

# THE YOUNG WORKER

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## The Work of the Communist Youth of the World

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AT a time when the entire working class and especially the young workers are undergoing great hardships; when the capitalist offensive and reaction is still heavy against the workers; when the dangers and signs of another World War are to be seen, the Third Congress of the Young Communist International opened in Red Moscow.

On the morning of Dec. 6th, 1923, over ninety delegates to the Third Congress of the Young Communist International, coming from all parts of Asia, North and South America, Australasia, Europe and Africa, representing nearly one million revolutionary young workers filed their way into Sverdlov Hall within the Kremlin walls. A few minutes and all were seated. The bell rang. Comrade Shueller, secretary of the Young Communist International arose and speaking successively in German, French and English declared the second session of the Congress open and ready for work. The opening celebration (first session) had taken place the night previous in the Bolshe Theatre. The delegates rose and sang the Internationale. A minute later, comrade Lazarus Shatskin of the Russian Young Communist League began his report for the Executive Committee of the Young Communist International on the accomplishments since the Second Congress.

### Much Work Is Done.

It will be impossible to cover the actions and decisions of the Third Young Communist Congress in such detail as might be desirable. I shall, hence cover the more important matters generally and in future articles deal at length with special subjects and decisions of the Congress. First, a brief review of the activities of the Executive Committee and the Leagues since the Second Congress.

Comrade Shatskin pointed out that the Young Communist International and the Young Communist Leagues had relinquished their roles as the political leaders of the masses since Communist Parties, the logical leaders, had arisen in most of the countries and had assumed their proper positions. The Young Communist Leagues must become **Mass Organizations**—this was the task set before the Young Communist International and the Leagues. To become mass bodies of the young workers, the Leagues must throw open their ranks to the young workers, class conscious and not, break with sectarianism and enter into all the activities and lives of the young workers. By waging the struggle for the bettering of the economic con-

ditions of the youth, by fighting capitalist militarism, by striving for their education and physical upbuilding, by seeking to bring the wage-slave, peasantry and the children of the workers into the Young Communist organizations and into their activities—by becoming organizations for **Militant Education** of the youth, only thus could the slogan of the Second World Congress, "**To The Masses**," be realized. The various decisions arrived at by the Second Congress to carry out this slogan had, as comrades Ziegler and Shueller showed in elaborating on Shatskin's report, on the whole been vindicated in practice.

### Must Do More Trade Union Work.

The Young Communist International recognized that the Young Communists had to enter into intimate economic and trade union activity. Much material was collected on the economic conditions of the young workers in Germany, Austria, Sweden and Norway. These Young Communist Leagues especially propagandized the economic demands and needs of the young workers. Thru their efforts, many trades unions and other working class organizations paid attention to the young workers' problems and formulated and fought for demands on behalf of the Youth. In numerous instances, in Germany, Rumania, Jugo-Slavia, Belgium, France, the Young Communists were in many strikes and fights of the workers, very often taking the lead in these movements. Pride can be taken of the achievements of the Young Communist organizations in this work. More so since, because of the numerous defeats inflicted upon the workers during this period of the capitalist offensive (1920—1922), the militant spirits of the workers waned. The reactionary elements hit even more strongly against the Young Communists, forcing many of the Leagues underground.

### Fight Against Militarism.

The campaign against militarism is always one of the big points in the activity of the Young Communists. Comrade Doriot of France reporting on this question said that not much progress over the previous year had been made. When the capitalist class is pressing hard upon the workers, then anti-militarist agitation is met with the severest of reprisals. Many Young Communists met death in combating this capitalist scourge. Yet, the French, Spanish, Greek, Norwegian and other Young Communists carried on much anti-military work among the soldiers and recruits. Better conditions were obtained for the soldiers in Norway and



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A GROUP OF DELEGATES TO THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL. Reading from left to right, they represent the following countries: Top row: Belgium, Sweden, Korea, Russia. Bottom row: France, America (Abern), Russia, England, Japan, Italy.

Sweden. Particular attention is being paid to perfecting cooperation between the Young Communist Leagues of France and Germany that they may better handle their anti-military actions and other problems arising out of the criminal Versailles Treaty.

