

**V. I. LENIN**

**THE TASKS  
OF THE  
YOUTH LEAGUES**

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

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V. I. LENIN

THE TASKS  
OF THE  
YOUTH LEAGUES

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of the Russian Young Communist League,  
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### PUBLISHER'S NOTE

The present English edition of *The Tasks of the Youth Leagues* is taken from V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, English edition, FLPH, Moscow, 1952, Vol. II, Part 2. Based on a check with the original Russian, certain adjustments of translation and style have been made.

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*(The Congress greets Lenin with a stormy ovation.)*

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

It is all the more necessary to dwell on this question because in a certain sense it may be said that it is precisely the youth that will be faced with the actual task of creating a communist society. For it is clear that the generation of workers that was brought up in capitalist society can, at best, accomplish the task of destroying the foundations of the old, capitalist social life, which was built on exploitation. At best it can accomplish the task of creating a social system that will help the proletariat and the toiling classes to retain power and to lay a firm foundation, on which only the generation that is starting to work under the new conditions, in a situation in which exploiting relations between men no longer exist, can build.

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

Of course, this is only "one word." It does not answer the principal and most essential questions: what to learn, and how to learn? And the whole point here is that with the transformation of the old capitalist society, the teaching, training and education of the new generations that will create the communist society cannot be conducted on the old lines. The teaching, training and education of the youth must proceed from the material that has been left to us by the old society. We can build communism only from the sum of knowledge, organizations and institutions, only with the stock of human forces and means that have been left to us by the old society. Only by radically remoulding the teaching, organization and training of the youth shall we be able to ensure that the efforts of the younger generation will result in the creation of a society that will be unlike the old society, i.e., in the creation of a communist society. That is why we must deal in detail with the question of what we should teach the youth and how the youth should learn if it really wants to justify the name of communist youth, and how it should be trained so as to be able to complete and consummate what we have started.

I must say that the first and most natural reply would seem to be that the Youth League, and the youth in general that wants to cross over to communism, should learn communism.

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

Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning communism means imbibing the sum of knowledge

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

One of the greatest evils and misfortunes left to us by the old capitalist society is the complete divorce of books from practical life; for we have had books in which everything was described in the best possible manner, yet these books in the majority of cases were most disgusting and hypocritical lies that described capitalist society falsely.

That is why it would be extremely wrong merely to absorb what is written in books about communism. In our speeches and articles we do not now merely repeat what was formerly said about communism, because our speeches and articles are connected with our daily work in every branch. Without work, without struggle, a book knowledge of communism obtained from communist pamphlets and works would be absolutely worthless, for it would continue the old divorce of theory from practice, that old divorce which constituted the most disgusting feature of the old bourgeois society.

It would be still more dangerous to start to imbibe only communist slogans. If we did not realize this danger in time, and if we did not direct all our efforts to avert this danger, the half million or million young men and women who called

themselves communists after studying communism in this way would only do great damage to the cause of communism.

Here the question arises: How should we combine all this for the study of communism? What must we take from the old-type school, from the old science? It was the declared aim of the old-type school to produce people with an all-round education, to teach the sciences in general. We know that this was utterly false, for the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of people into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Naturally, the old school as a whole, being thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, imparted knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was falsified in the interests of the bourgeoisie. In these schools the younger generation of workers and peasants were not so much educated as drilled in the interests of this bourgeoisie. They were trained in such a way as to be useful servants of the bourgeoisie, able to create profits for it without disturbing its peace and idleness. That is why, while rejecting the old school, we have made it our task to take from it only what we require for real communist education.

This brings me to the reproaches and accusations which we constantly hear levelled at the old school, and which often lead to totally wrong conclusions. It is said that the old school was a school of cramming, drilling, learning by rote. That is true, but we must distinguish between what was bad in the old school and what is useful for us, and we must be able to choose from it what is necessary for communism.

The old school was a school of cramming; it compelled pupils to imbibe a mass of useless, superfluous, barren knowledge, which clogged the brain and transformed the younger generation into bureaucrats regimented according to one single pattern. But you would be committing a great mistake if you

attempted to draw the conclusion that one can become a communist without assimilating the wealth of knowledge amassed by humanity. It would be a mistake to think that it is enough to learn communist slogans, the conclusions of communist science, without acquiring the sum of knowledge of which communism itself is a consequence. Marxism is an example of how communism arose out of the sum of human knowledge.

