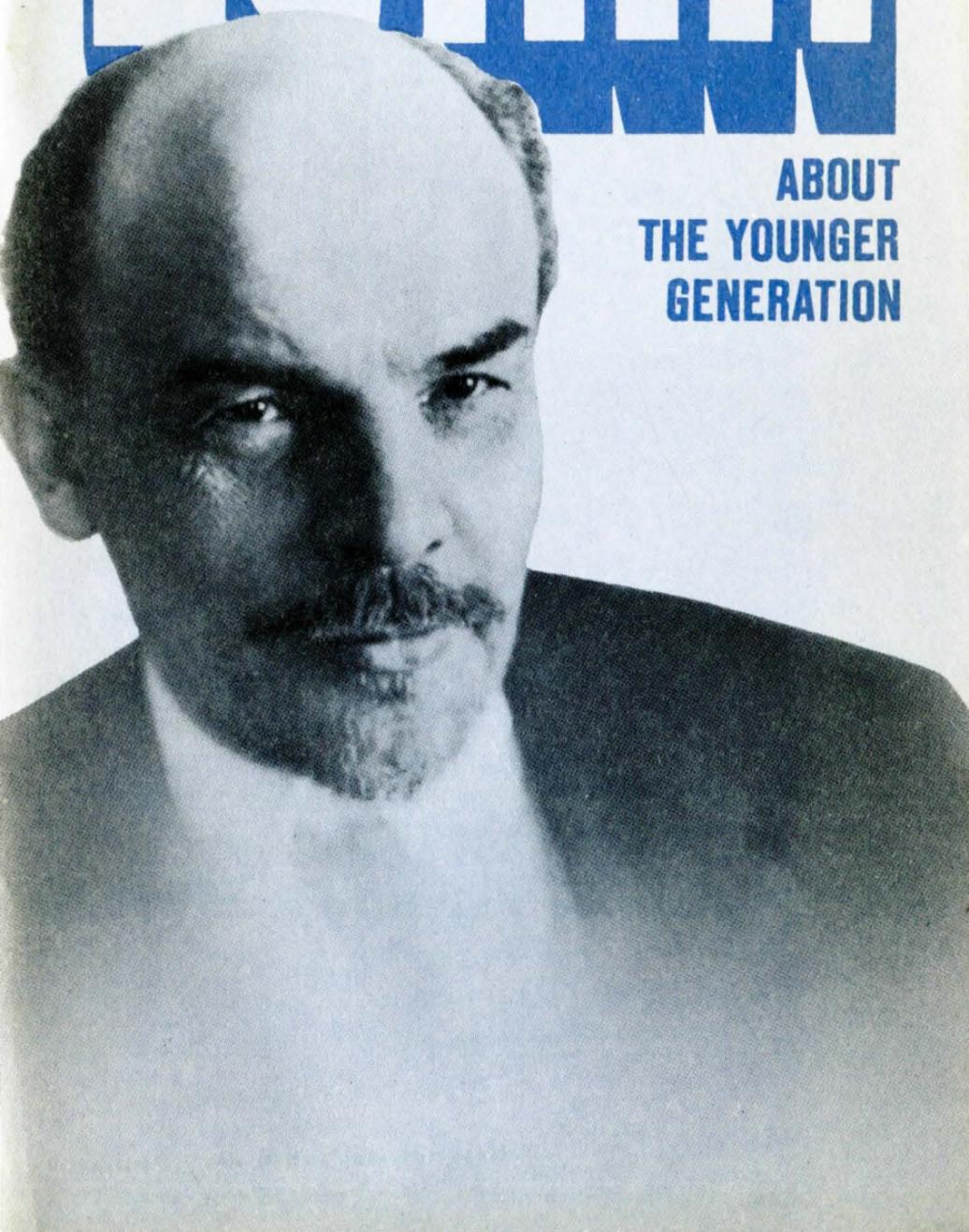


# Lenin

**ABOUT  
THE YOUNGER  
GENERATION**





# Lenin

THE GREAT HERITAGE

**ABOUT  
THE YOUNGER  
GENERATION**



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## INTRODUCTION: LENIN, SOCIALISM, YOUTH

The peoples of this planet have since long ago been creating idols, believing in their omnipotence and hoping they will deliver them from hunger and diseases, natural calamities and foreign invasions.

In the West, people of the socialist world are often described as fanatics who have rejected old idols but worship some new ones. There have indeed been fanatics in history. But is this the case with people of the socialist world?

For many centuries philosophers and sages of various countries and nations had been trying to explain the world, dreaming about universal affluence on earth. But dreams are not enough. And is it possible to change the world—to replace lies and mistrust with sincerity and friendliness, violence and oppression with equality and freedom, to enable the downtrodden and unfortunate to have human dignity and the right to develop freely?

Yes, the world can be reshaped. “In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.”<sup>1</sup> These words are from the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* written in the middle of the last century by the outstanding thinkers and revolutionaries, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

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<sup>1</sup> K. Marx, F. Engels. *Coll. Works*, 1976, Vol. 6, p. 506

At a crucial moment in human history, when the most revolutionary class—the proletariat—came to the fore, the founders of scientific communism provided answers to the pressing questions of historical development. They brought about a great revolution in the social consciousness of mankind and evolved the scientific world outlook of the proletariat, which objectively reflected historical laws.

Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924), brilliant theoretician and political leader, continued the cause of Marx and Engels and further developed their theory. Leninism combined revolutionary thought and revolutionary action in a new historical epoch. This scientific world outlook marked a new stage in Marxism, its creative development in the conditions of imperialism and proletarian revolutions, and the transition of mankind from capitalism to socialism.

Lenin's contribution to the progress and liberation of mankind is truly great and invaluable. Continuing the great cause of Marx and Engels he steadily translated their ideals into life. Lenin has gone down in history as a thinker of genius and outstanding revolutionary, as the leader of the world's first victorious proletarian revolution, the founder and head of the Soviet state.

He was not an idol, a fetish created by human imagination, but a real person, one with a penetrating mind and perspicacity and a heart capable of feeling the joys and sorrows of his fellowmen, one whose entire life was dedicated to the struggle for the triumph of communist ideals on the Earth.

Many letters arrive in the Soviet Union from all corners of the globe. Young people ask about Lenin; they want to know more about his life and work and learn more about Leninism.

Here is a letter from José Luis Martínez Anchondo of Mexico. "I have just read Lenin's work 'What Is Soviet Power?' It greatly helped me to understand what socialism really means, what it gives to ordinary people. I am a young worker living in a small settlement. Like my coevals I wish to know as much as possible about socialism."

"I am fed up with all kinds of slander against the socialist system," writes Chris Better, a young Canadian.

"I have read Lenin's theoretical work 'Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism' with the greatest interest. His view of the historical process has put me right on many things. Such books are useful to us. I do hope there will be more of them..."

In response to numerous requests received by Novosti Press Agency we are publishing this collection which contains excerpts from Lenin's books, articles and speeches dealing with youth. Like Marx and Engels, Lenin thought and wrote much about young people and for young people, future active citizens of a new society.

Young people have their own specific interests and requirements. In a class society, under the system of exploitation of man by man, youth is not only a demographic age category, but a part of one or another class or social group.

Developing the ideas of the founders of scientific communism, Lenin created an integral concept of upbringing and educating the younger generation as well as of its role and place in the proletariat's class struggle. Lenin regarded the basic community of the class interests of the older and younger generations of the proletariat, of all working people as the objective foundation of their unity and of the continuity of revolutionary traditions.

In the summer of 1903, the historic Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) was held, which proclaimed the formation of a proletarian party of a new type, the Party of Bolsheviks. At the Congress Lenin put forward the task of rallying around the Party revolutionary-minded young people of Russia and establishing close ties between youth organisations and the RSDLP. He worked out a Draft Resolution on the Attitude Towards the Student Youth and submitted it for discussion by the Congress. The Draft called "upon all organisations of the Party to give them /students/ every possible assistance in their efforts to organise,"<sup>1</sup> and recommended that all organisations and groups of students should "...make it the prime object of their activities to imbue their members with an integral and consistent

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 6, p. 469

socialist world outlook and give them a thorough acquaintance with Marxism...”, as well as maintain contact with Social-Democratic organisations “...so as to have the benefit of their advice and, as far as possible, to avoid serious mistakes at the very outset of their work”.<sup>1</sup>

The Bolsheviks passed on to young proletarians their experience of revolutionary struggle and taught young people how to achieve their goals. In the conditions of reaction and political oppression in tsarist Russia the Party brought up the best representatives of the younger generation to be worthy continuers of the struggle waged by their older comrades, and prepared young people for the forthcoming revolutionary battles.

