LENIN and GUEVARA on YOUTH
This booklet is based on Volume Twenty One of the little Lenin library, first published, May 1940
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The rising tide of revolutionary enthusiasm among the Moscow proletariat, so vividly expressed in the political strike and in the street fighting, has not yet subsided. The strike continues. It has to some extent spread to St. Petersburg, where the compositors are striking in sympathy with their Moscow comrades. It is still uncertain whether the present movement will subside and await the next rise of the tide, or whether it will be of a sustained character. But certain results of the Moscow events, and very instructive ones at that, are already apparent, and it would be worth while to dwell on them.

On the whole, the movement in Moscow did not attain the pitch of a decisive battle between the revolutionary workers and the tsarist forces. It consisted only of small skirmishes at the outposts, part perhaps of a military demonstration in the civil war, but it was not one of those battles that determine the outcome of a war. Of the two suppositions we advanced a week ago, it is apparently the first that is being justified, namely, that what we are witnessing is not the beginning of the decisive onslaught, but only a rehearsal. This rehearsal has nevertheless fully revealed all the characters in the historical drama, thus spotlighting the probable—and in part even inevitable—development of the drama itself.

The Moscow events were inaugurated by incidents which at first glance appear to have been of a purely academic character. The government conferred partial “autonomy”, or alleged autonomy, on the universities. The professorate were granted self-government, and the students were granted the right of assembly. Thus a small breach was forced in the general system of autocratic-feudal oppression.
New revolutionary currents immediately swept into this breach with unexpected force. A miserable concession, a paltry reform, granted with the object of blunting the edge of the political antagonisms and of “reconciling” robbers and robbed, actually served to stimulate the struggle tremendously, and increase the number of its participants. Workers flocked to the students’ gatherings, which began to develop into popular revolutionary meetings, where the proletariat, the foremost class in the struggle for liberty, predominated. The government was outraged. The “respectable” liberals who had received professorial self-government began to scurry back and forth between the revolutionary students and the government of police rule and the knout. The liberals made use of liberty in order to betray liberty, restrain the students from extending and intensifying the struggle, and appeal for “order”—this in the face of the bashi-bazouks and Black Hundreds, the Trepovs and the Romanovs!

The liberals made use of self-government so as to do the work of the butchers of the people, and to close the University, that holy sanctuary of “science” permitted by the knout-wielders, which the students defiled by allowing the “rabble” to enter it for discussion of questions “unauthorised” by the autocratic gang. The self-governing liberals betrayed the people and liberty, because they feared carnage in the University. They were punished in exemplary fashion for their contemptible cowardice. By closing the revolutionary University they opened the way to revolution in the streets. Wretched pedants that they are, they were ready to jubilate in concert with rascals like Glazov over the fact that they had managed to extinguish the conflagration in the school. But as a matter of fact they only started a conflagration in a huge industrial city. These manikins on stilts forbade the workers to go to the students, but they only drove the students to the revolutionary workers. They appraised all political matters from the standpoint of their own chicken coop, which reeks of age-old hidebound officialism. They implored the students to spare this chicken coop. The first fresh breeze—the manifestation of the free and youthful revolutionary elements—was enough for the chicken coop to be forgotten, for the breeze freshened and grew into a blast against the tsarist autocracy, the prime source of all officialism and all the humiliations heaped upon the Russian people.
And even now, when the first danger has passed and the storm has clearly subsided, the lackeys of the autocracy still quake at the mere recollection of the chasm that yawned before them during the days of bloodshed in Moscow. “It is not yet a conflagration, but that it is arson is already beyond question,” mutters Mr. Menshikov in the servile Novoye Vremya (of September 30). “It is not yet a revolution... but it is already the prologue to a revolution.” “‘It is on the move,’ I [Mr. Menshikov] argued in April. And what frightful strides ‘it’ has since made! The popular element has been stirred to its very depths....”

Yes, the Trepovs and the Romanovs, together with the treacherous liberal bourgeoisie, have got themselves into a predicament. Open the University—and you provide a platform for popular revolutionary meetings, and render invaluable service to the Social-Democrats. Close the University down—and you open the way for a street struggle. And so our knights of the knout dash to and fro, gnashing their teeth. They reopen Moscow University, pretending that they want to allow the students to maintain order themselves during street processions; they turn a blind eye to revolutionary self-government of the students, who are dividing into Social-Democrats, Socialist-Revolutionaries, etc., thus bringing about proper political representation in the student “parliament” (and, we are confident, will not confine themselves to revolutionary self-government, but will immediately and in dead earnest set about organising and equipping contingents of a revolutionary army). Together with Trepov, the liberal professors are dashing to and fro, hastening one day to persuade the students to be more moderate, and the next day to persuade the knout-wielders to be more lenient. The scurryings of both of these give us the greatest satisfaction; they show that a fine revolutionary breeze must be blowing if the political-commanders and the political turncoats are staggering about on the upper deck in such a lively manner.

But besides legitimate pride and legitimate satisfaction, true revolutionists must derive something else from the Moscow events—an understanding of the social forces operating in the Russian revolution and just how they operate, and a clearer idea of the forms they take when they operate.
Call to mind the political sequence of the Moscow events, and you will see a remarkably typical picture of the whole revolution, one that is characteristic of the class relationships. Here is the sequence: a small breach is forced in the old order; the government tries to mend the breach with petty concessions, illusory “reforms”, etc.; instead of calming down, the struggle becomes even more acute and widespread; the liberal bourgeoisie wavers and dashes from one thing to another, urging the revolutionists to desist from revolution, and the police to desist from reaction; headed by the proletariat, the revolutionary people arrive on the scene, and the open struggle gives rise to a new political situation; the conflict shifts to the newly won battlefield—a more elevated and broader field—a new breach is made in the enemy strongholds, and in that way the movement proceeds to an ever higher plane. A general retreat on the part of the government is taking place before our eyes, as Moskovskie Vedomosti aptly remarked recently. A certain liberal newspaper[1] rather cleverly added: a retreat under cover of rearguard action. On October 3 (16) the St. Petersburg correspondent of the liberal Berlin Vossische Zeitung wired to his paper about his interview with Trepov’s chef de cabinet. As the police underling told the correspondent: “You cannot expect the government to follow a consistent plan of action, since every day brings with it events that could not have been foreseen. The government is obliged to manoeuvre. Force cannot crush the present movement which may last for two months or two years.

