

# The Cradle of the Giants

By Max Shachtman

**A** N army of old, white-bearded men marching to battle against troops composed of young, enthusiastic lads, would make a preposterous state of affairs.

A revolutionary movement which has not as its strongest regiment the exploited youth would soon find itself in the predicament of the old soldiers confronted by the virile young troops. It was for this reason that the old lion, Karl Liebknecht, turned to the young socialists for support when he found himself almost alone in the party of Scheidemann and Kautsky. It was for this reason that Lenin used to go on long jaunts with the young comrades during his exile in Switzerland, and talk to them of the revolution that was coming, for which it was necessary to steel one's self with Communist theory and Communist struggle. It is for this reason that Zinoviev was able to report at the last congress of the Communist International that it had "on the whole . . . depended a great deal on the support of the Young Communist International in its national activities."

In the United States, where the cake-eater and flapper are supposed to reign supreme, the American section of the Young Communist International has already established beyond peradventure its important place in the Communist movement of the country.

Some two years ago a group of young revolutionaries gathered in New York to constitute the first national convention of the Young Workers League. Since then, especially after its second convention, the organization has gone through many struggles in its efforts to rally to its standard the youth.

Its task has been and will continue to be a tremendous one. In America the minds of the youth are filled with a greater proportion of capitalist poison per square brain cell than in any other country. From the very day that the child of the worker is old enough to understand the language it is obliged to run the years-long gauntlet of all the prostituted intellects of the capitalist class. It gets a generous portion of safely and sanely perverted history and economics in the public schools; it is treated to a plentiful dose of the antics of Mr. Benjamin Turpin, or the suspiring glances of Miss Gloria Swanson in the moving pictures; and if it manages to retain any regard for the class it is a member of, this regard is usually suppressed by a steady diet of the thrilling adventures of Andy Gump or the latest baseball scores.

It is this deliberate and spontaneous capitalist propaganda, reaching especially the youthful worker, that the Young Workers League is attempting to counteract. It is these young workers whom the League is trying to bring into a class organization, for the struggle against the boss and his rule of misery, unemployment and war. And the Young Workers League is succeeding.

The Young Workers League is not a rival to or a duplicate machinery of the Workers Party. Organizationally independent, it is politically a powerful arm of the Workers Party. The young Communist organization not only participates in all the political and economic campaigns of the Workers Party but carries on campaigns on issues that are of specific interest to the youth.

I recall with what anxiety we awaited the effect of the first drive for the betterment of the conditions of the young workers in the big factory of the Bunte Chocolate company in Chicago. With bundles of their official organ, the *Young Worker*, under their arms, a dozen young comrades stood in front of the gates waiting for the streams of tired young slaves to pour out. In the paper was the "inside" story of the conditions of the workers of that plant, together with the appeal of the Young Workers League to their fellow-workers to unite on the league program, the six-hour day, five-day week for the young workers; equal pay for equal work for young and old; the abolition of the murderous speed-up and piece work system. I also recall that some older comrades had warned us in a final tone that our campaign was useless, that we were wasting our time in the attempt to interest the flappers and cake-eaters in such a proposition. But how eagerly they bought the papers! How furtively they looked around to see if they were being watched while listening to us talk about the Young Workers League.

And when the same type of campaign, with the same demands for the youth, was begun in the plant of the National Biscuit company in Chicago, and the young workers bought over a thousand copies of our paper while the newsboy who was selling the local Hearst rag was obliged to go home with about the same number of papers he had come with, the place of the young Communist movement was assured.

Petty work, you say? Go to! When you know that the bosses of the National Biscuit Company felt it necessary to surround our open air meeting in front of the plant with a half dozen burly "dicks;" when they used "dicks" on the young comrades who were carrying on the campaign in the Pittsburgh plant; when they got their uniformed tools to arrest four young Communists in Minneapolis for attempting to hold a meeting in front of the plant in that city, nabbing them three times in succession—then you realize that revolutionary phrases alone do not hurt the capitalist class, but that the daily work of organizing the workers, young and old, of intensifying class hatred, the struggle for better conditions of work and life, gives flesh and blood to the thing.

When the strike wave broke recently in the Calumet region, the Young Workers League was there on the spot, its members, together with those of the Workers Party and the Trade Union Educational League, addressing strike meetings, filling the men with the enthusiasm that youth alone can impart, aiding in the picketing, and organizing the young strikers. In Hegewisch, a group of a score of young heater boys, the cream of the exploited youth of America, have now found their place in the ranks of the young Communist movement. In Hammond, Indiana, an even larger number have been brought into the league, organized, not on the old social-democratic basis of territory, but into a shop nucleus, agitating for Communism on the job, "fanning the flames of discontent" and directing these flames into an organizational flue.

