

# Gompers Fails Nation's Youth; Organize the Young Workers!

BY MAX SHACHTMAN

After having allowed Sam Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, three months in which to answer the proposal of the Young Workers League of America made to him at the conference in Chicago, the League has decided to bring the issue to the rank and file of organized labor. The proposal was made that the American Federation of Labor establish a young workers' Bureau for the purpose of showing the workers of this country the necessity of organizing the millions of young workers into the unions. Mr. Gompers definitely promised that this matter would be given careful consideration by the executive council of the Federation, but since he made that promise his silence has been that of the graveyard.

Is this then a question which is of such insignificance that labor can afford to ignore it? NO! The number of young workers employed in industry is increasing every day. Reports of the U. S. Department of Labor show that in dozens upon dozens of cities child and youth labor has taken a sudden jump. This is largely due to two facts: One is that in the general drive to break the control of the unions in industry the bosses have found that young workers can easily be used to scab; and two, that with the prostituted Supreme Court having declared the Child Labor law unconstitutional, the employment of children has been given a tremendous impetus.

In New Jersey, for example, the organizers of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union have found it almost impossible to unionize the sweat shops of the "sub-contractors" because of the enormous number of young workers employed in them. In West Virginia, Kentucky and the whole southern coal mining district, young workers are one of the barriers with which union organizers have to contend. During the last summer vacation university students from upstate New York colleges were used to break the strike of the railway shopmen on the Pennsylvania R. R. at Olean, N. Y., Harrisburg, and Altoona, Pa. And the shame of the labor movement is the fact that it was the Church League for Industrial Democracy, a milk-and-water organization of sky pilots, that took the initiative in writing, printing and distributing a leaflet upon the students to play fair, not to "violate the American college spirit and affront their own self-respect."

A couple of months ago 60 boys were used as strikebreakers in the plant of E. Wiener Co. when the upholsterers left the shop after an announcement that thereafter the piece-work plan would prevail. "Besides the piecework grievance," says a Federated Press dispatch, "the strikers charged that the company was turning the plant into a kindergarten, a claim that was verified when it was found that children even below the permit age were being put into the labor treadmill."

And every day brings new instances of the importance which the employment of young workers is assuming in the daily struggles of the workers against their bosses. While we recognize the fundamental principle that all child labor up to 16 must be abolished completely, we also recognize the fact that while it is more profitable for the capitalist to employ the young worker instead of the adult, he will do so. We also recognize the fact that young workers are being used as producers to an enormous extent, enormous enough to warrant their being organized into unions.

The youngest worker can be organized. Newsboys have been organized into A. F. of L. unions in at least two cities: in Seattle where John Nothorn was the leading spirit and delegate to the Central Labor Council, and in Chicago where young Robert Buck was active until his recent death. If only the trade unions would take a more sympathetic attitude towards the young workers there is no doubt of the possibilities for organization. Only recently, in New York, 800 plumbers' helpers who had been receiving from \$2.50 to \$4.50 a day went out on strike for a uniform wage scale of \$6.00 a day, and recognition for their recently formed union, the United Plumbers' Helpers and Assistants Union. They organized their own union and demanded recognition of it by the Master Plumbers Association because the regular A. F. of L. union, the Journeymen Plumbers, REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THEM!

The bosses, as usual, are more foresighted than the workers. The American Newspaper Publishing Assn. at its recent meeting in New York went on record in favor of sponsoring printing trades schools for the instruction of regional schools in several sections of the United States and Canada, to be financed by newspapers in their own sections, and creating a printing trades schools fund to be collected from the membership of the association, for the purpose of promoting the school plan throughout the United States and Canada. The official organ of the International Typographical Union remarks that this is "a direct plan at the printing trades unions." And young workers will form the vast majority of those taught at these schools which are nothing but scab nests.

Here is a very important problem which must be dealt with immediately. The progressives and radicals in the labor movement have issued the slogan, "Organize the unorganized!" In this campaign we must not for a moment forget the great masses of unorganized who are young workers and who need a different method of approach in order to get them to join and participate actively in the unions. Their psychology is different from that of the older workers. The preparatory education must, therefore, be different, too.

If only for their own protection, the union men of this country should see to it that special efforts are made to enroll the working youth, to make it easier for them to enter the unions by lowering the entrance fees in accord with the ability of young workers to pay. It is not only for their protection that labor unionists must do this, but for self-preservation. The young workers are being used to lower the wages of the adults and to break the control of the unions ev-

erywhere. It is absolutely essential that they be organized into the unions together with the older workers.

The Young Workers League of America, as the representative of the class conscious young workers of this country, calls upon all members and sympathizers of the League, who are already organized into unions, to bring this matter to the attention of their fellow workers. We call upon all trade unionists to agitate this question in their locals. We ask that all members of the Workers Party, of the Trade Union Educational League, all radical and progressive unionists raise this issue in their unions.

We ask, furthermore, that this be not only brought up for a thorough discussion, but that all the workers mentioned see that definite ACTION is taken. This must not, this cannot, become an academic issue for hot-house discussions only. It must be brought into action in every local union, in every district organization, and in every national and international convention. Where Mr. Gompers and the officialdom of the American Federation of Labor have ignored the problem, the rank and file must take it up and ACT. All together now!

For the organization of the unorganized!

For the organization of the young Workers!

For the preservation, the protection, and the strengthening of the labor movement!

## Prepare Expose of Sacco Perjurera.

DEDHAM, Mass.—Complete exposure of the perjury by which state witnesses brought about the conviction of two innocent men, Sacco and Vanzetti, in the payroll murder case is expected to be read into the court records in October as part of the arguments for a new trial of the two Italian-American labor men.

Lola Andrews and Louis Peiser were the principal witnesses on which the prosecution relied. Both of them have confessed that they testified falsely and under pressure. Together with the scientific proof by microphotography that the bullet in the raymaster's body could not have come from Sacco's gun, a strong case for retrial is in readiness by the Sacco-Vanzetti defense committee.

The organized political and industrial workers of this country must have the means of adequate public expression through the DAILY WORKER.

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