Indeed the government’s tactics have now become quite clear. They indubitably lie in manoeuvring and retreating under cover of rearguard action. Such tactics are quite correct from the standpoint of the autocracy’s interests. It would be a grievous error and a fatal illusion for revolutionists to forget that the government can still continue to retreat for a very long time to come, without losing what is most essential. The example of the abortive, unfinished semi-revolution in Germany, in 1848—an example to which we shall return in the next issue of Proletary, and which we shall never tire of recalling—shows that even if it retreats so far as to convoke a (nominally) constituent assembly, the government will still retain sufficient strength to defeat the revolution in the final and decisive battle.
That is why, in studying the Moscow events, the most recent in a long series of conflicts in our civil war, we must soberly consider the developments, prepare with the maximum of energy and persistence for a long and desperate war, and be on our guard against such allies that are already turncoat allies. When absolutely nothing decisive has as yet been won, when the enemy still has an enormous area for further advantageous and safe retreats, when battles are becoming ever more serious—confidence in such allies, attempts to conclude agreements with them or simply to support them on certain conditions may prove not only stupid but even treacherous to the proletariat.

Indeed, was the liberal professors’ behaviour before and during the Moscow events fortuitous? Was it an exception, or is it the rule for the entire Constitutional-Democratic Party? Does this behaviour express the individual peculiarities of a given group of the liberal bourgeoisie, or does it express the fundamental interests of this entire class in general? Among socialists there can be no two opinions on these questions, but not all socialists know how to consistently pursue genuinely socialist tactics.

For a clearer understanding of the gist of the matter, let us take the liberals’ own exposition of their tactics. They avoid coming out against the Social-Democrats or even speaking directly about them in the columns of the Russian press. But here is an interesting report in the Berlin Vossische Zeitung, which undoubtedly is more outspoken in its expression of the liberals’ views:

"Extremely stormy student disturbances have reoccurred both in St. Petersburg and in Moscow since the very beginning of the academic year, although autonomy has been granted—belatedly, it is true—to the universities and other higher educational institutions. Moreover, in Moscow these disturbances are accompanied by a wide spread workers’ movement. These disturbances indicate that a new phase has begun in the Russian revolutionary movement. The course of the student meetings and their resolutions show that the students have adopted the watchword of the Social-Democratic leaders to convert the universities into popular meeting places, and thus spread revolution among wide sections of the population."
The Moscow students have already shown how this is being put into effect: they invited to the University premises such large numbers of workers and other persons who have no connection with the University that the students themselves were in a minority. It stands to reason that such a state of affairs cannot go on for long under the existing conditions. The government will close the universities rather than tolerate such meetings. This is so obvious that at first glance it appears inconceivable that the Social-Democratic leaders could have issued such a watchword. They knew perfectly well what this would lead to, but what they wanted was for the government to close the universities. For what purpose? Simply because they intend to hinder the liberal movement by all available means. They admit that they are not strong enough to effect any major political action with their own forces; therefore the liberals and radicals must not do anything either, for that would allegedly only harm the socialist proletariat. The latter must win its rights for itself. The Russian Social-Democratic Party may take great pride in these 'inflexible' (unbeugsame) tactics, but they will scarcely lead Russian Social-Democracy to victories. It is quite incomprehensible what it will gain by the closing of the universities, which is inevitable if the present tactics continue. On the other hand, it is of the utmost importance to all progressive parties that there should be no interruption in the work of the universities and higher schools. The protracted strikes of students and professors have already caused great damage to Russian culture. It is imperative that academic work be resumed. Autonomy has enabled the professors to conduct their classes freely. That is why the professors of all universities and higher schools are agreed that it is necessary to start tuition once more and in energetic fashion. They are exerting all their influence to persuade the students to abandon their efforts to give effect to the Social-Democratic watchword."

Thus, the struggle between bourgeois liberalism (the Constitutional-Democrats) and the Social-Democrats has taken definite shape. Do not hinder the liberal movement! Such is the slogan so splendidly expressed in the article quoted above. What does this liberal movement amount to?
It is a retrograde movement, for the professors use and desire to use the freedom of the universities not for revolutionary propaganda, but for counter-revolutionary propaganda; not to fan the conflagration, but to extinguish it; not to extend the field of battle, but to draw the masses away from decisive struggle and induce them to collaborate peacefully with the Trepovs. With the struggle becoming more acute, the “liberal” movement (as we have seen in practice) has become marked by desertion from revolution to reaction. Of course, the liberals are, in a way, useful to us, since they introduce vacillation into the ranks of the Trepovs and other lackeys of Romanov. This good, however, will be outweighed by the harm they cause by bringing vacillation into our ranks, unless we make a clean break with the Constitutional-Democrats, and brand every hesitant step they take. Their knowledge, or, more frequently, their sense of their dominant position in the existing economic system has led the liberals to aspire to dominate the revolution as well. They say that each step aimed at continuing, extending and intensifying the revolution and taking it farther than the most ordinary patchwork is a “hindrance” to the liberal movement. Fearful for the fate of the so-called freedom of the universities granted by Trepov, they are today fighting against revolutionary freedom. Fearful for the legal “freedom of assembly” which the government will grant tomorrow in a police-distorted form, they will hold us back from using these assemblies for genuinely proletarian aims. Fearful for the fate of the State Duma, they already displayed wise moderation at the September Congress, and continue to display it now by combating the idea of a boycott; why, they say, you must not hinder us from getting things done in the State Duma!

It must be confessed that, to the shame of Social-Democracy, there have been opportunists in its ranks who fell for this bait by reason of their doctrinaire and lifeless distortion of Marxism! They argue that the revolution is a bourgeois one and therefore ... therefore we must retrace our steps in the measure the bourgeoisie succeeds in obtaining concessions from tsarism. To this day the new Iskrists have not seen the real significance of the State Duma, because they are themselves drawing back and therefore naturally do not notice the Constitutional-Democrats’ regression. That the Iskrists have already retraced their steps since the promulgation of the State Duma Act is an indisputable fact.
Prior to the State Duma Act they never thought of placing the question of an agreement with the Constitutional-Democrats on the order of the day. After the State Duma Act they (Parvus, Cherevanin and Martov) raised this question, and not merely as a matter of theory, but in an immediately practical form. Prior to the State Duma Act they presented quite stringent conditions to the democrats (right up to co-operation in arming the people, etc.). After the State Duma Act they immediately reduced the conditions, confining themselves to a promise to convert the Black-Hundred or the liberal Duma into a revolutionary one. Prior to the State Duma Act the reply their official resolution gave to the question as to who should convocate the popular constituent assembly was: either, a provisional revolutionary government or a representative institution. After the State Duma Act they deleted the provisional revolutionary government, and they now say: either “democratic” (like the Constitutional-Democrats?) “organisations of the people” (?), or ... or the State Duma. We thus see in fact how the new-Iskrists are guided by their magnificent principle: the revolution is a bourgeois revolution—therefore, comrades, watch out lest the bourgeoisie recoil!

