RESULTS OF THE YOUTH CONFERENCE OF SOUTH-EAST ASIAN COUNTRIES

We are reporting to you on the results of the work of the Youth Conference of Southeast Asian countries.

The conference was held in Calcutta, India, from 19 to 26 February 1948. It was attended by 93 people, representing various democratic youth organizations in 25 countries. Representatives of youth organizations attended the conference: 18 delegates from India, Pakistan - 9 delegates, Burma - 7 delegates, Malaya - 1 delegate, Indonesia - 5 delegates, Vietnam - 6 delegates, Ceylon - 1 delegate, Philippines - 2 delegates, China - 7 delegates. There were 56 delegates total with the right to vote.

Representatives of youth organizations attended the conference as observers: Nepal - 1, Australia - 1, North Korea - 4, Mongolian People's Republic - 3, Kazakhstan - 1, Uzbekistan - 1, Kyrgyzstan - 1, Azerbaijan - 1, Tajikistan - 1, Turkmenistan - 1. There were 15 observers total. Representatives of youth organizations took part in the conference as guests: USSR - 3, Canada - 1, England - 1, France - 1, Yugoslavia - 1, Czechoslovakia - 1, India - 1, Pakistan - 13. There were 22 guests total.

The All-Indian Student Congress refused to attend the conference and only sent a guest of a certain Meimang. The head of the Congress, Wyrm, explained his refusal by saying that, supposedly, the delegation from India was elected in an undemocratic way.

The Conference approved the following order of the day, proposed by the Preparatory Committee of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students:
(1) The struggle of the youth of Southeast Asian countries against imperialism, for national independence and freedom, peace and democracy. Reports of the Vietnamese and Chinese delegations.
(2) The situation and needs of the youth of Southeast Asia struggling against imperialism. Reports of the Indian, Pakistani, Malay and Burmese delegations.
(3) The tasks of strengthening the unity of the youth movement within countries and developing connections with democratic youth throughout the world through the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students (IUS). The reporter was the representative of WFDY Vidia Canuga.

The conference opened on February 19, 1948, with the welcome speech of the Mayor of Calcutta in the presence of 9,000 young people. After the announcement of the welcome telegrams from WFDY and IUS, reports on the first issue of the day were given. Reports on the second and third issues of the agenda were also read out in plenary sessions, in the presence of eight to nine thousand young people. The announcements and discussions about the main reports (1) - (3) were held in the presence of delegates, observers, and guests - representatives of youth organizations of foreign countries.

Representatives of the student organizations of Ceylon, the trade union youth of India, the socialist and communist youth of Burma, the League of Democratic Youth of Vietnam, the All-India Trade Union Federation, the youth section of the Nepalese National Congress, the Student Congress of Pakistan, the All-Indian Student Federation (Pakistani organization), the Muslim student federation of Pakistan, the democratic youth of the league of Pakistan.

All speeches were of a militant anti-imperialist character. The speakers spoke of the treacherous character of the national bourgeoisie which entered into a deal with Anglo-American, French and Dutch imperialism. The majority of presenters spoke about the work of democratic youth organizations and presented data characterizing the growth of democratic youth organizations in countries of Southeast Asia.

The head of the Soviet delegation, Comrade Kharlamov, greeted the conference at the second meeting in presence of 9,000 young people. His words about the Soviet Union and Comrade Stalin were greeted with a stormy ovation, with numerous exclamations in honor of the Soviet people and Comrade Stalin.

Youth representatives of trade unions of Pakistan, the youth of the Nepalese national congress, the Burmese student league, the women's youth of Pakistan, the peasant union of India, the student federation of Pakistan, the socialist youth of India, and the youth of the Revolutionary Communist Party of India took part in the discussion of the second point on the agenda.
The speakers talked about the hard disenfranchised position of working, peasant, and student youth. The delegates from India and Indonesia told us how women's and children's labor is widely exploited at enterprises in the presence of a huge army of unemployed men. At many enterprises, children as young as six to eight years old are employed. Young people are deprived of the opportunity to receive basic medical care. The majority of workers and peasants (over 90%) do not have the opportunity to attend any school and thusly remain illiterate. The participants listened, with great attention, to the speeches of representatives of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan who spoke in detail about the life of the youth of the Central Asian Soviet republics.

