

History of the International Socialist Youth Movement to 1929



"NO MORE WAR"

History of the International Socialist Youth Movement to 1929



"NO MORE WAR"

HISTORY
of the
INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST
YOUTH MOVEMENT
to 1929

Contents

Editorial Notes	1
Introduction	11

Part I

From Its Origin to 1919	1
-----------------------------------	---

Part II

The Young Communist League (1919-1929)	17
--	----

Appendix I

Call for The First International Youth Day	29
--	----

Appendix II

From: "The Youth International" by V.I.Lenin	31
--	----

Prepared by
Shirley Waller

Edited by
Tim Wohlforth

Young Socialist Forum Educational Bulletin Number 3

Published for
"The Young Socialist"
A monthly newspaper

P.O.Box 471, Cooper Station
New York 3, New York

EDITORIAL NOTE

The bulk of the material published in this bulletin first appeared as two bulletins prepared by Shirley Waller and published by the Provisional National Committee for a Socialist Youth League circa 1946. The bulletins were allowed to go out of print and were never reissued as the general drift of that organization and its parent affiliate, the Workers Party (later called the Independent Socialist League), was further and further to the right. The publication of this material would have shown only too graphically the distance the groups had traveled from their original principles.

Added to the original material is a new introduction and summary sections at the end of Part I and Part II all written by Tim Wohlforth. Also added is a short excerpt from Lenin's article "Youth International" which states clearly his views on the independence of the youth. In order to make these additions certain supplementary material which appeared in the Waller pamphlets originally has been omitted.

Work has already begun on a second educational bulletin to bring the history of the socialist youth movement up to date.

COVER — "Nie Wieder Krieg" (No More War) by Kathe Kollwitz.

Kathe Kollwitz was a sympathizer of the Young Spartacus League, a revolutionary Socialist Youth organization in Germany in the 1920's.

This poster was done for Middle German Youth Day, Leipzig, August 2-4, 1924.

INTRODUCTION

The 20th century world was most aptly described by Lenin as the "Epoch of Wars and Revolutions." We have seen that the First World War, Wilson's "war to end all wars," was followed after only a brief tranquil period by the Second World War. The Second World War was brought ominously to an end when the United States dropped atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ushering in the atomic era.

Hardly a year after the end of the Second World War the Cold War began, bringing the world time and time again to the "brink of war" and occasionally going over the brink as in Korea. The advent of nuclear weapons has transformed peace from a laudatory sentiment to a necessity if man is to survive at all. The question of "What Road to Peace?" is therefore the most burning question of our time and all thinking people should attempt to arrive at an answer to it.

The early history of the international socialist youth movement has great relevancy to this current problem. For the Young Socialist International was formed in the time of the first great imperialist war and devoted most of its energies to the development of an anti-war program. Its adherents utilized the Marxist method to discover the roots of modern war in the capitalist system itself. They then worked out a concrete program of struggle against war whose ultimate objective was the transformation of the social and economic system which engendered war into a socialist system based on mutual cooperation among people and nations.

They did not succeed in preventing the First World War because of the treachery of their elders who controlled the social democratic parties. But their method of struggle against war was vindicated positively in the triumph of the Russian Revolution and negatively in that World War II was made possible by the desertion of these principles by the mass Socialist and Communist parties.

The Young Socialist is publishing this pamphlet, first with the hope that a new account of the origins and early history of the international socialist youth movement will contribute to a re-evaluation of the socialist methods of struggle against war. Such a re-evaluation can lead to a theoretical rearming of the socialist youth movement for the all-important task of averting a third world war.

Secondly, we hope that this publication will fill an important gap in the education of young socialists in all lands. For some time now there has been unavailable in English any account of the early history of the international socialist youth movement. This has led to a situation where many of those active in building socialist youth organizations in English speaking countries are but dimly aware of the historic roots and traditions of their movement.

1. The Role of Karl Liebknecht

The personality of one individual, Karl Liebknecht, dominated the early years of the Socialist Youth International. Liebknecht was responsible, more

than any other individual, for the formation of independent youth organizations in the period from 1900 to 1914 and for directing the energies of these organizations against the war drive of the imperialist nations.

Karl Liebknecht was born in 1871 while his father, Wilhelm Liebknecht, one of the founders of the First International, was in jail for his socialist activities. After training as a lawyer he entered active socialist politics at an early age. He soon found that the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) was evolving slowly and ponderously away from the Marxian precepts on which it had been founded. He was forced to struggle time and time again against the bureaucratic leadership of the Party which continued to give lip service to Marxism while it sidestepped anything which brought it into head-on struggle with the capitalist class and its powerful state.

Liebknecht noted with increasing anxiety the preparations of the great imperialist nations for another war. He watched the stockpiling of weapons in one country after another, the increase of patriotic propaganda and the development of large military organizations. He felt that if this trend were allowed to continue, not only would the world be faced with another bloody war, but the capitalists would be able to use patriotism and militarism in order to prevent a socialist revolution.

Liebknecht realized that the struggle against war and militarism was basically a struggle between the capitalists and the working class over the minds of the youth. Further, and this was his greatest contribution to the socialist movement, he recognized that in order to combat bourgeois influences over the youth, it was necessary to organize independent youth organizations. One could not simply urge the youth to vote for the Party and join it. One must allow the socialist youth to form their own organizations which they would run for themselves.

Within these independent organizations the youth could learn through experience to be real socialist revolutionaries and would graduate into the ranks of the party. Further, they could reach out more easily than the party itself to other young people and win them over to socialist ideas. It was necessary for the party to work with and give support to these youth organizations, but not to dominate them.

In 1904 he proposed to the SPD convention that the Party launch a campaign against militarism among the youth. He was turned down. In 1906, in the aftermath of the 1905 Revolution in Russia which had a radicalizing effect on the European social democracy, the party favored on paper the development of an independent youth movement. It was during this period that Liebknecht was instrumental in launching the South German youth organization. However by 1908, while Liebknecht was in jail for writing his famous pamphlet "Militarism and Anti-Militarism," the SPD gave up the concept of an independent youth movement and a struggle against militarism. Liegen, head of the trade union movement, characterized the youth movement as "a mistaken undertaking."

However Liebknecht's influence could not be suppressed. It was the South German youth whom he had helped organize, that issued the call for the International Conference at Stuttgart in 1907 which actually founded the International Union of Socialist Youth.

2. Militarism and Anti-Militarism

A history of the International Socialist Youth Movement is incomplete without some mention of Karl Liebknecht's one great piece of writing -- the pamphlet "Militarism and Anti-Militarism." This pamphlet had a profound influence on contemporary young socialists when it was first published. In many ways it contributed ideologically to preparing young revolutionists for the transition which was to come from the traitorous Second International to the new Communist International. Further, as a sociological treatment of what C. Wright Mills calls the Military Establishment, it belongs with the great Marxist classics.

First and foremost, Liebknecht states, militarism is designed to be used "against the enemy abroad." The army is utilized to protect the investments of the capitalists in various colonial lands, and to protect the interests of the capitalist class of one nation when conflicts arise with the capitalist class of another nation. In this process the working people who make up the army are pitted against their fellow workers in other lands and against the colonial peoples. All this is done "under the cloak of spreading Christianity and civilization or of defending the national honour." We may add that today the overthrowing of the Arbenz government in Guatemala or Mossedegh in Iran or sending troops into Lebanon is done under the additional cloak of fighting the "Communist menace."

The army is also used domestically. The capitalist takes a section of the working class, separates them from their fellow workers and trains and disciplines them to the point where he can utilize them to police their fellow workers in the interests of the capitalists. Thus the army has been used time and time again to break strikes and shoot down workers. America has probably seen more of this, from the Pullman Strike down to the use of the National Guard in Harlan County, Kentucky this year, than most European countries.

In order to utilize the working class as an armed prop to the capitalist system both at home and abroad the capitalists must "educate" the soldier so as to nullify his critical capacities of thought and counteract his consciousness of his own interests. In order to do this the soldier is first removed from his home environment and placed in an isolation ward -- the barracks. This frees him from the direct influence of his family and fellow workers. Then he is dressed in a uniform designed to set him apart and to flatter him. In order to instill the instant obedience of the soldier the army uses both the "whip" to frighten him into obedience and the "carrot" in the form of ranks, medals, etc.

On top of all this the expense of keeping a standing army is pawned off as much as possible upon none other than the working class, through taxes. Liebknecht sums up the whole absurd situation as follows:

"The Capitalist classes, like the ruling classes of other social systems, make use of their coercive domination based upon the exploitation of the proletariat for the following purpose: the oppressed and exploited classes are not only compelled to make their own chains, but even to pay for them as far as possible. It does not suffice that the sons of the people are turned into the torturers of the people, but even the pay of these torturers is, as much as possible, wrung from the sweat and blood of the people."

For all these reasons, which are as true today as they were in Liebknecht's day and in some ways more so, militarism is deadly dangerous to the working class. It is not a hopeless battle, however. The capitalists have generally found the army to be unreliable when used against workers during strikes. In the United States it was necessary time and time again to use troops from another region in the suppression of strikes. If socialists actively propagandized the army, they could have considerable influence in combating military indoctrination.

For this reason Liebknecht paid special attention to the work of young socialist groups in reaching conscripts and youth about to be conscripted with anti-militarist propaganda. In fact the last sentence of his book states provocatively: "He who has the youth has the army." (emphasis in original).

3. Liebknecht and Communism

Liebknecht again came into prominence during World War I. On Dec. 2, 1914, he alone in the German parliament voted against the issuance of war credits. From that moment on Liebknecht led a struggle which led to a split from the SPD and finally to the organization of the Spartacus Bund which in solidarity with Lenin led the struggle of the working class to end the war through workers' power. Lenin, in this period, was fond of characterizing his own methods of struggle against war as distinct from the right wing or the centrists by referring to "Liebknecht's Way".

During the course of the Spartacus uprising, Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg were murdered with the help of the social democrats, Noske, Schiedman and Ebert. The Young Communist International was organized around the principles that Karl Liebknecht had fought for.

