

The Young Workers League Is Discovered!

By MARTIN ABERN and PAUL STEVENS

IN the August 18th issue of the "American Legion Weekly," official mouthpiece of the American Legion, there appears a somewhat lengthy article, purporting to dissect the Young Workers' League. It is entitled: "America's Youth and the Reds." "Radical agitation, stepping down off the soap box, carries on in subtler guise on an impressionable front," blurts out a large-type sub-head, as if undoubtedly scared by the recent development of the radical movement because of the growing critical aspect of the economic conditions of the workers.

Particularly, the writer in the "Weekly," James E. Darst, is disturbed by the efforts of the "reds" to gain the support of the working youth. He starts in by quoting the article by Rose Pastor Stokes, which was printed in the May issue of the "Young Worker." Therein is pointed out to a boy scout (the child of a worker), who in conversation says, "It's my country; ain't I got to fight for my country some time?" — that for workers under capitalism there is no country that they can call their own.

Ownership of the United States.

Who own this country? Ninety per cent of the people in the United States control less of the wealth of the nation than does one per cent of a particular class. And they rule the nation who rule the industries. They even rule the American Legion. Of this more later.

Does the Legion know that:

65 per cent of the population own nothing;
15 per cent one thousand dollars, and under;
18 per cent two thousand dollars, and over;
2 per cent may be called rich, possessing \$50,000 or over.

Does the Legion think that these 65 per cent, for example, ought "to fight for their country sometime?"

When these facts are pointed out to the American youth, is it any wonder that they make an impression upon their minds? Is there anything subtle or magical about it, as the writer for the "Weekly" wishes to make out? Rather, it is common sense and the realization of fact. It is not radical agitation, which is arousing the workers of this country, but on the contrary, it is the increasing exploitation — lower wages, longer hours, more miserable working conditions — all of which fall even more heavily upon the shoulders of the young workers. Our education and agitation serve but to make the workers understand the reasons for these conditions and also show how to eliminate those causes.

Who Uses Trickery and Fraud?

It is not the Workers League or the radical movement that needs to resort to trickery, or worse, (of which the Legion is guilty) to gain adherents or win the mind of the youth to its cause. We leave fraud and self-imposed law to the American Legion and its type. Facts, and the laws behind the facts, will serve our ends quite amply (social evolution, etc.)

It is significant to note throughout the entire article in the "Weekly," the writer fails even to attempt to refute any of the statements and opinions which are

given in the articles which he quotes. Mr. Darst is lost in holy horror to think that anyone can even contemplate changing the present social system of capitalism and the institutions born of it, say, such as the American government, that "government of the people, for the people and by the people," wherein 65 per cent of the people own nothing!

Boy Scout Charges Unanswered.

Our "keen" investigator in the "Weekly" declares that the Young Workers League vents the full force of its denunciation on the boy and girl scout movements; but as to the truth or falsity of the charges he is as silent as the tomb.

For the benefit of the young workers, we reiterate a few of the facts concerning these incubators of white guards: The boy scouts are conspicuous in most strikes — on the side of the bosses; they work with the Chamber of Commerce in every city in which they are organized, directly and indirectly, in the agitation and installation of the scab "open shop" plan, or for other demands inimical to the interests of the working-class; the scouts are infused with cheap patriotism in the name of dollar-a-year Schwabs, who during the war cleaned up veritable fortunes; the boy scouts are "trained as soldiers, they are pervaded with the psychology of a soldier — obedience to their master, to the ruling class, to all their immediate 'superiors.'" The girls scouts and Y. M. C. A., insofar as their organizational structure permits, follow in the footsteps of the boy scouts in the fight against labor. And the Legion, of whom, no doubt, Mr. Darst thinks highly, speaking of what it is doing for Young America, says that it "backs and participates in the boy and girl scout movements."

William J. Burns, Director of the Bureau of "Investigation" of the Department of Justice (sic!), seems to be the source of a good many of Mr. Darst's "facts." Who does not remember the famous "Linde" case? It was Burns who melodramatically announced to the world that he had "discovered" the "plotters" behind the Wall Street bomb outrage. Linde, the "investigator," was in reality a fellow stool pigeon with Burns. Burns, no doubt, would be happy if the entire Linde episode were thrust into the bosom of oblivion and left to rest there forever. So much for the reliability of gum-shoe Burns upon whom Mr. Darst leans so much for support in his article.

The Basis for Our Organization.

Why does any movement come into being? To fulfill an interest. The workers of this country, and especially the young, are being exploited as never before in the history of American capitalism. Over a million children around fourteen years of age yearly enter the factories of the capitalists. Secretary of Labor Davis states that 1,500,000 girls and boys, 10 to 15 years of age, in this country are employed, and that the number is steadily increasing. The United States, in proportion to its population, has a greater number of children at work producing profits than any other civilized nation, excluding China, Japan and India, and Mr. Darst, certainly, would not want to

class the United States, or even compare it with those "heathen" countries.

The writer, Darst, speaking of the recent origin of the Young Workers League, quotes Trotsky's speech to the youth of Europe and America, in which Trotsky feels convinced that the working youth of the world will join the revolutionary forces for the overthrow of world capitalism.

