

# Into the Fight, Young Workers!

By MARTIN ABERN

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**T**ODAY we are met to celebrate International Youth Day. Today in nearly all lands and climes, the youth, the young workers of the world have come together to view their past struggles with the imperialist powers of the world. Youth of the hot Spanish blood, youth of the phlegmatic German, youth of the impulsive Italian, youth of the victorious Russian, youth of the determined English, youth of the energetic American—the youth of these and other lands today count their victories, their defeats, the loss of the life-blood of working men and women on the battle-front of freedom; count their mistakes, their blunders—and then again gird their loins and make ready for the fray. Ready once again to battle with greater

determination for the overthrow of the robbers and oppressors of the masses of the people, and for the establishment of a society of free men and women, a society based on the willingness of men and women to work for the social betterment, to produce of the good things of life for the use of all mankind and not for the few capitalist bandits. Such a society as our Russian brothers and comrades are fighting, struggling, starving, dying for, that the future may live, are determined must be—Communism.

We meet to celebrate this day of days of the young revolutionary workers of the world. Yet International Youth Day is not so much a day of celebration as a day when we must take up the immediate and pressing

tasks of the working class youth. But before we discuss some of these problems, let us first see when and how and why International Youth Day came into being.

Out of the great war of Imperialism, International Youth Day came into existence. When in August, 1914, the Social-Democratic parties deserted the cause of the working class, destroyed the United Front of the workers against war and capitalism, and scurried over into the camps of the bourgeoisie and began shooting one another, it was youth who still retained faith in an International of the workers. While most workers were bathing in an ocean of blood, the few who still retained their class-consciousness and especially the youth, met to revive the class spirit of the workers and the revolutionary ideals. At Berne, in 1915, the International Union of Socialist Youth was formed and issued the challenge of the revolutionary workers—"WAR AGAINST THE WAR!" That was then the immediate problem before the workers.

#### Revolutionists' Persecution.

Persecution followed persecution. The few European revolutionists were outlawed, many were shot. Slowly, step by step, was the ground gained. But the appeal of the International Union of Socialist Youth was not in vain. Steadily more and more workers, young and old, flocked round the banners of the revolutionary vanguard. This is the great historical significance of International Youth Day: that it was the first real international demonstration against the imperialist war, against the capitalist class, and, aye and sadly enough, against the traitors within the ranks of the working class. While the traitorous Social-Democrats hastened to answer the jingo call of capitalism, the revolutionary youth raised aloft the red banner of Revolution and prepared for the struggle. The International Day of Youth was the fore-runner of the World Revolution and of the Revolutionary Third (Communist) International.

Out of struggle, then, out of terrible conflict, the militant day of the International Union of Socialist Youth, which was the name of the Young Communist International at that time, arose, even as the Young Communist International arose out of battle, in the midst of revolution.

At its birth, therefore, the slogan of International Youth Day, of the International Union of Socialist Youth, was "War Against the War," against militarism.

For the eighth time now is the working youth of the world engaging in the celebration of International Youth Day, in America for the first time on a national scale. And with each succeeding year, greater became the demonstrations against war, more determined and energetic the struggle against capitalism. And it was youth who, especially in the first years of the great World War, bore the brunt of the attacks, who moved first against the Capitalist International. Where there were no revolutionary political parties or only weak parties, it was the young communist organizations which initiated the slogans of the day and carried on the revolutionary fights and demonstrated for the political struggle.

#### Vanguard Struggles Against Capitalism.

And as during the early years of the World War, the struggle of the revolutionary vanguard was against that war of capitalism, so it continued during the entire

course of the war. Yet the exploitation of the workers by capitalism and its sacrifices of the young workers was so great that even back in 1916 the International Union of Socialist Youth in its program called for a struggle for the improvement of the workers' economic life and conditions.

With the collapse of capitalism in Russia; with the formation of a workers' revolutionary government in Russia, the Soviet Government; with the establishment once again of a real Workers' International, the Third (Communist) International, hopes of a speedy world collapse of capitalism revived in the working-class. And at the close of the capitalist war, the slogan of the workers changed. In Central Europe the slogan was the immediate struggle for working class power—FOR ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS! Then civil war, then heavy conflicts raged between the workers and the capitalists and their hirelings. The war not of workers slaughtering workers, but the **War Of The Classes**—workers versus capitalists and the capitalist tools. In 1919 and 1920, Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria—all Central Europe struggled for power.

But—and we cannot go into all the reasons for that at this time—the battle has not yet been completely and finally won. Capitalism, aided by working class traitors, has staved off its inevitable defeat. Desperate, fearful of its fate, it has struck out with all its remaining strength at the workers. To a certain extent, and only temporarily of course, capitalism revived and launched its greatest offensive against the working class and its youth. And the working class and the youth have had to battle for their very existence and lives.