4. Liebknecht's Tradition

Today many youth remain adherents of the older Second International parties. This is especially true in Western Europe. These young people have failed to learn the lessons that the pioneers of the socialist youth movement learned back in 1914. But an even greater tragedy beset the vital new Communist International. While it was still barely coming into its own, assimilating the lessons of the October Revolution and learning how to apply these to the unique situation each individual section faced, the isolation of the USSR had its effect in the growth of a conservative bureaucratic stratum. This stratum soon reached out and destroyed the revolutionary kernel in the International transforming it into a mere subsidiary function of its foreign office.

Today there is no Communist International and no Young Communist International. The "Communist" youth, like their adult parties, substitute hopes for a deal with American imperialism for the socialist class struggle road to peace. They, too, have turned away from the traditions of the founders of the international socialist youth movement.

The Young Socialist in the U.S. and revolutionary socialist youth in other countries throughout the world are the inheritors of the traditions of the founders of the international socialist youth movement. We base ourselves

on the concept that the struggle for peace is a struggle against capitalism. Lasting peace cannot be achieved through a deal between heads of governments; it can come only from the establishment of workers' states in the advanced capitalist countries.

For many years revolutionary youth of all countries celebrated "L Day" -- a day of tribute to Lenin, Liebknecht and Luxemburg. It is to Liebknecht's memory that we dedicate this history as well as our present struggle for socialism.

--Tim Wohlforth, editor Young Socialist

PART I FROM ITS ORIGIN TO 1919

A. IMPETUS

In early capitalist and precapitalist society, the youth played a negligible role which was for the most part confined to the guilds. The increasingly important role of the youth reached its height with the development of the imperialist stage of capitalism which provided a broader economic base for increasing the economic role of the young worker and thereby increasing manifold the role played by the youth in the class struggle. While in the national revolutions of Europe from the beginning of the 19th Century upwards, the youth in large numbers played a significant role, its real participation in class events as an organized force was postponed until the close of the century and the opening of the twentieth.

The growth of invention and industry brought with it structural changes in the economic order, simultaneously changing the role of youth in society. The factory system created entirely new conditions; youth entered industry in vast numbers. With this occurrence came the diminution in importance of the apprentice character of youth labor, and its final liquidation as a decisive problem.

Despite the wrong attitude of the Social Democratic Parties towards the youth, the very existence of an international organization of the working class proved an important influence in the organization of the youth.

1. Anti-Militarism

A number of early youth movements found an impetus for their development on the basis of anti-militarist activity. This was true of the following:

Jeunes Gardes (Young Guards) of Belgium . . . . .	.1886
Holland Socialist Youth . . . . .	.1885
Socialist Youth League of Sweden . . . . .	.1895
Socialist Youth of Switzerland . . . . .	.1900
Italian Socialist Youth Federation . . . . .	.1901
Social Democratic Youth League of Norway . . . . .	.1902

2. Organizations of Economic Struggle

The exceptional conditions of exploitation was the impetus for the formation of the following youth organizations:

Young Workers League of Austria . . . . .	.1894
Federation of Free Youth Leagues of Northern Germany . . . . .	.1904

3. Education

The growing need to educate youth for socialism resulted in the formation of the following groups:

Socialist Youth of Spain . . . . .	.1903
Young Workers Leagues of South Germany . . . . .	.1904

Youth organizations were then organized in Hungary and Denmark (1905), Finland (1906) and the United States (1907).

B. PARTY - YOUTH RELATIONS

The youth organizations came into being as a result of the initiative of the youth themselves, aided by the support of the revolutionary elements of the Social Democracy. They received the bulk of their support from the left-wing, while officially the parties remained either passive or in direct opposition to the youth organizations and their activities.

The role and activities of the youth organizations were becoming a point of dispute in the Second International which rose in sharp form at its Stuttgart conference and the post-Stuttgart period. This struggle was not solved until the formation of the Communist International. As on all questions of a fundamental character, so on the question of the youth, the struggle between the revolutionary and reformist wings of the Second International was extremely bitter. The left-wing contended that the youth organizations must essentially be organizations of struggle in the general field of politics and especially in the sphere of anti-militarist work, not neglecting, of course, the economic struggles of the young workers. The reformist wing tried to limit the activity of the youth organization around the rights of apprentices, economic struggles under the immediate supervision and direction of the Social Democratic trade unions, and to concentrate upon general education and cultural work. The reformists wished to relegate the youth to the background, and thus liquidate the whole problem.

It becomes quite clear then why the Austrian and North German organization mirrored the reformist social-democracy and were vastly different than the militant youth organizations elsewhere. Many factors acted in favor, however, of the left wing forces in the youth movement. It was less weighted down by the parliamentary actions and tradition of the Social Democracy, was more receptive to the theories of Marxism, and hence, was more militant.

The left-wing forces in the Parties were the first to recognize the role of the youth in the class struggle and immediately wished to lend it support and help it in its work. Among the first was Karl Liebknecht. The issue of militarism was the first ever which he raised his voice. At the international congresses of the Social Democracy in Paris, 1890 and Amsterdam, 1904 the questions were raised from the point of view of adult aid to the youth and for the construction of an international youth organization. Such decisions were adopted through the insistence of Karl Liebknecht, but they were only paper decisions and made only for the record. The Social-Democracy except for the left wing, really didn't intend to carry them out.

C. THE YOUNG GUARD -- A MODEL

The activities of the Belgian Young Guard, by far the most important organization at this stage, stands out during this period. A good many of its activities remain as models for the present day organizations. The Young Guards was founded in 1886 during an acute industrial crisis. The strike wave affecting particularly the miners was met with the intervention of the strike breaking army and the shooting down of strikers. In the face of this class struggle background, the youth organization became almost entirely anti-militarist.

The Young Guard issued two papers "Le Conscript" (The Recruit) and "Le Caserne" (The Barrack), in the French and Flemish languages. By 1907, the papers had a circulation of 100,000 copies.

In 1889 a national federation was formed. The movement now held regular anti-militarist demonstrations followed by mass meetings. Protracted activity at the barracks and among the recruits, with astounding results, led to the attempts at suppression by the government. In 1911, Lenin referred to the Belgian youth organization as an example and model for anti-militarist activity.

The activity of the Belgian organization and the splendid traditions associated with it, had a sharp influence upon the other youth organizations. The Italian youth in particular, approximated the activities of the Belgian organization and was destined to play a most important role in later years. The French youth likewise embarked on a course of anti-militarist activity. With the threat of war between Norway and Sweden in 1903, the Swedish youth adopted an anti-war resolution and entered this field of work also.

D. THE STUTTGART CONFERENCE

For some time now, there existed a number of individual national youth organizations without international connections or form. Such a condition could not last long. The international character of the class struggle made it imperative to construct an international organization of the youth as well as of the Party.

The Union of Youth Workers of South Germany, at its congress in Sept. 30, 1906 went on record in favor of an international youth organization. From this decision a provisional international committee composed of Karl Liebknecht (Germany) and DeMan (Belgium) was established. This committee was the organizer of the Stuttgart Conference, the first international youth gathering, held on August 24-26, 1907 immediately following the congress of the Social Democracy at Stuttgart, Germany.

1. Formation of An International Youth Organization

Following the opening report of DeMan, the conference decided to establish an international youth organization and named it "The International Union of Socialist Youth Organizations". The first international bureau whose seat was in Vienna was composed of five members: Liebknecht (Germany), DeMan (Belgium), Winarsky (Austria), Moller (Sweden), and Roland-Holst (Holland). DeMan was elected international secretary, but in the early part of 1908 he was replaced by Robert Dannenberg, a follower of the reformist Austrian organization. The name of the international was soon shortened to "Socialist Youth International".

2. Resolution on War

The conference was divided on the major issues into revolutionary and reformist wings, with the former predominating. While at the Social Democratic Congress the revolutionary resolution on the war was more or less a concession to the left-wing on the part of the growing centrist tendency, in the youth movement the reformist influences were in a distinct minority.

The resolution of the Party Congress proposed by Lenin, Luxemburg, and Martov gave the lead to the youth conference. The resolution is very clear

in expressing the idea of a struggle against war through revolutionary activity; and if failing in this, prevention of war, to utilise such methods that would turn the imperialist war into a civil war resulting in the destruction of capitalism. The leader in the fight for this viewpoint at the youth conference was Karl Liebknecht. He made the report on "The Struggle Against Militarism". On the basis of the report he wrote "Militarism and Anti-Militarism". The report which was intended for public consumption had to be compiled in a careful manner, for already the indictment of Liebknecht for high treason had begun. (Hence the conference was closed to outsiders).

3. Resolution on Education

The second main question around the discussion of "Socialist Education and Cultural Work", was reported on by Roland-Holst. On this issue also there was expressed in sharp form the differences between the revolutionary and reformist elements. The conference correctly decided that socialist education could not be non-political or divorced from the class struggle itself. General education, separate and apart from the class struggle was the point advocated by the reformist elements of the Social Democracy who tried to prevent the youth from an active participation in the class struggle. Since there were many legal restrictions on the German Party, they wished to permit the youth to act according to the laws of the land but opposed their extra-legal work. The conference, nevertheless, adopted a line of struggle: (a) against militarism; (b) against alcoholism; (c) and the economic struggle.

While in essence adopting a correct position, the conference, seemingly as a concession to the right-wing, pitted the relation between education and activity by stating that the education of the youth should predominate over participation in the class struggle. This false conception of theory and practice was finally corrected by the Young Communist International and in the day to day life of the Socialist Youth International.

4. Economic Position of Youth

The final point of the conference, the "Economic Position of the Apprentices and the Young Workers" was reported on by Alpari. The report went beyond the reformist conceptions of Dannenberg and the Austrian organization, i.e. of protest commissions with the aim of reform pure and simple. Alpari stressed the need of the main concentration upon large scale industries. Up until that time only the Austrian, Hungarian, North German and sections of the South German organizations had concerned themselves with this field of work. Alpari also favored the establishment of "defense commission" for the apprentices, whose task it would be to watch against excesses in exploitation of the apprentices.

On the whole, the Stuttgart Conference adopted a good program of struggle, in spite of the efforts of the Social Democracy to prevent this. In view of the entire situation, there was a great deal of unclarity at the conference. Still the main line was a revolutionary Marxian approach to problems. The major aim of the conference was the struggle against war and militarism in the spirit of Liebknecht and in line with the proposals of Lenin and Luxemburg, as adopted at the Social Democratic Congress held also at Stuttgart.

