

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

Fifth Congress of the Young Communist International.

Moscow, 20th August, 1928.

The Fifth World Congress of the Young Communist International was opened this evening in the splendidly decorated auditorium of the **Big Theatre** in the presence of 250 delegates from all parts of the world and 4000 guests.

In his opening speech Comrade **Chitarov** reminded his hearers of the leaders of the International who had died since the last congress and of the young victims of the revolution in the Balkans, in Italy, in China etc. As a sign of sorrow everyone present rose from his seat. As most of the victims were in China, the memory of the dead was honoured in Chinese fashion by two minutes' complete silence. Chitarov closed his speech by pointing to the tasks of the Communist Youth in the struggle against imperialist war and offered the revolutionary greetings of the congress to the revolutionary fighters in the dungeons of the bourgeoisie.

The **Presidium** and an **honorary presidium** were then elected. The following were elected (*inter alia*) to the honorary presidium: Comrades **Stalin, Bukharin, Krupskaya, Clara Zetkin, Thaelmann, André Marty, Max Hoelz** and **Gramsci**.

After the march in of the flag bearers of the organisation of the Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union, who took up their positions on the stage, **Kosarev** welcomed the Congress in the name of the Central and Moscow Committees of the Leninist Y. C. L. of the Soviet Union.

Comrade **Bukharin** then spoke and was welcomed with protracted applause which lasted several minutes. In his speech Comrade Bukharin declared:

Your Congress is being opened at a moment when the Comintern is seriously occupying itself with the struggle against the preparations for imperialist war. The war danger hanging over the Soviet Union is extremely great, and this makes it our duty to work with all our forces to organise the resistance of the proletariat against the imperialists who wish to destroy the first workers and peasants State. After the VI. World Congress of the Comintern, the V. World Congress of the Y. C. I. must consider this question seriously. Amongst those present here we can see various generations: there are the representatives of the Paris Commune, then there are ourselves, the representatives of the October Revolution and then there are you, the representatives of the Communist Youth who must fight for world communism.

In conclusion Comrade Bukharin called to mind the heroic deeds of the Chinese youth in the Canton insurrection and appealed to the Communist Youth all over the world to fight for the proletarian revolution.

The close of Bukharin's speech let loose a tremendous storm of applause.

After speeches of greetings by representatives of the Moscow youth organisation, Comrade Smith answered in the name of the Congress.

The Congress then heard the greetings of a delegation of the military division which bears the name K. I. M. (Young Communist International). The delegation of young soldiers was welcomed with indescribable ovations. In answer to the greetings of the soldiers the delegates took the oath: "In the spirit of our great leaders Liebknecht and Lenin we swear to mobilise the working class and peasant youth all over the world for an irreconcilable struggle against the imperialists of all countries, and to work to secure that in the coming war the soldiers of all countries use their weapons to defend the Soviet Union, to protect the oppressed peoples, to overthrow the bourgeoisie and to win victory for the working class and the world revolution."

The congress received Comrade Krupskaya with applause which lasted several minutes. Krupskaya then greeted the congress in the name of the old Bolsheviki.

Comrade Thaelmann then spoke and reminded the young communists of the international duties in the struggle against imperialist war.

The chairman asked whether a translation of Thaelmann's speech was necessary, whereupon the delegates replied in the negative, declaring that although most of them could not understand German they had nevertheless understood the spirit of Thaelmann's remarks.

The speeches of greetings were interrupted by the march in of a detachment of young pioneers. The speaker for the detachment, the thirteen year old Comrade Avkeyevitch spoke with the confidence of a practised speaker and wished the Congress success in its deliberations and in its struggle against the imperialist bourgeoisie.

Comrade Cachin then appeared on the stage and welcomed the Congress in the name of the C. P. of France. "For us old fighters it is a great satisfaction to see that for which we fought realised in such a great country", he declared.

He was followed by a delegate of the Y. C. L. of China, Liu Wu-tchu, who was received with enthusiastic cries of "Red Front!" and protracted applause. The young communist Negro Phillips was similarly received when he spoke to the Congress.

The international delegation from the Spartakiade then marched into the theatre to the strains of the "International" and the March of the Communards. The speech of greetings made by Comrade Rossignol was welcomed by the Italian delegates with the singing of "Bandiera Rossa" (The Red Flag).

In the name of the Presidium of the Congress Comrade Ferrat (Italy) replied to the speeches of the Spartakiade representatives.

After the election of the secretariat and the commissions and after a speech of greetings from the representative of the Labour School which bears the name of the Y. C. L., the Congress sang the "International" under the conductorship of its composer Degeyer. With the singing of the "Young Guard" the official part of the programme was then concluded and the opening session of the Congress closed. A concert and entertainment then followed.

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Moscow, 29th August, 1928.

Yesterday the second plenary session of the fifth World Congress of the Young Communist International took place under the chairmanship of Blenkle.

Comrade Chitarov (E. C. of the Y. C. I.)

made his speech on the danger of war and the chief tasks of the Young Communists in the struggle against imperialist war. He declared:

Broad masses of the working youth are still under bourgeois influence. Like the organisation of the bourgeois youth,

under-estimate the militarisation of the youth. Italian fascism has won great masses of the youth. The Young Socialist International is following a right-wing course and is steadily losing ground.

