

International Youth Day

All the glorious traditions of the revolutionary youth in their struggle against capitalism, militarism and war are embodied in International Youth Day.

As the day of demonstration against these curses of present day society, the first Sunday of every September, was set aside by the revolutionary Socialist youth who met at the first international anti-war conference held during the World War. Who were more courageous than the handful of youth who assembled at Bern, Switzerland, in the dark days of April 1915?

Neither the mass chauvinistic spirit of the time fostered by the capitalist class and the official Social Democratic parties, nor the powerful coercive powers of the war governments could deter their struggle. Filled with revolutionary enthusiasm and a keen understanding of the imperialist character of the World War, their small numbers and their isolation from the mass of youth did not deter them from unfurling the banner of the Socialist struggle against war, of revolutionary internationalism.

These advanced youth had been taught by the Left wing in the old Second International. Above all Liebknecht and Luxemburg had fought for the organization of the youth. As early as the 1900 Paris Congress the Second International recognized the need for "the education and organization of the young people with the object of fighting militarism."

Origin of Socialist Youth Movement

In the period from the late '80's to 1907, Socialist youth organizations arose in all the important countries of Europe and America. In some, primarily as anti-militarist organizations (Belgium, Italy, Holland, South Germany, Spain, Switzerland and Norway), in others, as defenders of the apprentices and young workers (Austria, North Germany), in still others, for the Socialist education of the youth (England, the United States).

All reflected the growing importance of youth under imperialism, as wage slaves and cannon-fodder. The growing militarization of Europe at the turn of the last century focused the attention particularly of the revolutionary Socialists on the problem of winning the youth for socialism.

The process culminated at Stuttgart on August 24, 1907, where, under the leadership of Karl Liebknecht the Socialist youth leagues organized the first revolutionary youth international. The fate of the militant youth movement was inextricably bound up with that of the revolutionary Socialist wing of the Second International.

On the wave of the enthusiasm engendered by the heroic struggles of the Russian workers in 1905, the internationalists gained strength in Western Europe and America. On the crest of this Western European Socialist Youth International was founded. However, reaction soon set in. Shortly after the Stuttgart Congress the influence of the Left wing receded, not to be revived until the Russian working class revolution of November 1917. Thus came the decline of the world Socialist youth movement.

Nevertheless small groups of youth were trained in revolutionary Marxism. Those who had founded the Socialist Youth International joined, in the main, the Left wing in their respective country. While there was neither unanimity nor clarity among the revolutionary Marxists and though they were not well organized, the crucial test of a social crisis, the World War, found them united in defense of internationalism.

Anti-War Position at Bern

The Bern Youth Conference arose on this background. It denounced the Social Democratic war mongers who despite their repeated anti-war pledges, given at International Congresses and meetings, became bloodthirsty proponents of the imperialist slaughter. Uncertainty was displayed on the question of the centrists. But what was to be expected on such an occasion? Surely not a clear-cut, complete Marxist program!

Not until the Russian revolution of November 1917 and the creation of the Communist International did the youth movement again arise. The Young Communist International was thus organized in Berlin on November 20, 1919, nine months after the founding of the Comintern.

This genuine heir of the revolutionary Socialist youth traditions, endorsed the decision of the Bern Conference on International Youth Day. However, the struggle against centrism on the matter of the political subordination of the Young Communist League to the Communist parties was not solved until the Second Congress of the Y.C.I. in 1921.

The thriving militant youth movement was temporarily doomed with the victory of Stalinism in the Communist International, the defeat, once again, of the revolutionary Marxists. The revisionist and treacherous program and practices of the Stalinists could have no other effect than the collapse of the Young Communist International. The bureaucratic regime in the Communist parties, which took on even greater repugnant force among the youth, could not but be repugnant to the young workers and their need for self-education and development.

Steps Towards New Youth International

Arising from this situation the movement for a new world party of revolutionary Marxism, the Fourth International, is finding its reflection among the youth. The Luxemburg Youth Conference held last February, in organizing the International Bureau of Revolutionary Youth Organizations, marked an important step forward in this process. Unanimity does not exist. Many of the participating youth organizations do not understand the need for a decisive struggle against centrism. Are they less advanced than were the youth who assembled at Bern in 1915? Only the most patient discussion and constructive joint activities can win these youth to a full revolutionary program.