The Moscow events, which for the first time since the State Duma Act have shown the real nature of the Constitutional-Democrats’ tactics at grave political junctures, have also shown that Social-Democracy’s opportunist appendage, which we have described, is inevitably being transformed into a mere appendage to the bourgeoisie. We have just said: a Black-Hundred or a liberal State Duma. To an Iskra supporter these words would appear monstrous, for he considers distinction between a Black-Hundred State Duma and a liberal State Duma highly important. But these selfsame Moscow events have disclosed the fallaciousness of this “parliamentary” idea, which had been so inappropriately advanced in a pre-parliamentary period. The Moscow events have shown that the liberal turncoat has actually played the part of a Trepov. The closing of the University, which would have been decreed by Trepov yesterday, has been carried out today by Messrs. Manuilov and Trubetskoi. Is it not clear that the “Duma” liberals will also scurry back and forth between Trepov and Romanov, on the one hand, and the revolutionary people on the other? Is it not clear that the slightest support for liberal turncoats is something befitting only political simpletons?
Under a parliamentary system it is often necessary to support a more liberal party against a less liberal one. But during a revolutionary struggle for a parliamentary system it is treachery to support liberal turncoats who are “reconciling” Trepov with the revolution.

The events in Moscow have revealed in practice the alignment of social forces that Proletary has spoken of so many times: the socialist proletariat and the vanguard of revolutionary bourgeois democracy have waged a struggle, while the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie has conducted negotiations. Therefore, fellow-workers, study the lessons of the Moscow events, and do so most attentively. For it is in this way, and inevitably so, that matters will take their course throughout the whole of the Russian revolution. We must rally more solidly than ever in a genuinely socialist party, which shall consciously express the interests of the working class, and not drift along in the wake of the masses. In the struggle we must place reliance only on revolutionary democrats, permit agreements with them alone, and carry out these agreements only on the field of battle against the Trepovs and Romanov. We must bend every effort to rouse, in addition to the students, who are the vanguard of revolutionary democracy, also those broad masses of the people whose movement is not only democratic in a general way (today every turncoat calls himself a democrat), but a genuinely revolutionary movement—namely, the masses of the peasantry. We must remember that the liberals and Constitutional-Democrats, who are bringing vacillation into the ranks of supporters of the autocracy, will inevitably strive in every way to bring vacillation into our ranks as well. Only an open revolutionary struggle which consigns all liberal chicken coops and all liberal Dumas to the rubbish heap will be of serious and decisive consequence. Therefore, prepare for ever new battles, without losing a single moment! Arm as best you can; immediately form squads of fighters who will be prepared to battle with devoted energy against the accursed autocracy; remember that tomorrow or the following day events will certainly call you to rise in revolt, and the question now is only whether you will be able to take prepared and united action, or whether you will be caught off your guard and disunited!
The events in Moscow have once again and for the hundredth time confuted the sceptics. They have shown that we are still inclined to underestimate the revolutionary activity of the masses. They will bring round many of those who have already begun to waver, who have begun to lose faith in the idea of an uprising after the conclusion of peace and the granting of a Duma. No, it is precisely now that the uprising is gaining ground and increasing in intensity with unparalleled rapidity. Let us all be at our posts when the imminent explosion comes, one in comparison with which both January 9 and the memorable Odessa days will seem mere child’s play.

Notes

[1] The reference is to the liberal-bourgeois newspaper Rus which came out at intervals in St. Petersburg between 1903 and 1908 under various names, such as Bus (Russia), Molva (Hearsay), and Dvadtsaty Vek (The Twentieth Century).
A students’ strike has been called at St. Petersburg University. A number of other higher education establishments have joined in. The movement has already spread to Moscow and Kharkov. Judging from all the reports in the foreign and Russian newspapers and in private letters from Russia, we are faced with a fairly broad academic movement.

Back to the old days! Back to pre-revolutionary Russia! That is what these events signify above all. As before, official reaction is tightening the screw in the universities. The eternal struggle in autocratic Russia against the student organisations has taken the form of a crusade by the Black-Hundred Minister Schwartz—acting in full agreement with “Premier” Stolypin—against the autonomy which was promised the students in the autumn of 1905 (what did not the autocracy, faced with the onset of the revolutionary working class, “promise” Russian citizens at that time!); against an autonomy which the students enjoyed so long as the autocracy had “other things to think of than students”, and which the autocracy, if it was to remain such, could not but begin to take away.

As before, the liberal press laments and groans, this time together with some Octobrists—the professors lament and snivel too, imploring the government not to take the road of reaction and to make use of an excellent opportunity “to ensure peace and order with the help of reforms” in “a country exhausted by convulsions”—imploring the students not to resort to unlawful courses which can only play into the hands of reaction, etc., etc., etc. How ancient and antiquated, how hackneyed are all these tunes, and how vividly they resurrect before our eyes what took place
twenty years ago or so, at the end of the eighties of last century! The similarity between that time and this is all the more striking when we take the present moment by itself, apart from the three years of revolution we have gone through. For the Duma (at first sight) with only the tiniest difference expresses that same pre-revolutionary relation of forces—the supremacy of the wild landlord, who prefers using Court connections and the influence of his friend the official to any kind of representation; the support of that same official by the merchants (the Octobrists) who do not dare to differ from their benevolent patrons; the “opposition” of the bourgeois intellectuals who are concerned most of all to prove their loyalty, and who describe appeals to those in power as the political activity of liberalism. And the workers’ deputies in the Duma recall feebly, far too feebly, the part which the proletariat was recently playing by its open mass struggle.

It may be asked, can we in such conditions attribute any importance to the old forms of primitive academic struggle of the students? If the liberals have sunk to the level of the “politics” of the eighties (one can of course only in irony speak of politics in this connection), will it not be a debasement of the aims of Social-Democracy if it decides that it is necessary to support the academic struggle in some way or other?

Here and there, apparently, Social-Democratic students are putting this question. At any rate, our editorial board has received a letter from a group of Social-Democratic students which says, among other things:

“On September 13 a meeting of the students of St. Petersburg University resolved to call upon students for an all-Russian student strike, the reason given for this appeal being the aggressive tactics pursued by Schwartz. The platform of the strike is an academic one, and the meeting even welcomes the ‘first steps’ of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Professorial Councils in the struggle for autonomy. We are puzzled by the academic platform put forward at the St. Petersburg meeting, and consider it objectionable in present conditions, because it cannot unite the students for an active struggle on a broad front. We envisage student action only as one co-ordinated with general political action, and in no case apart from it. The elements capable of uniting the students are lacking. In view of this we are against academic action.”
The mistake which the authors of the letter are making is of much greater political importance than may appear at first sight, because their argument, strictly speaking, touches upon a theme which is incomparably more broad and important than the question of taking part in this particular strike.

“We envisage student action only as one co-ordinated with general political action. In view of this we are against academic action.”

Such an argument is radically wrong. The revolutionary slogan—to work towards co-ordinated political action of the students and the proletariat, etc.—here ceases to be a live guidance for many-sided militant agitation on a broadening basis and becomes a lifeless dogma, mechanically applied to different stages of different forms of the movement. It is not sufficient merely to proclaim political co-ordinated action, repeating the “last word” in lessons of the revolution. 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. 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 phrase-mongering.

