

The Fight Against the Pauperization of the Working Youth

Open Letter of the Y. C. I.

TO THE ENTIRE WORKING CLASS!

To All Young Workers of Both Sexes!

Everywhere, in the factories, in the meetings of the workers' organisations, and in their newspapers.

The Proletarian United Front

is being discussed.

But not only is it being discussed; the working masses have already made many practical steps forward along this road. In January, the Bureau of the International Working Union of Socialist Parties issued an appeal to the workers' parties of the world in which

The Joint Convocation of a General Conference of Labor Organisations

was proposed. In general conference they are to consider what the international working class must do in order to escape from the difficult situation in which it finds itself at present.

In all countries the employers are proceeding with all their power against the workers. Wages are being cut, hours of labor are being increased, and the workers resisting are being locked out or discharged by the hundred thousand. The capitalist governments are attempting to reinforce their shaky positions by the imposition of huge taxes, which bear principally upon the workers.

The working class wants to fight in common against this attack of the capitalist of all countries against the workers, against this

Offensive of Capital

by the uniting of all proletarian forces.

The Communist International, which has hitherto called to the revolutionary battle for emancipation without considering the interests of the international bourgeoisie, and which works in all countries for the union of all the forces of the working class for battle, has also accepted this proposal, so important for the defence of the vital interests of the workers.

WHAT IS THE ATTITUDE OF THE PROLETARIAN YOUTH TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PROLETARIAN UNITED FRONT?

WHAT ARE ITS EXPECTATIONS FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LABOR ORGANISATIONS?

The proletarian youth works in the shops and factories alongside of its adult comrades. The hardships of the older workers are shared by the youth. But they suffer even more. Millions of young workers suffered in body and soul in the trenches of the last war. Millions of adolescents had to undergo the entire misery of the war and were permanently disabled as a result. And now the blows of the offensive of capital are raining down with redoubled energy upon this youth, which has always been subjected to special legislation.

But no one seems to think of the terrible hardships under which the proletarian youth is now bowed. Not even at the present moment, when the misery of the working class has become so great that the whole international labor movement is looking for new, hitherto unused weapons in the fight against the exploiting class.

Should that Remain?

No! The entire working class can no longer look on while capitalism destroys health and vigor of its younger generation and plunges it into the abyss of misery. Too long have reformist trade-unions and the Socialist parties passively endured this perilous state of affairs.

The working youth everywhere demands that something be done for it, that the adult workers at last take up the struggle for the most urgent economic demands of the young workers.

AND THE WORKING YOUTH CAN AND MUST DEMAND THAT THE COMING INTERNATIONAL LABOR CONFERENCE ALSO DECLARES ITSELF READY FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST THE PAUPERIZATION OF THE YOUNGER WORKERS.

The adult workers, however, must and will comply with these demands of the youth. Not only must the coming generation be saved, but the capitalists must be hindered from misusing the disfranchised and defenseless youth in order to reduce wages, break strikes and enslave the youth, thus consolidating its victory over the working class.

TODAY BOTH YOUNG AND ADULT WORKERS HAVE THE SAME INTEREST IN TAKING UP THE DECISIVE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ENSLAVEMENT OF THE WORKING YOUTH.

THE BEGINNING HAS BEEN MADE!

The Communist International and the Red Trade Union International have decided, upon the urgent motion of the Young Communist International, to take up the fight against the pauperization of the working youth on an international scale. And since they realise how burning this question is at the present time, they have further decided.

TO DEMAND THAT THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LABOR ORGANISATIONS TAKE UP THE QUESTION OF THE FIGHT AGAINST THE PAUPERIZATION OF THE WORKING YOUTH.

The Communist International, the Red Trade Union International and the Young Communist International, which have thus taken a decisive step for the commencement of this struggle, have at the same time drawn up a list of demands which are of especial importance in the defensive fight against the offensive of capital. These demands, taken from the program of the Young Communist International, are as follows.

I.

1. **Minimum wages, corresponding to the minimum cost of living.**
2. **Fight against the violation of the eight hour day, against trade education after working hours and for the establishment of the six hour day for minors.**
3. **Provision for the young unemployed.**
4. **Establishment of educational shops for the young unemployed.**
5. **24 hour Sunday rest.**
6. **Four weeks' yearly vacation with full pay.**
7. **Prohibition of night and Sunday work.**
8. **Abolition of the work of minors in trades and factories which are injurious to their health. (Certain branches of the chemical industry, underground work in mines, etc.)**

II.

For Apprentices.

1. **Limitation of the number of apprentices.**
2. **Abolition of individual indentures, apprentices to be included in collective agreements.**
3. **Control of the employment of apprentices by the trade-unions and the shop councils.**

These demands, which answer the urgent needs of all young workers, must be taken up and fought

for by the entire working class. The Communist Organisations have already done so; it is up to the other labor organisations to do the same. The Socialist parties and youth organisations, which have an impossible situation if they pay no attention to the demands of the working youth, must support them as well.

NOW IT IS UP TO EVERY YOUNG AND ADULT WORKER TO THROW THE WEIGHT OF HIS VOTE INTO THE SCALES!!

Young and old, workingmen and workingwomen, see to it that this time the voice of the youth be heard and their rights represented!

The working youth of all countries, who have a burning interest in a large-scale struggle against their pauperization, must now let their voice be heard!

The masses of the working youth must make their will known in meetings and processions.

They must show the parties and trade-unions that it is their warmest desire that at last their cause must be considered and the struggle for their interests taken up. And they must show that they are ready to employ all their forces in the fighting of this struggle.

Comrades! Young and adult workers!

We call you to the international battle against the pauperization of the working youth! Heed the call of the Young Communist International and, together with it, demand, that the international conference put the struggle against the impoverishment of the working youth on its agenda! Take up our demands and unite for a fearless, powerful revolutionary struggle!

FOR THE PLACING OF YOUTH QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER OF BUSINESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE!

FOR THE INVITATION OF THE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL TO THE CONFERENCE!

FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF A RUTHLESS STRUGGLE TO SAVE THE WORKING YOUTH FROM THE EFFECTS OF THE OFFENSIVE OF CAPITAL!

These are the slogans which we call upon you to support!

LONG LIVE THE UNITED FRONT OF THE YOUNG AND ADULT WORKERS!

LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTIONARY PROLETARIAN UNITED FRONT!

**The Executive Committee
of the
Young Communist International.**

Moscow, March 8th, 1922.