

# *Manifesto of the Second Congress of the Young Communist International*

*Translated from the German*

To the young workers of all countries!

Comrades! Brothers!

In November 1919, twenty representatives of young workers and peasants came together in Berlin, from all parts of the world. It was just at this time that Noske's white guards were persecuting and murdering the revolutionary proletarians. During the bloody years of the world war these young revolutionists, undaunted and bold, had aroused the workers and peasants from the madness of the mutual butchery in the interests of their oppressors. Many of them languished in prisons because of the wrath of the ruling classes; all of them were hounded and persecuted. Now they had come together in order to fashion into an indissoluble alliance, the loose ties that had so often been rent asunder during the war. The crying needs of the young workers brought them together, through all the terrors of persecution and in defiance of all obstacles. And here in Berlin, in the midst of the white guard conspiracy, they established the militant organization of the young workers against their oppressors, the capitalist class—The Young Communist International.

This organization embraced 200,000 workers of both sexes. All of them pledged themselves to carry on a systematic struggle against the deadly enemies of the working class. The congress gave them a clear communist program, and decided upon affiliation with the Communist International, thus establishing a united front of young and maturer proletarians.

Since then twenty-one months have elapsed, twenty-one months of anguish and intense, sacrificing struggle for the working class of all countries. The bourgeoisie attempted to restore international commerce, destroyed by the imperialist war. In 1920 they succeeded in achieving an apparent improvement. But their insatiable lust for profits revealed itself repeatedly and always more plainly, as the break which was halting production. "Without sufficiently large profits not a chimney will smoke, not a plow will pass over the fields." The working class of the world, including the young workers, discovered this, their enemies' motto. A new violent industrial crisis broke out. Because the factory owners, the mine owners, and the landlords no longer enjoyed the confidence of the workers, millions of the latter, in America, in England, in Germany, and in other countries, were thrown out into the streets. Against those whom the masters continued to employ they began to struggle in all possible ways for the assurance of their profits.

Wage reductions, refined exploitation, increases in the prices of the necessaries of life, discharges from the shops of the proletarians who defended themselves—the agitators, as they were called—these are the means by which the capitalists proceed against the proletariat.

The misery of the workers is increasing frightfully in city and country. Hunger is their constant guest, while their masters wallow in huge extravagances. In rags, without shelter, they wander about the streets. Their children get sick and die. The yawning abyss of savagery opens before them. A few more steps and it must engulf them.

Peace, so ardently sought by the workers during the war, and supposedly obtained by the Versailles peace treaty, has not reestablished harmony in the capitalist world. Out of the old antagonisms, rooted in the efforts of the capitalists to obtain the greatest possible profits, new conflicts once more arise today. New wars are threatening. America, Japan—France, Germany—England, America—Germany, Poland—all capitalist states are arming themselves to the teeth and are preparing themselves for new battles for the best fields of investment. At the same time, however, developing, with true capitalist hypocrisy, a campaign of mutual disarmament by summoning disarmament conferences and the like. The same game that was played before the world war, is being repeated. The workers, and above all the young workers, must expose the fraud of this campaign. They must recognize that the capitalist state cannot disarm, if it does not wish to cut off the bough that supports it. They must recognize that this activity is only a means to throw sand into their eyes, so that their masters, at the outbreak of a new war, may conveniently obtain a willing supply of cannon fodder. They must recognize that in spite of all disarmament propaganda, preparations are being made energetically for a new war for greater profits.

But not alone for that reason are they forging their weapons. The less the ruling class understood of how to restore production, the fiercer were they obliged to turn against the working class in order to quell those who were fighting against misery and in order to make secure their possession of the factories, mines, and land, the sources of their wealth and privileges. In this field they manifested a far greater skill. They armed and organized themselves anew. In this way they succeeded in subduing, again and again, those workers who had not yet learned to struggle steadfastly, in close formation. In Italy, Germany, England, and other countries, wherever the proletariat rose up against their oppressors, they

were conquered by the armed bourgeoisie, supported by the traitorous leaders of the workers. The workers have made huge sacrifices. The master class, provoked by the perseverance with which the workers forever keep on rising again and again, reject no means to subdue and terrify them. The white terror rages in Finland, Latvia, Germany and many other countries. Thousands of workers are being shot and tens of thousands thrown into prisons and dungeons, in order to make the most courageous of them impotent.

