

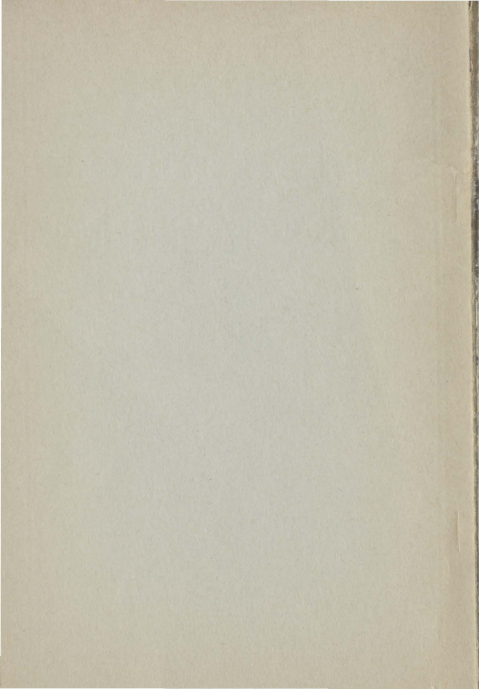
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**THE YOUNG
GENERATION**

V. I. LENIN



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V. I. Lenin



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NEW YORK

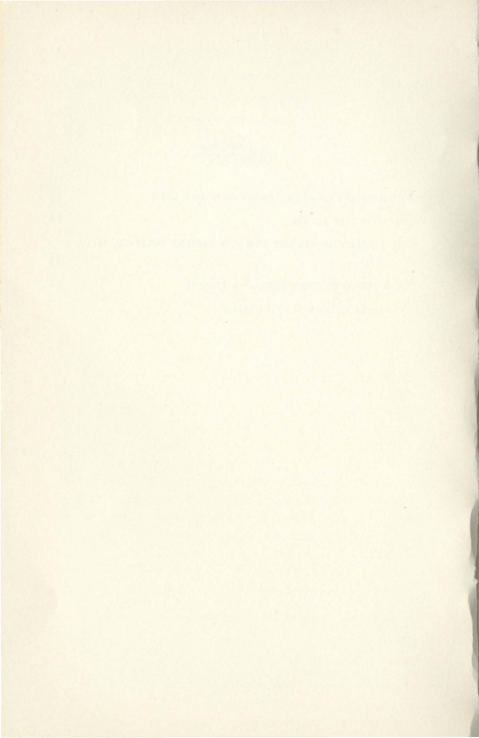
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THE YOUNG GENERATION

THE DRAFTING OF 183 STUDENTS INTO THE ARMY

The newspapers of January 11 published an official statement by the Ministry of Education¹ announcing the drafting into the army of 183 students of the Kiev University as a punishment for "riotous assembly." The Provisional Regulations of July 29, 1899²—which constitute a menace to the student world and to society—are being put into execution less than eighteen months after their promulgation, and it seems as if the government was in a hurry to justify its application of this unparalleled penal measure by publishing a whole indictment in which no pains are spared to paint the misdeeds of the students in the blackest possible colors.

These misdeeds are worse than awful! A general students' congress was convened in Odessa in the summer to discuss a plan to organize all Russian students for the purpose of protesting in every form on matters connected with academic, public, and political life. As a punishment for these criminal political designs all the student delegates were arrested and deprived of their documents. But the unrest does not subside

¹ We were just going to press when the official announcement appeared.

² University students were exempt from compulsory military service until after graduation. However, following a series of student strikes in 1899 the tsarist government issued special regulations drafting students into the army as a form of punishment.—*Ed.*

—it grows and persists in breaking out in *many* higher educational institutions. The students desire to discuss and conduct their common affairs freely and independently. Their authorities—with the soulless formalism that has always distinguished Russian officials—retaliate by petty pinpricks, rouse the discontent of the students to the highest pitch, and involuntarily suggest the idea to the youth who have not yet become submerged in the morass of bourgeois stagnation to protest against the whole system of police and official tyranny.

The Kiev students demand the dismissal of a professor who had replaced a colleague who had left the university. The authorities demur, provoke the students into convening “assemblies and demonstrations” and then . . . give way. The students call a meeting to discuss why it is possible for two blue-blooded undergraduates to rape a girl with impunity (so rumor says). The authorities sentence the chief “culprits”—for convening a meeting—to solitary confinement. The latter refuse to submit. They are expelled. A crowd of students demonstratively accompany the expelled students to the railway station. A new meeting is held. The students remain assembled until the evening and refuse to disperse unless the rector appear. The Vice-Governor and the chief of gendarmerie arrive with a detachment of troops, who surround the university, enter the main hall and—summon the rector. The students demand—what do you think, a constitution? No, they demand the abolition of punishment by solitary confinement and the reinstatement of the expelled students. The names of those present at the meeting are taken and the students are allowed to go home.

Ponder over this astonishing incongruity between the modesty and inoffensiveness of the students’ demands and the consternation of the government, which behaves as if the ax

has already been laid to the pillars of its dominion. Nothing exposes our "omnipotent" government so much as this consternation. It shows by this more convincingly than does any "criminal manifesto"—shows to all those who have eyes to see and ears to hear—that it feels its utter instability and it relies only on the bayonet and the knout to protect it from the indignation of the people. Taught by decades of experience, the government is firmly convinced that it is surrounded by inflammable material, and that a mere spark, a mere protest against solitary confinement, is enough to start a conflagration. That being the case, obviously the punishment had to be exemplary, and so—draft hundreds of students into the army! "Put the drill sergeant in place of Voltaire!"—this formula is not a bit obsolete. On the contrary, the twentieth century is destined to see it really put into effect.

This new penal measure, new in its attempt to revive the long-obsolete past, provokes many a thought and comparison. About three generations ago, in the reign of Nicholas I, drafting into the army was a natural punishment and entirely in keeping with the whole system of Russian serf society. Aristocratic scions were sent to the army so as to compel them to serve and earn officer's rank, thus abolishing the former liberty of the nobility. Peasants were drafted into the army as the equivalent of a long term of penal servitude, where the inhuman treatment of "Green Street"¹ and the like awaited them. But it is now more than a quarter of a century since "universal" military service was introduced, which was acclaimed at the time as a great democratic reform. Real, and not nominal, universal military service is undoubtedly a democratic reform; it abolishes the system of social estates and puts all citizens on an equal footing. But if this were really

¹ Running the gauntlet.—*Ed.*

the case, would drafting into the army be employed as a punishment? And if the government converts military service into a form of punishment, does it not prove that we are much nearer to the old recruiting system than to *universal* military service? The Provisional Regulations of 1899 tear away the pharisaical mask and expose the Asiatic nature even of those of our institutions which most resemble the European. In reality, we have not and never did have universal military service, because the privileges of birth and wealth create a host of exemptions. In reality, we have not and never did have anything resembling equality of rights of citizens in the matter of military service.