You have read and heard that communist theory, the science of communism, mainly created by Marx, that this doctrine of Marxism has ceased to be the product of a single Socialist of the nineteenth century, even though he was a genius, and that it has become the teaching of millions and tens of millions of proletarians all over the world, who are applying this teaching in their struggle against capitalism. And if you were to ask why the teachings of Marx were able to capture the hearts of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would derive only one answer: It was because Marx took his stand on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism. Having studied the laws of development of human society, Marx realized the inevitability of the development of capitalism, which was leading to communism. And the principal thing is that he proved this only on the basis of the most exact, most detailed and most profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, not ignoring a single point. Everything that had been created by human thought he reshaped, criticized, tested on the working-class movement, and drew conclusions which people restricted by bourgeois limits or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

We must bear this in mind when, for example, we talk about proletarian culture. Unless we clearly understand that only by an exact knowledge of the culture created by the whole development of mankind and that only by reprocessing this culture can we build proletarian culture — unless we understand that we shall not be able to solve this problem. Proletarian culture is not something that has sprung nobody knows whence, it is not something thought up by people who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the natural and necessary development of the stores of knowledge which mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist society, landlord society, bureaucratic society. All these roads and paths have led, are leading, and continue to lead to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, reprocessed by Marx, showed us what human society must arrive at, showed us the transition to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution.

When we so often hear representatives of the youth and certain advocates of a new system of education attacking the old-type school and saying that it was a school of cramming, we say to them that we must take what was good from the old school. We must not take from the old school the system of loading young people's minds with an immense amount of knowledge, nine-tenths of which was useless and one-tenth distorted. But this does not mean that we can confine ourselves to communist conclusions and learn only communist slogans. You will not create communism that way. You can become a communist only when you enrich your mind with the knowledge of all the treasures created by mankind.

We do not need cramming; but we do need to develop and perfect the mind of every student by a knowledge of the fun-

damental facts. For communism would become a void, a mere signboard, and a communist would become a mere braggart, if all the knowledge he has obtained were not digested in his mind. You must not only assimilate this knowledge, you must assimilate it critically, so as not to cram your mind with useless lumber, but enrich it with all those facts that are indispensable to the modern man of education. If a communist took it into his head to boast about his communism because of the ready-made conclusions he had acquired, without putting in a great deal of serious and hard work, without understanding the facts which he must examine critically, he would be a very deplorable communist. Such superficiality would be decidedly fatal. If I know that I know little, I shall strive to learn more; but if a man says that he is a communist and that he need not know anything thoroughly, he will never become anything like a communist.

The old school turned out servants needed by the capitalists; the old school transformed men of science into men who had to write and say what pleased the capitalists. Therefore we must abolish it. But does the fact that we must abolish it, destroy it, mean that we must not take from it all that mankind has accumulated that is essential to man? Does it mean that we do not have to distinguish between what was necessary for capitalism and what is necessary for communism?

We are replacing the old drill-sergeant methods that were employed in bourgeois society in opposition to the will of the majority by the class-conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, who combine hatred of the old society with the determination, ability and readiness to unite and organize their forces for this fight, in order to transform the wills of millions and hundreds of millions of people, disunited, dispersed and scattered over the territory of a huge country, into a single will;



for without this single will defeat is inevitable. Without this solidarity, without this conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, our cause is hopeless. Without this we shall not be able to beat the capitalists and landlords of the whole world. We shall not even consolidate the foundation, let alone build a new, communist society on that foundation. Similarly, while rejecting the old school, while cherishing an absolutely legitimate and essential hatred for the old school, while prizing the readiness to destroy the old school, we must realize that in place of the old system of tuition, the old cramming, the old drill, we must put the ability to acquire the sum of human knowledge, and to acquire it in such a way that communism shall not be something learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, that it shall embody the conclusions which are inevitable from the standpoint of modern education.

That is the way we must present the main tasks when speaking of the task of learning communism.

