

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

The Fifth World Congress of the Young Communist International.

Moscow, 15th September 1928.

The 16th session took place yesterday afternoon under the chairmanship of Comrade Rust (Great Britain).

Comrade Mehring made his closing speech on "The Y. C. I. and the Sport Movement": In the question of the united front tactics, the Congress of the Red Sport International adopted a programme for fighting the social democracy, winning the workers away from the bourgeois sport organisations, applying the united front from below and strengthening the mass work. Our congress must be the commencement of real mass work on the part of our leagues in the sport organisations.

Comrade Auer (Germany)

made the report of the committee on credentials. There are 138 delegates with decisive and 95 delegates with consultative votes representing 44 countries with decisive and five countries with consultative votes. Of 132 delegates included in the statistics, 105 are members of the Party, 91 members of Trade Unions, 88 workers, 27 employees and students, 16 peasants. The congress adopted the report of the committee.

Comrade Miltschakov, the secretary of the Y. C. I. of the Soviet Union reported on the "Youth in the Building up of Socialism":

For ten years the Young Communist League of the Soviet Union has co-operated actively in the work of socialist construction. The League will defend the Soviet Union with all its forces. The League has now 2,100,000 members. The chief tasks of this mass league are the struggle against the hindrances to the work of socialist construction, illiteracy, etc. This struggle is carried on by means of mass work in the Soviets, the trade unions, the co-operatives and other mass organisations. The so-called "light cavalry", i. e. groups of young communists whose special task it is to fight against the bureaucracy, are of particular importance. The central organ of the league, the daily newspaper "Komsomolskaya Pravda" plays an important role. The independence of the young workers is being widely developed. The league is the pioneer of socialist rationalisation and gives the masses of the workers an example of labour discipline and introduces new forms of the labour process. Special groups exist in the factories. Unfortunately, the youth take too little part in the productive discussions and in the work for the collectivisation of agriculture.

The tasks of educating the new generation in a communist spirit are very different from the tasks of the league in the civil war. The League must educate revolutionary internationalists in the spirit of the Y. C. I. Close contact must therefore be established with all sections of the Y. C. I. Nationalism amongst the national minorities must also be opposed. Other important tasks are the work for carrying on the cultural revolution, fighting against illiteracy by organising a campaign to teach the illiterate to read and write, and above all the abolition of illiteracy in the league itself. Broad cultural mass work is being conducted in the clubs, in the cinematographs and other theaters, through the radio. It is specially important to win the youth away from the class enemy, particularly from the influence of religion. The League fights against alcoholism; by collective and healthy life the League will be victorious.

The education of the children is very important for the League. There are 2,000,000 pioneers in the Soviet Union. The work of the pioneer organisation must proceed under the increased leadership of the League. The connection between cultural and proletarian work in the League is particularly important. The League is carrying on a campaign to organise the whole working youth. At present 45 per cent belong to the League. The proletarian leadership in the village must be strengthened.

The basic principle of the economic work of the League is the setting up of a close connection between the productive

work and the education of the young workers. There are approximately 2,000,000 young workers employed in industry, in the R. S. F. S. R. there are 456 factory schools. The League has two types of factory schools, one with a two years course to turn masses of young workers into qualified workers and another three to four year course to produce highly specialised workers. The first type of school is being temporarily maintained as also the organisation of pre-school courses, above all, for the unemployed. The factory schools are the nuclei of the socialist organisation of the young workers. These schools do not produce automats, but workers with an all-round training. Parallel with the factory school there are the seven or nine class general schools. The number of young workers engaged in production and the number of those visiting the evening schools are increasing as also is the number of young workers attending workers faculties and the university. Last year the wages of the apprentices increased and are now approximately fifty per cent of an average wage. The League demands further increase of the tariffs. The working youth have four weeks paid holidays which they can spend in sanatoria or recreation homes. In connection with the introduction of the seven hour day, the League proposes the introduction of the five hour day for the youth. In connection with the five years' economic plan, the League proposed a number of improvements in the apprentice system and the labour protection regulations. It also proposed wage increases for young workers and special measures against unemployment.

In the League there is a growth of interest for the application of new methods in the mass work, the development of League democracy and the improvement of the standard of the officials. The number of officials is growing as also is the percentage of young comrades belonging to the party. During the last two years the League handed over 140,000 members to the party. The League recognises that it has still great deficiencies. Under the slogan of self criticism it is carrying on an energetic campaign. The League is rallying the broad masses of the young workers and peasants for a decisive struggle for communism. (Storms of Applause.)