On the contrary, the barracks are thoroughly saturated with a most revolting spirit of deprivation of all rights—the utter defenselessness of the worker and peasant soldier, the trampling of human dignity under foot, extortion, and beating, beating, beating. And for those who have influential connections and money there are privileges and exemptions. It is not surprising that drafting into this school of tyranny and violence may be a punishment, and a very severe punishment at that, almost equivalent to deprivation of rights. The government counts on teaching the “rebels” discipline in this school. But is it not miscalculating? Will not the school of Russian military service be a military school for the revolution? Not all the students, of course, will have the strength to go through the full course of training in this school. Some will be broken by the hardships, will fall victims in conflicts with the military authorities; others—the weak and flabby—will be cowed by barrack life. But others still will be steeled by it, will have their outlook broadened, and will be led to ponder over and test out their aspirations for emancipation. They will now experience personally the full weight of

tyranny and oppression, now that their human dignity will be placed entirely at the mercy of the drill sergeant, who is often capable of willfully humiliating the "educated." They will see with their own eyes what the position of the common people is, their hearts will be rent by the scenes of outrage and violence that they will be compelled to witness daily, and they will realize that the injustices and petty tyrannies from which students suffer are a mere drop in the ocean of oppression from which the people suffer. Those who realize this will, when their term of military service is over, take a Hannibal vow¹ to fight side by side with the vanguard class of the people for the emancipation of the people from despotism.

But the humiliating character of this new penalty is not less outrageous than its cruelty. The government has thrown down a challenge to all who still possess a sense of decency by declaring the students who protested against arbitrary action to be mere rowdies—just as it declared the striking workers who were exiled to be vicious persons. Read the government announcement: it bristles with the words, disorderliness, brawling, riot, immodesty, license. On the one hand, it declares that there were criminal political aims and a desire for political protest; on the other hand, it treats the students as mere rowdies who need a lesson in discipline. This is a slap in the face to Russian public opinion, whose sympathy for the students is very well known to the government. And the only fitting reply the students can make to this would be to carry out the threat of the Kiev students and organize a

¹ The vow taken by Hannibal, the leader of the Carthaginian forces, not to cease the war against Rome until it was utterly destroyed. In this case, it is used as a metaphor to imply unshakable determination to fight against the autocracy to the end.—*Ed.*

determined and steadfast strike of all students in all the higher educational establishments in support of the demand for the repeal of the Provisional Regulations of July 29, 1899.

But the reply to the government must not come from the students alone. The government has itself seen to making this incident something very much more than a mere student matter. The government addresses public opinion exactly as if it were boasting of the severity of its reprisals, exactly as if it were mocking at the desire for emancipation. And all honest elements among all strata of the people must take up this challenge if they do not want to sink to the level of dumb slaves, silently tolerating their humiliation. These honest elements are headed by the advanced workers and the Social-Democratic organizations which are inseparably linked up with them. The working class constantly suffers immeasurably greater oppression and humiliation at the hands of the police tyranny with which the students have now come into such sharp conflict. The working class has already started the struggle for its emancipation. And it must remember that this great struggle imposes a great duty upon it; that it cannot emancipate itself without emancipating the whole people from despotism; that it is its duty to respond first and foremost to every political protest, and to give it every support. The finest representatives of our educated classes have proved and have sealed in the blood of thousands of revolutionaries, tortured to death by the government, their ability and readiness to shake the dust of bourgeois society from their feet and to join the ranks of the Socialists. And the worker who can look on indifferently while the government dispatches troops against the students does not deserve to be called a Socialist. The students came to the aid of the workers—the workers

must come to the aid of the students. The government wants to fool the people by declaring that an attempt at political protest is mere riot. The workers must publicly declare and explain to the masses as widely as possible that this is a lie, and that the real focus of violence, outrage and riot is—the Russian autocratic government, the tyranny of the police and the officials.

How this protest should be organized must be decided by the Social-Democratic organizations and workers' groups in the various localities. The most practicable form of protest is to distribute, scatter and post up leaflets and to organize meetings to which as far as possible all classes of society are invited. But it would be desirable that where strong and firmly established organizations exist, an attempt at a broader and more open protest should be made by means of a public demonstration. A good example of this was the demonstration organized in Kharkov December 1 last outside the premises of the *Yuzhni Krai*.¹ This filthy sheet, which vilifies every aspiration for light and freedom, and which glorifies every brutal act of our government, was celebrating its anniversary. A crowd gathered outside the premises of the *Yuzhni Krai* and solemnly tore copies of the paper to shreds, tied them to the tails of horses, wrapped them around dogs, and threw stones and phials of sulphurated hydrogen at the windows, amidst cries of "Down with the corrupt press!" Not only corrupt newspapers, but all our government institutions are worthy of such honors. They are honored by official favor only rarely, but they deserve to be honored by popular reprisals always. Every manifestation of governmental tyranny and violence is a legitimate occasion for such a demonstration.

¹ *Southern Area*—a monarchist newspaper.—Ed.

Let not the government's public announcement of reprisals against the students remain unanswered by the people!

Iskra, No. 2, February, 1901.

Collected Works, Vol. IV, Bk. I, pp. 70-75.

ORGANIZE THE YOUTH

... We need young forces. I would recommend directly shooting on the spot those who dare to say that there are no people. There are shoals of people in Russia, all that is needed is more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely, again more widely and again more boldly to recruit young people, *and not to be afraid of them*. This is war time. The youth will decide the issue of the whole struggle, the student youth and still more the working-class youth. Get rid of all the old habits of immobility, respect for rank and so on. Form *hundreds* of circles of *Vperyodites*¹ among the youth and encourage them to work at full blast. Enlarge the committee *threefold* by taking on young people, create five or ten sub-committees, "co-opt" any and every honest and energetic person. Empower every sub-committee to write and publish leaflets without any red tape (it will not be terrible if they make a mistake: we on the *Vperyod* will "mildly" correct them). We must with desperate speed unite and set to work all people with revolutionary initiative. Do not fear their lack of training, do not tremble at their inexperience and lack of development. Firstly, if you are unable to organize and stimulate them to action, they will turn to the Mensheviks and the Gapons, and this same inexperience of theirs will cause five times more damage. Secondly, events themselves will

¹ *Vperyod*—a Bolshevnik newspaper.—*Ed.*

teach them *in our spirit*. Events are now teaching all and everybody precisely in the *Vperyod* spirit.

Only you must unfailingly organize, organize and organize *hundreds* of circles, completely pushing into the background the customary, well-intentioned committee (hierarchical) stupidity. This is war time. Either you create *new*, young, fresh, energetic, militant organizations everywhere for revolutionary Social-Democratic work of all sorts and kinds, and among all strata, or you will perish, enveloped in the glory of "committee" bureaucrats.

