



The Student L. I. D.

on

Why and What Are We Striking for?

April, 1935

On this day when many thousands of students are demonstrating in a history-making protest, their solidarity in the fight against war, the Student League for Industrial Democracy, one of the original sponsors of a strike, urges upon you the need for clarity and for permanent organization in the anti-war fight. Our strike must not be considered the be-all and end-all of the anti-war movement. In fact, it is only a beginning.

We choose a strike for several reasons: Because it is the most effective and dramatic form of protest against the war preparations now in progress; because it is in a sense a "fire drill" for the only form of mass action which promises to be effective against a summons to war in the future; because polls and convocations and conferences are played out, and can be dismissed as "surface scratching" when the strike cannot; because of the publicity which a strike brings, publicity which will not only go far to impress the American people with the seriousness of our purpose, but which will reach foreign shores, there strengthening the hand of the anti-war movement which has been so completely confounded by the intensive war preparations of the U. S. government.

The students of the world today are back in the same precarious position as the students of 1914. Never before has the world been so near to war, yet not in actual war. Looking back with a perspective of 20 years we ask ourselves, what could the students in 1914 have done to really aid in the prevention of the conflict that cost ten million lives of their generation? Protest? Send telegrams? Hold conferences? —None of these things were effective in the delirious months before Sarajevo. Their only effective method of expression was a student strike against war. But such a strike would have required long preparation, courage and clarity of vision. Today we are in the same place.

T H E Y D I D N ' T S T R I K E



Defensive and Offensive Wars

The students that have walked out of their classrooms at 11 o'clock are indicating thereby that they, whom the Government believes will fight the next war for it, will not support that government in any war it may undertake. That fact must go ringing through the ears of those who would recklessly plunge us into a war for profit. Not wishing to renounce defending their country against an "invader," some students may cavil at this pledge. They would distinguish between aggressive and defensive war and reserve the right to fight in the latter. The Student L.I.D. rejects this distinction, considering it a dodge whereby capitalist nations induce their people to wage their wars. *Every nation in the World War claimed it was fighting a defensive war.* Regardless of who strikes the match that sets off the tinder pile, the materials that feed the conflagration of war are the mass of imperialist rivalries and capitalist self-seekings that long precede the actual pretext for the conflict. One cannot apportion responsibility among imperialists for a war. All are equally responsible. Particularly is this true of the United States. No nation can possibly invade us. The only nation that is thought of in this connection is Japan, but Japan can never build a fleet large enough to carry an aggressive war to American shores,—no more than we can build a fleet large enough to carry a war to Japanese soil. In light of these facts it is an easy responsibility for American students, as compared with British undergraduates, to take the Oxford pledge. If we are not to be involved in a war with Japan over Chinese markets, we must let our government know now that we will not serve in its expeditionary forces to the Orient.

Come Clean, Mr. Roosevelt

The Democratic controlled Congress acting on orders from the White House has just passed a huge military peace-time budget. General MacArthur is proposing that C.C.C. recruits be given two months military training. Senator Frazier's amendment of the army appropriation bill to make R.O.T.C. elective was buried under an avalanche of administration votes. Our fleet is undertaking provocative manoeuvres in the Pacific. Against these war measures, our student strike is a protest. And it is a question to Mr. Roosevelt—against whom are we preparing to make war? When you march us over college drill fields, over what foreign lands do you expect us to march later? When our fleet conducts target practice in Pacific waters, what foreign nation is supposed to take warning that these same guns may shell its inhabitants? Come clean, Mr. Roosevelt, the youth of this country wants to know.

"Arming" for Peace

The Student L.I.D. is opposed to military preparations. We do not consider them a guarantee of peace. All nations were armed to the hilt in 1914, yet war broke out. Huge armaments merely multiplied the chances of conflict. Parenthetically we must say, that we do not believe that the nationalization of munitions manufacture will end war. Munitions makers breed war in the same way and for the same reason that shyster doctors prolong illness, and therefore, they are dangerous to the peace of the world. But they have a profitable market because they can play on the rivalries and schemings of militarist nations. The abolition of private ownership of munitions factories will not abolish war; only the abolition of a system that uses war to settle arguments between rival groups of imperialists will achieve that.

Solidarity the World Over

There is a fellowship and fraternity amongst the ten million young men who died in the last war—a fellowship of those who died in vain. This brutal fact in mind, German and Frenchman, Englishman and Turk, can join their hands in solemn union. There must be a fellowship of the living youth, a fellowship of all those who refuse to sacrifice their generation in a war which cannot be to their interest. The Student L.I.D. deems it proper that on this day we send our greetings to the students of Europe, of the Far East, of South America, and we point out to our fellow classmates the need of supporting the Brussels Student Congress against War and Fascism, The International Socialist Student Federation, and the coming Pan-American Student Conference against War.

Not only must we join hands with our fellow students in other countries but we must unite with the workers of our own country if we are effectively to combat war. Students alone cannot stop war. It is the trade unions which can stop the transportation of war materials, which can halt the manufacture of the clothes and food necessary to feed an expeditionary force, that can stop war. With them and with sympathetic religious and liberal groups the students must unite in their struggle, because it is these groups along with the young men and women that have nothing to gain from another world war.

Stripping for Action

We declare that Fascism breeds war and that the fight against war must be the fight against Fascism. Fascism represents a nation stripping for action. The rights of minority groups, all the amenities of civilization that the world has struggled to achieve over so many centuries, are cast aside under Fascism in order to build a more effective war machine. Those who are preparing the way for Fascism in this country, the Hearsts, the Nunans, the D.A.R.'s, are preparing us for war.

Enlist in the Permanent Fight against War

The Student L.I.D., however, considers it the most important fact to be understood that Fascism and war have their basis in and are produced inevitably by a system where production is for profit. The search for profits brings nations into conflict, as the war in the Gran Chaco, the animosities in the Far East, and the dispute in Northern Africa abundantly reveal. When profits are imperiled by an economic crisis, capitalists resort to Fascism. When Fascism is unable to satisfy the economic needs of the masses who turned to it for succor, Fascism then turns to war. Capitalism, Fascism, war, are inextricably interwoven. To fight one is to fight all. Our strike today, therefore, is only a beginning. Students, if they really are opposed to war, must carry the fight home to the economic system that produces war. This work of education the Student League for Industrial Democracy has been carrying on ever since 1905 when it was founded by Jack London and others. Never was our message more needed than at present. We urge you to enlist in the longer and more arduous war against war that begins today. Join the Student League for Industrial Democracy.

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