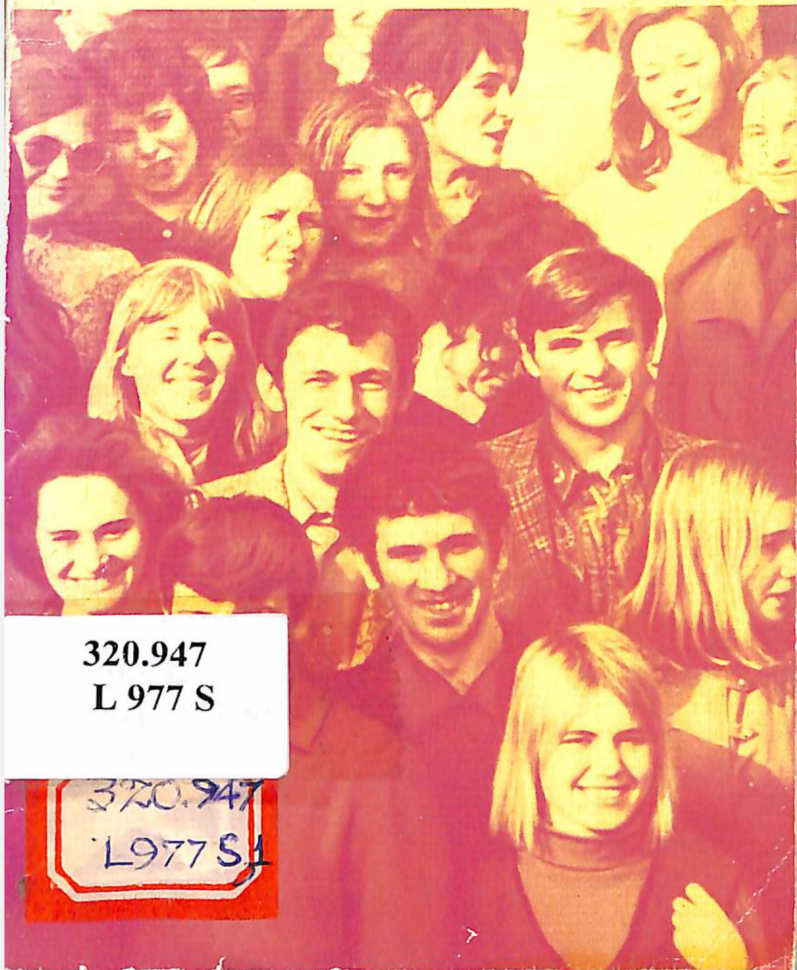


Sixty Years On and Ever Young

VLADIMIR LUTSKI



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VLADIMIR LUTSKI

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In April 1978 the 18th Congress of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League (YCL), Komsomol for short, was held. This League plays an important part in the life of Soviet youth and has a long and meaningful history of 60 years. This history encompasses several generations, different in their lives and deeds, but very much alike in their aspirations, goals, feelings and beliefs.

In all the periods of the development of the Soviet state and people—the years of war and creative labour—Komsomol members have always led the way in the front ranks of Soviet youth. The Komsomol enlists young people devoted to the Party's cause who are politically active, uncompromising, honest and vigorous. They are taught to follow examples and traditions set by great revolutionaries whose names are sacred to us today and whose lives were fully dedicated to the happiness of the future generations. Their faithfulness to the homeland, the ideas of Marxism-Leninism and Lenin's behests were bequeathed to the young generations to be broadened by new exploits and deeds.

This booklet tells about different Komsomol generations, their work and plans, their organization and history—closely linked with the history of the first socialist country. It does not attempt a full account of all the problems and issues connected with the

activity of the Leninist Komsomol. We would be glad to receive criticism and suggestions which would stimulate further writings.

The first 22,000

There is a special hall in the building of the Central Committee of the Soviet Young Communist League or Komsomol where the relics of its glorious history are preserved. The banner of the YCL stands in the hall like on honour guard beside the Red banners presented by the RCP(B) * Central Committee and the CPSU Central Committee. Government decorations awarded to the Komsomol are pinned on ribbons and beneath them are certificates explaining when and for what activity it won the decorations. Along the walls are small stands. In them visitors can see Komsomol cards pierced by bullets, weapons used by Komsomol members, leaflets yellow with age, and photographs. One photograph dates back to 1918. On it the young people of today can see the delegates of the first All-Russia Congress of workers' and peasants' youth leagues. There were almost 200 delegates at the Congress, representing the first 22,000 Komsomol members. Many of them had been active in the revolution: they participated in the storming of the Winter Palace ** in Petrograd (now Leningrad), they helped

* RCP(B)—Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik). Before 1917, the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Bolshevik) as distinguished from the opportunist minority that had split away—the Mensheviks. Later the Russian Communist Party was renamed the Communist Party of the Soviet Union—CPSU.

** The Winter Palace—former residence of Russian tsars, in 1917 the building was occupied by the Provisional bourgeois government.

throw the junkers out of the Moscow Kremlin and to establish Soviet government in other towns of Russia.

Passionate speeches rang out at the Congress. The young people argued hotly about a name for their organization and its structure. They were blazing a new trail. Rimma Yurovskaya, a delegate to the Congress from the Urals, recalled later:

“No form of organization had been devised, nor was there any plan—only the enthusiasm of the young, the deep conviction that the youth could not be onlookers of the great revolution, and a passionate desire to create, to learn to help the older generation.

“It’s true, the speeches were timid and awkward. But that was understandable—it was the first time that young people were tackling such a serious affair. . .”

The Komsomol is the product of the creative efforts of hundreds, even thousands of people. The ideological and organizational principles of a proletarian youth movement were worked out by the Communist Party. The Marxists-Leninists sought to win the minds of the younger generation and exposed all the attempts to mislead the young people with pseudo-revolutionary phrases and anarchist slogans. They resolutely fought attempts to lead the young people off the track. After the February 1917 revolution in Russia, when the tsarist regime was overthrown, the bourgeois and opportunist parties (Constitutional Democrats, Social Democrats and Mensheviks) sought to attract the younger generation to their clubs and associations. They told them that the class struggle should be left to their fathers, while the youth should learn to sing, dance, embroider and cook.

The Communist Party called on the youth to rally under the banner of the socialist revolution. Small organizations of revolutionary minded youth were founded in many areas.

The Hall of the Putilov factory trade school was packed as the first conference of the youth of the Petrograd-Narva district got under way. It was chaired by Vasily Alexeyev, a young Bolshevik.

"All kinds of scoundrels," he said, "are trying to split the younger generation and stuff nonsense into minds that are still rather ignorant. It is essential to channel the consciousness of youth along communist lines. New battles lie ahead and the youth must emerge from them victoriously under the banners of the Social-Democratic Party of the Bolsheviks!"

His words were drowned in applause, cries of "Hear! Hear!", and shouts of "Down with him!"

Then a representative of the Mensheviks moved to the rostrum. "The previous speaker," he noted, "talked about the tasks of our organization. We are being placed under the banner of the Bolsheviks. But the youth should remain outside party affiliations. Red banners bring blood! The youth will not follow them. . ."

And again shouts of "Down with him!" from the other side, again whistles. The cries of approval were lost in a storm of indignation.

The conference continued long past midnight. Everyone was tired, voices had grown hoarse and palms stung from clapping. Alexeyev rose to speak again:

"Does any one else insist on speaking?" he asked. Then he put the motion of the Bolshevik faction to a vote. "Who," he asked, "supports the proposals of the Bolsheviks? Our slogans are: Down with the exploitation of child labour! Free universal educa-

tion! Peace to the hovels, war to the palaces! And most important of all: long live socialism!"

The resolution of the young Bolsheviks was adopted. Vasily Alexeyev was elected chairman of the Organizational Bureau. That was in the spring of 1917, almost 18 months before the first All-Russia congress of workers' and peasants' youth leagues at which the Komsomol was born.

Comments of a historian. Vladimir Sulemov, Dr. of History, writes:

"Lenin taught us that any association of people, if they want to be successful in their activities, must be based on common views and convinced of the rightness of their aims. In Soviet Russia, the Komsomol emerged as part of the overall proletarian revolutionary movement on the initiative and under the leadership of the Communist Party. At the first All-Russia congress of workers' and peasants' youth leagues, the fundamental principles of its programme openly proclaimed the communist nature of its activities. It expressed solidarity with the programme of the Communist Party and set itself the goal of 'disseminating communist ideas and drawing young workers and peasants into the active construction of Soviet Russia,' thereby siding firmly with the working class in the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of society.

"At the time when the Russian Young Communist League (RYCL) was formed, the Communist Party led by Lenin had already elaborated the principles of the revolutionary education of the youth and the main forms of association of young fighters in independent organizations.

"The formation of a single communist youth organization for all of Russia with a clearly defined political programme, a single set of rules and a single leading body—the Central Committee—was an

outstanding event in the organizational history of the Komsomol.

"An organization of a new type had been formed for the first time in the history of the world youth movement, a class organization, proletarian in character and revolutionary-communist in its aims and practical activities. It was a single organization, centralized in structure, independent in the principles and methods of its work."

There were 22,000 founding members of the Russian Komsomol. Many things are unknown about their early history.

Veterans of the Komsomol are frequent visitors to the Hall of the glorious history of the Soviet Young Communist League. It is often hard to recognize in those grey-haired people of solid standing, the youngsters shown on photographs yellowed with age. They look at each other and recall their youth. It makes a strong bond between them. However their roads in life have diverged, in the past, in their youth, they were together.

Each trod his own path, but their fate was always linked with that of the nation and they worked for their people. They were all ordinary youngsters, but the time they lived in was anything but ordinary.

Recollections of a Komsomol veteran. Alexander Milchakov, a delegate to eight YCL congresses, recalls:

"For some reason it always happens that people, no matter when they lived and whether they had a good life or a bad one, envy those who lived before them and those who follow them. But they never envy themselves. In our case we miss the galloping horses, the sword we shall never carry again and, of course, the eternal life that will one day be—but not for us.

"I say this, because even if you know nothing about the *yunkoms* (an acronym derived from the first syllables of the Russian "Young Communards") you are filled with respect for them just because they lived sixty years ago."

Their Life and Activities

The name *yunkom* appeared at the beginning of the revolution and was current usage right up to the 3rd Congress of the RYCL (1920), after which the name "Komsomol member" became firmly rooted.

The *yunkoms* were badly dressed. Their old clothes were too small and new clothes were impossible to get, so they took their parents' old clothes. They wore bast shoes or boots, army overcoats, jackets made of homespun cloth and the boys' heads were covered by caps and the girls' by red kerchiefs or knitted shawls.

Food was an acute problem then, but the *yunkoms* were much more concerned by the hunger of others. They collected funds for the starving in Moscow and along the Kama River. They collected for families of wounded Red Army soldiers, for orphans and for the striking workers in Germany. They collected for a variety of causes and this made them feel closely involved in all that was happening in the country. They could exist for months on potato peelings or cabbage.

The best gift for a girl on her birthday used to be some potatoes or a bunch of carrots, just as today a bunch of flowers is common.

Adulthood is relative. It is said that if you know what a person is striving for you know whether he is an adult. The revolution had been victorious, but the country faced the military intervention of 14

foreign countries and the Civil War (1918-20) which kept the Soviet land in the grips of hunger, cold and disease. At that time the front line cut across the country, families and the heart of every person. There were no adolescents then, it seems. A fourteen-year-old lad was often in the trenches with a rifle in his hands and his bullets struck the enemy just as surely as those of adult soldiers. A 16-year-old, Arkady Gaidar (subsequently a popular writer of children's books), even commanded a regiment. Factories lay in ruins, but the country had to live on, and it was boys and girls who manned machines and did the work.

Meanwhile in the villages, former estate-owners and counter-revolutionary elements let grain spoil and killed off livestock, when in the towns people's rations were reduced to a minimum. The yunkoms went with their fathers and elder brothers, communists, to the villages to fight the enemies of the revolution. They requisitioned grain from profiteers and brought it to the cities.

As a Komsomol activist, Victor Vlasov received his monthly rationed food at the YCL provincial committee—400 grams of macaroni, 800 grams of small fish, and a bit of salt, and with that in his bag he began his long walk from village to village. Words were his only weapons. His job, as it was described then, was to open the eyes of those whom the revolution had not yet reached. In official reports, it was called culture and education activities.

The war and the devastation wreaked immense material damage on the country, but no figures can measure the grief they caused to children who had lost both parents and didn't even have a roof over their heads. Thousands of these homeless orphans roamed the country—hungry, dirty and ill, at times with very adult diseases. It was the yunkoms who

took care of the homeless orphans-making arrangements for them to stay at children's homes, to attend school, and sharing their meagre rations and whatever clothing they had with them.

If one were to single out the distinguishing feature of the younger generation of those years, it would have to be their passionate thirst for knowledge. Workers departments were set up at colleges to speed the training of intellectuals from the ranks of the working class.

One official survey of the workers departments of those days said: "Materially the worker students are on the verge of starvation. They get 200 grams of bread a day and a lentil broth, their feet are always cold and words seem to freeze in their throats, but they study hard and with enthusiasm." They sacrificed sleep and leisure for this opportunity to study.