Capitalism, realizing that its greatest enemy and the workers' best friend was and is Soviet Russia, did its utmost to crush the Workers' Government. However, we are all acquainted with the magnificent resistance of the Russian workers and peasants to the counter-revolutionary armies and their victories over them; so we need not recount that here . . . Then came the famine in Russia and where bullets could not defeat the workers' Soviet Government, it seemed that lack of bread would do that. But we also know how thru the generous response and aid of the workers of the world, Soviet Russia is successfully passing thru that crisis. Yet, because of this famine, the working youth had another battle besides that of the direct struggle against capitalism. In 1921, therefore, the slogan of International Youth Day was fundamentally to save the Russian Revolution by aid to the famine stricken.

#### Capitalism Is On the Offensive.

Today capitalism's offensive is still on—and also the workers' resistance. So horrible and terrible has become the misery, the degradation and exploitation of the working masses of Europe, that the fight in Europe—the immediate fight and need—has become a struggle for bread. The working class must first live, if it is to carry on the struggle against capitalist exploitation and in time conquer the capitalist government and capitalist system. Hence the immediate slogan and necessity in Europe to-day is: Prevent the Pauperization of the Working Class! If the working class is not yet ready to unite for the revolution, then let it unite that it may have bread, that it may not die of starvation. And so the cry in Europe on this eighth year of the International Day of Youth, the cry of the

revolutionary workers, of the Communist International, of the Young Communist International is: The United Front of Labor to prevent further exploitation and further degradation of the proletariat!

And now, comrades, what of America? We participate in this International Youth Day for the first time on a national scale in conjunction with the youth of all the world; we take part in this celebration—rather in this International ACTION—of the young workers of the world. This is well and indicates that the revolutionary youth of America is now ready and desirous of entering the struggle against world imperialism and exploitation side by side with the young workers of other countries and under the direction and leadership of the vanguard of the young workers, the Young Communist International.

Not in words, tho, can the American Youth, can the Young Workers League, prove that it is ready to help lead in the fight against capitalism, against exploitation, against militarism. Thru the clarity of its program and purpose, thru action, participation in the daily work and battles of the workers in the shops, fields and mills, can the Young Workers League of America demonstrate that it is the revolutionary expression of the American youth, prepared to carry out, so far as it is able to, the program of the Young Communist International; only thru that contact and struggle by the side of the other workers can it obtain the confidence of the masses of the young workers, who will then be willing to accept its leadership and guidance.

Really to carry out the purpose and spirit of International Youth Day, to gain this confidence of the young workers, to show that we mean business, what must we do? What are our problems and duties in America?

#### Problems of Young.

They are many indeed, but in particular, it is our task and duty, that of all workers, to enter the fight against the campaign of wage-cutting—a problem of all workers, young and old; second, to resist far more strongly than has been done, the attempt to force the Open Shop on the workers of America; third, to combat the increasing tendency for the use of child-labor; lastly, to carry on always our revolutionary education among the workers that we, that all workers, may understand and better know the action they must take if exploitation is to be abolished.

Economically, the workers in America have not yet been pushed to the perilous level and degrading life of the European proletariat—not yet. Europe is starving. We eat something—yet. Europe begs for crumbs. How soon will it be before the American worker is so badly crushed that he too will be looking longingly for the few crusts that will be thrown him as if he were some mongrel or cur of the streets? Not so soon, do you think, my comrades? Too soon, already in many places in this country, unless the workers of America awaken to the danger and make more determined resistance to the blows of the plutocrats of America.

With the World War's end, the imperialists of America made up their minds that they were going to stop once and for all the ever increasing demands of the workers for more wages, which would bring more of the good things of life to the workers. The workers, were becoming too prosperous, don't you know—some

of them even owned a silk shirt or a Ford. Quite preposterous! A stop must be put to such aristocratic notions. Silk shirts, good cars, fine food, beautiful dwellings, ah yes, these are made by the workers, but they are not for the workers to have. And this, not because the American capitalists were afraid that the workers were receiving too much, but because they felt that as the workers began to demand more and more and to need more, they would in time demand their heritage—the earth and all that is therein! And most of all American capitalist bandits have declared that wages must come down because they can't afford to pay living wages. That sounds queer, doesn't it? And yet there is economic truth and law behind it. American capitalism cannot stand the competition of foreign-made goods unless it can reduce wages and increase the amount of exploitation. And there you have the further irony of capitalist society. The capitalists knowing that the workers have not sufficient, yet being unable to give more. And so capitalists say that wages must come down. And where the workmen refuse to accept this verdict of starvation, and capital by itself cannot defeat the workers, it makes use of its political arm, of the state-injunctions, the capitalist army, the militia, other thugs and gunmen.

