

YOUTH LABOR FLOODS METAL -- AUTO SHOPS

Increase of Youth Labor in Michigan Metal and Automobile Factories Shows Up Important Union Work

By MAX SHACHTMAN.

The prevalence of youthful toilers in the metal, machinery and automobile industry of Michigan, can be seen as one of the main reasons for the absence of trade union organization in these notoriously open shop industries, according to a detailed report just made public by able investigators.

The report shows that young workers are replacing the adults, not only in the unskilled crafts, but also in the skilled and even in the highly skilled. Such jobs as assistant chemist, machine molder, core maker, acetylene and electric-arc welder, milling machine operator, internal and external grinder, brake and cable adjuster, gasoline engine erector, inspectors and numerous other jobs that used to be considered the exclusive work of adults with years of training and experience, are now being taken by young workers between the ages of 14 and 21.

Michigan, and especially the city of Detroit, is well known as one of the least organized union localities in the country, the metal trades and automobile industry being particularly weak. Such a once powerful trade union as the International Association of Machinists, for example, is now at but a shadow of its former strength, due to a large extent to the large influx of young workers, who supplant their older brothers.

The young workers are recruited largely from the farms and from among the foreign-born youth and the comparatively higher wages they receive is calculated by the big employers to keep them from organizing for real living wages and better conditions.

The cost of living, however, forces the young workers to seek higher wages and the lack of opportunity drives them from the metal manufacturing slave pens after a short time. Most of the young workers leave the factories after holding the job for an average of two and a half years, because of the lack of chance for advancement, either in position or wages, and because of the long hours, which run higher than 60 hours per week in many cases. The wages are pitifully low when the cost of living and the dangers of the work are considered. The average wage is less than 50 cents an hour and the dangers to life, health and limb are tremendous.

Youths, just out of school, and many of them not even having a public school education, are drawn into the factories without any consideration being given to their future life or education.

Many of them are turned out by the scab nests which are called by the sweet sounding names of "vocational training" or "industrial" schools. In Saginaw there are two high schools (the Saginaw and the Arthur Hill), which give a four-year vocational training for young workers. Lansing, Flint and Bay City have similar institutions. In Detroit, the Cass Technical high school is the preparation school for young workers who are to break down the conditions of work and wages of the workers in general. Of 449 youths in a typical group of the Boys' continuation school of Detroit, 332 were preparing for the metal and automobile industries.

Added to this, is the illegal employment of many of the "minors" in hazardous work. In one year, 13 were killed, 223 lost a limb or part of one, and over 1,200 were involved in accidents which necessitated their absence from work from anywhere between two weeks and a year. These figures are only for the manufacturing industries and do not take into account the young workers in agricultural, mining, quarrying, transportation and other work. Another fact to consider is that these figures are for the year 1918, since which time the percentage of young work-

ers has increased considerably and with it the toll which industry collects from the blood of the slaves who grind out the profits for the bosses.

It is significant that the organized labor movement in Michigan has realized the situation with which they are confronted. This was evidenced by the resolution passed at the last convention of the Michigan State Federation of Labor in Detroit, calling for a campaign to organize the young workers into the trade unions. This was after the initiation of a similar campaign by the Young Workers League of America, which has now entered with more effort and organized force into the drive.

As has been pointed out in the columns of this paper for the last few months, the ever-growing participation of the youth in the industries of this country presents a great menace to the standards and union organizations of the entire working class. The bosses and their organizations see the advantages that will accrue to them if they can supplant, even to a small degree, the older workers with the younger ones. The older workers are more susceptible to a plea for unionization; the younger ones still have the psychology of the capitalists which they have been taught in the schools, the newspapers, the movies and the church. Having been impressed with the alleged viciousness of labor unions, it is necessary to approach them in a somewhat different fashion than the older workers.

The Young Workers League program of a bureau for the education and organization of the young workers into the trade unions would go a long way to solving this perplexing problem. The League is interested in protecting the interests of the working class in general as well as those of the young workers, whose working class expression the League is. The organization of the young workers into the unions would go a long way towards bettering the conditions and increasing the wages of both the young and adult workers.

The youth are being used as scabs in more and more instances. The necessity for educating and organizing them becomes more apparent every day. The report of the conditions in Michigan is another example of this crying need.

It should not be forgotten, however, that the Young Workers League by no means advocates the organization of the young workers into unions which are separate and apart from the already existing organizations of the workers. On the contrary the league is unalterably opposed to such a plan, believing that the interests of the older and younger workers are identical in that they are members of the working class. What the league does maintain, though, is that a different psychology exists among the young workers which makes necessary a different method of approach.

The workers of this country, young and old, must face the problem of the young workers in industry and realize that the only way out of the dilemma is an intensified campaign of organization as outlined in the plan advocated by the Young Workers League of America.