The yunkoms, however, were not fanatics. They stoically withstood the cold and were ready to throw themselves into battle, but they could also laugh and play, write poetry, fall in love and marry, and, of course, dream of that wonderful future for which they were fighting and which they hoped to see in their lifetime.

Unfading ideas

Lenin proclaimed the slogan "Learn Communism" in his speech on the tasks of the Youth League at the 3rd Komsomol Congress in 1920, which was attended by 602 delegates representing a membership of half a million.

Delegates recall that Lenin began his speech very simply and quietly. He stood at the very edge of the platform and quietly talked to his audience. In fact, his speech resembled a father's heart-to-heart talk with his sons. He began: *"Comrades, today I would like to talk on the fundamental tasks of the Young Communist League. . ."*

The young people in the audience, impatient and excited by the day-to-day battles of the Civil War, concerned about economic devastation and the needs of the economy, expected Lenin to speak on the situation at the fronts, to brief them on the state of affairs in industry and transport.

And unexpectedly: the tasks of the League. . . Surely they themselves knew what had to be done? They had to break the intervention and counter-revolution, save the young Soviet republic from hunger. Lenin to their surprise had other ideas and began to speak of something quite different. . .

"The tasks of the youth. . . might be summed up in a single word: learn."

A surprised murmur swept the hall. Learn? At a time, when the enemy was pressing hard? When people were dying of typhoid fever? . . .

1920 was a year when the Soviet republic was moving away from the Civil War to peaceful labour. The days of the armed battles were numbered and the Party was looking to the future: to the building of a new social system. The working people had no experience in such construction. A new socialist economy had to be built up, the foundations of the bourgeois code of ethics, customs and habits needed uprooting and a new communist code of ethics and new codes of behaviour laid down. A new attitude to work and labour discipline had to be shaped.

In his speech at the 3rd Congress, Lenin concentrated on the role of the younger generation and its organization—the Komsomol—in the solution of all these tasks.

The new social system, socialism, about which Lenin spoke to YCL members, had no ready-made cadres of its own. When the Russian working class took over power it had no proletarian intellectuals. There was only a handful of revolutionary intellectuals and men of science who had sided with the proletarian revolution.

The following facts about the delegates to the 3rd YCL Congress illustrate the level of education among the Komsomol members in 1920: half the delegates had one or two years of schooling, about 37 per cent had a secondary education, just over 3 per cent had been educated at home, and only 11 delegates had a higher education.

To successfully build a new society, the country needed its own cadres of educated men and women, production executives conversant with the achievements of modern science. Hence the first task of the Komsomol—to rally youth in the campaign for knowledge.

"... What should we teach the youth and how should the youth learn?" Lenin threw that question at the audience and then stepped back into the depth of the stage, as if giving them time to digest it. Then he stepped forward again and answered:

"... The Youth League and the youth in general who want to advance to communism, should learn communism."

The eyes of the delegates sparkled. That, they thought, is what we are doing when we read communist books, newspapers and magazines.

But, it seemed, Lenin had something else in mind. He was not thinking in terms of simply memorizing

the communist formulas, but of assimilating them. Learning past and present history and philosophy, adding it all up and analyzing it. Yet even that was not all; theory alone was not enough.

Communism as a science cannot be learnt from textbooks, no matter how excellently written. Yet at the same time one cannot become a communist without being well-educated, without being enriched by the knowledge of all treasures created by mankind.

Addressing the youth, who were inclined to think in terms of practical revolutionary activities, Lenin showed that Marxism is the apex of modern scientific thought, that it serves the masses of people as a practical guide to action, that our greatest advantage lies in the unity of theory and practice, science and labour.

In many of his works Lenin underlined that the men and women changing a social system would themselves change in the process of struggle and labour. Hence:

... *"The Young Communist League should teach all young people to engage in conscious and disciplined labour from an early age."*

Lenin repeatedly made the point that the main component of mastering communism should be participation in the common efforts of the people, in labour and competition, and that each step in their learning, upbringing and education should be linked with this participation. Lenin reviewed the current situation and indicated concretely where the young generation's creative efforts would be most useful: the youth, he said, should help to restore devastated industry and farming and develop the electrification of the country. In addition to these primary tasks, he also mentioned working on the market

gardens, ensuring cleanliness, distributing food and taking part in *subbotniks*. *

"Only by regarding your every step from the standpoint of the success of that construction, and only by asking yourselves whether you have done all you 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."

Lenin was concerned with ensuring that the content and nature of Komsomol work would foster a creative approach to life and a feeling of personal responsibility to the nation for their deeds and behaviour, that the Komsomol would be the youth's first school of political education, where they would learn to take an active part in the life of society.

"It is the task of the Youth League to organize its practical activities in such a way that, by learning, organizing, uniting and fighting, its members shall train both themselves and all those who look to it for leadership; it should train Communists."

Lenin talked to the youth of the Soviet republic as to fellow-fighters. The republic was less than three years old at that time. Yet today too, when the Soviet Union is more than sixty years old, his words have lost none of their importance, and young people remember Lenin's words. But, of course, each generation applies his principles in keeping with their time: for one generation it was work on the construction sites of the first five-year plans; for the next it was the war against nazi Germany and

* *Communist Subbotniks* (Communist Saturdays)—voluntary work for the nation in one's free time with proceeds going to the needs of society. One of the first manifestations of a communist attitude to labour.

the victory in Berlin battle; then came the thousands of enthusiasts who went to the construction projects in far-away areas and launched spaceships into the orbit around the earth.

A young man of our times from Norilsk, Victor Chalov, explained how he understood the main tasks Lenin had set the youth: "A real Komsomol member," he said, "is one who can see any ordinary day or event in relation to the goals of the future, who is capable of long-term thinking. You can recognize such people easily—they never moan and groan or cry on another's shoulder. They pledge their loyalty to the Party, they are always seeking and fighting for a better life and they remain faithful to their pledge."

"The Tasks of Youth Leagues" was Lenin's testament to the youth. For richness of content and depth of ideas Lenin's speech at the 3rd Komsomol Congress could justly be described as the Komsomol Manifesto. It set out explicitly the tasks of the Komsomol of the 1920's, yet at the same time developed a programme for the generations that followed.

Named after Lenin

Lenin had a strong belief in the revolutionary and creative abilities of young people. He pointed out that it was the task of the entire Party and nation to educate the young, and he insisted that all the best should be given to children and youth. The young responded to this concern with deep affection and boundless loyalty to Lenin and the Party.

Lenin died on January 21, 1924. Numerous documents show how deeply the Komsomol and all So-

viet youth grieved over the death of their leader. At memorial meetings and in letters, the young people pledged loyalty to the behests of the leader of the proletarian revolution and asked that both the Komsomol and the Young Pioneer Organization * be named after Lenin.

On January 23, 1924, the YCL Central Committee decided that the children's communist groups named after Spartacus should be re-named the children's communist groups of Leninist Young Pioneers.

Two days later the YCL Central Committee considered the question of naming the Komsomol after Lenin. It decided to put this matter to the next congress. The 6th All-Russia YCL Congress was held from the 12th to 18th of July, 1924. At the first session its delegates enthusiastically adopted a resolution saying: "The Russian Young Communist League shall henceforth be known as the Russian Leninist Young Communist League." The Komsomol pledged to remain faithful to Lenin's behests, his ideas and deeds. The Manifesto adopted by the Congress stated: "This decision has been taken not for elaborate reasons, nor merely to commemorate the death of a great man. No. This decision has been taken so that the working youth of all the nationalities inhabiting the USSR, together with their vanguard—the Young Communist League—will be imbued by the common will and firm determination to learn to live, work and fight as Lenin did, to carry out the behests Lenin left us."

The Komsomol responded to Lenin's death with a big increase in membership. In the period between February and November of 1924, 400,000 new mem-

* Pioneer Organization—the mass voluntary communist organization of children founded in 1922.

bers were admitted to the Komsomol while 25,600 of the best YCLers joined the Party.

Today there are 38 million

That was the figure given at the 18th Komsomol Congress in April, 1978.

38 million young people are going through the school of the Komsomol. Who are they?

42 per cent are students, almost 35 per cent are workers, about 6.5 per cent—co-operative farmers, and 16.5 per cent—office workers.

57.6 per cent are now engaged in the national economy. Among the Komsomol office workers, almost two-thirds are engineers and technicians, farm experts, teachers, young scientists and cultural workers.

62.1 per cent of the YCL members have a higher or secondary education. Compare this with the two out of a thousand who had a college education at the time when the organization was founded.

More than half the YCL members—52.4 per cent—are girls.

The Komsomol has a multinational membership, and it is internationalist in its activities. Among its members there are young people of more than 100 Soviet nationalities and ethnic groups.

The Komsomol is a voluntary public organization. Membership gives no privileges. In joining the Komsomol, a youngster pledges to remain in the first ranks of the builders of communism. The increase in the YCL membership is, therefore, an indication of the rapid growth of the political activity of Soviet youth and of its loyalty to the ideals of communism.

What is it about the Komsomol that attracts

youngsters? No simple answer can be given to that question. The bourgeois press publishes a lot of nonsense in this connection. Much of it stems from its refusal to recognize the basic difference between the social and political systems of Soviet and Western society.

Any public organization reflects the interests of its membership and the strata of society from which that membership is drawn. In a society divided into antagonistic classes, there are some organizations which express the interests of the propertied and others which fight in the interests of the oppressed. There is no such division in Soviet society. So the Komsomol has no need to oppose the state system to defend the interests of the youth. Only together with the state, within the framework of the political system of advanced socialism can the Komsomol fully and consistently express the interests of the younger generation.

So the young people who join the Komsomol do so not to be in opposition to the society they live in, but to further its progress. From their own experience and that of the older generation they know that this is the surest way to a meaningful, interesting and well-provided life. It is true, that the same can be achieved without joining the Komsomol. But for a member of the YCL it is imperative that others follow his example. So when a young person decides to join the Komsomol, he is determined to set an example in socially useful work and in political maturity, and to be an active fighter for the common cause.

Some viewpoints expressed by the YCLers of the 1970's: Vladimir Solodchenko, a Moscow worker: "The Komsomol can be called a school where we learn to do social work, to work collectively and to advance to our chosen goals. We learn from our el-

ders to be ideologically strong and loyal to the Soviet people.

"It seems to me that one of the greatest merits of the Komsomol is that it helps young people to become able and active builders of a new society."

Gennady Yaryshev, a Sverdlovsk student: "You sometimes come across people who say the Komsomol gave them nothing. Others believe that it should not give anything. I would say both are wrong. The Komsomol should give certain things. And it does. To the weak it gives strength, to the tired—it offers a haven, and to the gifted—a road to life.

"The way I understand it is this: if you feel that you are gaining nothing from Komsomol membership—leave the organization, leave in a hurry, because for you it's a wrong place, for you Komsomol life is a burden, a heavy and unneeded burden.

"If you give the Komsomol nothing, then either you are not a fighter, but a weak grumbler, or a hypocrite, and an egoist. In any case, you are not a real YCLer and the membership card in your pocket means nothing."

Leonid Ovchinnikov, a soldier: "The Komsomol? It has taught me to see in a proper perspective not only my own life, but that of the people who surround me, to note all the best qualities others have and try to develop those qualities in myself. The need to fight for every person is also something the Komsomol taught me. Another thing I learnt is to give battle to the indifferent onlookers, to those who seek to hamper the advance to our common goal—the building of communism—and to spare nothing in this battle.

"To be useful to other people, to make things good not only for myself, but to think of all those who are around me—that too was something the Komsomol taught me."

Article 51 of the new Soviet Constitution (1977) decrees that "in accordance with the aims of building communism citizens of the USSR have the right to associate in public organizations."

Some people might ask, but doesn't the phrase "in accordance with the aims of building communism" make for limited democracy?

The communist society we are building is a classless society of harmoniously developed, free creative working people, a self-governing society where law and order are maintained not by force or compulsion, but by the high level of consciousness of its members, a society in which the guiding principle will be "From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs". That is our goal, and to bring that goal closer means promoting the harmonious development of the individual, meeting his needs and interests, spotting special talents and abilities, fostering the economic, social and cultural progress of the country. Each of the many public organizations in the country does this in its own way and field. The Komsomol is no exception. And therefore it is absurd to talk of limited democracy.

The youth problem that is such a headache to the authorities in bourgeois countries does not worry the Soviet authorities or the public organizations for obvious reasons. Unlike youth in the Western world who challenge traditional values and stereotypes enshrined by centuries, the Soviet youth have no need to do this. They are an integral and active part of Soviet society with full rights and they influence their elders just as much as they are influenced by them. The General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee and the Chairman of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet Leonid Brezhnev at the 17th YCL Congress said: "...no major problem—concerning the affairs of either the Soviet Union, a re-

gion, a district, or a work collective—is handled without the participation of youth.”

The composition of local government bodies, the Soviets of People’s Deputies, shows how fully and effectively the younger generation has been drawn into public affairs. In 1967, when the country’s population totalled 234,800 thousand, 16.4 per cent of the deputies in the local Soviets were young people under the age of 30. Ten years later, when the population was almost 260 million, the percentage had gone up to 32.4. In the top body of state power—the USSR Supreme Soviet—practically every fifth deputy is a young person (18.4 per cent).