I shall write about this in *Vperyod* and speak about it at the Congress.¹ I am writing to you in one more *attempt* to evoke an exchange of ideas, to call upon you *to put into direct contact* with the editorial board a dozen *young, fresh workers'* (and other) circles, although... although, between ourselves be it said, I do not cherish the slightest hope that these bold wishes will be fulfilled. All that can be expected is that two months from now you will request me to wire whether I agree to such and such changes in the "plan."... I reply in advance that I agree to everything. Good-by, see you again at the Congress.

LENIN.

From letter February 11, 1905.

First published in 1925, *Proletarskaya Revolutsia*, No. 4 (39).

THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION

A students' strike has been declared in the St. Petersburg University. It has been joined by a number of other higher educational institutions. The movement has already spread

¹ The Congress held in London, April, 1905.—Ed.

to Moscow and Kharkov. Judging by all the accounts in foreign and Russian newspapers and in private letters from Russia, we are confronted with a fairly widespread *academic* movement.

Back to the old times! Back to pre-revolutionary Russia! ¹ Such is the call to which these events above all testify. The government reactionaries are trying, as always, to pull the universities into line. The struggle against the student organizations, an eternal feature of autocratic Russia, has assumed the form of a campaign by Schwartz, the Black Hundred Minister ²—acting with the full consent of Stolypin, the “Premier”—against the autonomy which was promised to the students in the autumn of 1905 (what did the autocracy not “promise” the Russian citizens then under the pressure of the revolutionary working class!), against the autonomy which the students enjoyed as long as the autocracy “had its hands full without the students,” and which the autocracy, being an autocracy, was bound to try to withdraw.

The liberal press mourns and whines as always, but this time together with some of the Octobrists.³ The professional gentry are also mourning and whining: they implore the government not to adopt the path of reaction and to take advantage of this splendid opportunity “to ensure peace and order by reforms” in “a country exhausted by upheavals”; they implore the students not to resort to illegal methods, which can only play into the hands of the reactionaries, etc., etc., etc. How antiquated and hackneyed all these arguments are, and how vividly they recall the situation of some twenty years ago, at the end of the 'eighties! The similarity between

¹ The period prior to the Revolution of 1905.—*Ed.*

² Minister of Education.—*Ed.*

³ The party of the reactionary bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

those times and the present is particularly striking if we consider the present moment by itself, separated from the vicissitudes of three years of revolution. For the Duma¹ (at a first glance) expresses, only in a slightly different way, exactly the same pre-revolutionary alignment of forces: the rule of the barbaric landlord, who prefers to have connections at court and to exercise his influence through his brother, the official, rather than have any kind of representative government; the support that this same official enjoys among the merchants (Octobrists), who do not dare to part ways with the benefacting fathers; the "opposition" of the bourgeois intelligentsia, whose greatest concern is to demonstrate their loyalty and who regard exhortations to the powers as the political activity of liberalism. The workers' deputies in the Duma are an all too feeble reminder of the part the proletariat recently played by its open mass struggle.

One asks, can we, under such circumstances, attribute any importance to the old, primitive forms of academic struggle of the students? If the liberals have sunk to the "policy" (one can, of course, call this a policy only in derision) of the 'eighties, would not the Social-Democrats be lowering their tasks if they were to consider it necessary to support the academic struggle in one way or another?

Apparently, this question is being asked by Social-Democratic students here and there. At any rate, a letter was received by the editorial board of our paper from a group of Social-Democratic students which, incidentally, states:

"On September 13, an assembly of students of the St. Petersburg University decided to call for an all-Russian students' strike, justifying the call on the grounds of

¹ Parliament.—*Ed.*

Schwartz's aggressive tactics. The platform of the strike is academic; the assembly even welcomed the 'first steps' of the Moscow and St. Petersburg professional councils in the fight for autonomy. We are perplexed by the academic platform advanced by the St. Petersburg assembly; we consider it inadmissible under present conditions and one which cannot unite the students for an active and broad struggle. We can conceive student action only in co-ordination with general political action and in no case by itself. The elements that could unite the students do not exist. In view of this we are against academic action."

The mistake made by the authors of the letter is of far greater political significance than might have been thought at a first glance, for the authors' arguments in fact touch on a subject which is incomparably more wide and important than the question of participating in the present strike.

"We can conceive student action only in co-ordination with general political action....In view of this we are against academic action."

This argument is fundamentally wrong. A revolutionary slogan, namely, that we must strive for the co-ordinated political action of the students and the proletariat, etc., is here transformed from a living guiding principle for wider, more comprehensive and militant agitation into a lifeless dogma which is mechanically applied to the various stages of various forms of the movement. It is not enough to proclaim co-ordinated political action in repetition of the "last word" of the lessons of the revolution. One must *know how* to agitate for political action, *utilizing* for this agitation every opportunity, every circumstance and, first and foremost, every mass conflict between any of the advanced elements and the

autocracy. The point is not, of course, that we should necessarily in advance divide every students' movement into "stages" and absolutely see to it that every stage is punctiliously observed from fear of "untimely" transitions to politics and so forth. Such a view would be the most harmful pedantry and would only conduce to an opportunist policy. But equally harmful is the reverse mistake of refusing to take account of the actual situation and conditions of the given mass movement for the sake of a slogan wrongly understood in an immobile sense. Such an application of the slogan inevitably degenerates into revolutionary phrasemongering.

Conditions are possible in which the academic movement may lower the level of the political movement, or disintegrate it, or distract attention from it; and in such a case, of course, it would be the duty of the Social-Democratic student groups to concentrate their agitation against such a movement. But everybody can see that the objective political conditions at the present moment are different: the academic movement signifies the *beginning* of the movement of a new "shift" of students who are already more or less accustomed to a narrow autonomy, and this movement, moreover, is beginning just now, at a time when other forms of mass struggle do not exist, at a time of a lull, during which the broad masses still continue silently, intently and slowly to *digest* the experience of three years of revolution.

Under such circumstances the Social-Democrats would be committing a profound mistake if they declared that they were "against academic action." No, the student groups belonging to our party must devote every effort to supporting, utilizing and expanding the present movement. Like all support given by Social-Democrats to primitive forms of the movement, support in this case must consist chiefly and

primarily in ideologically and organizationally influencing the broader strata which have been aroused by the conflict and for which this form of conflict is in many cases their *first* political conflict. For the students who entered the universities during the past two years were almost entirely secluded from politics and were trained in a spirit of narrow academic autonomy, trained not only by official professors and the government press, but also by liberal professors and by the whole Cadet Party.¹ For young people like this a broad strike (if they are only capable of creating a broad strike! We must do everything to assist them to do so, but of course we as Socialists cannot guarantee the success of any bourgeois movement) is the beginning of political conflict, whether the combatants realize it or not. It is our duty to explain to the mass of "academic" protesters the objective significance of this conflict, to try to make it a *conscious* political one, to intensify tenfold the agitational activities of the Social-Democratic student groups, and to *direct all* this activity in such a way that the revolutionary lessons to be drawn from the history of these three years shall be assimilated, that the inevitability of a new revolutionary struggle shall be understood, and that our old slogans—which have remained quite up to date—calling for the overthrow of the autocracy and the summoning of a Constituent Assembly shall again become a subject of discussion and a focus for the political concentration of the new generations of the democracy.