Comrade **Blenkle** (Germany) read the following resolution signed by the Young Communist Leagues of **China, France, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, Italy, Czechoslovakia and Sweden:**

The fifth World Congress of the Y. C. I. approves completely of the policy and activity of the Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union. The World Congress observes with pleasure the successful activity of the League for drawing the masses of the working class youth into the work for the construction of socialism. This policy was expressed particularly in the training of new groups of qualified workers and technical specialists and in the continuation of the work for the socialist reorganisation of the youth work. The Congress observes in particular the successes of the cultural revolution, the work for the collectivisation of agriculture, for the participation of the League in the campaign of self criticism and in the struggle against bureaucracy. With satisfaction the Congress observes that **Trotskyism** has been completely defeated.

The Congress recognises the great work which has been done to support the Leagues in the capitalist and colonial countries, particularly in **China** both morally and materially. The Congress regards the establishment of closer connection between the working youth in the capitalist countries and the working youth in the Soviet Union to be important work. The chief tasks of the League in the Soviet Union is to strengthen the defence of the Soviet Union against the attacks of the imperialist powers. The Congress is convinced that under the leadership of the Leninist Y. C. I. the working youth will be the most heroic defenders of the workers' State. The league will receive energetic support in its work from the proletarian youth all over the world. The Y. C. I. pledges itself to mobilise the working youth of all countries to defend the Soviet Union and to fight until the World October has been won.

A discussion then followed concerning the international relations between the sections of the Y. C. I. and the League of the Soviet Union.

Moscow, 17th September, 1923.

The 17th Plenary Session was opened today with Comrade **Dalland** (Norway) in the chair. The report on the **Position and Tasks of the Communist Children's Movement** was delivered by

Comrade Darcy (U. S. A.):

Child labour and child misery are characteristic of the life of the proletarian children. The abolition of the laws protecting children and of the free materials and food hitherto supplied, has greatly worsened the position of the workers' children. The health of the children has deteriorated, and under-nourishment dooms a high percentage to tuberculosis. Since the war rationalisation has greatly increased child labour, a retrogression for which the weakening of the trade unions and of labour control is responsible. Child labour is especially prevalent in agricultural work.

The bourgeoisie is adapting the schools to the needs of war preparation and rationalisation, employing methods of increased militarisation, furtherance of patriotism, propaganda against the Soviet Union, intensified religious teaching, severer discipline accompanied by corporal punishment, open support of Fascist and scout organisations, persecution of revolutionary children's organisations, technical preparatory training for simple processes of work, and finally, propaganda for class co-operation.

The bourgeois and social-democratic children's organisations have grown during the last few years.

In spite of favourable conditions, our leagues work feebly, do not protect the interests of the proletarian children sufficiently, and participate but little in the struggles of the adults. We can, however, record a certain amount of success during the last two years.

We must increase our demands for the practical needs of the children, and prevent their conditions of life from sinking lower; this means inducing them to take active part in the election campaigns and strikes, demanding food for strikers' children, combating militarisation, corporal punishment, and religious instruction. We must fight for the legality of the revolutionary children's organisations. The foundation of the revolutionary children's organisation is the participation in the class struggle, accompanied by the improvement of the inner organisatory life, the introduction of new methods, such as games, songs, theatrical performances, with a political purpose, in order to develop our leagues into mass organisations.

The organisations have fallen off numerically, but have become stronger organisationally, and have learnt to define clearly the rôle falling to them. One conspicuous political success was the delegations to the Soviet Union. The weakness of our children's organisations is partly due to the lack of support by the Party and by the Communist Youth. More support from these bodies is a prerequisite for the further development of the children's organisations.

Our main task is to intensify our work in the schools, to ensure the participation of the children in the struggles of the adults, to strengthen our oppositional work, and to induce the Parties and Young Communist Leagues to give practical help. (Applause.)

The Congress was then addressed by a delegation of young railway workers from Rostov, who brought presents for the Congress.

The discussion on the report on the position and tasks of the Communist Children's movement was then opened.

Comrade Sothmann (Germany):

The German state school law aims at clericalising the schools. We must combat energetically the "Children's Friends" and other social-democratic organisations.

Comrade Lynch (England):

The development of the economic struggle of the children is of special importance. In England we organised children's strikes, got the children to take part in the election campaigns, and won over proletarian children from bourgeois organisations. Our work must be furthered by practical aid from the youth leagues.

Comrade Billoux (France):

The most important question for us is to combat the militarisation of the children.

Comrade Sorin (International Children's Bureau):

We must devote more attention to such methods of work as excursions, camps, living newspapers, etc. Communist education is of great importance. We must take care that the pioneer movement is not isolated in its struggles. It is also our task to develop international connections.

Comrade Adam (Czechoslovakia):

The standpoint of the Party with respect to the children's organisations is one of the causes of their weakness. In Czechoslovakia our children's organisation is compelled to work with illegal methods. The exploitation of children in agricultural labour must be more energetically combated. Another main task is the training of leading functionaries.

Comrade Wiesner (International Children's Bureau):

The military preparation of the children is being carried on more energetically than ever. The Fascist and scout organisations are steadily increasing. It is of great political importance that our Parties support the children's organisations.