To Mr. Darst's naive mind "Trotsky's call on the revolutionary youth of America 'to fulfil its duty' has been answered by the formation of the 'Young Workers League.'" Rather, the organization of the League is due to the increasing misery and exploitation of the American working youth, pointed out herein. It is these objective, immediate, hellish conditions that are now the lot of all toilers in America and elsewhere which compel the organization of the workers to resist the blows of the capitalists. Capitalism forces the workers to attempt to protect themselves. It makes workers inquire into the causes of their increasing misery and thus many of them discover the causes of exploitation.

The Young Workers League has come to see that man cannot be free so long as there is economic slavery — not even in America, where the workers have "political freedom, liberty and the right to the pursuit (pursuit is right) of happiness." And capitalism, with the extremest economic exploitation, horrible wars, etc., has shown itself to be the worst of slaveries. Hence, another bugaboo of the capitalist class, the Young Workers League, has come into being and states that its purpose is:

"To organize and educate the young of the working class for the abolition of capitalism and to aid in the establishment of a Republic of Workers' Councils, a government functioning through the power of the proletariat to the exclusion of all other classes, as the first step toward the establishment of an international classless society, free from all political and economic slavery."

What the League Teaches.

The Young Workers League teaches its members economic and political science. Lenin, Marx, Engels, Bukharin and a host of other revolutionary thinkers are the sources of education for its members. How lamentable! cries Mr. Darst. Where is Washington, land gobbler, Hancock, prince of smugglers, Hamilton, the liberty-loving soul who wished a monarchy for America? You are right, Mr. Darst, we don't believe in your Washingtons and Monroes and Hamiltons. They established political liberty and economic supremacy — for the capitalist class. And to follow their teachings is to work for the perpetuation of wage slavery. Marx, Engels, Lenin, and many others have shown to the workers the way out of the dilemma of capitalist slavery. They have shown the workers the cause of their misery — unpaid labor, surplus value; they have pointed out to us the laws of social development, which doom capitalism and aid the workers in their battle for a society divorced from all forms of exploitation.

Our education is for the benefit of a working class; all other "education" is for the capitalist class. And all history, past and in the making, go to prove the Marxian teachings correct. That Mr. Darst has failed to speak of. Perhaps he would like to have the world engage in another little "democratic" war (democratic

in that all workers are free to kill one another and the capitalists free to compete for the spoils.)

"Economics and psychology," says Mr. Darst, "receive special attention." Yes, and history and political science and anything else which will help the working class free itself from capitalist banditry. Are these the "bombs" — history, politics, economics, etc — Mr. Darst and Mr. Burns and Mr. Gary and Mr. Morgan and company fear so greatly? Have all the "plots" of these estimable gentlemen, the capitalists and their lackeys, been reduced to a "conspiracy" to educate the workers of America against capitalism? . . . Well, they fear rightly who fear an enlightened and awakened working class. The day the workers realize the hopelessness and futility of life under capitalism — on that day, the capitalist class can say, "Our Deluge has come!"

Our International Relationship.

In line with the charge that the Young Workers League of America was formed in answer to the call of Trotsky, a stupid assumption as we show, Darst declares that . . . "The Young Workers League . . . is the above-board manifestation of the youthful communist organization in America." We consider the Young Communist International the only true guide of the young workers of the world, and although not affiliated with it at this time, we have the greatest sympathy for it, and feel that under its direction the revolutionary young workers — all young workers — will best advance their cause. We hope some day that conditions may arrive when the Young Workers League can become a section of Young Communist International.

What is the basis for the international relationship of workers organizations? It is the very development of capitalism itself; it is that development which has compelled the capitalist class of the various nations to try to organize on an international basis against the workers. But the competition of the capitalist for profits and for markets prohibits their coming together successfully internationally. On the other hand, the workers of the world being exploited in common in every country into which the capitalist system has penetrated, find it to their advantage and necessity to organize to combat the international exploitation by their masters. The Communist International and the Young Communist International have proved to be workers' internationals, not only in words, but in action. For this reason, the Young Workers League of America emphatically accepts and recognizes these bodies as the only true workers' internationals.

American Legion "Principles."

The American Legion, among other things, "advocates the training of all boys and girls in broad and tolerant (!) Americanism." We wonder if the Legion writes this in seriousness or in mockery.

As examples of the "broad and tolerant Americanism" so ardently advocated by the Legion, let Arthur Warner repeat his unrefuted testimony: (*The Nation*, "The Truth About the American Legion," Nos. July 6th to July 27th, 1921, inclusive.)

The Legion . . . "gives orders to public officers and is fearfully consulted by them; it is accorded quasi-official standing through the privilege of occupying government buildings, as in New York City, where it enjoys commodious offices in the Hall of Records . . .

it has established a censorship of public meetings and by actual or threatened violence suppresses freedom of speech; it is attempting to dictate the instruction in our public schools and pass upon the qualification of the teachers; although nominally non-political, it has actually sponsored a host of bigotted and repressive laws and policies . . ."