The Social-Democratic students have no right to reject such work under any circumstances—and however difficult such work may be at the present moment, and whatever mishaps may befall some or other agitators in some or other university,

¹ The abbreviated name of the Constitutional-Democratic Party, the Party of the liberal bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

fraternity, meeting, etc., we say: knock, and it shall be opened unto you! Political agitation is never wasted. Its success is not measured by whether we succeed at once right off the bat in winning a majority or in gaining consent to co-ordinated political action. It is possible that we may not secure this at once. But just because we are an organized proletarian party we should not be disturbed by temporary failures, but should rather carry on *our work* persistently, unswervingly and consistently even under the most difficult conditions.

The appeal of the St. Petersburg Coalition Students' Council shows that even the most active elements among the students stubbornly adhere to pure academism and are still singing the Cadet-Octoberist song. And this at a time when the Cadet-Octoberist press is displaying the most despicable attitude towards the strike, arguing at the very height of the struggle that it is harmful, criminal, etc. We cannot but welcome the rebuff which the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party considered it necessary to give the Coalition Council.

Apparently, Schwartz's whips are still not enough to convert the present-day students from "academics" into "politicians"; they need the scorpions of new Black Hundred drill sergeants for the complete revolutionary education of the new forces. And to train these forces, who are being educated by Stolypin's policy and by every step of the counter-revolutionaries, we too must work indefatigably, we, the Social-Democrats, who clearly see the objective inevitability of new bourgeois-democratic conflicts, on a nation-wide scale, with the autocracy, which has joined forces with the Black Hundred and Octoberist Duma.

Yes, on a nation-wide scale, for the Black Hundred counter-revolution, which is turning Russia back in its course, is

not only steeling new fighters in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat, but will inevitably evoke a new movement among the non-proletarian, *i.e.*, bourgeois democracy (meaning by this, of course, not the participation of the *whole opposition* in the struggle, but the wide participation of the elements of the bourgeoisie and petty-bourgeoisie that are really democratic, *i.e.*, those capable of fighting). The beginning of the mass student struggle in Russia in 1908 is a political symptom, a symptom of the whole present situation created by the counter-revolution. Thousands and millions of threads bind the student youth to the middle and lower bourgeoisie, to the small officials, to certain groups of peasants, clergy, etc. If, in the spring of 1908, attempts were made to revive the "League of Emancipation," somewhat more Left than the old Cadet, semi-landlord League represented by Peter Struve,¹ if in the autumn ferment is beginning among the mass of the youth which stands closest to the democratic bourgeoisie in Russia, if the venal hacks have with redoubled fury again raised a howl about revolution in the schools, if the vile liberal professors and Cadet leaders are moaning and wailing over the untimely, dangerous and disastrous strikes, strikes that are abhorrent to the dear Octobrists and capable of "repelling" the Octobrists, the ruling Octobrists—it means that new powder is accumulating in the powder magazines! It means that it is *not only* among the students that a reaction against reaction is beginning.

And however feeble and embryonic this beginning may be, the party of the working class must and will utilize it. We were able to work for years and decades before the revolu-

¹ One of the leaders of the "legal Marxists," who under the guise of Marxism sought to adapt the working class movement to the interests of the bourgeoisie.—*Ed.*

tion, advancing our revolutionary slogans first among the circles, then among the masses of the workers, then in the street and then at the barricades. And *now too* we must be able to create what above all is the task of the day, without which talk about co-ordinated political action will be empty phrasemongering, namely, a strong proletarian organization, everywhere carrying on *political agitation* among the masses on behalf of its revolutionary slogans. And our university groups too must set about creating such an organization in their student field, must set about conducting such agitation based on the present movement.

The proletariat will not lag behind. It frequently yields first place to the bourgeois democrats in the making of speeches at banquets, within legalized unions, within the walls of universities and from the rostrums of representative institutions. It never yields and never will yield first place to anybody in the great and earnest revolutionary struggle of the masses. The conditions for the outbreak of this struggle do not ripen as rapidly and as easily as some of us might wish—but these conditions are ripening and will most certainly reach maturity. And the small beginning of the small academic conflicts is a big beginning, for it will be followed by big sequels—if not today, then tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow.

Published October, 1908.

Collected Works, Vol. XII, pp. 336-41. (Russian Edition.)

“THE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL”

A REVIEW

In Switzerland, since September 1, 1915, a German publication bearing the above title has been appearing as the “Mili-

tant and Propaganda Organ of the International League of Socialist Youth Organizations." Altogether, six issues have appeared. This publication is worthy of general notice and should be strongly recommended to the attention of all members of our Party who are able to come into contact with foreign Social-Democratic parties and youth organizations.

The majority of the official Social-Democratic parties of Europe are now advocating the meanest and vilest form of social chauvinism and opportunism. This applies to the German and French parties, the Fabian Society and the "Labor" Party in England, the Swedish party, the Dutch (Troelstra's) party, Danish, Austrian, etc. In the Swiss party, notwithstanding the secession (to the great benefit of the labor movement) of the extreme opportunists and their formation of a separate *non-party* "Grütli League," there are still within the Social-Democratic party itself numerous opportunist, social-chauvinist and Kautskyian leaders who exercise *enormous* influence on the affairs of the party.

In the circumstances thus prevailing in Europe, on the League of Socialist Youth Organizations falls the tremendous, grateful, but difficult task of fighting *for* revolutionary internationalism and *for* true socialism and against the prevailing opportunism, which has deserted to the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The *Youth International* has published a number of good articles in defense of revolutionary internationalism, and the whole publication is permeated with a fine spirit of intense hatred for the betrayers of socialism who "defend the fatherland" in the present war, and with an earnest desire to purge the international labor movement of the corroding influence of chauvinism and opportunism.

Of course, the organ of the youth *still* lacks theoretical clarity and consistency, and perhaps may never acquire this

precisely because it is the organ of the vigorous, turbulent, inquiring youth. However, our attitude towards the inadequate theoretical clarity on the part of *such* people must be entirely different from what it is and should be towards the theoretical muddle in the heads, and the lack of revolutionary consistency in the hearts of our "O.C.-ists,"¹ "Socialist Revolutionaries," Tolstoyans, Anarchists, the European Kautskyists (of the "Centre"), etc. Adults who pretend to lead and teach others, but who mislead the proletariat are one thing: against such people a *ruthless* struggle must be waged. *Youth* organizations which openly declare that they are still learning, that their main task is to train party workers for the Socialist Parties, are quite another thing. Such people must be assisted in every way. We must be as patient as possible with their faults and strive to correct them gradually, mainly by *persuasion*, and not by fighting them. 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, under other* circumstances than their fathers. Incidentally, this is why we must be decidedly in favor of the *organizational 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 to prepare themselves to lead socialism *forward*.