Lenin emphasised the importance of inculcating in young people a consistent revolutionary world outlook and a class, political approach to all social phenomena. A profound knowledge of Marxism can become a firm conviction only when it is verified by the experience of struggle in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat.

“The real education of the masses can never be separated from their independent political, and especially revolutionary, struggle. Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will,” Lenin said in the “Lecture on the 1905 Revolution” delivered at a meeting of Swiss young workers in January 1917.<sup>2</sup>

While highly appreciating the revolutionary energy of young people and their possibilities in revolutionary struggle, Lenin at the same time resolutely opposed all kinds of playing up to young people and demagogic statements about a “special” role of the youth as the “vanguard” of revolution.

For many years Lenin waged a persistent struggle against “false friends” of the youth. He did not tolerate political adventurers who tried to set young people against the older generation, and opportunists who condemned the “early” drawing of young people into politics.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 6, p. 469

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 241

Lenin taught his followers the correct approach to young people. “The middle-aged and the aged,” he noted, “often *do not know how* to approach the youth, for the youth must of necessity advance to socialism *in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances than their fathers*”.<sup>1</sup>

Proceeding from this, Lenin emphasised the importance of organisational unity of young people. Their organisations with their own structure and practical activities should work under the guidance of the proletarian party.

Lenin took an active part in the internationalist education of young people both in Russia and in the world arena. His ideas were reflected in the decisions of an international conference of proletarian youth organisations held in 1907, which proclaimed the formation of a Youth International.

In 1917, when preparations were being made for the Great October Socialist Revolution and when it was being carried out, Lenin and the Bolshevik Party paid great attention to the drawing of young people into revolutionary struggle. In his article “Advice of an Onlooker”, Lenin said that “the *most determined* elements (our ‘shock forces’ and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all important operations...”<sup>2</sup> In the decisive revolutionary battles the proletarian youth, young sailors and soldiers, showed that they were worthy successors of the Bolsheviks.

In October 1918, the Russian Communist Youth League was organised. Its creation marked a new stage in the development of the youth movement in the Republic of Soviets. This political organisation of working-class and peasant youths proclaimed itself a reserve and assistant of the Party. It was proletarian in its class nature, communist in aims and tasks and mass-scale and independent in structure and activity. In 1924, after Lenin’s death, the Russian Communist Youth League was named after him.

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 23, p. 164

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 26, p. 180

At present, the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (Komsomol) unites 42 million young men and women. This is the most numerous mass youth organisation in the USSR, the vanguard of the Soviet youth.

From its very inception the Komsomol members were in the front ranks of the fighters for a new life, along with the Communists. "We know that we have a reserve of tens and hundreds of thousands of working-class and peasant youths," Lenin said in November 1919, "who have been coming to us in bigger numbers and whose devotion is the greater the severer our difficulties. These reserves give us confidence that in these two years we have achieved a firm and sound cohesion and now possess a source from which we shall for a long time be able to draw still more extensively..."<sup>1</sup>

The most important piece in this collection is Lenin's speech "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues" delivered on October 2, 1920, at the 3rd Congress of the Russian Communist Youth League. This is an outstanding document of creative Marxism dealing with the character, main tasks, principles and methods of work of communist youth leagues. It was the first theoretical work in the history of Marxist thought that dealt with the role and tasks of young people in the building of a new world. Lenin said then: "... the youth in general, who want to advance to communism, should learn communism."<sup>2</sup> In our day this terse formula sounds like call to action.

For millions of young men and women the book **The Tasks of the Youth Leagues** has become a revolutionary programme, an introduction to Marxism-Leninism for many generations to come.

The book outlines the principles for the moulding of a Communist. Lenin regarded the moulding of the new man as one of the most decisive factors in the building of a new world.

Speaking at the 3rd Congress of the Russian Communist Youth League Lenin addressed the young delegates as the architect who had dedicated himself to the building of a new edifice, which was to stand forever. And

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 30, p. 133

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 31, p. 284

for this it was necessary above all to do away with poverty, devastation, hunger, backwardness and illiteracy, in a word, with the miserable legacy of the past. That was why Lenin's words that "...a communist society cannot be built in an illiterate country"<sup>1</sup> were so timely. That was why it was essential to study, to master the knowledge accumulated by humanity. Such was the path charted by Lenin.

Lenin's speech at the 3rd YCL Congress was regarded by the international communist and progressive youth movement as an important revolutionary document. It has preserved its import today, young fighters all over the world continue to study it.

Bourgeois ideologists are trying to disprove and misrepresent Lenin's theory about the youth. Western Sovietologists and writers on youth problems try to belittle the significance of Lenin's speech at the 3rd YCL Congress as a major theoretical and programmatic document of Marxism-Leninism on problems concerning young people. Life itself, however, has refuted their unfounded assertions.

In the 1920s the father of modern cosmonautics, Konstantin Tsiolkovsky, said that having read Lenin's speech "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", he came to have greater confidence in the realisation of his own ideas. Today these ideas have been carried out. Spaceships manned by international teams have been successfully launched. When one of the cosmonauts, Arnaldo Tamayo Mendez of Cuba, was asked who his favourite hero was, he said without hesitation: "Lenin. I've read his works with a deep feeling..."

Because of its revolutionary spirit Lenin's theory is turned to young people, their capacity for creative work, their strivings for a bright future. The Party led by Lenin has always been a party of the future, a party of inventive people of progress. Anatoli Lunacharsky, one of Lenin's followers and comrades-in-arms, said about him: "He himself remained youthful all his 53 years, and would have remained youthful for as long as he lived. Leninism, too, is

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 296

youthful. From it springs a world-wide youthfulness, the colossal future awaiting us and irrepressible youthful valour.”<sup>1</sup>

Soviet young people are linked with Leninism by thousands of bonds. In schools and vocational centres, at higher educational institutions and at their places of work young people study Marxism-Leninism and learn about Lenin’s life and work in order to imitate him in everything they can.

This is what Lenin said to the young: “Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist.”<sup>2</sup> During the years of Soviet power labour has become one of the highest moral values in the USSR, a source of joy and pride, an effective means of the communist education of the mass of people. As time passes, the scope and scale of work and the conditions of work change. But just as before, dedication in the struggle for the common goal, will-power, courage and maturity are instilled in Soviet young people in day-to-day work.

In order to implement their plans successfully the Soviet people need durable peace. The Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet state, unswervingly following the Leninist course, are waging a persistent struggle against the threat of a world thermonuclear catastrophe. This course is clearly opposed to the militaristic strategy of the imperialist forces.

To justify and carry out their militaristic and hegemonistic schemes the imperialists are trying to frighten the peoples with the “Soviet military threat”. Only those who do not know history and the real state of affairs can be deceived and believe in that “threat”. The “Soviet military threat” is nothing but a myth, and like anti-Sovietism generally, is groundless.

The Soviet people have never threatened anyone with force, have never tried to impose their social system or their ideology on anyone. This is confirmed by history.

<sup>1</sup> *Lenin Through the Eyes of Lunacharsky*, Moscow, APN, 1981, p. 140

<sup>2</sup> V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 298.

Suffice it to recall that the first foreign-policy act of the world’s first state of workers and peasants was Lenin’s Decree on Peace which denounced war as the greatest crime against humanity.

As a great socialist power the Soviet Union is fully aware of its responsibility to the peoples for preserving and strengthening peace. The USSR stands for peaceful, mutually beneficial cooperation with states on all continents, for the peaceful settlement of all disputed international problems through serious, equal and constructive talks.

The Leninist Komsomol, Soviet young people in general, have always been in the vanguard of all young fighters in the world for peace and social progress. Sentiments of proletarian internationalism unite Soviet young people with their counterparts in the fraternal socialist states, young independent countries, and with progressive-minded circles in capitalist countries. The youth festival movement helps to strengthen ties of friendship among young people all over the world. It calls on them to step up the struggle for peace, for averting nuclear threat, for disarmament, national independence and social progress.

In February 1984, at its meeting in Havana the International Preparatory Committee of the World Festival of Youth and Students supported the initiative of the Soviet Komsomol to hold the 12th World Festival in Moscow, in the summer of 1985, and endorsed its slogan: “For Anti-Imperialist Solidarity, Peace and Friendship”. This decision was supported by broad sections of young people all over the world.

