



SINCE 1922

Bottomline

BECAUSE THE YCLSA SAYS SO

Socialism In Our Lifetime

June 2024

ISSUE #003



**Opinion:
Reviving
Ex-Mineworkers
Livelihoods in the
North West**

**In this edition the YCLSA First
Deputy National Secretary reflects
on the Socio- economic conditions
retired-mine workers 37 years after
the historic 1987 mineworkers
strike in the North West, SA.**

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ISSUED BY THE YOUNG COMMUNIST LEAGUE OF SOUTH AFRICA

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YOUTH EPOCH: DEFINING OUR FUTURE BEYOND THE BALLOT

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EDITORS NOTES

WRITTEN BY

RAMATOLO TLOTLENG - YCLSA NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON

The Youth Month June edition of the Bottomline is issued after the National elections which took place on the 29th May 2024. The National elections have proven to be a turning point and have as a result presented peculiar conditions for the revolutionary alliance to conduct the revolution under unprecedented circumstances. We view this moment as a wake up call to the movement.

The transformation agenda as envisaged and championed by the revolutionary alliance for the total emancipation of the South African population with a particular emphasis on Africans in general and blacks in particular. The current situation poses new challenges for progressive and revolutionary forces, shifting the terrain of our discourse. As a result, the left has suffered a significant setback.

The current situation presents liberation forces with a new set of challenges and as a result tilts the balance of forces in the domestic terrain as well as in the international front. These new set of challenges require objective and scientific analysis of the concrete material conditions at the grassroots level.

There are competing questions that have to be answered in light of the prevailing altered political landscape – basing the discussion on the electoral outcomes which saw the movement's electoral support dwindle to 40% meaning that to form a government we would need to go into power-sharing discussions to establish government.

The central question to be answered is what then becomes the role of the left axis in the changed conditions after experiencing the electoral decline. Does these conditions not call us to aggressively Organise, Mobilise and further Agitate the general South African population for socialism and the Youth in particular – with the sole intention of contesting state power? The contestation of State Power for the Party to actively participate in elections is by no means intended to debase the ANC but to rescue it from being obliterated by the reactionary forces which have made it their preoccupation to weaken and push the ANC out of power.

Perhaps indeed the time has arrived for the SACP, to come in defence of the NDR. What lies ahead for the 7th Administration is what can be best described as the 5 years of deepened mass mobilisation in defence of the revolution. This situation serves as a rallying call for Communists to come to the fore to protect the interest of the working class and the poor and to secondly come to the fore to protect NDR (National Democratic Revolution). In the pursuit of the National Democratic Revolution (NDR) amidst the altered political landscape, it is crucial for the left axis to urgently organize itself with robustness and organizational strength.

The period we are about to enter suggests that we are going to be standing in strong opposition against laws which are going to be against the people. The cocktail that is being brewed has in our view no real intention to resolve the class contradictions that exist in a country such as ours which is characterised by a high level of Inequality, high Poverty levels and high unemployment which mostly affects the Youth - we as the YCLSA have long characterised it as a pandemic that needs urgent resolution.

The time for the Vanguard party to reclaim its role in society has struck – in every corner, every home and every place we must ensure that we Mobilise, Organize and Agitate the Youth for Socialism. All key sites of struggle having being identified by the South African Road to Socialism must be contested relentlessly now more than ever. The rescue mission of the NDR has gotten into gear – The Red Flag of the people, Fly high!

HONORING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE: THE YCLSA 102 YEAR ANNIVERSARY MESSAGE

The 102nd Anniversary Message Delivered by YCLSA National Secretary, Cde Mzwandile Thakhudi, at the Harry Gwala Multi-Purpose Hall in Zamdela, Sasolburg.



- Members of YCLSA & SACP join in solidarity, emphasizing unity in the fight for socialism

YCLSA 6th National Committee, 102nd Anniversary Celebrations

24th May 2024

Comrades, fellow compatriots, and friends,

It is with great honor and revolutionary fervor that I address you today as we commemorate the 102nd anniversary of the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA). The 6th National Committee declared the year 2024: The Year of the District to Mobilize, Educate and Agitate the Youth for Socialism. Our history is rich with the struggles and triumphs of countless young comrades who have fought tirelessly for justice, equality, and socialism. Today, we gather to celebrate their legacy, reaffirm our commitments, and chart the course for our future actions.

Reflecting on Our History

The YCLSA has always been at the forefront of the struggle for socialism and workers' rights in South Africa. Our history is one of resilience, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. We honor the legacy of our forebears who laid down their lives for the freedom we now enjoy. Their spirit guides us as we continue to fight for a South Africa where the wealth of the land is shared among those who work it.

At this conjecture, as a nation we find ourselves at a critical moment. The political landscape is fraught with challenges, from the pervasive influence of neoliberalism to the resurgence of right-wing ideologies. The upcoming elections are not just a political contest but a battle for the soul of our nation. It is a fight to ensure that the gains of our liberation struggle are not eroded by forces of reaction and regression.

Our commitment to socialism remains unwavering. Socialism is not just an economic empowerment system but a moral and ethical imperative. It is about creating a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, where the wealth of the nation is shared equitably, and where the dignity of every individual is upheld.



- *The Ruth First Red Brigades is in formation as attendees don the iconic red shirts of the YCLSA, creating a striking visual statement of solidarity and commitment at the 102nd anniversary event.*

Organizational Achievements: A Historical Perspective

As we gather to celebrate the 102nd anniversary of the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCLSA), it is essential to honor our storied past by reflecting on the numerous achievements that have defined our journey. From our inception, the YCLSA has been at the forefront of the struggle for social justice, economic equality, and political freedom. Here, we highlight some of the key milestones and organizational achievements that have shaped our legacy:

The Early Years: Founding and Resistance

1. Formation and Early Activism (1922 - 1940s)

- **Founding:** The YCLSA was established in 1922, inspired by the revolutionary consweeping across the world in the wake of the Russian Revolution. Our founding aimed to mobilize young South Africans in the fight against colonialism and capitalism.
- **YCLSA pioneered the struggle for the attainment of non racialism** in the context of the broad objectives of the NDR. This could be seen by the recruitment of comrades such as Thomas Mbeki, Thibeli and other native activists as early as 1925 even before the 6th Comintern could adopt the Native Republic Thesis.
- **Anti-Pass Campaigns:** In the 1930s and 1940s, YCLSA members were actively involved in anti-pass law campaigns, opposing the oppressive pass system that restricted the movement of Black South Africans.
- **Naming of our Brigade after Ruth First** is symbolic to our commitment to the principle of non sexism as an antithesis of patriachal relations in society. You would recollect that Cde Ruth First who was cowardly assassinated with a parcel bomb in Maputo conducting underground work is our first female National Secretary.