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, who have more or less become accustomed to a narrow
measure of autonomy; and this movement is beginning when other forms of mass struggle are lacking at the present time, when a lull has set in, 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. Like every other support of primitive forms of movement by Social-Democracy, 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, and have been educated in a spirit of narrow academic autonomism, educated not only by the professors of the Establishment and the government press but also by the liberal professors and the whole Cadet Party. 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 calling for the overthrow of the autocracy and the convocation of a constituent assembly should 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.

The appeal we print below from the St. Petersburg Joint Student Council shows that even the most active elements of the students obstinately cling to pure academic aims, and still sing the Cadet-Octobrist tune. And this at a time when the Cadet-Octobrist press is behaving in the most disgusting fashion towards the strike, trying to prove at the very height of the struggle that it is harmful, criminal, etc. We cannot but welcome the rejoinder which the St. Petersburg Committee of our Party found it necessary to give the Joint Council (see “From the Party”[2])

Evidently the whips of Schwartz are not enough as yet to change the present-day students from “academics” into “politicians”; they need the scorpions of more and more Black-Hundred sergeant-majors to give a full revolutionary training to new cadres. These cadres, trained by all Stolypin’s policy, trained by every step of the counter-revolution, require the constant attention of ourselves, the Social-Democrats, who clearly see the objective inevitability of further bourgeois-democratic conflicts on a national scale with the autocracy, which has joined forces with the Black-Hundred Octobrist Duma.

Yes, on a national scale, for the Black-Hundred counter revolution, which is turning Russia backward, is not only tempering new fighters in the ranks of the revolutionary proletariat, but will inevitably arouse a new movement of the non-proletarian, i.e., bourgeois democrats (thereby implying, of course, not that all the opposition will take part in the struggle, but that there will be a wide participation of truly democratic elements of the bourgeoisie and petty bourgeoisie, i.e., those capable of struggle).
The beginning of a mass student struggle in the Russia of 1908 is a political symptom, a symptom of the whole present situation brought about by the counter-revolution. Thousands and millions of threads tie the student youth with the middle and lower bourgeoisie, the petty officials, certain groups of the peasantry, the clergy, etc. If in the spring of 1908 attempts were being made to resurrect the “Osvobozhdeniye League”, slightly to the left of the old Cadet semi-landlord union represented by Pyotr Struve; if in the autumn the mass of youth which is closest of all to the democratic bourgeoisie in Russia is beginning to be disturbed; if the hireling hacks, with malice tenfold, have started howling once more against revolution in the schools; if base liberal professors and Cadet leaders are groaning and wailing at the untimely, dangerous, disastrous strikes which displease those dear Octobrists, which are capable of “repelling” the Octobrists who hold power—that means new powder has begun to accumulate in the powder-flask, it means that not only among students is the reaction against reaction beginning!

And however weak and embryonic this beginning may be, the party of the working class must make use of it and will do so. We were able to work years and decades before the revolution, carrying our revolutionary slogans first into the study circles, then among the masses of the workers, then on to the streets, then on to the barricades. 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 political 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.

The proletariat will not be behindhand. It often yields the palm to the bourgeois democrats in speeches at banquets, in legal unions, within the walls of universities, from the rostrum of representative institutions. It never yields the palm, and will not do so, in the serious and great revolutionary struggle of the masses. All the conditions for bringing this struggle to a head are not ripening as quickly and easily as some of us would hope—but those conditions are ripening and gathering head unswervingly.
And the little beginning of little academic conflicts is a great beginning, for after it—if not today then tomorrow, if not tomorrow then the day after—will follow big continuations.

Notes


[2] This refers to the decision of the St. Petersburg Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. published in “From the Party” column of the newspaper Proletary, No. 36, October 3 (16), 1908. The St. Petersburg Committee called upon the Social-Democratic students’ groups to dissociate themselves from the appeal of the Joint Students’ Council and subordinate the student movement to the aims of Social-Democracy in the nation-wide struggle against tsarism.
The Youth International
A REVIEW

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A German-language publication bearing the above title has been appearing in Switzerland since September 1, 1915. It carries the subtitle: “Militant and Propaganda Organ of the International League of Socialist Youth Organisations”. Altogether six issues have appeared so far. The magazine merits our attention and should be strongly recommended to all Party members in a position to contact foreign Social-Democratic parties and youth organisations.

Most of the official European Social-Democratic parties are advocating the foulest and vilest social-chauvinism and opportunism. This applies to the German and French parties, the Fabian Society and the Labour Party in England, the Swedish, Dutch (Troelstra’s party), Danish, Austrian parties, etc. In the Swiss party, notwithstanding the withdrawal (to the great benefit of the labour movement) of the extreme opportunists, now organised in the non-party “Grütli Verein”, there still remain within the Social-Democratic Party numerous opportunist, social-chauvinist and Kautskyite leaders who exercise tremendous influence on its affairs.

With this state of affairs in Europe, there falls on the League of Socialist Youth Organisations the tremendous, grateful but difficult task of fighting for revolutionary internationalism, for true socialism and against the prevailing opportunism which has deserted to the side of the imperialist bourgeoisie. The Youth International has published a number of good articles in defence of revolutionary inter nationalism, and the magazine as a whole is permeated with a fine spirit of intense hatred for the betrayers of socialism, .
the “defenders of the fatherland” in the present war, and with an earnest desire to wipe out the corroding influence of chauvinism and opportunism in the international labour movement.

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. However, our attitude towards the lack of theoretical clarity on the part of such people must be entirely different from what our attitude is and should be towards the theoretical muddle in the heads, and the lack of revolutionary consistency in the hearts, of our “O.C.-ists”, “Socialist Revolutionaries”,[2] Tolstoyans, anarchists, the European Kautskyites (“Centre”), etc. 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 gradually, 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. For unless they have complete independence, the youth will be unable either to train good socialists from their midst or prepare themselves to lead socialism forward.

We stand for the complete independence of the Youth Leagues, but also for complete freedom of comradely criticism of their errors! We must not flatter the youth.
Of the errors to be noted in this excellent magazine, reference must first of all be made to the following three:

1) The incorrect position on the question of disarmament (or “disarming”), which we criticised in a preceding article.[1] There is reason to believe that this error arises entirely out of the laudable desire to emphasise the need to strive for the “complete destruction of militarism” (which is perfectly correct); but the role of civil wars in the socialist revolution is forgotten.

