



VIEWS and REVIEWS

by

Gil Green

(National Secretary, Y.C.L.A.)

Statement of Gil Green of Young Communist League to Senate Committee on Education and Labor for the American Youth Act.

THE organization I represent—the Young Communist League—has given its unreserved endorsement and support to the American Youth Act.

I believe the facts presented to this committee these past two days, have vividly portrayed the plight of America's young and have certainly confirmed the need for immediate emergency measures such as provided for in the proposed bill.

I doubt whether any sober person would care to dispute these facts. I doubt whether any sober person could honestly maintain that these conditions should continue to exist, or that the administration has in any way dealt amply with the problem before it.

But here is the rub. While everyone agrees that something should be done—while everyone is prepared—nay, even anxious to extend their sympathy to the young people of this country—very few indeed are ready to take the necessary action by which to even partially remedy the situation.

SPEAKING for my organization, let me say, I have come here not to solicit sympathy, but to ask for immediate effective action, to urge ratification of the American Youth Act.

What are the arguments of those opposed to the proposed bill? They can be summed up in the following words: the bill asks too much and is thus impractical. I ask the honorable gentlemen of the Senate Committee, is it too much to ask for a chance to work—for a chance to an education? Is it too much to ask society for a chance to do useful creative labor, for a chance to earn a livelihood? Certainly this is the least one can ask and expect from this government or any government, from this society or any society.

This holds doubly true for America. Ours is the wealthiest country on the face of the globe. Its wealth is greater than that of all other nations combined. Its material wealth and natural resources are ample to provide abundantly for all.

And in the face of this, the recognized spokesmen of this nation cry, "there is no money—the budget must be balanced." We have no objection to balancing the budget. But we stand unalterably opposed to balancing it with the bodies and souls, the health and happiness of a generation of youth. If the budget is to be balanced, let it be balanced at the expense of the rich; let the necessary funds be taken from the coffers of the Morgans, duPonts, Rockefellers and Fords. Yes, the government can get funds, if it will only take from those who have them. Instead of sales taxes we call for direct taxation of the rich in order to provide for the poor.

THE Morgan-Chase-National financial combination alone controls an aggregate wealth of some seventy-five billion dollars. Here, gentlemen, are more than sufficient funds for the Youth Act and for all other progressive social legislation. What this country needs is not a "breath-taking-spell," but the application of a slogan put forth by none other than President Roosevelt some time ago, but since discarded: "Soak the Rich!"

But there are those who say this is un-American. Since when has it become American for a few to live in fabulous wealth while the majority live in squalid misery? This interpretation of Americanism will not be tolerated by the young people of this country much longer, even if it may be the brand preached and practiced by Mr. Hearst and the Liberty League.

THE testimony presented to this hearing is a powerful indictment of our present social order. It is also a barometer indicating a surging wave of anger and resentment in the ranks of youth. Among larger numbers of young people there is a growing conviction that our present social and economic order must be replaced by a new order, a Socialist society. That only such a society can fundamentally solve the needs of the people and provide opportunity and security for the youth has already been proven in one land—the Soviet Union.

Thus your action on the American Youth Act has far more significance than may be apparent at this moment. By your deeds so shall you be known. America's youth ask for immediate aid. They ask for the American Youth Act. What will be your answer, honorable gentlemen?