The Struggle Against Apartheid: 1950s - 1990s

- Defiance Campaign and Sharpeville Massacre (1950s - 1960s)
- The Defiance Campaign:

In the early 1950s, YCLSA members participated in the Defiance Campaign, a coordinated effort to resist apartheid laws through non-violent civil disobedience. The YCLSA was also involved in registering our peoples demands towards the congress of the people which ultimately adopted the Freedom Charter in Kliptown.

- Sharpeville Massacre:

In the tragic events of 1960, where peaceful protesters were shot by racist police who were enforcing the brutality of the Apartheid on behalf of the National Party Government in Sharpeville, further galvanized our resolve. YCLSA members played critical roles in mobilizing communities and international solidarity efforts in response.

2. Underground Activities and Armed Struggle (1960s - 1980s)

- Umkhonto we Sizwe:

Many YCLSA members joined Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the joint armed wing of the SACP and ANC, engaging in sabotage and guerrilla warfare against the apartheid regime. Their actions were so impactful that they even triggered cross-border attacks by the Pretoria regime in places like Maputo, Matola, Lesotho, and Namibia. As mentioned earlier, our former National Secretary, Ruth First and many others lost their lives as a result of these brutal retaliatory attacks, highlighting the immense sacrifices made in the struggle for liberation.

Transition to Democracy: 1990s - Present

The Birth of a New South Africa (1990s)

- End of Apartheid: The early 1990s marked the official end of the apartheid regime, paving the way for democratic governance and the dismantling of institutionalized racial segregation.
- First Democratic Elections: In 1994, South Africa held its first democratic elections, leading to Nelson Mandela's election as the country's first black president and symbolizing a new era of equality and freedom.
- Constitutional Transformation: The 1990s saw the drafting and adoption of a new constitution, which enshrined human rights, equality, and justice, laying the foundation for a democratic and inclusive society.

Post-Apartheid Nation Building (2000s - Present)

Educational reform and Skills Development:

The YCLSA has been a champion of educational reforms, advocating for free and quality education. Our campaigns have resulted in increased government investment in education and the establishment of bursary programs for disadvantaged youth.

Youth Employment Initiatives:

We have spearheaded initiatives aimed at reducing youth unemployment, including advocating for youth quotas in employment and the establishment of youth development programs. The youth employment accord, which brings stakeholders from a wide range spectrum being government, labour, youth organizations etc sets aside this quotas. The Presidential infrastructure intervention as well as the employment stimulus that has strategically targeted the youth to deal with the pandemic of youth unemployment. The YCLSA is firm on the demand for the right to work and will continue mount a relentless campaign to elevate the right to work for all.

Strengthening Organizational Capacity

Leadership Development:

Over the years, the YCLSA has invested heavily in developing young leaders via our publications, political education, mentorship programs, and leadership training workshops. This continuous investment ensures the sustainability and growth of our movement, empowering the next generation to carry forward the torch of socialism.

Digital Transformation:

Embracing the digital age, the YCLSA has modernized its operations, utilizing social media and digital platforms to engage with the youth, disseminate information, and mobilize support.

International Solidarity and Global Movements

Solidarity with Global Struggles:

The YCLSA has consistently supported international struggles against imperialism and capitalism, forging alliances with youth movements worldwide. We have stood in solidarity with the Palestinian cause, the Cuban Revolution, and anti-imperialist movements across Africa and Latin America. Well conversant of the three theatre military strategy according to a leaked Pentagon correspondence, we aligned ourselves with all progressive forces in the international community.

The Importance of the Youth Vote

A strong argument could be made that that the the youth are a strategic vanguard of our revolution. It is imperative that we harness the energy, creativity, and revolutionary potential of young people. We must engage them, educate them, and mobilize them to take ownership of their future.

Addressing Voter Apathy amongst the Youth

One of the significant challenges we are facing in our democracy is voter apathy, particularly among the youth. The disillusionment stems from unfulfilled promises and the harsh realities of unemployment, inequality, and poverty. Our task is to reignite the revolutionary spirit and instill a sense of hope and purpose. We must remind the youth that their vote is their voice and that they have the power to shape the future.

The YCLSA Sibangena Campaign:

Our Siyabangena election campaign is deeply rooted in the foundational principles of league building. As we build upon the work outlined in our Youth Manifesto, adopted during the 5th National Congress in Alice, we focus on the key pillars:

International Solidarity

The Battle of Ideas

Campus Work

Community Engagement through the 'Know Your Neighborhood and Act'

Strengthening Alliances

The strength of our movement lies in unity. The Student Worker Alliance and the PYA are critical in building a broad-based movement that transcends individual interests and focuses on collective goals. It is our firm position that the state of youth underdevelopment correlates directly to the disenfranchised youth voice in the country.

The PYA should primarily champion the youth interests and aspirations in order to rally them behind the banner of the movement. There is a pressing need to strengthen the PYA for the battles ahead. In the same vein, the student worker alliance has got to be built and be tactically repositioned as a launching pad for the renewal of left-wing agenda`

The Battle of Ideas

We must recognize that the battle of ideas will be fiercely contested, with information, misinformation, and disinformation shaping the electoral landscape. Our revolutionary intelligentsia must act as vigilant watchdogs, safeguarding the interests of the people. The ideological struggle is not just an academic exercise but a real fight for the hearts and minds of our people. As Marx argued, the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class. We must counter these with a clear, compelling, and progressive vision that resonates with the masses.

Campus Work

Marx's assertion that the ruling ideas are those of the ruling class reminds us of the critical role institutions of higher learning play as centers of knowledge production, reproduction, and dissemination. The rollout of our Operation Khula must be strengthened to assert our presence among the student body, fostering a foundation for the realization of an effective and strong PYA front on campus and a vibrant Student Worker Alliance. Universities and colleges are reservoirs of the intelligentsia in society therefore it ought to be cultivated in the hallways of left ideas so as to become progressive intellectuals who contribute vibrantly to the revolution.