In America, tho the expenditures for the army and navy and other capitalist murder agencies are second only to Great Britain, the anti-military work of the Workers Party and the Young Workers League, it was pointed out, has been only of a general nature. However, the Washington Disarmament Conference farce, the activities of the American White Guard organizations such as the Ku Klux Klan with their "imperial wizards", etc., striving to establish American Imperialism in name as well as in fact, and the blood-thirsty (for workers blood) American Legion have done much to arouse the American working class to the need of combating American militarism and also to the need of protecting themselves in more ways than those offered thru the capitalist courts.

#### Education Thoroughly Discussed.

Now from militarism to education. Education, gotten not only from books but also from experiences in the class conflict in the daily battle for bread, in the labor and political movement—**Militant Education**—that is what the Young Communist International stands for. The Young Communist Leagues of Norway, Sweden and France have developed a sound system for educating their members and training functionaries. Germany and Austria, comrade Zeigler of Russia said, had carried on the best popular and propagandic educational work.

The Young Communist Leagues are educational organizations—schools for communism. The Young Communist movement is, however, a section of the labor movement; the young workers have their own particular economic problems and ideas which must be understood and regarded. The Young Communist and Workers Leagues, besides their political, educational and anti-military work, therefore must and do take

part in the daily industrial struggle, in the union work both as fellow workers and as communists who understand best the worker's problems.

Results in other directions of the decisions of the Second Congress could be given but since these as well as others link themselves with the questions handled by the Third Congress, I shall, if necessary, deal with them hereafter while taking up some Third Congress decisions.

Perhaps the most important matter completed at the Third Congress was the drafting of an Economic Program for the young workers. It is not sufficient for the Young Communists merely to say that they will participate in the economic struggles of the young workers. A basis, a definite program must be had if decisive intelligent work is to be done, and thus laid the work is to be performed. The Young Communist International therefore correctly decided upon an Economic Program.

#### "Socialist Reorganization of Youth Labor."

The foundation and aim of the program adopted at the Third Congress is: "The Socialist Reorganization of Youth Labor." In a fine pamphlet issued by the Young Communist International, (reviewed in the February "Young Worker") "Fundamental Problems of the Young Communist International", a lengthy definition of this slogan is given. We think it well to repeat it:

"It means a **complete transformation** of the situation of the youth and juvenile labor. To realize the Socialist reorganization of youth labor means to put an end to the exploitation of youth in the fields of labor, and to get the young workers to pay serious attention to their education; it means to deal with the position and fate of the youth in society, not from the point of view of the **exploitation** of labor, but from the point of view of **educating** and developing the highest mental, physical and moral qualities, to create for the entire youth, and without exception, a rich, decent life, corresponding with the needs of the youth."

The program demands that the youth till 19 years of age, shall not be subject to exploitation. To care for those under eighteen from a social, a socialist view, **really** to educate youth in a civilized manner and not in the present barbaric and savage and bloody capitalist fashion, is demanded by the Young Communist International.

Admittedly, to realize these demands would be to achieve the Social Revolution. Indeed, this demand cannot be obtained while capitalism lasts—yet it is the only sane solution to the youth problem, to the workers' problem. Such a revolutionary aim can be attained only in a Soviet Government functioning thru a dictatorship of the working class. And that is the purpose and aim of the Young Communist International and the Young Workers League of America. We shall work with those who will for a quick establishment of a Workers Soviet Republic. But while striving for that, we must do our utmost to better the conditions of the workers **now**, and to make them better fighters.

#### Formulate Partial Demands.

So the Young Communist International and the Leagues adhering to it, also formulate an economic program of partial demands, always keeping in view our final aim. The question: Can a revolutionary organization have a program of partial demands is answered: Yes. The breaking up of capitalism prevents it from giving to the workers, if it would, a decent standard of living (witness the horrible lowering of the living standard in all countries—Asia, Europe, America), and hence a struggle for partial economic and political demands, wisely conducted by a communist organization, becomes revolutionary. Moreover, unlike the Social-reform adult or youth organizations which make **minimum** demands of capitalism, the Communists fight for demands suitable to the workers needs and not the capitalist's desire. It is questionable in the extreme, it is, in fact, impossible for instance for capitalism to grant a six hour work day in America or an eight in Europe, and not disturb capitalist economy beyond repair. But care and discreditation must be used in arriving at an economic program.

In the Economic Commission, many changes which made for clarity were made in the original draft. Comrade John Edwards and myself spoke for the insertion of certain clauses which would make it more satisfactory to America.