Compare that with the US Congress, where less than one per cent of its members are under the age of 30.

The Constitution gives the Komsomol the right to nominate their candidates in elections. And Komsomol organizations make wide use of this right. More than two million deputies today run the affairs of state and among them there are more than 700,000 young people. During the election campaigns, millions of Komsomol agitators take an active part in election meetings, they organize events for young electors and canvass for the candidates. Hundreds of thousands of YCL members work in the electoral commissions at all levels (from the wards to the central). During the local elections of June 19, 1977, there were more than 1,500 thousand Komsomol members sitting on the electoral commissions.

An important part in the life of youth is played by the standing commissions on youth affairs that were set up several years ago at Soviets of all levels. Their task is to look after the interests of the younger generation in all fields—education, jobs, recreation, living conditions, participation in the affairs of state and society.

Members of the Komsomol also have seats on the collegiums of many ministries and departments.

Some Facts and Figures. Between 1974 and 1977 the YCL Central Committee adopted jointly with state and public organizations 945 decisions on matters concerning work, studies, living conditions and leisure time of the younger generation.

Practically all decisions of government bodies concerning the youth are taken jointly with the Komsomol or with due consideration for its views. That applies not only to legal acts affecting the country as a whole, but also to the corresponding sections in collective agreements and plans for the social development of individual enterprises, which establish the management's obligations to young workers. These obligations include the provision of conditions for studies, for improving skills, lower norms for workers while they train, and many other things.

The Komsomol co-operates in its work with trade union, sports, creative and other organizations. Almost 1,500 thousand young people have been elected to trade union committees. More than one million YCL members work in the public control bodies.

The 1977 Soviet Constitution has given the young wider rights and opportunities. The age at which a person can be elected to the Supreme Soviets of the union and autonomous republics has been lowered from 21 to 18 years and for election to the USSR Supreme Soviet from 23 to 21. The voting age remains 18, which is also the minimum age for election to local Soviets.

In the past too the Komsomol participated actively in the drafting of national legislation affecting young people: the basic principles of the Labour Act, the Marriage and Family Act and the Education

Act. Now it has been given the additional right to initiate a legal proposal.

Another factor fostering Komsomol activity is that it is financially independent, with property of its own, and a budget for carrying out the tasks set out in its rules. This too has been formally enacted in the new Soviet Constitution. The Komsomol derives its revenue primarily from membership dues, profits from its publications and from lotteries. Drawing on its funds the Komsomol financed, for example, the construction of 19 international tourist camps in picturesque areas of the USSR. It builds youth hostels, memorial museums dedicated to Komsomol heroes, and much more.

The Komsomol has its own share of the mass media. This includes three publishing houses and 234 newspapers and magazines with a total circulation of over 76 million. In 1977 the *Molodaya Gvardia* (Young Guard) Publishing House alone printed 352 books totalling over 42 million copies. Youth programmes are broadcast by nearly 300 Radio and TV services with which the Komsomol actively collaborates.

Centralism and Democracy

Any truly revolutionary organization, including that of the youth, is a union of people who not only have a common political philosophy, but also act in unity. The Leninist Komsomol is a constantly growing and complex body. At present it includes 14 republican, 155 area and regional, 4,275 town and district, and 420,000 grass-root Komsomol organizations. To ensure that all local and grass-root organizations work toward one aim, it is essential to have an efficient, and clearcut pattern of guidance. The Leninist principles of the structure of the Komsomol, especially the principle of democratic centra-

lism, have proved to be a major mobilizing and organizing force. Especially in our times.

As in the Communist Party, centralism in Komsomol does not hinder democracy. They are two aspects of a single whole. Centralization of leadership is combined with the election of all leading bodies; strict discipline with broad independence; the right to discuss all issues freely with the duty to implicitly carry out all adopted decisions.

This principle ensures that the wide masses of youth are able to conduct their revolutionary activities fully and effectively. It also introduces a high degree of organization and discipline in the activities of the YCL, and helps to channel the initiative and creative efforts of the youth towards the common goal of building socialism and communism. Democratic centralism helps to rally the millions of members of the Komsomol into a single political organization. At all stages of its history, the Soviet Komsomol operated as a single youth organization uniting republican, local and grass-root organizations. They are all part of the YCL, part of an entity. Their unity is promoted by the existence of one single set of rules, discipline common to all, centralized leadership within the organization and the principle of binding decision adopted by the majority.

The Komsomol is built on the territorial-and-production principles. Its grass-root organizations operate in places where young people work or study, thereby uniting them in the decisive sphere of human activities—the sphere of labour. But at the same time all Komsomol organizations, beginning at the district level, are built on territorial principle. This allows the specific interests of various groups of youth (workers, farmers, students—both college and school) to be taken into account while promoting the combined activities of the grass-root organiza-

tions. It also makes it possible to consider the special features of individual organizations (such as college ones).

Centralized leadership of all YCL activities is exercised by the All-Union Komsomol Congresses, and between congresses, by the Central Committee and its top bodies—the Bureau and the Secretariat. Decisions of these bodies are binding on each organization and every Komsomol member.

When young people join the Komsomol they voluntarily assume obligations to the organization, to the Party and the entire Soviet people.

The Komsomol has always maintained that there should be full freedom of views in the organization, that members should discuss freely and productively all the problems of Komsomol life, since this helps to improve the work of the organization. Criticism and self-criticism are encouraged to help pinpoint shortcomings and educate the youth. This principle is developed in day-to-day activities. The latest example is offered by the reports and elections held in preparation for the 18th YCL Congress. They showed the Soviet youth's activity and ideological maturity, their solidarity with the Party.

Another highly important principle of Komsomol work is that of "reaching each member". This means in practice that every single member is drawn into socially useful activity, taught to be a fighter and a builder, shown that only with the collective's support and help can a young person find the greatest satisfaction in life and assure that his interests are fully met.

The Party's First Reserve

From the very first days of its existence the Komsomol has been conscious of the Party's concern. It

was the Party that armed the YCL with a programme of action, helped it to draw up the principles of its organization and work, ensured its practical participation in the revolutionary struggle and the building of socialism. The Party helped the members of the Komsomol and all youth to acquire a scientific Marxist outlook and understand the laws of social development; and the Party passed on its experience of revolutionary struggle.

In today's mature socialist society, Party guidance has been enriched with new content. The level of guidance and the choice of methods, ways and means of exercising guidance has to be much more sophisticated. The spiritual world of youth is richer, their cultural and social activity greater and their needs much more varied. Trust, respect for youth and comradely concern have always brought a warm response.

More than ever before the young people are today intolerant of anything resembling formalism, petty interference and guardianship, and especially, of any attempts to administrate, of rudeness and disregard for their needs and problems. As Leonid Brezhnev noted in his speech at the 25th Party Congress, it is essential to take this into account when working with youth. He also pointed out: "They are prepared to respond sincerely and wholeheartedly to any good initiative. But encounters with formalism and a bureaucratic approach to educational work tend to extinguish their fervour. Our task, however, is not only to keep this fervour alive, but also to encourage it. We want our young people to retain their enthusiasm, their mental alertness and their youthful energy for the rest of their lives. This should be promoted by the YCL, this should be its important concern."

The guidance given by the Marxist-Leninist Party is neither a guardianship nor an attempt to impose its views on youth, as anti-communists and enemies of socialism try to assert. The experience the Leninist Party acquired in the hard and heroic struggle for the happiness of the people entitles it to show concern for the upbringing and ideological tempering of its main ally and reserve—the Komsomol. That is an important condition for the successful development of the revolutionary youth. At the 25th CPSU Congress the Komsomol was described as the direct and militant reserve of the Party. Those are not empty words. In 1977, for instance, YCL members accounted for 72 per cent of the candidates for Party membership. At present, 16.6 per cent of total Party membership—2.7 million—are under the age of 30.

Young Internationalists

In his speech to the 18th Komsomol Congress Leonid Brezhnev said: "To preserve this Earth of ours and to hand it over to the rising generation with all its wealth and beauty, unblemished by a nuclear holocaust—this, as we see it, is the goal to which the thoughts of humanity should be directed."

His words brought a warm response from the delegates and the guests of the Congress: representatives of seven international youth organizations (including the World Federation of Democratic Youth, the International Union of Students, the Pan-African Youth Movement), 135 communist youth leagues, democratic and socialist youth organizations from 107 countries.

Wide sections of the rising generation throughout the world are now developing co-operation, streng-

thening their ties for a joint struggle for peace and for the national and social liberation. The aims and tasks of this struggle at the present stage have been clearly defined in the Programme of Further Struggle for Peace and International Co-operation, and for the Freedom and Independence of the Peoples put forward by the 25th CPSU Congress.

Soviet young people are internationalist in their outlook, and, like all the Soviet people, they are enthusiastically implementing the Party's peaceful foreign policy. They always take an active part in progressive undertakings and in widening contacts with young people and youth organizations of other countries.

Many international youth gatherings and events took place in this country. The largest were: the International Youth Forum "The October Revolution and Youth", held in Leningrad last year when the 60th anniversary of the revolution was being marked; the Forum of Students from the Socialist Countries; the World Meeting of Young Women; and the International Children's Festival "Let There Always Be Sunshine". All these forums clearly revealed the growing interest of progressive youth in the immortal ideas of Lenin and in the practice of communist construction.

In recent years the world youth movement has launched a number of major campaigns which clearly showed its determination to make a concrete contribution to achieving these ideals. Among the campaigns initiated by Soviet youth, which received an international support were: the worldwide campaign of youth for anti-imperialist solidarity, peace and progress, the European Meeting of Youth and Students, for Lasting Peace, Security, Co-operation and Social Progress, and the European Youth and Student Conference on Disarmament.

A task of prime importance—and this was stressed at the 18th Komsomol Congress—is that of drawing the widest sections of the youth into vigorous actions to limit and stop the arms race. In our opinion, a representative international meeting of young fighters for peace, putting an end to the arms race and achieving disarmament would contribute to this cause.

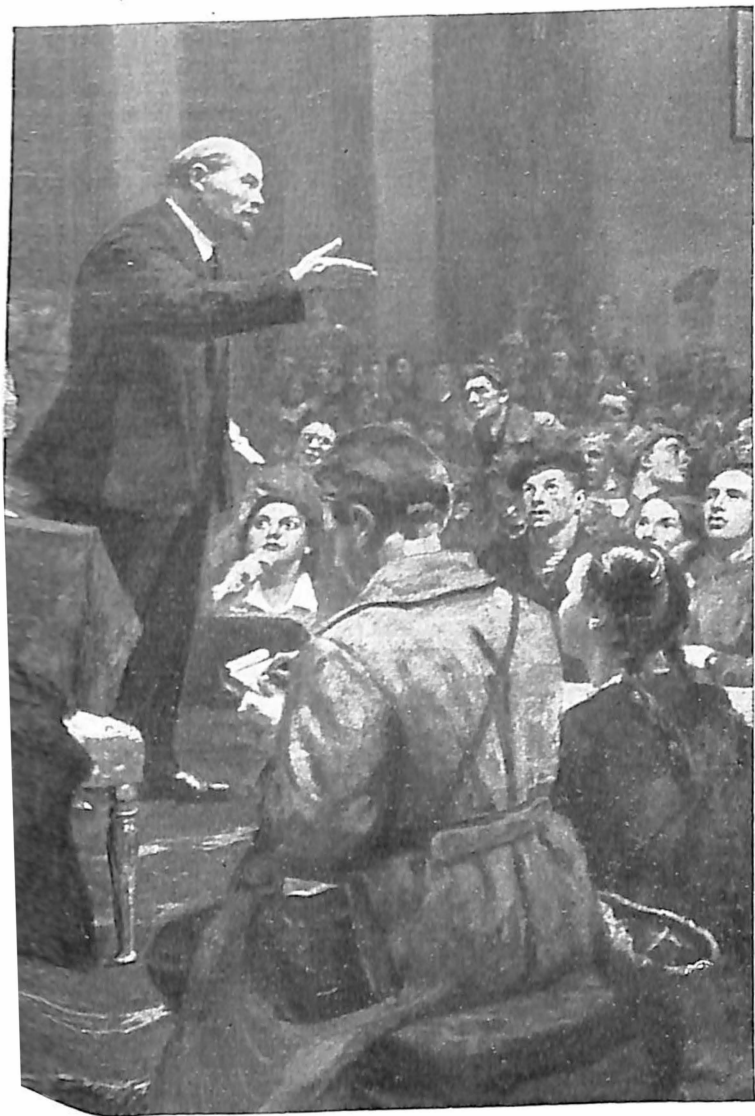
We are convinced that the democratic youth of the world will continue to reply to the ominous plans of the apostles of neutron death with massive and vigorous participation in the campaign “No to the Neutron Bomb!”

All the Komsomol activities at the present stage are geared to the Party’s programme goal of bringing the people up in a spirit of loyalty to communism and high ideological standards. This is all the more important now when a developed socialist society has been built and the country is moving towards communism.

**“Enrich your mind with
the knowledge of all
the treasures created
by mankind”**

Those words are taken from the Lenin’s speech at the 3rd Komsomol Congress. Indeed, it would

“You must be the first builders of a communist society,” Lenin said at the 3rd Komsomol Congress in 1920.





