

Socialist Youth

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Editorial

THE LEAGUE FOR SOCIALISM

Why We Appear

THE LEAGUE OF YOUTH is the organised form of the most politically advanced youth—yet it has no official publication under its control. *Socialist Youth* has therefore come into being to provide a platform for the League. The policy of the paper will be expressed through its Editorials, its broad aims being to assist in the development of a vigorous League with a democratic structure, and to formulate a Socialist Youth Charter.

We realise that the problems of the young workers are irrevocably linked with the problems of the whole working class, and can be solved only with the overthrow of capitalism. Nevertheless, a specific programme is required to deal with the problems which affect youth most closely.

Conservative policy is to lull the youth into political oblivion with bankrupt leadership, and divert our energies with dances in the evening in the hope that we will continue peacefully to allow big business to exploit us in the daytime. The Young Communist League masquerades as the young workers' organisation, but its real function is to create little Sir Echoes of Stalin.

The Labour League of Youth exists to expose these and to awaken the youth to socialist ideals. To succeed, we must offer not a diversion from, but a solution to, the great problems of war, wages, and the building of the New Society. Unfortunately, however, the Labour leaders have overlooked giving the youth even a corner in the New Society, so we must design a Socialist Youth Policy and seek its adoption by the Party. Such a policy could not be separate from a general Socialist Policy, and we hope the rank and file of the Party and the League will unite for this common end.

Annual League Conference

The contribution which the League can make would be immeasurably increased if we were to have a genuine League Conference—with resolutions and delegates of the League's own choice—which could state the opinion of the national League on policy questions. This would in no way interfere with the democratic rule of the majority of the Party, nor would it create a separate

Party, but it would let the Party know the views of the whole League.

Socialist Youth therefore advocates an Annual National Conference to discuss organisation and policy and send a delegation to the Party Conference.

As a first step, we welcome the Spring Conference, but we are gravely disturbed at the action of the National Executive Committee in severely restricting the League's freedom of choice of resolutions and delegates.

The powers of veto given to Constituency Labour Parties might lead one to believe that the National Executive Committee desires the Conference to be a mockery.

The League has asked for an Annual Conference but we have been given an experimental one, and we are repeatedly told that we may have more, if this Conference is satisfactory. We share the hope of the N.E.C. that the Conference will be "satisfactory," if a satisfactory Conference is one which reflects the feelings of the members. We hope, of course, that the N.E.C. has no other criterion of what is "satisfactory," for all democrats should hate stage-managed Conferences—and the League of Youth certainly does. We shall do all we can to ensure a satisfactory Conference and we invite you to co-operate with us by sending us your ideas.

FACTS ABOUT US

Socialist Youth was launched at a meeting of Leaguers held at the Holborn Hall, London, on 12th November, 1950. Previously, the *Socialist Outlook* allotted one page of each issue to youth articles, but as pressure of space would prevent this in future, a meeting of League members was called to explain the position. We wish to express our appreciation of the assistance given to the League by *Socialist Outlook* in the past. At the meeting, the League members decided to start a separate paper. It is being run entirely by members of the League and has no outside financial backing, but depends entirely on sales and donations. We are your paper, and we rely on you for articles, letters, donations and sales. Regular meetings will be held to report progress. We shall be pleased to supply speakers to tell you more about the paper and its policy. The following Editorial Board was elected at the inaugural meeting.

Editor: Audrey Brown. Chairman of Edmondston League, Secretary of East Middlesex Leagues Area Committee, member of Middlesex Federation E.C., delegate to Party Management Committee. Joined Newcastle Labour Party 3½ years ago. Aged 18.

Chairman: John Haynes. Joined Party over a year ago and is an active member of Harrow Weald League.

Business Manager: John Daly. Secretary of Holborn and South St. Pancras League. Delegate to Party Management Committee, E.C., and Propaganda Committee. Chairman of local Youth Parliament. Joined Party 4 years ago. Aged 20.

Michael Perkins. Vice-Chairman of Malden and Coombe League and member of Surrey Federation E.C. Joined Party 9 months ago. Aged 18.

Kevin Grant. Publicity Officer of Lamorbey League. Joined Party one year ago. Aged 17.