We stand for complete independence of the Youth Leagues, but also for complete freedom for comradely criticism of their errors. We must not flatter the youth.

Of the errors to be noted in the excellent organ mentioned above, reference must above all be made to the following three:

¹ Mensheviks.—Ed.

1. On the question of disarmament (or "unarming"), a wrong position is taken, this position we have criticized in another article.¹ There is ground for believing that this error is entirely due to the laudable desire to emphasize the necessity of striving for the "complete destruction of militarism" (which is perfectly correct), but the role of civil wars in the socialist revolution is forgotten.

2. On the question of the difference between Socialists and Anarchists in their attitude towards the state, Comrade Nota Bene² in his article (in issue No. 6) falls into a very serious error (as he also does on several other questions, for instance, our *reasons* for combating the "defense of the fatherland" slogan). The author wishes to present "a clear picture of the state in general" (together with that of the imperialist predatory state). He quotes several statements by Marx and Engels, and, *inter alia*, comes to the following two conclusions:

(a) "...It is quite a mistake to seek for the difference between Socialists and Anarchists in the fact that the former are in favor of the state, while the latter are opposed to it. The real difference is that the revolutionary Social-Democracy desires to organize social production on new, centralized, *i.e.*, technically the most progressive lines, whereas decentralized anarchist production would mean retrogression to obsolete technique, to the old form of enterprises." This is wrong. The author raises the question of the difference in the attitude of Socialists and Anarchists *towards the state*, and answers not *this* question, but *another*, namely, the difference in the attitude of Socialists and Anarchists towards the economic foundation of future society. This, of course, is

¹ See V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, pp. 352-361.—*Ed.*

² Pen name of N. I. Bukharin, convicted of treason in 1938.—*Ed.*

an important and necessary question to discuss; but that does not mean that the *main* point of difference in the attitude of Socialists and Anarchists towards the state should be ignored. The Socialists are in favor of utilizing the present state and its institutions in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, and they also urge the necessity of utilizing the state for a peculiar form of transition from capitalism to socialism. This transitional form is the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is *also* a state.

The Anarchists want to "abolish" the state, to "blow it up" (*sprengen*), as Comrade Nota-Bene expresses it in one place, mistakenly ascribing this view to the Socialists. The Socialists—unfortunately the author quotes the words of Engels relevant to this subject rather incompletely—hold that the state will wither away, will "gradually" "fall asleep" *after* the bourgeoisie has been expropriated.

(b) "Social-Democracy, which is, or at least should be, the educator of the masses, must more than ever emphasize its hostility to the state in principle. . . . The present war has shown how deeply the roots of the state have penetrated the souls of the workers," writes Comrade Nota-Bene. In order to "emphasize" our "hostility" to the state "in principle" we must indeed understand it "clearly." This clarity, however, our author lacks. His remark about the "roots of the state" is entirely muddled. It is un-Marxian and un-socialistic. The point is not that the "state" has clashed with the repudiation of the state, but that the opportunist policy (*i.e.*, the opportunist, reformist, bourgeois attitude towards the state) has clashed with the revolutionary Social-Democratic policy (*i.e.*, the revolutionary Social-Democratic attitude towards the bourgeois state and towards utilizing the state against the bourgeoisie in order to overthrow it). These are

entirely different things. We hope to return to this very important subject in a separate article.

3. The "declaration of principles of the International League of Socialist Youth Organizations" published in issue No. 6 as the "Secretariat's draft" contains not a few inaccuracies, and does not contain the *main* thing: a clear comparison of the *three* fundamental trends (social-chauvinism, the "Centre" and the Left), which are now contending with each other in the Socialist movement in all countries.

We repeat, these errors must be refuted and explained; at the same time we must exert every effort to find points of contact and friendship with the youth organizations and help them in every way, but we must find the *proper manner* of approach to them.

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THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

I would like today to discuss the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League and, in this connection, what the youth organizations in a Socialist republic should be like in general.

It is all the more necessary to deal with this question because in a certain sense it may be said that it is precisely the youth that will be faced with the real task of creating a Communist society. For it is clear that the generation of workers that was brought up in capitalist society can, at best, accomplish the task of destroying the foundations of the old, capitalist social life, which was based on exploitation. At best it can accomplish the task of creating a social

system that would help the proletariat and the toiling classes to retain power and to lay a firm foundation, and on this foundation only the generation can build that is starting to work under the new conditions, conditions in which exploiting relations among men no longer exist.

And so, in approaching the tasks of the youth from this angle, I must say that the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist League and all other organizations in particular, may be summed up in one word: Learn.

Of course, this is only "one word." It does not answer the important and most essential questions: what to learn, and how to learn? And the whole point here is that with the transformation of the old capitalist society, the teaching, training and education of the new generations that will create the communist society cannot be conducted on the old lines. The teaching, training and education of the youth must proceed from the material that was bequeathed to us by the old society.

We can build communism only from the sum of knowledge, organizations and institutions, only with the stock of human forces and means that were bequeathed to us by the old society. Only by radically recasting the teaching, organization and training of the youth shall we be able to ensure that the result of the efforts of the younger generation will be the creation of a society that will be unlike the old society, *i.e.*, a communist society.

That is why we must deal in detail with the question of what we should teach the youth and how the youth should learn if it really wants to justify the name of communist youth, and how it should be trained so as to be able to complete and perfect what we have started.

I must say that the first and most natural reply would

seem to be that the Youth League, and all young people who want to pass to communism in general, should learn communism.

But this reply—"learn communism"—is too general. What do we need in order to learn communism? What must be singled out from the sum total of general knowledge to acquire a knowledge of communism? Here a number of dangers threaten us, which invariably crop up whenever the task of learning communism is presented incorrectly, or when it is interpreted too one-sidedly.

Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning communism means imbibing the sum total of knowledge that is contained in communist textbooks, pamphlets and books. But such a definition of the study of communism would be too crude and inadequate.

If the study of communism solely consisted in imbibing what is contained in communist books and pamphlets, we might all too easily obtain communist text-jugglers or braggarts, and this would very often cause us harm and damage, because such people, having learned by rote what is contained in communist books and pamphlets would be incapable of combining this knowledge, and would be unable to act in the way communism really demands.

One of the greatest evils and misfortunes bequeathed to us by the old capitalist society is the complete divorcement of books from practical life; for we have had books in which everything was described in the best possible manner, yet these books in the majority of cases were most disgusting and hypocritical lies that described communist society falsely. That is why the mere routine absorption of what is written in books about communism would be utterly wrong. In our speeches and articles we do not now merely repeat what was

formerly said about communism, because our speeches and articles are connected with daily, all-round work. Without work, without struggle, a routine knowledge of communism obtained from communist pamphlets and books would be worthless, for it would continue the old divorcement of theory from practice, that old separation which constituted the most disgusting feature of the old bourgeois society.