* Because of this he was sentenced to prison for one and a half years.

E. THE WAVE OF REFORMISM AND THE YOUTH

The upward growth of imperialism brought with it a corresponding growth of the right-wing elements; it created a world aristocracy of labor in the ranks of the workers movement. The defeat of the Russian Revolution in 1905 was also an important factor in the ensuing ebb of the youth movement. Reformist leaderships dominated most of the Parties of the Second International. The "History of the Y.C.I." describes this period, "Alas! The declarations of the Stuttgart Congress were not carried out. From 1907 on, first in Germany and then in the majority of European countries, Social Democratic parties and trade unions who had no relations with the organizations of the union of youth, and in many cases (Austria and Switzerland) had persecuted them -- suddenly developed a strong affection towards 'inexperienced youth' and resolved to direct them on the 'right road'. First Schultz, and after him other apostles of opportunism, frightened by the revolutionary spirit of the independent organization proclaimed a liberal 'pedagogical' principle: 'The youth must not mix in politics'. Then in the interests of Social Democracy, Anarchism was discovered among the youth and as a result a theoretical transformation of the young proletarians into helpless children was formulated, the idea of dissolving the Independent Unions of Youth and setting up Committees of Youth, composed of representatives of parties and trade unions."

This reformist attitude was accompanied by governmental repressions universally, but mainly in Germany. In 1907, the German government issued a decree which forbade youth from belonging to political organizations or from attending political meetings. This decree was enforced by the government with the aid of bayonets, whips and prison. Liebknecht was already sentenced. Various youth sections answered these repressions by intensifying their activity.

Added to this, the reformist wing of the German Social Democracy began to take action against the youth organizations which had until then functioned autonomously. In 1908, at the Hamburg Conference of the Trade Unions, Legien declared in the name of the social democratic trade unions that a separate youth organization was a "mistaken (false) undertaking." In spite of the protests of the youth, the German Party at its congress in September 1908 at Nuremberg proceeded to liquidate the North German, South German and local youth organizations. In its place, it instituted commissions of party district committees to carry forth agitation and education for the youth. In spite of the struggle of Liebknecht's group, they could not prevent the carrying through of these decisions. On January 1, 1909, the Party's Central Committee of the Working Youth of Germany issued a paper "The Working Youth" in place of the militant "Young Guard". The head of the committee was none other than Fritz Ebert, the first President of the German Republic.

The activity of the youth organizations, now completely dominated by the Party and trade unions became colorless units of a petty-bourgeois character. Education was the chief feature of these groups, but this education was non-political. The groups played games, held social gatherings, etc. In Austria a similar development took place. While the youth maintained their separate existence here, it was nothing less than a formal organization indulging purely in sports and play.

Holland saw the same occurrence enacted as that begun in Germany. In 1910, a split occurred between the revolutionary and reformist elements. The reformists established an organization similar to that of the German, called "The Central Committee of the Working Youth of Holland." In France too, the youth were placed under the direct control of the Party. Soon this process was followed in Bohemia, Rumania, Bulgaria, Finland, Denmark and America.

This development naturally did not take place everywhere with such ease and thoroughness. The youth organizations of Italy, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland, successfully resisted the effort to destroy their organizations. The Italian youth movement, in particular, played a leading role in this struggle against reformism and for the continuation of a revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

The Italian organization enjoyed a period of tremendous growth, activity and education. Foremost in its activity was anti-militarist work in which respect it mirrored the Belgian Young Guards. Through propagandizing the soldiers via its illegal army groups and its press, the movement came into conflict with the opportunist Party leadership. Following the struggle against the imperialist venture of Italy in Tripoli, the youth organization came into open struggle with the Party regime. In 1909, the Central Committee of the youth adopted a resolution against the Party regime for its opportunism and reasserted its revolutionary position on the question of war and militarism. In this resolution a call was raised for a second international youth conference and proposed that this conference institute a practical program for international action against war. As the struggle ensued, the Party in 1912 led by the reformist wing proposed liquidation of the youth movement in the manner of the German Social-Democracy. This proposal brought matters to a head and in this struggle the opportunist leadership lost control of the Party to the left wing.

The Swedish and Norwegian youth organizations were extremely active in the Party in the struggle against opportunism; thereby it played a leading role in the Party itself. Following the general strike of 1908, the cleavage between the youth and the Party sharpened, so that the left wing issued their own paper, "Stormklocken". Here, the fight in the Swedish organization was such that workers beyond the age of "youth" entered the youth organization where they could combine with the militants. In time, the relations between the Party and youth improved. It was agreed that the older comrades would re-enter the Party and in turn the Party would lend active support to the youth. At the 1912 Congress, the Swedish youth participated more actively in the inner Party questions with the aim of bolstering the left wing forces.

F. COPENHAGEN CONFERENCE

The reformist elements did not wholly succeed in their aim of capturing the youth organizations. The decisions of Stuttgart were full of meaning to the Italian, Swiss, Norwegian youth and to the Left Socialist Youth of Holland, as well as the left opposition of Germany. They kept aloft the banner of internationalism during the great betrayal. However, the international Bureau was inactive due to the leadership of Dannenburg who succumbed to the right wing. Nevertheless, the left groups called for a new international conference.

The second international conference of the youth, held in Copenhagen, September 1910, was represented by 32 delegates plus many visitors. Liebknecht reported on the question of anti-militarist work which was followed by the adoption of a resolution along the lines laid down at Stuttgart. A most important question on the relations between the youth and the Party was introduced with Dannenberg favoring the subordination of the youth to the reformist Party leadership. Nothing was done about this matter; Dannenberg remained head of the Bureau.

G. BASLE CONFERENCE

The outbreak of the Balkan War in 1912, acutely raised the danger of a world conflict. This circumstance brought about the conference of the Social Democratic International which adopted a series of actions against war, only to cast it aside two years later for the most rabid chauvinism. At the time they held their conference, the youth also convened at Basle, on Nov. 25th.

Under the leadership of Dannenberg, they proceeded to take measures that meant the liquidation of the youth international. Against Dannenberg's concepts, the Italian youth proposed a strengthening of the movement, the creation of a genuine international program and a functioning and disciplined Bureau. While the struggle really unfolded after the conference, the outbreak of the war only made clearer the deep divisions existing in the workers movement.

H. THE WORLD WAR AND THE GROWTH OF THE OPPOSITION

The war brought about a "crisis in opportunism". This tendency in the Socialist International was prepared long before the great betrayal of 1914, but the war gave impetus and open expression to this course. Under the influence of the Parties, a nationalist sentiment existed in some of the youth movements. Hundreds of youth functionaries joined the army and carried on an agitation for war. While the Social Democracy supported the war, the socialist leaders in France and Belgium entered their respective bourgeois governments.

The German youth paper "Die Arbeiter-Jugend" took an unsocialist war-mongering position. When the well-known former leader of the South German Young Guard, Ludwig Frank volunteered for military service at the outbreak of the war and died on a French battlefield, his voluntary enlistment and death were hailed in "Die Arbeiter-Jugend" as an heroic act and as an example to be followed by the millions of young German workers.

The war marked the end of the international Bureau. It disappeared from the scene, and thus, the proposal of Dannenberg became a reality. He and the Austrian organization adopted Kautsky's formula for the youth organization: "The International is founded for the purpose of peace and not for wartime." Dannenberg proceeded to hang a black-bordered sign on the door of the office of the youth Bureau in Vienna, which read: "Temporarily closed on account of the war."

The Italian organization again played a leading role in calling for another conference. The first international gathering since the war was a meeting of the Italian and Swiss organizations at Lugano, Sept. 1914 which

met at the behest or through the initiative of the Russian Socialists under the leadership of Lenin (they then resided in exile in Switzerland). Lenin regarded the war resolution adopted at this conference, while not clear on the question of internationalism and the revolution, as a revolutionary document, and as representative of a tremendous step forward in the mobilization of the revolutionary current in the workers movement.

The Central Committee of the Swiss youth, headed by Munzenberg addressed the Italian youth on Oct. 10, 1914, inviting them to participate in a gathering at Zurich. A copy of this letter was sent to Dannenberg by Munzenberg, and the former replied "It is practically impossible to say now if the conference in the spring will be possible. At the present time, I cannot do anything about the proposal. Best greetings, Dannenberg." As poor a reply as it was, this post card nevertheless was the first sign of life on the part of the Bureau since the war.

No longer recognizing the Bureau as a decisive force, the youth organizations of Sweden, Norway and Denmark issued a call for a new international conference. The Italian and Danish youth also decided to participate. The "De Zaaier", the left youth of Holland, who had already broken with the reformist wing of the Dutch Party, accepted the call also. The Central Committee of the German youth (Ebert's group) openly condemned the conference as did the French. The Austrian organization opposed holding the conference during the war. Dannenberg, a member of the Austrian executive committee answered in the name of the Secretariat, somewhat differently, exhibiting the name of the dual role he played as a member of the International and of the Austrian executive. Although he said he could not be present at the conference, he wished it success.

The decision of the French Central Committee found opposition in its midst via the Secretary Strago, who resigned from his post and from the C.C. and proceeded to organize the opposition movement in France.

The reply of the German organization was scandalous. It laughed at the aims and phraseology of the call for the conference and warned the militant youth of its "disasterous" actions. They felt that the tasks set forth by the youth were tasks which only the Party had a right to take up and arrive at a solution. The youth must stop meddling.

I. THE BERNE CONFERENCE

1. Background

This period can best be described as a part of the initial clarification of the revolutionary wing of the movement. The left wing was decentralized along side of a Second International dominated by reformism. The leaders of the right wing turned chauvinist: Vaillant, Bessolati, the Trade Union leaders of Great Britain, the Austrian leadership, etc. Former orthodox Marxists like Plechanov also failed to take a revolutionary position on the war. On the other hand the Bolsheviks, the left opposition in Germany (Merhing, Liebknecht, and Luxemburg, & of the Bremen lefts), groups in France, Austria, Sweden and Norway, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Italy remained true to internationalism. In support of them stood the overwhelming majority of the youth.

