

The International Communist Youth

(A REVIEW OF THE FOURTH CONGRESS)

By JOHN WILLIAMSON

The Fourth Congress of the Young Communist International opened in the large Bolshoi Theater in Moscow. Delegations from many Moscow shops were present and mingled freely among the many delegates from the various countries. The opening session was taken up principally with speeches of welcome from the Comintern, Profintern, Red Army and many other organizations. Banners were presented to several of the League from Russian Y. C. I. Shop nuclei.

There were present 108 regular delegates and 34 fraternal. America was well represented having three regular delegates, Comrades Williamson, Carlson and Edwards with Kaplan a fraternal delegate. The work to be considered by the Congress was principally a review of the activities based on previous decisions and a clarification and extension in various fields of work. The fundamental program adopted at the 3rd Congress had proved itself to be correct.

Politically, the Y. C. I. had consistently supported the Executive Committee of the Comintern in its major issues and it was significant that not one League in the International had deviated from the stand of the Executive in the two major situations, viz. German and Russian. In the Scandinavian countries the League had consistently fought for the position of the C. I. against the opportunist leadership of the Swedish Party. As a result the League was denounced by this Hoeglund element but the Comintern had defended the Y. C. I. and the situation is now coming to a head. The situation arising out of the German situation was dealt with extensively both by Com. Manuelisky who represented the E. C. C. I. and in the report of the Y. C. I. Executive. The 5th Congress of the C. I. had definitely stated its position on the United Front and the Workers and Farmers Government, pointing out the role of the Communist forces and thereby leaving no loophole for opportunist deviations such as had occurred in Germany. A cardinal point in this discussion is that which says that the Communist Party must guard its independence of propaganda and criticism while carrying out these maneuvers. The Y. C. I. Congress accepted this unanimously.

Closest cooperation had taken place between party and League in nearly all countries and the Parties were really realizing the role of the youth movement in relation to our entire Communist movement much better than in the past. The success of the League in shop nuclei and anti-militarist activity had undoubtedly assisted in this transformation.

Organizationally, the Y. C. I. had taken many strides forward. While our International numbers well over a million, many of our Leagues must increase their influence and membership during the next year so that this can be doubled. Only the Russian League can be considered a real mass organization in the full sense of the term. Our German and Czechoslovak League however are well on the way to becoming mass organizations and they must strive for a membership of 100,000 each during this year.

To the degree that the Leagues participated in shop nuclei activity did they increase in membership and influence. A good start had been made in all of our Leagues in transforming the Leagues to the shop nuclei basis exclusively. The Russian and Estonian were functioning exclusively on this basis and the German, Czech, French and Italian Leagues were ready for complete reorganization in whole districts. The Congress reiterated the fact that only thru the complete reorganization of the Leagues upon the basis of shop nuclei could we become a real mass organization including in our ranks the entire working class youth. The idea of territorial branches was a hangover from

our previous Social Democratic organizations and in the Y. C. I. there was no longer any opposition to the nuclei. Our principal task was to extend our work along these lines. In such countries as America and Great Britain, the organization was instructed to build from the beginning on the basis of nuclei. No more territorial branches must be organized in any country. Experience showed the comrades how easy it actually was to reach young workers when approached on the basis of actual shop conditions and then organize them. It was pointed out however, that it was not merely a question of shop fractions, but a greater one, that of the nucleus being the basic political unit of the organization carrying on every activity at present given to the branch, but thru the change of form reaching the young proletarians in the shops and thus increasing our activities. The incoming Executive was given instructions to set a date for the Complete Reorganization on the Basis of Shop Nuclei, of every section of the International, this to be completed by the next World Congress.

Despite the fact that the conditions of the young workers had become worse during the past period, the League had not increased the Economic-Trade union work in proportion. A start had been made by every League but too often this had been

the youth workers will become worse and our League must prepare to meet the situation by entering into every struggle and utilizing it to further our organization. The struggle for our partial youth demands serve as a lever in the struggle for the complete destruction of the capitalist system.