The Swedish and Norwegian comrades also made many suggestions. An acceptable draft was gotten and unanimously adopted by the Congress.

#### To Draw in Masses of Young Workers.

In drawing up this Economic Program, the Young Communist International laid one of its most important stones which would result; first, in a greater work of the Leagues directly on the industrial field—in the shops, mills unions etc., secondly, in attracting thus the mass of young workers to the Young Communist or Workers Leagues, and hence realizing the aim of the Young Communist International—to become Mass Organizations.

With the matter of education I shall deal briefly now. The Young Communist International demands book learning, theoretical, understanding, yes. But it also requires that this education be supplemented and completed thru participation in the political and economic life of the workers. We want knowledge that we may know how to destroy capitalism and, after that,



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how to reconstruct society on a communist basis. We shall learn and we shall experience revolutionary Marxism. Theories have their origin in material things. Ideas in conflict with social and economic facts will remain ideas only, if they continue to exist at all. Marxian theory and education turn on the pivot of reality—are based on experiences in the relations of man and man to his tools and nature.

The Young Communist International declares that our education shall be threefold: political, general and physical. The political education which is by far the most important, is not just theoretical but must be carried on within the organization, among the organized and unorganized young workers, and must be systematic, properly coordinated in a National Department. In America, our educational work has been of too general a character, has been characterized by looseness. More definite and intensive work must be outlined. The Workers Party must extend help—teachers, etc.—to the Young Workers League in this field of work.

#### Shop Nuclei Organization.

For these many years now, the geographical or territorial basis of organization has been accepted and used. The Young Communist League of Russia tho, has demonstrated that the most successful form of organization has been that based on the Shop Nuclei—or organizations of the Young Communists within a given shop, factory, mill, etc. The comrades can get together easier, perhaps during the dinner hour or after work, can discuss the problems confronting them in the shop—hours, wages, conditions, strikes, etc. Political and economical matter are grasped more realistically; their application can be better understood because of the workers nearness to the physical reality.

The Third Congress decided to carry out more widely the decisions of the Second World Congress to transform the Young Communist or Workers Leagues from the territorial basis to the Shop Nuclei one. The Con-

gress recognized, of course, that the problem of Shop Nuclei organizations is not a matter of over-night ending but that a transition period, requiring in many countries several years, is needed for the accomplishment of this task. The preliminary work necessary is the registration of the members of the Leagues. In a future article, I shall more fully discuss the Shop Nuclei and its application to the Young Workers League. If possible the speech of Comrade Zetlin of the Young Communist League of Russia on the Shop Nuclei will be translated and sent to the League membership.

Much as I would wish I cannot deal fully herein with the remaining problems at the Third Congress, and indeed shall have to eliminate much. Each country had its own particular problems and experiences to set before the Congress—Czecho-Slovakia, Italy, England, and others.

Comrade Corelli of the Young Communist League of Italy told graphically of the struggles against the Fascisti cut-throats; how the Young Italian Communists have been the leaders in the armed resistance against these deadly enemies of the workers. Take note, American comrades and workers, that Commander Owsley the head of the American Fascisti, the American Legion, has declared that the American Legion would, if necessary to prevent the workers from throwing off their chains, take on the reigns of the American Government, even as did their fellow-breed, the Italian Fascisti mongrels. The struggles of the Young Communists of Italy against the latest reaction has been magnificent. Fascism is not a phenomenon peculiar to Italy, but is an international one, differing in the capitalist countries only in form and degree of oppression and depending on the development of the class struggle. The courageous Italian working class will defeat the Fascisti, however long and fierce the conflict may be. The American workers will learn from the Italian comrades how to handle such capitalist tools as the Ku Klux Klan and the American Legion.

#### Should Throw Open Doors.

The Italian comrades were criticised because their League had not thrown open widely, its doors to the masses of young workers. The tendency had been to band by themselves. Hereafter the Italian League was instructed to strive to become a mass organization and not to fear "contamination" by the not yet fully-communist youth. In this connection comes up the matter of the unity of radical forces in Italy.

The Young Communist International aims quickly "to bring about a fusion between the Socialist Youth organization, after it has been purged of all reformist elements, and the Young Communist League of Italy." All attempts are being made to attain the United Front of all the workers in the battle against Fascism.

