with pay for all young workers. —JOSEPH FRIEDMAN

(To Be Continued)