In order to explain this to you, and as an approach to the question of how to learn, I shall take a practical example. You all know that following immediately on the military tasks, the tasks of defending the republic, we are now being confronted with the economic task. We know that communist society cannot be built unless we regenerate industry and agriculture, and we must not regenerate them as of old. They must be regenerated on a modern basis, in accordance with the last word in science. You know that this basis is electricity, and that only when the whole country, all branches of industry and agriculture have been electrified, only when you have mastered this task will you be able to build for yourselves the communist society which the older generation will not be able to build. Confronting you is the task of economically reviving the whole

country, of reorganizing and restoring both agriculture and industry on a modern technical basis which rests on modern science and technology, on electricity. You realize perfectly well that illiterate people cannot tackle electrification, and that mere literacy is not enough either. It is not enough to understand what electricity is; it is necessary to know how to apply it technically to industry and to agriculture, and to the various branches of industry and agriculture. We must learn this ourselves, and must teach it to the whole of the growing generation of toilers. This is the task that confronts every class-conscious communist, every young person who regards himself a communist and who clearly understands that by joining the Young Communist League he has shouldered the task of helping the Party build communism and helping the whole younger generation create a communist society. He must realize that he can create it only on the basis of modern education; and if he does not acquire this education communism will remain a mere desire.

The task of the old generation was to overthrow the bourgeoisie. The main task then was to criticize the bourgeoisie, to arouse hatred of the bourgeoisie among the masses, to develop class consciousness and the ability to unite their forces. The new generation is confronted with a much more complicated task. Not only have you to combine all your forces to uphold the power of the workers and peasants against an invasion by the capitalists. That you must do. That you have clearly understood; that the communist distinctly perceives. But it is not enough. You must build a communist society. In many respects the first half of the work has been done. The old order has been destroyed, as it deserved to be, it has been transformed into a heap of ruins, as it deserved to be. The ground has been cleared, and on this ground the young com-

munist generation must build a communist society. You are faced with the task of construction, and you can cope with it only by mastering all modern knowledge, only if you are able to make communism from ready-made, memorized formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programmes into that living thing which integrates your immediate work, and only if you are able to make communism into a guide for your practical work.

This is the task by which you should be guided in educating, training and rousing the whole of the younger generation. You must be the foremost among the millions of builders of communist society, which every young man and young woman should be. Unless you enlist the whole mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building communism, you will not build a communist society.

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

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

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

But is there such a thing as communist ethics? Is there such a thing as communist morality? Of course, there is. It is often made to appear that we have no ethics of our own; and very often the bourgeoisie accuse us communists of rejecting all

ethics. This is a method of shuffling concepts, of throwing dust in the eyes of the workers and peasants.

In what sense do we reject ethics and reject morality?

In the sense in which it is preached by the bourgeoisie, who derived ethics from God's commandments. We, of course, say that we do not believe in God, and that we know perfectly well that the clergy, the landlords and the bourgeoisie spoke in the name of God in pursuit of their own interests as exploiters. Or instead of deriving ethics from the commandments of morality, from the commandments of God, they derived them from idealist or semi-idealist phrases, which always amounted to something very similar to God's commandments.

We reject all morality based on extra-human and extra-class concepts. We say that it is a deception, a fraud, a befogging of the minds of the workers and peasants in the interests of the landlords and capitalists.

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

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landlords and capitalists. We had to destroy this, we had to overthrow them; but for this we had to create unity. God would not create such unity.

This unity could be provided only by the factories, only by the proletariat, trained and roused from the old slumber. Only when that class was formed did the mass movement begin which led to what we see now — the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been repelling the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world. And we see how the proletarian revolution is growing all over the world. We now say, on the basis of ex-

perience, that only the proletariat could have created that compact force which the disunited and scattered peasantry are following and which has withstood all the onslaughts of the exploiters. Only this class can help the toiling masses to unite, rally their ranks and finally defend, finally consolidate and finally build up communist society.

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

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

And what are classes in general? Classes are what permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of the other section. If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landlord class and a peasant class. If one section of society possesses the mills and factories, shares and capital, while another section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class.

It was not difficult to drive out the tsar — that required only a few days. It was not very difficult to drive out the landlords — that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists. But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant squats on his separate plot of land and appropriates superfluous grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, then the peasant becomes an exploiter. The more grain he clings to, the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve: "The more they starve the dearer I can sell this grain."

Everybody must work according to a common plan, on common land, in common mills and factories and under common management. Is it easy to attain this? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the tsar, the landlords and the capitalists. What is required is that the proletariat re-educate, re-train a section of the peasantry; it must win over those who are toiling peasants in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and are profiting by the poverty and want of the rest. Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not yet completed when we have overthrown the tsar and have driven out the landlords and capitalists, and to complete it is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle continues; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to prevent the return of the old exploiters, to integrate the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants into a single unity. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to this struggle. And we subordinate our communist morality to this task. We say: Morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the toilers around the proletariat, which is building up a new society of communists.

