

# **The Y. C. I. in the First Decade of the Comintern.**

By R. Chitarow.

Our Young Communist International was among the first sections to join the Comintern. In the spring of 1919 the Comintern was founded as an alliance between the victorious Bolshevik Party and a few revolutionary groups of the West. At that time it was not yet a stable organisation and in no sense world organisation. It was then rather a cry from the heart of the victorious Russian proletariat to the world proletariat, a rallying cry to the forces to unite in a uniform, closed ranked, iron army of world revolution. The proletarian youth were among the first to hear this call and to follow it. The young socialist organisations, which even at the very beginning of the world war had united themselves in an international organisation and heroically fought against the imperialist war, followed spontaneously and almost without exception the tendency of the revolutionary masses of the West European proletariat towards union with the revolutionary Soviet State and its leader, the Bolshevik Party. When these youth organisations, for the first time after the war, gathered in November 1919 for an international congress, there was no longer any question with whom revolutionary youth would go. It was resolved unanimously to accept the programme of the Communist International and to form a section of the Communist International. This congress therefore became the foundation congress of the Young Communist International.

When the revolutionary young socialist organisations resolved to enter the Comintern, it was clear to them that the relation between themselves, on the one hand, and the Communist parties and the Comintern, on the other hand, would be an essentially different one from that which had existed before the war between the youth organisations and the Social-Democratic parties. There was no more distrust of one another nor fighting, but the closest fighting unity, brotherhood in arms in the truest sense of the word. Thus the relation between the Comintern and the Y. C. I. commenced. But as time went on this first form of association developed into closer co-operation until they reached the present stage, of which we can say: We now have the right relationship between the leading organisations of the fighting proletariat, namely, the C. I. and its junior organisation, the Y. C. I.

During the first epoch, from the I. to the II. Congress of the Y. C. I. (from 1919 to 1921), the Y. C. I. had, indeed, become a section of the Comintern and was working in general in accordance with its platform and its resolutions, but they were two independent organisations enjoying equal rights, which had concluded a fighting alliance. The programme of the Y. C. I., which was accepted by the Congress, expressed this relationship; a relationship between two kindred politically united organisations but nothing more. The causes of this situation were obvious. The Y. C. I. came into the Comintern from outside as an independent force and as such assisted it in the spreading of Communist ideas in the various countries and in the founding and organising of Communist Parties. In many countries, if not in the majority of them, the youth league was

the pioneer section of the Communist movement, the shock troop of the C. I. This leading position of the youth leagues made of the Y. C. I. even in the first years of its existence, a political independent force.

The II. Congress of the Y. C. I., which took place immediately after the III. Congress of the Comintern, made a fundamental change in this relationship. At that time there were already formed in most of the European countries Communist parties which had in general maintained their political aspect and their existence. It now became clear that two Communist parties differing only in the matter of the age of their members could not exist side by side in the same country. It was necessary to give the leadership and the chief political work to one of these organisations. Naturally, this had to be the Communist Party. The Young Communist League was compelled to hand over the leadership and submit politically to the Communist Party. — In this sense the II. World Congress of the Y. C. I. resolved to make the Young Communist Leagues politically subsidiary to the Communist parties and to leave to the Young Communist Leagues the proper work for youths, namely, the mass work among the broadest strata of young workers. The resolutions of the II. Congress were only accepted after discussions at the congress. A considerable portion of the delegates, including many of the leading comrades of the youth executive, were not yet able to grasp the necessity for the change. The main fight concerning these resolutions, however, commenced in the various countries after the congress. Much effort and long discussions were necessary before the majority of the members and functionaries of the Youth Leagues could be convinced of the necessity for a radical change in the relationship to the Communist Party.

At the time of the III. Congress of the Y. C. I. (1922) the policy laid down by the II. Congress was victorious all along the line and from this time onward the relations between the Communist parties and the Young Communist Leagues developed along the new and previously quite unknown path as a close union between the older and younger generation under the absolute and acknowledged leadership of the Communist parties and the Comintern.

The Young Communist Leagues fought all those years under the leadership of the Communist parties for the line of the Comintern. They have not only proved their attachment to the cause of the C. I. throughout but have shown their ability to maintain their position in the Communist movement. The development during these years has embellished the relationship between the Communist parties and the Young Communist Leagues lies in the hands of the Party; because, for us Communists, this relationship in the following manner: The Y. C. I. is politically subordinated, but organisatorily independent. Now we can now develop this formula still further: For us it is clear that political subordination to the Party means that the general management of the whole of the activity of the Youth Leagues lies in the hands of the Party; because, for us Communists, organisational activity cannot conceivably be separated from political activity. This does not mean that the Young Communist Leagues renounced their organisational independence; they remain organisationally autonomous, as the existence of a separate organisation, in which Youth can work and develop independently, is of paramount educational and psychological significance. But this organisation must and can develop only under the leadership of the Party. This leadership is realised by the resolutions of the Party and of the Comintern, which apply to the Communist movement in general by the representatives, which the Party sends to all bodies of the Youth League and finally by the party members who work in the Youth League and thereby uphold the leading role of the Party and the proletarian hegemony within the Youth movement.

Such is now, on the third stage, the relationship between the Communist parties and the Young Communist Leagues, which relationship is best expressed in the Soviet Union, in the relationship between the Bolshevik Party and the Leninist Youth League. This relation is likewise formulated in the programme of the Y. C. I., which has been accepted by the V. World Congress. The Young Communist League, working under the leadership of the Communist Party, has to educate the masses of the young workers in the spirit of Communism and to draw them into the daily struggles, in this manner forming a reserve for the Communist Party, constantly supplying

with fresh forces, and serves as an instrument for influencing the broad masses of young workers; it is thus the rising generation of the Communist Party and at the same time its most important fighting force. The Party shares the responsibility for the activity of the Youth League and must now devote its attention to the quality of the leadership of the youth movement. It must give more serious study to the problems of the youth movement and become fully acquainted with them, it must choose the best comrades for the work of fostering the youth organisations. It must infuse and reinforce the Party spirit in the Youth League.

At present the Young Communist Leagues in the capitalist countries are the most devoted supporters of the Parties, the best comrades in the fight against capitalism and for the organisation of the revolutionary forces. In the Soviet Union the Young Leninist League is of great help to the Communist Party in the great socialistic constructive work. It is one of the chief pillars of the proletarian dictatorship.

We will not permit ourselves to be dazzled by these successes. We know very well — and this the V. World Congress has clearly expressed — that we have not yet solved our chief problem, namely, the creation of mass Young Communist Leagues in all countries. But we are of the opinion that our past justifies the assumption that we shall be able to perform this task. Now, when as a result of a fighting union of ten years' standing the proper relationship between the Parties and the youth is established, the Parties must also realise the great responsibility they bear for the youth movement and must concentrate now more than ever upon its support and leadership. If this is done, we may be quite sure that the Y. C. I. and its sections will carry still higher and even more successfully the standard of the Communist International into the masses of the working youth.