1928

Defending Soviet power

The Order of the Red Banner was the Komsomol's first decoration. It was conferred upon the young Leninists for bravery during the years of the Civil War and foreign intervention.

"The Committee is closed, everyone has gone to the front"—this was not an infrequent notice on the boarded doors of Komsomol offices in many towns in those days. More than 200,000 young men and women took up arms to fight the enemies of the



revolution, to defend and secure Soviet power. Many of them have become an ever-lasting example for future generations of Soviet young people.



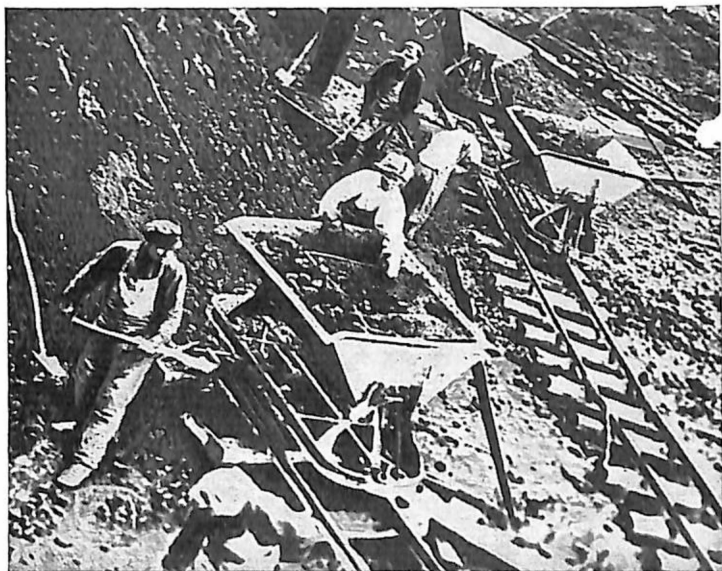


1931

Dedicated labour to fulfil the five-year plan

The conditions in which the young Soviet Republic began to create its economic base were very difficult. New plants, factories, railroads and power stations had to be built in the shortest possible time.

The Leninist Komsomol became the main force of communist construction and the initiator of the socialist emulation movement. It was in those years that the tradition of Komsomol-built high priority projects originated. The



projects included mines and blast furnaces, chemical and machine-building complexes.

To mark the Komsomol's contribution to the country's industrialization, the Soviet Government awarded the YCL the Order of the Red Banner of Labour.



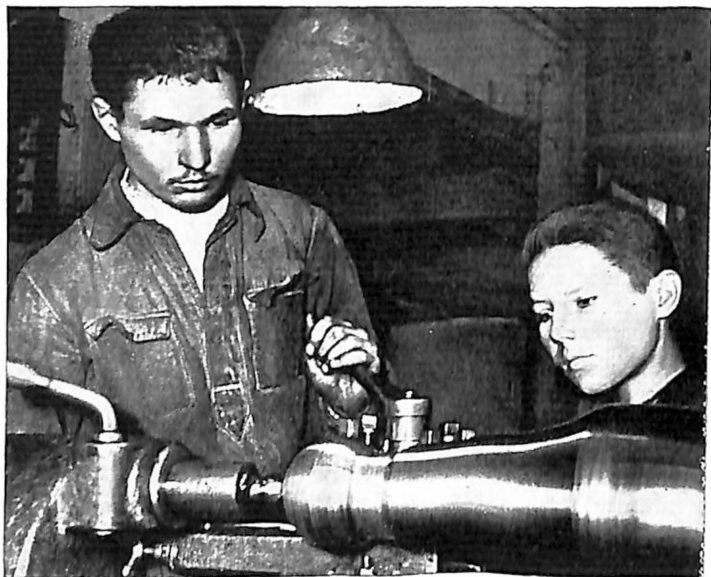


Selfless dedication to the homeland

The third and highest decoration, the Order of Lenin, was conferred on the Komsomol for the unparalleled heroism, determination and loyalty of its members to their Motherland during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45.

In those years young people matured before their time. Millions of YCLers who were at the front, in partisan detachments and underground in occupied areas displayed great feats of bravery and showed true love for their Motherland. Fourteen-year-old boys took over the jobs of their fathers and brothers who had gone to the front.

1945



Пролетарии всех стран, соединитесь!
**ВСЕСОЮЗНЫЙ АГРИКОННО-КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКИЙ
СОЮЗ МОЛОДЕЖИ**

КОМСОМОЛЬСКИЙ БИЛЕТ
№ 14609182 *

Фамилия Кагамлык
Имя и отчество Григорий Григорьевич
Год рождения 1921
Время поступления в члены 1940
Наименование организации Колхоз "Красный Октябрь"
Место работы Колхоз "Красный Октябрь"
Функция Секретарь

УЛМУЧ НУ НЕ
Уплата членских взносов за 1938 г.

Месяц	Мой ла- работы	Число внес	Секретарь <u>ЛН</u>
Январь	<u>не стаю</u>		
Февраль	<u>на заю</u>		
Март			
Апрель	<u>Клянуся</u>		
Май			
Июнь	<u>своей крави</u>		
Июль			
Август	<u>ср. флаги</u>		
Сентябрь			
Октябрь	<u>★</u>		
Ноябрь			
Декабрь			

"I'll die but I won't go back an inch..." was written on his Komsomol card by soldier and YCLer Grigori Kagamlyk when Hitlerites were surrounding him.





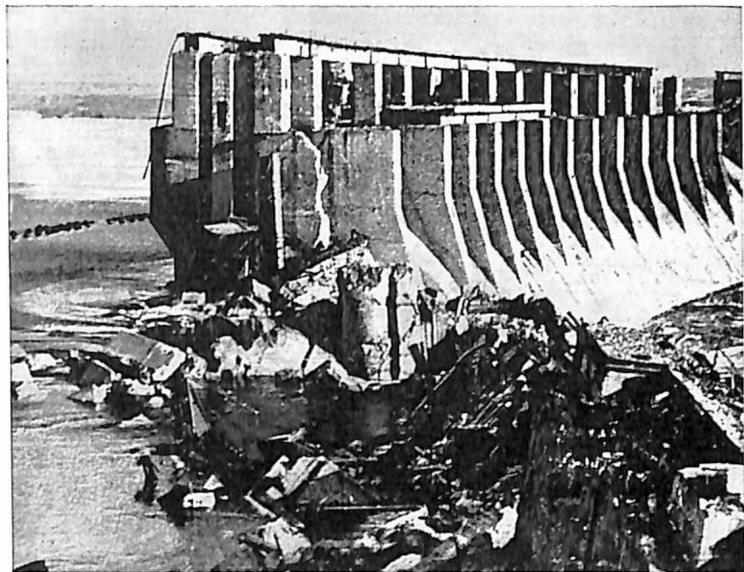
1948

In honour of the fallen

Not only did the war against fascism take the lives of 20 million Soviet people, it left 25 million homeless. 1,710 towns and 70,000 villages lay in ruins and 32,000 industrial enterprises were destroyed. Many Western experts estimated that it would take the Soviet Union at least a quarter of a century to rebuild. Yet in five years the war wounds were healed and Soviet industry was producing one-and-a-half times as much



as had been produced before the war. For its efforts in the rehabilitation of the economy the Kom-somol was, on its 30th anniversary, awarded the Order of Lenin for the second time.





1956

"Discovery" of Virgin Land

Names of new heroes and new endeavours marked every new stage in the Komsomol's history. In 1954-55, responding to the Party's call over half a million young people went to Kazakhstan and Siberia to settle and develop virgin lands. In three years, 80 million acres of land were brought under cultivation. 425 large grain-producing state farms were built as well as modern settlements, scientific and edu-



cational institutions, railway lines, roads and electrical installations. This immense and economically important effort was marked by the third Order of Lenin on the Komsomol's banner.





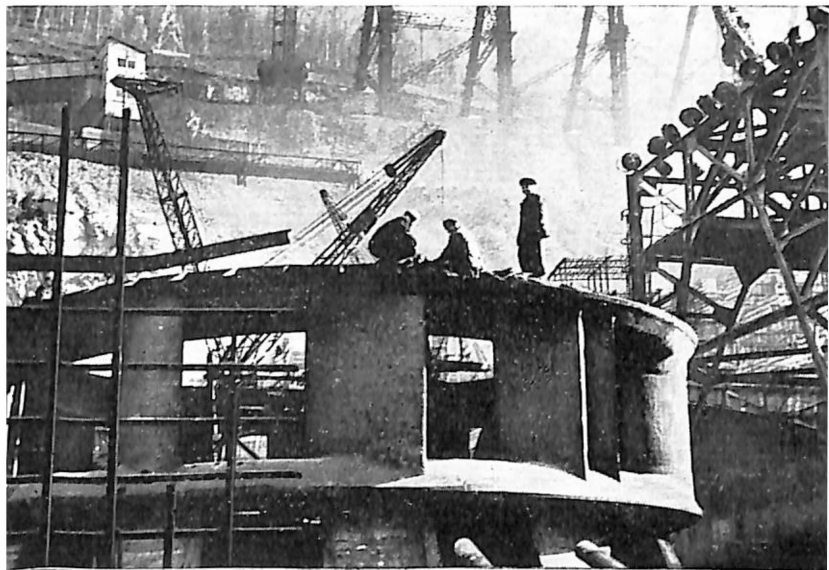
Order of the October Revolution

This decoration was conferred on the Leninist Komsomol on its 50th anniversary. It was awarded in appreciation for the labour and war-time exploits of all generations of Soviet young people who grew up after the

1968



revolution. The Leninist League demonstrated ideological unity, continuity of revolutionary, combat and labour traditions and boundless loyalty to the cause of Communism.





Carrying on the traditions of early years

Today, as in the 1920's, in the difficult war years and the years of peaceful construction, the Komsomol members are leading the way. They are developing the Earth's resources, building new towns and large economic projects. Among today's Komsomol-patronaged high priority construction projects are the Baikal-Amur Railway in East Siberia, Works on the Kama River, oil deposits in Tyumen in West Siberia and the development of the Non-Black Soil Zone in the Russian Federation.



Our address is KAMAZ

The Kama Auto Works in Naberezhniye Chelny is the Europe's largest and most modern truck manufacturing enter-



prise. This industrial giant and the surrounding town were built by young people who also manage the works and the town, which is the youngest in the USSR.



Construction project of the century

The Baikal-Amur Railway Trunkline (3,200 km) is a bellwether of the Komsomol construction projects.





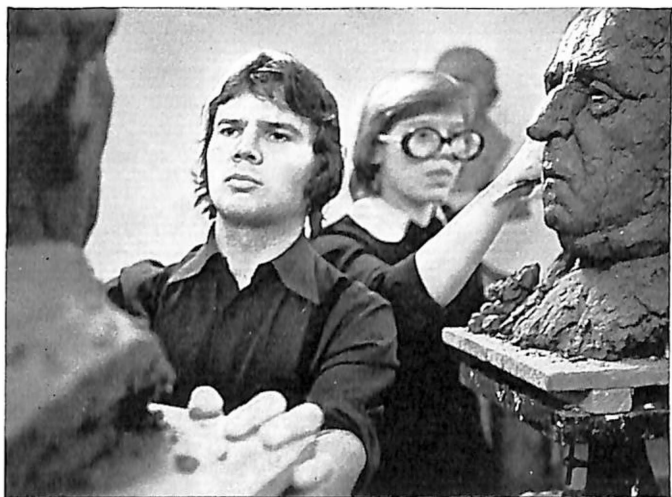
Finding oneself



The Soviet Union has a wide network of specialized secondary and higher educational establishments. Over 1,700,000 students work in research labs and designing offices belonging to students' scientific societies. The



natural striving of young people for creative work is encouraged by the Komsomol in every way. Annual Komsomol prizes for literature, art, science and production are awarded to the young.



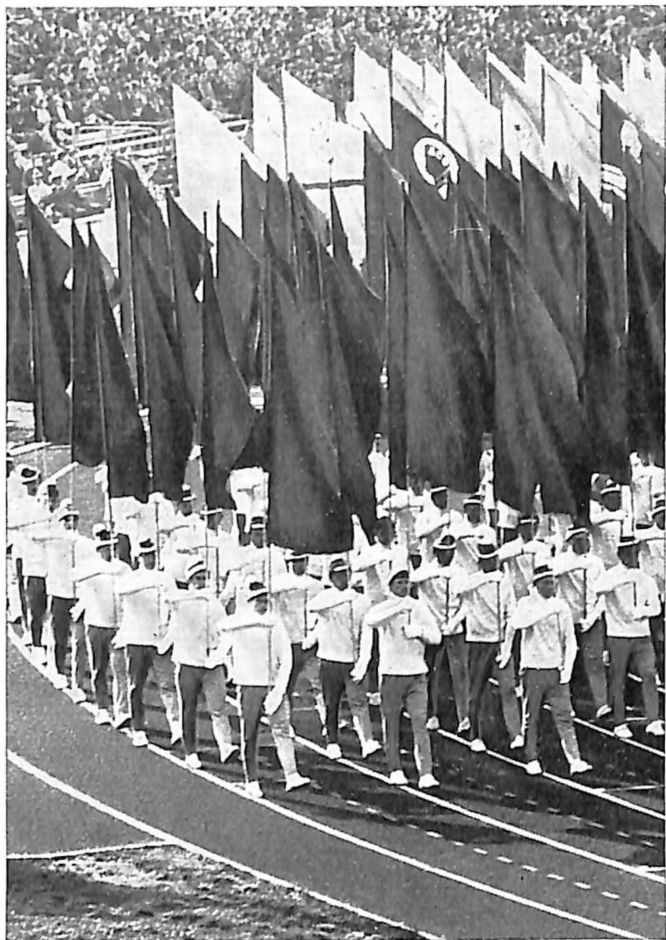


Lyudmila Semenyaka, soloist of the Bolshoi ballet and member of the YCL Central Committee, as Aurora in Chaikovsky's "The Sleeping Beauty".