The economic situation of the youth is very bad, particularly of the peasant youth. The protection of the youth is being diminished in all countries. The role of the youth in the factories is growing. By the introduction of the moving band and the introduction of rationalisation the youth has taken on a new importance in the process of production. Apprenticeship in the factories is declining, but the exploitation of the apprentices in handwork is increasing. The youth is badly organised in the trade unions; there is even a further retrogression to be recorded on this field. The responsibility for this rests chiefly on the shoulders of the Amsterdammers who give the youth no rights and even attempt to rob them of those they have already won. The Young Socialist International is attempting to win influence over the young trade unionists by organising them in a special youth organisation.

In recent years the fighting activity of the working youth has grown. In individual countries a number of strikes of young workers have taken place. The influence of the Communist youth in the trade unions is growing. Since the last World Congress the Communist Youth have taken part in a number of armed struggles in China, Indonesia, Poland, Bulgaria and Greece. Our chief work is against the danger of war and imperialism. The French Communist Youth actively fought against war in Morocco and Syria, and the British Communist Youth against the intervention in China. In connection with the visit of the British fleet, the Scandinavian youth did good work. We learned to connect our anti-militarist work with the partial demands of the soldiers.

There is to be booked a considerable increase in the political activity of the youth, progress in the mass work and the application of new methods, good trade union work in Poland, Germany, Britain and France. The Trotzkyist opposition was not able to win any influence worth speaking of in our ranks. The Chinese Young Communist League has developed into a mass organisation. We have also had success with the connecting of the legal with the illegal work. The Young Communist League in the Soviet Union has over two million members and works actively for the building up of Socialism.

Our weaknesses and deficiencies are: insufficient organisational strength, considerable fluctuation in the membership figures, the membership is still chiefly composed of young workers from the small and middle-scale factories and shops, insufficient work in the sport, trade union and other mass organisations of the working class. The organisational weaknesses are partly to be accounted for by objective difficulties like the capitalist stabilisation and the capitalist persecution, but also partly by subjective errors like the insufficient regard paid to special youth methods. The way out of the difficulty lies by no means in the de-politisation of the youth movement. On the contrary, our next tasks are: increased political action, the maintenance of the political features of the youth, increase of the youth character of the mass work, increased penetration into the factories, particularly the large-scale factories, strengthening of the trade union work, strengthening of the Leninist educational work, creation of Young Communist Leagues in the colonies where none as yet exist, the creation of auxiliary organisations in the country, the winning of the youth from the influence of the class enemy (loud applause).

After the reading of numerous telegrams of greeting and after speeches of greeting from delegations of the working youth, the session was closed.

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Moscow, 31st August, 1928.

The third plenary session was opened yesterday under the chairmanship of Comrade Mehring.

Comrade Gorgitch

made the report on the organisational situation and the tasks of the Y. C. I. on behalf of the executive committee:

Since the fourth world congress, he contended, the Y. C. I. had learned to put its instructions concretely. At the fourth congress there had been certain exaggerations in estimating

the strength of the organisations. The leagues were growing ununiformly. The Swedish and Greek leagues were the only leagues which were growing steadily. The large leagues were at a standstill and the small leagues were losing members. The illegal leagues had maintained themselves very well despite the white terror and had even made progress. The most important task for these leagues was the preservation of their nucleus and the maintaining of the illegal activity of the organisations. The strength of the Y. C. L.'s in relation to the party was not normal. Four years ago the relations of the youth to the party were 1 to 5, to-day, however, the youth represented only 15%. The only exception was Sweden, where the youth with 84% were not far behind the party. The Y. C. L.'s in the capitalist countries were not yet mass-organisations.

Since the last congress the Y. C. I. had founded the following new organisations: Australia, Palestine, South Africa, Indonesia, Persia, Honduras, San Salvador and India. One of our most important tasks is to found organisations in Central and South America. The children's movement was making progress, twelve new organisations having been formed. The standstill or even retrogression in the individual countries is caused by the application of dry-as-dust methods.

A great number of errors and deficiencies are to be noticed in the internal organisation. Up to the middle of 1927 the re-organisation made no progress and only the org-conference at the end of 1927 brought new life into the re-organisation. The problem of the fluctuation of membership must be solved. The C. P.'s do not support the Y. C. L.'s enough and their support is purely formal. It is necessary for the E. C. of the Y. C. I. to give the leagues practical assistance. A number of the departments of the E. C. of the Y. C. I. work poorly. The work in the mass organisations is insufficient. The work in the non-party young workers' organisations, in the sport organisations, amongst the peasant youth, in the cultural organisations and in the colonies must be strengthened. The German Jungsturm non-party organisation has been successful and it is necessary to create similar organisations in other countries.

An important question is the education of new leagues officials. It is necessary to study new and better methods and to issue concrete and popular instructions, to control the carrying out of decisions, to specialise the work of the officials and to draw all the members into the active work of the Leagues. Illegality is threatened in the near future. We must carry on a sharp struggle against the reaction and for our legality and prepare ourselves organisationally and ideologically. We must learn to work concretely and to make organisational questions, questions for the whole organisation (great applause).

The congress was then greeted by a **White-Russian youth delegation**. The **Young Communist League of Poland** then handed the congress a flag.