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Youth Against Fascism

Comrades, I am bringing you warm greetings from the Executive Committee of the Communist International.

The remarkable words of the great leader and teacher of the proletariat and of all the oppressed of the world, Comrade *Stalin*, that “*internationalism is the fundamental idea that permeates the activity of the Young Communist League,*” find their living embodiment in you.

No dangers that beset your long and arduous road, no fascist or police cordons were able to prevent you from gathering in the Red proletarian capital for the purpose of discussing, in a friendly and amicable way, like the international family that you are, the tasks of uniting the forces of the young generation of toilers.

You are a congress of the revolutionary youth, a congress of strength and courage. How many of the best and most exemplary fighters in the cause of the working youth have assembled at your congress!

It is with pride and affection that I welcome, through you, in the name of the older revolutionary generation, the glorious young guard of the working people of the whole world.

Comrades, a month ago the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International completed its work in this hall where you are assembled today.

The Congress of the Comintern, led by the brilliant teaching of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, thoroughly discussed all the main problems of the international labor movement and mapped out the road that must be taken to overcome the split in this movement, and to weld together the forces of the toilers in the struggle against exploiters and oppressors, against fascism and war. The Congress of the Communist International paid particular attention to the youth movement as one of the principal problems of the international revolutionary movement, understanding full well that the victory of the class struggle of the working people depends upon the correct and successful development of the youth movement, upon its assuming a sweeping mass character.

Fascism has wreaked bestial vengeance upon the best fighters of the revolutionary youth. At the same time it is making every ef-

fort to adapt its putrid demagogy to the moods of the wide mass of the youth, and to take advantage of the growing militant activity of the youth for its own reactionary ends, in order to convert it into a prop of dying capitalism.

Depriving the young generation of working people of all rights, the fascist governments militarize the entire youth, and try to train from their ranks obedient slaves of finance capital in civil as well as imperialist war.

What can we place in opposition to fascism and the threat of imperialist war, which has become particularly acute in view of the preparations being made by Italian fascism to attack Ethiopia and the growing aggression of German fascism?

We can and must place in opposition to it the union of all anti-fascist forces and, first and foremost, the union of all the forces of the young generation of working people, at the same time enhancing a thousandfold the role and activity of the youth in the struggle of the working class for its own interests, for its own cause.

Let the entire activity of the Congress of the Young Communist International be devoted to the attainment of this immediate and principal goal.

On the basis of the experience you already have gained, and the decisions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, we expect you to be able to find the proper ways and means of accomplishing the most important task of your movement, the task of uniting the forces of the entire non-fascist youth, and, first and foremost, of the working class youth, the task of achieving unity with the socialist youth.

This, however, cannot be achieved if the Young Communist Leagues keep on trying, as they have done hitherto, to construct their organizations as if they were Communist *Parties* of the youth; nor will this be possible if they are content, as heretofore, to lead the secluded life of sectarians, isolated from the masses.

The whole anti-fascist youth is interested in uniting and organizing its forces. Therefore you, comrades, must find such ways, forms and methods of work as will assure the formation, in the capitalist countries, of a *new type* of mass youth organizations, to which no vital interest of the working youth will be alien, organizations which, without copying the Party, will fight for *all* the interests of the youth and will bring up the youth in the spirit of the class struggle and proletarian internationalism, in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism.

This requires that the Congress should very seriously *check up* and *reappraise* the work of the Young Communist Leagues, for the purpose of *actually* achieving their reorganization and the fearless removal of everything that obstructs the development of mass work and establishment of the united front and unity of the youth.

We expect the Young Communist International to build up its activity in such a manner as to weld and unite all trade union, cultural, educational and sports organizations of the working youth, all revolutionary, national-revolutionary, national-liberation and anti-fascist youth organizations, for the struggle against fascism and war, for the rights of the young generation.

We note with great pleasure that our young comrades in France and the United States have actively joined the mass movement for a united front of the youth which is so successfully developing, and have already achieved in this sphere successes which hold out great promises. All sections of the Young Communist International should profit by this experience of the French and American comrades.

In many countries the Communist and Socialist youth are coming closer and closer together. A striking example of this is the presence, at this Congress of the Young Communist International, of representatives of not only the Communist but also the Socialist youth of Spain.

Therefore, comrades, follow boldly the course of uniting with the Socialist youth and of forming joint and united organizations with it. Follow boldly the course of uniting all forces of the anti-fascist youth!

The Executive Committee of the Communist International will encourage and support in every way your initiative and activity in the fight for unity and for all the vital interests of the working youth.

The millions of young men and women for whom capitalist society has created impossible conditions of existence, who are either outside any organization at all or are in organizations led by the class enemy, are your brothers and sisters, whom you can and *must* win over to the side of socialism by your persistent work.

Don't wait until unity between the Communist and Social-Democratic Parties and other organizations of the working class has been reached.

Be bold, independent and full of initiative!

You are the Congress of the most active, the most self-sacrificing section of the young generation of today. You cannot stand aside from the movement in favor of unity which is growing and strengthening in the ranks of the working class. You do not have to wait like the Socialist Youth International for permission “from above” before you can support the united front movement and the union of the toiling youth in one organization.

In the name of the Executive Committee of the Communist International I declare that the youth united in the ranks of the Young Communist International enjoys and will continue to enjoy every opportunity of *independently* developing its revolutionary movement and solving the problems of this movement.

Communists in youth organizations must be able to work in such a way as to influence the decisions of these organizations by convincing their members, and not by issuing orders in the name of the Party.

I call to mind the words of the great Lenin which form the basis for the relations between the Communist International and the youth and its organizations:

Frequently the middle-aged and the aged *do not know how* to approach the youth in the proper way, for, necessarily, the youth must come to socialism *in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances* than their fathers. Incidentally, this is why we must be decidedly in favor of the *organisational independence* of the Youth League, *not only* because the opportunists fear this independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence, the youth *will be unable* either to train good Socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism *forward*.

Comrades, you must *study, study while you fight*.

Combine your day-to-day practical activities with a profound study of the original sources of Marxism-Leninism, for without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary practice.

Be exemplary, staunch and valiant fighters against fascism, against capitalism.

Hold aloft *the banner of the liberation of humanity from capitalist slavery, the banner of the Communist International*.

Rally the young generation of working people of the whole world around this banner. This emblem of stupendous victories already waves over one-sixth part of the globe and it will conquer

throughout the world! It is the flag of the great leader of the world proletariat, Comrade *Stalin!*

Speech at the Opening of the Sixth Congress of the Young Communist International, September 25, 1935.