

THE PROGRAM  
of the  
YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL  
(as adopted at the Berlin Congress  
of the Y. C. I., November 1919)

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THE unheard-of development of capitalist accumulation and production has brought capitalism to a new stage in its development — to the phase of imperialism, which is characterized by the formation of trusts and syndicates, and by the rule of finance capital. Its colonial policy, caused by the necessity for finding new markets for trade and procuring raw material, the competition of the national capitalist cliques, led with iron necessity to imperialist wars.

The war of 1914-18, the consequences of which cannot be liquidated by the resources of capitalist society, has disturbed and destroyed most of the capitalist countries. The terrifying calamities of war, famine, financial and commercial bankruptcy, and the destruction of human lives, have brought humanity to a crisis from which there is but one way out — World Wide Social Revolution. The material conditions necessary for this are here. The class antagonisms have become extremely acute. The victory of the Revolution depends entirely upon the will and the energy of the international proletariat. The way to Socialism leads through the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is characterized by a government of the revolutionary Soviets. The first task of the working class is the struggle for the overthrow of the political, economic, and intellectual domination of imperialism, and to establish a proletarian dictatorship. This struggle can come to a victorious end only when the proletariat decisively breaks away from the Second International, which is reformist to the core and compromises with bourgeois society, betraying thereby the whole working class. Only then will the working masses unite under the standard of the Communist International — the leader of the proletariat in the revolutionary struggle.

In a revolutionary epoch one must employ primarily the means of revolutionary struggle of the masses (demonstrations, strikes, general strikes, armed uprisings). At the same time the proletariat cannot reject in principle other political resources, such as parliaments. The entry into parliament depends upon the political situation of the moment, and must be decided in each case separately by the organizations of each country.

(2) If the position of the adult workers under the rule of capitalism is exceptionally hard, the position of the working youth is quite intolerable. Low wages, a long working day, barbarous treatment from the employer and immediate superiors characterize the position of the young workers. Conditions are even worse in those trades where the apprentices are wholly within the power of their trade masters. Such an unlimited exploitation of young workers hinders their intellectual and physical development. The bourgeois governments allow the working class youth only so much education as is necessary for them to possess in the capacity of industrious and useful cattle. The bourgeoisie strive to imbue the youth with their own ideology. School, confession and bourgeois young people's organizations, as well as militarism, have but one object — to alienate the proletarian youth from the struggle for Socialism and to make of them devoted soldiers for capitalism. The world war aggravated this situation considerably. Millions of young proletarians were sent to the front to serve as cannon fodder; millions of others were driven into the ammunition plants.

Although the State and the employers exhaust the strength of the youth to the utmost, political and personal rights are permitted them only on a very modest scale. Such a state of affairs has incited the working class youth to take up a merciless struggle against imperialism.

(3) The formation of separate organizations of the proletarian youth is dictated by: (a) The position of the young in the process of production and in society. This position forces them to fight in defense of their own interests; in the reorganization of labor; reforming the school system, etc. (b) The psychological characteristics of youth (the prevalency of sentiment over reason, aptitude for cooperation, great receptivity as regards all new and revolutionary ideas, readiness for sacrifice and action). (c) The necessity of special methods for its socialist and revolutionary education (independent organizational work, active participation in political

struggles); the application of all methods which give the young workers an opportunity of acquiring those qualities which will be extremely necessary to them in the future as champions of the proletariat and bearers of the revolution.

(4) The working class youth is the most active and revolutionary part of the proletariat. The most important task of the Young Communist Leagues is, for the present, an incessant agitation among the wide masses of workers, the organization and carrying out of political demonstrations, the immediate struggle for Communism by taking part in the overthrow of capitalist tyranny, and the training of the youth to fit them for building up the communist society.