In southern Illinois, the best organized mining field in America, there is hardly a town of importance where there is not a group of young miners in the Young Workers League, fighting the coal magnates and the agents of the coal mag-

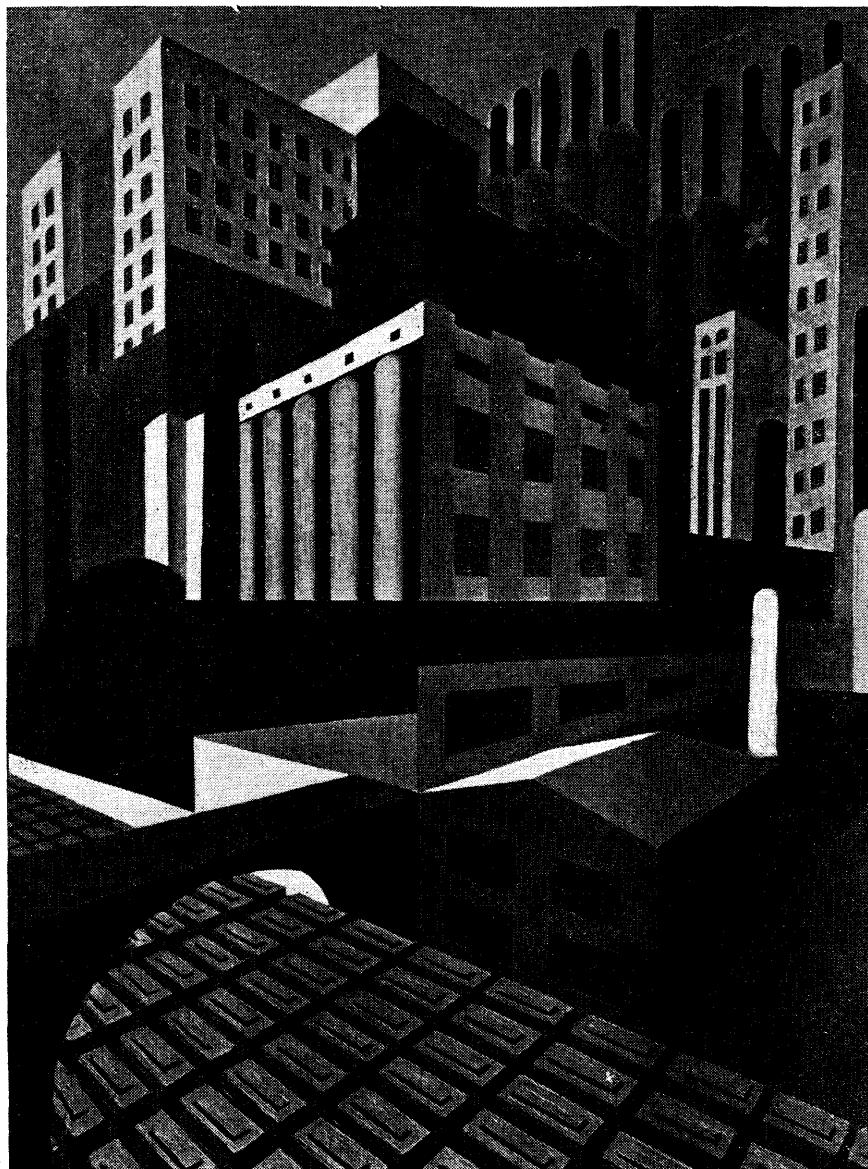
nates, the misleaders of the United Mine Workers of America, John L. Lewis and Frank A. Farrington, in their local unions, in the mines, on the convention floor. And one of the leaders of the Trade Union Educational League remarked, after seeing the Young Workers League members in action on a convention floor: "If we could only get a dozen of these young fellows and give them a few months of intensive training in Chicago, Farrington would soon be looking for another job!"

In the Citizens' Military Training Camps, instruments for the manufacture of efficient cannon fodder for the next imperialist war, members of the Young Workers League could be found, investigating the possibilities for Communist activity within the armed forces of capitalism, carrying out for the first time in this country a part of Communist activity which assumes an ever-growing importance as the struggle

for power among the capitalists becomes sharper and draws the workers into another world holocaust.

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The young workers of this country are a factor of tremendous importance to the revolutionary movement. In a relatively short time they will be the full-grown proletariat of America. Upon whether they are drawn into the camp of reaction or revolution now depends to a large extent on the strength of the Communist party in the coming years. The Young Workers League is exerting all its efforts to assure this strength. Into its ranks are brought the experiences of the struggle to be forged into the mighty weapon for the emancipation of the bitterly oppressed of America. It bears the seed of a powerful Communist party. It is the cradle of the giants.



Cleveland

Louis Lozowick

## Not for Bishops

FATHER who art in heaven, pray  
Price thy daily bread today,

For thy will is done as well,  
There in heaven—here in hell.

Hallowed is thy name—yet all  
Mark that more than sparrows fall. . .

So, until thy kingdom come  
Let that hallowed name be dumb.

We forgave our trespassers,  
And they made their trespass worse:

Tempt us not to bear again  
Evil undelivered, then.

Being not like lilies made  
Nor like Solomon arrayed

Suffer us if we despoil  
These that neither spin nor toil.

Here, upon the twice-struck cheek,  
Read the blessing of the meek—

If we still refuse to see,  
Dare we lay the blame to thee?

If we now in judgment stand,  
Guide thy somewhat tardy hand,

They that help themselves shall find  
Thee benignantly inclined.

Thine the glory be—amen:  
Ours the power, now and then.

Robert L. Wolf.