Community Engagement

We must also understand the dynamics within our communities. Workers and students are members of their communities before anything else. Community activism must permeate the structures of our movement, both during and beyond the electoral campaign. Engaging with our communities on a grassroots level allows us to build trust, understand their needs, and mobilize them effectively. The 'Know Your Neighborhood and Act' campaign is not just about electoral gains but about long-term community building and empowerment. Our branches must be rooted in community struggles if they are to live up to the characterization as centres of community/youth development!

Voter Mobilization

We acknowledge the announced figures of over 27 million registered voters, with more than 50% being female and over 40% being youth. While consolidating our support among the female electorate, it is equally important to encourage active participation from male voters.



- *Revolutionary forces from the Ruth First Red Brigades posing for a rare picture in Mbuyiselo Ngwenda District, NMBM*

Why do we mobilize the Youth to support the ANC in the upcoming elections?

Our resolute support for the ANC is grounded in a common manifesto that represents the collective aspirations of our revolutionary alliance. The manifesto of the ANC echoes the collective views and long held campaigns of alliance partners as it would have underwent rigorous consultative processes within the framework of the alliance.

Therefore comrades, we stand firm in our unwavering support for the African National Congress (ANC) as we approach the 7th National and Provincial Elections, scheduled for 29 May 2024. This pivotal moment in our nation's history calls for a reconfigured alliance headed by the ANC, as resolved by the South African Communist Party (SACP). It is crucial to recognize that this does not imply a suspension of our efforts to build an independent party profile or a broad left front.

Youth Unemployment

Youth unemployment is a national crisis, statistics in this regard cannot be over emphasised. This lived reality has devastating impact on our communities-the youth in their majority. The chronic nature of our youth unemployment lies on the structural unemployment which is informed mainly by skills mismatches or lack thereof. The youth must demand a report of how far has the youth wage subsidy addressed this pandemic? Massive populace skilling desires a concerted effort. We have perpetually called for a plausible exit and sustainability strategy for the interns and learnerships programmes. We maintain that each workplace **MUST** be a training space in order to enhance the effectiveness of the Work Intergrated Learning. The YCLSA is focused on creating pathways for youth to enter the workforce:

Vocational Training and Apprenticeships:

We must expand vocational training programs and apprenticeships that equip young people with practical skills needed in the job market. Partnerships with industries and educational institutions can facilitate the advancement of vocational training and apprenticeship programs. Emphasis must be placed on the development of the exit and sustainability strategy. This is to ensure that skills, knowledge and attitudes assimilated through public investment yield value for the state and also create sustainable livelihood for the working poor.

Entrepreneurship Support and Cooperatives Development:

Encouraging entrepreneurship among youth by providing access to funding, mentorship, and business development services can create new job opportunities and foster innovation. It is now common cause that SMMEs and the informal sectors are the greatest creators of employment globally. It is therefore imperative that we lobby and advocate tirelessly for the entrepreneurial support especially of youth enterprises. We maintain that business conducted in socialist principles by way of cooperatives, is one of the best models for rapid and collective growth and empowerment. Lets revive One Branch, One Cooperative in the year of the District.

3. Forward to the rollout of the Basic Income Grant.

Culminating from the fact that our country is one of the unequal societies world over, and it is peculiar in that it discriminately affects the majority of the population, in this case when a child of the working class is born it will owing to the current trajectory most likely be subjected to live in squalor and below the poverty line to the extent that it compromises their living standards as defined by the human development index. This provides the basis for the state intervention to preserve the livelihoods, health and dignity of its inhabitants by designing a social security net which has got to also accomodate the worker seekers. If government can subsidize the private sector to employment the youth almost like compensating a fish to swim, then the question of funding should not arise.

The SRD continues to be one of the critical programmes for poverty alleviation. The Basic Income grant should build on its advances and close its gaps. Critical to the basic income grant is that it must be substantial in monetary terms and in contribution to community service. The fundamental criterion for eligibility should follow the one of the SRD and buttressed by the fact that recipients should serve 4 hours a week on community service and show cause of employment seeking in the last 4 weeks. This is to ensure that we build a developmental state opposed to a welfarist one. The communities must reap the spin offs of public investment on Basic Income Grant through community patrols, community health workers, cleaning and recycling programmes, water leakage fixing brigades etc.



● Ruth First Red Brigades / ANC LET and MKLWV at operation center in Johannes Nkosi District

Education Reform

Education is a fundamental right and a powerful tool for social transformation. The YCLSA is resolute on its programme to make education accessible and fashionable through broadening access into the system and pursuing success whilst within the system. However, the current education system is fraught with an array of challenges:

Ensuring Free and Quality Education:

We continue to push for the realization of free, compulsory and quality education for all, from primary through tertiary levels. This includes adequate funding for schools, improving infrastructure, and ensuring the availability of learning materials and supplies for nutrition programme. Our branches should continue engaging in protracted Joe Slovo Right To Learn Campaign to continue elevating education transformation issues.

Curriculum Relevance:

The curriculum must be updated to reflect the needs of a modern economy and society. This includes incorporating more vocational training and skills development, as well as teaching critical thinking and problem-solving skills. We will continue calling for the comprehensive history curriculum to be development that our history is devoid of Afrikaner indoctrination but instead balanced. We have to continue campaigning for the seminal work of Karl Marx especially the laws of human development and historical materialism to be infused in the curriculum on a compulsory basis.

Teacher Training and Support:

Investing in the training and continuous professional development of teachers is essential. Teachers need the skills, resources, and support to deliver a quality decolonized education. The programme of the Assistant Teachers as support mechanism for the administrative work for educators and employment creation endeavor must be supported and protected.

Healthcare Access

Access to quality healthcare remains a critical issue, particularly for the Supporting the NHI: The NHI aims to provide comprehensive healthcare to all South Africans, regardless of their financial status. We must mobilize support for its implementation and ensure it is managed efficiently. The NHI is intended to end the two tier health system when public funds are invested in the private sector mainly while it only serves the few at the expense of the majority.

Expanding Healthcare Infrastructure:

Investment in healthcare infrastructure, especially in rural and underserved areas, is vital. This includes building more clinics and hospitals and ensuring they are well-staffed and equipped. This should be done by monitoring progress on the pilot projects of the Ideal Clinics which should serve our people 24hours.