But the workers cannot think and act according to the needs of the capitalists. They must formulate their demands in accordance with their own needs. If the capitalists say: "But we cannot afford to give you more," the workers must reply: "Our need is greater than thine." And then take it. The attempt of the American pirates to browbeat the American working class into a coolie standard of life must be resisted to the utmost by all workers—youth and adult alike. There can be no hesitation on this score. It is for us, the Young Workers League, to render all possible aid in this battle for elemental and primitive needs. As young workers, we must take part in this struggle to prevent increasing exploitation. The Young Workers League must use its energies to prevent other young workers and students from scabbing on workers who may be on strike. We must urge all workers to unite in this fight, to join the unions if they have not already done so; and agitate for the amalgamation of the unions that the workers may better resist and battle the capitalist class. We must carry on the work of education to the purpose that the workers may realize, that to end this conflict of the classes, they must direct their energies and strength against the system of capitalist society itself and its protector, the capitalist government.

#### Struggle Against Wage-Cuts.

This struggle to prevent the further wage reductions is decisively important to the workers. Meekly to submit to these slashes of the employers would result in the weakening of the fighting ability and resistance of the workers. To give in without battle would be to become mere slaves—humble, beggarly slaves, with the cringing morale of a beaten slave. We are slaves all of us—wage-slaves, but let us be rebellious slaves; for thinking, rebellious slaves are the hopes of the world. For in rebel slaves is generated that power which will some day overcome and destroy capitalism.

On every hand we have evidence that the American working-class does not propose to submit easily to the

dictates of the capitalist class. And we, young workers, we the Young Workers League, must encourage and aid these resisting and struggling workers. Six hundred thousand workers refused to dig coal because they knew that the wages offered them meant that their lot was starvation. And rather than work and starve they said, "If we must starve, we will **fight and starve!**" Four hundred thousand railroad men have said, "We refuse to be coolies!" And they struck. Textile workers, one hundred thousand strong, refused to bend their necks and to accept the yoke of humble slavery, and they too walked out. And that spirit we see everywhere in America, a spirit that we, as workers and members of the Young Workers League must enter into and strengthen. For it is in the daily strife that the workers will gain experiences and begin to grasp an understanding of the necessity of aiming for the complete overthrow of capitalist society.

The American working class is battling nobly against these wage slashes; against odds indeed, but battling still. Pressed to the wall, attacked by soldiers of a capitalist government and by capitalist thugs these men have fought back. And many scabs now lay underneath the earth in Illinois and West Virginia, because LABOR is becoming FIGHTING LABOR! All honor to the battling miners of Illinois and West Virginia. They have taught scabs a lesson which will not soon be forgotten by the capitalists and their hirelings. But they have done more than that. They have taught a lesson in tactics to the American working class, which we believe the workers will not forget, but will remember and do more than remember when the hour of the Social Revolution in America strikes!

Resistance to wage cuts therefore is one of the problems and duties of the American working class. The Young Workers League must enter into these struggles and fight side by side of these fellow workers. But more than that. As class-conscious workers we must bring our understanding of social problems, of the profit system to bear upon the workers; we must propagandize and educate, that the workers may sooner see the futility of fighting the struggle on the basis of wages and capitalist control—where the cards are ever stacked against the workers—and thereafter direct their energies for the absolute elimination of the system of wage-labor and of capitalist government.

#### Open Shop Problem.

In connection with all that has been said here to-day on the matter of wage cuts it is impossible to leave out the Open Shop problem. We need not tell you what is the Open Shop. You are all too well acquainted with its workings and what an evil it is for the workers. Suffice it to say, that the Open Shop must be fought without stint or limit. The attempt of the capitalist class to destroy every vestige of strength and power of the workers must be combatted to the end—else American labor is dealt a blow from which it would take years to recover. The Open Shop in America would mean no more nor less than plain feudalism and feudal conditions for the working class. The organized labor movement smashed, and then all that the workers of this country have gained thru many years of fierce battle, hunger, starvation and jails, would be swept away over night. Maintaining of the Closed Shop, then, becomes an immediate necessity and a revolutionary duty. And we have every evidence that the

workers are realizing what the Open Shop means and are resisting it with all their might. The Young Workers League, too, must lend encouragement and support to all workers engaged in this worthy struggle.