The Young Communist International has tried at all times to establish the United Front of all the working class youth, and also of adult and youth labor, against the capitalist offensive and reaction. The comrades will remember that the Young Workers League of America accepted the call last year of the Young Communist International for a **World Congress of Young Workers**, and sent a delegate to Europe. The Young Communist International desired to unite the forces of the working youth of the world, and to formulate plans for effective struggle against the increasing pauperization of the youth and the growing militarism. But the reformist youth organizations of the Second

and Two-and-a-half International declined to participate in such a Congress. Thus, like their adult yellow father bodies, they revealed their yellow blood corpuscles. These yellow youth organizations are not interested in fighting the capitalist class, but rather the Communists. The workers will learn the true character of these treacherous bodies and deal harshly with them.

#### Unite Against Capitalist Wars!

With another World War imminent, in which the young workers will again be the cannon fodder, the Communist and the Young Communist Internationals are determined in their attempt to unite all workers, whatever be their political and economic views, in a battle to prevent the slaughter of the workers for the capitalists' benefit. To this end the Young Workers League of America heartily subscribes and will work.

In many countries, Children's Groups have now been firmly established. In America however, we have done comparatively nothing thereon. Yet, if we can instill communist ideals and thoughts into the minds of the children, these ideas will be lasting. We must as far as possible prevent bourgeois clap-trap and rot from reaching the ears of the workers' children. The coming Young Workers League Convention will have to prepare details for the organization of Children's Sections—in fact, not only in name.

Likewise the Czecho-Slovakian comrade pointed out the necessity of the young Communists reaching out into the sports organizations where there are hundreds of thousands of young workers subject to capitalist influence. The young workers must have recreation. Wherever we can, we must establish our own sport clubs, associations, etc., where we may bring the young workers. The young workers will listen if we approach them on a common ground. If we cannot bring them to us, then let us go to them and carry on with them. We have thus far not as seriously as we should, taken up the matter of Sport Organizations. Considering the influence exercised upon the young workers by the huge capitalist sport and recreation clubs, like the Y. M. C. A., it is high time that we approach this problem. A study of the activities of the Red Sport International will indicate the importance of such work. The Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish and German comrades have had a great success in forming workers sport clubs or in getting into capitalist clubs and pulling the young workers away from their bourgeois influences.

It will be highly pleasing to the comrades of the Young Workers League to know that the Young Communist International has a fine opinion of the Young Workers League, and expects as we grow, great things of us soon. Such work as we have been able to do, we have carried on in a true communist fashion and spirit.

The Young Communist International has accepted the Young Workers League of America into its ranks as a sympathizing or fraternal body, and hopes the time will soon arrive when the Young Workers League can affiliate to it. In this connection I can only say—and comrade Edwards will agree—that there is only one place for a revolutionary youth organization, such as the Young Workers League of America, and that it is in the ranks of the leaders of the young workers of the world—in the Young Communist International.

All that I have witnessed in Russia at the Congress convinces me that at our next National Convention, May 13, 1923, the Young Workers League of America

should make application to become the American section of the Young Communist International.

#### Death Occurs During Congress.

Towards the last day of the Congress, the comrades were saddened by the death of one of the delegates, Comrade Morris, who directed the young communist work in the Balkan States. Suddenly taken sick at the Congress, he died at the hospital a few days later. A tried and true comrade, he passed away while on active duty for the communist cause. The Young Communist movement, the revolutionary movement, mourns his loss—our great loss.

Many amusing stories and interesting events of the Congress of the experiences of the comrades in their countries, could be told; yet the actual acts of the Congress I have considered more important and have presented them to you. In carrying out these acts and decisions will be found the true romance of life.

Comrade Gregory Zinovieff, Chairman of the Com-

munist International, spoke to the Youth Congress at the last Congress session, December 16th. He emphasized the role and importance of the Young Communist movement in the world revolutionary work and promised aid from the Communist International.

Zinovieff's speech concluded, comrade Shueller declared the Third World Congress of the Young Communist International at an end. The band stuck up the "Internationale". We sang song after song. Comrades were tossed into the air—a Russian custom. Singing, shouting, talking. The minutes whirled by. At length we started to pass out of Sverdlov Hall.... It was high night and cold. But the sky was clear and starry. The stars twinkled brightly as if pleased with our gaiety and laughter and song. Thru the gates of the historic Kremlin Walls we passed. Red stars were glowing, Red flags flying. And the Third Congress of the Young Communist International was over—and also just beginning.

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