Comrade Darcy then replied to the discussion:

The main direction in which our discussion leads is clear: The resolution lays down the main lines for our work, and the International Children's Conference to take place shortly will give us the opportunity to define our tasks in detail.

Moscow, 17th September, 1928.

The eighteenth session of the V. World Congress of the C. Y. I. was held this afternoon, with Comrade Limanovski (Poland) in the chair.

Comrade Fokin

gave the report of the colonial commission:

The Y. C. I. of China has before it the task of overcoming the sectarian and liquidatory tendencies, of strengthening its trade union work, and improving its social composition. These tasks are the main problems of the Chinese league. One of the most important tasks of the Y. C. I. is the founding of a Young Communist League in India. This requires much ideological clarification, and also the aid of the English Y. C. L. We have accomplished but little towards the solution of the Negro problem; the Y. C. L. of the United States, and the Latin American leagues, must provide the required cadre of functionaries. The section of the theses dealing with South America, with the tasks of the mother countries, and with the part played by the colonies in war, should be extended. A commission should be appointed to deal with the questions of the working and peasant youth associations. The theses on the colonial question were then passed unanimously.

Comrade Young

gave the report of the commission for economic and trade union work:

The commission has examined the experiences acquired by the leagues in the sphere of economic and trade union work, of strike strategy, and of the vocational school problem. The speaker stressed the defects of the trade union work and the deficient trade unionist organisation of the members. It is our immediate task to insure that the members of the youth leagues are 100 per cent. organised in the trade unions. The tasks incident to the formation of factory nuclei must be combined with the trade union work. Mass work must be carried on in the revolutionary trade unions. When working in the trade unions, we must issue definite slogans and fight for the demands of the young workers; functionaries representing the youth must work in the unions and gain the works and factories for the movement. The theses must be complemented with respect to the imminence of the war danger. The speaker dealt further with the theory of youth strikes, and with the part played by Fascism in trade union work.

The theses on economic and trade union work, the lines laid down for strike strategy, and the resolution on vocational education, were then passed unanimously.

Comrade Pioneer (China)

made the following declaration:

The Chinese delegation is in agreement with the criticism

on the work of the Chinese Y. C. L. It emphasises that it itself fully recognises these faults and deficiencies; the assertion that it has failed to recognise them is, however, not correct.

Comrade Grigoryev

read the report of the peasant section:

The discussion has dealt with the deficiencies of work in the rural districts. It is extremely necessary to combat militarism more determinedly in the country, to fight more energetically against Fascism and to intensify the work among the women. Our activities among the young peasantry in the colonies must be increased. We must gather together the masses of peasant youth in relief organisations, and draw up a far reaching programme of partial demands.

The resolution on this question was passed unanimously.

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Moscow, 18th September, 1928.

The nineteenth Plenary Session of the V. World Congress of the Communist Youth International was held under the chairmanship of Comrade Benario (Germany).

Comrade Wiesner (International Children's Bureau)

reported on the work of the Young Pioneers commission, which proposes some alterations in the theses.

The theses on the position and tasks of the communist children's movement were passed unanimously.

Comrade Barbé (France)

reported on the work of the anti-militarist section:

The theses dealing with anti-militarist work have been more precisely delineated in the questions of the reorganisation of imperialist forces, and of the rôle played by the social democratic leaders and the Socialist Youth International. The social democratic leaders and the S. Y. I. not only spread abroad pacifist illusions, but take active part in the preparations for war. We must work energetically to gain supporters in the army and to organise the broad masses. The principles and tactics of our struggle against the military training of young people were dealt with. It is necessary to employ a differentiated tactic; the struggle against the military organisations must be combined with political and economic demands.

The theses on anti-militarist work were passed unanimously.

Comrade Leo (Germany)

delivered the report on the work of the organisation commission. He summed up the experiences gained by the leagues in the work of training staffs of instructors for works and factories; in the organisation of factory newspapers, mutual information, etc. The results of the work done by the organisation commission, in the form of a written report, will be placed at the disposal of the E. C. of the Y. C. I. for reference in its future work.

Comrade Holmberg (Sweden)

reported on the work of the Statutes Commission, which has made some alterations in style in the statutes submitted. The statutes were then passed unanimously.

Comrade Auer (Y. C. I.)

spoke on the work of the Sport Commission. The resolution stressed the development of the bourgeois sport organisations in the direction of factory sport clubs. (The resolution was adopted as a basis).

Comrade Geminder (Y. C. I.)

reported on the work of the Agitprop Commission. Some alterations have been made in the theses: the sub chapters have been rearranged under the different spheres of work. New sections have been added on the work among young girls and in the rural districts. The chapter on the illegal leagues has been enlarged. In the chapter dealing with the press more stress is laid on the importance of the worker and peasant correspondents.