In this process of clarification, the left elements were not as yet clear as to the differentiation taking place, especially in regard to the centrists (Kautsky, Haase, MacDonald, Hardie, etc.) Many of the anti-war socialists were actually socialist-pacifists who failed to recognize the need of carrying on the class struggle in their home country as a means of turning the war into a civil war. In Switzerland, especially, under the leadership of the centrist Grimm, much confusion existed.

Under such circumstances, the holding of an international conference of the youth had extreme importance, because it would open up all the issues and force a definitive solution of them. Through the entire period, the Bolsheviki endeavored to steer the oppositional movements completely to the left. Berne marked precisely such a step.

2. Work of Conference

Thirteen delegates representing nine countries convened at Berne April 4-6, 1915. The major issue before the conference was "The War and the Attitude of the Social Democratic Parties and Youth Organizations." For the first time in the history of the youth international, the socialist youth came to an independent decision and recorded their views in documentary form. The Bureau with the aid of Grimm and Angelica Balabanova presented the thesis on the war which characterized it as one of banditry and the result of capitalist politics. It sharply condemned the class collaborationist policy of the Social Democracy and pledged itself to the continuation of the class struggle to bring an end to war.

During the third session, the Russian delegation (which walked out of the conference over a dispute over the allotment of votes and returned on the insistence of Lenin) presented Lenin's position on the war. It sharply attacked the chauvinists and centrists, and called for civil war as a solution to the imperialist war. They criticised the left pacifist position of Grimm and Balabanova. Although this resolution was defeated and the resolution that was adopted had many weaknesses, it still signified an essentially progressive step in comparison to previously adopted resolutions by the youth movement.

The Berne Conference elected a new Bureau with Willi Munzenburg* as international Secretary.

The new Bureau which was formed at Berne published the "Youth International". This famous paper often contained articles written by some of the most prominent Bolsheviki leaders in the international labor movement. The Bureau also participated at the Zimmerwald Conference, a gathering of the internationalists in the Parties who were also undergoing a period of clarification.

* Munzenburg first entered the Socialist Youth Movement in Germany in 1906 as a young factory worker. He later transferred his activity to Switzerland. The outbreak of the war found him one of the leading members of the Swiss socialist movement. He later became one of the leaders of the German Communist Party.

Two very important decisions were made at Berne. One was the establishment of International Youth Day*. This was a call to the workers and youth in all countries to cast aside their artificially created hatred of their class brothers and to substitute in its place the struggle against the capitalist system and imperialist wars. The call was answered by revolutionists in all countries who on Oct. 3, 1915, demonstrated in the streets against capitalist oppression. The Y.P.S.L. in the United States marched down the streets of New York City on this day in 1915. The I.Y.D. has become a part of the tradition of the youth movement.

The second important decision was the breaking off of relations with the Vienna Bureau and Dammberg. In its place a new committee and new international organization was formed, destined to become the forerunner of the Young Communist International. The conference also decided to organize a Liebknecht fund to be used for anti-militarist work. They also issued a declaration of sympathy for the five arrested Bolsheviks and for Rosa Luxemburg and raised funds for the class war prisoners.

A period of intensive organization followed the Berne conference. This was the war period in which the international Bureau sought to put into practice the decisions of Berne, and hence marked great strides towards the formation of the Young Communist International; this period led to the clarification of the most disputed and misunderstood fundamental problems at a time when the Parties betrayed the working class of the world.

J. POST BERNE PERIOD

The decisions at Berne found wide response in the ranks of the revolutionary youth. In many places, leaflets were distributed and meetings held on the decisions of the Berne conference. In those organizations not present at Berne, discussions on the proposals were heatedly thrashed out in the ranks.

By the end of the war practically all the youth organizations were supporters of the new international bureau with the exceptions of the Berlin Committee, the Holland, the reformist Central Committee of the French League. However, both in France and Germany strong left wings developed.

The youth organizations still contained strong centrist tendencies. In reality the Berne resolution stood on a left-centrist plane. It was because they did not completely break with centrism, that the Bolsheviks were so severely critical of the resolutions. The entire movement was faced with questions of reformism, centrism or socialist pacifist positions, and revolutionary positions on war. Already the questions of whether or not to regenerate the Second International or build the Third was debated.

In the fall of 1916 the Swedish youth came out openly in favor of the Zimmerwald-left, the internationalists in the war. At the Kienthal Conference, (1916), a continuation of the Zimmerwald gathering of the Parties,

* See Appendix I for the call issued at Berne for the first International Youth Day demonstration.

the youth demonstrated their solidarity with the ideas of Bolshevism. At the celebration of the second International Youth Day, the new tendency in the youth organizations was demonstrated when the main fire of the demonstrations were directed against the social-patriots.

The youth moved faster and faster to the left. The Swiss organization allied itself with the Bolsheviks and its leading spirits and took the lead in winning the youth organizations to Bolshevism. They were the first to declare their support of the Russian Revolution.

In the meanwhile, as a direct result of the war, class struggle intensified on a world scale. The revolution in Russia became a symbol and inspiration to the class struggle everywhere. In January 1918, mass strikes broke out in Austria and Germany. In Hungary the revolution commenced. In the midst of the revolutionary struggles of the workers, came a series of repression against the workers movements by the capitalist governments all over Europe. In November, 1917, Willi Munzenberg was arrested.

K. THE VANGUARD ROLE OF THE YOUTH

While in the imperialist war of 1914-1918 practically all the Social Democratic Parties went over to the side of the bourgeoisie, most of the proletarian youth organizations and the youth international remained true to the principles of revolutionary class struggle. The banner of revolution, disgraced and betrayed by the parties of the Second International, was held aloft again by the proletarian youth.

By the very nature of the situation, the youth international played a vanguard role. There were in most places no revolutionary parties; those that did exist sold out on the working class. The youth organizations were converted into young parties which attempted to lead the entire working class. Particular youth problems became secondary to the main burning problems confronting the working class as a whole. The youth organizations conducted independent struggles against the imperialist war, against the bourgeoisie and against the social-democrats. Thus, to a large extent, they paved the ground for the formation of revolutionary working class parties. This vanguard role, i.e. the leadership of the working class, existed as far along as 1919. Even in the early stages of the communist movement the youth groups were acting like young parties. It was not until the first and second congresses of the Young Communist International that the question was treated to a long and serious discussion. At that time a solution was arrived at: the recognition of the Party as the leader of the entire working class, the Youth as the leader of the toiling youth.

L. TOWARD THE ORGANIZATION OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

It is necessary to examine several of the other youth organizations in this period as the militant youth moved towards the formation of the Young Communist International.

1. Hungary

Prior to and during the war, the Hungarian youth organization was attached to the Social Democratic Party. A change began to take place in the

beginning of 1918. Supporters of Zimmerwald began a wide agitation for adherents; sharp conflict against war rose. This was the era of great strikes and revolutionary battles. The revolution broke out on Oct. 31, 1918. On the 13th of Nov., 1918 the youth held its third congress at which, although still affiliated to the Social Democratic Party, it solidarized itself with the Spartacus League and the Russian Bolsheviks and called for a struggle against its own party. They were driven inexorably toward a split with the Party and finally declared themselves an independent youth organization. This was purely transitional since most already stood on the platform of communism. The Social Democracy also had its own youth organization composed of those who did not split. Still, this new youth group issued a paper "Young Proletarian" and engaged in such tremendous activity that by the end of March, 1919 it had 19,500 members.

2. The United States

In 1907 young peoples groups were organized on a local scale by the Socialist Party which started out as purely educational groups studying the elements of socialist theory. The 1912 convention of the Socialist Party recognized the fact that the spontaneous and uncoordinated growth of the Socialist youth movement was in itself sufficient proof of the need of such a movement on an organized basis. At first the problem of the youth was relegated to a special section of the women's department, but later a special youth department with a full time director was organized.

This movement, the Young Peoples Socialist League, was formed in 1915; William Kruse was elected National Secretary and a paper "Young Socialist Magazine" was published. Despite the valuable propaganda work, the League membership and activities were still closer to the earlier discussion groups than to a politicalized youth movement. But the core of leading comrades were developing politically and were slowly raising the level of the movement.

In the meanwhile, the S.P. under its special youth department organized Socialist Sunday Schools for the purpose of training children from the ages of six to fourteen, at which time they were ready to enter the Y.P.S.L. A book published by David Greenberg "Socialist Sunday School Curriculum" is particularly interesting in showing the methods employed in the training of younger children. In the primary class, children of six and seven studied economics. The purpose was "to get the children to see that the source of all things is the earth which belongs to everybody and that it is labor that takes everything from the earth and turns it (1) into machinery and (2) the things that labor makes with machinery." Courses on music and poetry contained "simple revolutionary verse that emphasizes human rights."

When the U.S. entered the war in 1917, the Y.P.S.L. took a pacifist rather than a Marxian position and its organizational attempts to combat war fell through for lack of a stable machinery and a trained membership. The League was divided on the question of the war. Kruse, despite his being a part of the S.P. machine, nevertheless took steps which later led to his imprisonment. Various S.P. members were sentenced to twenty years imprisonment on grounds of treason, but the case was finally squashed in 1920.

Kruse attempted to form an underground apparatus at the last minute by advising all secretaries to conceal duplicate lists of their membership and to

"list all the dependable Socialist members of your League, and form them into an unofficial executive committee and pledge them to work for our movement and be true no matter what happens."

The trials of the leading Party and Y.P.S.L. members later revealed that the membership did not have the training necessary to effectively carry out underground work and such errors as keeping illegal literature in the homes of prominent members and carrying printer's receipts for such literature about their persons led to a large number of arrests and convictions.

The differences in opinion on the war within the S.P. aided the politicization of the League. This development received an even greater impetus with the advent of the Russian Revolution and the heated controversy it engendered in the ranks of the Party. The overwhelming majority of the Y.P.S.L. in America declared its agreement with the program of the Communist International and in solidarity with the left wing of the Party demanded affiliation to the international of Lenin and Trotsky.

The National Executive Committee of the Party, seeing a split in the offing, tried to keep the Y.P.S.L. intact by shielding it from the factional fight. They naively thought that this object could be achieved by granting the Y.P.S.L. greater autonomy and removing it further from the Party machinery. However, the 1919 convention of the Y.P.S.L. stood in solidarity with the left wing. Shortly afterwards these youth moved with increasing tempo towards the Y.C.I.

