

THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL AND THE YOUNG COMMUNIST
MOVEMENT

1. The Young Socialist Movement arose as a consequence of the acute capitalist exploitation of the young workers, as a reaction against the attack of the bourgeois militarism to poison the minds of the young workers with the bourgeois national ideology, and as a revolt against the neglect of the economic, political and cultural demands of the young workers by the Social-Democratic parties and trade unions in the majority of countries.

The creation of Young Socialist organizations in most countries took place without the assistance of the Social-Democratic Party and Trade Unions, continually increasing in their opportunism and reformism, and in some countries, the Young Socialist organizations were formed even directly against the will of these organizations. The Reformist Social-Democratic Party and trade unions see in the revolutionary Young Socialist organizations a serious menace to their opportunist policy. By bureaucratic measures and the discouraging of all independence, they attempt to retard the Young Socialist Movement, to alter its character, and impose their policy upon it.

2. The imperialist war and the attitude of the Social-Democratic parties in the majority of countries towards it, necessarily led to the contradictions between the Social-Democratic parties and international revolutionary Young Socialist organizations becoming more acute, and to open conflicts. During the war the condition of the young workers as a consequence of mobilization and military service, the increased exploitation in the war industries, and militarization at home became intolerably worse. The best section of Young Socialists opposed nationalism and the war, split off from the Social-Democratic parties, and took up their own political action (the International Young Socialist Conference in Berne in 1915,

Jena 1916).

In its struggle against the war, the Young Socialist organizations were supported by the best of the revolutionary groups of the adult organizations, and thus became the rallying point of revolutionary forces. In this manner the Young Socialist organizations undertook the functions of a revolutionary party, and became the vanguard in the revolutionary struggle, and politically independent organizations.

3. With the establishment of the Communist International, and the Communist parties in the various countries, the role of revolutionary Young Socialist organizations in the general proletarian movement changed. Owing to their economic position and their peculiar psychology, the Young Workers are more susceptible to Communist ideas, and, in the struggle, display a greater revolutionary enthusiasm than the adult workers; but the role of vanguard in the form of independent political action and political leadership has been taken over by the Communist Party. The existence of the Young Communist organizations as politically independent and leading organizations, must lead to the existence of two competing Communist Parties which will be distinguished only by the ages of their members.

4. The functions of the Young Communist organizations at the present time consist in organizing the masses of young workers and drawing them into the Communist fighting front. The time has passed when the Young Communist Organizations could remain numerically small propaganda organizations. As a method of winning the broad masses of young workers we must consider new methods of agitation and the introduction of a leadership of economic struggles.

In accordance with its past, the Young Communist Organizations must extend and increase their educational work. The basis of Communist education in the Young Communist movement is the active

participation in all revolutionary struggles, closely bound with the teaching of Marxism.

A further important task of the Young Communist organizations in the immediate future is the breaking up of the Centrist and Social-Democratic ideology among the young workers, and the removal of the latter from the influence and leadership of the Social-Democrats. At the same time the Young Communist organizations must do everything in the development of the mass movement, to rejuvenate the movement by giving up its older members to the Communist Parties.

The fundamental difference between the Young Communist organizations and the young centrist and social-democratic organizations lies in their participation in all political problems; in the work and construction of Communist parties, and in the active participation in revolutionary struggle.

5. The relations between the Young Communist organizations and the Communist Party are fundamentally different to those of the revolutionary Young Socialist organizations and the Social-Democratic Parties. In the general struggle for the realization of proletarian revolution, it is necessary to have the greatest possible unity and the strongest centralization. The political leadership internationally can only be conducted by the Communist International, and nationally by the various national sections. The duty of the Young Communist organizations is to submit to this political leadership (programme, tactics and political directions), and to join the general revolutionary front. In view of the varying stages of revolutionary development of the Communist parties in various countries it is necessary that the application of this principle in exceptional cases be determined by the Executive Committees of the Communist International and the Young Communist International, in accordance with the special circumstances of the case. The relation of the Young Communist organizations, which have organized

their ranks on the basis of the strictest centralization, to the Communist Party, the bearer and the leader of the proletarian revolution, will be that of iron discipline. The Young Communist organizations within their own organization, must concern themselves with all questions of policy and tactics, and also take up a position with regard to the Communist Party, in their respective countries, but never to oppose the accepted resolutions of the Party. In the event of a serious difference of opinion between the Communist Party and the Young Communist organizations, the latter may take advantage of their right to appeal to the Communist International. The task of this political dependence in no way implies the abandonment of its organizational independence, which on educational grounds cannot be permitted.

6. One of the immediate and most important tasks of Young Communist organizations is to make a clean sweep of the remnants of the ideology of political leadership left over from the period of absolute autonomy. The Young Communist press, and the organizations as a whole, must be employed for the purpose of instilling into the minds of the Young Communists the consciousness of being soldiers and responsible members of a Communist Party.

The Young Communist organizations must devote the greatest possible attention, time and effort to this task, at the period when it is beginning to win over large sections of the young workers for the mass movement.

7. The close political co-operation of the Young Communist organizations with the Communist Party must be expressed in close organizational bonds between the two organizations. It is essential to have permanent mutual representations of the organizations at the Party headquarters, district and local organizations, down to the lowest unit of the Communist groups in the factories, in the Trade

Unions, as well as mutual representation at all conferences and congresses. In this manner it will be possible for the Communist Party to have a lasting influence on the political policy and activity of the young organizations, and to help the Young Communist organizations; the latter on the other hand will be able to influence the Party.

8. The relations between the Communist International and the Communist parties still more closely determine the relations between the Young Communist International and the Communist International. The functions of the Young Communist International consists of the centralized leadership of the Young Communist Movement to support and advance the various leagues by moral and material means, to create Young Communist organizations where these do not exist, and to conduct propaganda for the Young Communist International. The Young Communist International is a section of the Communist International, and as such, submits to the decisions of the Congresses of the Communist International and the Executive Committee. Within these limits it conducts its work and acts as the agent of the political will of the Communist International in all its actions. By means of a strong mutual delegation and close lasting co-operation, the permanent control of the Communist International and the fruitful labor of the Young Communist International in all spheres of activity (leadership, agitation, organization, strengthening and supporting the Communist Organizations) will be guaranteed.

(Thesis adopted at the Third World Congress of the Communist International—June 22nd—July 12th, 1921)