It would be still more dangerous to start to imbibe only communist slogans. If we did not realize this danger in time, and if we did not direct all our efforts to averting this danger, the half million or million boys and girls who called themselves Communists after studying communism in this way would only occasion great damage to the cause of communism.

Here the question arises: how should we combine all this for the study of communism? What must we take from the old school, from the old learning?

The old school declared that its aim was to train men with an all-round education, to impart general learning. We know that this was utterly false, for the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of men into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Naturally, the old school, being thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, imparted knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was falsified in the interests of the bourgeoisie.

In these schools the younger generation of workers and peasants were not so much educated as drilled in the interests of this bourgeoisie. They were trained to be useful servants of the bourgeoisie, able to create profits for it without disturbing its peace and leisure. That is why we reject the old school, and have made it our aim to take from it only what we require for real communist education.

This brings me to the reproaches and accusations which we constantly hear leveled at the old school, and which often lead to totally wrong conclusions.

It is said that the old school was a school of cramming, grinding, learning by rote. That is true; nevertheless, we must distinguish between what was bad in the old school, and what is useful for us, and we must know how to choose from it what is necessary for communism.

The old school was a school of cramming; it compelled pupils to imbibe a mass of useless, superfluous, barren knowledge, which clogged the brain and transformed the younger generation into officials turned out to pattern. But you would be committing a great mistake if you attempted to draw the conclusion that one can become a Communist without acquiring what human knowledge has accumulated. It would be a mistake to think that it is enough to imbibe communist slogans, the conclusions of communist science, without acquiring the sum total of knowledge of which communism itself is a consequence.

Marxism is an example of how communism arose out of the sum total of human knowledge.

You have read and heard that communist theory, the science of communism, mainly created by Marx, that this doctrine of Marxism has ceased to be the product of a single Socialist of the nineteenth century, even though he was a genius, and that it has become the doctrine of millions and tens of millions of proletarians all over the world, who are applying this doctrine in their struggle against capitalism.

And if you were to ask why the Marxian doctrine was able to capture the hearts of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx took his stand on the firm

foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. Having studied the laws of development of human society, Marx realized that the development of capitalism was inevitably leading to communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed and most profound study of this capitalist society; and this he was able to do because he had fully assimilated all that earlier science had taught.

We critically studied everything that had been created by human society, not ignoring a single item. We studied everything that had been created by human thought, criticized it, put it to the test of the working-class movement, and drew conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

This is what we must bear in mind when, for example, we talk about proletarian culture. Unless we clearly understand that only by acquiring exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind and that only by studying this culture can a proletarian culture be built, we shall not be able to solve this problem.

Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung nobody knows whence, it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the result of a natural development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society and bureaucratic society.

All these avenues and paths have led, are leading, and continue to lead to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, reshaped by Marx, showed us what human society must come to, showed us the transition to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

When we so often hear representatives of the youth and certain advocates of a new system of education attacking the old school and saying that it was a school of cramming, we say to them that we must take what was good from the old school.

We must not take from the old school the system of loading young people's minds with an immense amount of knowledge, nine-tenths of which was useless and one-tenth distorted. But this does not mean that we can confine ourselves to communist conclusions and imbibe only communist slogans. You will not create communism that way. You can become a Communist only by enriching your mind with the knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind.

We do not need cramming; but we do need to develop and perfect the mind of every student by a knowledge of the principal facts. For communism would become a void, a mere signboard, and a Communist would become a mere braggart, if all the knowledge he had obtained were not digested in his mind. You must not only assimilate this knowledge, you must assimilate it critically, so as not to cram your mind with useless lumber, but enrich it with all those facts that are indispensable to the modern man of education.

If a Communist took it into his head to boast about his communism because of the ready-made conclusions he had absorbed, without putting in a great deal of serious and hard work, without understanding the facts which he must examine critically, he would be a very sorry Communist. Such superficiality would be decidedly fatal. If I know that I know little, I shall strive to learn more; but if a man says that he is a Communist and that he need know nothing thoroughly, he will never be anything like a Communist.

The old school turned out servants needed by the capitalists; the old school transformed men of learning into men who had to write and say what suited the capitalists. Therefore, we must abolish it. But does the fact that we must abolish it, destroy it, mean that we must not take from it all that mankind has accumulated for the benefit of man?

Does it mean that it is not our duty to distinguish between what was necessary for capitalism and what is necessary for communism?

We are replacing the old drill-sergeant methods that were employed in bourgeois society in opposition to the will of the majority by the class-conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, who combine hatred of the old society with the determination, ability and readiness to unite and organize their forces for this fight, in order to transform the wills of millions and hundreds of millions of people-disunited, dispersed and scattered over the territory of a huge country—into a single will; for without this single will we shall inevitably be defeated. Without this solidarity, without this conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, our cause will be hopeless. Without this we shall be unable to beat the capitalists and landlords of the whole world. We shall not even consolidate the foundation, let alone build a new communist society on this foundation.

Similarly, while rejecting the old school, while cherishing a perfectly legitimate and essential hatred for the old school, while prizing the readiness to destroy the old school, we must realize that in place of the old system of tuition, in place of the old cramming system, the old drill system, we must put the ability to take the sum of human knowledge, and to take it in such a way that communism shall not be something learned by rote, but something that you yourselves

have thought over, that it shall consist of the conclusions which are inevitable from the standpoint of modern education.

That is the way we must present the main problems of learning communism.

In order to explain this to you, and as an approach to the question of how to learn, I shall take a practical example. You all know that following after the military tasks, the tasks connected with the defense of the republic, we are now being confronted with economic tasks.

We know that a communist society cannot be built unless we regenerate industry and agriculture, and these must not be regenerated in the old way. They must be regenerated on a modern basis, in accordance with the last word in science. You know that this basis is electricity, and that only when the whole country, all branches of industry and agriculture have been electrified, only when you have settled this problem will you be able to build up for yourselves the communist society which the older generation cannot build up.

We are confronted with the task of economically regenerating the whole country, or reorganizing and restoring both agriculture and industry on a modern technical basis which rests on modern science and technology, on electricity.

You realize perfectly well that illiterate people cannot tackle electrification, and even mere literacy is not enough. It is not enough to understand what electricity is; it is necessary to know how to apply it technically to industry and to agriculture, and to the various branches of industry and agriculture. We must learn this ourselves, and must teach it to the whole of the younger generation of working people.

This is the task that confronts every conscious Communist,

every young person who regards himself as a Communist and who clearly understands that by joining the Young Communist League he pledges himself to help the Party to build communism and the whole younger generation to create a communist society. He must realize that he can create it only on the basis of modern education; and if he does not acquire this education communism will remain a pious wish.

The task of the old generation was to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The main task in their day was to criticize the bourgeoisie, to arouse hatred of the bourgeoisie among the masses, to develop their class consciousness and the ability to unite their forces.