These are the considerations which we must recall on the nineteenth International Youth Day. Today when reaction is growing throughout the world, we must assemble the forces of revolution. The victory of Fascism in Germany, the Fascist danger in France, the spread of incipient Fascism in democratic United States, as well as the threatening war clouds which hover over the world, the growth of the militarization of the youth and the hopeless plight of the young workers and students under capitalism, challenge us to build a powerful youth movement—for the youth are the first victims of imperialist wars and Fascist demagogues.

Just as the revolutionary vanguard requires the youth, so the militant youth movement depends upon political guidance from the vanguard. Such should be the inseparable connection between the Communist League and the Spartacus Youth League. Together we call upon the militant youth to demonstrate on September 2nd against wage slavery, militarism and imperialist war.

—JOS. CARTER.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Due to an unfortunate combination of circumstances the regular "Question Box" does not appear in this column. However, we hope once again to be able to present our readers with this feature in the coming issues.

Trying to Turn the Clock Of History Back

Called by the national committee of the Socialist Party of Argentina, a congress of "Iberian-American democracy" is scheduled to take place in Buenos Aires in September. Invited to participate in this congress are "the democratic parties and central organizations of a democratic type" of Latin America.

The task of this congress, according to its callers, will be to unite the above described organizations on a common plan of action in favor of the following program:

1. Free interchange, commercial and culturally. (Free trade.)
2. Pacific solution of international conflicts.
3. Defense of the republican and democratic forms of government.
4. Labor legislation.
5. Control of foreign capital (imperialist capital).
6. Compulsory, free, lay education.
7. Separation of church and state.

As yet it is unknown what response this call has had among the liberal, democratic and reformist groups of Latin America. This platform will, however, undoubtedly be attractive to such organizations as the Apra of Peru, Groves party in Chile the Socialist Parties of Uruguay and Brazil, Grau San Martin in Cuba, the Left wing of the National Revolutionary Party in Mexico and the Sandinist group in Nicaragua.

Even by an immense stretch of imagination we cannot picture the above program as issuing from a workers' party. It would be conservative even for a petty bourgeois liberal group. It is a twentieth century echo of English 19th century liberalism.

Caught in the scissors of big foreign financial capital, mainly invested in extractive industries (mining, rubber, cotton, coffee, meat, nitrate, fruit) and in railroad and power and the super-exploited proletariat slaving in these industries, the native industrial capitalists, tiny and impotent, in many cases little removed from artisanry, adopts a position in international politics analogous to their position in economics: in between, is the best description. By their very nature incapable of a revolutionary struggle against imperialism, they find solace in miserable impotent reactionary walling.

The financial capitalists demand the uncontrolled exploitation of the semi-colonial countries and the workers and peasants in them. The proletariat demands freedom from all imperialism. The petty bourgeoisie wants to "control" foreign capital. (The fly on the cow's rump wants to control the cow!)

Dependent upon foreign capital for the machines and tools they use; upon railroads owned by foreign imperialists to transport their products; upon banks to finance their undertakings; upon laborers working for the foreign imperialists for their chief market—they are controlled by foreign capital and will become ever more dependent upon it instead of attaining the control over it they dream about.

South America is the arena for a free-for-all fight between various European and North American groups, with the late entrance of Japan into the fray. The chief battles are Great Britain and the United States. The conflicts in South America are in reality conflicts between countries sympathetic to British influence versus those sympathetic to North America. Governments are formed and overthrown, nations fight each other, international pacts are signed according to the dictates of the course of events in the struggles between these two countries.

At present we have the war in the Chaco. As the two little countries involved directly become exhausted both from the point of view of man power and economic strength, the powers behind these two governments of Paraguay and Bolivia, the United States and Great Britain, are obliged to call in other forces to decide the issue. The war in the Chaco is in acute danger of becoming continental, international. The prize of this enlarged war will not be a small piece of land in the Chaco, but entire South and Central America and world hegemony.