This international youth forum will be held in the International Youth Year and in the year of the 40th anniversary of the victory over German fascism and Japanese militarism in the Second World War. The festival will be the main event of the International Youth Year and is to promote the anti-imperialist youth movement, and give a new and powerful impetus to the struggle for a peaceful future for entire mankind.

At this forum young people from different countries will have many opportunities to learn about the life of

Soviet young men and women and their efforts to fulfill Lenin's behests.

History marches on. The urgent tasks for one country at one time are being implemented today in other countries, in different continents. For millions of young men and women Lenin's ideological heritage has become a lodestar in their struggle for peace, democracy and social progress, enabling them to look to the future with optimism.

*Victor MISHIN*

*First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Leninist Young Communist League*

## **LENIN ABOUT THE YOUNGER GENERATION**

## YOUTH IN REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT

From:

### DRAFT RESOLUTION ON THE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE STUDENT YOUTH<sup>1</sup>

The Second Congress<sup>2</sup> of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party welcomes the growing revolutionary initiative among the student youth and calls upon all organisations of the Party to give them every possible assistance in their efforts to organise. It recommends that all student groups and study circles should, firstly, make it the prime object of their activities to imbue their members with an integral and consistent socialist world outlook and give them a thorough acquaintance with Marxism..., secondly, that they should beware of those false friends of the youth who divert them from a thorough revolutionary training through recourse to empty revolutionary or idealistic phrase-mongering..., for as a matter of fact these false friends are only spreading an unprincipled and unserious attitude towards revolutionary work; thirdly, that they should endeavour, when undertaking practical activities, to establish prior contact with the Social-Democratic organisations, so as to have the benefit of their advice and, as far as possible, to avoid serious mistakes at the very outset of their work.

*June-July 1903*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 6, p. 471*

**From:**

### **NEW TASKS AND NEW FORCES<sup>3</sup>**

... Whatever the course or the outcome of the revolution may be, however early it may be checked by one or other circumstance, all its real gains will be rendered secure and reliable only insofar as the proletariat is organised.

The slogan "Organise!" which the adherents of the majority wanted to issue, fully formulated, at the Second Congress must now be put into effect immediately. If we fail to show bold initiative in setting up new organisations, we shall have to give up as groundless all pretensions to the role of vanguard....

There are masses of people, and we are short of people; this contradictory formula has long expressed the contradictions between the organisational life and the organisational needs of the Social-Democratic Party. Today this contradiction is more salient than ever before; we often hear from all sides passionate appeals for new forces, complaints about the shortage of forces in the organisations, while at the same time we have everywhere countless offers of service, a growth of young forces, especially among the working class.

*March 1905*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 8, pp. 219-220*

**From:**

### **PREFACE TO THE RUSSIAN TRANSLATION OF K. KAUTSKY'S PAMPHLET:**

*The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian  
Revolution<sup>4</sup>*

...The working class, which all over the world is waging a hard and persistent struggle for complete emancipation, needs authorities, but, of course, only in the way that young workers need the experience of veteran *fighters* against oppression and exploitation, of those who have organised many strikes, have taken part in a number of revolutions, who are wise in revolutionary traditions, and have a broad

political outlook. The proletarians of every country need the authority of the world-wide struggle of the proletariat. We need the authority of the theoreticians of international Social-Democracy to enable us properly to understand the programme and tactics of our Party. ...And important though this authority is in widening the horizon of the fighters, it would be impermissible in the workers' party to claim that the practical and concrete questions of its immediate policy can be solved by those standing a long way off. The collective spirit of the progressive class-conscious workers immediately engaged in the struggle in each country will always remain the highest authority on all such questions.

*December 1906*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 11, pp. 412-413*

**From:**

### **THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIALIST CONGRESS IN STUTT GART<sup>5</sup>**

A feature of the International Socialist Congress held in Stuttgart this August was its large and representative composition: the total of 886 delegates came from all the five continents. Besides providing an impressive demonstration of international unity in the proletarian struggle, the Congress played an outstanding part in defining the tactics of the socialist parties. It adopted general resolutions on a number of questions, the decision of which had hitherto been left solely to the discretion of the individual socialist parties. And the fact that more and more problems require uniform, principled decisions in different countries is striking proof that socialism is being welded into a single international force.

We pass now to the last, and perhaps the most important, resolution of the Congress—that on anti-militarism...

...Rosa Luxemburg<sup>6</sup> and the Russian Social-Democratic delegates moved their amendments to Bebel's resolution. These amendments (1) stated that militarism is the chief weapon of class oppression; (2) pointed out the need for propaganda among the youth...

*September 1907*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 13, pp. 75, 79, 80*

From:

## THE STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE PRESENT POLITICAL SITUATION<sup>7</sup>

...It is not sufficient merely to proclaim political co-ordinated action...

One must *be able* to agitate for political action, *making use* of all possibilities, all conditions and, first and foremost, all mass conflicts between advanced elements, whatever they are, and the autocracy.<sup>8</sup> It is not of course a question of us dividing every student movement beforehand into compulsory "stages", and making sure that each stage is properly gone through, out of fear of switching over to "untimely" political actions, etc. Such a view would be the most harmful pedantry, and would lead only to an opportunist policy. But just as harmful is the opposite mistake, when people refuse to reckon with the actual situation that has arisen and the actual conditions of the particular mass movement, because of a slogan misinterpreted as unchangeable. Such an application of a slogan inevitably degenerates into revolutionary phrasemongering.

Conditions are possible when an academic movement lowers the level of a political movement, or divides it, or distracts from it—and in that case Social-Democratic students' groups would of course be bound to concentrate their agitation against such a movement. But anyone can see that the objective political conditions at the present time are different. The academic movement is expressing the *beginning* of a movement among the new "generation" of students... and this movement is beginning when other forms of mass struggle are lacking at the present time, when a lull has set in<sup>9</sup>, and the broad mass of the people, still silently, concentratedly and slowly are continuing to *digest* the experience of the three years of revolution.

In such conditions Social-Democrats would make a big mistake if they declared "against academic action". No, the groups of students belonging to our Party must use every effort to support, utilise and extend the movement.

...The present support, too, should consist most of all in ideological and organisational influence on wider sections

who have been roused by the conflict, and to whom this form of conflict, as a general rule, is their *first* experience of political conflicts. The student youth who have entered the universities during the last two years have lived a life almost completely detached from politics, ... educated not only by the professors of the Establishment and the government press but also by the liberal professors... For this youth a strike on a large scale (if that youth is able to organise a large-scale strike: we must do everything to help it in this undertaking, but of course it is not for us socialists to guarantee the success of any bourgeois movement) is the beginning of a political conflict, whether those engaged in the fight realise it or not. Our job is to explain to the mass of "academic" protesters the objective meaning of the conflict, to try and make it *consciously* political, to multiply tenfold the agitation carried on by the Social-Democratic groups of students, and *to direct all* this activity in such a way that revolutionary conclusions will be drawn from the history of the last three years, that the inevitability of a new revolutionary struggle is understood, and that our old—and still quite timely—slogans... once again become a subject of discussion and the touchstone of political concentration for fresh generations of democrats.

Social-Democratic students have no right to shirk such work under any conditions. And however difficult this work may be at the present time, whatever reverses particular agitators may experience in this or that university, students' association, meeting, etc., we shall say: knock, and it will be opened unto you! The work of political agitation is never wasted. Its success is measured not only by whether we have succeeded here and now in winning a majority, or obtaining consent for co-ordinated political action. It is possible that we shall not achieve this all at once. But that is why we are an organised proletarian party—not to lose heart over temporary failures, but stubbornly, unswervingly and consistently to carry on *our work*, even in the most difficult conditions...

We were able to work years and decades before the revolution... We must be capable, *now too*, of organising first and foremost that which constitutes the task of the hour, and without which all talk about co-ordinated po-

litical action will be empty words, namely, the task of building a strong proletarian organisation, everywhere carrying on *political agitation* among the masses for its revolutionary watchwords. It is this task of organisation in their own student midst, this agitation based on the concrete movement, that our university groups, too, should tackle...

October 1908

Coll. Works, Vol. 15, pp. 215, 216,  
217, 218

From:

### THE QUESTION OF PARTY AFFILIATION AMONG DEMOCRATIC-MINDED STUDENTS

We noted in *Pravda*<sup>10</sup>... the article by the student M. which provides remarkably valuable material about "student moods". On students' party affiliation, the writer says:

"Of course, a comparatively limited section of the students are members of Left-wing organisations. In existing conditions, it could not be otherwise, and in general the strength of organisations is determined not by the number of their members, but by their influence on the masses. It is hard to make a guess about the future, but it should be pointed out that today the Left-wing organisations are marching in step with the mass of the students."