The new generation is confronted with a much more complicated task. Not only have you to combine all your forces to uphold the power of the workers and peasants against the attacks of the capitalists. That you must do. That you have clearly understood and it is distinctly perceived by every Communist. But it is not enough.

You must build up a communist society. In many respects the first half of the work has been done. The old order has been destroyed, as it deserved to be, it has been transformed into a heap of ruins, as it deserved to be. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the young Communist generation must build a communist society.

You are faced with the task of construction, and you can cope with it only by mastering all modern knowledge, only if you are able to transform communism from ready-made, memorized formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programs into that living thing which unites your immediate work, and only if you are able to transform communism into a guide for your practical work.

This is the task by which you should be guided in edu-

cating, training and rousing the whole of the younger generation. You must be the foremost among the millions of builders of communist society, which all young men and young women should be.

Unless you enlist the whole mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building communism, you will not build a communist society.

This naturally brings me to the question how we should teach communism and what the specific features of our methods should be.

Here, first of all, I will deal with the question of communist ethics.

You must train yourselves to be Communists. The task of the Youth League is to organize its practical activities in such a way that, by learning, organizing, uniting and fighting, its members train themselves and all who look to it as a leader, train them to be Communists. The whole object of training, educating and teaching the youth of today should be to imbue them with communist ethics.

But is there such a thing as communist ethics? Is there such a thing as communist morality? Of course, there is. It is often made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of repudiating all ethics. This is a method of shuffling concepts, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we repudiate ethics and morality?

In the sense that it is preached by the bourgeoisie, who derived ethics from God's commandments. We, of course, say that we do not believe in God, and know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie spoke in the name of God in pursuit of their own interests as ex-

plotters. Or instead of deriving ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they derived them from idealist or semi-idealist phrases, which always amounted to something very similar to God's commandments.

We repudiate all morality derived from non-human and non-class concepts. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

We say that our morality is entirely subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat. Our morality is derived from the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

The old society was based on the oppression of the workers and peasants by the landlords and capitalists. We had to destroy this, we had to overthrow them; but to do so we had to create unity. No God will create such unity.

This unity could be created only by factories and workshops, only by the proletariat, trained and roused from its long slumber. Only when that class has been formed did the mass movement begin which led to what we see now—the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been resisting the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

And we see that the proletarian revolution is growing all over the world. We now say, on the basis of experience, that only the proletariat could have created that compact force which has the following of the disunited and scattered peasantry and which has withstood all the onslaughts of the exploiters. Only this class can help the laboring masses to unite, rally their ranks and definitely uphold, definitely consolidate and definitely build up communist society.

That is why we say that for us there is no such thing as morality apart from human society; it is a fraud. Morality for us is subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat.

What does this class struggle mean? It means overthrowing the tsar, overthrowing the capitalists, abolishing the capitalist class.

And what are classes in general? Classes are what permits one section of society to appropriate the labor of the other section.

If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landlord class and a peasant class. If one section of society owns the mills and factories, shares and capital, while another section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class.

It was not difficult to drive out the tsar—that required only a few days. It was not very difficult to drive out the landlords—that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists.

But we have not yet succeeded in abolishing classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. A peasant settled on his separate plot of land and appropriating superfluous grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve. He says to himself: "The more they starve the dearer I can sell this grain."

What is required is that everybody should work according to a common plan, on common land, in common mills and factories and under common management. Is it easy to bring this about? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the

tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. In order to achieve this the proletariat must re-educate, re-train a section of the peasantry; it must win over those who are laboring peasants, in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and are profiting by the poverty and want of the rest.

Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not completed by our having overthrown the tsar and driven out the landlords and capitalists; and its completion is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle is still continuing; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to prevent the return of the old exploiters, to unite the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants into one union. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to this struggle.

And we subordinate our communist morality to this task. We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all laboring people around the proletariat, which is creating a new, communist society.

Communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle, which unites the toilers against all exploitation, against all small property; for small property puts into the hands of one person what has been created by the labor of the whole of society.

The land in our country is common property.

But suppose I take a piece of this common property and grow on it twice as much grain as I need and profiteer on the surplus? Suppose I argue that the more starving people there are the more they will pay? Would I then be behaving like a Communist?

No, I would be behaving like an exploiter, like a proprietor. This must be combated.

If this is allowed to go on we shall slide back to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has more than once happened in earlier revolutions. And in order to prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie we must not allow such things to happen, we must not allow individuals to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest, and all laboring people must unite with the proletariat and form a communist society.

This is the principal feature of the fundamental task of the League and of the organizations of the communist youth.

The old society was based on the principle: rob or be robbed, work for others or make others work for you, be a slave-owner or a slave. Naturally, people brought up in such a society imbibe with their mother's milk, so to speak, the psychology, the habit, the concept: you are either a slave-owner or a slave, or else a small owner, a small employee, a small official, an intellectual—in short, a man who thinks only of himself, and doesn't care a hang for anybody else.

If I work this plot of land, I don't care a hang for anybody else; if others starve, all the better, the more I will get for my grain. If I have a job as a doctor, engineer, teacher, or clerk, I don't care a hang for anybody else. Perhaps if I toady and please the powers that be I shall keep my job, and even get on in life and become a bourgeois. A Communist cannot have such a psychology and such sentiments.

When the workers and peasants proved that they were able by their own efforts to defend themselves and create a new society, a new communist schooling began, a schooling in the fight against the exploiters, a schooling in alliance with the proletariat against the self-seekers, against the psychology and habits which say: I seek my own profit and I don't care a hang for anything else.

This is the answer to the question how the young and rising generation should learn communism.

It can learn communism only by linking up every step in its studies, training and education with the continuous struggle the proletarians and the toilers are waging against the old exploiting society.

When people talk to us about morality, we say: for the Communist, morality lies entirely in this compact, united disciplined and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose all the lying fables about morality.

Morality serves to help human society rise to a higher level and get rid of the exploitation of labor.

To achieve this we need the younger generation which began to awaken to conscious life in the midst of a disciplined and desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle it will train genuine Communists. It must subordinate to this struggle and link up with it every step in its studies, education and training.

The training of the communist youth must not consist of feeding it on sentimental speeches and moral precepts. This is not training.

People who have seen how their fathers and mothers live under the yoke of the landlords and capitalists, who have themselves experienced the sufferings that befall those who start the struggle against the exploiters, when they see what sacrifices the continuation of this struggle entailed in order to defend what had been won, and what frenzied foes the landlords and capitalists are—are trained in this environment to become Communists.

The basis of communist morality is the struggle for the consolidation and completion of communism. That is also

the basis of communist training, education and teaching. That is the reply to the question how communism should be learned.

We would not believe in teaching, training and education if they were confined only to the school and were divorced from the stress of life. As long as the workers and peasants are oppressed by the landlords and capitalists, and as long as the schools remain in the hands of the landlords and capitalists, the young generation remains blind and ignorant.