To All Readers of the International of Youth and the Y.C.I. Review

Comrades—

By closing the publishing house of the Young International, General Seeckt, the instrument of Stinnes & Co., had attempted to prevent the publication of our magazine. The regular publication of the leagues with our magazines had, therefore, to be interrupted. The Executive Committee has immediately taken steps to insure their continued publication. The November issue of the "International of Youth" (German edition) and the December issue of the Young Communist International Review (German edition), which were in print at the time of the closing of the publishing house, will appear in a few days. On the 15th of January a double number of the "International of Youth" (December-January, German edition) will be published. From then it will appear regularly.

The publication of the English edition of the "International of Youth," the Young Communist International Review and the Bulletin for Leaders of Children's Groups is guaranteed by printing it outside of Germany.

We are convinced that the readers of our magazines and our membership will answer the attempt of the dictatorship of the white generals with even greater faith in their organs and with an intensified propaganda for them.

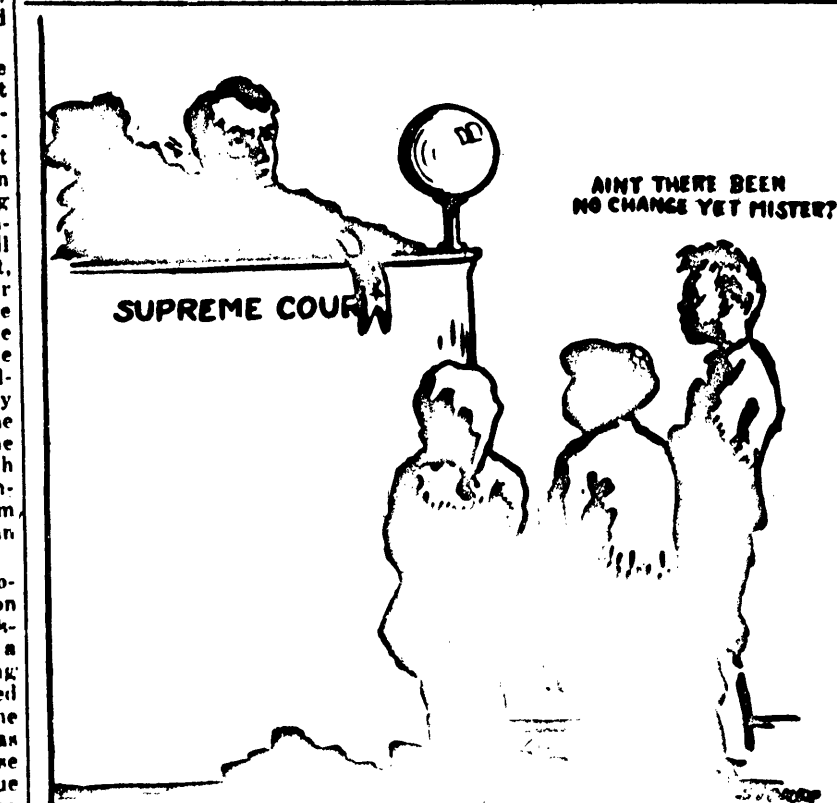
Every Communist wins a new reader—that must be the answer of the young Communist to General Seeckt.

Down with the white dictatorship in Germany!

Long live the international militant organ of the young workers and peasants, the "International of Youth!"

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF
THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL.

Moscow, December, 1923.



Workers! Are You Going to Let Your Children Appeal to Capitalist Courts to Save Them From Children Slavery When This Power Rests in Your Hands?

Youth Get Attention of Workers Party Convention

By MARTIN ABERN.

The third National Convention of the Workers Party gave strong endorsement to the struggle of the Workers Party for the formation of a class-fairer labor party, endorsed the work of the industrial department, laid out a policy for an aggressive campaign for the protection of the foreign-born workers, and formulated a policy for the campaign against the strongly developing militarism of America.

The details of the report on the labor party policy, industrial and other major campaigns of the Party can be read by the comrades in the Daily Worker, now being published. The Young Workers League came in for considerable attention at this convention, and fullest support to the Young Workers League for the future was indicated by the statements of the The young communist movement, as represented by the Young Workers League of America, was recognized as forming a broad basis for the development of the Workers Party in future years.

The League was represented by three delegates, at this convention in Chicago, December 30, 31st, and January 1st: comrades Martin Abern, executive secretary, John Edwards, and John Williamson, members of the Pennsylvania Steel and coal area, and on the Pacific coast. The possibilities for growth are tremendous and the goal has been set for 10,000 members in the Young Workers League in the next year.