3. Germany

The centralized and organized character of the youth left opposition took place in Jena, 1916. A few years later another national conference was held in Berlin in which Liebkecht participated and helped form the "Free Socialist Youth of Germany". The conference went on record for the Dictatorship of the Proletariat and decided to issue the "Junges Garde" as the official organ of the organization.

The revolution broke out shortly afterwards. During the revolution the revolutionary sections of the youth were found in the Spartacus League or aiding. The Spartacus League, organized by Liebkecht and Luxemburg after a split with the centrists of the Independent Social Democracy, was primarily composed of young people. Although small, and hence defenseless, they tried to assume leadership in the revolution. The reformists in the Social Democracy, fearing the active revolutionary struggle of the proletariat ran to the bourgeoisie. Noske called out the Junkers. During this period, Liebkecht and Luxemburg were slaughtered in the midst of struggle.

Around Dec. 1918, Munzenberg was expelled from Switzerland. He went to Berlin where a meeting of the Bureau was held. It was decided to move the International Secretariat to Germany, but Munzenberg was arrested again and the Swiss comrades took over the Secretariat once more. At the same time (March, 1919) the Communist International was organized and the youth were present also

With the arrest of Munzenberg, Trostel (Swiss) was named Secretary. In the early part of 1919 the German, Hungarian and Russian youth sections established relations with each other. Zeigler of the Munich Communist youth organization was in Moscow as were members of the Lithuanian and Budapest opposition groups. They planned a new international conference at Budapest.

As was soon established, the majority of the youth organization stood under the banner of the Third International. The Soviet government of Hungary had in the meantime fallen and it was decided to hold the congress in Vienna. Munzenberg was again released from prison at the same time. On the 25th of August, 1919, the first session took place in the editorial office of the "Wiener Arbeiterzeitung". The presence of Dannenberg and his organized group still expressed the confusion arising out of the war years. As it turned out the congress was just an "information" meeting.

A Provisional Committee headed by Munzenberg called a world conference. In the course of the preparatory work, and under the influence of the Bolsheviks, errors in relation to the centrists were clarified and rectified.

On November 20, 1919, at 3:00 P.M. in the back room of a beer house, guarded by sentinels and pickets of the Berlin youth, the first congress of the Young Communist International was held. There were present delegates from 14 countries representing 200,000 members when Munzenberg, in the name of the Provisional Committee, opened the Congress.

Thus was the Young Communist League organized.

M. LESSONS OF THE PERIOD

From even this sketchy treatment of the origins of the Young Socialist International certain lessons can be ascertained the assimilation of which are essential to the healthy growth of the socialist youth movement today. This period was one in which the socialist movement began to recognize the importance of the youth and to test ways of bringing the youth to socialist ideas. From the experiences of the early experiments in youth activity it is clear that the youth need their own separate organizations. As we pointed out in the Introduction this concept was Liebknecht's great contribution to the socialist movement.

1. Independence of the Youth

Independence did not come automatically to the youth. They were forced to struggle, and not always successfully, for their independence. The tendency of the conservative leadership of the social democratic parties was to attempt to control the youth from the top. They feared above all a youth movement which thought for itself and might therefore begin to doubt the efficacy of the do-nothing policies of the contented social democratic leadership. The period from 1900 to 1918 was a period of constant battle between the adult parties and the youth organizations over the question of the organizational independence of the youth. This battle has been fought continually down to the present day by one generation after another of young socialists who came into conflict with their elders in the social democratic parties and in the degenerated "Communist" Parties of recent times.

The independence of the youth is not simply a matter of formal declarations. It is necessary, if the youth movement is to grow, that the movement have a life of its own. It must be more than a mere shadow of an adult party tolerated in a condescending fashion by that party. The youth must have their own leadership, chosen by themselves, their own organizational life, conventions, etc., and even their own political controversies. The young person who is a member of the youth organization but not a member of the adult party must

have an equal voice in the affairs of the youth movement with a young person who is also a member of the party.

It is quite natural and correct for the more mature young people in the youth organization to join the adult party and thus provide a continuity from one generation to the next. It is also correct for the politically more experienced leaders of the adult party to offer advice and guidance to the youth. Such relationships should be based on the recognition by the youth of the importance of building a party and by the party of the importance of the organizational integrity of the youth movement. We shall return to this problem at the end of part II of this history when we can bring the experience of the Young Communist International to bear on it.

2. Youth and Revolution

The role young socialists played in the period prior to World War I in struggling against the growing reformism in the adult parties and their role during World War I that led to the break of the socialist youth as a whole from the social democratic parties and their affiliation with the Communist International shows clearly the revolutionary role youth have played historically.

The young workers make up the most revolutionary stratum of the working class. They are less tied to family responsibilities, to years of security in their jobs, and are more exploited on the job. Further the young students, many of whom may come from middle-class backgrounds, also have greater revolutionary potential than their parents. The working-class revolution cannot be successful unless a section of the intermediate classes breaks with the capitalists and joins the worker's struggle. It is the children of the middle classes and even occasionally of the bourgeoisie itself, that find it easier to make this transition -- to see that their ideals can only be furthered by an alliance with the working class. Thus the unity of young workers and students is essential to the building of a revolutionary movement capable of bringing socialism into existence. It is the prime duty of revolutionary socialists to assist in every way they can the development of a socialist youth movement.

3. Anti-Militarism

It is young people who are most directly affected by militarism and by war. The modern world has been almost continuously at war and all major questions will at one time or another be solved by use of arms. It is therefore the primary responsibility of young socialists to conduct a struggle against militarism and war.

This was certainly clear to the young socialists of Liebknecht's day. It should be doubly clear to us today when we face the far greater horrors of nuclear war. It is essential that young socialists again put the struggle against war in the forefront of their activity and build a socialist campaign around this question. It is the socialists and only the socialists who have a realistic solution to the question of war. We should not be afraid to forcefully put it forward.

4. Internationalism

The Young Socialist movement from its very birth was an international movement which placed international solidarity above national patriotism. The most important political events among young socialists of this period were

the International Congresses where the basic policies of the socialist youth were worked out. A pamphlet like Liebknecht's "Militarism and Anti-Militarism" was translated into all European languages and read by young socialists of all the European countries. The struggle during World War I against war brought international unity among the left wing forces who conducted this struggle. Finally this international spirit was formalized in the formation in 1919 of the Communist International and the Young Communist International.

Today the international solidarity of socialist youth is greatly weakened. The Young Communist International has long been dissolved and its "broader" successor, the World Federation of Democratic Youth, does not even pretend to be socialist. The International Union of Socialist Youth is a very ineffectual organization and while somewhat to the left of its parent International, does not offer a compelling socialist alternative on an international scale. The revolutionary socialist youth forces are weak and unorganized internationally.

Under such conditions we must constantly keep an international perspective in mind and not lose ourselves in the problems of our particular country. We must work towards the reconstruction of a truly revolutionary socialist youth international as the organizational embodiment of the international spirit of Marxism.

PART II THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE (1919-1929)

A. BACKGROUND

The betrayal and collapse of the Second International at the outbreak of the World War did not fail to leave a deep imprint upon the working class youth movement. Although the social patriots of France, Austria, England and Belgium exhorted the working class to support their native capitalists in the war, the best elements of the youth movement remained loyal to internationalism.

The Young Socialist International, as early as April 1915, when one year of war had already stained the fields of Europe with the blood of workers, convoked the first anti-war gathering in Berne, Switzerland. Working in close association with Lenin and the exiled Bolsheviks, the revolutionary youth were destined to become one of the firmest supports to the coming Russian Revolution.

The new Third International received a mighty impetus when the Bolsheviks took power. Both this historic event and the war served to cut a sharp division in the socialist movement between reformist servants of the ruling class and the conscious revolutionists. In every country in Europe the two divisions began to take clearer shape.

Hardly anywhere was the birth of the Communist movement disassociated from the work which the youth, fresh and uncorrupted by opportunist poison, contributed in every country. In the tradition of Liebknecht, undiscouraged by the betrayal of the old social democratic leadership, drawing strength from the victories of the Russian working class, the young communists became one of the chief pillars of the new international movement.

This was the background of the formation of the Young Communist League. On November 20, 1919, at 3:00 P.M. in the back room of a beer house, guarded by sentinels and pickets of the Berlin youth, the first congress of the Young Communist International was held. There were present delegates from fourteen countries, representing twenty thousand members when Willi Munzenberg opened the Congress. Thus was the Young Communist International organized.

B. FORMATION OF THE Y.C.L. IN THE UNITED STATES

In May 1919, the first national convention of the Young People's Socialist League proclaimed a revolutionary policy and denounced the Second International. A special conference of the Y.P.S.L. in Rochester December 1919 overthrew the official Socialist Party group. The revolutionary sections won a solid majority and the convention advocated support for the Communist International and for affiliation to the Young Socialist International (which was meeting illegally in Berlin to form the Young Communist International).

The Y.P.S.L. at Rochester finally broke off all relations with the Socialist Party and declared itself "independent" of all existing parties.

From this tactic, the Communists hoped to win over even more members of the Y.P.S.L. to the communist movement.

However, the cruel Palmer raids of 1920 hindered this direction. Thousands of communists, young and old, were arrested, imprisoned, or deported. The entire movement was hit badly. Many who had never dreamt that communism would put them to such severe tasks, dropped back into the comforts of private life. Others converted their groups into purely social clubs secluding themselves from the rigors of the struggle. Only a few held on tenaciously and proceeded to build a youth movement. Although there were two communist parties (The Workers Party and the Communist Labor Party) and although both maintained youth leagues, they were quite small.

During this period, the army of unemployed steadily grew inspite of the many attempts of state and national authorities to provide employment. Ex-soldiers (all of them young) often became thieves and beggars because they were given no work. The American Legion, organized by the ex-officers on behalf of the capitalists sought to retain the militaristic spirit of war and to intimidate all workers and working class organizations which threatened to rouse the masses to action.

Because of the political situation at that time, the two Communist Parties had to function illegally; hence their minute youth organizations also were underground. The unity of the two parties in 1920 gave a new impetus to the revival of the revolutionary youth movement. However, it, like the Party continued underground. In the meantime, through the medium of two Young Workers League delegates to Moscow, Gus Schulenberg and Oliver Carlson, connections were established with the Young Communist International.

