Preface

THE rulers of the Soviet Union, in striving to strengthen and perpetuate their regime, have placed much emphasis on training the young. For youths aged fourteen through twenty-five and often older still, the chief instrument of indoctrination and control is the All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth, called "Komsomol" from the initial syllables of the Russian words for "Communist League of Youth." (Throughout this study, the noun and adjective "Komsomol" designates the organization, while "Komsomolite" designates the male or female member of the League.) The present work, using mainly the official reports of the congresses or nation-wide conventions of the Komsomol, studies the development of the Komsomol during the period 1918–54, with particular emphasis on the pattern of attitudes and behavior which the regime, in and through the Komsomol, sought to impose upon Soviet youth.

This pattern represents an important part of the program and goals of the Soviet hierarchy. The Komsomol was designed to embrace the leading elements among Soviet youth, and "youth" as defined for Komsomol purposes has constituted a large segment of the working population. It is important to know in what ways the Soviet regime has tried to use the enthusiasm and initiative of youth; to know how the Party has guided the Komsomol; to know in what respects the regime's policies toward youth have remained constant and in what respects they have changed; to know the functions of the Komsomol in the school, the Army, the factory, and the fields. The activities of the Komsomol since 1918 have touched almost all aspects of Soviet life, and the demands upon Komsomolites have significance for other broad categories of the Soviet population. Thus

careful study of these demands should help Westerners better to understand the development, the workings, and the future objectives of the Soviet system.

The selection of the present subject involved difficult problems of focus and definition. The source material is voluminous: the presses of the Komsomol and the Party have issued countless newspapers, magazines, pamphlets, and books, relating as a whole or in part to the Komsomol and its members. On the other hand, the monographic foundations essential to a solid study of the Komsomol have been lacking: none of the Soviet publications provides an objective and systematic analysis of the Komsomol, and non-Soviet scholars have given the Komsomol only brief treatment in books on larger subjects (see the Bibliography). These circumstances forced the present writer to restrict the scope and the central focus of this study, in respect to the subject to be treated and the sources to be used. The topical and the documentary limitations adopted were interdependent.

As to the subject, the focus is on the "Komsomol pattern"—the chronological and topical pattern of demands made upon Komsomolites by the Soviet authorities: the Party, the government, and the Komsomol itself. Included are demands made upon the individual Komsomolite, demands made upon various categories of Komsomolites, and demands made upon Komsomolites in general, or upon the organization that embraces them. The demands range from those for abstract qualities of individual character to those for specific performance in almost any field of Soviet life. The demands vary greatly in intensity and persistence, from a suggestion of the moment to a thundering and sustained command backed by the coercive instruments of the Soviet state. The demands are not always explicit. For example, the Komsomol Regulations prescribed that Komsomol officials be "elected." But the true nature of that demand was revealed less by the formal language of the Regulations than by the elective process actually reported in the proceedings of the congresses. Although it is sometimes convenient to speak of an imaginary "ideal Komsomolite" or "good Komsomolite,"

who meets all the demands of the regime at a given time, that concept of the abstract ideal is not explicit in the Soviet materials but only inferred from them, and it is used in this work only where it will not obscure the precise designation of the group toward which any particular demand is directed.

As to its documentary base, this study concentrates on the official (usually "stenographic") reports of the twelve Komsomol congresses that were held during the years 1918–54. Several factors dictated concentration upon this source. The writer desired to select, from the mass of literature on the Komsomol, a major sample that was intended primarily for study by Komsomol members themselves; that was authoritative in character; that was comprehensive both chronologically and topically; that was homogeneous enough to permit comparison of period with period and to reveal changes from one period to the next; and that was sufficiently limited in bulk to be explored thoroughly in the present volume. General Party literature does not meet the first requirement; hence the field was narrowed to Komsomol publications. Among the newspapers, *Komsomol'skaia pravda* (Komsomol Truth) is the best single source, but it did not begin publication until 1925, and substantially complete files of this newspaper in the United States date only from 1928. If one were to supplement with other newspapers and with magazines, one would encounter problems of excessive bulk and heterogeneity. Among the magazines for youth, *Iunyi kommunist* (Young Communist), *Komsomol'skaia nedelia* (Komsomol Week), *Molodoi bol'shevik* (Young Bolshevik), and *Molodoi kommunist* (Young Communist) are authoritative, and in combination they would cover the whole time span, but American holdings of these journals are far from complete except for the 1940s and 1950s. To supplement those journals with other publications would have made the bulk unmanageable for the purposes of the present study. Soviet pamphlets and books relating to the Komsomol exist by the hundreds, but they are so heterogeneous and their chronological and topical distribution is so uneven, particularly for the Stalinist period, that they can be used most effectively