Only in Russia have the workers and peasants the power in their hands, after having driven their oppressors away. After a three years' desperate war against the united forces of the white guards of all countries, they must now conduct a desperate and terrible struggle against economic collapse and hunger. To be sure, they hunger and starve, but they are hungering and starving for freedom's sake, and not that the bourgeoisie may riot and revel, as they do in capitalist nations. Their consciousness of this fact inspires them, and in spite of their momentary difficulties, their courage does not lag. They are fighting under the leadership of the Communist Party and are waiting for the help of the proletariat in other countries.

The latter are gradually beginning, in spite of bloody defeats, in spite of shameless persecutions, to understand the hopelessness of recovery from the collapse of industry as long as it remains under capitalistic control. They recognize more and more the necessity for systematic struggle against the existing social order. And they understand above all, the traitorous role of the leaders in the social-patriotic and centrist parties and even in the Amsterdam Trade Union International. In huge numbers they are streaming into the Communist International and into the Red Labor Union International. In all countries during the last year, strong Communist mass parties have been built, which the masses recognize as the most trustworthy leaders for the decisive conflict between capital and labor. And when, in the month of June, in Moscow, the capital of the Russian Soviet Republic, the third world congress of the Communist International met, it counted in its ranks countless new hosts of struggling workers. And with the consciousness of the heavy responsibility entrusted to it, the congress of this gigantic army formulated plans and measures to meet the conditions resulting from the present world situation.

"Thorough preparation for the struggle between capital and labor!" it cries to the workers. Against the strategy of capitalism, which strives to entangle the working class in petty conflicts, it opposes the strategy of consolidation and organization of forces for a favorable opportunity for the battle.

The congress said to the Communist Parties, "Learn from the past. The important thing is to labor anew to win over the majority of the working class. Utilize every possibility during the struggle in order to lead them on victoriously. The traitorous

leaders of the workers are already saying: 'This shows that we were right when we said that the revolutionists cannot as yet bring us to the goal, Socialism. The workers must first be educated.'"

To them the Communist International says, "To be sure, the masses must first be educated and won over for the real revolution, since you have led them astray. You fell upon their backs just when the revolution promised to become victorious; you have helped to arm the bourgeoisie. Then the bourgeoisie was weak, the proletariat strong. To-day the working class is weakened due to terrible deprivation, as a result of the many struggles in which you betrayed them, while the bourgeoisie is strong, organized and armed. That is why victory is so difficult for us, that is why the working class must be organized more and more powerfully.

The Congress said to the Communist Parties, "Go to the masses; show them the traitorous role of their leaders. Show them the necessity for a powerful world wide mass-front in order that they may participate in the struggle for victory and achieve it and in order that they may rid themselves of the cause of their present misery, the capitalist profit system.

Immediately after the Third Congress of the Communist International there assembled the Second World Congress of the Young Communist International in the same city, in the throne-room of the Kremlin, the citadel of the former Czarism. One hundred and fifty representatives from forty leagues assembled to decide clearly and firmly upon the problems confronting the proletarian youth at present. This Congress could look backward with pride over the path that had been traversed. From fourteen leagues with 214,000 members, it had grown to 49 leagues with 800,000 members. And the individual leagues themselves have been tested and more closely knit by the struggle. For the Young Communists have stood faithfully side by side with their maturer class comrades, in all the struggles of the latter in Germany and in Italy on the barricades, accompanied them amongst the broad indifferent masses, were persecuted and murdered with them by the white guards, and went to prison with them in the struggle for the freedom of the working class. These young revolutionists do not utter lamentations when they suffer. A smile on their lips, a cheer for the world revolution—that is their reply to their judges and murderers. The Congress vowed that it would stand by the working class and the revolution with the same, inviolable loyalty in the future. With the knowledge gained in the last intense struggles of the working class that the fight against capitalism can be conducted only by a united, disciplined army under a wise and prudent leadership, it decided to place the Communist organizations of youth under the political leadership of the Communist parties in all countries. The Communist parties and the Communist International are the leaders in the struggle against the old and for the new form of society. The Communist youth as a part of the working class sub-

ordinates itself completely to their leadership. In their ranks and in accordance with their instructions the Communist youth will help, as it has hitherto, to attain the goal, with the same vim and enthusiasm. It will help to rejuvenate and strengthen the proletarian army by its ardor and devotion. The Communist youth, therefore, transfers certain tasks which it had assumed, to those who, as a result of greater experience and broader view, can fulfill them better—and turns to those tasks which have been assigned to it by historical development.