The third question on the agenda was addressed by the representative of the youth league "Eureka" (Australia), Revolutionary Union of Youth (Mongolian People’s Republic), the student organization of Canada, the People's Youth of Yugoslavia, the Democratic Union of Youth of North Korea.

Despite the fact that discussion of reports on all issues was held in an atmosphere of mutual understanding, an acute struggle developed in the commissions for the drafting of resolutions.

The representative of the student congress of eastern Pakistan, Girah Jalinden, proposed that the resolution on the first issue should mention the merits of the "leader of the Indian national liberation movement" Subhash Chandra Bose in the struggle against imperialism. This proposal caused a sharp protest from the participants of the conference. The delegates of Vietnam, Indonesia, Burma, China, as well as the representative of the democratic student's league of eastern Pakistan Shamsul Haque, correctly characterized Subhash Chandra Bose as a traitor who cooperated with the Japanese imperialists and German fascists. After a lengthy discussion, Girah Jalinden withdrew his amendment to the resolution.

Representatives of the so-called revolutionary-communist (Trotskyist) party of India tried to pull out the formulation that the war of united nations against German fascism and the Japanese imperialism was not progressive for the countries of South-East Asia, since, allegedly, this war strengthened the positions of Anglo-American imperialism. This proposal was rejected.

On the night before the plenary session, at which the draft resolutions of the conferences prepared for the commissions were to be approved, the leader of the so-called left wing of the All-India Student Congress, Aurobindo Bose (nephew of Subhash Chandra Bose), stated to the preparatory committee of the conference the ultimatum requirement: if the resolution on the first question will not indicate that the struggle of the youth of Southeast Asian countries against imperialism must be under the banner of the kuja (Fuhrer) Subhash Chandra Bose, then he, Bose, will leave the conference and his people will disrupt all activities of the conference through violence. Knowing the gangster antics of these young men, the members of the preparatory
committee were confused and were ready to accept Bose's demand. After talking with the leadership of the delegation of the Soviet youth, the members of the preparatory committee realized their mistake. The meeting of the preparatory committee together with those with the right of decisive vote rejected the ultimatum demand of Bose. In response to such a decree, Bose, and the Trotskyites he influenced, the youth of the All-India Trade Union Congress, the All India Youth League, the so-called Indian National Army (volunteers) and the All-India Muslim Students Federation, left the conference.

The preparatory committee reported on this escapade of Bose and on its decision on this issue to the plenary session of the conference. The decision of the preparatory committee was unanimously approved by the conference. Attempts by the reactionaries to subordinate the work of the conference to their influence or to disrupt it has failed. The Conference adopted resolutions on all issues that corresponded to the instructions given to the Soviet delegation.

On the question of the struggle of youth of Southeast Asian countries against imperialism, for national independence and freedom, peace and democracy, the Conference unanimously adopted a resolution supporting the national liberation struggle of the youth of the countries of South-East Asia against imperialism for national independence, democracy and freedom of peoples of the colonial and dependent countries. The conference called on the democratic youth of the world to support the just struggle of the peoples of the colonial countries against imperialist oppression, which is part of the common struggle for peace and democracy.

The conference condemned the policy of the Dutch and French imperialists, which, with the support of the Anglo-American imperialists, conducted criminal colonialist wars in Indonesia and Vietnam, and called on the democratic youth of the countries of South-East Asia to suspend the supply of weapons for the imperialist armies in Indonesia and Vietnam, and help the youth struggle of these countries, as well as and the young people of China by all possible means. The Conference sharply condemned the provocative policy of British imperialism aimed at inciting racial and religious hostility between the peoples of India and Pakistan and appealed to the youth to expose the intrigues of reaction and to wage a struggle against it.

On the issue of the situation and the needs of the youth fighting against imperialism, the Conference adopted a resolution aimed at fighting for the realization of the rights and urgent needs of the youth of South-East Asian countries.

The conference put forward the following general requirements of the struggling youth of the countries of Southeast Asia.
For all youth: granting political rights that ensure the active participation of youth in public life; the right to free education in one's native language; providing young people with the conditions necessary for physical and cultural development.