The author is quite right when he says that *with us in Russia, particularly* in the current political conditions, "the strength of organisations is determined *not* by the number of their members, *but* by their influence on the masses"...

But what is the party attitude of these "Left-wing" organisations among the students? Student M. writes:

"It should be particularly noted that one does not feel any dissension among the individual Left-wing organisations. Such dissension was particularly strong three or so years ago, during the period of lull and inaction... Now these divisions have almost disappeared, partly because everyone has realised the need to join forces for common action, partly because the old party positions have been unsettled and the new ones have yet to be consolidated."

There can be no doubt that in this respect, as well, the students provide a reflection of an all-Russia phenomenon. Everywhere, throughout the democratic movement, and also among the workers, "the old party positions have been unsettled and the new ones have yet to be consolidated". What is liquidationism?<sup>11</sup> It is either a pusillanimous concession to the spirit of the times, to the atmosphere of "unsettlement" of the old party positions, or the malicious utilisation of this unsettlement by the liberals.

The task of the *whole* democratic movement is to fight with all its strength against this "unsettlement", and to achieve a precise, clear, definite, thoughtful "consolidation" of the "new positions". It would be a great mistake to confuse the arguments and discussions on party (and inner-party) platforms with "dissensions".

It is absolutely necessary "to join forces for common action"... This does not obviate a definite party stand, but, on the contrary, *demand*s it. It is possible to combine action only when there is *real* unity of conviction as to whether the particular action is necessary...

December 1912

Coll. Works, Vol. 36, pp. 209, 210

From:

### THE YOUTH INTERNATIONAL<sup>12</sup>

Of course, the youth organ *still* lacks theoretical clarity and consistency. Perhaps it may never acquire them, precisely because it is the organ of seething, turbulent, inquiring youth... Adults who lay claim to lead and teach the proletariat, but actually mislead it, are one thing: against such people a *ruthless* struggle must be waged. Organisations of *youth*, however, 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 given every assistance. We must be patient with their faults and strive to correct them gradu-

ally, mainly by *persuasion*, and not by fighting them. The middle-aged and the aged often *do not know how to approach the youth*, for the youth must of necessity advance to socialism *in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, in other circumstances* than their fathers. Incidentally, that is why we must decidedly *favour organisational independence* of the Youth League, *not only* because the opportunists fear such independence, but because of the very nature of the case...

December 1916

Coll. Works, Vol. 23, p. 164

From:

### ADVICE OF AN ONLOOKER<sup>13</sup>

...Armed uprising is a *special* form of political struggle, one subject to special laws to which attentive thought must be given. Karl Marx expressed this truth with remarkable clarity when he wrote that "*insurrection is an art quite as much as war*".

Of the principal rules of this art, Marx noted the following:

(1) *Never play* with insurrection, but when beginning it realise firmly that you must *go all the way*.

(2) Concentrate a *great superiority of forces* at the decisive point and at the decisive moment....

(3) Once the insurrection has begun, you must act with the greatest *determination*, and by all means, without fail, take the *offensive*....

(4) You must try to take the enemy by surprise and seize the moment when his forces are scattered.

(5) You must strive for *daily* successes, however small..., and at all costs retain "*moral superiority*".

...The *most determined* elements (our "shock forces" and *young workers*, as well as the best of the sailors) must be formed into small detachments to occupy all the more important points and to *take part* everywhere in all important operations.

October 1917

Coll. Works, Vol. 26, pp. 179, 180

## THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

### ADMISSION TO HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

From the Draft Decision of the Council of People's Commissars<sup>14</sup>

The Council of People's Commissars instructs the Commissariat of Education<sup>15</sup> at once to prepare several decisions and measures so that in the event of the number of applicants to the higher educational institutions exceeding the usual number of places, extra-special measures be taken to ensure a chance to study for all who so desire, and to ensure there be no actual or legal privileges for the propertied classes. Priority must certainly go to workers and poor peasants, who are to be given grants on an extensive scale.

August 1918

Coll. Works, Voll. 28, p. 48

From:

### SPEECH AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS ON EDUCATION AUGUST 28, 1918<sup>16</sup>

Education is one of the component parts of the struggle we are now waging.<sup>17</sup> We can counter hypocrisy and lies with the complete and honest truth. The war<sup>18</sup> has shown plainly enough what the "will of the majority" means, a phrase used as a cover by the bourgeoisie. It has shown that a handful of plutocrats drag whole nations to the slaughter in their own interests. The belief that bourgeois democracy serves the interests of the majority has now

been utterly discredited. Our Constitution, our Soviets, which were something new to Europe, but with which we were already acquainted from the experience of the 1905 Revolution, serve as splendid agitation and propaganda material<sup>19</sup>... We have openly proclaimed the rule of the working and exploited people—and there lies the source of our strength and invincibility.

The same is true of education: the more cultured the bourgeois state, the more subtly it lied when declaring that schools could stand above politics and serve society as a whole.

In fact the schools were turned into nothing but an instrument of the class rule of the bourgeoisie. They were thoroughly imbued with the bourgeois caste spirit. Their purpose was to supply the capitalists with obedient lackeys and able workers. ...We publicly declare that education divorced from life and politics is lies and hypocrisy. What was the meaning of the sabotage resorted to by the best educated representatives of the old bourgeois culture? This sabotage showed better than any agitator, better than all our speeches, better than thousands of pamphlets that these people regard learning as their monopoly and have turned it into an instrument of their rule over the so-called common people. They used their education to frustrate the work of socialist construction, and came out openly against the working people<sup>20</sup>.

The revolutionary struggle has been the finishing school for the Russian workers and peasants. They have seen that our system alone assures their genuine rule, they have been able to convince themselves that the state is doing everything to assist the workers and the poor peasants in completely crushing the resistance of... the landowners and the capitalists.

The working people are thirsting for knowledge because they need it to win. Nine out of ten of the working people have realised that knowledge is a weapon in their struggle for emancipation, that their failures are due to lack of education, and that now it is up to them really to give everyone access to education. Our cause is assured because the people have themselves set about building a new, socialist Russia. They are learning from their own

experience, from their failures and mistakes, and they see how indispensable education is for the victorious conclusion of their struggle. In spite of the apparent collapse of many institutions and the jubilation of the intellectuals carrying out sabotage, we find that experience in the struggle has taught the people to take their fate into their own hands. All who really sympathise with the people, all the best teachers will come to our aid, and that is a sure pledge that the socialist cause will triumph.

*Coll. Works, Vol. 28, pp. 87, 88*

**From:**

**SPEECH AT A JOINT SESSION OF THE ALL-  
RUSSIA CENTRAL EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE,<sup>21</sup> THE MOSCOW SOVIET AND ALL-  
RUSSIA TRADE UNION CONGRESS  
JANUARY 17, 1919**

... The advanced sections of the workers have already set about governing the state, building a new life. We know we must reach down deeper and more boldly enlist new sections. They still lack training, they will inevitably make mistakes, but we are not afraid of that. We know that in this way we shall get young trained workers and recompense errors a hundredfold by securing scores of younger and fresher forces. There is no other source we can draw on. We must move ahead all the time, take our young workers from wherever we can and put them in more and more responsible posts.

*Coll. Works, Vol. 28, p. 403*

**From:**

**DRAFT PROGRAMME OF THE RCP (B)<sup>22</sup>**

... In the sphere of public education, the object of the RCP is to complete the work that began with the October Revolution in 1917 to convert the school from an instru-

ment of the class rule of the bourgeoisie into an instrument for the overthrow of that rule and for the complete abolition of the division of society into classes...

The immediate tasks in this field are, for the present, the following.

(1) The implementation of free, obligatory general and polytechnical education (acquaintance with all the main branches of production theoretically and in practice) for all children of both sexes up to the age of 16.

(2) The closest connection between schooling and productive social labour.

(3) The provision of food, clothing, books and other teaching aids for all school children at the expense of the state.

(4) Greater agitation and propaganda among schoolteachers.

(4) The training of new teaching staffs imbued with communist ideas.

(6) The working people must be drawn into active participation in the work of education (the development of the public education councils, mobilisation of the educated, etc.).

(7) All-round help on the part of Soviet power in the matter of the self-education and self-development of workers and working peasants (organisation of libraries, schools for adults, people's universities, courses of lectures, cinemas, studios, etc.).

(8) Development of the most extensive propaganda of communist ideas.