Communist morality is the morality which serves this struggle, which unites the toilers against all exploitation, against all small property; for small property puts into the hands of single persons what has been created by the labour of the whole of society. In our country the land is common property.

But suppose I take a piece of this common property and grow on it twice as much grain as I need and profiteer on the surplus? Suppose I argue that the more starving people there are the more they will pay? Would I then be behaving like a communist? No, I would be behaving like an exploiter, like a proprietor. This must be combated. If this is allowed to

go on things will slide back to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has more than once happened in previous revolutions. And in order to prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie we must not allow profiteering, we must not allow individuals to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest, and the toilers must unite with the proletariat and form a communist society. This is the principal feature of the fundamental task of the League and of the organization of the communist youth.

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

If I work this plot of land, I don't give a hang for anybody else; if others starve, all the better, the more I will get for my grain. If I have a job as a doctor, engineer, teacher, or clerk, I don't give a hang for anybody else. Perhaps if I toady to and please the powers that be I shall keep my job, and even get on in life and become a bourgeois. A communist cannot have such a psychology and such sentiments. When the workers and peasants proved that we are able by our own efforts to defend ourselves and create a new society — that was the beginning of the new communist education in the struggle against the exploiters, education in alliance with the proletariat against the self-seekers and small owners, against the psychology and habits which say: I seek my own profit and I don't give a hang for anything else.

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

It can learn communism only by linking up every step in its studies, training and education with the continuous struggle the proletarians and the toilers are waging against the old exploiting society. When people talk to us about morality, we say: For the communist, morality lies entirely in this solid, united discipline and conscious mass struggle against the exploiters. We do not believe in an eternal morality, and we expose the deceit of all the fables about morality. Morality serves the purpose of helping human society to rise to a higher level and to get rid of the exploitation of labour.

To achieve this we need the younger generation which began to turn political consciousness in the midst of the disciplined and desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle it is training genuine communists, it must subordinate to this struggle and link up with it every step in its studies, education and training. The education of the communist youth must consist not in giving them sentimental speeches and moral precepts. This is not what training consists in. When people saw how their fathers and mothers lived under the yoke of the landlords and capitalists, when they themselves experienced the sufferings that befell those who started the struggle against the exploiters, when they saw what sacrifices the continuation of this struggle entailed in order to defend what had been won, and when they saw what savage foes the landlords and capitalists are — they were trained in this environment to become communists. The basis of communist morality is the struggle for the consolidation and completion of communism. That too is the basis of communist training, education, and teaching. That is the reply to the question how communism should be learned.

We would not believe in teaching, training and education if they were confined only to the school and were divorced from the storm of life. As long as the workers and peasants continue to be oppressed by the landlords and capitalists, and as long as the schools remain in the hands of the landlords and capitalists, the young generation will remain blind and ignorant. But our school must impart to the youth the fundamentals of knowledge, the ability to work out communist views by themselves; it must make educated people of them. In the time during which people attend school, it must make them into participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters. The Young Communist League will justify its name as the League of the young communist generation only when it links up every step of its teaching, training and education with participation in the general struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters. For you know perfectly well that as long as Russia remains the only workers' republic, while the old bourgeois system exists in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they, we shall be under the constant menace of a new attack; and that only if we learn to be solid and united shall we win in the further struggle and — having gained strength — become really invincible. Thus, to be a communist means that you must organize and unite the whole rising generation and set an example of training and discipline in this struggle. Then you will be able to start building the edifice of communist society and bring it to completion.

In order to make this clearer to you I will quote an example. We call ourselves communists. What is a communist? Communist is a Latin word. *Communis* is the Latin for "common." Communist society is a society in which all things

— the land, the factories — are owned in common and the people work in common. That is communism.

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

I have replied to the questions what we must learn, what we must take from the old school and from the old science. I will now try to answer the question how this must be learned. The answer is: only by inseparably linking every step in the activities of the school, every step in training, education and teaching, with the struggle of all the toilers against the exploiters.