2) On the question of the differences between socialists and anarchists in their attitude towards the state, Comrade Nota-Bene[3] in his article (issue No. 6) falls into a very serious error (as he also does on several other questions, for instance, our reasons for combating the “defence of the fatherland” slogan). The author wishes to present “a clear picture of the state in general” (together with that of the imperialist predatory state). He quotes several statements by Marx and Engels, and arrives at the following two conclusions, among others:

a) “...It is absolutely wrong to seek the difference between socialists and anarchists in the fact that the former are in favour of the state while the latter are against it. The real difference is that revolutionary Social-Democracy desires to organise social production on new lines, as centralised, i.e., technically the most progressive, method of production, whereas decentralised, anarchist production would mean retrogression to obsolete techniques, to the old form of enterprise.” This is wrong. The author raises the question of the difference in the socialists’ and anarchists’ attitude towards the state. However, he answers not this question, but another, namely, the difference in their attitude towards the economic foundation of future society. That, of course, is an important and necessary question. But that is no reason to ignore the main point of difference between socialists and anarchists in their attitude towards the state. Socialists are in favour of utilising the present state and its institutions in the struggle for the emancipation of the working class, maintaining also that the state should be used for a specific form of transition from capitalism to socialism. This transitional form is the dictatorship of the proletariat, which is also a state.
The anarchists want to “abolish” the state, “blow it up” (sprengen) as Comrade Nota-Bene expresses it in one place, erroneously ascribing this view to the socialists. The socialists—unfortunately the author quotes Engels’s relevant words rather incompletely—hold that the state will “wither away”, will gradually “fall asleep” alter the bourgeoisie has been expropriated.

b) “Social-Democracy, which is, or at least should be, the educator of the masses, must now more than ever emphasise its hostility to the state in principle.... The present war has shown how deeply the state idea has penetrated the souls of workers,” writes Comrade Nota-Bene. In order to “emphasise” our “hostility” to the state “in principle” we must indeed understand it “clearly”, and it is this clarity that our author lacks. His remark about the “state idea” is entirely muddled. It is un-Marxist and un-socialist. The point is not that the “state idea” has clashed with the repudiation of the state, but that opportunist policy (i.e., the opportunist, reformist, bourgeois attitude towards the state) has clashed with revolutionary Social-Democratic policy (i.e., the revolutionary Social-Democratic attitude towards the bourgeois state and towards utilising it against the bourgeoisie to overthrow the bourgeoisie). These are entirely different things. We hope to return to this very important subject in a separate article.[4]

3) The “declaration of principles of the International League of Socialist Youth Organisations”, published in issue No. 6 as the “Secretariat’s draft”, contains not a few inaccuracies, and does not contain the main thing: a clear comparison of the three fundamental trends (social-chauvinism, “Centre” and Left) now contending against each other in the socialist movement of all countries.

We repeat, these errors must be refuted and explained. At the same time we must make every effort to find points of contact and closer relations with youth organisations and help them in every way, but we must find the proper manner of approach to them.

Notes

[1] [PLACEHOLDER FOOTNOTE.] —Lenin
[2] Socialist-Revolutionaries—members of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, a petty-bourgeois party in Russia, which arose at the end of 1901 and beginning of 1902 as a result of the merger of various Narodnik groups and circles. The Socialist-Revolutionaries were oblivious to the class differences between the proletariat and petty proprietors, glossed over the class differentiation and contradictions within the peasantry and negated the leading role of the proletariat in the revolution. The views of the Socialist-Revolutionaries were an eclectic mixture of the ideas of Narodism and revisionism. The Bolshevik Party exposed their attempts to masquerade as socialists, carried out a determined struggle against them for influence over the peasantry, and showed the danger to the working-class movement of their tactics of individual terrorism.

The fact that the peasantry, to which the Socialist-Revolutionaries appealed, was not a homogeneous class determined their political and ideological instability and organisational disunity and their constant waverings between the liberal bourgeoisie and the proletariat. As early as the first Russian revolution (1905–07) the Right wing of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party broke away and formed the legal Trudovik Popular Socialist Party whose outlook was close to that of the Cadets, and the Left wing formed the semi-anarchist League of Maximalists. The majority of Socialist-Revolutionaries adopted a social-chauvinist position during the First World War.

O.C.-ists—See Note No. 31.


[4] Towards the end of 1916 and early in 1917 Lenin devoted much of his time to intensive research on the problem of the state, studying the works of Marx and Engels and other sources. His copious notes, comments and conclusions were recorded in a notebook, the famous Blue Notebook, under the general heading “Marxism and the State”. In a letter to Alexandra Kollontai dated February 4 (17), 1917 he wrote: “I’m working on an article (have already prepared nearly all the material) on the Marxist position on the state.” The article was meant for No. 4 of Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata, and Lenin had apparently drawn up the plan for it. However, the article was not written at the time. The materials collected for it were made the basis of Lenin’s celebrated The State and Revolution, written in the summer of 1917.
The Tasks of the Youth Leagues

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Transcribed: Colin S. Cavell
Speech Delivered At The Third All-Russia Congress of The Russian Young Communist League [1]

(The Congress greets Lenin with a tremendous ovation.)

Comrades, today 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. For it is clear that the generation of working people brought up in capitalist society can, at best, accomplish the task of destroying the foundations of the old, the capitalist way of life, which was built on exploitation. At best it will be able to accomplish the tasks of creating a social system that will help the proletariat and the working classes retain power and lay a firm foundation, which can be built on only by a generation that is starting to work under the new conditions, in a situation in which relations based on the exploitation of man by man no longer exist.

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 training 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 if it really wants to justify the name of communist youth, and how it should be trained so as to be able to complete and 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.

It would be still more dangerous to set about assimilating only communist slogans. Had we not realised this danger in time, and had we not directed all our efforts to averting this danger, the half million or million young men and women who would have called themselves Communists after studying communism in this way would only greatly prejudice the cause of communism.

The question arises: how is all this to be blended for the study of communism? 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 communist 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.

We must bear this in mind when, for example, we talk about proletarian culture.[2] We shall be unable to solve this problem unless we clearly realise that only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the entire development of mankind will enable us to create a proletarian culture. The latter is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society. All these roads have been leading, and will continue to lead up to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, as reshaped by Marx, has shown us what human society must arrive at, shown us the passage to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

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 account of knowledge, nine-tenths of which was useless and one-tenth distorted. 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 are replacing the old drill-sergeant methods practised in bourgeois society, against the will of the majority, with the class-conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, who combine hatred of the old society with a determination, ability and readiness to unite and organise their forces for this struggle so as to forge the wills of millions and hundreds of millions of people -- disunited, and scattered over the territory of a huge country -- into a single will, without which defeat is inevitable. Without this solidarity, without this conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, our cause is hopeless. Without this, we shall be unable to vanquish the capitalists and landowners of the whole world. We shall not even consolidate the foundation, let alone build a new, communist society on that foundation. Likewise, while condemning the old schools, while harbouring an absolutely justified and necessary hatred for the old schools, and appreciating the readiness to destroy them, we must realise that 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 yourself 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. 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.