(5) The Young Communist Leagues carry on an energetic struggle against all bourgeois parties and also against such right socialists, lackeys of the bourgeoisie, as Scheidemann, Renner, Bissolati, Renaudel, Henderson, Gompers, Troelstra, Branting, Vandervelde, etc.; and against the socialist centrists, Kautsky, MacDonald, Robert Grimm, Bauer, etc., who by their vacillation only help to uphold capitalist society. The Young Communist Leagues likewise oppose the syndicalist ideology, which is against a political struggle for the conquest of proletarian dictatorship and which rejects the right of the political party to conduct this struggle, and which also rejects proletarian centralization. They are equally opposed to the anarchist ideology which does not admit of a proletarian government as an intermediary phase between capitalism and communism, and which, in the sphere of political economy, preaches petty bourgeois ideas. The same struggle is directed against the youth organisations connected with the above mentioned parties. In their political struggle, the Young Communist Leagues are subject to the principles of that party or local fraction which is affiliated with the Third International, or to the principles proclaimed in the program of the Communist International. The organizational relations toward the parties are determined by two fundamental principles: (a) organizational independence of the youth; (b) close contact and reciprocal help.

(6) Although the Young Communist Leagues will continue an energetic struggle against bourgeois militarism in all its abstract and practical forms, still they do not defend the ideas of a liberal pacifism. They know that the working class will yet be forced, in order to put down imperialism, and to defend its own victorious dic-

tatorship from unexpected attacks by the bourgeoisie, to have recourse to arms and to fight against bourgeois militarism. *For the arming of the proletariat! For the Red Army!* That is the cry of the communist youth.

(7) The struggle for the amelioration of the economic situation of the proletarian youth is one of the principal problems of the Leagues. A practical reform of the conditions of labor is possible only in a communist community. In the present period of capitalist domination it is possible to attain a partial amelioration of the situation of the young only through the revolutionary class struggle, but in no wise by collaborating with the compromisers and the bourgeois governments.

(8) One of the elementary problems of the Young Communist Leagues is the training of proletarian leaders and future builders of the communist society. Communist judgement and readiness for action are attained not only by taking part in the political struggle, but also through theoretical socialist instruction which is a sharp weapon in the fight against bourgeois ideology. Socialist education combined with active participation in the political struggles — these are the true methods of training young proletarian champions.

(9) The Young Communist Leagues, moreover, set themselves the task of a universal education of the working class youth in the Marxian spirit, thereby raising their cultural level. The working class youth must extort from the bourgeoisie the treasures of knowledge which are indispensable to the workers as a guide in the movement for the emancipation of the proletariat. They must conquer the paths to science, literature, and art. Besides honest workmen and brave soldiers of the Red Army, the working class youth must supply scholars, technical experts, organizers, philosophers, poets, and artists for the new communist society. It is the mission of the proletarian youth and its organizations to be in the front ranks of the constructors of a new culture conceived in the spirit of communism.

(10) The communist organizations must turn the proletarian youth into a healthy people — healthy bodily and mentally. Therefore, the Young Communist Leagues are also concerned with the physical development of the young. This work, to which we can give only a part of our activity at the present time, is also of great importance for the young workers.

(11) Although the Leagues strive to influence with their ideas wide circles of the working class youth, this is not done at the expense of clarity of our communist program and tactics. A matter of extreme importance is the propaganda amongst the rural laborers and the poorer peasants.

(12) The Young Communist International considers that the existence of separate organizations of the collegiate socialist youth is superfluous. Honest revolutionists in the ranks of the young students must become members of the proletarian youth organizations, as equals among equals, and comrades among comrades. The formation of groups of the collegiate youth within the general youth organizations must be regulated according to the conditions in each country separately.

(13) In the present revolutionary epoch, the struggle of the proletariat can be victorious only if it is world-wide. This applies as well to the struggle of the young workers. As a consequence, the political organizations of the youth unite themselves under the banner of the Young Communist International. The chief aim of the Young Communist International is centralization and guiding the work and struggles of the Young Communist Leagues in the various countries. Its regulations are the supreme laws to all organizations of the youth. Its practical work consists in international education and international guidance of political manifestations. Its duty is to give unity to all the activities of the youth organizations; to serve them as a directing force; to support them morally and materially; to form new Leagues and to bind together as closely as possible, the proletarian youth organizations of all countries.

(14) The Young Communist International stands upon the basis and the principles laid down by the First Congress of the Communist International. The Executive Committee of the Young Communist International is connected organizationally with that of the Communist International and works in close connection with it.