Youth Wants PEACE THROUGH SOCIALISM

By NORMAN GOODCHILD, South Hackney L.O.Y.

The drums of war are beating again! Once more we have the mockery of "peace through strength": huge expenditure on armaments, gigantic standing armies—a line-up for world war.

Like the villains in some Wellsian fantasy, the "peaceful" and "friendly" governments spend millions on developing bestial methods of mass extermination. The atom and hydrogen bombs are now claimed to be many times more powerful than those which destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki, yet science is being still further degraded to produce even more horrible weapons.

In their frenzied desire for markets, in their life and death struggle to retain their stranglehold on the colonies, and to colonise the Soviet Union, the imperialists will stop at nothing. Korea has been reduced to ruins. In Malaya, Indonesia and Indo-China bloody war is being waged against peoples fighting a socialist battle for national liberation.

Comrades! We in the Socialist Youth movement, we young people who have to form the armies to fight the capitalist wars, must make our voices heard. We have everything in common with the colonial workers: their enemy is our enemy—World Imperialism. The same boss class which exploits us at home exploits also the labour of our colonial brothers. The people of the colonies are now on the march to throw off the shackles of Imperialism. Their struggle should have our complete support. We must make it clear that we are not prepared to shed our blood in order to defend the interests of monopoly capitalism in the colonies.

Conscription—For What?

Neither are we prepared to be conscripted for a further war with the Soviet Union. Despite its political deformities Russia retains its planned economy and remains the land of the October Revolution. A defeat for the Soviet Union in an imperialist war would mean a tremendous set-back for the world struggle for Socialism.

Some misguided people have been taken in by the Communist Party sponsored peace campaign. This calls for a ban on the atom bomb, for a Five-Power Pact, and for a

Editorial Policy

The Editorial Board does not necessarily agree with the policy contained in signed articles. It is our intention to publish as far as possible all articles likely to assist in the clarification of Socialist ideas and in the stimulation of discussion generally. We welcome all articles submitted on that basis and will endeavour to publish as space permits.

All correspondence and articles should be sent to:—

Miss Audrey Brown, 67, St. Alphege Road, Edmonton, N.9.

declaration that the first power to use the atomic bomb shall be branded as a war criminal.

This campaign is worse than useless. History has taught us the bitter lesson that pacts between powers are meaningless. When the need arises all such pieces of paper are thrown into the waste paper basket.

As regards the banning of atomic weapons—who is to enforce this ban? Surely not the capitalist governments concerned.

The "Peace Petition" misses the main point, which is that the only real struggle against war is the struggle for Socialism.

To suggest that peace can be secured by patched-up agreements between capitalist

states is to sow a dangerous illusion. Until we have taken the power away from the capitalist class there will always be a tendency towards war. We must first of all remove its teeth—by nationalisation of the armaments industry and placing it under workers' control.

No more profits from munitions!

This, linked to a general policy of nationalisation to remove economic power completely from the capitalist class, is the only real guarantee for peace.

It would mean, of course, the immediate withdrawal of all troops from the colonies, giving the right to the colonial people to self-determination.

These are the main essentials of a socialist policy for peace, inseparable from the struggle for Socialism. If we proceed along these lines we can rally behind us the youth of the whole world in the struggle against war and for International Socialism.

Youth in Industry

By JACK HAMILTON, Westminster L.O.Y. and Amalgamated Engineering Union.

YOUTH wants to work, to create and produce with hand and brain—and capitalism can only offer a perspective of increased exploitation, unemployment and a third world war. Youth wants a trade, but gets one only to be tied to a machine that to-morrow will stop and let its operator starve beside the riches produced.

We want to learn—and the only way to further education and culture is barred to us. We want to live and to make a new world to-morrow—and we are told: "Be satisfied, to-morrow never comes."

The prospect for Youth is grim, and since no political party has recognised the problems which confront young people to-day it is little wonder that political apathy is so general, even at the time of a Labour and Trade Union Government. We all recognise that if we are to achieve Socialism, then Youth must be organised under the banner of the Labour Movement for the bitter struggle that lies ahead. But one thing is lacking: *our Programme of action to carry through this struggle.* We are at present like a gun without a bullet.