Addressing Healthcare Inequalities:

Tackling the disparities between public and private healthcare sectors is crucial. Ensuring that the public healthcare system is adequately funded and that healthcare professionals are fairly compensated will help bridge this gap the two tier health system.



LOOKING FORWARD

As we look to the future, we must continue to adapt and innovate while staying true to our core principles. The challenges we face are formidable, but so is our resolve. Our vision of socialism in our lifetime requires relentless dedication and strategic action.

Our Key Priorities:

Party Building	Alliance Building	League Building
Political Education	Revolution	Battle of Ideas
Mentorship	Innovation	Technology

Conclusion

This 102nd anniversary of the YCLSA is a testament to our enduring spirit and unwavering commitment to the cause of socialism. Let us draw inspiration from our history, remain steadfast in our principles, and work tirelessly to build a better future for all South Africans. We have to remain steadfast on our quest for Socialism for we are certain that under socialism, there will be no space for underdevelopment, poverty, inequality and patriarchy.

The struggle continues, and our victory is certain. Ushindi Hakika!

**Socialism in our lifetime.
Forward to Socialism!!!
Down with Capitalism!!!!**

“Song for Hani”

Written by Vijay Prashad
Research scholar, Delhi University

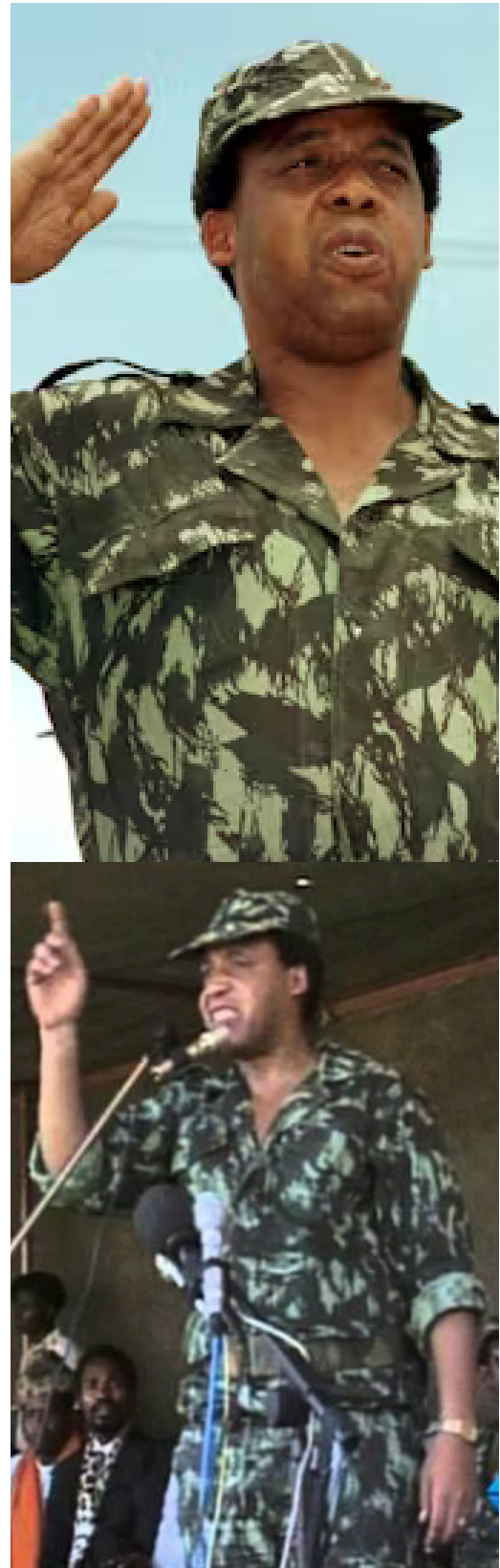
In the protest, lay a prophesy.
Nor fatigue, nor anger, but history
of pain, of struggle, of history,
an as yet unresolved story.

A warning of uncertain times,
of times to come for all.
It is no secret that there crimes will
be their downfall.

When the first stone was thrown,
The burghers all stood still.
Then a simple silent moan
began and sound the peoples will.

I sit and write these lines,
with a need to feel that hope;
but the only line i find
is the noose of a lynching rope.

Oh Chris Hani the stone is flying.
a prophesy for those who are left.
But the comrades are dying,
leave us so truly bereft.





A YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

The National Democratic Revolution through the context of a young person

The ideology which was at the apex of creating an equal society in South Africa has always been the national democratic revolution, as early as the 1930`s it was already discussed and formulated to advance the struggle within South Africa towards such a society, it is also through the efforts of the then leadership, that the NDR inspired the Freedom Charter of 1955 and the radicalization of the MDM, which most of the leaders were banned by the Apartheid regime which resulted in many of them going underground as early as 1950.

The result of the Freedom Charter made it clear that the advancement of the national democratic revolution, indeed through revolutionary theory will have to involve the strategic guerilla warfare of sabotage and advanced propaganda, to engage both the classes and the color lines which were a result of Colonialism of a Special Type (CST) in South Africa, which created a handful of European settlers in South Africa who mostly were racist and antagonistic to the black majority of South Africa, they deemed them to be inferior and barbaric as they saw themselves as civilized and superior, this led to the barbaric laws of Apartheid which were implemented by the so called civilized and superior people the British and the Afrikaners (Boers) the so called founders of the "UNION OF SOUTH AFRICA".

The policy of this so called superior people was just a fascist copy of what the Nazi`s did in German and what the Israelites are doing in Palestine, a sickening ideology of a superior people remains the enemy of human kind today and if it is not eradicated, it will continue to advance and destroy our civilization towards a multilateral world order of mutual respect and benefit amongst nations without superiority nor inferiority complexes, having to play a major role in multilateral engagements as if childish psychology still controls this important multi-polar centers for world peace and sustainable development, but merits of advanced social construction and equality should be of paramount acceptance of human development and advancement from childish antagonisms produced by greedy and selfish individuals or families.

