

ABOUT THEIR PROBLEMS



sumer society which is in store for us, too, if we don't change. We began restructuring just in time."

"When talking to Americans, I was surprised that they didn't know their great writers Kurt Vonnegut, Stephen King, and Norman Mailer, whom I read here. They seem to be interested only in comics and Hollywood movies."

YCL city committee adopts new style of work

We were received by Stanislav Smirnov, First Secretart of the Moscow Young communist League City Committee. (The Moscow YCL organization has 1.2 million members).

"I would divide youth associations into those which we willingly contact and those which we reject on principle. For example, we cannot accept hippies with their leanings toward religion and social isolation. Metallists and other rock-music lovers are a different thing. We organized a rock laboratory at the YCL City Committee and held a rock festival.

"Lately the peace was often being disturbed in Moscow by motorcyclists riding the streets at night. Many of them did not have a driver's licence and consciously violated the rules. We made night raids together with the militia, got acquainted with motorcyclists, and are setting up motorcycling clubs."

"I'm sure that none of the punks or other groups is against the socialist principles." Stanislav Smirnov said. "They most often protest against obsolete formal structures. Today people's initiative foreruns structural changes in society. A gap between them causes public discontent. Young people are against bureaucracy in the YCL. We were slow to understand that we should base our work on young people's interests. These interests change quickly and we weren't flexible enough, now we are restructuring our system."

The YCL does not

just look after young people's free time. "we want to set up sections, factory shops, department stores and clinics staffed entirely, from office-cleaners to the director, by young people," Stanislav said. "This month we are opening such department stores

"Who taught them that happiness is being married to a brainless doll, making good money and having a car and carpets? There must be a different goal in life."

in each Moscow district. We want them to work in an unconventional way. We've opened the first school staffed by young graduates of pedagogical institutes. Though they lack work experience, they are more willing to establish informal communication with their pupils and have a better understanding of child and teenage psychology. Many youth problems are caused by a lack of understanding and trust on the part of adults."

Young biologists on higher education

In a Moscow University garden we met Alexander Rubtxov, a 32-year-old assistant at the Biological Faculty Chair of Biochemistry. He is married with two children.

"In my opinion, there are no special youth problems."

he said. "There are social problems which concern all generations, but some young people have an accentric reaction to them, such as becoming a hippie. I'm indifferent to unofficial associations I'm past that age."

Since restructuring is mostly young people's concern, it's important that they be not only socially active citizens, but real professionals. According to the young scientist, at higher educational establishments the emphasis should be on practical rather than theoretical education. In this respect, there is room for improvement at the biological faculty, too.

I served in Afghanistan

Transport worker Viktor Morozov whom we met on Ostozhenka street in Old Moscow believes drug addiction to be the Number 1 youth problem. "Young people

take drugs because they have nowhere to go in their spare time. They try it out of curiosity and the weaker ones get addicted." "Did you try drugs yourself?" "Yes, I did, in Afghanistan."

Twenty-four-year-old Viktor is single. "I've no time for girls," he said. Since serving in Afghanistan, he has been studying part-time at the Institute of National Economy for two years.

He recalled the most scary episode in his life. It happened in Afghanistan. A radio-controlled antitank artillery shell smashed a tank ahead of him. He got off with a slight concussion, but he clearly imagined himself in that tank.

His greatest desire is to live his life in peace. "Those who have been to war, know this feeling well."