after a general framework has been established on the basis of a more systematic source. In contrast to the other sources considered, the proceedings of the Komsomol congresses do meet the stated requirements in regard to purpose, authoritativeness, comprehensiveness, homogeneity, and bulk. This does not mean that the proceedings of the congresses are a complete source for the Soviet pattern for youth. Some of the valuable attributes of the proceedings—that they recorded important formal meetings, that they were published for the guidance of Komsomol leaders, and that they were prominently used in part as newspaper propaganda for Soviet youth—also constitute limitations to their usefulness. The proceedings are not a comprehensive source concerning, for example, elements of dissension among Soviet youth. Yet they are vitally important, they are virtually untapped by previous research, and they can be used to survey the subject of the Komsomol for scholars who may wish to explore further the vast and varied literature on Soviet youth and its organization.

In certain respects the topical and documentary concentrations outlined above have been broadened. As to the sources, only the proceedings of the congresses have been examined intensively, but some other materials have been used to a limited extent, especially for the period before 1918, for which it was necessary to use several books and booklets, and for the long period between the Congress of 1936 and the Congress of 1949, for which the newspaper *Komsomol'skaia pravda* was employed to provide continuity. As to the subject, a considerable amount of information has been included on the development, the organization, and the achievements of the Komsomol. Much of that information either supplies general background (since there is no full history of the League to which the reader may be referred), or furthers a proper understanding of the demands upon Komsomolites. (For instance, the statistics on the proportion of women in the League are important to an understanding of the demand to enroll more women as members.) Those items that will be useful principally to future researchers studying the history of Soviet youth have often been relegated to

the footnotes in order to preserve, in the body of the text, a rather sharp focus on the pattern of demands.

Only to a limited extent can this volume estimate how far the demands upon Komsomolites were realized in practice. As is shown by the excellent exploratory work of Professor Merle Fainsod (see the Bibliography), a comprehensive estimate of this sort will call for a wide range of material, including particularly autobiographical accounts by former Soviet citizens and extensive interviews. The completion of such larger projects, whether by this writer or by others, awaits the future. Meanwhile this work may help to chart the terrain.

I am glad to be able to express here, albeit inadequately, my gratitude to those who have most generously assisted me in preparing this work. Geroid Tanquary Robinson of Columbia University has helped me from beginning to end with a paternal and self-sacrificing blend of exhortation, encouragement, and unsparing criticism. My first explorations of the topic were facilitated by Margaret Mead, who invited me to interview Soviet refugees and in other ways to learn about the Komsomol while participating in her research project, Studies in Soviet Culture. The Social Science Research Council awarded me the fellowship under which I completed most of my preliminary research. The Russian Research Center of Harvard University, and particularly Raymond A. Bauer and Alex Inkeles, permitted me to broaden my knowledge of the Komsomol through the reading of interview materials. The Library of Yale University, and especially Donald G. Wing, acquired materials important for my research. The anonymous donor of the Blanche Elizabeth MacLeish Billings Memorial Award, at Yale University, enabled me to acquire useful background information through the interviewing of former Komsomol members in Munich in the summer of 1955. Penetrating criticisms on the major portion of the manuscript were offered by Frederick C. Barghoorn, Merle Fainsod, John N. Hazard, Philip E. Mosely, and Sidney I. Ploss. Other especially valuable help, in-

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