The advanced detachment which brought about the Freedom Charter and the formation of guerilla warfare (uMkhonto We Sizwe) was delayed by the harshness and barbaric tendencies of the Fascist Nat`s and it took 2 decades to finally realize the beginning of the end for the Nat`s fascist regime in South Africa. 1961 the guerilla warfare was formed but only in 1980`s was it now intensified, thanks to the Luanda consultative and authoritative conference of 1978 which brought us to a point of having a series of car bombs, landmines on railways and major key point of infrastructures were brought down, of cause this was the result of the rebuilding that was down during the 1970`s and the 1976 Soweto generation which brought us the new organs and strengthening of those MDM organs, such as UDF, COSAS, COSATU, SASCO and SANCO, this organizations brought about the pressure and intensification of the National Democratic Revolution towards the 1994 break through and all of this was on the back of the underground guerilla intelligence network that was reconstructed during the 1970`s and the strategy and tactics produced by the Vietnam inspired greenbook.



The 1994 democratic breakthrough towards socialism

The intensification of the struggle during the 1980`s which resulted in the state of emergency being implemented by Mr. Crocodile “Botha” was a sign post that the apartheid regime was now a dying crocodile and our people must pick up the spear of the nation and drive this crocodile out of our homes just as President Albert Luthuli said we must do, of cause this led to the 1994 democratic break through yet not without delayed as soon as the 1994 democratic break through was ushered we were hindered by the gravy train and the flesh pots, which caused ideology to be thrown out the window and the neoliberal dollar bag was sneaked in through the back door to redirect the MDM towards neo-colonialism agenda and the unilateral hegemonic dominance of the West was solidified and who ever tried to rise against the mighty tide was flushed away, just as the guerilla warfare was delayed by 2 decades before it intensified its strategies towards democratic break through, it could as well be said that the national democratic revolution has been delayed by the neoliberals and Neo-Cons within the MDM and this call`s for our generation to awaken and intensify the struggle towards socialism.

- This points us to political education and training as the start point for the advancement to socialism amongst the left first then spread it.
- For young people to create international solidarity movements apart from the already existing to deepen the NDR towards socialist break through.
- To create SADC youth solidarity movements and advance it towards other African regions.
- Revive MDM structures and inject them with revolutionary theory, win other organs back which left and create an intensification of militancy and radicalism.
- Discredit neo-cons and neoliberal polices by any means necessary especially at tertiary institutions and research centers and organizations.

This is a duty in a summary that the young people within the Tripartite Alliance and the MDM as a whole should agitate for and advance for a more equal society which will be a result of the National Democratic Revolution inspired policies. The international balance of forces currently suite our nation to advance in such a struggle as those in the 80`s and 90`s were faced with first a bipolar world then came in the full might of the unipolar world and now as we advance into a multi-polar world order this creates a sense of self determination according to our people`s needs and not what the imperialist forces or neo-cons think it should be, and this will need strong Africans such as knights of old to defend our beloved continent from the past Western barbaric forces towards a socialist break through and equal society.

END

Written by Ivan Mnisi, a dedicated young activist and committed member of our party.



**REFLECTIONS ON THE
REVITALIZING EX-
MINEWORKERS' LIVES IN
NORTH WEST"**

The year 2024 Marks exactly thirty seven (37) years since the historic 1987 Mineworkers strike that was spearheaded by the militant and progressive National Union of Mine Workers [NUM] which had sought to take the bull [Capitalists] by the horns in pursuit of not only better living wages but importantly an improved and qualitative socio-economic living conditions of the

The burning desire to wage this relentless struggle had been prompted by the saddening living condition that the community of Mineworkers were purposefully subjected to by the mining bosses and of course the Apartheid government itself.

At the time of this 1987 industrial revolt, NUM disputed the lowest wages of R230 per month for gold mine workers and R335 per month for coal mines. Reports highlighted that gold mines for the year 1986 alone recorded the highest profit ever in history with about 8 420

Clearly, Mining companies could afford to pay workers what was due to them but for obvious reasons opted profit maximization and exploitation thus lack of will to even continue with wage negotiations which led to the industrial action. Conclusively, the 30% wage increase that was resolved on at the final meeting itself did not culminate “living wage”. This therefore meant that the quest for improved socio-economic conditions for mine workers was postponed yet again or worse they would be condemned to generational exploitation and poverty. As Marxist scholars would deposit an analogy on class struggle between the bourgeoisie and proletariat; to these mine bosses, mine workers are just mere tools of profit maximization with sell by date.

To date many of ex-mineworkers and their families continue to live in abject poverty and remain unemployable with many of those retired with nothing but deteriorated health conditions, mostly respiratory infections and diseases like silicosis, TB and occupational injuries which they were never compensated for. This is despite these mineworkers having generated billions of profits for the class that owned these means of production thus creating generationally wealth which offspring of this exploitative class continue to rule on.

According to the TEBA annual report released in 2017 on the ex mine workers population in South Africa, it is estimated that there is about 922 888 ex-mineworkers in South Africa with the large number of those concentrated in the Eastern Cape with 281 553 (31%) followed by North West Province with 168 171 (18%) and Gauteng with 160 530 (17%) and other numbers is scattered around.

On diseases, the overall burden of disease related to mining in Southern Africa is estimated to be 1 624 938 with the majority in South Africa (1 189 515) followed by Lesotho (191 225) and Mozambique (152 051). There is approximately 500 000 ex-mineworkers with an unknown place of residence.

The Compensation fund for Occupational Injuries (COIDA) has grown to R70 billion while the Compensation Fund under the Occupational Diseases in Mines and Works Act has grown from R2.8 billion (2012) to R5 billion (currently). There have been 39 937 claims finalised over last 5 years (47%) and 85 087 claims over 23 years within the CCOD.

Recognising this historical socio-economic injustice committed against the Community of ex-mine workers, the South African National government established the Ex-mineworkers project under the Department of Health in 2022. Research that led to the establishment of this project revealed that many Ex mine workers of African descent suffered the deterioration of their health condition, injuries and death but did not get compensated although they got exposed to these dangers on line of duty making profit for the greedy mine bosses.

In other instances, health care services (hospitals and clinics) were privately owned by mining companies and as such medical reports on the health condition of these ex-mine workers were medically questionable, fabricated and blemished with the motive to prevent these mining companies from compensating mine workers (especially the native mine worker) for occupational injuries and diseases.

As we reflect on this rich history many years later, we realise the democratic government intention and political will to redress this injustice, the thus the legislation on Occupational Health and Safety act (OHS act) of 1993 which was developed from occupational health and safety.