However, to an immediate problem now directly affecting the young workers, that of Child Labor. Capitalism sucks every drop of blood it can from its victims. The capitalists are the blood-sucking drones of society and care not who are their victims—be they the gray-haired old men hurried to the pauper's home after being bled white for profits, or the little children in the Southern cotton fields, in the poisonous canning factories, in the tubercular-breeding textile mills. Profits. That is all capitalism hopes for, thinks for, drives for. And its government of course, render its masters every aid. So long as profits could be ground out nicely enough without much use of children, capital permitted itself the moral pleasantries and amusing irony of a Child Labor Law. When then the Child Labor Law became restrictive, its willing tool, the Supreme Court, declared this law unconstitutional. And that is what one must expect from class institutions, from class society. The Supreme Court is obeying its master.

And need we add any word to the character of capitalist government, of the capitalist courts, other than to mention the injunction (the Daugherty injunction) of the other day against the striking railroad shopmen? Was ever better the court, the judiciary of the United States, shown to be but an organ, a groveling servant of the capitalist class? And need we say anything else concerning that injunction other than that ALL WORKERS must resist and fight that and all injunctions? And is it not now clear that the government of the United States is the capitalist class?

To the child labor question, again. The working class of America cannot stand for child labor. Its use means the impoverishment and degradation not only of the children, but also of the entire working class. Employment of children reduces the wages of the adult workers, in fact replaces them in many instances by children. More members of the family must labor to get the same—a little bread, just enough for existence. This is not a matter of the right or wrongness of child labor. Let us not consider it from the standpoint of morals, but as a simple economic problem affecting each and every wage earner and family. This attack upon the living standard of the workers, the most vicious attack in its way, an attack without restraint, nor care, nor thought of its results, must be fought. This is a fundamental and immediate issue and it is for the organized labor movement to move strongly against this latest smash of capitalism. Young members cannot help but fight hard. Child labor is degrading, physically, morally, intellectually. All strength and powers are sapped from the young children. Child labor tends to make morons—undeveloped, or rather underdeveloped, men and women. Child labor pauperizes the working class. It kills the hope of the future. We must not permit birth to become death! If ever capitalism is revealed in all its ugliness, if ever government is again proved to be but a class instrument, a class club, it is proved now in the actions and attempts of the capitalists and the government to **institutionalize** Child Labor in America. Young workers! Fight this capitalist scourge as you

have never fought aught else before. Don't let them draw your last breath for profits. All workers must work on this issue: Children shall not work!

And lastly, comrades, what is our task? Youth, we are told, is to be the leader of the future world revolution. His shall be the task to educate, to lead, to organize, to battle against the forces of capitalist tyranny and exploitation. That is well indeed if that is the role of the young workers. But if this is the task and duty of leadership, the young workers must prepare themselves for that work.

#### Must Not Lose Sight of Goal.

We have seen, found it necessary, that we shall engage in the daily struggles with the other workers, that we shall carry on the fight for certain fundamental needs of all workers. But we must not lose sight of the revolutionary goal—the elimination of capitalist society and its replacement by a dictatorship of the proletariat, functioning thru the Soviet Government, aiming and preparing for the free social order of communism.

And hence education based on the teachings of revolutionary Marxism also becomes our immediate task. For without this preparation, without this clarity of thought, of purpose, then we are lost. Then our action would be stupid and blind. The slogan of the Young Workers League, let us not forget, comrades, is: Clarity and Action.

In Russia, for example, comrades, the young workers and young Communists make up the red army, the defenders of the Soviet Republic. They are leaders

in the new educational work, in the unions, in the arts, etc. As is to be expected, if they fulfill properly the role allotted them by history, youth will be the backbone of the revolutionary workers, its fighting vanguard. The young workers must not be led astray by the siren call of reformism, but must always maintain their clarity of purpose and action. Thru close study and thru application of that education, thru education and action will we learn the proper tactics. It is because for years back the educational work has been neglected, or worse yet, perverted, that the revolutionary movement in America has been in a great part so backward, disrupted and broken within itself. Social-Democratic education, reformist education instead of class education, has not only hindered, but positively harmed the development of the revolutionary movement here. Let us not forget these mistakes and lessons. Let us hereafter carry on our educational work, our whole activity in the direction of our goal, to the end that every move we make, every action we take brings us closer to the day of final conflict, the day of revolution and a worker's Soviet Republic in America.

Youth's role then, what is it? This: thru their keen brains, their strong arms, thru their organized political and economic strength, youth shall lead the workers of the world for the overthrow of capitalist society, of wage-slavery and toward the new society—communism.

Prepare for the day when the iron battalions of the working class shall throttle capitalist despotism and capitalist government forever!