For working youth: work opportunity; equal pay for equal work; receiving qualifications during working hours; labor protection and free medical care; prohibition of work for children under 14; improvement of living conditions.

For peasant youth: endowment with land; legislative restriction of the exploitation of youth labor in landed estates; simplification of taxation; expansion of state aid to peasants in improving land cultivation.

For students: immediate and complete departure from the imperialist educational system; teaching in their native language; elimination of anti-national and anti-scientific ideas from textbooks; the establishment of a fee for tuition available to the entire population in high school and higher education; providing the necessary number of buildings for schools, colleges and dormitories; guaranteed job placement in accordance with the received specialty and qualification.

The conference stressed that the struggle of the youth of Southeast Asian countries for their needs is an inseparable part of the struggle of these countries in achieving true independence, the destruction of the feudal system of land use, and the nationalization of key industries.

On the issue of strengthening the unity of the youth movement within South-East Asian countries and expanding ties with the democratic youth of the world through the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) and the International Union of Students, the resolution says: "Young people must fight with all attempts to split up its ranks and establish a solid unity between the working, peasant, and student youth, among the youth of all countries, nationalities, and religions. In its struggle for freedom and people's democracy, the youth of Southeast Asia have strong allies in the face of the youth of the whole world, united in the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students. The continuous struggle led by the democratic youth of the whole world under the leadership of the WFDY against the American warmongers who are preparing the third world carnage is a direct and great help to the youth of Southeast Asia."

The Conference unanimously adopted an appeal to the youth of the world, in which it vowed to strengthen the unity of the youth of the whole world in the struggle against imperialism and its agents. The conference in its appeal calls on all democratic youth organizations to unite in the ranks of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students. The Conference expressed fraternal solidarity of the democratic youth of China, Spain, and Greece, fighting together with the peoples of their countries for freedom and independence. The Conference sent messages to the democratic youth of China, Spain, and Greece.
During the conference work in Kolkata mass events were held with the participation of a large number of young people.

On February 21, a youth demonstration was held under the slogan "Hands Off Asia". Following the column of the conference participants were columns of various student and workers' organizations in Kolkata, as well as several thousand peasant youths who came from the villages. The demonstration began in the center of the city and passed through the city a distance of 9 kilometers. Demonstrators shouted slogans in Bengali and English: "Hands off Asia", "Down with Dollar Imperialism", "Long Live the Soviet Union!", "Long Live the World Federation of Democratic Youth!", "Youth of the World, Unite!", "Youth: Unite, Fight, Attack, and Win!", "Long Live People's Revolution!".

The procession through the city ended with a rally numbering twenty thousand people, at which participants of the Conference made short speeches. When a representative of the Soviet youth Nina Zhvania rose to the podium, the assembled people held a stormy ovation in honor of the Soviet Union, lasting for several minutes. The slogans were shouted from the audience: "Long live the Soviet Union!", "Long live Comrade Stalin!".

The rally ended with the burning of the cartoon dummy of the Anglo-American imperialist. The burning of the dummy was accompanied by exclamations: "Down with the imperialists", "Long live full freedom and independence!".

On February 22, in honor of the Conference, a mass sports festival of the youth was held at the Calcutta-Maidan stadium. The celebration was opened by a parade of participants of sports performances. About four thousand people participated in sports performances. The participants of the parade, shouting slogans in honor of the World Federation of Democratic Youth and foreign delegations, voiced their slogans past the central grandstand. The youth welcomed the Soviet delegates especially warmly.

On February 24 the festival was held. More than 5,000 young people attended the festival.

That same evening, Aurobindo Bose, in opposition to the events of the conference, tried to hold a mass protest, but nothing came of this undertaking. This time only about 300 people gathered in the hall where eight to nine thousand young people gathered at the plenary sessions of the conference in the previous days. The slanderous speech of Bose at the conference was repeatedly interrupted by exclamations: "Down with the schismatics", "You had no right to declare you were leaving the conference on our behalf ", "We protest against hooliganism". The rally was hastily closed.
On February 26, the day after the conference ended, the final meeting of the youth was again held on the square of Calcutta - Maidan. About seven thousand people gathered for the rally. A speech on the outcome of the conference was made on behalf of the preparatory committee of the conference by Vidia Canuga. Then, speeches were made by the heads of delegations of Pakistan, Australia, Malaya, the USSR, Vietnam, and China. After the representative gave the floor to the head of the Soviet delegation, all those present at the meeting applauded stormily. At this time, at the back of the square, two explosions were made by the Bose people in order to disrupt the rally. This provocation was not successful, there was no panic at the rally. The participants of the meeting collectively repeated the slogan several times: "Long live the Soviet Union". During the speech, there was complete order, and after the end, a stormy ovation and cheers in honor of the Soviet Union, Comrade Stalin, began again. The meeting ended with the adoption of a short resolution, which supports the decisions of the conference.