February 1919

*Coll. Works, Vol. 29, pp. 111, 112*

**From:**

**THESES OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE  
RUSSIAN COMMUNIST  
PARTY (BOLSHEVIKS) ON THE SITUATION ON  
THE EASTERN FRONT<sup>23</sup>**

The trade unions must organise the extensive enlistment of peasants, especially of peasant youths in the non-

agricultural gubernias,<sup>24</sup> for the ranks of the Red Army, for the formation of food detachments<sup>25</sup> in the Don and the Ukraine.

This activity can and should be expanded to many times its present volume; it helps both to assist the hungry population of the metropolitan cities and the non-agricultural gubernias and to strengthen the Red Army.

April 1919

*Coll. Works, Vol. 29, p. 278*

**From:**

**SPEECH AT THE FIRST ALL-RUSSIA CONGRESS  
OF COMMUNIST STUDENTS<sup>26</sup>  
APRIL 17, 1919**

It gives me great pleasure to greet you. I do not know how many gubernias are represented here, or where you have come from. The important thing is that the youth, the communist youth, are organising. The important thing is that the youth are gathering together to learn to build the new type of school. Now you have a new type of school. The old, bureaucratic school, which you hated and detested, and with which you had no ties, no longer exists. We have planned our work for a very long period. The future society we are striving for, the society in which all must work, the society in which there will be no class distinctions, will take a long time to build. At present we are only laying the foundations of this future society, but you will have to build it when you grow up. At present, work as your strength permits; do not undertake tasks that are too much for you; be guided by your seniors. Once again I greet this Congress and wish your labours every success.

*Coll. Works, Vol. 29, p. 324*

**From:**

**SPEECH AT A JOINT SESSION  
OF THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,  
THE MOSCOW SOVIET OF WORKERS'  
AND RED ARMY DEPUTIES,  
THE ALL-RUSSIA CENTRAL COUNCIL  
OF TRADE UNIONS,<sup>27</sup>  
AND FACTORY COMMITTEES,  
ON THE OCCASION  
OF THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION  
November 7, 1919**

We have a reserve of tens and hundreds of thousands of working-class and peasant youths, those who saw and know to the full the old oppression of landowner and bourgeois society, who have seen the unparalleled difficulties of our constructive work, who saw what heroes the first contingent of Party functionaries proved to be in 1917 and 1918, who have been coming to us in bigger numbers and whose devotion is the greater the severer our difficulties. These reserves give us confidence that in these two years we have achieved a firm and sound cohesion and now possess a source from which we shall for a long time be able to draw still more extensively, and so ensure that the working people themselves undertake to develop the state. In this respect we have had such experience during these two years in applying working-class administration in all spheres, that we can say boldly and without any exaggeration that now all that remains is to continue what has been begun....

*Coll. Works, Vol. 30, pp. 133*

**TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION<sup>28</sup>**

Greetings to the working-class and peasant youth of Petrograd Gubernia on the occasion of their communist labour week.

Intensify your work in this field, my young comrades, so that you can apply your fresh, young forces to the building of a new and brighter life.

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin)*

*December 1919*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 30, p. 276*

**From:**

**THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES**

**Speech Delivered at the Third All-Russia Congress of the  
Russian Young Communist League  
October 2, 1920<sup>29</sup>**

... I would like to talk on the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League and, in this connection, on what the youth organisations in a socialist republic should be like in general.

It is all the more necessary to dwell on this question because in a certain sense it may be said that it is the youth that will be faced with the actual task of creating a communist society.

... And so, in dealing from this angle with the tasks confronting the youth, I must say that the tasks of the youth in general, and of the Young Communist Leagues and all other organisations in particular, might be summed up in a single word: learn.

Of course, this is only a "single word". It does not reply to the principal 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 upbringing, 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 has been left to us by the old society. We can build communism only on the basis of the totality of knowledge, organisations and institutions, only by using the stock of human forces and means that have been left to us by the old society. Only by radically remoulding the teaching, organisation and train-

ing of the youth shall we be able to ensure that the efforts of the younger generation will result in the creation of a society that will be unlike the old society, i.e., in the creation of 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 so as to be able to complete and consummate what we have started.

I must say that the first and most natural reply would seem to be that the Youth League, and the youth in general, who want to advance to communism, 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 of general knowledge so as to acquire a knowledge of communism? Here a number of dangers arise, which very often manifest themselves whenever the task of learning communism is presented incorrectly, or when it is interpreted in too one-sided a manner.

Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning communism means assimilating the sum of knowledge that is contained in communist manuals, pamphlets and books. But such a definition of the study of communism would be too crude and inadequate. If the study of communism consisted solely in assimilating what is contained in communist books and pamphlets, we might all too easily obtain communist text-jugglers or braggarts, and this would very often do us harm because such people, after learning by rote what is set forth in communist books and pamphlets, would prove incapable of combining the various branches of knowledge, and would be unable to act in the way communism really demands.

One of the greatest evils and misfortunes left to us by the old, capitalist society is the complete rift between books and practical life; we have had books explaining everything in the best possible manner, yet in most cases these books contained the most pernicious and hypocritical lies, a false description of capitalist society.

That is why it would be most mistaken merely to assimilate book knowledge about communism. No longer do our speeches and articles merely reiterate what used to be said about communism, because our speeches and

articles are connected with our daily work in all fields. Without work and without struggle book knowledge of communism obtained from communist pamphlets and works is absolutely worthless, for it would continue the old separation of theory and practice, the old rift which was the most pernicious feature of the old, bourgeois society...

...What must we take from the old schools, from the old kind of science? It was the declared aim of the old type of school to produce men with an all-round education, to teach the sciences in general. We know that this was utterly false, since the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of people into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Since they were thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, the old schools naturally gave 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 that bourgeoisie. They were trained in such a way as to be useful servants of the bourgeoisie, able to create profits for it without disturbing its peace and leisure. That is why, while rejecting the old type of schools, we have made it our task to take from it only what we require for genuine communist education.

This brings me to the reproaches and accusations which we constantly hear levelled at the old schools, and which often lead to wholly wrong conclusions. It is said that the old school was a school of purely book knowledge, of ceaseless drilling and grinding. That is true, but we must distinguish between what was bad in the old schools and what is useful to us, and we must be able to select from it what is necessary for communism.

The old schools provided purely book knowledge; they compelled their pupils to assimilate a mass of useless, superfluous and barren knowledge, which cluttered up the brain and turned the younger generation into bureaucrats regimented according to a single pattern. But it would mean falling into a grave error for you to try to draw the conclusion that one can become a Communist without assimilating the wealth of knowledge amassed by mankind. It would be mistaken to think it sufficient to learn com-

munist slogans and the conclusions of communist science, without acquiring that sum of knowledge of which communism itself is a result. Marxism is an example which shows how communism arose out of the sum of human knowledge.

You have read and heard that communist theory—the science of communism created in the main by Marx, this doctrine of Marxism—has ceased to be the work 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 it in their struggle against capitalism. If you were to ask why the teachings of Marx have been able to win the hearts and minds of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx based his work on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. After making a study of the laws governing the development of human society, Marx realised the inevitability of capitalism developing towards communism. What is most important is that he proved this on the sole basis of a most precise, detailed and profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, without ignoring a single detail. He reconsidered, subjected to criticism, and verified on the working-class movement everything that human thinking had created, and therefrom formulated conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

... When we so often hear representatives of the youth, as well as certain advocates of a new system of education, attacking the old schools, claiming that they used the system of cramming, we say to them that we must take what was good in the old schools. We must not borrow the system of encumbering young people's minds with an immense amount of knowledge... This, however, does not mean that we can restrict ourselves to communist conclusions and learn only communist slogans. You will not create communism that way. You can become a Communist only when you enrich your mind with a knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind.

We have no need of cramming, but we do need to develop and perfect the mind of every student with a knowledge of fundamental facts. Communism will become an empty word, a mere signboard, and a Communist a mere boaster, if all the knowledge he has acquired is not digested in his mind. You should not merely assimilate this knowledge, but 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 well-educated man of today. If a Communist took it into his head to boast about his communism because of the cut-and-dried conclusions he had acquired, without putting in a great deal of serious and hard work and without understanding facts he should examine critically, he would be a deplorable Communist indeed. 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 not know anything thoroughly, he will never become anything like a Communist.

The old schools produced servants needed by the capitalists; the old schools turned men of science into men who had to write and say whatever pleased the capitalists. We must therefore abolish them. But does the fact that we must abolish them, destroy them, mean that we should not take from them everything mankind has accumulated that is essential to man? Does it mean that we do not have to distinguish between what was necessary to capitalism and what is necessary to communism?