All the efforts at "pacifistic solution" are not only the phantasies of a class which lives on illusions. Not only will they not stop an imperialist war, but are also a great obstacle in the path of the revolutionary solution of an imperialist war by revolutionary methods. Between the imperialist war of the big financiers, and the revolutionary war of the proletariat we find the petty bourgeoisie dreaming of "pacifistic solutions" of all wars. In this matter also the middle class in-between nature of this all becomes clear.

Free trade? One rubs his eyes to find out if by some chance he has not reversed the position of the hero of Bellamy's "Looking Backward" and instead of waking up in the 21st century, has awakened in the year 1850. To call for free trade—like the industrial capitalists of the latter years in England—in the year 1934, when the world is engaged in a war (at present concealed, but soon to be open) between the imperialists who are continually raising tariff wars against each other, and the proletariat, one of whose historic tasks is the freeing of world economy from its national barriers, shows definitely that this conference is representative of the hopeless petty bourgeoisie.

As in international politics (war) and in economics, so in national politics the middle class character of this call is clear. Between fascism and the proletarian dictatorship this call defends the form of government ideal for capitalism at the time it was small, progressive and democratic. There is no word of independent working class action of even a reformist type.

All of these things clearly prove that what we will have in Buenos Aires in September will be an international conference of representatives of a class left behind by the march of history: the Latin American industrial bourgeoisie. The ideas of this class are on par with its economic development: 1850.

The bourgeois United States of Europe was and is a utopia owing to the fact that European capitalism cannot overcome its inner differences that lead them to the building of ever higher tariff walls and the exciting of ever more frenzied nationalism. For the same reason—that European and North American imperialism cannot overcome their differences—the bourgeois United States of South and Central America is doomed to be still-born. Such is the nature of politics in the epoch of imperialism.

The proletariat lives in 1934. It needs an internationalism suitable to its epoch, a revolutionary internationalism that will carry society forward instead of backward. For the Latin American countries the next step forward is the formation of the United Socialist States of Latin America. The main task of this union will be the defense and extension of the proletarian dictatorship of the various countries against the attacks of imperialism, chiefly Wall Street.

—C. C.

August 24, 1934

Muenzenberg in a Web Of Contradictions

In the July 31st issue of the New Masses, Willi Muenzenberg undertakes to explain the German events to the American workers.

It seems that there is very little agreement on this question even in the minds of the Stalinist historians, since each new pamphlet and article on the subject contradicts the laborious apologetics of its predecessors.

However that may be, we are presented by Muenzenberg with a brand new interpretation, which is to give the American workers the key to the German situation.

Unfortunately, space limitations do not permit us to deal adequately with each point raised. What we intend to do therefore, is to concentrate exclusively on the material presented by Muenzenberg, and show that even on the assumption that the premises laid down are true (which they are not),—the conclusions drawn are entirely at variance with the facts presented.

In an introduction where he attempts to give a picture of the conditions in Germany prior to Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, Muenzenberg reveals in the most unmistakable manner the crass, unhistorical and un-Marxian approach of the Stalinist historians.

After recording the effects of the economic crisis in Germany from 1928, he goes on to attribute the success of the Fascists in winning a mass base (1) to the propaganda of Goebbels and (2) "by promising every group in the population what that group desired."

And what, pray, was the "revolutionary party" doing during that interval? "The Socialist Party," Muenzenberg continues, was "declining steadily" during 1930-1931 and: "The Communist Party in the ensuing winter of 1932-1933 began to win the masses at a rapid rate. It began to attain considerable success in its tactic of the united front (under below!)"

Under these conditions, granting for the moment that they are true, and that "when the Prussian Government was overthrown in the coup d'etat of July 20, 1932 . . . (the) Social Democracy's last iota of prestige disappeared," it should have been a comparatively easy task for the C. P. to rally the workers under its banner.

Make This Out—if You Can!

But, no! Despite the fact that the Social Democracy was completely discredited and that: "Its trade unions were losing members at a catastrophic pace" and; that the C. P. was attaining "considerable success in its policy of the united front"; and, that it was winning "the masses at a rapid rate"—despite all these favorable factors, says Muenzenberg, the reason "Hitler did not seize power in an open struggle against the working class," was because this same Social Democracy (which had already lost its influence), prevented the workers "from making a solid united front; (and) had been compelled to make a retreat."