The conference played an important role in bringing together the democratic youth organizations of South-East Asian countries around the World Federation of Youth and the International Union of Students, showed the growing unity of the progressive youth of these countries in the struggle to strengthen the anti-imperialist camp.

On February 27, foreign delegations attending the conference were invited by the Indian People's Theater Association and the Society of Friends of the Soviet Union. Members of the society of Indian friends of the Soviet Union, including prominent scientists, writers and art workers of India, warmly received delegates.

Then the conference participants went to the Association of Indian People's Theater. This meeting was foiled. Immediately upon the arrival of participants of the conference, the Bose people carried out an armed raid on the premises of the association. Six Hindus, members of the association, were wounded from the pistols, two of whom died shortly. None of the foreign delegates were injured. Two hours later, the Bose people threw sticks and stones at the barracks, where the delegates of the conference lived.

In connection with these gangster antics, foreign delegates appealed to the governor-general of Bengal, and the personal representative of the president of the World Federation of Democratic Youth sent a protest to Prime Minister of India Pandit Nehru. Immediately after the raid, the police did not take any measures to search for the bandits. However, on March 1, the newspaper Statesman, published by the British, proclaimed that early in the morning a special department of the Calcutta police searched 35 places in connection with an armed raid on Dixon Lane during a reception hosted by the Indian People's Theater Association in honor of foreign delegates to the youth conference. In one of the houses, cartridges and materials for manufacturing explosives were found. 11 people were detained, including Aurobindo Bose and his brother Ranonit Bose.
The Soviet delegation held talks with delegations of young people from other countries. These talks provided an opportunity to get acquainted with the youth movements in South-East Asian countries, as well as talk about the life of the Soviet youth. At the request of the conference participants, our delegation made a report on science, culture, and education in the Soviet Union. Talks were held with the peasants of Bengal who arrived in Calcutta for a demonstration (there were more than a thousand young peasants) and students of the University of Delhi.

The participants of the conference screened the Soviet color film "Parade of Youth" in one of the central movie theaters of the city. The auditorium was crowded. There were about a thousand spectators. The film made a terrific impression. The stormy applause, cheers in honor of Comrade Stalin, were repeatedly distributed. After the end of the picture, no one adjourned. At the request of the audience, the film was shown again.

The Government of India was far from being friendly towards the conference. Newspapers controlled by the government silenced the conference. However, they gave the speech of the Soviet delegation in detail, without distorting the essence.

India is experiencing an acute crisis. Steel, for example, is only 65-70 percent melted to existing capacities. Because the country is divided into India and Pakistan, the already weak railway communication has been undermined. There are no locomotives and rolling stock. The agriculture is brought to complete decline due to the impoverishment of the peasants. Three-quarters of all peasants are landless. Tenants are forced to give from 75 to 90 percent of the harvested yield in the form of various taxes and levies. All government measures to raise crop yields do not produce positive results. According to official data, more than 20 million people are starving in Madras province. In fact, the number is much higher than is indicated in the official data. In one of his public statements, the minister of food supplies said that hunger threatens more than the Madras province. Every year, food supply standards decrease while population grows. In 1947, the number of people supplied by welfare cards reached a huge figure of 170 million people, and the supply rate fell from 18 ounces to 12 and even eight ounces a day.

The reluctance of the Indian government to carry out democratic reforms provokes sharp protests from the workers and peasants. According to official data of the Indian Association of Industrialists, only in the first half of 1947, over 9 million days were lost as a result of strikes and protests. In the second half of the year, the number of days lost as a result of strikes is much greater than in the first half of 1947. It is noted that from 40 to 60 percent of the strikes ended with the victory of the workers.