It was the task of the older generation to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The main task then was to criticise the bourgeoisie, arouse hatred of the bourgeoisie among the masses, and foster class-consciousness and the ability to unite their forces. The new generation is confronted with a far more complex task.
Your duty does not lie only in assembling your forces so as to uphold the workers' and peasants' government against an invasion instigated by the capitalists. Of course, you must do that; that is something you clearly realise, and is distinctly seen by the Communist. However, that is not enough. You have to build up a communist society. In many respects half of the work has been done. The old order has been destroyed, just as it deserved, it has been turned into a heap of ruins, just as it deserved. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the younger communist generation must build a communist society. 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. You will not build a communist society unless you enlist the mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building communism.

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.

You must train yourselves to be Communists. It is the task of the Youth League to organize 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? Of 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.

In what sense do we reject ethics, reject morality?

In the sense given to it by the bourgeoisie, who based ethics on God's commandments. On this point we, of course, say that we do not believe in God, and that we know perfectly well that the clergy, the landowners and the bourgeoisie invoked the name of God so as to further their own interests as exploiters. Or, instead of basing ethics on the commandments of morality, on the commandments of God, they based it on idealist or semi-idealist phrases, which always amounted to something very similar to God's commandments.

We reject any morality based on extra-human and extra-class concepts. We say that this is deception, dupery, stultification of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landowners and capitalists.

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. That is something that God cannot create.

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.

What are classes in general? Classes are that which permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of another section. 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 after we have overthrown the tsar and driven out the landowners and capitalists; to accomplish that is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

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, communist society.

Communist morality is that which serves this struggle and unites the working people against all exploitation, against all petty private property; for petty property puts into the hands of one person that which has been created by the labour of the whole of society. In our country the land is common property. But suppose I take a piece of this common property and grow on it twice as much grain as I need, and profit from the surplus? Suppose I argue that the more starving people there are, the more they will pay? Would I then be behaving like a Communist? No, I would be behaving like an exploiter, like a proprietor. That must be combated. If that is allowed to go on, things will revert to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has more than once happened in previous revolutions.
To prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie, we must not allow profiteering; we must not allow individuals to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest; the working people must unite with the proletariat and form a communist society. This is the principal feature of the fundamental task of the League and the organisation of the communist youth.

The old society was based on the principle: rob or be robbed; work for others or make others work for you; be a slave-owner or a slave. Naturally, people brought up in such a society 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.

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

To make this clearer to you, I shall quote an example. We call ourselves Communists. What is a Communist? Communist is a Latin word. Communis is the Latin for "common". Communist society is a society in which all things -- the land, the factories -- are owned in common and the people work in common. That is communism.

Is it possible to work in common if each one works separately on his own plot of land? Work in common cannot be brought about all at once. That is impossible. It does not drop from the skies. It comes through toil and suffering; it is created in the course of struggle. The old books are of no use here; no one will believe them. One's own experience of life is needeed. When Kolchak and Denikin were advancing from Siberia and the South, the peasants were on their side. They did not like Bolshevism because the Bolsheviks took their grain at a fixed price. But when the peasants in Siberia and the Ukraine experienced the rule of Kolchak and Denikin, they realised that they had only one alternative: either to go to the capitalists, who would at once hand them over into slavery under the landowners; or to follow the workers, who, it is true, did not promise a land flowing with milk and honey, and demanded iron discipline and firmness in an arduous struggle, but would lead them out of enslavement by the capitalists and landowners. When even the ignorant peasant saw and realised this from their own experience, they became conscious adherents of communism, who had gone through a severe school. It is such experience that must form the basis of all the activities of the Young Communist League.

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.

Take, for example, work in the suburban vegetable gardens. Is that not a real job of work? It is one of the tasks of the Young Communist League. People are starving; there is hunger in the factories. To save ourselves from starvation, vegetable gardens must be developed. But farming is being carried on in the old way. Therefore, more class-conscious elements should engage in this work, and then you will find that the number of vegetable gardens will increase, their acreage will grow, and the results will improve. The Young Communist League must take an active part in this work. Every League and League branch should regard this as its duty.
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, and utilise every suburban farm to help the population -- people will cease to regard labour in the old way.

It is the task of the Young Communist League to organise assistance everywhere, in village or city block, in such matters as -- and I shall take a small example -- public hygiene or the distribution of food. How was this done in the old, capitalist society? Everybody worked only for himself and nobody cared a straw for the aged and the sick, or whether housework was the concern only of the women, who, in consequence, were in a condition of oppression and servitude. Whose business is it to combat this?
It is the business of the Youth Leagues, which must say: we shall change all this; we shall organise detachments of young people who will help to assure public hygiene or distribute food, who will conduct systematic house-to-house inspections, and work in an organised way for the benefit of the whole of society, distributing their forces properly and demonstrating that labour must be organised.

The generation of people who are now at the age of fifty cannot expect to see a communist society. This generation will be gone before then. But the generation of those who are now fifteen will see a communist society, and will itself build this society. This generation should know that the entire purpose of their lives is to build a communist society. In the old society, each family worked separately and labour was not organised by anybody except the landowners and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. 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, able to help establish a communist system. The Young Communist League should teach all young people to engage in conscious and disciplined labour from an early age. In this way we can be confident that the problems now confronting us will be solved. We must assume that no less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may profit from the latest achievements of technology. And so, the generation of those who are now fifteen years old, and will be living in a communist society in ten or twenty years' time, should tackle all its educational tasks in such a way that every day, in every village and city, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some problem of labour in common, even though the smallest or the simplest. The success of communist construction will be assured when this is done in every village, as communist emulation develops, and the youth prove that they can unite their labour. Only by regarding our 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. (Stormy applause.)
Notes

[1] The Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League took place in Moscow between October 2 and 10, and was attended by some 600 delegates. Lenin addressed the Congress at the first session in the evening of October 2. For more information read an abstract of this document.

[2] Lenin is referring to Proletcult, a cultural and educational organisation which arose in September 1917 as an independent workers' organisation. After the October Revolution Proletcult, whose leadership fell into the hands of Bogdanov and his supporters, continued to insist on independence, thus setting itself in opposition to the proletarian state. This led to the infiltration of bourgeois intellectuals, who began to exert a decisive influence on Proletcult. Its members actually denied the cultural legacy of the past, neglected cultural and educational work among the masses, isolated themselves from life and aimed at setting up a special "proletarian culture". Bogdanov, the chief Proletcult ideologist, paid lip service to Marxism, but actually preached subjective idealism, Machism. Besides bourgeois intellectuals who held leading positions in many organisations, Proletcult also included young workers who sincerely wished to promote cultural development in the Soviet state. Proletcult organisations had their heyday in 1919. In the early 1920s they began to decline, ceasing to exist in 1932.
Abstract of "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues"
Written by Colin S. Cavell, 1997

In his 1920 address entitled "The Tasks of the Youth Leagues", presented before the Third All-Russia Congress of the Russian Young Communist League, Lenin sought to motivate the revolutionary youth of Russia to its necessary tasks and responsibilities, given the general backwardness of the country and the interventionist war being waged by Britain, France, the United States and other anti-communist powers, while simultaneously capturing the imagination of youth by pointing out the non-exploitative nature of communism, the revolution in historical development it represented, as well as laying out the fundamental tasks of youth organizations, particularly the Young Communist League, in a socialist society.