I want to outline some essential questions which concern young people at work: they are the same as those which face all workers, but predominate to a greater extent with the Youth because of their inferior position in the workshop and consequently greater degree of exploitation.

Wages

It wasn't so long ago that an apprentice had to pay his employer in order that he might learn a trade so that he could earn a living later on. Fortunately, this system has

been destroyed, but economically the status of a young factory worker has not altered much: his wages for performing the same work as his adult workmate are a mere token payment when considered in relation to rising rents and cost of living. Our Programme must therefore demand:

A decent living wage for all young workers, youths and girls, and Equal Pay for Equal Work.

Hours

For shorter working hours and one month's holiday per year.

The Factory Acts lay down very vaguely the limits to which a young person should work during a week, but few employers interpret them in any other way than to keep young workers in the factory as long as possible, extracting the maximum amount of work from them. We have a right to more time for study, leisure and holidays.

Trade Training

For technical training and education in the employers' time.

Not at night school for three, four or five nights a week after work. If we are to be trained to produce more and better things for the boss, then he must sacrifice some of his precious capital for this purpose.

Let us then incorporate these basic points in a Socialist Programme for Youth. Then, and only then, shall we be on the way to drawing thousands of working-class Youth into the ranks of the League, away from despair and disillusionment which is the only future facing them now.

PRICES RISE

— WE PAY

By JOHN REEKIE, Richmond and Barnes L.O.Y.

HOWEVER much apologists for the Government argue to the contrary, we all know that prices are going up and that the workers' real wages are going down. We can discover that while retail prices have increased by 7.3% over those for 1948, wages have lagged behind with only a 4% increase in the same period.

But we are obviously only at the beginning of the story. The coming months will see more rapid price increases, and a further sagging in the workers' standard of living. The enormous increase in arms expenditure means that the aluminium which would have gone into saucepans, the cloth which would have gone into suits, and all the other materials which would have entered into the production of consumers' goods, will be diverted into turning out war materials. This diversion, and the accompanying diversion of labour into war industries, will mean that there will be fewer goods in the shops, and fewer goods with an unchanged level of demand will result in price increases on a large scale.

Not only, however, have we yet to feel the effects of our own suicidal arms expenditure, but also the leaps which have taken place in the world level of prices of various primary products will soon begin to be reflected in our own price level. American stock-piling, and, even worse, the American policy of forcing up world prices so as to prevent the purchase of raw materials by Russia and the Eastern European countries, have rocketed the world prices of many products which are important in the production of the "home-goods" industries.

The effect of Foreign Policy

Bevin's pitiful attempt to get the United States to meet half the cost of the tremendous increase in our arms expenditure, which the State Department "hinted" we should undertake, was prompted by a vague realisation that such expenditure is destined to wreck our economy. That fact that the United States was able to ignore Bevin's plea is just another example of the fact that United States Aid has only one string attached to it—that we do what we are told, or we don't get it!

Our job in the Party and the League is to show that the Foreign Policy which we have fought against for the last five years is at last coming home to roost—in the workers' pay-packets. On every occasion we must link the fight against the higher cost of living with our fight against its basic cause, which is the continuation of an imperialist Foreign Policy.

When the working class sees that it is our subservience to United States imperialism and the resulting crippling arms expenditure, which is cutting real incomes, then there will be a turn against this policy. Let us pledge ourselves to obtaining this realisation on the part of the working class.

A Programme is Vital

Says JOHN DALY, Holborn and St. Pancras

THE fight for a League Conference has been partly won with the announcement that a National Conference is to be held in 1951. This news does not necessarily mean a more benevolent attitude from Transport House towards the League, for it remains to be seen how strictly they will apply the rule that discussion is limited to organisational matters, and how many of the speakers will be Transport House Officials. This partial victory should not mean that we relax our efforts for a really democratic structure. Other vital matters will undoubtedly also tax our time and energy. For instance, in the event of another General Election, the Leagues will naturally forsake their internal struggle and work as hard, and even harder than any other section of the Party to return once more a Labour Government. However, it is equally our duty to ensure that the Party will attract young people both to vote and to join, and democracy for the League is essential for this.

