

3rd CONGRESS of the Y.C.I.

BY DORIOT

The Third Congress of the Young Communist International, which was attended by a hundred delegates, representing fifty organisations, will have a salutary effect on the Young Communist International.

It marked a turning-point in the history of the revolutionary movement of the youth. It decided on various changes necessitated either by the establishment of strong Communist Parties or by the change in the general situation. The chief changes were the abolition of the office of leadership in the political revolutionary movement, the abolition of the autonomy of the Young Communist Organisations, and their complete political subordination to the Communist Parties (or relations with the revolutionary section of the proletariat organised as Communist Parties), and the transformation of the Young Communist organisations into mass organisations, i.e., the establishment of ideological and organic relations with the working-class youth as a whole.

This necessitates a new orientation and the new road will be opened to us by a more energetic economic struggle on the part of the young workers, and a continuous defence of the interests of the young proletariat.

The tasks before the Third Congress were not very difficult. It had to ascertain if the decisions of the Second Congress had been justified by experience, and find out, by testing the results of the everyday work, if our orientation was correct. Moreover, it had to probe these experiences much more deeply, to define them more accurately, and to provide more exact data than the Second Congress; in a word, it had to define all the modes of applying the decisions of the preceding congress. Finally, it had to decide upon the nature of the Young Workers' Movement and define the exact rôle of the Young Communists in the most serious problems of the day, viz., the capitalist offensive and reaction. The first few days of the Congress immediately showed that it was equal to its task. Two points were outstanding during the discussions: one dealing with the results of the decisions of the Second Congress, and the means of putting them into practice, and the other dealing with the serious problems of the struggle against the capitalist offensive and reaction.

The change decided upon at the Second Congress is being slowly put into practice. Our organisations are no longer political van-

guards leading the whole movement; but they are not yet mass organisations. A number of objective circumstances have retarded the transformation; for old traditions within the Federations are difficult to overcome. Moreover, the economic crisis and unemployment have hindered the entry of the working masses into our organisation, and reaction has dissolved several of our Federations. In spite of all these circumstances, however, a beginning has been made. Every one of our organisations is fully aware of the difficult tasks that confront it. This being the present situation within our organisation, the question arises, how we are to accelerate the process of transformation?

This question, theoretically, was solved by the Second Congress. It adopted the principle of the factory nucleus as the basis of the organisation of the federations. The Third Congress, however, gave practical solution to the question. It outlined in detail all the forms of application of the factory nuclei and the series of the intervening stages during the period of transformation. These two decisions constitute the greatest change concerning organisation. The Third Congress distinctly said: "These nuclei must become the basis of our organisation, as well as the deep roots of Communism among the Youth. They are the only practical means for establishing connection between the very life of the organisation and the masses. The experience of the Russian Young Communists is conclusive. Its organic base is the factory nucleus, and its influence over the young workers is continually on the increase." It never lost contact with the masses even during the most difficult days of the revolution. Such results would not have been possible under the system of territorial groups. Thus, the establishment of nuclei is very important for the organisations which desire to cope with their revolutionary task.

The nuclei must also be animated with the Communist spirit. Constant effort must be made within them to educate the Young Communists. Active work must be conducted within the organisations in order that they may survive. In addition to these minimum tasks of internal organisation, which constitute a duty towards the organisation as a whole, there are the tasks of acting as a lever for revolutionary action within the workshops, of defending the immediate interests of the proletarian Youth as a whole, of superintending the organisation of the struggle for its partial demands, and of its political education. Such, on the whole, are the most important tasks confronting the Y.C. Leagues if they are to assume, without much delay, the control and the leadership of the masses of young workers."

Many difficulties will confront us on all sides. The Congress warded off some of them by defining certain stages of the transition. These will have to be yet more clearly defined on the basis of future experiences in the various countries. However, the idea that we are on the road to the formation of mass organisations must predominate. There is still enough energy and enthusiasm among the Young Communists to achieve this and to overcome all difficulties.

The capitalist offensive, in its manifold forms, had painful but not unexpected repercussions within the ranks of the working-class youth—direct misery caused by starvation wages, unemployment, heartless treatment by unscrupulous employers, whose sole idea is of profit, and (alas!) at times by a section of the adult working

class, who fail to see the necessity for solidarity with the young workers. The physical weakness and backward state of organisation of the working class youth make it an easy prey of capitalism.

One of the most dangerous features of the capitalist offensive—which, while not new, tends to become general—is the employment of young workers at lower rates of pay against the adult workers during strikes, and at times even the employment of the adult against the young workers struggling for the defence of their interests. This division, which is cleverly encouraged by capitalism, is very detrimental to the working class as a whole. It must not be tolerated further, and the Third Congress used very plain language on this point.

It drew up a programme of demands for the working-class youth in opposition to that of the Social-Democrats, the realisation of which takes account of the capacity of the capitalist system—which means that it will never be carried out. Our demands must serve as a rallying ground for the wide masses of the working-class youth, and must draw them into the struggle. They are drawn up without any consideration for declining capitalism, and are based on the needs of the young workers, and on nothing else.