Entrance hall at the student satire theatre, "Dummy", a polytechnical institute in Chelyabinsk.



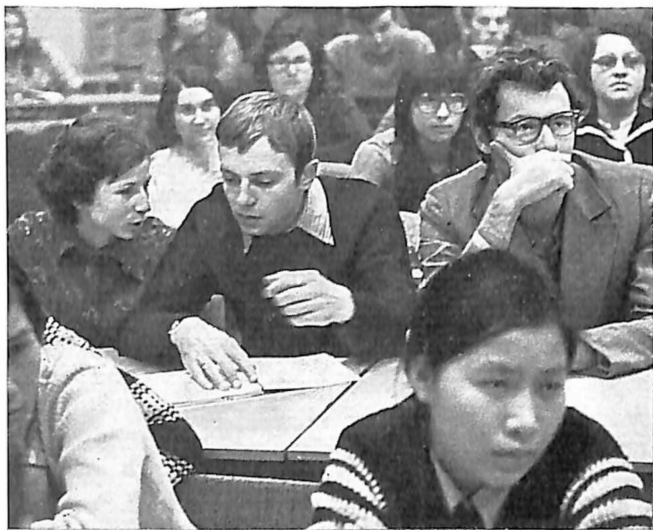
From a GTO [Ready for Labour and Defence] badge to an Olympic medal is a motto of the mass physical culture movement. Photo shows the opening of a sports festival at Luzhnik stadium in Moscow.



We're a happy family



"We're a happy family", say the Mironovs, Olga and Sergei, students of Moscow University, the USSR's largest. They have a son, love each other and are sure that everything they dream about will come true.



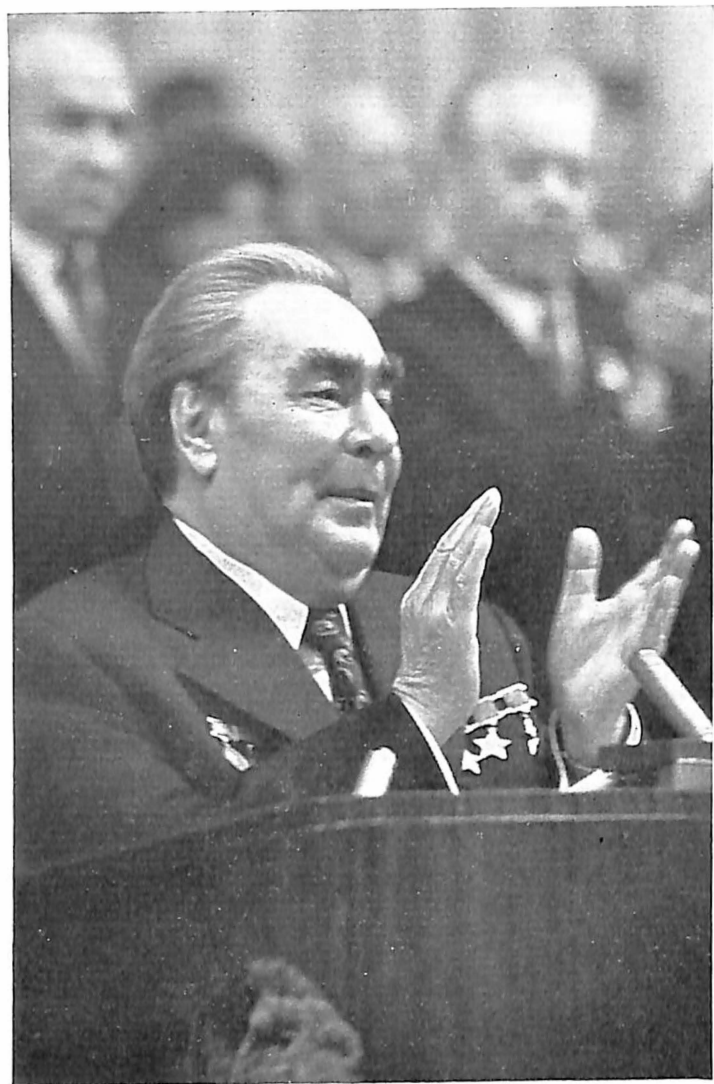


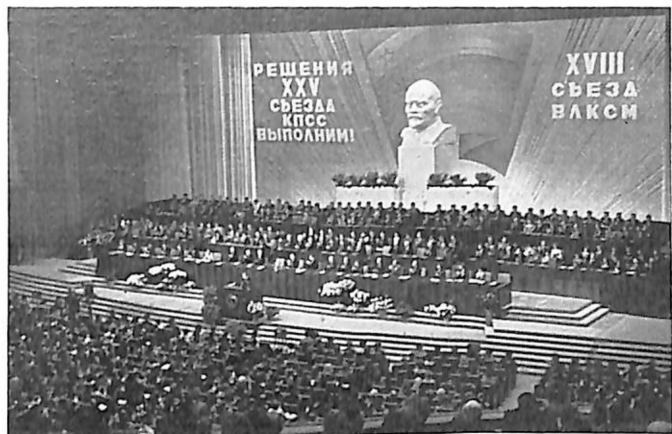
Active attitude to life and high sense of civic duty—these are the distinguishing features of Soviet YCLers. At their general meetings, meetings of YCL Committees and at production conferences they learn to manage public and eco-



conomic affairs. Young people take keen interest in everything—the work of their local organizations, the life of their enterprises, schools or colleges, as well as the country's social and economic development. . .







"By and large, I think, Communists of the older generation can be pleased with Soviet youth of the present day. They are growing up with Communist convictions, and are deeply faithful to the great cause of the Party and Lenin."

Leonid BREZHNEV. Speech at the 18th Komsomol Congress on April 25, 1978

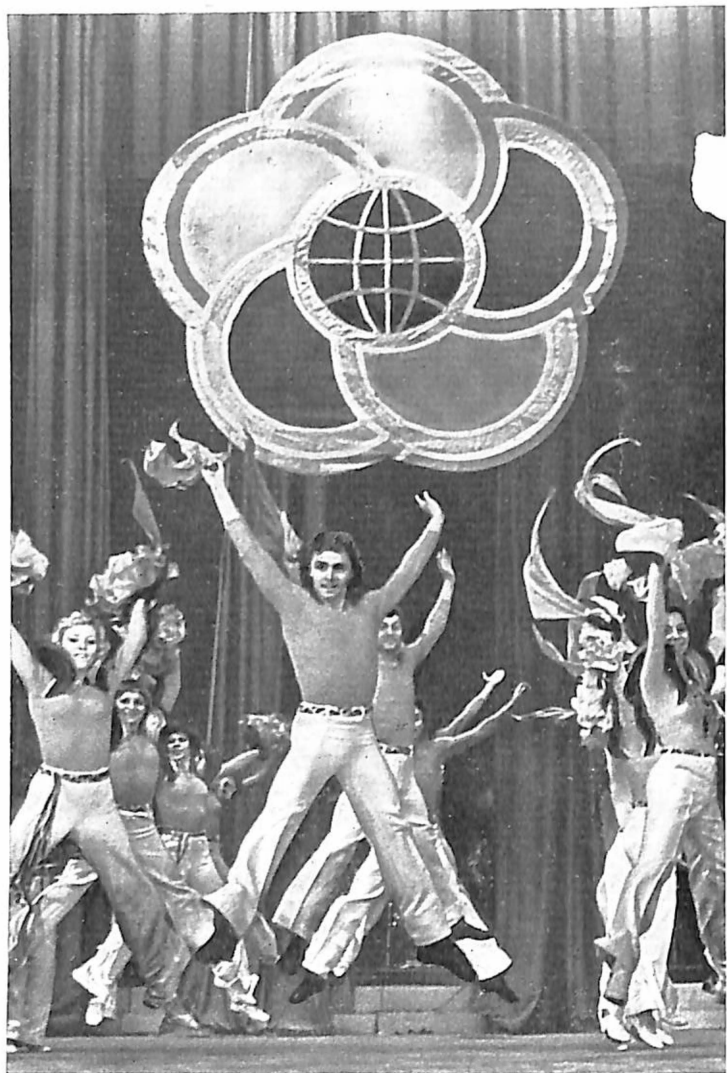
At the 18th Komsomol Congress (April 1978) delegates spoke about their achievements and discussed problems of Komsomol life and the world youth movement. During intervals between sessions they exchanged impressions, experiences



and new songs. Many delegates visited Moscow's industrial enterprises, schools and institutes...

Soviet youth followed the work of the Congress with keen interest.





be hard to imagine modern man without a knowledge of all that has been achieved to date. Science and production are constantly advancing. Technology and management of production are becoming increasingly complex. Dozens of professions wither away and new ones emerge. Modern society requires a mobile specialist who in the 25-30 years of his working life can change his profession several times. This professional mobility can only be achieved if one never stops learning, making use of the educational system embracing general and special secondary school, college, refresher courses, courses for improving qualifications, etc. This system provides for a solid general and special education.

Article 45 of the USSR Constitution reads: "Citizens of the USSR have the right to education. This right is ensured by free provision of all forms of education, by the institution of universal, compulsory secondary education, and broad development of vocational, specialized secondary, and higher education, in which instruction is oriented towards practical activity and production; by the development of extramural, correspondence and evening courses; by the provision of state scholarships and grants and privileges for students; by the free issue of school textbooks; by the opportunity to attend a school where the teaching is in the native language; and by the provision of facilities for self-education".

This is a great achievement of socialism, but it was not easy to achieve.

Before the October Revolution, three-fourths of

Soviet performers gave a concert for the participants in the 11th World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana.

the population of Russia could neither read nor write. The situation was worst of all in the outlying areas. Forty ethnic groups had no written language at all. Many people viewed the situation with extreme pessimism. In 1904, the Russian magazine *Vestnik Vospitaniya* (Educational News) predicted that total literacy could be achieved in the European part of Russia in 120 years, in the Caucasus and Siberia in 430 years and in the Tur-kistan Area in 4,600 years.

In one of his speeches in the early years after the revolution Anatoly Lunacharsky, who was commissar (a minister) in charge of education, said that the young Soviet government could supply one pencil for 60 people, one fountain-pen for 22, one inkwell for 100 pupils and one exercise book per pupil a year. Nevertheless, schools and classes for eliminating illiteracy began to spring up throughout the country. The Komsomol call of those days was "Each Komsomol member who can read and write must teach one illiterate person." And teach they did, but not only one—many many more. By the mid-thirties, 40 million people had learned to read and write. More than 350 thousand YCL members were engaged in the literacy campaign. By the end of the 1930's, illiteracy in the USSR was virtually wiped out.

According to statistical data, in the 1977/78 academic year, more than 93 million people were studying, including 40 million in the general education schools, about 4 million in vocational and trade schools, 4.7 million in technical and other specialized secondary schools, and 5 million in institutions of higher learning. Over 5 million young people received a secondary education in 1977 (either a general or specialized secondary educa-

tion), and of this number, 1.2 million combined work with studies.

For young people who work there are evening and correspondence schools, technical schools and colleges. Those who combine work with studies have a shorter working week, additional paid leave, and they cannot be made to work on jobs that could hinder their studies. The management is obliged to provide students of evening and correspondence courses with work in keeping with their chosen profession.

Factories, co-operative and state farms, organizations and offices can send their employees to college and technical schools and pay them higher maintenance grants out of their own funds.

The state's expenditure on the education and upbringing of children and teenagers increases every year. Students pay nothing for tuition. They receive maintenance grants, have free use of all educational aids, laboratories, libraries, reading halls, computer facilities, clubs, sports gear and facilities.

Hostel accommodation is provided for the purely symbolic sum of not more than 5 per cent of the maintenance grant.

These are only some of the provisions made by the state to ensure the young people's right to education. These provisions are being extended all the time. The state is ensuring the training of active builders of communism, well educated and harmoniously developed. Throughout the history of the Soviet Union, the Komsomol and the schools have worked hand in hand to perfect the education system.

The Komsomol organizations in the general education, vocational and technical schools, and colleges and universities are an impressive force. Their

membership ranges from 60 to 95 per cent of all students, and every fifth teacher is a YCLer.

Today 94 out of every 100 young workers have a higher or secondary education or are studying to acquire it. But even this cannot satisfy us. There are still thousands of young workers who have not complete secondary education and many school pupils do not study well.