This act has not been effectively because many victims of this well premeditated, impeccably arranged and executed operation never succeeded in claiming their benefits. The larger number of those and their families remain unemployable, poor and hopeless and thus the need for a program by government to improve their socio-economic conditions.

According to the Department of Health [DoH] 2023 semester report for the Dr Kenneth Kaunda Ex mine workers project released in June 2023, the average ex-mine worker is between the ages 60-70 years of age, at then the time of their employment the age of many of these mine worker was relatively 20-30 which in the new democracy would qualify them as youth.

This therefore suggests that many of those were directly robbed off their survival in the future thus many families that depended on these mine workers for living remain hopelessly destitute and frustrated.

In the North West province, the project was officially launched in August 2022 after lengthy consultation with different stakeholders which included amongst others ex-mine workers, Tribal Authorities, Mining trusts that manage claims for workers, religious leaders and other stakeholders.

The project had clear objectives developed from the 5 year provincial strategic plan which are:

- Structures and systems improvement;
- Occupational Health Services;
- Social Protection Benefits; and
- Socio-Economic Development.

The project was implemented in the four districts of the North West Province with the goal of “The restoration of social justice and the dignity of ex-mineworkers in the North West Province”.

The following significant milestones were achieved:

Governance Structures: Provincial Steering Committee and North West Ex-mineworkers Council established and are functional.

- A 5-year Strategic Plan developed and being implemented
- Project Management Unit and 4 District coordinating Units established and functional
- Contributed to the comprehensive and integrated Resource Mobilisation and funding Plan
- Activated one-stop-service centres in all four districts to evaluate ex mineworkers and facilitate the lodgement of claims

On the 19 September 2023, the project management team led by the project Director and Deputy Director General District Health Services reported that since the launch, more than 7300 applications of ex mineworkers have been processed and more than R53 000 000 paid to beneficiaries by CCOD for the period 2022 to 2023 and R60 000 000 by Tshiamiso Trust for the period 2021 to 2023.

Comparatively speaking, in one year since the launch, processed claims through this project covered the total number of 6 years period. This is a clear indication that the livelihood of many of these ex mineworkers who benefitted from the mentioned claims has improved for the better and justice restored. On Socio-Economic developments, the DoH has partnered with Mining Development Agency, SETA's and Agri SA to develop cooperatives to support ex mineworkers in sustainable economic activities. This could aid in combating the triple challenges of poverty, inequalities and unemployment ravaging our country.

This project remains one of the most decisive and transformative interventions by the democratic government to change the lives of South Africans in particular the lives of ex mine workers and their families (beneficiaries) and deserves to be hailed by the Community of the North West province for the transformation it brings about.



livelihood of ex mine workers and their families, thus the need to applaud the latter. This was achieved against the background of destructive criticism, shortage of logistics and budget constraints to mention but a few challenges however the commitment for the transformative agenda has seen the African National Congress led government striving to achieve even more. By far this project remains one of the most significant and preeminent ways by the ANC government to restore justice, pursue transformation and bridge the dividing inequality gap between the elite minority and down-trodden majority in the province. In the end, it is interventions like the Ex Mine Workers project that give hope about the commitment of our government to really address injustices of the past and as such we will be looking forward for more transformative programs such as this one.

By Tsietsi Letsebe, the YCLSA 1st DNS writing in his personal capacity as a trade unionist.



VLADIMIR LENIN'S THE TASKS OF THE YOUTH LEAGUES

Speech Delivered At The Third All-Russia Congress of The Russian Young Communist League

(The Congress greets Lenin with a tremendous ovation.)

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

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

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

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

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

But this reply -- "learn communism" -- is too general. What do we need in order to learn communism? What must be singled out from the sum of general knowledge so as to acquire a knowledge of communism? Here a number of dangers arise, which very often manifest themselves whenever the task of learning communism is presented incorrectly, or when it is interpreted in too one-sided a manner. Naturally, the first thought that enters one's mind is that learning communism means assimilating the sum of knowledge that is contained in communist manuals, pamphlets and books. But such a definition of the study of communism would be too crude and inadequate.

If the study of communism consisted solely in assimilating what is contained in communist books and pamphlets, we might all too easily obtain communist text-jugglers or braggarts, and this would very often do us harm, because such people, after learning by rote what is set forth in communist books and pamphlets, would prove incapable of combining the various branches of knowledge, and would be unable to act in the way communism really demands. One of the greatest evils and misfortunes left to us by the old, capitalist society is the complete rift between books and practical life; we have had books explaining everything in the best possible manner, yet in most cases these books contained the most pernicious and hypocritical lies, a false description of capitalist society.

That is why it would be most mistaken merely to assimilate book knowledge about communism. No longer do our speeches and articles merely reiterate what used to be said about communism, because our speeches and articles are connected with our daily work in all fields. Without work and without struggle, book knowledge of communism obtained from communist pamphlets and works is absolutely worthless, for it would continue the old separation of theory and practice, the old rift which was the most pernicious feature of the old, bourgeois society.

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

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

But this reply -- "learn communism" -- is too general. What do we need in order to learn communism? or when it is interpreted in too one-sided a manner.

What must be singled out from the sum of general knowledge so as to acquire a knowledge of communism? Here a number of dangers arise, which very often manifest themselves whenever the task of learning communism is presented incorrectly. The question arises: how is all this to be blended for the study of communism? What must we take from the old schools, from the old kind of science? It was the declared aim of the old type of school to produce men with an all-round education, to teach the sciences in general. We know that this was utterly false, since the whole of society was based and maintained on the division of people into classes, into exploiters and oppressed. Since they were thoroughly imbued with the class spirit, the old schools naturally gave knowledge only to the children of the bourgeoisie. Every word was falsified in the interests of the bourgeoisie. In these schools the younger generation of workers and peasants were not so much educated as drilled in the interests of that bourgeoisie. They were trained in such a way as to be useful servants of the bourgeoisie, able to create profits for it without disturbing its peace and leisure. That is why, while rejecting the old type of schools, we have made it our task to take from it only what we require for genuine communist education.