... We must replace the old system of instruction, the old cramming and the old drill, with an ability to acquire the sum total of human knowledge, and to acquire it in such a way that communism shall not be something to be learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, something that will embody conclusions inevitable from the standpoint of present-day education.

That is the way the main tasks should be presented when we speak of the aim: learn communism.

I shall take a practical example to make this clear to you, and to demonstrate the approach to the problem of how you must learn. You all know that, following the military problems, those of defending the republic, we are now confronted with economic tasks. Communist society,

as we know, cannot be built unless we restore industry and agriculture, and that, not in the old way. They must be re-established on a modern basis, in accordance with the last word in science. You know that electricity is that basis, and that only after electrification of the entire country, of all branches of industry and agriculture, only when you have achieved that aim, will you be able to build for yourselves the communist society which the older generation will not be able to build. Confronting you is the task of economically reviving the whole country, of reorganising and restoring both agriculture and industry on modern technical lines, based on modern science and technology, on electricity.<sup>30</sup> You realise perfectly well that illiterate people cannot tackle electrification, and that elementary literacy is not enough either. It is insufficient to understand what electricity is; what is needed is the knowledge of how to apply it technically in industry and agriculture, and in the individual branches of industry and agriculture. This has to be learnt for oneself, and it must be taught to the entire rising generation of working people. That is the task confronting every class-conscious Communist, every young person who regards himself a Communist and who clearly understands that, by joining the Young Communist League, he has pledged himself to help the Party build communism and to help the whole younger generation create a communist society. He must realise that he can create it only on the basis of modern education, and if he does not acquire this education communism will remain merely a pious wish.

...You are faced with the task of construction, and you can accomplish that task only by assimilating all modern knowledge, only if you are able to transform communism from cut-and-dried and memorised formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programmes into that living reality which gives unity to your immediate work, and only if you are able to make communism a guide in all your practical work.

That is the task you should pursue in educating, training and rousing the entire younger generation. You must be foremost among the millions of builders of a communist society in whose ranks every young man and young woman should be...

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

I first of all shall deal here with the question of communist ethics.

...It is the task of the Youth League to organise its practical activities in such a way that, by learning, organising, uniting and fighting, its members shall train both themselves and all those who look to it for leadership; it should train Communists. The entire purpose 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? Or course, there is. It is often suggested that we have no ethics of our own; very often the bourgeoisie accuse us Communists of rejecting all morality. This is a method of confusing the issue, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants...

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

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landowners and capitalists. We had to destroy all that, and overthrow them, but to do that we had to create unity...

This unity could be provided only by the factories, only by a proletariat trained and roused from its long slumber. Only when that class was formed did a mass movement arise which has led to what we have now—the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been repelling the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. We can see how the proletarian revolution is developing all over the world. On the basis of experience, we now say that only the proletariat could have created the solid force which the disunited and scattered peasantry are following and which has withstood all onslaughts by the exploiters. Only this class can help the working masses unite, rally their ranks and conclusively defend, conclusively consolidate and conclusively build up a communist society.

That is why we say that to us there is no such thing as a morality that stands outside human society; that is a fraud. To us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletariat's class struggle.

What does that class struggle consist in? It consists in overthrowing the tsar, overthrowing the capitalists, and abolishing the capitalist class.

... If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landowner class and a peasant class. If one section of society owns the 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 landowners—that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists. But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is installed on his plot of land and appropriates his surplus 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, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to, the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve: "The more they starve, the dearer I can sell this grain." All should work according to a single common plan, on common land, in common factories and in accordance with a common system. Is that easy to attain? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the tsar, the landowners and the capitalists. What is required is that the proletariat re-educate a section of the peasantry; it must win over the working peasants in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and are profiting from the poverty and want of the rest. Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not quite completed...

The class struggle is 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 in a single union the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to that struggle. Our communist morality is also subordinated to that task. We say: morality is what

serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the working people around the proletariat, which is building up a new, a communist society.

... 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 assimilate with their mother's milk, one might say, the psychology, the habit, the concept which says: you are either a slave-owner or a slave, or else, a small owner, a petty employee, a petty official, or an intellectual—in short, a man who is concerned only with himself, and does not care a rap for anybody else.

If I work this plot of land, I do not care a rap for anybody else; if others starve, all the better, I shall get the more for my grain. If I have a job as a doctor, engineer, teacher, or clerk, I do not care a rap for anybody else. If I toady to and please the powers that be, I may be able to keep my job, and even get on in life and become a bourgeois. A Communist cannot harbour 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—that was the beginning of the new and communist education, education in the struggle against the exploiters, education in alliance with the proletariat against the self-seekers and petty proprietors, against the psychology and habits which say: I seek my own profit and don't care a rap for anything else.

That is the reply to the question of how the young and rising generation should learn communism.

... When people tell us about morality, we say: to a Communist all morality lies in this united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose the falseness of all the fables about morality. Morality serves the purpose of helping human society rise to a higher level and rid itself of the exploitation of labour.

To achieve this we need that generation of young people who began to reach political maturity in the midst of a disciplined and desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle that generation is training genuine

Communists; it must subordinate to this struggle, and link up with it, each step in its studies, education and training. The education of the communist youth must consist, not in giving them suave talks and moral precepts. This is not what education consists in. When people have seen the way in which their fathers and mothers lived under the yoke of the landowners and capitalists; when they have themselves experienced the sufferings of those who began the struggle against the exploiters; when they have seen the sacrifices made to keep what has been won, and seen what deadly enemies the landowners and capitalists are—they are taught by these conditions to become Communists. Communist morality is based on 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 of how communism should be learnt.

We could not believe in teaching, training and education if they were restricted only to the schoolroom and divorced from the ferment of life. As long as the workers and peasants are oppressed by the landowners and capitalists, and as long as the schools are controlled by the landowners and capitalists, the young generation will remain blind and ignorant. Our schools must provide the youth with the fundamentals of knowledge, the ability to evolve communist views independently; they must make educated people of the youth. While they are attending school, they must learn to become 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 only when every step in its teaching, training and education is linked up with participation in the common struggle of all working people against the exploiters. You are well aware 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 are, and be constantly threatened with a new attack; and that only if we learn to be solidly united shall we win in the further struggle and—having gained strength—become really invincible. Thus, to be a Communist means that you must organise and unite the entire young generation and set an example of training and

discipline in this struggle. Then you will be able to start building the edifice of communist society and bring it to completion.

...I have replied to the questions of what we must learn, what we must take from the old schools and from the old science. I shall now try to answer the question of how this must be learnt. The answer is: only by inseparably linking each step in the activities of the schools, each step in training, education and teaching, with the struggle of all the working people against the exploiters.

I shall quote a few examples from the experience of the work of some of the youth organisations so as 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 task. The young generation itself must take up this work. Communism means that the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Youth League, should 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 young people. We are trying to get the rising generation to devote their activities to this work. You know that we cannot rapidly transform an ignorant and illiterate Russia into a literate country. But if the Youth League sets to work on the job, and if all young people work for the benefit of all, the League, with a membership of 400,000 young men and women, will be entitled to call itself a Young Communist League. It is also a task of the League, not only to acquire knowledge itself, but to help those young people who are unable to extricate themselves by their own efforts from the toils of illiteracy. Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labour and efforts to the common cause. That is what a communist education means. Only in the course of such work do young men and women become real Communists. Only if they achieve practical results in this work will they become Communists...

The Young Communist League must be a shock force,

helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The League should be an organisation enabling any worker to see that it consists of people whose teachings he perhaps does not understand, and whose teachings he may not immediately believe, but from whose practical work and activity he can see that they are really people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organise its work in this way in all fields, it will mean that it is reverting to the old bourgeois path. We must combine our education with the struggle of the working people against the exploiters, so as to help the former accomplish the tasks set by the teachings of communism.

The members of the League should use every spare hour to improve the vegetable gardens, or to organise the education of young people at some factory, and so on. We want to transform Russia from a poverty-stricken and wretched country into one that is wealthy. The Young Communist League must combine its education, learning and training with the labour of the workers and peasants, so as not to confine itself to schools or to reading communist books and pamphlets. Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine Communist. It has to be generally realised that all members of the Youth League are literate people and at the same time are keen at their jobs. When everyone sees that we have ousted the old drill-ground methods from the old schools and have replaced them with conscious discipline, that all young men and women take part in subbotniks<sup>31</sup>, and utilise every suburban farm to help the population—people will cease to regard labour in the old way.