I will quote a few examples from the experience of the work of some of the youth organizations to illustrate how this training in communism should proceed. Everybody is talking about abolishing illiteracy. You know that a communist society cannot be built in an illiterate country. It is not enough for the Soviet government to issue an order, or for the Party to issue a particular slogan, or to assign a certain number of the best workers to this task. The younger generation itself must take up this work. Communism means that the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Youth League, would say: This is our job; we shall unite and go into the rural districts to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our rising generation. We are trying to get the rising generation to devote its initiative and activity to this work. You know that we cannot quickly transform ignorant, illiterate Russia into a literate country. But if the Youth League sets to work on this job, if all the young people work for the benefit of all, the League, which unites 400,000 young men and women, will be entitled to call itself the Young Communist League. Another task of the League is, after having acquired knowledge of one kind or another, to help those young people who cannot liberate themselves from the darkness of illiteracy by their own efforts. Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labour and efforts to the common cause. That is what communist education means. Only in the course of such work does a young man or woman become a real communist. Only if they achieve practical results in this work will they become communists.

Take, for example, work on the suburban vegetable gardens. Isn't this a real job of work? This is one of the tasks of the Young Communist League. The people are starving; there is starvation in the mills and factories. In order to save ourselves

from starvation, vegetable gardens must be developed. But agriculture is being carried on in the old way. Therefore, more class-conscious elements must undertake this work, and you would then find that the number of vegetable gardens would increase, their area grow, and the results improve. The Young Communist League must take an active part in this work. Every League and every branch of the League should regard this as its job.

The Young Communist League must be a shock group, helping in every job and displaying initiative and enterprise. The League should be such that any worker may see that it consists of people whose teachings he may not understand, whose teachings he perhaps might not immediately believe in, but from whose practical work and activity he could see that they are really the people who are showing him the right road.

If the Young Communist League fails to organize its work in this way in all fields, it will mean that it is slipping into the old, bourgeois path. We must combine our education with the struggle of the toilers against the exploiters in order to help the former to perform the tasks that flow from the teachings of communism.

The members of the League should use every spare hour to improve the vegetable gardens, or to organize the education of young people in some mill or factory, and so forth. We want to transform Russia from a poverty-stricken and wretched country into a wealthy country. And the Young Communist League must combine its education, teaching and training with the labour of the workers and peasants, so as not to shut itself up in its schools and not to confine itself to reading communist books and pamphlets. Only by working side by side with the workers and peasants can one become a genuine communist. And everyone must be made to see

that all those who belong to the Youth League are literate and at the same time know how to work. When everyone sees that we have driven the old drill methods from the old school and have replaced them by conscious discipline, that all young men and women are taking part in subbotniks, that they are utilizing every suburban farm to help the population — the people will look upon labour differently from the way they did in the past.

It is the task of the Young Communist League to organize assistance in the village or in the city block in such a matter as — I take a small example — cleanliness or the distribution of food. How was this done in the old capitalist society? Everybody worked for himself alone, and nobody cared whether some people were aged or sick, or whether all the housework fell on the shoulders of the women, who, as a result, were in a state of oppression and enslavement. Whose business is it to combat this? It is the business of the Youth Leagues, which must say: We shall change all this; we shall organize detachments of young people who will help to maintain cleanliness or to distribute food, who will make systematic house-to-house rounds, who will work in an organized way for the benefit of the whole of society, properly distributing their forces and demonstrating that labour must be organized labour.

The generation which is now about fifty years old cannot expect to see the communist society. This generation will die out before then. But the generation which is now fifteen years old will see the communist society, and will itself build this society. And it must know that the whole purpose of its life is to build this society. In the old society labour was carried on by separate families, and nobody combined it except the landlords and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people. We must organize all labour, no matter how dirty and arduous

it may be, in such a way that every worker and peasant may say: I am part of the great army of free labour, and I can build my life without the landlords and capitalists, I can establish the communist system. The Young Communist League must train everybody to conscious and disciplined labour from an early age. In this way we shall be sure that the problems that are now confronting us will be solved. We must assume that no less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may be served by the latest achievements of technology. And so, the generation which is now fifteen years old, and which in ten or twenty years' time will be living in communist society, must approach all their tasks in education in such a way that every day, in every village and in every town, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some problem of common labour, even though the smallest, even though the simplest. To the extent that this is done in every village, to the extent that communist emulation develops, to the extent that the youth prove that they can unite their labour, to that extent will the success of communist construction be ensured. Only by regarding our every step from the standpoint of the success of this construction, only by asking ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united, conscious toilers, will the Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect. (*Stormy applause.*)

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The Third All-Russian Congress of the Russian Young Communist League took place in Moscow between October 2 and 10, and was attended by some 600 delegates. Lenin addressed the Congress at the first session on the evening of October 2.

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