Now we will list a few of the cases which Mr. Warner heads "The long, long trail of lawlessness."

1. Arthur Clark, editor of the *Carpenteria* (California) Herald, whipped most brutally, a former Legion man. Criticizing Legion.

2. Cincinnati raid on Communist Labor Party headquarters.

3. In connection with above, attempted murder of Frederick Reis, Jr., former Legion man. Testified against the legion at trial of above case. Story damaging to Legion.

4. Stopping of innumerable meetings.

5. Prevention of the organization of workers into unions. As a result, many unions have taken action forbidding their members from joining that organization.

6. Innumerable instances of strike-breaking charged to Legion. Central Federated Union of New York, representing the entire membership of American Federation of Labor in that district. Detroit Local No. 127, Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers of America.

To the Young Workers League and other working class organizations, it is quite obvious why the American Legion is a labor hating and labor breaking organization. The Legion has been subsidized by big business. A drive for \$100,000 which was made in Illinois, was largely subscribed to by the financial and stock yard interests. A letter printed in "Stars and Stripes," a soldier's paper, signed by Gale Johnson, editor of the "Intelligencer," inquires:

"Who are the 400 'friends of the Legion' who indorsed the notes for \$257,000, with which the Legion was organized? Was Coleman Du Pont of the Powder Trust, one of them? Were the packers of Chicago? Was David Goodrich, of the Rubber Trust? Was the Standard Oil Company?"

Warner, commenting on these questions, says that they have never been answered.

The Legion and the Bonus.

Thousands have joined the Legion for the simple reason that they thought this was a good way to get the bonus and not because they subscribed to the "principles" of that organization. The Legion, at best, is for a pittance in the form of a bonus for the working-class soldiers who suffered as a result of the war. Even this has been denied by the tools of the masters who head the government.

The Young Workers League is for a bonus — a bonus so large, taken from the military budget, that it will give to the workers who fought for "democracy" somewhere near the massive profits reaped by the capitalists through the exploitation of the entire working class. We are for a bonus so large that it will strip the military budget so that not another soldier could be outfitted to scab or shoot down workers. We are for caring for the wounded soldiers in a fashion that is impossible under the capitalist system — namely, the best of medical care in resorts now monopolized by the master class and their sycophants, who, during

the war were flooded with the wealth that came out of the blood-shed.

However, we know, as has been repeatedly proved, that any substantial benefit for the workers is impossible under capitalist society.

Thousands of members have, since the organization of the Legion, left its ranks because they have realized that the American Legion is but a scab institution of the capitalist class. Hence the Legion is dwindling and shriveling. Yet, the capitalist class will not stand by and see the American Legion destroyed of itself, but will try to revive this or similar White-guard, terroristic organizations to be used against the working-class.

The World War Veterans.

We know that there are other soldier organizations in existence that oppose the obvious capitalistic and anti-labor activities of the American Legion — organizations that stand in fact for free speech, free press, and free assemblage. Such an organization is the World War Veterans of America, composed of working class members. The World War Veterans do stand for the organized labor movement — for the working-class, which is the only true Americanism; and we feel certain that the World War Veterans, composed as it is of workers, will soon come to see that it is necessary for it to take a definite stand against the entire capitalist system. We urge all ex-soldiers and those interested in a real workers-soldiers organization to join the World War Veterans.

The last war was but the logical outcome of the natural development of the capitalist system. Of course, Mr. Darst and his fellow Legionnaires do not understand this. Wars are inevitable so long as capitalism exists. We need but to point to the Turkish imbroglio to emphasize this.

The Young Workers League is a foe of capitalism. The American Legion is a supporter and a fighter for capitalism. Hence the Legion is uneasy at the rapid and sure growth of the radical movement — the workers' movement.

The Movement of the New Day.

We will continue to carry on our education, agitation and organization for the overthrow of capitalism and for the establishment of a workers' government, — a Soviet Republic. Our immediate task is to enlist the youth in this struggle. It will be the youth upon whose shoulders will fall the greatest burden of establishing a society free from exploitation, classes and American Legions.

Darst and the Legion are the supporters of a dying, tottering system. The Young Workers League stands for the new day. In the prophetic words of Jack London we say:

"The old world is dead, dead and buried along with its heroes and Helens and knights and ladies and tournaments and pageants. You cannot sing of the truth and wonder of today in terms of yesterday. And no one will listen to your singing till you sing of today in terms of today.

"This is the day of the common man. Do you glorify the common man? This is the day of the Machine. When have you sung of the Machine? The Crusades are here again, not the crusades of Christ, but the Crusades of the Machine — have you found motive in

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them for your song? We are crusading today, not for the remission of sins, but for the abolition of sinning, of economic and industrial sinning. The Crusade to Christ's sepulchre was paltry compared with the splendor and might of our crusade today towards manhood. There are millions of us afoot. In the stillness of the night have you never listened to the trampling of our feet and been caught up by the glory and romance of it? . . . Our captains sit in council, our heroes take the field, our fighting men are buckling their harness, our martyrs have already died, and you are blind to it all!"
