

Why Workers Go to War

By Max Shachtman.

DEAR little comrade! Did you ever notice that when your father or brother comes home from his work in the shop of the field or the mine, he looks tired? Did you notice that he goes to bed as soon as he can because after his day's work he can hardly stand on his feet and he is weary and sleepy?

Now, why is this? We will try to tell you. You see, the workers work so hard that they make so many of the good things of life that they cannot even buy them with the wages they get. If your father works in a factory where silk dresses are made, you never wear any of them. You wear cotton dresses. And so it is with every other thing. The boss does not want to give the workers too much pay because then he would not make enough of profit to satisfy him. And he says, "What is the use of running a business if I cannot make a lot of profit out of it?"

But as we said, so many of the good things are made that after a little while the boss cannot find anyone in his country who has the money to buy his goods. What does he do then? He packs up his goods, puts it on a big steamship, and sends it away to some small island or a big city that has not yet any factories of its own where it can make its own clothes, and houses, and many other things that we have.

When the boss reaches these foreign countries, he unpacks his stock of goods and shows it to the natives. He says to them, "Put on trousers" and "Put on hats, coats, and shirts and shoes." But the natives are very simple people. They do not wear much clothes, because in their part of the world the sun is very hot and it is very comfortable to go without clothes. And they do not wear heavy leather shoes, so that their feet are strong and shapely, while we often have corns and bunions and flat feet. They do not want to live in stuffy brick tenements, either, for they like the pure air, and they love to bathe in their sweet pools.

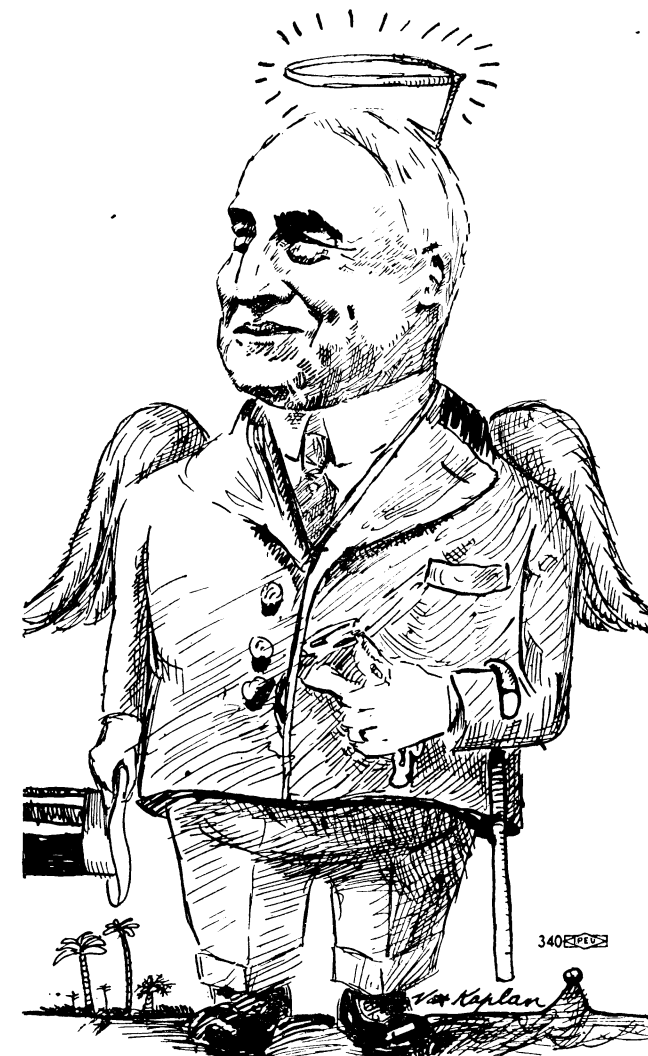
But does the boss care about what these simple people like or do not like? Oh, no! All he cares about is to make money by selling his goods to anyone he can find. But the native refuses to buy the things which he thinks are of no use to him, and when the boss tries to force him to buy it, the natives become angry, and they kick the boss off their land. Wouldn't you do the same if, for example, you lived in a desert and a man tried to sell you a perfectly useless steamship?