... We must organise all labour, no matter how toilsome or messy it may be, in such a way that every worker and peasant will be able to say: I am part of the great army of free labour, and shall be able to build up my life without the landowners and capitalists. ... The Young Communist League should teach all young people to engage in conscious and disciplined labour... Only by regarding your every step from the standpoint of the success of that construction, and only by asking ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united and politically-conscious working people will the

Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect.

*Coll. Works, Vol. 31, pp. 283-299*

### **TO THE THIRD CONGRESS OF THE YOUNG COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL, MOSCOW<sup>32</sup>**

Dear Comrades,

I regret that I cannot greet you in person. I send you my best wishes for success in your work. I hope that notwithstanding your lofty title you will not forget the main thing, namely, that it is necessary to promote in a practical manner the training and education of young people.

With best communist greetings,

*V. Ulyanov (Lenin)*

*December 1922*

*Coll. Works, Vol. 33, p. 446*

**COMMENTARIES**

1. This draft resolution was prepared by Lenin for the Second Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (RSDLP) /see No. 2/.

The "Draft Resolution on the Attitude Towards the Student Youth" adopted by the Second Congress is the first document of the Communist Party dealing with questions of the revolutionary education and organisation of the young generation.

2. This refers to the Second Congress of the RSDLP (1903). The major items on the Congress agenda were endorsement of the Party's Programme and the Rules and elections to the leading Party bodies.

The First Programme of the RSDLP summed up the radical demands of the youth. Lenin and the Party regarded them as part of the general demands of the working people of tsarist Russia. They included: the right to vote from 20 years of age, the right to receive an education in one's native language, free compulsory universal and vocational education for all children up to the age of 16, a ban on the employment of children under 16, and reduction of the workday for adolescents aged from 16 to 18 to six hours.

The Second RSDLP Congress was marked by a split between supporters of revolutionary strategy and tactics and an opportunistically-minded part of the delegates. The former obtained a majority of votes in elections to the leading Party bodies and began to be called "Bolsheviks" (from the Russian word "bolshinstvo" meaning "majority"), and their opponents—"Mensheviks" (from the Russian word "menshinstvo" meaning "minority"). From 1917 the Party was officially called the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolsheviks) (RSDLP), and after the Seventh Congress in 1918—the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks) (RCP/B/), after the 14th Congress in 1925—the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks), and since the 19th Congress in 1952—the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU).

3. Lenin wrote the article "New Tasks and New Forces" at the beginning of the 1905-1907 revolution. In it he further considered the question of the tactics of the Bolshevik Party in the first Russian revolution. Organisational work among young people, their rallying around the Party, the drawing of young people into effective Party activity—these were, in Lenin's view, the demands put forth by the course of revolutionary events.

4. The pamphlet "The Driving Forces and Prospects of the Russian Revolution" by Karl Kautsky (1854-1938), one of the leaders of the German Social-Democrats, was published in a Russian translation, which was edited and had an introduction by Lenin. In this work Kautsky, who at the time adhered to Marxist views, essentially agreed with Lenin's evaluation of the character and the driving forces of the first Russian revolution.

Later Kautsky gravitated towards social reformism; he became an ideologist of centrism, accepting some propositions of Marxism, but rejecting the ideas of revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Kautsky was hostile to Bolshevism and Soviet power. Lenin spoke well of his theoretical works of prewar years (before 1914), but was highly critical of his later political and ideological activity.

5. The International Socialist Congress in Stuttgart (1907) considered the following questions: (1) militarism and international conflicts; (2) relations between political parties and trade unions; and (3) the colonial question. The Congress "decided these issues in the spirit of revolutionary Marxism" (V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 13, p. 81). The draft resolution "Militarism and International Conflicts" was adopted with Lenin's amendments. An important addition to the draft was the thesis about the anti-militarist activity of the Social-Democratic parties among working-class youth. It considered it a duty of the international Social-Democrats "to act in such a way as to educate working-class youth in the spirit of socialism and an awareness of the brotherhood of nations" (V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 41, p. 200). The Congress resolution on the question "Militarism and International Conflicts" in Lenin's version became a programme of struggle waged by the international proletariat against imperialism and the war being prepared by it.

6. Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), an outstanding figure in the Polish and German Left-wing Social-Democratic movement, was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Germany. Despite some of her theoretical mistakes, Lenin regarded her as a noted ideologist of the German Communist Party. She was killed by counter-revolutionaries during the suppression of the German revolution.

7. Lenin wrote the article "The Student Movement and the Present Political Situation" in the period of reaction which followed the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia. It was in response to a letter by one of the leaders of the student movement which emerged in the autumn of 1908. The mass student movement at the time was called forth by the reactionary policy of the Minister of Public Education who declared a campaign against progressive-minded students.

8. Autocracy—a monarchic form of government in Russia. The autocracy had existed right up to the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917.

9. Lenin was referring to the period after the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907.

10. *Pravda*, the legal Bolshevik newspaper founded on May 5, 1912. It was published with money contributed by workers; it had a circulation of up to 40,000 copies; some issues were put out in a printing of 60,000

copies. Lenin supervised the publication of the newspaper. *Pravda* had rallied together, said Lenin, four-fifths of the politically-conscious workers of Russia, who later took an active part in the October Revolution of 1917.

11. Liquidators (liquidationism) emerged in the ranks of the RSDLP members after the defeat of the first Russian revolution of 1905-1907. Liquidators rejected the class struggle of the proletariat and its leading role in the revolution, advocated the abolition of the revolutionary party of the working class and dissociated themselves from the revolutionary programme and revolutionary slogans of the Party.

12. The International League of Socialist Youth Organisations, usually referred to as the Youth International, was set up in 1907 at an international conference of proletarian youth organisations in Stuttgart. It had practically ceased to function at the beginning of the First World War (1914), but resumed its activity at a conference of socialist youth unions in Berne (Switzerland) in 1915. The conference denounced the imperialist war and decided to publish a magazine *The Youth International* and to hold on the first Sunday of September each year an International Youth Day. (It was held from 1915 to 1945. Since 1945 it has been renamed World Youth Day.)

Lenin welcomed the publication of the magazine and noted the correct assessment by it of the First World War (1914-1918) unleashed by two groups of imperialist powers hostile to each other.

In his article "The Youth International" Lenin defined the ideological and political as well as organisational principles of the proletarian youth movement.

13. In his article "Advice of an Onlooker" Lenin outlined the plan of the October uprising (1917). The Bolshevik Party assigned an important role to working-class youth in the forthcoming revolution. Young people took an active part in the preparations for and the actual carrying out of the revolution.

During the first Russian revolution from one-third to one-half of the armed groups fighting the autocracy consisted of young people from 16 to 22 years of age. Young people also made up a considerable part of the Party activists during the period of reaction that followed the defeat of the 1905 revolution. Seventy-eight per cent of the Bolshevik Party members who joined the revolutionary struggle at the time were under 21.

Young people played a major role in the February bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1917 which overthrew the autocracy: they supported the course adopted by the Bolshevik Party for the struggle for socialism. It was logical that the Sixth RSDLP Congress, which proclaimed a course for revolution, regarded the setting up of socialist youth leagues as an urgent task.

Young people fought heroically in the ranks of the Red Guard during the October Revolution of 1917 and during the defence of Soviet power. Fifty-four per cent of the Red Guard soldiers who upheld the gains of the October Revolution were young men and women under 24 years of age. The October Revolution was a revolution of workers, peasants and soldiers. But it can also be called a revolution of working-class and peasant youths.

14. The Council of People's Commissars (CPC)—the first Soviet government. It was headed by Lenin.

15. The Commissariat (Ministry) of Public Education. The first People's Commissar of Education was Anatoli Lunacharsky (1875-1933), a prominent Bolshevik.

16. The First All-Russia Congress on Education (1918) was held in Moscow. Delegates from public education departments, teachers and staff members of cultural and educational institutions attended the Congress. It elected Lenin its Honorary Chairman inviting him to attend its sessions.

The Congress discussed a draft statute "On Uniform Labour School" which further developed Lenin's ideas about preparing the younger generation for productive labour and bringing up conscious builders of a new society.

17. A government decree "On Uniting Educational Institutions of All Departments under the People's Commissariat of Education" (1918), laid foundation for setting up a state system of public education. The Constitution of the Russian Federation—the RSFSR—(1918), the first Soviet Constitution, legally fixed the working people's right to complete, all-round and free education.

Even during the most difficult period the Soviet state earmarked huge sums for public education. In the first year after the victory of the October Revolution, the Council of People's Commissars allocated 18 times more money for public education than the tsarist government did in the last year of its rule.