Foremost among the responsibilities of youth, instructed Lenin, was to "learn". Specifically, the youth must learn communism. And to build a communist society, we must utilize the "totality of knowledge" at our disposal. Book knowledge, however, without work and struggle, will lead to a complete rift with practical life; hence, theory and practice must be intertwined and interrelated. Also, knowledge must not be merely assimilated, rather, Lenin instructs, "assimilate it critically". Cut-and-dried conclusions should not be expounded, he cautions, unless they are backed up by "serious and hard work" and a critical examination of the facts.

Lenin then expounds upon how communism should be taught and what must be taught touching upon the key questions of communist ethics, classes and the class struggle, unity between the workers and the peasants, and organizing youth for participation in the common struggle of all working people against the exploiters.

To belong to the Youth League, one must devote one's labour and efforts to the common cause. This is the essence of a communist education. Only in the course of such work do we become real communists, and this, Lenin notes, will be indicated by our practical results.
"The Young Communist League," Lenin states, "must be a shock force, helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise". Through the League's "practical work and activity" any worker will be able to see that the YCL is demonstrating the correct road to follow—correct because it leads to the liberation of all workers. Emulation of communist methods and actions will follow upon the successful solution to practical problems by the method of labour in common and as the youth prove that they can unite their labour. This is the standpoint from which one can judge the success of communist construction.
It is not necessary to dwell upon the characteristics of our revolution; upon its original form, with its dashes of spontaneity which marked the transition from a revolution of national liberation to a socialist revolution; one full of rapidly passing stages, led by the same people who participated in the initial epic of the attack on the Moncada Barracks; a revolution which proceeded through the landing from the Granma and culminated in the declaration of the socialist character of the Cuban Revolution. New sympathisers, cadres, organisations joined the feeble structure to such an extent that they imparted to our revolution its present mass character, which has now placed its stamp upon our revolution.

When it became clear that a new social class had definitely taken power in Cuba, the great limitations which the exercise of state power would encounter because of the existing conditions in the state became evident: the lack of cadres to cope with the enormous tasks which had to be carried out in the state apparatus, in political organisation, and on the entire economic front.

Immediately after the taking of power, administrative assignments were made "by rule of thumb"; there were no major problems - there were none because as yet the old structure had not been shattered. The apparatus functioned in its old, slow, lifeless, broken-down way, but it had an organisation and with it sufficient co-ordination to maintain itself through inertia, disdaining the political changes which came about as a prelude to the change in the economic structure.
The 26th of July Movement, deeply impaired by the internal struggles between its right and left wings, was unable to dedicate itself to constructive tasks; and the Partido Socialista Popular (Popular Socialist Party), because it had undergone fierce attacks, and because for years it was an illegal party, had not been able to develop intermediate cadres to cope with the newly arising responsibilities.

When the first state interventions took place in the economy, the task of finding cadres was not very complicated, and it was possible to select them from among many people who had the minimum basis for assuming positions of leadership. But with the acceleration of the process which took place after the nationalisation of the North American enterprises and later of the large Cuban enterprises, a veritable hunger for administrative technicians manifested itself. At the same time, an urgent need was felt for production technicians because of the exodus of many who were attracted by better positions offered by the imperialist companies in other parts of the Americas or in the United States itself. The political apparatus had to make an intense effort, while engaged in the tasks of building, to pay ideological attention to the masses who joined the revolution eager to learn.

We all performed our roles as well as we could, but it was not without pain and anxieties. Many errors were committed by the administrative section of the Executive; enormous mistakes were made by the new administrators of enterprises who had overwhelming responsibilities on their hands, and we committed great and costly errors in the political apparatus also, an apparatus which little by little began to fall into the hands of a contented and carefree bureaucracy, totally separated from the masses, which became recognised as a springboard for promotions and for bureaucratic posts of major or minor importance.

The main cause of our errors was our lack of a feeling for reality at a given moment; but the tool that we lacked, that which blunted our ability to perceive and which was converting the party into a bureaucratic entity and was endangering administration and production, was the lack of developed cadres at the intermediate level.
It became evident that the policy of finding cadres was synonymous with the policy of going to the masses, to establish contact anew with the masses, a contact which had been closely maintained by the revolution in the first stages of its existence. But it had to be established through some type of mechanism which would afford the most beneficial results, both in feeling the pulse of the masses and in the transmission of political orientation, which in many cases was only being given through the personal intervention of Prime Minister Fidel Castro or other leaders of the revolution.

From this vantage point, we can ask ourselves what a cadre type is.

We should say that a cadre person is an individual who has achieved sufficient political development to be able to interpret the extensive directives emanating from the central power, make them his, and convey them as orientation to the masses, a person who at the same time also perceives the signs manifested by the masses of their own desires and their innermost motivations.

He is an individual of ideological and administrative discipline, who knows and practices democratic centralism and who knows how to evaluate the existing contradictions in this method and to utilise fully its many facets; who knows how to practice the principle of collective discussion and to make decisions on his own and take responsibility in production; whose loyalty is tested, and whose physical and moral courage has developed along with his ideological development in such a way that he is always willing to confront any conflict and to give his life for the good of the revolution. Also, he is an individual capable of self-analysis, which enables him to make the necessary decisions and to exercise creative initiative in such a manner that it won't conflict with discipline.

Therefore the cadre person is creative, a leader of high standing, a technician with a good political level, who by reasoning dialectically can advance his sector of production, or develop the masses from his position of political leadership.
This exemplary human being, apparently cloaked in difficult-to-achieve virtues, is nonetheless present among the people of Cuba, and we find him daily. The essential thing is to grasp all the opportunities that there are for developing him to the maximum, for educating him, for drawing from each personality the greatest usefulness and converting it into the greatest advantage for the nation.

The development of a cadre individual is achieved in performing everyday tasks; but the tasks must be undertaken in a systematic manner, in special schools where competent professors - examples in their turn to the student body - will encourage the most rapid ideological advancement.

In a regime that is beginning to build socialism, you could not imagine a cadre that does not have a high political development, but when we consider political development we must not only take into account apprenticeship to Marxist theory; we must also demand responsibility of the individual for his acts, a discipline which restrains any passing weaknesses, and which will not conflict with a big dose of initiative; and constant preoccupation with all the problems of the revolution. In order to develop him, we must begin by establishing the principles of selectivity among the masses; it is there that we must find the budding personalities, tested by sacrifice or just beginning to demonstrate their stirrings, and assign them to special schools; or when these are not available, give them greater responsibility so that they are tested in practical work.