How is one then to interpret all his statements about the success of the party's united front policy, its winning the masses at a rapid rate and the disintegration of the S.D.? Perhaps the editors of the New Masses will undertake to enlighten the American workers on this score!

And then to cap it all, he concludes this part of his article with this statement: "We will continue the tactics of the united front, as we have successfully up to now (1), together with the German workers, for a real revolution and not for another bourgeois-social democratic regime." Is this perhaps the same kind of united front that Browder is now so anxious to have the S. P. accept?

By this casuistry, the Stalinists hope to extricate themselves from their responsibility for the German defeat. But it is a difficult task.

It was not so long ago that Muenzenberg spoke in a different vein. In February 1932, he had this to say about the united front: "A bloc or even an alliance, or even temporary joint operation in individual actions between the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party in Germany against National Socialism, would forever discredit the Communist Party among the broad masses of the workers. . . . Then, it was the united front below that would crush fascism, for as the great Stalin himself hath said, and all the little Muenzenbergs after him: 'The Social Democracy and Fascism are not antipodes but twins'." It was first necessary to defeat the S. P. before fascism could be destroyed. In a statement of the Central Committee of the German Communist party in July, 1932, it was even proclaimed that fascism already existed!

"Before all, we must make it clear to the social democratic workers that what we have today is the Fascist dictatorship. . . . The same holds for the illusion that the S.D.P.G. or the General German Trade Union Alliance are also organizations of the anti-fascist struggle. Whoever would aim to build on the idea that by 'appeals' to the S.D.P.G. or other reformist organizations, a struggle would come about, would disarm the proletariat."—Rote Fahne, July 26, 1932.

Muenzenberg, also cannot refrain from taking a poke at the Trotskyites. In a brilliant example of history written to order, he says: "The Trotskyites say we made a mistake in January, 1933 when we didn't declare a general strike ourselves (!), with or without the Socialists (!!), when we didn't summon the workers to follow us into the streets for an armed uprising. We are ready to bear responsibility for what we did before the Communists of New York today, and before the coming World Congress of the Comintern in Moscow. The events of the last one and a half years have shown that the line of Thaelmann and the German Party was correct."

The correct line which put Hitler into power and Thaelmann in jail, is now counter-posed to an invented one for the Trotskyites. The German L. O. which for years prior to Hitler's advent to power consistently advocated the united front between the S. D. and C. P., for which they were peremptorily castigated as "counter-revolutionists," are now accused of calling for an armed uprising without the S.D.! Needless to say, Muenzenberg does not quote chapter and verse to substantiate this fantastic proposition. His very original mind, while it can invent unconscionable fabrications, cannot produce what does not exist.

While the World Congress of the Comintern—if it ever is held—can be depended on to whitewash the criminal betrayal of the German workers, the workers of N. Y. and the world over will soon give their answer to the Stalinist—organizer of defeats.

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239

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WORLD OF LABOR

YOUTH UNITE IN BELGIUM

Belgian youth are showing the way of genuine united front action to the young workers and students of the world. An agreement for action against war and fascism has been arrived at between the three major youth organizations: The National Federation of Young Socialist Guards, the Young Communist League and the Young Leninists (the Belgian counterpart of the Young Spartacus). The three organizations will fight for the liberation of all class war prisoners irrespective of political affiliation and organize joint action of the workers against the dictatorial powers of the reactionary Belgian government. Further, the united organizations will combat the recent government decrees calling for the dissolution of the Young Socialist Guards and the Young Leninists. Independence of organization is to be maintained in the united struggle against the common foe.

Two features are of interest here. One is that the Stalinist party organization have designed to enter a united front with the "counter-revolutionary Trotskyists." And the other is the splendid attitude of the Young Socialists in the course of the negotiations with the Stalinists. The Belgian Y.C.L. addressed a proposal to the Young Socialists calling for united struggle in behalf of Thaelmann. To this the Y.S.G. replied in part:

"We believe that the defense of a militant like Trotsky is equally as important and that we should be in the camp opposing the French bourgeoisie. We think that every militant without regard to tendency hounded by international reaction should be defended by us."