In the principalities, there are mass protests of peasants against feudal lords and princes. In the Indian press, it was officially declared that 1/6 of the province of Hyderabad is in the hands of the peasants. In the united provinces, the peasant movement is less developed, in lieu of
the fact that many peasants still believe in demagogic statements about the proposed land reform. In fact, there are no land reforms. It is supposed to "liquidate" landlord land use by buying land from the landlords for very high prices. Under the draft reform, the peasants will have to pay the landlords one billion 30 million rupees for 40 years.

Recently, the Indian bourgeoisie, warmed up by the British imperialists, are becoming more reactionary. Even the Gandhian ideology of passive resistance has become a hindrance to it. This caused the killing of Gandhi, who enjoyed great popularity among the people. Gandhi's murderer, Godse, is a member of the semi-fascist military organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which is led by one of the most reactionary parties in the National Congress - Hindu Mahasabha.

After Gandhi's assassination, the struggle between the political parties-members of the National Congress and between the leaders of the government - Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel - has sharply escalated. Nehru and Patel try to hide the ongoing struggle between them from the public opinion.

Immediately after the assassination of Gandhi, spontaneous riots broke out in many cities of India. The people beat and exterminated members of the organization Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. In the first week, police and troops shot the people. Then, when the riots began to take on a larger scale, the government formally declared Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh outlawed.

The other day a draft constitution was published in print. The project is reactionary, modeled on the constitution of Canada, England, and the United States. Two potential nominees for the governor-general and, later, the president positions are the current president of the National Congress, Rajendra Prasad, and the Governor-General of Bengal, Rajagopalachari. All-Indian National Congress, which now has four to five million members, changes its charter and structure. The Congress will consist of electors (about 150 million) and the Congress staff. Throughout the country, it is planned to create panchayats (local committees) - one panchayat for two thousand electors. The huge bureaucratic apparatus of the Congress is selected only from people devoted to the government.

The Socialist Party of India (whose leader is Jayaprakash Narayan) has considerable influence among the petty-bourgeoisie. For example, in the elections in Bombay, the National Congress received 40 seats, the Socialist Party - 26 seats, the Communist Party - 5 seats. After the assassination of Gandhi, the Socialist party changed its tactics. The Congress of the Socialist Party is going to take place in the city of Nazik on March 19, 1948, where the party is expected to leave the Congress. The Socialist Party is hostile to the Communists and does not ally with the Communist Party of India.
The Communist Party of India has great influence among the people. The party is now essentially semi-legal. On the eve of the Congress, the police carried out a number of raids and searches of the committees of the Communist Party in Bombay, Madras, and Delhi. Since the arrival of the Soviet Embassy in Delhi, 5 police raids were committed on the Delhi Committee of the Communist Party. There have been numerous arrests of active Party and trade union workers. The government did not allow representatives of the foreign press to attend the Congress of the Communist Party, which opened on February 28 in the city of Calcutta.

Americans and Englishmen force their agency upon everyone and seek to cultivate public opinion. Immediately after its arrival in India, the American embassy opened its libraries in large cities and spread slanderous books and pamphlets about the Soviet Union. The embassy of the Soviet Union in India does not yet have a single library, although a considerable number of intellectuals and students have a great interest in Soviet literature.

There is a great interest in Soviet movies in India. However, the screening of Soviet films is not organized even though there is an opportunity for it. During the stay of our delegation in Calcutta, only English and American films were shown in movie theaters.

In our opinion, it would be expedient to allow the Anti-Fascist Committee of Soviet Youth to invite a delegation of various youth organizations to the Soviet Union this summer. This will play an important role in strengthening democratic youth organizations and expanding their influence on young people.

During the stay of the delegation of Soviet youth in India, Deputy Prime Minister of Vietnam Dr. Ram Nook Tak addressed us. On February 27, 1948, in the city of Calcutta, Dr. Tak expressed the following considerations.

About the situation in Indonesia. The latest developments in Indonesia, Dr. Tak stated, and in particular, the signing of the Renliff Agreement, testify to the opportunistic and capitulatory policy of the Indonesian party, which failed to lead the mass movement and handed over the leadership to the bourgeois parties. Dr. Tak believes that everything that was won with blood has been lost. In Indonesia, during the war, the progressive forces engaged in too much international propaganda, the establishment of diplomatic relations, etc., but did not engage in real unity of internal forces, and eventually lost them.