In this way, we have been finding a multitude of new cadres who have developed during these years; but their development has not been an even one, since the young companeros have had to face the reality of revolutionary creation without the adequate orientation of a party. Some have succeeded fully, but there were others who could not completely make it and were left midway, or were simply lost in the bureaucratic labyrinth, or in the temptations that power brings.
To assure the triumph and the total consolidation of the revolution, we have to develop different types of cadres: the political cadre who will be the base of our mass organisations, and who will orient them through the action of the Partido Unido de la Revolucion Socialista (United Party of the Socialist Revolution; PURS). We are already beginning to establish these bases with the national and provincial Schools of Revolutionary Instruction and with studies and study groups at all levels. We also need military cadres; to achieve that, we can utilise the selection the war made among our young combatants, since there are still many living, who are without great theoretical knowledge but were tested under fire-tested under the most difficult conditions of the struggle, with a fully proven loyalty toward the revolutionary regime with whose birth and development they have been so intimately connected since the first guerrilla fights of the Sierra. We should also develop economic cadres who will dedicate themselves specifically to the difficult tasks of planning and the tasks of the organisation of the socialist state in these moments of creation.

It is necessary to work with the professionals, urging the youth to follow one of the more important technical careers in an effort to give science that tone of ideological enthusiasm which will guarantee accelerated development. And, it is imperative to create an administrative team, which will know how to take advantage of the specific technical knowledge of others and to co-ordinate and guide the enterprises and other organisations of the state to bring them into step with the powerful rhythm of the revolution.

The common denominator for all is political clarity. This does not consist of unthinking support to the postulates of the revolution, but a reasoned support; it requires a great capacity for sacrifice and a capacity for dialectical analysis which will enhance the making of continuous contributions on all levels to the rich theory and practice of the revolution. These companeros should be selected from the masses solely by application of the principle that the best will come to the fore and that the best should be given the greatest opportunities for development.

In all these situations, the function of the cadre, in spite of its being on different fronts, is the same. The cadre is the major part
of the ideological motor which is the United Party of the Revolution. It is something that we could call the dynamic screw of this motor; a screw that in regard to the functional part will assure its correct functioning; dynamic to the extent that the cadre is not simply an upward or downward transmitter of slogans or demands, but a creator which will aid in the development of the masses and in the information of the leaders, serving as a point of contact with them. The cadre has the important mission of seeing to it that the great spirit of the revolution is not dissipated, that it will not become dormant nor let up its rhythm. It is a sensitive position; it transmits what comes from the masses and infuses in the masses the orientation of the party.

Therefore, the development of cadres is now a task which cannot be postponed. The development of the cadres has been undertaken with great eagerness by the revolutionary government with its programs of scholarships based on selective principles; with its programs of study for workers, offering various opportunities for technological development; with the development of the special technical schools; with the development of the secondary schools and the universities, opening new careers; with the development finally of our slogans of study, work and revolutionary vigilance for our entire country, fundamentally based on the Union of Young Communists from which all types of cadres should emerge, even the leading cadres in the future of the revolution.

Intimately tied to the concept of cadre is the capacity for sacrifice, for demonstrating through personal example the truths and watchwords of the revolution. The cadres, as political leaders, should gain the respect of the workers by their actions. It is absolutely imperative that they count on the respect and affection of their companeros, whom they should guide along the vanguard paths.

Overall, there are no better cadres than those elected by the masses in the assemblies that select the exemplary workers, those that will be brought into the PURS along with the old members of the ORI (Organizacion Revolucionaria Integrada - Integrated Revolutionary Organisation) who pass the required selective tests.
At the beginning they will constitute a small party, but with enormous influence among the workers; later it will grow when the advance of socialist consciousness begins converting the work and total devotion to the cause of the people into a necessity. With the intermediate leaders of this category, the difficult tasks that we have before us will be accomplished with fewer errors. After a period of confusion and poor methods, we have arrived at a just policy which will never be abandoned. With the ever-renewing drive of the working class, nourishing from its inexhaustible fountain the ranks of the future United Party of the Socialist Revolution, and with the leadership of our Party, we fully undertake the task of the forming of cadres which will guarantee the swift development of our revolution. We must be successful in the effort.
What We Stand For:

The Young Communist League is:
The youth wing of the Communist Party
It aims to build support among young people for the Communist Party’s programme, Britain’s Road to Socialism and to increase young people’s involvement in politics. The Young Communist League is organisationally autonomous and decides its own activities and priorities.

Democratic
Policies are formulated by a Congress which must be held at least once every two years, and are carried out by an elected Executive Committee. The League also fights to defend and strengthen democratic rights. It rejects unfair discrimination on the basis of race, sex, age, sexuality or religious or other belief. It calls for the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords and regards the European Union as an undemocratic and reactionary institution which serves the interests of big business rather than those of Europe’s working people.

Centralised
Democratically taken decisions are binding across the organisation, although local branches decide how best to implement them in their own areas.

Part of a mass movement
It never puts its own interests as an organisation above those of the movement as a whole and it seeks to build the widest possible coalition behind progressive policies. The Morning Star, Britain’s only socialist daily newspaper, plays a vital role in strengthening the left and the League works actively to support the paper and raise its circulation. The League also recognises the importance of trade unions as the broadest mass organisations of the working class and fights all anti-trade union laws.

Communist
It works to abolish capitalism and establish a socialist society based on common ownership and democratic control, drawing on the ideas of Marx, Engels, Lenin and others as well as on the experience of socialist countries since 1917.
In the context of this struggle it seeks to defend and strengthen public services, the welfare state and the NHS. It believes that everyone has the right to free and inclusive secular education including nursery care, schools, universities, community colleges and adult education centres. The struggle for socialism must go hand in hand with the struggle to protect the natural environment, which is being wilfully damaged by corporations and capitalist governments in their drive for short-term profit.

**Internationalist**

It is a member organisation of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, which represents millions of progressive young people in around 100 countries. It campaigns in solidarity with sister Young Communist organisations around the World and defends existing socialist countries. It backs the right to self determination and opposes any attempt by imperialist states such as Britain, the US and the European Union to impose their will on the peoples of the world or to exploit or to exploit the world's resources for capitalist profit. It calls for unilateral, immediate and unconditional nuclear disarmament.

**Revolutionary**

It aims not to mend capitalism, but to end it. This does not mean that the League calls for an armed uprising in modern Britain, although we defend the right of the oppressed to take up arms for their liberation. It means realising that only a fundamental shift in power from the capitalists to the working people can guarantee democratic rights and social progress. Socialist revolution in Britain can and should be achieved by peaceful means, through a combination of elections with mass work outside parliament. The League publicises its activities, its theory and its revolutionary perspective on the day to day struggle through its magazine Challenge, which also provides a channel for debate within the organisation and the wider movement.
60p from your newsagent