We recalled the youngsters of the 1920's, badly dressed and undernourished, but with a passionate desire to study. What are young people of today like? Today, there are a few lazy fellows, who have existed in all times and ages. And of course there is no justification for a youngster who lacks nothing, but declares: "I don't want to study and I won't!" He could be left to his fate. In another 5-10 years he will come to regret his foolishness and will try to make up for it. But time does not stand still and if a youngster has stopped using his brain, he will find it hard to make it work again. What came easily at the age of 15-17, is much harder at the age of 30-35. And so the Komsomol is doing a tremendous job in the schools to ensure that there are less and less young people who waste the best years of their life.

A young person can join the Komsomol at the age of 14. Teachers regard this as a difficult age, when the young want to become adults quickly. That makes it all the more important to instill a feeling of responsibility—for themselves, their comrades and their country. Only someone with no sense of responsibility can say: "I don't want to study."

Soviet people take it for granted that all education is free. So much so that a teenager does not realize that the government provides him with an

education and a profession as an advance payment that he will repay with his work when he becomes involved in social production. Usually children are taught at home not to waste money, because their parents have to work hard to earn it. But not every family explains to a child that it is equally wrong to waste state money, because that money actually belongs to all the people.

The work of the Komsomol in educational establishments is by no means confined to making the loafers study properly. Its task is much bigger: to help shape an ideologically convinced fighter, a conscious builder of communism. The Komsomol is responsible for the political education of youth. This is no easy task. It is necessary to avoid the pitfalls of rhetoric, empty mouthing of slogans and revolutionary phrases. It is now common practice for the Komsomol organizations to arrange what has become known as a Lenin Lesson at which theory sets the stage for concrete analysis and practical action. Young people don't merely study Marxism-Leninism, they apply it creatively to the present situation and put it into practice. The Lenin Lesson under the motto: "YCL membership calls for heroic deeds," did not become a simple enumeration of all the acts of heroism of the Komsomol. It helped the young people understand that everything entrusted to them—studies, work, army service—should be done so that later in life there are "no torturing regrets for wasted years", as the writer Nikolai Ostrovsky, a YCLer of the 1920's, put it.

The system of political education of the youth has changed very greatly in the 60 years of the Komsomol's existence: from the popular explanations of the basic principles of Marxism in the early years

to in-depth studies by millions of young people of Lenin's theoretical work and Party and Komsomol documents.

Another field of intensive Komsomol activity is the vocational guidance of the younger generation. The youth newspapers and magazines introduce youngsters to various spheres of human activity, so that they could choose a profession close to their hearts, which would help them to bring greater benefit to society and where they would be most needed. The grasping of these ideas by a youngster ensures the right choice of his way in life.

The Soviet rising generation is deeply involved in scientific and technical creative work. This can be seen from the exhibition of inventions and works of schoolchildren, vocational and technical school students, young workers and co-operative farmers, the certificates of authorship issued and the diplomas they have won at various contests.

The Moscow city Komsomol organization has elaborated a comprehensive programme for drawing young people into the efforts to promote scientific and technical progress, reconstruction and technical re-equipment of factories. At the Likhachev Auto Works in Moscow a young people's scientific and technical unit has been formed. Its work is guided by the scientific and technical council of the factory YCL Committee. The unit substantially contributes to increasing production capacities, designing and making new models of vehicles.

The Komsomol organization of Tajikistan reported to the 18th Komsomol Congress that 25,000 young people in the republic have been taking part in scientific and technical activities, as a result of which 2,539 innovations were effected in production with a total saving of 2 million roubles (the cost

of building 3 nine-storey houses with 71 flats each).

In the universities and colleges more than 1,800 thousand students are doing research. There are also student designing offices, student science expeditions, classes and seminars headed by students. Recently the student Designing Office at the Lvov Polytechnical Institute produced the blueprints for the construction of more than 160 hostels, college buildings, sports camps, schools and pre-school institutions in 50 cities.

The newspaper *Moskovsky Komsomolets* (Moscow YCLer) reported on February 22nd, 1978, about a 16-year-old inventor—Vitaly Petrovsky, from the vocational school training metal workers in Baranovich, Byelorussia. The boy had read in a magazine *Yuny Tekhnik* (Young Technician) an article about the mechanisms operating on the bridges in Leningrad. The thing is that there are many bridges across the Neva river in the city which are extremely valuable as objects of historical and artistic importance, since they were built by famous 19th century architects. To enable ships to navigate on the river, the bridges are drawn each night. Vitaly sent the magazine his own original proposal for drawing up the bridges. It was passed on to experts, and they found it very interesting and promising.

The State Committee on Inventions and Discoveries of the USSR Council of Ministers examined Vitaly's solution and finding that it had no analogy in bridge-building issued a certificate of authorship. The boy's invention would reduce the number of trained staff needed on the bridges by three-fourths and would also greatly reduce the cost of bridge construction and maintenance.

Part of the great army of free labour

"We must organize all labour, . . . in such a way that every worker and peasant will be able to say: I am part of the great army of free labour," Lenin told the 3rd Congress of the Komsomol. His words have become the guiding principle in the labour education of Soviet youth.

The youth of the 1970's can be said to live on the frontier between two ages. Old techniques and manual labour still exist, while a new production technology is taking shape under the influence of the scientific and technological revolution. There are still jobs that any healthy man can cope with, but at a modern power station the "stoker" has to have a technician's diploma and on board the nuclear ice-breaker *Arktika*, a physicist's college diploma is necessary before you can get anywhere near the engine-room. The scientific and technological revolution is advancing at a terrific pace. New branches of science are emerging. In their wake come new types of production which bring new professions. Society requires highly specialized knowledge and the rising generation of workers has to have a solid general educational basis to build on.

In today's society of developed socialism, a conscientious attitude to one's job is not enough, one must also display initiative, creative abilities and labour activity.

The labour education of the younger generation is a matter of national concern which has found its reflection in the new Soviet Constitution.

Shock Labour

In our life we have such concepts as shock labour, shock-worker, a Komsomol shock project. Shock labour means putting everything you've got into your job.

As Lenin pointed out, the Great October Socialist Revolution was marked by "the great change from working under compulsion to working for oneself, to labour planned and organized on a gigantic, national... scale..."

Right after the Civil War of 1918-20 Komsomol-and-youth labour teams were organized at factories, mines and railways that had been rehabilitated or were being rebuilt. That was where the youth of the 1920's—fresh from the cavalry attacks and having lost none of their revolutionary fervour—moulded their character. They were undernourished, badly dressed and lacked sleep. But an inner fire kept them going and each morning they found the strength to get on with their job. They were a cheerful and exuberant crowd.

The papers reported that in 1921 alone, 1,500 Communist subbotniks were held at the Petrograd railway junction. It was at these subbotniks that the youth, as Lenin put it, made their social contribution, displayed their initiative and made many a new beginning. A youth subbotnik in the Donetsk coalfields produced 480 tons of coal that was distributed among children's homes and schools for heating purposes. In the Novgorod province, 5,360 young workers took part in one subbotnik...

The first five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the USSR was adopted in April, 1929. A backward agricultural country was being turned into an industrial state. The Komsomol called for young volunteers to work on the

construction sites of the five-year plan; 7,000 went to build the Magnitogorsk steel works in the Urals, the Stalingrad tractor plant, the Turkestan-Siberian railway, the new town of Komsomolsk-on-the-Amur in the East, and the Dnieper hydro-power station. Another 66,000 left for Siberia and the Urals, and 36,000 went to work in the pits of the Donetsk coal-fields.

Through its newspaper, the *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, the Central Committee of the Komsomol called on the young people to launch nation-wide socialist emulation movement for the overfulfilment of the five-year plan and urged the formation of teams of shock labour. In just one year 1,500 thousand young people joined the ranks of the shock workers. The Party approved the Komsomol initiative and called on all workers and farmers to back it up. Initiated by the Komsomol, socialist emulation became the main method of building socialism in the country. Those taking part in the movement sought to help those who lagged behind, not merely forge ahead themselves. Industrial and office workers and farmers competed in expanding industrial and agricultural output; shop-assistants and workers in the services industries—in providing the best service to the population. Nor did this emulation drive pass by scientific and cultural workers. In this kind of friendly competition, there is scope for initiative and each person can display his abilities to the full. The number of shock production teams increased and soon entire factory shops, pits and blast furnaces were given this title.

Forty years ago seventy volunteers from the ranks of the Komsomol set to building the Moscow underground or Metro as we call it. Today it is a network of 164.5 kilometres of track with 103

stations, that carries 5,700 thousand passengers every day.

In the second half of the 1950's, thousands of young people went to Kazakhstan in Central Asia to reclaim virgin and fallow lands and build the Karakum canal. In their breast pocket was a small red card issued by the Komsomol, showing they had full YCL backing. The young people were leaving comfortable homes for a largely unknown and difficult job. What prompted them? Was this forced on them?

To quote one of the builders of the Karakum canal, Vasily Kirillov, a YCL member: "From the point of view of the young, a Komsomol construction project not only spelled adventure and achievement, it offered the chance to choose your road in life, to find yourself. It gave you a sense of responsibility, the feeling that you were the master of the land. It also taught you to be courageous to surmount difficulties."

The Komsomol construction sites were excellent schools which taught the younger generation to run things and instilled a sense of responsibility. The management and the workers belonged to the same generation. The average age of the builders at these projects was 26-28 and the chiefs were only a couple of years older. A 26-year-old engineer in a designing institute is often a very junior member of the staff, and a journalist fresh from college in a large publishing house will find little independent work at first. But at a Komsomol construction project the young run the job and put out the newspaper. This brings them not only great satisfaction and prestige, but great responsibilities as well. There are no experienced men around who will set the young specialist right and put his mistake

down to lack of experience. Everything has to be done by the young themselves.

It is a Komsomol tradition to sponsor the most important construction projects in the country. This tradition continues today. The YCL members of the sixties and seventies built the Bratsk and Krasnoyarsk hydropower stations in Siberia, as well as the towns of Ust-Ilimsk and Divnogorsk: they built the Kama Auto Works in Naberezhnye Chelny in the Tatar Autonomous Republic and are now working on the Baikal-Amur Railway. In the period of the 9th five-year plan alone (1971-75), 675 projects were sponsored by the Komsomol. On April 28, 1978 Komsomol shock work units of 1,500 left straight from the YCL Congress to build the *Atom-mash* engineering works, the Ust-Ilimsk timber complex, to the construction sites of the Non-Black Soil Belt in Central Russia, and to the building of gas and chemical industry in the Tyumen region of Siberia as well as to the Baikal-Amur Railway project.

To Live Means to Create

"I can't understand your young people," complained a young Frenchman during the World Youth and Student Festival in Moscow in 1957. He was sincere in wanting to find out everything for himself instead of depending on hearsay. He asked to be introduced to someone who had worked on the virgin lands and was greatly surprised to meet a well-dressed young man, Konstantin Patin, instead of the bearded wild-looking chap he had pictured.

The Frenchman afterwards said excitedly: "He's read Baudelaire and Villon, he knows the latest models of our cars and hopes to have a car of his

own as well as a comfortable flat. But he went to the virgin soil project and his hands are in callouses. He wants to go again and that wish is stronger than the desire for all the things we dream to have. Yet he's no fanatic. He knows what's good and what's bad. I just can't understand it all."

He didn't understand, but he wanted to. In two weeks he hoped to find all the answers. He listened to our songs and asked for the translation of every word. He stopped youngsters in the street and questioned them at length. He would open the paper *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and pointing at an item beg his interpreter to translate it. He sat in on Komsomol meetings.

And the conclusion he drew was: "You live to create, not the reverse."

In any undertaking it is essential to create, invent and try things out. That is the stand taken by the Komsomol—not an abstract or theoretical stand, but a principle it has put into practice throughout its lifetime. This principle stems from the very nature of the organization.

So if a youngster thinks that he will do best at a Komsomol project, he volunteers for such work; if he believes he will do well on the farm, he becomes an agricultural machine-operator. The type of work he chooses is not the main thing, what is important is that it is not a job just to earn a living, but a job that will make his life interesting and worthwhile. The right to choose his vocation—the one that lies closest of all to his heart—is extremely important.

In affirming one of the great gains of socialism, the right of all citizens to work, the 1977 Soviet Constitution in Article 40 decrees for the first time in history: "...the right to choose their (the citizens'—*Ed.*) trade or profession, type of job and

work in accordance with their inclinations, abilities, training and education, and with due account for the needs of society."

It is not enough to have the right to choose a profession, one has to be able to take full advantage of this right. There are some 50,000 different professions known in the world. So a youngster is unable to make a choice without advice. On his own he can hardly even get to know all the different fields of human activities. His teachers and vocational guidance experts come to his aid. The Komsomol too has its part to play: its press and the TV and radio programmes it sponsors tell young people about various trades and professions and, most important of all, how and where they can be acquired.

As Boris Pastukhov, the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Komsomol, said at the 9th Plenary Meeting of the YCL Central Committee, "The new provision in the Constitution on the right to choose a profession is an important part of the right to work and it demands of the Komsomol organizations to do everything to strengthen links between the school and life... so that the system of labour education and vocational guidance embrace all pupils and be conducted on the basis of modern production and technology with due consideration for different age groups."

The Komsomol committees at factories and offices help young people to raise their professional skills by organizing schools of advanced experience and classes to raise skills. Socialist emulation movement provides an important stimulus for gaining higher qualifications.