The legalization of the Communist Party at the December, 1921 convention (after a bitter internal dispute -- the minority desired to remain underground) helped to make the Young Workers League a reality. The convention set up an organization committee to call the conference of the Young Workers League and to help organize it. "Youth" the organ of the New York "Independent" Young People's Socialist League (which was in communist hands) was taken over by the organization committee and renamed "Young Worker".

Youth memorial meetings were held under the banner of International Youth Day from coast to coast. By the time the first convention met there were already in existence between thirty to fifty groups in the country ready to participate in launching the new organization.

It is important at this point to interject some of the proposals of the Young Communist International on the structure and role of the organization, for the Y.W.L. in the United States and the Trotskyist youth movements were built upon this basis also.

C. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE

On November 1, 1920, the Russian Young Communist League proposed to the Executive Committee of the Y.C.I. a change in the relation between the youth leagues and the parties. The proposal called for the POLITICAL SUBORDINATION

OF EACH NATIONAL LEAGUE TO THE RESPECTIVE PARTY ORGANIZATION: WHILE EACH LEAGUE WOULD RETAIN ITS ORGANIZATIONAL INDEPENDENCE. The Party in each country would determine the general politics of the entire communist movement, its strategy, tactics (in agreement with the line and leadership of the Communist International) and the youth leagues would be guided by these decisions. However, the Party could not interfere in the internal organizational problems of the youth league except in an advisory capacity. Hence, the youth league would enjoy organizational autonomy.

The Executive Committee of the Y.C.I. could not at that time agree with the proposal. It held the view of the independence of the leagues and the cooperation on a basis of equality between each party and league.

The political subordination of the Young Communist League to the Communist Party was finally adopted at the Second Congress of the Y.C.I. after a long struggle which was later carried on in the Leagues. At that time (1921) such a decision appeared to be absolutely necessary although it met with great resistance from many leaders of the Y.C.L. who were still swayed by the "vanguard ideology".

The "vanguard" ideology was a carry over of the former role of the revolutionary youth. While in the imperialist war of 1914-1918 practically all of the Social Democratic Parties went over to the side of the bourgeoisie, most of the socialist youth organizations and the youth international remained true to the principles of revolutionary class struggle. By the very nature of the situation, the youth international played a vanguard role. There were in most places no revolutionary parties; those parties that did exist, for the most part, betrayed the working class. The youth organizations were converted into YOUNG PARTIES which attempted to lead the entire working class, carry on independent struggles against the boss class, against the imperialist war, etc. Thus, the youth, to a large extent, paved the way for the formation of the revolutionary working class parties. This vanguard role, that is, the leadership of the working class, existed as far along as 1919. Even in the early stages of the communist movement, the youth groups were acting like young parties. Therefore, at the second congress of the YCI, with the political subordination of the Y.C.L. to the C.P.; the youth recognized that the Party was to become the leader of the toiling youth.

The organizational structure of the communist youth movements were arranged so as to correspond to their revolutionary role in the class struggle. The social democratic organizations which gave up the revolutionary method of class struggle, created an organizational structure adapted to the reformist standpoint and particularly to parliamentary elections. The fact that the structure of the social-democratic organizations were not based on centralism and discipline and at the same time did not further inter-party democracy was in accordance with the whole reformist conception of organization. The Y.C.L. discarded these obsolete forms and attempted to create an organization capable of rallying the widest masses of toiling youth, capable of leading them in the class struggle, and capable of preserving the League (or Party) despite the repressions from capitalists.

The Y.C.L. was based on the principles of democratic centralism. It combined the maximum independence and activity of the members of the organization with strict discipline. On the basis of the internal democracy, all

members participate in the life of the League and had a share in determining the League's policy. This was achieved (when strict illegality doesn't prevent it) through the election of leading bodies, the organization of League conferences on a large scale, and the holding of internal discussions for the purpose of preparing the League's decisions on various questions. The lower bodies were subordinate to the higher, the leadership was centralized, and all members were under obligation to carry out the decisions of the organization and do their duty towards it. It was only as a strictly centralized organization that the Y.C.L. in conjunction with the C.P. could carry out a revolutionary struggle for the interests of the working youth and the general communist aims.

The democracy which reigned in the early period of the Y.C.L. was in glaring contrast to the bureaucratic rule in the social democratic organizations. In the Y.P.S.L. since the various leaders and the various committees were not responsible to any particular group, since each leader was permitted to carry out his own political line (even though it contradicted the political line of his fellow members on the executive committee and the opinion of the rank and file) like its parties, the social democratic youth organizations were somewhat bureaucratized.

Although the Y.C.L. was ORGANIZATIONALLY INDEPENDENT, the closest connections existed between it and the C.P. This connection was effected through the mutual representation on all rungs of the organizational ladder. To secure the political oneness of the League and Party, there were cadres composed of dual members, i.e. members of both the Party and the youth,

The Y.C.L. did not limit its activity to the frame work of "legality" as ordained by the boss class. In its struggle against capitalism, the Y.C.L. was continually compelled to combine its open legal activity with illegal and semi-legal work, and therefore, often overstepped the limits laid down for it by capitalist legality. Since it recognized that it was surrounded on all sides by its class enemies and that it must expect to be driven to illegality at any time, it formed an underground apparatus through which it could be able to continue its work in case of enforced illegality. The main thing was to ensure the leadership and development of the Y.C.L. and preserve its existence.

D. ROLE OF THE Y.C.L. AND DIFFERENCES WITH THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC YOUTH

The Young Communist League was a training ground for the Communist Party. The C.P. needed a reserve which would assure a new cadre of young forces for its ranks. The Y.C.L. was to serve as a preparatory school which would train the young generation of workers for the Communist Party.

There were fundamental differences in the concepts of the role of the youth and youth organization between the social-democrats and the communists. Social democracy, for the most part, declared that the role of the youth organizations should be "purely" educational or cultural. It said that youth were not capable of participating in the class struggle. Since the social democrats often placed class collaboration in the place of the class struggle, it sought to train the youth also in class peace. They didn't want the young workers to acquaint themselves with the real conditions in class society and

with the facts of the class struggle. In conformity with this, the social democracy indulged in talk about "youth in general" without regard to class differences. Hence, they set the youth organizations the utopian task of creating the "new man" by means of cultural work within the youth organization to be undertaken in the conditions of capitalist society, that is, divorced from all relation to class society and reality itself.

The Young Communist League repudiated the hypocritical slogan of the social democracy to the effect that the youth must not participate in politics. The energetic participation of the young workers, who are an important factor in social production, in the political struggle of their class, signified an increase of forces for the working class struggle and served as a medium for training young workers to communism. The Y.C.L. was a political organization which trained young people for the class struggle. It based itself on the Leninist concept that stated theory could not be separated from practice. Hence, its educational work was of a dual nature: education through studying theory and education through struggle.

"Without revolutionary theory, a revolutionary movement is impossible" -- V.I. LENIN. This statement of Lenin formed the basis for the Y.C.L.'s work. The special educational work was intended to gather the working youth's experience in fighting practices, and to present them in a ready, logical and supplemented form. It had to train from the ranks of the young workers, educated and persistent class fighters against capitalism. The educational work was therefore, simultaneously, agitation and propaganda; agitation in the sense of dissemination of various slogans among the masses, and propaganda in the sense of a deepened education of the young workers with regard to the aims and principles of the Y.C.L.

E. THE FIRST YEAR OF THE YOUNG WORKERS LEAGUE IN THE UNITED STATES

On May 13, 1922, the first convention of the Young Workers League met in Brooklyn to formally unite the revolutionary youth organizations throughout the country, to affiliate to the Young Communist International and to acknowledge the political leadership of the Workers Party (C.P.). However, the principle struggle at the convention, with its more than forty delegates representing more than twenty cities was the question of "independence". The genuine party elements were for political subordination of the youth to the Workers Party. The supporters of "independence" came from two camps; remnants of the Independent Y.P.S.L. who found it more convenient to stand aloof from the genuine communist movement, and the ultra-leftists, organized into the United Toilers of America, who had opposed the formation of the legal party (they wanted to continue functioning underground) and advocated "independence" as a maneuver to prevent the youth from affiliating with the party. The delegations voted overwhelmingly against the "independence" advocates. A manifesto and program were adopted together with a constitution and a resolution on relations with the Workers Party. A National Committee was elected with Martin Abern as National Secretary.

The year between the first and second conventions was marked by functioning based on propagandistic activity. The "independents" disappeared completely from the scene, particularly after the United Toilers liquidated

their organization and joined the Workers Party. In this period a number of new groups were organized and a functioning League was established as a distinct organization. But it was only at the second convention (Chicago, May, 1923) that the League's attention was directed away from the purely propagandistic activity of spreading the general ideas of communism amongst youth, and more in the direction of winning the young worker to the communist movement by organizing them on the basis of their daily struggles and their immediate interests. This turn which has always come as the second stage in the development of the movement, was achieved with the assistance of the Y.C.I. but not without some internal dispute. The swing towards active participation in the daily struggles of the working youth and the adoption of the organizational forms best suited for such activity was resisted by many of the middle class students. This turn to the masses was introduced at the Second and Third Congresses of the Y.C.I.

F. WORK OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL PRIOR TO THE SECOND CONGRESS

Prior to the second congress, the Y.C.I. proceeded to win over sections of the centrist youth. Hence, by the end of 1920, the young socialists in Czechoslovakia (two youth leagues) the Young Socialist League of France and Finland, League of the Socialist Proletarian Youth of Germany (Independent) and the Independent Y.P.S.L. in the U.S. were won over to the Y.C.I.

Simultaneous with the organizational development that progressed during this period, the Y.C.I. began to consolidate its central apparatus. Numerous pamphlets and periodicals were published including the two organs, YOUTH INTERNATIONAL and INTERNATIONAL YOUTH CORRESPONDANCE.

The popularization of the ideas of the Y.C.I. was discussed at a series of international conferences, in internal discussions within the various sections, and in the Youth International. However, little was done to orient the Y.C.I. towards the masses until the second congress.