The situation in Burma is quite good, according to Dr. Tak. Everything is guided by the "Marxist League", along with which there is a Communist Party. There is no fundamental difference between them, according to Tak, -- the programs and slogans basically coincide, but there are disagreements and enmity of a personal matter in the leadership of the league and the
Communist Party. The Marxist League is ready to dissolve itself if the Communist Party does the same, for the purposes of establishment of a unified organization.

In modern Southeast Asia, Burma is the most advanced democratic country, except for Vietnam, according to Tak. It is very important, he stressed, to establish diplomatic relations between Burma and the USSR, since Vietnam is closely connected with Burma. The Vietnamese people's troops are advancing to the Burmese border, in order to be able to receive the weapons and materials promised by the Burmese unhampered.

Dr. Tak considers that the parties of Southeast Asia to be characterized by an abundance of "ultra-left" groups in them, an inability to see the difference between questions of strategy and tactics, between principles and tactics. Having learned the ABC’s of Marxism-Leninism, they suffer from the infantile disorder of "leftism". There are quite a few open Trotskyite elements who are hostile to the Soviet Union. Almost all communist parties, Tak stated, feel an acute shortage of trained and mature cadres, they are very weakly connected with information bureaus of their communist parties (located in Yugoslavia) and do not have the opportunity, due to lack of currency, to receive a sufficient amount of the newspaper “For a Firm World, for People's Democracy”. Tak asked to help with this.

The Communist Party of Vietnam, Tak reported, is at the very beginning of the revolution, and taking into account the experience of the CPSU (b) and world history, physically destroyed almost all the traitors. Experience showed that this was done correctly. Those of the traitors who managed to survive, now cooperate with the French.

Further, Dr. Tak asked us to convey whether the Soviet Union has the opportunity to provide Vietnam with foreign exchange assistance (US dollars, pounds sterling), citing the fact that it is possible to acquire a sufficient number of weapons in China and the Philippines.

Tak also spoke about the extreme need to get help in form of party and military cadres, because only a semi-partisan-type struggle has been conducted so far. Now, when the decisive phase is coming, experienced military people are needed. The French, says Tak, must be smashed militarily and then the question of the possibility of a compromise will disappear by itself. A special shortage is felt in aviation (there is none) and in the heavy artillery.

The French currently occupy only in large centers. The political and moral state of the French troops (150-200 thousand) is extremely bad. Vietnamese have about 100,000 active bayonets. If there were weapons, one could arm up to two million people with rifles. The food situation is good. Dr. Tak asked to do everything possible to promote the Vietnamese constitution throughout the world and distribute other materials by printing them in France, Belgium, Switzerland or the USSR, since it is impossible to do so from Vietnam (due to lack of people and means).
As Tak reported, in the case of the defeat of the French, the Communist Party seriously fears an open invasion by Americans under the pretext of preserving "security" in South-East Asia.

He said that he was instructed to enter into negotiations with the Americans in order to find out how much one can hope for their neutrality in the event of a victory over the French invaders. He had a conversation with the American ambassador in Siam.

Dr. Tak himself arrived in India with an official order to express his condolences to the Nehru government in connection with the assassination of Gandhi. In passing, he was instructed by the party to direct the work of the Vietnamese delegation at the Conference of Youth and establish contact with the Communist Party of Burma and other countries.

In India, he talked with Nehru (whom he regards as a politically incapable figure, the Indian edition of Leon Blum). According to the local Indian millionaire Birla, with whom Tak has also talked, the United States deeply penetrates into the life of India.

In conclusion, Dr. Tak gave fraternal greetings to the CPSU (b) and to the great leader Comrade Stalin.

Tak gave some materials in French, which the head of the delegation Kharlamov A.E. handed to Comrade Baranov L.S. during a conversation in the Central Committee of the CPSU (b).

Comrade Baranov was also given the theses of the II Congress of the Communist Party of India and other materials.

Secretary of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League Central Committee
N. Mihaylov

Translated by Polina Brik, edited by Leonard Zorfass of the American Party of Labor