NOTES ON THE UNITED FRONT

Czechoslovakia

A blanket refusal was the answer of the Czech Socialist party to the Stalinist request for a united front. They charge the Communist party with splitting the trade union movement and working for the destruction of the social democratic organizations. In years gone by, this argument would not have carried an ounce of water. But since the advent of Stalinism, with its theories of "social-fascism" and "red trade unions" not a few workers are affected by it and believe the reformists sincere in refusing the united front.

Britain

Here too the "Loyal Opposition of His Majesty King George," the chancellors of the Labor Party have rejected unity of action with the C. P. In Britain the Communist Party is an insignificant sect. It has little or no support in the unions which could reinforce its demand. Then the whole policy of the last five years serves as a condemnation. Two outstanding reasons motivate the Labor Party refusal of the united front: "It would stimulate confusion in our own ranks and weaken our hold over public opinion." In other words, the united front would discredit the fakery in the eyes of the workers and compromise them in the opinion of the bourgeoisie. They forget, however, that this is the party of Stalin and not of Lenin.

Holland

The S. P. of Holland says "Nothing Doing." Go appeal to our International. That's how they answer the Stalinist appeal for the united front. They could never get away with such brazen cynicism if they would have to answer to the workers for whom the danger of fascism is more important than the prestige of the bureaucrats, reformist or Stalinist.

Sweden

In Sweden the Social Democrats constitute the bourgeois government. Consequently they will have no truck with any proposition for united front. Because . . . it might lead to sad results for bourgeois society. And that, they wouldn't like at all. So they say to the C. P. "There is a gulf between the revolutionary line of Bolshevism and the peaceful road of Social Democracy. . . . The united front slogan is simply a slogan to increase the influence of Bolshevism at the expense of the Social Democrats and the trade unions."

CONDEMNATION AT ANY PRICE

In this column last week we wrote of the heavy toll taken by Kuo Min Tang terror of the Internationalists in China. In the course of the note we told of the plight of comrade Chen Du Hsiu, founder of the Communist party of China and leader of the Communist League there. We said that due to the intervention of bourgeois admirers he was not subjected to the same treatment as other political prisoners. The statement was immediately seized upon by a certain scribbler for the Daily Worker, one Harry Gannes, who says that . . . "The main bourgeois admirer of Chen Du Hsiu is Wang Chin Wei, one of the chief henchmen of Chiang Kai Shek." On what authority he makes this assertion he does not bother to say. Facts are least important in the Stalinist press. This different treatment (whatever it is, it means intense suffering for the Chinese revolutionist, who has now rounded out his seventieth year) is accorded Chen, according to Gannes, because of "his service to the executioners of the Chinese workers and peasants." Then why is he in jail altogether? Surely even the Chinese bourgeoisie has more use for such a "staunch friend" than to keep him cooped up in a foul dungeon. Or perhaps, as the argument went in regards to the "red" scare in Minneapolis, it is to make him more popular with the Chinese workers in order to be able to sell them out later?

But the stalwart loyalty of Chen to the revolutionary workers of China stands in glaring contrast to the craven capitulation and outright treachery of Stalinist leaders in China. Gannes says they are executed immediately upon apprehension. That might be true if they stuck to their guns. But the facts speak another story with most of them. Here is only a partial list of Gannes' heroes who have reneged on the proletariat, capitulated to the bourgeoisie and even betrayed their own comrades:

Tsang King-teh—secretary of the Chinese section of the International Red Aid.

Chen Yung-chao—head of the Chinese Communist party.

Chang Chi-yung—director of the Organizational Department of the Kiangsu Provincial Committee of the Chinese Communist party.

Lin Wen Hsiang—a party member and secretary and executive member of the party-controlled Shanghai Labor Union.

Fang Yuen-ming—editor of the party's trade union organ.

These facts only partially exhaust the names of the real renegades from Communism, to say nothing of the scores of spies, the most ardent "Trotsky-baiters," that wormed their way into the leading councils of the party only later to betray the most militant and courageous workers to the police.

NEW INTERNATIONAL OFF THE PRESS

The August issue of the New Internationalist is now available to all readers. It is an anti-war number and the major part of its contents deal with the questions of imperialism and militarism in the last war and the war to come. Besides, there is highly interesting material on the united front in France, containing documents hitherto unavailable in the English language.