But the boss doesn't give a snap about what is right or wrong. He is only anxious to sell the goods which he cannot sell to his own countrymen. So he begins to yell and to howl, and to shout and to squawk about the terrible people who kicked him off their land when he hadn't done a single thing to them. And he calls them "barbarous" and "heathen." In fact, he makes such a fuss about the whole thing, that the government sends a battleship and lots of soldiers down to the land of the natives, and forces them to be good to the boss. Pretty soon a missionary

comes down there and begins to talk to the poor natives about God. He tells them to be calm and peaceful, and that when they are struck on the one cheek to turn the other. You see, he knows that they are going to be hit on the cheek all the time, but he does not want them to do anything about it except to turn the other cheek and get hit there also. And the cheek is not the only place where he is hit, either. He gets it good and plenty.

So they put the poor native into clothes and make him drink whiskey so that he may not feel how he is being made a slave to the boss, and then they send him out into the fields to pick beets, or something like that.

But our country is not the only one that has too much goods made and no place to sell them. There are other countries, and the bosses of all these countries go down



A picture of ex-President Harding in Heaven. The reason he is smiling is that he must have been glad to have been rid of such a rotten country.

to these strange lands and try to get possession of them. The bosses of one country try their best to beat the bosses of the other countries. And when one of them succeeds, the other ones get angry, and they go home and tell the newspapers (which they own), to write about how bad the other countries are. The workers are sometimes very silly, and they believe all that the boss's papers tell them. Pretty soon they also become angry about the other country and they begin to agree with the boss's papers. But the paper does not tell them about the real thing—that fight over the strange land.

When the boss thinks that the workers are fooled enough, he begins to talk about a war. And before the workers know what has happened, they are thrown into a uniform, and they go to the front to shoot down other workers, who really don't know what they are all fighting about. Of course, the boss does not go to the front to fight his own battles. He laughs, and says to himself, "The workers are all fools, and they will fight for me forever."

And when the war is over, and the bosses of each country sign a peace treaty which gives the winner the share of land and money he was looking for, the papers tell the workers what a good bunch of fellows they are. But many of the workers are dead on the battlefield, and their widows and children cry for them in vain, for they can never come back. And many of those who do come back are crippled for life, or else they are wounded and unable to work for a living for themselves and their families. The government does not care about them. They take good care of the bosses and they give them large amounts of money to make them ships and bullets to kill the fathers of little children like you. But when the workers come back from the front, the boss will not even give them back their old jobs, because he has got a cheaper man. And the government does not give them a small bonus for all the things they sacrificed.

Little comrade, do you think that all these things are right? Do you think that your fathers and brothers should give up their lives in order that the boss should make profits? What is more important: The life of a single man, or the dirty dollars of a millionaire?

We, of the Junior Section of the Young Workers League of America, are fighting against this sort of thing. We

want the workers to own what they make, so that there won't be any need of fighting with other workers to own a land thousands of miles from home. We want the worker to be a free human being, who will receive the full fruits of his work, and will be able to keep his wife and children in good clothes, in a nice house, and feed them good healthy, nourishing food—and plenty of it.

Do you think we are right? Then do not waste a moment's time. Join the Junior Section of the Young Workers League of America. There must be a branch in your town or city. If there is not one there already, why it's up to you to organize one. We will send you all the information if you will write to Nat Kaplan. He is the National Junior Director, and his address is at Room 214, 1009 N. State St., Chicago, Ill.

Are you ready? Then let's go!

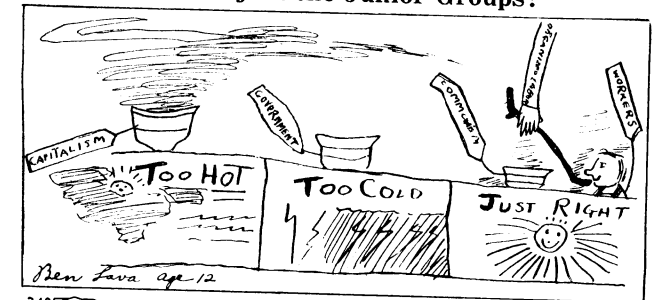
A Short Story

By Ben Lava, Age 12

Every time I walk the streets of Chicago, (which I don't do often as I prefer riding) I think of this.

A small boy without any parents had been selling newspapers and sleeping in a barn and eating only enough to keep him alive. He had been walking in a subway selling papers when a capitalist came up to him and bought a paper. The boy received a cent while two cents was the price. He ran after the man, but did not get more. If they're so rich, why don't they give more, not less?

Be a rebel and join the Junior Groups!



Drawn by Ben Lava

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