The meeting, after taking cognisance of the proposals made to the E. C. of the Y. C. I., that the results of international experience should be exchanged, an international Agitprop conference convened, and an international school for functionaries be organised for the period of six months, and after resolving to draw up instructions in the training question, passed the theses unanimously.

Moscow, 18th September, 1928.

At the twentieth Plenary Session of the V. World Congress of the C. Y. I., held in the evening of 18th September under the chairmanship of comrade Gorkic,

Comrade Schueller

gave his report on the work of the Programme Commission.

The Programme Commission has accepted the draft programme unanimously. The discussion showed us that the young people are greatly interested in theory, but that up to the present we have not done enough to organise this interest and to direct it in the right paths. It must be the task of the Congress to give this interest a firm foundation, by means of combining our slogans with the ultimate aim by theoretical enlightenment, and by better political training.

The programme is a programme of working youth in the fight for the world dictatorship of the proletariat. It signifies more than a complement to the programme of the Comintern. We are an international organisation, and our sphere of activity is the whole world.

The programme shows clearly the character of the revolution as a social revolution. It gives a general survey of the position of the juvenile workers in the capitalist countries and in the colonies. A special chapter gives instructions to the Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union.

The working class is the leader of all toiling classes. Therefore the programme insists on the necessity of recruiting the majority of the members of the Young Communist Leagues from the proletariat.

The Y. C. I. has already had one programme. The present one makes use of all that is best in the Stuttgart programme, and also makes use of Leninism.

The Young workers, being in a weaker position, are more exploited than adults under capitalism. In consideration of this and also of the special tasks to be fulfilled by the proletariat after it has seized power, the programme includes a special chapter on the position of young people under Socialism and Communism. We must carry on more propaganda for the ultimate aims of Communism. The fundamental principles to be observed towards youth under Socialism demand special protection for juvenile workers, and education in Socialism. We reject the social-democratic proposal to lengthen the school period; we are in favour of permitting juvenile workers to be employed, but with efficient protection against exploitation. Socialism fulfils the task of the social reorganisation of juvenile labour. All our struggles are subordinate to this aim. The social education of the new human being is impossible under capitalism, and is only possible under Socialism. The education of the new social human being has begun under the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The programme further demonstrates the necessity of the Young Communist Leagues. The establishment of Young Communist Leagues is in the interests of the whole working class. The working class is struggling with the bourgeoisie for the allegiance of the young people. The Communist Party requires a preparatory school and a reserve force. Therefore, the programme emphasises the necessity of forming Young Communist Leagues in all countries. The social democratic idea of the activities of youth organisations is the culture movement, the development of the new human being by means of the fight against alcohol tobacco, pernicious literature, cinema, replacing these by outings, games, sport, art, etc. Our educational work is a continuation of our struggle, is learning on the very basis of the struggle. The central question of the programme of the Young Communist Leagues is mass training for Communism.

We have discussed the organisational independence of the Young Communist Leagues, and have decided that we must hold congresses of our own, but must continue to be politically subordinate to the Party.

We have corrected the errors committed by the second congress of the Y. C. I. We have established the necessity of auxiliary and mass organisations alongside of the Y. C. L.'s. It is incumbent on us to ensure that the non-party youth do not remain politically neutral. The programme raises once more the question of the organisation of economic organisations for the youth. We must refuse to form such organisations where they are to be formed only as result of the failure of the reformists to protect the interests of the juvenile workers, and are likely to replace the much more necessary work in the trade unions. Separate organisations for young workers may only be organised where the youth cannot be organised in the trade unions.

The programme places the combating of reformism in the foreground of the economic struggle. We have defined our demands more clearly, and the programme now shows the actual connections between our partial demands and our ultimate goal of social reorganisation.

The programme makes as its central point the fight against war. We combat on principle the bourgeois military youth organisations; we advocate proletarian military training by the working class. For this reason we organise such defence organisations as the Youth Force (Jungsturm). The bourgeoisie pretends that its military organisations are neutral. We must make it clear to all, firstly, that this is not the case, and secondly, that our standpoint is precisely the opposite. It is most necessary to carry our influence into both the compulsory and the volunteer organisations. We do not call upon the juvenile workers to join the volunteer organisations.

We have made alterations considerably improving the chapter on the colonial question. We show the necessity of forming Young Communist Leagues in the colonies, and of organising the masses.

The concluding chapter, dealing with the Soviet Union, shows concretely the manner in which Communist Youth works under the proletarian dictatorship. The Soviet Union is a shining example for the juvenile workers of the whole world. The unanimity of the Congress is a good sign for the future of the Y. C. I. The Congress has given the working youth a new programme, a new weapon a new fingerpost on the road. Youth is the purest flame of revolution. (Enthusiastic applause; the Congress sings the "International").

There then follows the discussion.