



The Young People's Socialist League

on "Why Are We Striking?"

April 22, 1936

Today, when many thousands of students are demonstrating in militant anti-war action, the Young People's Socialist League urges upon you the necessity for clarity and permanent organization in the fight against war. Through the American Student Union, Young Socialists of America have worked for the Student Strike of today. But we see in today's Student Strike only the beginning. Though giving wholehearted support to the American Student Union, we nevertheless believe that Young Socialist organization on the campus is necessary to carry to completion the final struggle for International Socialism, which alone will mean peace in the world.

In 1913-14, few people realized the imminence of war; in 1936 everyone looks upon the present as a pre-war period. In the months preceding and following America's entrance into the World War, only one student organization fought the war in American colleges and universities—the Intercollegiate Socialist Society. The heritage of those brave souls of another student generation and the heritage of the Student League for Industrial Democracy, which first conceived the Student Strike, comes down to us in this Third Student Strike Against War.

Young Socialists support the Student Strike as an instrument which will train students to think and act in a manner that will be effective if and when the war bugles begin to blow. We see in today's Student Strike a *rehearsal*, a *preparatory mobilization*, a *drill* for the type of mass action which alone is a weapon against war when it has broken out. If all of us who are participating today, act with the conscious knowledge that we are preparing for mass resistance, then the Student Strike can become a really decisive force making for the maintenance of peace. The Student Strike anticipates a war situation; to the government it tells of our determination to resist a future war; to the students participating it gives strength and morale; to those not participating it brings a realization that there is a student anti-war movement which is determined and well organized; to university administrations and high school boards of education it is both a challenge for support and a warning of the determination of students not to be stopped in their fight for peace.

DEFENSIVE AND OFFENSIVE WAR

Students who walk out of their class rooms at 11 o'clock can indicate through their actions and through the passage of resolutions that they, whom the government believes will fight the next war for it, will not support the government in any war it may undertake. That fact can be made to ring in the ears of those who already are preparing a repetition of 1914-18—a war for profit and investments.

Many students not wishing to renounce "defense of their country" against an "invader" hesitate to take the Oxford Pledge: "refusal to support any war conducted by the United States Government," Young Socialists consider the idea of defensive war as one of the illusions by which capitalist governments induce the workers, farmers and youth to wage their wars. *Every nation in the World War claimed it was fighting a defensive war.* The responsibility cannot be appor-

tioned to any one of the imperialist powers. All are equally responsible, all equally fight for foreign markets, investments, raw materials. The Young People's Socialist League believes that any struggle in which the youth of one capitalist country are thrown against those of another capitalist country; where workers and farmers are thrown against workers and farmers—that war can bring nothing but destitution, misery, and military dictatorship.

WHAT'S THE TRUTH, MR. ROOSEVELT?

American capitalism is preparing for such a war. The action of the Democratic-controlled Congress, on order from the White House, in collaboration with Republican legislators in Congress, has passed the largest peace-time budget in the history of the United States. The War Department under President Roosevelt was almost directly responsible for the installation of compulsory conscription in the island puppet of American imperialism—the “independent Philippines”.

Our Student Strike is a challenge to Mr. Roosevelt—Why does the War Department in its official Doctrine of War state that the aim in the training of American armed forces is “offensive warfare”? When American students march over college and high school drill fields, over what foreign lands do you expect us to march later? We ask you if we are prepared to defend “American investments” in the Far East as we defended the “American investments” of Morgan and his friends in 1917?

Come clean, Mr. Roosevelt! American youth want the truth! Your actions make a mockery of your peaceful words. If you will prepare for peace, American students will prepare in their own right against any war which may come as a result of your policies, or any war into which you may draw us.

SCHOOLS, NOT BATTLESHIPS!

Meanwhile this same Congress rejected a report asking for \$75,000,000 for federal aid to education. At a time when schools are being closed, sessions are being shortened, teachers' salaries being cut, and students are facing the stoppage of federal aid, the administration votes money for destructive purposes. Young Socialists urge that you make today's Strike a demand that funds be diverted to educational and relief purposes. Demand—SCHOOLS, NOT BATTLESHIPS—FEDERAL STUDENT AID INSTEAD OF SALARIES FOR ROTC OFFICERS!

MILITARY PREPARATIONS MEAN WAR

Young Socialists are opposed to military preparations. Military preparedness promotes the urge on the part of the military bureaucracy to consummate that task for which they have been preparing. Military preparations are the result of pressure of those who own and control American economic life. If that class which desires war preparations has sufficient control over Congress to increase armaments, then they have the legislative power to use those military preparations for their own interests. Retired Major-General Smedley D. Butler has very aptly called the War Department of the United States the “muscle men” of big business.