Widespread today are young workers' contests for the title "best in the profession". They are conducted for the young separately, because they can-

not compete with their elders who have much more experience both in work and life in general. It is important to give the youth backing and encouragement in their attempts to become more experienced and take a more active part in the common cause. Until recently the contests for "best in the profession" were run within the framework of a single enterprise. Today they cover several enterprises in the same industry, so that workers can learn from the experience of others. An essential feature of these contests is that the competitors are concerned not only with fulfilling their personal commitments, but with all stages of production, with raising the economic efficiency of the entire enterprise.

A decisive role in the labour education of young people is played by work collectives. It is in this group that the personality of a young worker is shaped; there he grows spiritually and professionally, acquiring habits of thinking and acting in keeping with the nation-wide interests.

For many young people the Komsomol-youth collectives were the school where they learnt their job and matured as citizens. The first Komsomol-youth teams appeared more than 50 years ago. There are more than half a million of them today. What attraction do they hold for the young? They offer the opportunity to recognize the significance of one's work and instill a sense of responsibility. The Komsomol relies on these teams for tackling the most important tasks both in the field of production and in education.

The Experienced Help the Youth

In 1974 a group of workers and farmers received the highest award in the country—the title of Hero

of Socialist Labour. The group included Stepan Vitchenko, a fitters' team leader from the Leningrad *Elektrosila* plant, Olga Vakhmyanina, a spinner from the Reutov textile mills near Moscow, Pavel Pechenkin, a co-operative farmer from the Altai region and Alexei Shatilin, a steel-worker from the Urals. The citation said that the award was made for their long years of fruitful labour and for initiating the movement among experienced workers to help the youth.

An important aspect of the labour education of the rising generation is helping them to find their place in life, teaching them to understand not only the social significance of labour, but also that work is an art. They learn to love their chosen profession and to respect the work collective of their factory or co-operative farm. This is a field in which older, experienced workers are invaluable. They take young newcomers under their wing.

Stepan Vitchenko, a former officer in the Soviet Army, worked as a fitter at the Leningrad *Elektrosila* engineering works. His team was one of the best at the factory. But at the end of 1962 he left his famous work team and organized a new one, which included some of the difficult youngsters—those whom parents found hard to deal with and who worked badly, often just wasting hours on the job. Since then some 150 youngsters have been part of his team. Stepan Vitchenko taught them all the secrets of the trade and they became shock workers. At times things were difficult, almost unbearable, but the team never dropped a single youngster. More than 100 eventually joined the Komsomol and 16 joined the Party. Vitchenko stressed on many occasions that his success was due to the help of the Komsomol group. They took on new members, helped them to draw up their first socialist

emulation pledge and fulfil it, reviewed fairly the results of the newcomers' work and their behaviour. So it was only natural that the Komsomol organizer Vladimir Tzeluyev was respected just as much as the team leader. When Stepan Vitchenko decided to retire, he handed the team banner and leadership to his young pupil.

Boris Troyanov, a young worker from the Hammer and Sickle Steel Plant in Moscow, had this to say about the man who had helped him when he first came to the plant. "It's not easy when you begin your independent life. The main thing is not to make mistakes and not to get flustered. You have to have faith in yourself, not be afraid of difficulties and never seek the easy way out. None of those things happened to me, because from the moment I arrived on the factory floor I had a wonderful man at my side, an excellent steel worker-Sergey Nilin. He made it his job to teach me the tricks of the trade. He encouraged me to study in evening college and his personal example taught me to make the best use of my time for work, studies, social work, sports and leisure."

Like Boris Troyanov, thousands of other youngsters recall with affection and respect their teachers.

The young masters of the country

Public ownership of the means of production quite naturally requires that all the co-owners should take part in running production.

Since the day-to-day management of factories and offices is in the hands of government-authorized specialists who have full powers, the question that naturally arises is how can the people themselves participate?

They participate through the Party, Trade Union and Komsomol organizations, through the People's Control groups and the Standing Production Conferences. This enables them to control the activities of the management.

Article 8 of the 1977 Constitution proclaims: "Work collectives take part in discussing and deciding state and public affairs, in planning production and social development, in training and placing personnel, and in discussing and deciding matters pertaining to the management of enterprises and institutions, the improvement of working and living conditions, and the use of funds allocated both for developing production and for social and cultural purposes and financial incentives."

Members of the Komsomol take part in running production in two ways: directly through their members who hold executive posts and through elected public bodies and commissions.

Production issues are also discussed at Komsomol meetings. According to a sociological survey covering 21 machine-tool plants, young workers took part in discussions on the following issues: labour discipline; the results of the collective's work and socialist emulation for the quarter or the year; the discussion and adoption of annual and five-year plans for their enterprises; the adoption of a collective agreement; the drafting of the social development schemes.

The YCL Rules specify clearly that grass-root Komsomol organizations should "together with trade-union bodies and the management ensure

better working conditions for youth; they should take part in the consideration of matters concerning the encouragement of young industrial and office workers, labour protection of workers under 18, the dismissal of young workers, allocation of housing and hostel accommodation, the use of funds allocated to the advancement of cultural work and sports. . ."

Here is one example of how the Komsomol members carry out the tasks set in the YCL Rules.

On the insistence of the Komsomol Committee at the *Energomash* factory in the Far Eastern city of Khabarovsk, the management took disciplinary measures against a foreman for keeping a young worker Alexander Pashchenko on monotonous unskilled jobs. The foreman had not taken the trouble to draw the youngster into the production process and refused to accept that the boy's skills enabled him to cope with more complicated work.

The Komsomol adopted the cause of the young worker.

"We have very wide powers", remarked the Komsomol organization secretary of the *Energomash* factory Pavel Glukhoyedov. "It is not only our right, but our duty under the YCL Rules to work together with the trade union in improving the working conditions of the young people and to participate in all personnel issues. For instance, the management needs the consent of the Komsomol, not only of the trade union, before it can dismiss a young worker."

This incident prompted the Komsomol Committee of *Energomash* to make a check throughout the factory on how foremen and team leaders were helping young workers to master their profession and how they were organizing their work. The Komsomol Committee submitted its comments and

proposals to the management. The outcome was that the factory director instructed all chiefs of shops, shifts and production sectors to pay closer attention to the organization of the work of the young people and to see that their skills were enhanced. Together with the trade union, the management also decided to give additional material incentives to young workers who were doing well in mastering their trade.

A special Komsomol commission checked on the factory hostels, because it is largely unmarried young people who live in them.

The commission naturally concentrated on shortcomings. They noted that since more and more young people were studying in evening schools, technical schools and colleges, the number of available study rooms were no longer sufficient. Although the hostel library was well stocked, there was a shortage of reference books. And their conclusion was that the services in the hostels were not up to the mark.

Shortly after this check-up, a Komsomol meeting was held at which the deputy director of the plant, Vladimir Perevalov, and the chief of the housing and services department, Ivan Vasko, reported on how the management intended to eliminate the shortcomings found by the commission and on the progress of the construction of a new hostel.

Through the factory news-sheet and at Komsomol meetings young people are able to criticize the management—right up to the director—if they find shortcomings: negligent handling of new machines or insufficient attention to the requirements of the young workers.

This criticism is not simply a manifestation of the young's natural intolerance and ambition, be-

cause they work in alliance with their elders with whom they have common tasks and goals. They all equally own the enterprise. That is why the Komsomol members are eager to help the management in all production affairs.

Industrial economists of the factory have calculated that in a team where each worker can cope with a number of different jobs, labour productivity is much higher, because in the course of the day the workers change positions. This eliminates job monotony, lessens fatigue and leads to higher earnings. The management set the Komsomol the task of organizing the assistance to young workers in acquiring different sets of related skills. Why was this primarily a matter concerning young workers? Simply because they account for more than half the factory staff and the future success of the factory depends on their acquiring higher skills.

The Komsomol activists made a study of the various shops' requirements for workers with different skills, explained to the young workers the benefits of a new organization of labour and arranged facilities for training. This organization of labour in factory teams has now become the general rule.

It would be wrong, however, to think that the Komsomol organization replaces the management. It only helps. The management sponsors economic and technical courses to teach young people the basic elements of management and various production matters. The management provides the premises and invites experts to lecture. But since attendance at the courses is voluntary it is necessary to explain to the young why such studies are essential. That is the job of the Komsomol organization.

Or take another example. The factory had to master the production of gas turbines. It is never easy to put a new type of production into operation. All the public organizations of the factory, including the Komsomol, were engaged in tackling the matter.

A Komsomol task force was set up, with a YCL member Vladimir Sokolov, a designer from the department of the chief technologist, at its head. This task force watched over the entire operation. It pinpointed the causes of bottlenecks and sought additional reserves to speed up and improve the job. Each week the director reviewed progress with the chiefs of all departments involved and the chief of the Komsomol task force would always take part in these conferences.

The Komsomol task force reported on progress in the factory news-sheet, put out special issues congratulating those who handled their jobs well and drawing attention to sections requiring help. The factory produced its first gas turbine ahead of schedule. The management made a special point of praising the assistance given by the Komsomol task force.

Such participation in factory undertakings prompts young people to display initiative, gives rise to enthusiasm and brings satisfaction for a job well done.

The Communist Party, the Trade Unions and the Komsomol are doing a tremendous organizational and educational job to draw every worker into active production and social work, to help them implement their rights and to feel more deeply involved—to feel themselves masters of their country. Because, in the final analysis, it is that feeling that engenders the creative activity of the masses.

"Democracy," Leonid Brezhnev once said, "is just an empty word if it does not cover the surroundings in which a person does his daily work, applies his creative energy. Therefore it is of fundamental importance to strengthen democratic principles in production.

"And we are quite consistent in this matter. The Party demands that any law, any decision concerning the principles and methods of the operation of enterprises should provide without fail for the participation of the working people in economic management".

Young Specialists' Council

The Komsomol also has its special bodies through which it participates in running production affairs. At many enterprises Young Specialists' Councils have been set up in recent years to represent the interests of young people fresh from college.

Such a council exists in Minsk, capital of Byelorussia, in a factory of the firm "Horizon", which produces radio and TV sets. The council is made up of 140 college or technical school graduates who have worked less than three years. Besides, eleven of the most respected and experienced firm senior engineers work with the council as a public service (in their free time and without payment).

What does the council do? Briefly, it helps the young specialists to adapt to work at the firm factory, to find themselves, and it makes sure that the young have the chance to display their creative and professional skills.

The members of the council are young themselves and they are concerned about those who will one day come to work at the factory. The designers' sec-

tion of the council suggested that students of the Minsk Radio-Technical Institute should do their practical training in the factory shops, because many of the college graduates eventually come to work at the factory. The council regards the students as their reserve and tries to draw them into the work of the public designing bureau.

In recent years, the factory management has come to look for the council's recommendations for promoting the most talented young engineers and technicians.

The council's range of activities is very wide—it arranges contests for "the best young specialist" title (with the management providing cash prizes for the winners), it considers the personal creative plans of young engineers and helps with setting up special courses for those working on post-graduate papers.

Komsomol "Spotlights"

Throughout the country—at all stages of production, in offices, educational establishments and in military units—there are Komsomol "Spotlight" groups, which focus attention on shortcomings and pinpoint production reserves. Together with people's control bodies they fight for thriftiness and decide where saving can be made. They also fight against negligence and shiftlessness. The members of these groups make lightning checks everywhere. The results are brought to public attention: they are discussed by the people's control bodies, and highlighted in special wall bulletins ("Spotlights") with suggestions for how the shortcomings can be eliminated. The public are also kept informed on the measures that have been taken to rectify matters.

What are the aims of the young people who work in the Komsomol "Spotlight" groups? The members of such a group at the Urals Heavy Engineering Plant summed up their aims in these words: "To be useful to society, to improve the work of the factory, to avert and eliminate shortcomings, to learn to manage production".

Replying to a sociological survey question on what they personally gain from such work, about 50 per cent of young people answered that it helps to broaden their outlook and teaches how to organize work, over 30 per cent saw it as a school of production management, giving them the feeling of masters. One-third of the questioned thought it was also a way for increasing their technical knowledge, one-quarter felt it boosted their prestige in the work collective.

Student Building Teams

The art of production management is something a person has to learn—it is not easy. Many young specialists learnt this art in the student building teams.

At the end of May, 1959 some 339 future physicists from Moscow University arrived in North Kazakhstan. That was the Soviet first student building detachment. The following year another 520 Moscow University students went to Kazakhstan.

Since then each summer thousands of Soviet students spend part of their holidays helping to build railways and highways, schools and kindergartens, new towns and power stations. More than four million young boys and girls have worked in student building detachments since their inception 19 years ago.

What attracts them to these teams? Why after a tough set of exams are they eager to go off to a construction project?

In part, of course, because of the money. On the average a student earns about 300 roubles in two months. But the cash is not the most important thing. There are teams where the students take only a small part of their earnings. The bulk of the money—70-80% is donated to various special funds. Beginning with 1962 the student building teams contributed the money earned on a day of shock labour to special causes. 15 years ago the money bought a tractor consignment for Cuba, on another occasion the money went to the Vietnam Fund and on yet another occasion to the Fund for Chilean patriots and democrats.

