

In July 1918, an illustrated magazine called *Life and Creative Work of Russian Youth* began publishing in Moscow. At first it was almost exclusively a literary and art publication; besides original poetry and prose, materials were published about the theatre, architecture, music, and sports. The quality of the material printed was high: contributors included 24-year-old Sergei Yesenin and 19-year-old Andrei Platonov. The permanent editor was Nikolai Markov, a talented photographer and graphic designer.

Around the tenth issue (November, 1918), the magazine began to adopt a distinctly anarchist slant, publishing articles on anarchist themes and news items about the anarchist movements in Russia and

Ukraine. This led, in January, 1919, to the formation of the Secretariat of the All-Russian Federation of Anarchist Youth, with the magazine as its organ. The Federation of Anarchist Youth was not a junior branch of the anarchist movement. It was an independent organization that tried to exert its influence to overcome the chronic splits taking place in the broader movement.

The Secretariat began planning for a founding convention of the Federation to be held in June, 1919.

In early May, 1919, three members of the Secretariat made a pilgrimage to Kropotkin's home in the village of Dmitrov, near Moscow, to seek his blessing for their project.

## A Conversation with P. A. Kropotkin

On May 4 [1919] P. A. Kropotkin received a visit from three members of the Secretariat of the All-Russian Federation of Anarchist Youth: Markov, Chivolov, and Korsikov.

In spite of his 76 years, P. A. is quite cheerful and active; this meeting with young people evidently made him happy and he was delighted to listen to the comrade secretaries and offer them advice.

Comrade Markov introduced P. A. to the All-Russian Federation of Anarchist Youth, including the history of its emergence, and the work it was engaged in at the present moment. After this, P. A. answered questions asked by the secretaries.

P. A. expressed his support for the creation of the Federation of Youth; he was familiar with the content of its journal "Life and Creative Work of Russian Youth." He had a good impression of the journal with the exception of the features on Esperanto, which he related to in a negative fashion.

Moving on to political questions and the matter of defending Russia against Kolchak, P. A. responded that it was necessary to fight Kolchak with all the means at our disposal, for his movement is basically monarchist.

We are living in a critical period, P. A. continued, the old capitalist world is collapsing, while the means chosen by Soviet power to carry out its

goals are quite inadequate and it is quite evident that the way of the Bolsheviks is leading us towards a terrible reaction. The revolution and the building of a new life must be created from below,



A cover page of *Life & Creative Work of Russian Youth*

not from above. And in the process of building a new life, preference must be given to people with trade skills, not party people.

As for young people, they need to immerse themselves in all fields of endeavour, combining mental and manual labour, the life of the intelligentsia with the life of the worker – only this way will lead youth to a radiant future.

---

Published originally in *Life and Creative Work of Russian Youth*, No. 32-33, May 18, 1919 p. 8.

### TRANSLATOR'S EPILOGUE

A radiant future for Russian anarchist youth was not to be. The magazine was shut down by the authorities after No. 34-35, dated June 18, 1919. The founding conference of the Youth Federation was broken up by the Cheka and its participants ended up in Butyrki Prison. Of Kropotkin's three visitors, Nikolai Markov joined the terrorist group "Anarchists of the Underground," although his activity was restricted to propaganda, not bomb-throwing; Leonid Chivolov, whose real name was Evgeny Gabilovich, became a noted screenwriter and literary hack, taking part in 1934 in writing the memorial book about the White Sea – Baltic Canal, generally regarded as one of the worst examples of intellectual prostitution under Stalin.

---

Translation and notes by Malcolm Archibald.