The propaganda for, and organization of, a number of shop nuclei or shop units, and the formation of the junior section of the Young Workers League were the biggest achievements of the League in the past six months. In addition, the league has carried on, he reported, extensive work on the economic field; and the league has cooperated closely with

Washington Busy Preparing War Machinery; Sec'y of War Reports Big Growth in American Militarism

By HARRY GANNES.

Every day in Washington, the war department is preparing for the successful mobilization of the young workers of this country in the citizen's military training camps in the summer time. This is but one of the details that is occupying the slaughter bureau which already spends 83 cents out of every dollar collected by taxes by the United States government.

Most astounding, however, is the advance report of the Secretary of War which points out the mushroom growth of the military forces of the United States. The imperialist position of the United States has forced it to give itself for military ventures.

The army and naval forces are growing beyond all previous proportions. The following figures taken from the report for 1924 of the Secretary of War give a vivid picture of the growing military octopus that is being pampered by American capitalists:

"During the past ten years, while the cost of national defense has been doubled, the regular army has increased its actual total strength from 92,035 to 132,814, the national guard from 120,802 to 160,598, the organized reserves from 0 to 78,338, and the total of the army of the United States from 212,000 to 371,770. . . .

In the citizen's military training camps from 0 to 31,000, and the reserve of individuals under training has thus increased from 243,865 to 504,010. From April 15, 1910, to Jan. 1, 1920, the persons in military and naval service stations abroad rose from 55,608 to 117,238."

When it is remembered that three billion dollars are invested already in this country in naval equipment,

together with the vast military development pictured by the war secretary's report, a reliable gauge is offered to the growth of American imperialism.

It seems as tho the pro-militarist bosses are striving hard to mobilize their army of 5,000,000 chiefly from the masses of young workers and students in this country under the age of 25. The attempts of the students to hold peace conferences is not enough as they entirely ignore the economic basis of imperialism. They fail to recognize that imperialism must have an army, and that pacifism is no wall against the tidal wave of militarism which is sweeping this country.

The letter to the third convention of the Workers Party from the Communist International in a mistakable terms points out the danger of war, added to that the report of the secretary of war which reveals the never-ceasing feverish activities carried on by the militarists in the country there is a grave situation that must be faced by the workers of America and especially the youth.

Students Scab On Southern Typo. Union

ASHEVILLE, N. C.—The use of young students from the non-union typesetting school at Macon, Ga., to break the strike of typesetters on the two open shop dailies in Asheville, is another instance of the growing use of young workers in industry and the necessity of American labor adopting a program for the organization of young workers into the trade unions similar to the one proposed by the Young Workers League of America, which is foremost in this campaign.

The typesetters, members of International Typographical Union, Local 263, struck on the two dailies when the owners of the two papers refused to arbitrate a new wage scale with the 35 men involved.

The young scabs were brought in by a firm of rats known as McCone and Flagg, which operates in the name of the notorious Open Shop Publishers' association.

Secretary Visits Ohio League

Martin Abern, secretary of the Young Workers League, is making a tour of the Ohio territory to aid in strengthening some of the newly organized branches in that district. Abern will be in Cleveland on Wednesday, Jan. 20th, to speak at the mass meeting arranged by the young workers in that city in commemoration of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. Before going to Cleveland, the secretary will stop off at Dillonvale, Pa., on Jan. 19, for a meeting with the comrades there; he is also expected to visit Youngstown on Jan. 21, following which Warren, Yorkville and East Liverpool may expect a call.

Negro Editor Is For Organization of All U.S. Young Workers

(Crusader Service.)

CHICAGO.—That the working class negroes of this country are endorsing the stand of The Young Workers League of America in maintaining a united front of white and negro youth in the face of the united exploiters of this country, is evidenced by a letter written to the editor of The Whip, negro paper here, by Ed. Ryan, editor of Ryan's Weekly and negro member of the state legislature of Washington. In his communication Ryan writes:

"My Dear Editor: "I am inspired to write you by reason of a cut appearing in the Defender of December 15, entitled "Erasing Color Prejudice." It has occurred to me that this group of the Young Workers' League would make a fine start toward building a militant political organization.

"For more than thirty years I have been considered radical, and am now, as you may be aware, a member of the Washington legislature, representing the Farmer-Labor group. At present I am serving my second term, having been re-elected in 1922 with an increased majority.

"In my district, there are approximately 10,000 voters, about 140 of which are negroes. In both elections I led my ticket notwithstanding that both of my colleagues on the Farmer-Labor ticket were white men.

"My only reason for detailing this to you is to point out the fact that among the organized working groups there is no race prejudice and the motto of the Young Workers League of Chicago, 'There is but one race, the human race,' is not a mere play on words.

Yours respectfully
J. H. RYAN,
Editor Ryan's Weekly."