Stalin's Camp Followers on Latin America

This article is devoted to a discussion of the position of those apologists for the Stalinists, the Lovestonettes on Latin America. These people in their pitiable impotence to influence the course of events and because of the shameful ambition of their leaders to recapture important positions in the apparatus of the Stalinist party, defend or cover up the betrayal of the Stalinists.

In August 1933 the class struggle in Cuba reached the point at which the tension of the classes broke out into revolutionary struggle against the Machado dictatorship and American imperialism. The Lovestonettes maintained a profound and, for them, wise silence. When "revolutionists" do not understand that the revolution has arrived it is always wiser to keep quiet. A month later the masses struck again and raised the petty bourgeoisie to the seat of power, Martin supplanted DeCespedes as provisional president. The Lovestonettes still steeped themselves in silence. Wisdom had not been vouchsafed them. Four months later the revolution suffered a defeat with the reinstallation in power of the docile servants of American imperialism; this time it was Mendieta, who replaced Martin as president. The Lovestonettes reported a general strike. They were too busy reforming the Communist

parties of Germany and the United States to explain to the workers the significance of the Cuban revolution, what the Cuban workers were doing, what mistakes they were making, what was the role of the Communist party of Cuba in these events, what was still to be done in Cuba, what was to be done in the United States to help the Cuban workers. The same silence covered the infamous bargain Litvinov made with Roosevelt in its relation to the Cuban revolution, especially in the question of the fight against American imperialism. And on the war in the Gran Chaco the Lovestonettes observed the same policy of silence-is-golden.

But those in the Lovestonette camp who had faith were rewarded. In the July 15 issue of the Workers Age the Lovestonettes who, in their time "discovered" Latvia and Estonia, discovered the existence of the Cuban revolution. Those who seek light on the struggles which convulse the "Queen of the Caribbean" should read Ellen Ward's "Cuba in Turmoil." But remember as you read that this is the first pronouncement by these right wing Communists on the Cuban question. If you look for their position on the Cuban revolution you will look in vain. You will find, however, that Cuba's geographic position, population, principal crops and size are set forth with

the precision and language of a tourist guide book.

One other aspect of Ward's curious approach deserves mention. Ward tells us that "In addition to our economic interest we have a very vital political interest in Cuba." (The interest of the international proletarian revolution? No.) "Its dominant position in the Caribbean and its closeness to the Panama Canal make the island a strategic point in the continental defense of the United States." (Our emphasis). Ward writes like a patriot!

Ward attempts a chronological survey of the events covered by the period of the Lovestonettes' silence, that is to say, the first year of the present epoch of the Cuban revolution. It is a strange record which she compiles. According to Ward the "starving and wretched masses" overthrew Machado. But American imperialism was able to ease in DeCespedes who, Ward recognizes, "smelled so much of his former chief." How was this possible? Ward is discreetly silent. "The army and the students supported by another surge of the masses, took control of the government and put in Grau San Martin." Why weren't the masses able to take power? Ward does not tell us. The U. S. didn't recognize Grau. Wall Street was afraid of the big bad wolf. Grau who was carrying out repres-

sions against the workers and who dared to use troops to shoot down strikers and demonstrators, "appeared to take the demands of the masses too much in earnest." And so it goes with Hevia and Mendieta. The Cuban revolution is explained as a succession of presidential personalities in relation to American imperialism much as the school texts explain history as a succession of kings. The class struggle in this type of history, lurks somewhere in the background and makes its presence felt like the occasional rumble of a volcano.

On the role of the Communist party of Cuba Ward is as silent as the tomb. Grave charges have been laid at the door of this party. They have been substantiated with documents. A clear case of treachery has been made against the C. P. of Cuba. But Ward, like her confederates, finds it politic to pass this question by in silence. Eloquent testimony of the character of this movement!

Is this silence accidental? Not at all. Ward summarizes the statement of the Communist party of Cuba on the abrogation of the Platt Amendment. Did the Lovestonettes "discover" the literature of the Cuban Stalinists only yesterday? Strange and convenient ignorance of the statement of the Communist party of Cuba of the abrogation of (Continued on Page 4)