

# **History of the Komsomol and Youth Organisations in Belarus**

Olga Khabibulina

Ljubljana,  
03 October 2018

“Will anybody tell them that the USSR had broken down and there is no need to seek Party favour,” – Information portal kyky.org informs on 29 September in its Facebook Page.

The Article titles “Centenary Anniversary Will Be Celebrated for the Whole October in Belarus”.

Photo Credit:

Andrei Liankevich “Nasha Niva”

**KY KY** KYKY.ORG  
29 września o 14:10 · 🌐

Кто-нибудь, расскажите им, что Советский Союз давно распался и не надо выслуживаться перед партией.  
<http://kyky.org/.../v-belarusi-ves-oktyabr-budut-prazdnovat-s...>



KYKY.ORG  
**В Беларуси весь октябрь будут праздновать столетие ВЛКСМ**

# 1. When did it start?

Komsomol – All-Union Leninist Young Communist League established in 1924 = Russian Communist Union of Youth (October 1918) had been named as All-Union Leninist Young Communist League.

Age: 14-28 y.o. All the applied ones.

Though in 1920-1930 formal limitation: non-proletarian (non-working) youth was not accepted. Number of Members: 22 100 in 1918 (0.16% of the total population); 21,3 mln in 1991 (7.5% of the total population).

Candidate experience in the working area is from 6 months up to 2 years.

## 2. Meanwhile in Belarus...

**24 September 1920**— The First All-Belarusian Plenary accepted the idea to found the Communist Union of Belarus Youth (KSMB).

Plenary Resolution underlined that the KSMB was an undivided part of the Russian Communist Union of Youth.

Belarusian Soviet Socialistic Republic was finally established on 31 July 1920. In December 1922 it was a founder of the USSR along with Russia, Ukraine and Transcaucasian SSRs.

# 3. Mission, goals and tools of Komsomol

Mission: Prepare youth to defend socialistic Motherland, bring up self-sacrificing patriots who are ready to resolutely repel the attack of any enemy.

Goals: in 1920 to fight against "non-bolshevist elements", civil war soldiers.

1920-1930 Industrialisation, collectivisation, all-union illiteracy liquidation.

1940 WWII recruited ?

1945-1991 building, education, science, culture and arts, sport, spare time (in fact non-formal education).

Has its own media,

By 1990 it was impossible to leave the Komsomol voluntary.

Plenary, elected Central Committee (contained from the Bureau and Secretariat).

# 4. Mission, goals and tools of Komsomol

The Komsomol had **little direct influence** on the Communist Party or on the government of the Soviet Union,

But

Played an important role as a **mechanism for teaching the values** of the Communist Party to youngsters.

The Komsomol also served as a **mobile pool of labor and political activism**, with the ability to relocate to areas of high-priority at short notice.

Active members received privileges and preferences in promotion.

# 5. USSR collapse and Belarus youth organisations

Many youth Organisations were established with the support of the western organisations and their “patterns” in youth work (UNESCO Clubs, UN Association, Belarusian Scout and Guide Girls Organisations, Red Cross Society, Voluntary Service Organisations).

1989-1992 “boom” in establishing new youth organisations.

Belarusian Youth Union has been reorganised from the Belarusian Branch of the Komsomol. There still exists Belarusian Pioneer Organisation.

# 6. Post-Soviet reality in Belarus for Youth Organisations

- Meanwhile there are consultations with Council of European National Youth Councils. Establishing Belarusian Youth National Council “Rada” (est. 1993). Acting Committee of Youth Organisations (since the late 1980s).

“Rada” had been co-chaired by representatives from:

Belarusian Youth Union,

Belarusian youth organisations under the parties,

“New wave” youth organisations.

Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) acts as an initiator for creating an “updated” version of the Belarusian Committee of Youth Organisations (est. 2003). The break in youth sector is unavoidable.

# 7. Komsomol Heritage: BRSM:

Символика

Флаг ОО «БРСМ», эмблема ОО «БРСМ»



Лицевая сторона



Оборотная сторона



# 8. BRSM as the Main Pro-Government Youth Organisation in:

- Aim: creating conditions for complex development of youth, its creative potential, for contributing to civic society of Belarus based on its patriotic and moral values of the Belarusian nation.
- Guarantees equality to youth with all other social groups,
- Supports initiatives aimed at intellectual, moral, physical development as well as its entrepreneurial activism,
- Supports participation in developing youth programmes,
- Brings up patriotism as the main moral values.

!!! Acts as the major partner for youth policy implementation in Belarus (500.000 members  $\leq$  2 mln youth in Belarus).

Annually receives more than 95% of the state budget for its activities.

# 9. Challenges to Belarusian Youth Organisations:

- Polarisation of the youth organisation within relations to the Government and its ideology (GoNGO VS NGO)
- Discrimination towards access to the state budget and external funding (non-transparent procedure, complicated scheme for using funds from the international organisations);
- “Brain drain” of the youth leaders abroad the country;
- Low culture of pluralism and democracy;
- Inclination towards directive planned methods of youth work;
- Chase for quantitative indicators => ignorance of qualitative approach.

# Questions to reflect on

- What is the overall mission of a Youth Organisation in Belarus? What is its place within European dimension?
- Is the competition or cooperation acceptable within the youth organisation sector in Belarus?
- What are the methods / steps acceptable to “Belarusian reality”?
- Is a Youth Organisation secured enough in Belarus? Is underground position the best option?