In anti-militarist work the French Y. C. I. had carried on very successful work. During the Ruhr occupation many nuclei were established in the army and a regular army newspaper established. This is being published twice a month and has a circulation of 7,000. This has resulted in fraternization between the French army and the workers in Germany. The work of the Y. C. I. was especially commended by the Comintern as this was the first real attempt at actual work within the army. In other countries a beginning had been made but not enough effort had been put forth. We must concentrate and the various N. E. C. must lay out definite plans to extend this activity during the next period.

The Y. C. I. has neglected one important field of activity. Our influence as an International is principally upon the industrial workers while among the peasants it is nil. This must be remedied as we cannot hope for a successful revolution without the cooperation of the agrarian workers.

Forging Chains for the Proletariat



MacDonald and Herriot.

limited to mere verbal or written articles or speeches. It is essential that no youth strike or struggle take place presenting their demands and fighting for their adoption as the demands of the young workers. We must aim at becoming the leaders of the young workers in every struggle.

An energetic campaign must be waged by all the Leagues to rally the young workers into the trade unions. The Leagues must fight on the basis of 1. full rights within the union for young workers 2. reduced initiation and dues fees and 3. Y. C. I. fractions within the unions. At no time must we tolerate separate youth sections within the trade unions. We must understand and popularize our idea that no other separate youth organizations are necessary as the Young Communist Leagues and they alone are the sole representative of the working class youth. It is necessary that we present our youth demands for adoption at every occasion and within the Red Opposition Groups (T. U. E. L. in America) we must work in complete harmony and have our youth demands incorporated and fought for. It is the direct task of the Y. C. I. to win the masses of the young trade unionists for the revolutionary trade union opposition.

The Congress stated that during the coming period, the conditions of

This was especially noticeable in Central Europe where the problem is of immediate importance. All countries must conduct more activity among agrarian workers and organize them into our farm and village nuclei.

The sport problem is an important one for the youth movement. Many millions of young workers are interested in the sport movement and the capitalist class have many organizations thru which they direct their propaganda under the guise of sport. It is our duty to organize national workingclass sport organizations in opposition to the bourgeois outfits. Success has attended the attempts in this direction in Central Europe where we have established large workingclass youth sport bodies. Our weakness has been in not giving these organizations the correct directives. It was considered that in America we have a good field for this activity and our American League must make a start along these lines. We must aim to bring together into one national sport organization all the local clubs existing at the present time.

Our aim is three-fold in forming this Sport organization; first, winning the masses of young workers away from the influence of capitalist and bourgeois clubs; secondly, building a strong physical group of young workers with a class instinct and thirdly,

utilizing it as a recruiting ground for our Young Communist Leagues.

The problem of education was considered at great length as it was recognized that there was a dangerous situation facing many of our Leagues due to neglect in this field. The slogan of Bolshevizing the League was adopted and this carried with it a complete educational activity from the highest to the lowest units.

The American Young Workers League was given considerable attention. The Executive Committee expressed approval of our activities during the past period. It was pointed out that in America we had a more difficult situation to face than in many other countries and therefore the application of some parts of the international program was hindered. The good work conducted during the past year lays a firm foundation for future activities which we must carry out wholeheartedly under the supervision of the N. E. C.

The political situation in the Party reflected itself to a very limited extent in the American League. As is well known the majority of the League N. E. C. with the exception of Kaplan supported the so-called Foster-Cannon-Bittelman group who were supported by the Party membership at the last convention. This League minority developed around Comrade Kaplan who made serious charges against the N. E. C. These were emphatically repudiated and complete confidence expressed in the present N. E. C. majority and instructions given that all factionalism must cease within the League and the organization work as a solid unit with the N. E. C. in furthering the decisions of the Fourth World Congress.

The Fourth Congress of the Y. C. I. adjourned with a program of definite work allotted to each national section. The Young Communist Leagues have won for themselves, thru their activities, a definite place in the workingclass movement.

The Young Workers League of America has won for itself a definite place in the labor movement of this country. It must receive greater aid from the Party in its many campaign and struggles. The League of today is a recruiting and training ground for the active Party workers of tomorrow. It therefore deserves the support of every unit of the Party.

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