In order to prevent the division of the working class by capitalism into two sections, viz., adult versus young workers, one being manoeuvred against the other, the Congress took up again the watchword, adopted a few months previously by the C.I. and the R.I.L.U. on the motion of the Y.C.I., of the "United Front of Young and Adult Workers."

The realisation of the United Front is hampered by many obstacles created by the reformist trade union bureaucracy. This watchword, in fact, demands constant co-operation, in all phases of working-class life, between the young and the adult workers, especially within the trade unions, as well as unreserved support of the young workers' demands by the trade union organisations. We are convinced that the adoption of our programme of demands will be the result of the daily work of the Young Communists within the trade unions and within other working-class organisations, such as the shop committees and the young workers' movements. Conscious of all the difficulties, the Congress studied them carefully and minutely defined our tasks on this field.

Reaction, another form of the capitalist offensive, has also dealt a severe blow to the working-class youth, and especially to the Young Communists. Fifteen of our Leagues are compelled to work illegally. Others are threatened with the same fate. This shows how the bourgeoisie fear the activity of the élite of the young workers organised in our ranks. Social Democracy has lent a helping hand to the bourgeoisie in its work of savage repression, and has even frequently outdone the latter in this respect. By a strange or, rather, logical coincidence, the countries in which our young members meet with the greatest difficulties are those governed with the help of the Social Democracy. The Social Democratic Young People's Organisations play the rôle of policemen and informers against the Young Communists. The Congress was able to assert that the attacks of the bourgeoisie were parried by us with great gallantry. In Italy, where, by their attitude, the Communists were able "to save the honour of the Italian working class," the Young Communists participated in the struggles in full force. In

spite of these facts. however, we must admit our weakness in the face of reaction.

The Congress made a careful study of the chief forms of resistance, corrected certain errors which had manifested themselves during the preceding year, and resolved on a strict centralisation of all means of action. The young Communists, united in their struggle against reaction, will form an enthusiastic vanguard in all these struggles, but will be under the strict discipline of the Party. The Y.C. Leagues must begin immediately the moral, material and technical training of their best forces, in order to form experienced cadres for the entire working-class in the struggle against reaction. The Congress further laid it down that the struggle against reaction is a problem for the solution of which it is essential to win over the majority of the working class, and that every action must have for its aim the establishment of closer contact with the working masses.

Another important problem before our Congress was "the struggle against militarism and the menace of war." The young workers have a special interest in this struggle, for it is they who contribute the chief contingents and the largest number of victims during imperialist slaughters. The Congress was fully aware of the importance and urgency of this matter. In the first instance, it defined precisely its attitude to all the present problems, and especially to the farcical Hague Conference, which will have no definite practical results for the working class. To the empty watchwords of the leaders of the Amsterdam International the Congress opposed the old tactics of revolutionary permeation of the army by means of nuclei, for the purpose of disintegration. It resolved to initiate immediately a great campaign lasting several months against militarism, war and the imperialist peace treaties. We cannot consider our task at an end until every young worker realises the peril in store for him, and makes up his mind to combat it.

The Social Democrats would have been more than delighted if we had let them alone on this question of future wars. However, it is the duty of every proletarian party to express its opinion very clearly and emphatically on problems of such magnitude. On the other hand, the only means to meet this menace is to obtain the unity of the entire working class in the anti-war struggle. The Congress addressed to the Social Democratic and Syndicalist Young People's International a proposal for a united anti-war front. It expressed its desire to rally the majority of the young workers for the struggle, and its approval of the united front tactics adopted by us. The Social Democrats must not imagine that the anti-war campaign depends on the acceptance of our proposal. This campaign will go on with them, if they so wish it, or without them if necessary. This was shown by the unanimity of the Congress on this question.

The programme question was also on the agenda. The Y.C.I. has had a programme since 1919. With the exception of a few secondary tactical points, it is still effective. It was more a question of revising the programme than of elaborating a new one. A few important additions were made, as, for instance, the tasks of the youth after the assumption of power, based on the numerous experiences of the Russian Communist Youth.

It is a programme of struggle. It severs us distinctly from

the Social Democrats. The latter are of the opinion that the youth has a "cultural" mission to fulfil, handed down probably by history. This purely petty bourgeoisie theory serves as a narcotic to the working-class youth. It prevents it from fighting. We have once for all condemned the theory and its prophets. The draft proposal adopted for our programme is to serve as a basis for discussion. It will be seriously discussed in every League, and the next Congress will have to give it a definite shape.

Such, briefly, are the tasks laid down by the Third Congress for the International Young Communist movement. In the present situation they can give us rapid and fruitful results, and can, within a short space of time, transform the Young Communist League into a mass organisation. The instructions we have received enjoin us to extend our activities and to strengthen our organisation numerically and ideologically. We hope to make a big stride forward. The Communist Parties must well consider the importance of our action, and must assist us in our everyday tasks. In this respect the situation has very much improved as compared with the past years. However, what has been done hitherto is not sufficient, and more must be done in future. The Congress of the Communist International has set the example, by deciding that two representatives of the Y.C.I. be included in the Central Committee of the International Communist Party. Let the parties profit by this example by imitating it, and let them above all realise that we are "the future," as Comrade Zinoviev said at the closing ceremony of our Congress.