But the cry of disarmament and campaigns against munitions manufacturers are no solution to the problem. It is an illusion to believe that disarmament can be achieved, or that profit can be taken out of war, until capitalism is abolished.

A PANACEA FOR WAR

Students are being asked today, by “peace-lovers” ranging from liberals to Communists, to support a “panacea for war”: collective action of nations through

the application of economic or military sanctions against an "aggressor" nation. The agency for collective action for peace is the League of Nations. Today the international Communist movement believes that peace and labor movements should support sanctions.

Socialists state frankly that they believe that economic sanctions mean military sanctions and eventually war on behalf of those governments which control the League of Nations. Socialists do not believe that peace can be achieved through support of one group of imperialist nations against another imperialist nation or group of nations. Socialists do not believe that the interests of labor or youth on the question of war can be the same as the interests of the capitalist class of any nation. True internationalism means opposition to any policy which will help maintain imperialism and to any policy which will tend to weaken the struggle for socialism through the attachment of the labor movement to a capitalist government.

WAR AND FASCISM

When the profits of capitalists are imperiled by an economic crises, Capitalism resorts to Fascism to preserve itself by abolishing the minimum democratic rights of the workers. But Fascism, although it is a last desperate attempt to preserve capitalism, does not succeed in arresting the decay of the economic structure. Threatened with revolt at home because of the desperate economic conditions of the masses of the people, Fascism is in turn forced to resort to war to distract the rebelling masses with false patriotism. For this reason, Young Socialists consider the fight against Fascism to be implicit in the fight against war. However, Socialists do not believe that Fascism can be fought by alliances of "democratic" nations against Fascist nations for Fascism is not a contagious disease but is inherent in every capitalist structure. Fascism can be fought effectively only by the resistance of labor and students to its manifestations at home; by crusades against the Hearsts, the denials of free speech, the attempts to arrest the growth of the labor movement.

When the Test Came in April 1917

"We . . . call upon the workers of all countries to refuse support to their governments in their wars. . . . The only struggle which would justify the workers in taking up arms is the great struggle of the working class of the world to free itself from economic exploitation and political oppression, and we particularly warn the workers against the snare and delusion of so-called defensive warfare. . . . In support of capitalism, we will not willingly give a single life or a single dollar in support of the struggle of the workers for freedom we pledge our all."

—St. Louis Declaration of the Socialist Party, April 1917

SOLIDARITY AGAINST WAR

In this struggle for peace and freedom, the students of America cannot and do not stand alone. Students alone cannot stop war. Students must of necessity turn to that class to which many of us will belong in the future; that class which gains nothing and suffers most from war—the workers of the nation, skilled and unskilled.

Socialists believe that it is to organized labor that students must look for the strong support and action which alone will prove effective against the forces of war. It is the trade unions which can halt the manufacture of munitions, it is they who can stop the manufacture of clothes and materials needed for an army; it is they who can arrest the transportation of materials for war.

For this reason Young Socialists urge the participation of students in the coming May Day demonstrations of labor. The cities of America will witness a mighty outpouring of labor on this day. May Day is the time when students can give their acknowledgment that labor constitutes the mightiest force in the world today for peace and freedom.

THE PERMANENT FIGHT AGAINST WAR

Because Young Socialists believe that Fascism and War have their basis in and are produced inevitably by a system where production is for profit . . . we believe that the sole insurance against War and Fascism is the abolition of the capitalist system and the establishment of a Socialist Society. It is not enough to fight War and Fascism as merely isolated phenomena; we must organize to fight against the economic system that produces them; we must organize for Socialism.

We urge you to enlist in the long-term and permanent fight against War and Fascism by joining the Young People's Socialist League. The Young People's Socialist League is the youth section of the Socialist Party. But it is more than that. It is the American section of the International Socialist Youth Movement which is carrying on the fight for peace and against capitalism in France, Spain, Belgium, Austria and Germany.

On this day of the strike against War, we want to say to the students of America that we believe the primary task of youth is the organization of young people into a disciplined and militant political body of youth who can wage the fight for Socialism in the school, in the factory, and on the farm.

ENLIST NOW!

READ THE SOCIALIST PRESS:

- The *Challenge of Youth* . . . Young Socialist Periodical with a 4-page student section . . . 3 cents—25 cents a year.
 - The *Socialist Call* . . . Weekly organ of militant Socialism . . . 5 cents—\$1.00 yearly.
 - American Socialist Monthly* . . . Official theoretical organ of the Socialist Party of the United States . . . 15 cents—\$1.50 a year.
- Read—"Youth Fights War" by Gus Tyler—5 cents. The Socialist Position on the War Question. Published by the Young People's Socialist League.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIALIST LEAGUE

21 EAST 17TH STREET
NEW YORK CITY

I wish to join the Young People's Socialist League.

I would like additional information concerning the Young People's Socialist League.

Name

Address

School..... Age.....