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

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

You are faced with the task of construction, and you can accomplish that task only by assimilating all modern knowledge, only if you are able to transform communism from cut-and-dried and memorised formulas, counsels, recipes, prescriptions and programmes into that living reality which gives unity to your immediate work, and only if you are able to make communism a guide in all your practical work. It would be mistaken to think it sufficient to learn communist slogans and the conclusions of communist science, without acquiring that sum of knowledge of which communism itself is a result. Marxism is an example which shows how communism arose out of the sum of human knowledge. You have read and heard that communist theory -- the science of communism created in the main by Marx, this doctrine of Marxism -- has ceased to be the work of a single socialist of the nineteenth century, even though he was a genius, and that it has become the doctrine of millions and tens of millions of proletarians all over the world, who are applying it in their struggle against capitalism. If you were to ask why the teachings of Marx have been able to win the hearts and minds of millions and tens of millions of the most revolutionary class, you would receive only one answer: it was because Marx based his work on the firm foundation of the human knowledge acquired under capitalism.

After making a study of the laws governing the development of human society, Marx realised the inevitability of capitalism developing towards communism. What is most important is that he proved this on the sole basis of a most precise, detailed and profound study of this capitalist society, by fully assimilating all that earlier science had produced. He critically reshaped everything that had been created by human society, without ignoring a single detail. He reconsidered, subjected to criticism, and verified on the working-class movement everything that human thinking had created, and therefrom formulated conclusions which people hemmed in by bourgeois limitations or bound by bourgeois prejudices could not draw.

We must bear this in mind when, for example, we talk about proletarian culture.[2] We shall be unable to solve this problem unless we clearly realise that only a precise knowledge and transformation of the culture created by the entire development of mankind will enable us to create a proletarian culture. The latter is not clutched out of thin air; it is not an invention of those who call themselves experts in proletarian culture. That is all nonsense. Proletarian culture must be the logical development of the store of knowledge mankind has accumulated under the yoke of capitalist, landowner and bureaucratic society. All these roads have been leading, and will continue to lead up to proletarian culture, in the same way as political economy, as reshaped by Marx, has shown us what human society must arrive at, shown us the passage to the class struggle, to the beginning of the proletarian revolution. We are replacing the old drill-sergeant methods practised in bourgeois society, against the will of the majority, with the class-conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, who combine hatred of the old society with a determination, ability and readiness to unite and organise their forces for this struggle so as to forge the wills of millions and hundreds of millions of people -- disunited, and scattered over the territory of a huge country -- into a single will, without which defeat is inevitable.

Without this solidarity, without this conscious discipline of the workers and peasants, our cause is hopeless. Without this, we shall be unable to vanquish the capitalists and landowners of the whole world. We shall not even consolidate the foundation, let alone build a new, communist society on that foundation. Likewise, while condemning the old schools, while harbouring an absolutely justified and necessary hatred for the old schools, and appreciating the readiness to destroy them, we must realise that we must replace the old system of instruction, the old cramming and the old drill, with an ability to acquire the sum total of human knowledge, and to acquire it in such a way that communism shall not be something to be learned by rote, but something that you yourselves have thought over, something that will embody conclusions inevitable from the standpoint of present-day education.

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

I shall take a practical example to make this clear to you, and to demonstrate the approach to the problem of how you must learn. You all know that, following the military problems, those of defending the republic, we are now confronted with economic tasks. Communist society, as we know, cannot be built unless we restore industry and agriculture, and that, not in the old way.

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

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

That is the task you should pursue in educating, training and rousing the entire younger generation. You must be foremost among the millions of builders of a communist society in whose ranks every young man and young woman should be. You will not build a communist society unless you enlist the mass of young workers and peasants in the work of building communism.

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

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

You must train yourselves to be Communists. It is the task of the Youth League to organize its practical activities in such a way that, by learning, organising, uniting and fighting, its members shall train both themselves and all those who look to it for leadership; it should train Communists. The entire purpose of training, educating and teaching the youth of today should be to imbue them with communist ethics.

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

In what sense do we reject ethics, reject morality?

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

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

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

The old society was based on the oppression of all the workers and peasants by the landowners and capitalists. We had to destroy all that, and overthrow them but to do that we had to create unity. That is something that God cannot create. This unity could be provided only by the factories, only by a proletariat trained and roused from its long slumber. Only when that class was formed did a mass movement arise which has led to what we have now -- the victory of the proletarian revolution in one of the weakest of countries, which for three years has been repelling the onslaught of the bourgeoisie of the whole world.

We can see how the proletarian revolution is developing all over the world. On the basis of experience, we now say that only the proletariat could have created the solid force which the disunited and scattered peasantry are following and which has withstood all onslaughts by the exploiters. Only this class can help the working masses unite, rally their ranks and conclusively defend, conclusively consolidate and conclusively build up a communist society.

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

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

What are classes in general? Classes are that which permits one section of society to appropriate the labour of another section. If one section of society appropriates all the land, we have a landowner class and a peasant class. If one section of society owns the factories, shares and capital, while another section works in these factories, we have a capitalist class and a proletarian class.

It was not difficult to drive out the tsar -- that required only a few days. It was not very difficult to drive out the landowners -- that was done in a few months. Nor was it very difficult to drive out the capitalists. But it is incomparably more difficult to abolish classes; we still have the division into workers and peasants. If the peasant is installed on his plot of land and appropriates his surplus grain, that is, grain that he does not need for himself or for his cattle, while the rest of the people have to go without bread, then the peasant becomes an exploiter.

The more grain he clings to, the more profitable he finds it; as for the rest, let them starve: "The more they starve, the dearer I can sell this grain." All should work according to a single common plan, on common land, in common factories and in accordance with a common system. Is that easy to attain? You see that it is not as easy as driving out the tsar, the landowners and the capitalists. What is required is that the proletariat re-educate a section of the peasantry; it must win over the working peasants in order to crush the resistance of those peasants who are rich and are profiting from the poverty and want of the rest. Hence the task of the proletarian struggle is not quite completed after we have overthrown the tsar and driven out the landowners and capitalists; to accomplish that is the task of the system we call the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The class struggle is continuing; it has merely changed its forms. It is the class struggle of the proletariat to prevent the return of the old exploiters, to unite in a single union the scattered masses of unenlightened peasants. The class struggle is continuing and it is our task to subordinate all interests to that struggle. Our communist morality is also subordinated to that task. We say: morality is what serves to destroy the old exploiting society and to unite all the working people around the proletariat, which is building up a new, communist society.