Does pressure from the college authorities play any part in the formation of the student building teams?

Not at all. Statistics indicate that only one out of eight students joins the teams. There was no difficulty last year in finding 741,000 students wanting to join such teams. Moreover, according to their Charter, work in them is strictly voluntary and this principle is never infringed.

So what prompts the students to spend the summer working? Students themselves say that their main reason is the desire to be of use to society even while studying. There is no make-believe independence about the teams. They do work of real practical value which helps develop a sense of responsibility and is appreciated by society. The students are fully responsible for completing the job on schedule, for the quality of their work and its organization. Much depends on their initiative and ingenuity: the rational distribution of their forces

and of material resources, the way the work and recreation are organized. It is in the student building teams that the future engineers, doctors and teachers get management training.

An increasing amount of work done by the student building teams is in the field students have chosen for their studies and future profession. Thus, in 1977, 142,000 students organized what they called specialized teams: communication workers, oil workers, salesmen, workers of the services industry and medicine. Apparently, this type of student team will predominate in the future.

In 1977 almost every fourth member of all the student building detachments was involved in implementing the programme for the Development of the Non-Black Soil Zone of Russia. During the summer they built 180 schools, 90 kindergartens, 67 rural community centres, etc. in the zone. The students' contribution is substantial at more than a hundred of the largest construction projects sponsored by the Komsomol: the Sayano-Shushenskoye Hydropower Station, the sports facilities for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow and the Baltic republics and on the 3,200 kilometre Baikal-Amur Railway.

The mounting scale and potential of the student teams is evident from the fact that the funds they have put into use in 19 years have grown from an initial 250,000 to 1,367 million roubles in 1977. That is excellent, but still not the most important factor. Much more significant is that these teams promote industriousness, independence and a feeling of responsibility; they teach the young how to organize and manage production.

In 1979 the student building movement marks its 20th anniversary. The young will celebrate this day

by working where they are most needed: in the Soviet Far East and Far North, in Siberia and Central Asia.

A generation gap?

This is a problem that has always existed. The British Museum in London has in its collection one of the oldest Egyptian manuscripts to have survived to our times. It begins with the complaint. "The world is no longer what it used to be: Everybody wants to write books, and the young refuse to obey their parents. . ."

Relations between generations have invariably been marked by conflict, but also by the carrying on of traditions—from father to son. So what is important is which of the two trends predominates and that depends on the social system in which a person lives.

A society in which the younger generation accepts, assimilates and carries on the basic ideals of their elders, their ideas about the social system, their concepts of the future and of the purpose of life, can be ensured of stable development at all stages. Here the young vigorously take their practical actions a step further and each new generation blends harmoniously and relatively smoothly into the life of society. Conflicts do exist, but largely over minor matters, while in the major and most important things the young carry on the cause of their fathers.

But in a society where a substantial part of the youth refuses to accept the values of their fathers, social upheavals are the rule. The conflict between

generations which has affected the life arteries of society has been described in many ways—as “the revolt of the young,” “the generation of nihilists” and “youth riots”.

Perhaps, the most weighty evidence of the affinity between generations in Soviet society is that its progress is stable and constant. Yet the Soviet people have faced a number of serious tests in the course of their history: wars and devastation of the national economy, the need to work very hard to restore and advance it. Examples of young people’s political reversal and betrayal of the cause of their fathers during the Second World War were so few that they fade into insignificance against the background of the mass heroism of the young. So we have every right to say that the rising generation is carrying on the cause and ideals of its elders. Another indication is youth’s passionate desire to be needed by society and useful to it. The more than 40,000 monuments and obelisks erected by young people in various parts of the Soviet Union also illustrate their respect for the experience and traditions of the older generation. The monuments appeared as a result of the mass movement of the young who followed the trails blazed by their fathers during the revolution, the war and the building of socialism. Millions of youngsters took part in this movement.

Western sociologists sometimes allege that the ideological closeness of the two generations in the Soviet Union is due to brainwashing by the propaganda machine.

That view is rejected by the young people themselves. During a sociological survey held recently young people were asked to choose from among a number of reasons those which they felt had convinced them in the correctness of the fundamental

views and ideals dominating Soviet society. (Each person could choose several reasons).

Over 59.4 per cent replied that it was the concrete facts of the Soviet Union's social and economic development, 51.2 per cent pointed to the achievements of socialism on the world arena and 23.1 per cent said their convictions stemmed from the reading of special ideological literature. So propaganda in its pure form plays a minor role in the shaping of the younger generation's convictions.

As for the generation gap and the conflict between generations, it does not affect the most important ideological positions—rather the small things. Usually, it arises in the family or in the work collective. Not everyone belonging to the older generation is prepared to like, understand and accept the behaviour of some of the young people, their tastes or fashions.

On the other hand, the aggressive way in which some young people defend their right to all these things can serve as a cause of conflict.

The main features of the present rising generation—their determination to find the truth for themselves, the achievement of independence at an earlier age and their greater social activity—tend in a number of cases to embrace matters of secondary importance that do not determine their life credo.

In 1975 sociologists conducted a survey among 900 young people in the age group from 17 to 25. One question concerned their tolerance of ideas and modes of behaviour they did not approve of or accept. The survey revealed once again the Soviet youth's intolerance of anti-socialist and anti-Soviet propaganda.

On the other hand, they were prepared to tolerate a variety of different tastes in art and extravagance in clothing and fashion. Some young people

declared that any interference in the way they dressed or behaved was impermissible. That could hardly endear them to their elders and in families where parents had not found the correct approach to their offspring conflicts were quite possible.

The lack of a basic conflict between the generations in Soviet society stems from the nature of that society and conflicts on matters of secondary importance are, in our view, subjective and due to mistakes in education work.

Real wealth

This part deals with how the Soviet youth spend their leisure time. The main goal of Soviet society is to ensure the shaping of a harmoniously developed individual, well educated and professionally trained, socially active, spiritually and physically healthy. A person's free time and how he spends it plays a most important, if not decisive role, in achieving this goal. Karl Marx wrote that real wealth is the time not swallowed by productive labour, but the time that is left over for entertainment, for leisure, the time that gives scope for the activities a person likes and for his development.

We understand perfectly well that the existence of free time is an essential but certainly not the only condition for the shaping of a harmoniously developed individual.

It is equally essential to have the material opportunities for interesting and worthwhile leisure and that the rising generation should feel the urge to put the opportunities to full use.

In the Soviet Union there are more than 130,000 public libraries, with about 100 million people using them annually.

We have an even greater number of community centres—clubs and Palaces of Culture, as well as 1,300 museums, almost 600 professional theatres (with audiences of 117 million a year), over 152,000 cinemas (4,200 million film-goers a year), 3,200 stadiums, almost 100,000 football fields and 371,000 volleyball, basketball and tennis courts.

Of course, it is not only the young who use these facilities, but they use them more than their elders. A library subscription is free. The most expensive seat at the Bolshoi Theatre costs 3 roubles 50 kopecks, a ticket to the cinema from 10 to 70 kopecks. Membership dues in a sports club are 50 kopecks for a year.

More than 3,000 stadiums and some 60,000 gymnasiums offer their facilities without charge to all who wish to use them, while 48 institutes and junior colleges, 84 physical culture departments and 77 teachers training colleges train skilled coaches.

There is a set of sports requirements in the country (different for five age groups) which if met entitle a person to a special badge. In inaugurating this badge, the Sports Committee of the USSR Council of Ministers and the Central Committee of the Komsomol did not intend to make a champion out of everyone who went in for sports. Records are not the end in itself, the aim is to draw more and more people into the sports movement. A person can engage in sports at a sports society club, sports group at the nearest community centre, sports club at his college or place of work, at sports schools—and in many cases the facilities are right in

the backyard of the apartment house he lives in.

The achievements of the top Soviet athletes are universally recognized. The Soviet contribution to advancing the world sports movement is evident from the decision of the International Olympic Committee to stage the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow. The Soviet government has recently decorated the nation's most outstanding athletes: ice-hockey player Alexander Maltzev, figure-skater Irina Rodnina, wrestler Soslan Andiyev, gymnast Lyudmila Tourishcheva and many others. The members of the Komsomol have elected to their Central Committee Vladislav Tretyak, the ice-hockey player, who is world and Olympic champion, and Anatoly Karpov, world chess champion.

The Central Committee of the Komsomol and the USSR Sports Committee regularly sponsor sports contests for children, like "The Golden Puck" for ice-hockey teams, "The Leather Ball" for football players, "Neptune" for swimmers, and a field-and-track event called "A Hopeful Start". The main purpose is to draw the rising generation into sports. Of course, sports aren't compulsory. There are even many more people going in for sports than some officials seem to want. Both the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* and the newspaper *Soviet Sport* have recently printed a number of critical articles attacking those sports officials who, intent on making the best showing, have crossed youngsters who show no signs of being champions off their lists. Coaches, it is true, should train masters of sport, but for the most gifted there are special sports schools in each town and each sports club has its special classes for the most promising youngsters. What's more, the abilities of a person are not always self-evident. Irina Rodnina and Tatyana Ka-

zankina, both champions, seemed to hold out no promise at all when as rather sickly girls they first went in for sports.

The Komsomol's task is to help anyone who wants to participate in sports to be able to do so, whether he is champion material or not. Most important is that every youngster should be able to engage in his favourite sport during his leisure time. The *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reminded the coaches who concentrated on scouting for new talent that the purpose of all sports activities was to produce a healthy generation, not to breed a couple of new champions.

Hiking and tourism are very popular with Soviet youth. This ranges from the week-end hikes or boat trips to the much longer tours of their own and foreign countries. They are greatly helped by the International Tourist Bureau *Sputnik*. During the 20 years of its existence it has made a name for itself both in this country and abroad. *Sputnik* co-operates with 450 organizations in 87 countries. In 1977 more than two million Soviet people and foreigners used its services. It has 2,500 different itineraries.

Sputnik has excellent facilities. In 1977 alone it built a Hotel *Orlenok* in Moscow, a Youth Palace in Leningrad, Youth Houses in Volgograd and Kazan and an international camp in Dombay in the North Caucasus. *Sputnik's* construction plans for 1976-80 provide for a considerable expansion of the existing network of international youth camps and tourist bases. Hotels, accommodating from 300 to 500 visitors, are to go up in Irkutsk, Bukhara, Leningrad, Voroshilovgrad, Lvov and Brest.

The holiday trips arranged by *Sputnik* are well within the means of the Soviet youth, because part

of the expenses are paid by the place of work or college. A trip to the USA, for example, costs 3,000 roubles, but a youngster will only pay between 350 and 500.

No less interesting are the trips *Sputnik* offers inside the Soviet Union. One of its specialties is a hotel-on-rails, that is a tour by railway coach. There were 60 such trains last year travelling to Lake Baikal, the Baltic Republics, the hero-cities and other parts of the country.

Excellent opportunities are offered to Soviet youth in the sphere of amateur arts. The range of amateur activities is very wide: choreography, drama, chorus singing, orchestras, associations of writers, artists and film-makers. Schoolchildren, students, industrial and office workers spend their leisure hours in the more than 800 hobby groups, studios and people's theatre companies. More than 15 million youngsters today engage in various amateur arts. The young people took an active part in the nation-wide festival of amateur arts held to mark the 60th anniversary of the Soviet Union.

Many of the companies reach levels very close to the professional ones. In the Ukrainian town of Donetsk, for instance, there is an institute designing mining equipment. When a group of foreign engineers attended the performance put up by the institute's amateurs they wondered if they were being shown a professional group instead. It was in fact the institute staff—young engineers, research workers, draughtsmen who had given the performance. It might be asked why we promote the amateur arts on such a scale? Young people love to try themselves out as singers, dancers or actors. The Komsomol feels it should encourage them. Not only to discover a Chaliapin, Ulanova or Rikhter,

but mainly to draw millions of young people into the world of arts making their life more exciting.

The Moldavian republic's capital Kishinev has its Youth House with 17 amateur groups—variety, circus, opera and musical comedy, People's Theatre and a dance group. When it came to forming the drama cast in the People's Theatre the harassed producer had to choose one out of every ten. Each year the professional companies come to the Youth House to select the best performers. And those chosen have done well on the professional stage. As for the amateurs, they have on many occasions brought great joy to audiences at construction projects, in Uzbekistan, Moscow and many other parts of the country.

All this helps the rising generation to develop their abilities, to widen and deepen their range of interests. The Soviet people have every opportunity to put into practice the right guaranteed by Article 46 of the Constitution providing "broad access to the cultural treasures of their own land and of the world that are preserved in state and other public collections; by the development and fair distribution of cultural and educational institutions throughout the country; by developing television and radio broadcasting and the publishing of books, newspapers and periodicals, and by extending the free library service; and by expanding cultural exchanges with other countries."



1978—the year of the Komsomol's 60th birthday, is also the year for assessing the achievements of the organization. The review began with the 18th YCL Congress.

Its delegates—advanced workers and innovators, well-known scientists and inventors, cosmonauts, gifted writers and actors, artists, Soviet Army servicemen, top athletes, students, pupils of the general educational and the vocational schools—all personify Lenin's dream of a new type of man and of the ties between the different generations of the revolution.

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Vladimir LUTSKI

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VLADIMIR LUTSKI

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