The future will demand ever greater exertions and sacrifices of the working class. Huge struggles are coming. As never before in the history of the working class movement will the revolutionary forces be consumed. Therefore it is the duty of the Young Communist Leagues to provide for the filling up of the gaps created all along the front, and besides that to provide the necessary new forces to meet the demand of the ever growing struggle. In accordance with this decision the Congress directed the Young Communist Leagues of all countries to rally broad masses of the proletarian youth around the banner of the Young Communist International to make clear to them the necessity of the proletarian struggle, and to train them for the conflict through practical participation in the struggle and through fundamental Communist educational work. And it not only pointed out these tasks to them but gave them, at the same time, practical and thorough directions for all special tasks included therein. After thorough deliberation, lasting for days, it gave the Youth movement the directions for its future activity, and forged the weapons which will lead the proletarian youth against capitalism. Thereby it has shown that the Young Communist International intends to continue to be the leader and guide of the working youth in city and country, out of the misery of the present industrial order.

Young workers of both sexes!

You, who, far away from our movement, resistlessly bear the terrible burdens which the ruling class imposes upon you—and you who belong to antagonistic organizations under the leadership of traitorous leaders of the workers—the 2nd Congress of the Young Communist International calls upon you to help it in the fulfillment of the new tasks.

You are with us in the factories, fields and mines, and are exploited, like we by landlords and capitalists. Hundreds of thousands of you are jobless. You are enduring hunger and privation, and go about in ragged clothing. Countless numbers amongst you are ill as a result, and are facing a premature death. And so long as you continue working, you are being worn out, brutally and without consideration. Against you the industrial magnates begin their struggle by reductions of wages, and by increasing the hours of work, in order to separate you in this way, by skillfully established barriers, from your older class comrades. For the sake of greater profits they thrust you into the abyss of misery and complete demoralization.

The 2nd Congress of the Young Communist International calls to you: Take up the struggle against these bandits of capitalism! Defend yourselves against their attacks! You are fighting thereby for your lives! We are prepared to fight this battle to a finish side by side with you. We have already fought side by side with you in schools and at work. We want to fight together with you for better school conditions, for a transformation of working conditions in response to the needs of your lives, for better means of subsistence.

The struggles of the past taught us, as they did the maturer proletarians, the lesson, that we can succeed in such struggles only with well-knit organizations and with the support of the maturer workers. Individually we are impotent against the terrific power of the manufacturers and landlords; united and joined together under a brave and prudent leadership we are strong and will conquer. Therefore rally round the banner of the Young Communist International, which stands with the maturer proletarians in a united front.

Your privations will end only if you enroll in the front ranks of the Communist Youth and thereby in the Communist International; only if you rise up under its leadership, in close formation, and strike the weapons from the hands of the bourgeoisie.

Rend asunder the net of prejudice which the bourgeoisie has placed under over your consciousness, through their petit-bourgeois school-training. Beware, lest as soldiers you raise arms against your own class, by command of the capitalists.

Your enemies, however, are not only the capitalists; they often stand right in your midst. They call themselves your friends, but they are much worse than your open enemies, because they seek to confuse you in the struggle for your vital interests. What would you say to the friend, who, before you enter the battle against a deadly enemy would give you a gun without munition, or one that does not shoot. You would despise him and thrust him from you. Take heed! There are such doubtful friends at work, who wish to render impotent and destroy your best weapon, the Young Communist International. They are the leaders of the Young Socialist movement of both tendencies, who through the establishment of a so-called "Young Workers' International" a so-called "International Alliance" wish to shatter your strength which is steadily increasing.

Guard against their traitorous work! Thrust them from you with scorn. And pledge yourselves with redoubled energy to the task of rallying all young proletarians of the world under the banner of the Young Communist International.

The 2nd Congress of the Young Communist International say to you: Thus and not otherwise can you traverse the path that leads out of the misery of slavery. It places its hopes in you and trusts in your help, just as its predecessors during the frenzied war period steadfastly believed in the awakening of the proletariat. The World Congress greets you, suffer-

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ing young proletarians, who are enslaved by capitalism all over the world, and calls you to its colors.

Long live the Young Communist International which is fighting together with you and the older workers under the leadership of the Communist International, for your liberation from slavery and exploitation.

By order of the 2nd World Congress of the Young Communist International at Moscow.

The Executive Committee of Young Communist International. Moscow, July 31, 1921.

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