Communist morality is that which serves this struggle and unites the working people against all exploitation, against all petty private property; for petty property puts into the hands of one person that which has been created by the labour of the whole of society. In our country the land is common property.

But suppose I take a piece of this common property and grow on it twice as much grain as I need, and 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.

That must be combated. If that is allowed to go on, things will revert to the rule of the capitalists, to the rule of the bourgeoisie, as has more than once happened in previous revolutions. To prevent the restoration of the rule of the capitalists and the bourgeoisie, we must not allow profiteering; we must not allow individuals to enrich themselves at the expense of the rest; the working people must unite with the proletariat and form a communist society. This is the principal feature of the fundamental task of the League and the organisation of the communist youth.

The old society was based on the principle: rob or be robbed; work for others or make others work for you; be a slave-owner or a slave. Naturally, people brought up in such a society assimilate with their mother's milk, one might say, the psychology, the habit, the concept which says: you are either a slave-owner or a slave, or else, a small owner, a petty employee, a petty official, or an intellectual -- in short, a man who is concerned only with himself, and does not care a rap for anybody else.

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

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

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

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

To achieve this we need that generation of young people who began to reach political maturity in the midst of a disciplined and desperate struggle against the bourgeoisie. In this struggle that generation is training genuine Communists; it must subordinate to this struggle, and link up with it, each step in its studies, education and training. The education of the communist youth must consist, not in giving them suave talks and moral precepts. This is not what education consists in. When people have seen the way in which their fathers and mothers lived under the yoke of the landowners and capitalists; when they have themselves experienced the sufferings of those who began the struggle against the exploiters; when they have seen the sacrifices made to keep what has been won, and seen what deadly enemies the landowners and capitalists are -- they are taught by these conditions to become Communists. Communist morality is based on the struggle for the consolidation and completion of communism. That is also the basis of communist training, education, and teaching. That is the reply to the question of how communism should be learnt.

We could not believe in teaching, training and education if they were restricted only to the schoolroom and divorced from the ferment of life. As long as the workers and peasants are oppressed by the landowners and capitalists, and as long as the schools are controlled by the landowners and capitalists, the young generation will remain blind and ignorant.

Our schools must provide the youth with the fundamentals of knowledge, the ability to evolve communist views independently; they must make educated people of the youth. While they are attending school, they must learn to become participants in the struggle for emancipation from the exploiters. The Young Communist League will justify its name as the League of the young communist generation only when every step in its teaching, training and education is linked up with participation in the common struggle of all working people against the exploiters. You are well aware that, as long as Russia remains the only workers' republic and the old, bourgeois system exists in the rest of the world, we shall be weaker than they are, and be constantly threatened with a new attack; and that only if we learn to be solidly united shall we win in the further struggle and -- having gained strength -- become really invincible. Thus, to be a Communist means that you must organise and unite the entire young generation and set an example of training and discipline in this struggle. Then you will be able to start building the edifice of communist society and bring it to completion.

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

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

One's own experience of life is needed. When Kolchak and Denikin were advancing from Siberia and the South, the peasants were on their side. They did not like Bolshevism because the Bolsheviks took their grain at a fixed price.

But when the peasants in Siberia and the Ukraine experienced the rule of Kolchak and Denikin, they realised that they had only one alternative: either to go to the capitalists, who would at once hand them over into slavery under the landowners; or to follow the workers, who, it is true, did not promise a land flowing with milk and honey, and demanded iron discipline and firmness in an arduous struggle, but would lead them out of enslavement by the capitalists and landowners. When even the ignorant peasant saw and realised this from their own experience, they became conscious adherents of communism, who had gone through a severe school. It is such experience that must form the basis of all the activities of the Young Communist League.

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

I shall quote a few examples from the experience of the work of some of the youth organisations so as to illustrate how this training in communism should proceed. Everybody is talking about abolishing illiteracy. You know that a communist society cannot be built in an illiterate country. It is not enough for the Soviet government to issue an order, or for the Party to issue a particular slogan, or to assign a certain number of the best workers to this task. The young generation itself must take up this work. Communism means that the youth, the young men and women who belong to the Youth League, should say: this is our job; we shall unite and go into the rural districts to abolish illiteracy, so that there shall be no illiterates among our young people. We are trying to get the rising generation to devote their activities to this work. You know that we cannot rapidly transform an ignorant and illiterate Russia into a literate country.

But if the Youth League sets to work on the job, and if all young people work for the benefit of all, the League, with a membership of 400,000 young men and women, will be entitled to call itself a Young Communist League. It is also a task of the League, not only to acquire knowledge itself, but to help those young people who are unable to extricate themselves by their own efforts from the toils of illiteracy. Being a member of the Youth League means devoting one's labour and efforts to the common cause. That is what a communist education means. Only in the course of such work do young men and women become real Communists. Only if they achieve practical results in this work will they become Communists.

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

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

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

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

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

The generation of people who are now at the age of fifty cannot expect to see a communist society. This generation will be gone before then. But the generation of those who are now fifteen will see a communist society, and will itself build this society.

This generation should know that the entire purpose of their lives is to build a communist society. In the old society, each family worked separately and labour was not organised by anybody except the landowners and capitalists, who oppressed the masses of the people.

We must organise all labour, no matter how toilsome or messy it may be, in such a way that every worker and peasant will be able to say: I am part of the great army of free labour, and shall be able to build up my life without the landowners and capitalists, able to help establish a communist system. The Young Communist League should teach all young people to engage in conscious and disciplined labour from an early age. In this way we can be confident that the problems now confronting us will be solved. We must assume that no less than ten years will be required for the electrification of the country, so that our impoverished land may profit from the latest achievements of technology. And so, the generation of those who are now fifteen years old, and will be living in a communist society in ten or twenty years' time, should tackle all its educational tasks in such a way that every day, in every village and city, the young people shall engage in the practical solution of some problem of labour in common, even though the smallest or the simplest. The success of communist construction will be assured when this is done in every village, as communist emulation develops, and the youth prove that they can unite their labour. Only by regarding our every step from the standpoint of the success of that construction, and only by asking ourselves whether we have done all we can to be united and politically-conscious working people will the Young Communist League succeed in uniting its half a million members into a single army of labour and win universal respect. (Stormy applause.)

Speech End

Footnotes

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

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



● *Vladimir Lenin - Founder of the Soviet Union and the CPSU*

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