Communist University

How to read and write?

The first quarter of Communist University courses is complete. The next CU courses do not fully begin until the Sunday after Easter (i.e. 19 April 2020). In the mean time we have two weeks of "lockdown". The CU usually devises a short programme in these kinds of circumstance. Your suggestions and requests for a "Communist University Easter School" will therefore be most welcome. While you think about it, we can start with an enabling refresher course on:

If you could not read, you would not be reading this. Surely, you can also write. Most likely, you have a keyboard in front of you and are well capable of using it.

Why would we then need to discuss a topic like "How to read and write"?

As Communist University, I suggest we do need to discuss this. To see why, let us start (but not finish) with our Communist University library, called "VITABU", which is made up of PDFs of full books, all in a Telegram Channel.

“VITABU” contains more than 130 well-chosen titles. There is value and variety. There are classics there, as well as recent books.

But what we know about books in general these days is that people don’t usually read them. They like to possess books, or at least to have “access” to them, especially the famous ones. But you will often find, if you ask, that the possessor of a book, or even one who shares a book with you electronically, has never read it; or claims not to have read it.

The reading and writing that concerns us here is the entire social act or process of reading and writing. It is communication. If you read a book, the author has communicated with you, but further than that, you have joined a community of people who have read that book.

Of course, we are trying to create such a community of readers and writers in the Communist University, and from there, as commissars, more widely, into the mass population of the country.

To problematise this matter, let us put the question thus: How can we get more people to read books, and to write? Comrades have raised this matter with me as “VC” in the last couple of weeks. I don’t have all the answers. But I have a suggestion.

My suggestion is that comrades could each choose read just one of the books in “VITABU”, and review it. What does that mean? I suggest it means that you would write about 750 words that will tell us what that book is about.

In the world at large, many more people read reviews of books, than read the actual books. Taking this as normal, then let us exploit this fact. Let us provide reviews of the books in “VITABU” and thereby conscientise a lot more people about the books in that on-line library.

How are you going to do this? The best answer we know of is in Tony Buzan’s book “Use Your Head”, of which we have made a short summary for use in more than one CU course.

“Use Your Head” not only helps you to read faster and better, and therefore understand more of what you are reading; but it also helps you to lay out your material so as to write about what you have read.

The famous Buzan “mind map” is an ideal way to organise your material concretely, prior to writing.

I am asking that you read my synopsis, précis or “conspectus” (Lenin’s favourite) of Tony Buzan’s book.

Then, I am asking you to choose one of the 130 books in VITABU. Or choose another book, for that matter. Go through it the Buzan way. Look at chapter headings. Try to discover which is the summarising, or typical chapter. Try to find out as fast as possible the answer to the question: "What is this book ABOUT?" You may very well find that it is better to read the book from the back to the front. But in other cases you may find (as in "On War", by Carl Clausewitz) that the summary chapter is the first chapter.

Jump over difficult parts. Don't get bogged down. Follow Tony Buzan's study method. Make a mind-map as you go along, or afterwards. Then write us a review, and not too long. Tell us what the book is about, and your opinion as to how well it achieved its aim. 800 words is too long.

This request is already over 740 words. It's enough. Please try and review a book for the CU. Thanks.

VC, 2 April 2020

The CU's PDF Library "VITABU" is at:

https://t.me/CU_VITABU