The young state was faced with the problem of teaching tens of millions of people to read and write and creating alphabets for non-Russian nationalities that had no written languages. Under the Decree of the Council of People's Commissars "On the Eradication of Illiteracy among the Population of the RSFSR" (1919), which was signed by Lenin, all citizens aged between 8 and 50 who could not read or write had to learn their ABCs either in their native language or in the Russian language, according to their wish. The purpose here was to enable the population of the Republic to take part in the country's political life. Almost the entire population started learning to read, write and count.

18. Lenin was referring to the First World War unleashed by the imperialists in 1914.

19. The Soviets were formed as a result of the revolutionary activity of the popular masses during the 1905-1907 revolution in Russia. As the bodies that directed the strike movement they had the complete trust of the people, fully expressed their vital interests and were able to lead the armed struggle of the proletariat and peasantry against the autocracy. In the February revolution (1917) the Soviets, which were mass political elected organisations, were the bodies of revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and peasantry against the autocracy. After the triumph of the Great October Socialist Revolution in 1917 the Soviets became bodies of state authority in the country.

20. Here Lenin was speaking of that part of the intelligentsia whose representatives, owing to the type of work they did and their living standards, were closer to the bourgeoisie. They were hostile to the October Revolution and sabotaged measures of the Soviet government.

The democratically-minded intelligentsia sided with the people and continued to work for the benefit of Russia which had now become Soviet.

The problem of personnel for the building up a new society could not be solved only through enlisting old-time specialists. The country needed to train new specialists for the economic and cultural development from among the working class and working peasantry. It was necessary to give a higher education to working-class and peasant youths. That was the principal trend in creating a new intelligentsia.

To prepare young workers and peasants for entering institutions of higher learning, on the initiative of the working people themselves, the so-called workers' faculties were opened at institutes and universities. Not only young men and women, but adults, too, who had already worked in industry or agriculture, enrolled in these faculties. Within three or four years they completed the main part of a secondary school curriculum.

Anatoli Lunacharsky called these faculties "ladders" which enabled workers and peasants to reach the summits of knowledge. They functioned from 1919 to 1940 during which period they prepared 2,327,000 people for enrolment in institutions of higher learning.

21. The All-Russia Central Executive Committee (ARCEC) was the highest executive body of the Soviets after October 1917. Upon the formation of the USSR (1922), the All-Union Central Executive Committee (AUCEC) was set up. Since 1936, when the first USSR Constitution was adopted, the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet has been the country's highest body of state authority.

22. The draft of the Second Party Programme was endorsed at the 8th Congress of the RCP(B) in 1919. The new Party Programme defined the tasks of the construction of socialist society.

23. The proclamation of a socialist republic after the October uprising was met with stubborn resistance on the part of counter-revolutionary forces which began to organise rebellions and armed clashes. Numerous military units were set up consisting mostly of former tsarist army officers. Russia's western regions were seized by the German army, and in 1918 the Entente countries (Britain, France, Japan and the USA) launched an armed intervention against the Soviet republic—in the North, in the Far East and along the Black and Caspian sea coasts of Russia. The internal and external counter-revolutionary forces were defeated as a result of the heroic efforts of the working people led by the Communist Party. In historical literature the years 1918-1920 were usually given as the period of civil war and foreign intervention, although the elimination of the last seats of internal and external counter-revolutionary forces was completed only in 1921-1922.

Lenin wrote the "Theses of the CC RCP/B/" in April 1919. The Central Committee appealed to all Party organisations and to all trade unions "to set to work in a revolutionary way" (V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 29, p. 278), and mobilise all forces for the struggle against the counter-revolutionary forces which had launched a new attack on the Republic of Soviets.

In response to that appeal, in May 1919 the Central Committee of the Russian Young Communist League (see No. 26) announced the first all-Russia mobilisation of Komsomol members for the Eastern Front. About 10,000 of them were sent to that front.

All in all, 200,000 Komsomol members were fighting at various fronts of the Civil War.

24. Gubernia—a main administrative division in Russia which continued to exist for some time after the October Revolution.

25. Food detachments (1918-1921) were formed to help the village poor and suppress counter-revolutionary actions of the rural rich (kulaks), as well as to organise bread supplies for towns and cities gripped by famine.

26. At this Congress a decision was taken to accept students who were united in separate communist groups into the Young Communist League. Under a regulation endorsed on May 11, 1919 by the Central Committee of the RCP(B), work among young workers and peasants as well as students was entrusted to the Russian Young Communist League.

The YCL was formed at the First All-Russia Congress of Working-Class and Peasant Youths Leagues (1918). The Congress delegates represented 22,000 members of the leagues. The Congress agenda included a report on current developments; Programme and Rules of the League; the international youth movement; cultural and educational work, and so on.

Lenin paid considerable attention to the work of the Congress and received its delegates. He returned to the questions touched on during his talk with the delegates in his speech "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues" at the Third Congress of the Russian Young Communist League (1920).

27. The All-Russia Central Council of Trade Unions (ARCCTU).

28. *Nasha Smena* (Our Younger Generation)—the first Komsomol newspaper, organ of the Petrograd Committee of the Russian Young Communist League. The first issue of the paper was published on December 18, 1919, and carried a message of greetings from Lenin addressed to young people of the Petrograd Gubernia on the occasion of "Youth Week" (called then "Red Week"), whose aim was to draw as many young workers and peasants as possible into social work, and their best representatives into the Komsomol.

29. The Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League was held in Moscow between October 2 and 10, 1920. The Congress was attended by about 600 delegates—workers, peasants, Red Army soldiers, office employees and students. Among the delegates there were none older than 23, and 27 of them had barely reached 17. Lenin spoke at the Congress. He devoted his speech to the tasks of building a new society and the role of young people in their implementation.

30. Lenin was deeply interested in the idea of the electrification of the country. He once said: "Communism is Soviet power plus the electrification of the entire country" (V. I. Lenin. *Coll. Works*, Vol. 31, p. 516).

The plan of the country's electrification was the first scientific long-term Soviet economic development plan, which was drawn up at Lenin's initiative and under his guidance. That plan was endorsed at the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets in 1920. It envisaged the construction of 30 district electric power stations with a total capacity of 1.5 million kilowatts, which would help industrialise the main economic regions of the country and prepare the ground for uniting individual farms into cooperatives. Lenin assigned young people a major role in the carrying

out of the plan of Soviet Russia's electrification. The plan was fulfilled ahead of schedule.

31. Communist *subbotniks*—a mass movement of the working people who do voluntary work during free time for the benefit of society. The first *subbotnik* was held on April 19, 1919, at the height of the young Soviet Republic's struggle against the combined forces of internal counter-revolutionaries and interventionists. On that day workers of the Moscow Railway Line, in their spare time, repaired several steam locomotives on a voluntary basis.

On June 21, 1919, Komsomol members of Petrograd held a communist *subbotnik*, and on September 14 the Moscow Komsomol had a *subbotnik*. As part of the preparations for the May 1 All-Russia *subbotnik* (1920) the Moscow Committee of the Russian Young Communist League issued an appeal "To Young Proletarians". It said in part: "May 1 will be our first attack on economic devastation. Young Guard, take up the hammer!... Prove to your elder comrades that an army of the young is coming to help the older generation."

Communists and Komsomol members were in the front ranks of *subbotnik* participants. Lenin also took part in the *subbotnik*.

On September 4, 1920, the first country-wide *subbotnik* of young people was held.

Lenin called the *subbotniks* a great beginning, a new attitude to labour displayed by workers and peasants freed from exploitation. Today, every year on the eve of Lenin's birthday (April 22) or on that day, an All-Union Communist *Subbotnik* is held and the money earned is used for carrying out major social projects.

32. The Third Congress of the Young Communist International CYI was held in Moscow in December 1922. It was attended by delegates from 38 youth organisations of various countries. The Congress considered the following tasks facing the youth movement: assistance to the Communist Parties engaged in the struggle against the forces of reaction and fascism; struggle against the war danger; the turning of Young Communist Leagues into mass organisations of working-class youth and the elaboration of tactics for a united front, and raising the level of educational and theoretical work in the youth leagues.

The activities of the CYI (1919-1943) constituted an important stage in the history of the international youth movement. This organisation did much to rally progressive-minded young people in the struggle against imperialism and fascism, and to strengthen youth leagues ideologically and organisationally. Several generations of young people had taken part in the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress as members of this international organisation.

ЛЕНИН О МОЛОДЕЖИ  
на английском языке  
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