G. SECOND CONGRESS OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

The Russian Y.C.I. wanted to hold the Second Congress in Moscow in the throne room of the Kremlin citadel of the former Czarism. However, this was defeated in favor of Jena, Germany. The Congress opened in the latter city on the 6th of April, 1921, but moved for reasons of illegality (on April 10) to Berlin.

The resolution on the political situation adopted at the congress revealed that the differences on the organizational question (vanguardism) had other political roots: the majority supported the "theory of the revolutionary offensive" which held that despite the defeats of the workers in 1919-1920 and the renewed offensive of capital, no partial retreats were necessary in the struggle for state power; the working class (according to this theory) had to continue frontal, direct attacks against the capitalist governments. This theory was defended by such "ultra-leftists" as Bela Kun and Brandler plus others at the Third Congress of the Communist International. Lenin and Trotsky actively opposed this schematic conception of the "permanent

revolution".

On the advice of the Executive Committee of the Comintern, the Y.C.I. Congress "continued" in Moscow from June 9 to the 23rd immediately preceding the Third Congress of the Comintern. The latter almost split over the theory of the revolutionary offensive when a majority appeared to be in complete agreement with it. Lenin and Trotsky, who recognized the need for winning a decisive majority of the workers in the various countries before a direct bid for power could be made by the vanguard, urged the struggle for partial and immediate demands as a means towards this end. They finally succeeded in winning the delegates to their views. The Third Congress of the C.I. issued the slogan "To the Masses" as a summary of the immediate tasks of the communist parties.

The Second Congress of the Y.C.I. was held under the political influence of the Third Congress of the C.I., in which the youth delegates actively participated. The youth, too, finally rejected the "theory of the revolutionary offensive" and in their turn to the masses began to hammer out a specific youth program. Questions connected with the economic struggle, relationship between the youth and party, and anti-militaristic work were thoroughly discussed. Other youth questions were left in abeyance until the Third Congress.

H. PRIOR TO THE THIRD CONGRESS

The transition at the Second Congress from issuing slogans of the Party to the adoption of a specific youth program was done for the purpose of building a mass youth organization. However, the transformation of the small youth leagues into mass organizations was never achieved outside the Soviet Union. The progress of the leagues necessarily was dependent on the growth of the parties and the special attention paid to the youth leagues by the parties. In the brief period from the Third Congress of the C.I. to Lenin's death, the problems of the Party itself, its elementary organization, strategy, tactics, overshadowed the problems of the youth. The internal difficulties in the communist parties -- with currents in the parties who had not as yet broken politically with centrism as well as the more radical, ultra-left elements who rejected the struggle for partial demands -- hampered the development of mass young communist leagues.

Despite this shortcoming, the parties following the second congress showed the necessity of this shift in emphasis. During this time, the boss class of America and Europe, taking advantage of the ebb of the revolutionary wave, went on an all out offensive against the working class. Working hours were lengthened; wages were reduced. Since the main interest of the working class was their immediate economic gains, the result of these reverses was a diminution of political interest among the workers.

Among the working class youth too, a strong diminution of political interest was evident. Hence, the Y.C.L. had to transfer its work of propagandizing the general political ideas to the defense of the immediate vital interests of the working youth.

As a result of the capitalist offensive both the C.I. and the Y.C.I.

issued a call for the "united front". A united front is the unity and collaboration of different organizations on some particular issues. Each organization within a united front retains its own political identity, program, leadership, etc. It retains the right to criticize the other organizations within the front. (Ex. the collaboration of differing organizations say on a strike action, civil liberties case, etc. are some examples of a united front).

For the Y.C.L., the establishment of the united front took a twofold course. First: It attempted to align the working youth in the general struggle of the working class. This was needed to prevent the bosses from playing off the working youth as strike breakers against adult workers. Second: It attempted to coordinate the work of the youth in the enforcement of its elementary youth demands. The Y.C.I. began negotiations with the other youth internationals to hammer out a united front program together and to form a Young Workers World Congress. However, these efforts failed for the Second International youth induced the Vienna Youth International (which was a Marxist centrist group) to refuse to cooperate.

In the meanwhile, the Y.C.L. slowly began to participate in the industrial struggle. The Y.C.L. in Germany initiated a campaign against the 54 hour working week for the working youth. This reached its climax in a large mass demonstration on March 26, 1922.

In Sweden and Denmark, the Y.C.L. initiated a campaign for the economic protection of young workers. In Austria they fought for the improvement of the position of students in technical schools and for the enforcement of legislation as applied to apprentices. In this work, the Y.C.L. convinced the "centrist" youth to work with them, finally winning them over to the Y.C.I. In France and Czechoslovakia, the Y.C.L. organized illegal nuclei in the army as a method of carrying out their anti-militaristic activity.

The Y.C.I. also organized children's movements (known in the United States as the Young Pioneers). The children's movement developed fairly rapidly in Germany, Switzerland, and the Scandinavian countries. Here they attacked the nonpolitical "humanitarian" education as found in the social-democratic children's schools.

Despite all these events, the transition to youth tasks was not successfully carried out. The Third Congress of the Y.C.I. was to take this question up again with an aim to intensify the new course.

I. THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE TURN "TO THE MASSES"

At the Third Congress of the Y.C.I., Dec. 4-12, 1922, in Moscow, little progress could be recorded in the growth of the leagues. As against about 600,000 claimed at the previous Congress, it was now reported that the Y.C.I. had 750,000 members. This was primarily a result of the increase of the Russian League which had 38 Y.C.L. sections as against 36 at the previous congress. While some of the leagues had been engaged in economic activities of the young workers and in anti-militarist work the resolutions record:

"Education work was limited mostly to the members". "The Young Communist Leagues have not yet become mass organizations."

The Congress adopted a draft program for the Y.C.I. and a program of economic demands for young workers "up to 18 years of age."

After an analysis of the work accomplished since the Second Congress it became clear to the Third Congress that "the Young Communist Leagues have not yet become mass organizations in the sense of having close contact with the masses of young workers; of the participation of their branches and individual members in the daily struggle of the young workers for the betterment of their conditions and in the sense of the improved revolutionary enlightenment of the masses by means of an interesting communist educational work conducted on a mass scale." (Resolutions and Thesis of the Third Congress of the Y.C.I.)

Hence the Y.C.I. proceeded to change further the organizational structure of the Y.C.L.s. The basis of organization prior to the Third Congress was a territorial one and it is just in this that its main weakness existed. The new form of organization adapted itself to the demands of modern industry. Wherever there were a number of young Y.C.L. workers in a factory, they formed a shop nuclei. The object was to build up an organization which acting as a compliment to the Party would place the Y.C.L. in the strongest position to struggle for the revolution. The shop nuclei would combine the young communists at their place of work and would be in direct contact with the masses of the working youth in their daily struggles. Hence, it could recruit them, guide them, and persuade them to participate in all the fields of the league work.

In the schools, the members of the Y.C.L. were combined into fractions. These like the shop nuclei were basic organizational units and were combined into branches with the shop nuclei of the particular district in which the school was situated. As the economic activities of the school are by their very nature limited, it was necessary to establish a definite connection between members in their places of work and the branches in the districts in which the shops were situated. The unemployed members entered the branch at their place of living. At the labor exchanges, the unemployed League members formed into fractions to work among their fellow unemployed.

The League nuclei were to work in the closest contact to the Party nuclei. Representatives between nuclei were mutually exchanged.

The purpose of the cry "to the masses" and the change in organizational structure was both to increase the strength of the League and to build the social composition of the League on the working class elements. This form of organization, based on the Russian Y.C.L. and C.P., was accepted in theory by all the leagues, but was never completely carried out by the non-Russian organizations.

In the United States, with this turn, the face of the League was directed towards the young workers and every effort was made to win them. In the two main centers, New York and Chicago, the League began to participate in strikes and other struggles as a distinct youth organization. Campaigns were begun to reach into industries where the young workers were

concentrated. The "Young Worker", under Max Shachtman's editorship, was changed from a "refined" magazine into a fighting newspaper which sought to reflect the life of the members and to educate them in the struggle.

This period, in the U.S. was one of the Leagues soundest and healthiest growth. It was free from the corrupting factional and clique strife which undermined it later on, and hence reached a membership of more than 3,000. It did not fail however, to participate in the inner life of the Party.

J. THE BEGINNING OF THE END -- DEGENERATION

From late 1923 onward, the beginning of the degeneration of the Y.C.L. began to take place, until in 1925 the organic process of the youth movement was brought to an abrupt halt. The youth became a factional pawn, first by the Zinoviev-Stalin faction against Trotsky and then by Stalin against Zinoviev and Trotsky.

In late 1923, Leon Trotsky wrote in his "New Course": "It is wholly inadequate that the youth should repeat our formulas; it is necessary that the youth should take the revolutionary formulae fighting, transform them into flesh and blood, work out for themselves their own opinion with that courage which comes from sincere conviction and independence of character. Passive obedience, mechanical drill, characterless, obsequiousness, careerism, away with these things from the Party!"

Trotsky was accused of "pitting the youth against the old Bolsheviks". Young workers who accepted Trotsky's advice (or his political criticisms of the ruling regime) were treated as opponents of Bolshevism and later expelled from the Y.C.L.s (in Russia, the treatment was much more severe).

The Young Communist League in Russia, in 1921 adopted the position that Russia "can arrive at socialism only through the proletarian revolution, which epoch of development we have now entered". However, after 1924, when Stalin first introduced the theory of "socialism in one country", it was not long before this was also adopted by the League.

On July 13 to 25, 1924, the Fourth Congress of the Y.C.L. opened up the international campaign for "Bolshevization" (simultaneous with the campaign of the Fifth Congress of the Comintern). Since Trotsky was the outstanding spokesman against the bureaucratization of the C.P. and the theory of "socialism in one country", the Y.C.L. in every country was made the tool of the dominant faction in the party in the struggle against "Trotskyism" or alleged "Trotskyites". The slogan of "Bolshevization" was used to effectuate the struggle against the left-wing. In every country, critical education of the young communists became impossible; factional obedience and loyalty were the tests of youth leaders, who in turn transmitted these traits to the ranks.

In the United States, the American party had been handed over to Ruthenberg and Lovestone. Their youth supporters were presented with the leadership of the League in the face of the overwhelming opposition of the membership at the 1925 convention. That marked the retrogression of the

League, the degeneration of its leading elements, its conversion into a factional instrument, the mistreating of its membership, its bureaucratization.