Our schools, however, must impart to the youth the fundamentals of knowledge; they must train them in the ability to work out communist views for themselves; they must make educated people of them. At the same time, in the period people attend school, it must make of them participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters.

The Young Communist League will justify its name as the League of the young communist generation when it links up every step in its teaching, training and education with participation in the general struggle of all the working people against the exploiters. For you know perfectly well that as long as Russia remains the only workers' republic, and the old bourgeois system exists in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they, we shall be under the constant menace of a new attack; and that only if we learn to be solid and united shall we win in the further struggle and—having gained strength—become really invincible.

Thus, to be a Communist means that you must organize and unite the whole rising generation and set an example in training and discipline in this struggle. Then you will be able to start building the edifice of communist society and bring it to completion.

In order to make this clearer to all I will quote an example.

We call ourselves Communists.

What is a Communist?

Communist is a Latin word. Communist society means that everything—the land, the factories—is owned in common. Communism means working in common.

Is it possible to work in common if each one works separately on his own plot of land? Work in common cannot be brought about all at once. It cannot be done. It does not drop from the skies. It comes by toil and suffering, it is created in the course of struggle. Old books are of no use here; no one will believe them. Living experience is what is wanted.

When Kolchak and Denikin¹ advanced from Siberia and the South the peasants were on their side. They did not like Bolshevism because the Bolsheviks took their grain at a fixed price. But when the peasants in Siberia and the Ukraine experienced the rule of Kolchak and Denikin, they realized that they had only one alternative: either to go to the capitalist, and he would hand them over into bondage to the landlord; or to follow the worker, who, it is true, did not promise a land flowing with milk and honey, who demanded iron discipline and firmness in an arduous struggle, but who would lead them out of bondage to the capitalists and landlords.

When even the ignorant peasants realized and saw this from their own experience they became conscious supporters of communism with a stern school behind them. It is such experience that must form the basis of all the activities of the Young Communist League.

I have answered the question what we must learn, what we must take from the old school and from the old learning.

¹ Leaders of counter-revolutionary armies during the civil war of 1918-1921.—*Ed.*

I will now try to answer the question how this must be learned. The answer is: only by inseparably linking every step in the activities of the school, every step in training, education and teaching, with the struggle of all the working people against the exploiters.

I will quote a few examples from the experience of the work of some of the youth organizations to illustrate how this training in communism should proceed.

Everybody is talking about abolishing illiteracy. You know that a communist society cannot be built in an illiterate country. It is not enough for the Soviet government to issue an order, or for the Party to issue a particular slogan, or to assign a certain number of the best workers to this work. What is required is that the younger generation itself take up this work.

Communism means that the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Youth League, say: "This is our job; we shall unite and go into the rural districts to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our rising generation." We are trying to get the rising generation to devote its activities to this work.

You know that ignorant, illiterate Russia cannot be transformed quickly into a literate country. But if the Youth League sets to work on this job, if all the young people work for the benefit of all, the League, which has a membership of 400,000 young men and women, will be entitled to call itself a Young Communist League. Further it is the task of the League, after having acquired any particular knowledge, to help those young people who cannot liberate themselves from the darkness of illiteracy by their own efforts.

Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labor and efforts to the common cause. That is what com-

unist training means. Only in the course of such work does a young man or woman become a real Communist. Only if they achieve practical results in this work do they become Communists.

Take, for example, work on the suburban vegetable gardens. Is not that a job worthwhile? It is one of the duties of the Young Communist League. The people are starving; there is starvation in the mills and factories. In order to save ourselves from starvation, vegetable gardening must be developed. But agriculture is being carried on in the old way.

And so what is needed is that the more class-conscious elements should put their hand to this job, and you will then find that the number of vegetable gardens will increase, their area grow, and the results improve.

The Young Communist League should take an active part in this work. Every League and every branch of the League should regard this as its job.

The Young Communist League should be a shock group, helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The character of the League should be such that any worker, although he may not understand its doctrines, although he may not immediately believe them, nevertheless should see from the practical work and activity of its members that they are really the people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organize its work in this way in all fields, it will mean that it is reverting to the old bourgeois way.

We must combine our training with the struggle of the working people against the exploiters in order to help the former to accomplish the tasks that follow from the communist doctrine.

The members of the League should spend every spare hour

in improving the vegetable gardens, or in organizing the education of young people in some mill or factory, or in similar work.

We want to transform Russia from a land of poverty and want into a land of wealth. And the Young Communist League must combine its work of education, teaching and training with the labor of the workers and peasants, and not shut itself up in its schools and confine itself to reading communist books and pamphlets.

Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist.

And everyone must be made to see that all who belong to the Youth League are literate and at the same time know how to work. When everyone sees that we have driven the old drill methods from the old school and have replaced them by conscious discipline, that all young men and women are taking part in subbotniks,¹ that they are utilizing every suburban farm to help the population—the people will cease to look upon labor as they looked upon it before.

It is the task of the Young Communist League to organize assistance in villages and city blocks in such matters as cleanliness and the distribution of food.

How was this done in the old capitalist society?

Every man worked for himself, and nobody cared whether there were aged or sick, or whether all the housework fell on the shoulders of the women, who, as a result, were in a condition of oppression and slavery. Whose business is it to combat this? It is the business of the Youth Leagues, which must say: "We shall change all this; we shall organize detachments of young people who will help to maintain cleanliness or to dis-

¹ The contribution of labor on free days during the early years of the Soviet Union.—*Ed.*

tribute food, who will make systematic house-to-house inspections, who will work in an organized way for the benefit of the whole of society, properly distributing their forces and demonstrating that labor must be organized."

The generation which is now about fifty years old cannot expect to see the communist society. This generation will die out before then.

But the generation which is now fifteen years old will see the communist society, and will itself build this society.

And it must realize that the whole purpose of its life is to build this society.

In the old society work was carried on by separate families, and nobody united their labor except the landlords and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. We must organize all labor—no matter how dirty and arduous—in such a way that every worker and peasant shall feel that he is a part of the great army of free labor, that he can build up his life without the landlords and capitalists, and can establish the communist system.

The Young Communist League must train everybody to conscious and disciplined labor while they are still young, from the age of twelve. And if that is done, we may expect that the problems that now confront us will be solved.

We must reckon that not less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may be served by the latest achievements of technology.

And so, the generation which is now fifteen years old, and which in ten or twenty years' time will be living in communist society, must arrange all their educational tasks in such a way that every day, in every village and in every city, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some

problem of common labor, even if the smallest, even if the simplest.

To the extent that this is done in every village, to the extent that communist competition develops, to the extent that the youth prove that they can unite their labor, to that extent will the success of communist construction be ensured.

Only by regarding every step it takes from the standpoint of the success of this construction, only by asking itself whether it has done all it can to be a body of united and conscious workers, only in this long process will the Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labor and win universal respect.

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