An outstanding leader of the Third Congress of the Y.C.I., a follower of Zinoviev, Vuyo Vuyovitch was removed from the international leadership and later expelled and exiled to Siberia because of his support to the United Opposition of Trotsky and Zinoviev.

At the Fifth Congress of the Y.C.I., August 20 to Sept. 18, 1928 (following the Sixth Congress of the Comintern) the old formula on the character of the Y.C.L. was repeated in resolutions and in the program: Trotskyism was condemned and Stalinism endorsed. No real progress could be noted in the development of strength or influence of the League.

From the growth of the bureaucratic seed to the warped monolithic movement today, the Y.C.L. had gone through many changes, not only at the top where leaders were manufactured and smashed, but in the ranks where the terrific fluctuation of the membership expressed the failure of the Y.C.L. to fulfill its purpose of training revolutionists for the party. At a time when the Party was distorted and undermined by Stalinism, the official youth movement, untrue to the traditions that were incorporated into it at its foundation, simply went along with the stream.

K. LESSONS OF THE PERIOD

As can be seen, one of the first major political problems facing the Young Communist movement was again the question of youth-party relations. It was necessary for the Young Communists to reassess this question which had plagued the youth of the 2nd International and put it into a new political context--that of the relation between the youth and party when both have a fundamental commitment to revolutionary Marxism. This experience of the YCI gives a deeper understanding to the whole question of the independents of the youth, and must thus be studied by socialists today.

1. Correction of Party-Youth Relations

The basic relation between revolutionary youth and a revolutionary party is one of political solidarity between youth and party but organizational independence for the youth. However during the period prior to World War I a new element entered the picture: the party began evolving away from revolutionary socialist principles while the youth remained loyal to them. Thus political solidarity between youth and party became more and more tenuous. Just as it was correct for Karl Liebknecht out of loyalty to the higher interests of the socialist revolution to break party discipline and vote against war credits in Parliament, so it was correct for the youth in this period to begin to act like a party and actually compete with the party for hegemony over the working class.

However, when the YCI was launched the situation was different. The youth and the party were in fundamental political agreement. It was necessary, therefore, to ensure the unity of the movement as a whole through giving the party authority over formulation of basic political and

tactical questions (the youth participated in this formulation through its elected representatives in Party bodies) while preserving the organizational independence of the youth.

Today young people affiliated with the social democracy or communist parties will, like their predecessors have to put political principles above organizational questions and act over the heads of the party to ensure that revolutionary views reach the working class. However this does not mean that young revolutionists should break the unity that they have with the revolutionary party.

2. Organizational Independence Is Always Necessary

The degeneration of the YCI is also important to notice. It was made possible by the subverting of the organizational independence of the youth. The youth organization was turned into a mere pawn of party factions. As the Stalinist faction came to power in each of the national sections the organizational independence of the youth was shattered and the healthy growth of the youth hindered. Lenin states clearly in his article "The Youth International" (see appendix II that the party should influence the youth "mainly by persuasion, and not by fighting them."

3. From Propaganda Group to Mass Work

In order for young socialist groups to transform themselves into mass organizations they must be able, granting favorable objective situations, to win over a section of the working class youth on the basis of the immediate problems which confront the young workers under capitalism. This was clearly the aim of the YCI in the 1920's.

Today most revolutionary socialist youth groups are small propaganda groups. Such groups should be ready when the proper time comes to change the nature of their activity from socialist propaganda work to working class agitational work. However it would be a mistake for such groups to attempt to "jump over history." It would be a waste of time for a small group which is attempting to gather a cadre around it to act as if it were a mass organization which workers listened to and responded to. Trotsky once said the essence of revolutionary agitation is the establishment of a dialogue with the masses. They must listen to you and you must listen to them. It is not possible to really establish such a dialogue until one has the forces to integrate oneself with the working class and establish real contact with it.

It therefore would be a mistake for small propaganda groups to bypass the present propaganda stage and attempt direct agitation among the working class. It would be equally a mistake to believe one can build a mass youth organization simply through student discussion groups and periodicals comprehensible only to "sophisticated politicians." Politics is a question of timing. Something can be beneficial in one period only to be completely disastrous in another. The art of politics is to know when to make the "Turn.

Those of us who are unlucky enough not to be in a situation where we can realistically "Turn to the Masses" must work all the harder to prepare and educate our forces so we can do so when the time is right.

APPENDIX I

CALL FOR THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

(This is a reprint of the manifesto issued at the Berne Conference, 1915 by the International Union of Socialist Youth)

TO THE YOUTH OF ALL COUNTRIES!

Friends! Comrades! In all countries a part of the Socialists are moving powerfully forward to prepare a quick end to this most terrible of all wars by resuming class struggle action. Tirelessly and with remarkable perseverance some of the comrades in Germany are at work under the most difficult conditions, striving to realize this aim. The heroic struggles of our Italian comrades against the war are still fresh in our memory. They are struggles that belong to the most significant deeds of the proletarian movement. And even today the Italian proletariat is once more arming to impede with its might and its solidarity, the slaughter of its sons and if possible to prevent it altogether. With the very self-same enthusiasm and joyous sacrifice all the comrades loyal to our idea, also in France, Russia, Poland, Austria, Great Britain, Siberia, and all other countries, are at work agitating for an understanding among the people and for the fraternization of humanity.

Comrades! Young Socialists! Intoxicated by their orgy of blood, supported to the everlasting shame of the proletariat -- by the social patriotic labor leaders, the reactionary governments of all countries are attempting with all the means of raw and brutal power at their disposal, to suppress the heroic struggle of our comrades and to stifle their cries for peace in the dungeons. In Germany as well as in Italy, in Russia as well as in France, mass arrests of our comrades and friends have taken place. The governments of all countries are today zealously competing with one another in the murder of their "natives" and in the brutal trampling of every peace move. The victims which our comrades have brought on the altar of liberty are legion. The present state of affairs demand most urgently and most quickly, aid and support of our fighting comrades lest in spite of all their bravery and readiness for sacrifice, the governments should triumph and sink the last remnants of humanity and freedom in a sea of blood.

This aid, you, the young socialists of all countries, must bring to our hardpressed friends. You, who by your conference at Berne, in the spring of 1915, by your uninterrupted mutual relationships and by much more than that, have proved that in your hearts and soul the liberating thoughts of international socialist labor fraternization, revolutionary struggle for peace and freedom.

We call upon you everywhere, in all countries, to effectively and militantly support the attempts to resume revolutionary and class struggle activity.

Participate as speakers at conferences and meetings, spread pamphlets and newspapers in which you call for class struggle international action, agitate tirelessly from mouth to mouth among your friends and relatives, among your colleagues at work. The governments of all countries and the press which is entirely subordinated to them are attempting to conceal the peace efforts

and the revolutionary activities of our comrades: by lies and by fake reports they are attempting to precipitate the people into an ever-greater whirlpool of hate and blind wrath. Comrades, tear down everywhere this texture of lies. Your friends in Italy, France, Russia, and England and other countries tell the story of what a part of the German and Austrian comrades are sacrificing for peace. You comrades in Germany and Austria tell in your countries what heroic struggles which the workers in Italy, France, Russia, England and other countries are conducting for peace. Comrades! The resumption of a decisive, clearly defined class struggle by the majority of the socialist-ically thinking workers ever allows for the possibility of victory. The hour of action has come. A second winter campaign can only immeasurably increase the sufferings and the destitution of the working masses of all countries. The soil is prepared for revolutionary indignation. Let us sow.

The bourgeois peace conference will never be able to prevent war even if they wanted to and even if they were ever so impressively arranged. Only the full might of the proletariat and of this revolutionary action can hold in check the greed for profit and blood of the exploiters.

Comrades, Socialist Youth Organization of all countries. We call upon you to manifest by powerful demonstrations in all countries your unshakable will to work tirelessly against militarism and for socialism. On one day, on October 3, 1915, at one hour let us all meet. The comrades in Copenhagen, in Christiana, Stockholm, Paris, and Berlin must know that at one time when they demonstrate for peace and socialism the same will be done by their friends in Amsterdam, Wien, Berne, Bucharest, Rome, and other cities.

We are directing this urgent appeal to groups, that they might support effectively and militantly the action of the youth all socialist trade union and party by mass demonstration. Above all we expect an abundant participation on the part of the wives and the mothers of all young people who have been condemned to slaughter.

Arise young socialists of all countries, let your words follow your thoughts, let your acts follow your words.

Long live the International of the young worker generation, which shall one day bring to all countries peace and freedom. Long live the struggle against murder among nations, against the greed for blood. Long live the struggle for the highest ideal of humanity, for Socialism.

Bureau of the International Union of
Socialist Youth Organizations.

APPENDIX II

From: THE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL

By V.I. Lenin

Of course, the organ of the youth still lacks theoretical clarity and consistency, and perhaps may never acquire this precisely because it is the organ of the vigorous, turbulent, inquiring youth. However, our attitude towards the inadequate theoretical clarity on the part of such people must be entirely different from what it is and should be towards the theoretical muddle in the heads, and the lack of revolutionary consistency in the hearts of our "O.C.ists"*, "Socialist Revolutionaries," Tolstoyans, Anarchists, the European Kautskyists (of the "Centre"), etc. Adults who pretend to lead and teach others, but who mislead the proletariat are one thing: against such people a ruthless struggle must be waged. Youth organizations which openly declare that they are still learning, that their main task is to train party workers for the Socialist Parties, are quite another thing. Such people must be assisted in every way. We must be as patient as possible with their faults and strive to correct them gradually, mainly by persuasion, and not by fighting them. Frequently the middleaged and the aged do not know how to approach the youth in the proper way; for, necessarily, the youth must come to socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, under other circumstances than their fathers. Incidentally, this is why we must be decidedly in favor of the organizational independence of the Youth League, not only because the opportunists fear this independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence the youth will be unable either to train good Socialists from their midst, or to prepare themselves to lead socialism forward.

We stand for complete independence of the Youth Leagues, but also for complete freedom for comradely criticism of their errors. We must not flatter the youth.

* Mensheviks