Though all the demands which the League makes are important, priority in the fight must go to the demand for an Annual National Conference of League delegates, at which discussion is not limited, for only by discussion with members of the League from all parts of the country, can we, and the Labour Party, learn of the anxieties and proposals which the Socialist Youth of this country has to make in order to ensure that youth of the future does not suffer the present injustices. A Socialist Policy for Youth—these words alone echo great schemes, ideas and revolutionary changes. Limited space makes it possible to mention briefly only a few basic points, but much discussion should be taking place on these questions and we hope ideas are flowing fast.

Votes at 18

A young person of eighteen may be conscripted, hanged, taxed, and expected to

fulfil all the obligations of a person twenty-one years or over, without being allowed the same rights. He cannot vote, nor can he take legal action except through his parents. Though legally infants, these young people are expected to—and do—behave like adults, therefore give them adult rights.

Equality in Industry

The female section of the community cries "Equal Pay for Equal Work," a cry which all Socialists rightly support, yet young people are exploited by the employers to an even greater degree. A person under twenty-one often does with the same degree of accuracy the same work as a person over twenty-one, yet the difference in wages is not a matter of shillings, but of pounds. In excuse, the employers say that a young person does not need the extra money, and that he is still learning the job. Poor excuses, but they serve in the cause of exploitation and extra profits. Employers apparently forget that we travel on the same buses, eat the same food, wear the same clothes, and in fact have the same expenses as other people. We therefore demand the rate for the job.

It is small wonder that many young people drift into "blind alley" jobs, because of the better wages these jobs offer. Then when they realise that their job is temporary and there is no hope of advancement, they become frustrated and some become the petty criminals of to-day, and the gangsters of to-morrow.

Education

All entrance to Universities and all forms of higher education should depend on the ability of the student, and not the monetary power of his parents. Adequate provision should also be made to ensure that nobody suffers financial difficulties while taking the courses.

A Socialist Policy for Youth should include these basic proposals:

Franchise and full legal rights at eighteen.

A decent living wage for all young people and equal pay for equal work.

All University and Higher Education to depend upon ability.

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IS THIS THE LEAGUE SPEAKING?

Asks JOHN HEAD (Richmond and Barnes), reporting on the Speaking Contest.

DESPITE the non-existence of any other annual national function in the League of Youth, the Public Speaking Contest is not the most important event of the year, but this year's contest, which was held on 25th November in Manchester, is worthy of some comment for it did have a value other than social.

Listening for four hours to the speeches of League people, or indeed any other people, must be an ordeal even to the most hardened comrades, yet when a group of League members takes the platform for this length of time the audience usually has the opportunity to hear varying shades of opinion. The main feature of this year's contest was a tedium even greater than can be reasonably expected, for it reflected one and only one set of ideas.

Repetition

Each team had three members. The chairman introduced the speaker as a Parliamentary candidate who was addressing a meeting of his prospective constituents for the first time, and the third comrade moved a vote of thanks to the speaker. This uniformity of procedure made inevitable, of course, a superficial similarity between the teams, but unfortunately the similarity went far deeper.

Every speaker, from the one judged the best to the one who was least fluent, adopted

the same formula: first attack the Tories' past record; secondly, speak in glowing terms of the past five years and the social revolution in bonny babies; and then wind up with a few words on such future policies as Labour's Plan for World Mutual Aid, which, we understand, will solve almost all colonial problems—providing the colonial peoples are prepared to wait long enough. With Alice Bacon, the Labour Party Chairman, as one of the judges, it seemed as if the members of each team were trying hard to be the best at saying what they thought comrade Bacon would be saying had she been in their position.

It has been said that a good cook, working with the poorest of materials, can produce a different looking dish every day of the week. These culinary experts of the League of Youth were certainly using the poorest of materials, but unlike the professionals of the National Executive Committee, whose speech-making ingredients are precisely the same, they failed either to differ from one another or to deviate an inch from what has been served up so many times before.

Good Delivery

The speeches in this contest, it must be said, were excellently delivered, but much of what was said, although historically correct as far as facts are concerned, was not very

inspiring. A number of speakers mentioned Keir Hardie. They should have remembered that Keir Hardie was a fighter, and have delivered fighting speeches which would have attracted the working youth of this country to Socialism.

We came away from the contest with the feeling that not only is the manner in which a speech is delivered important, but the subject matter is equally so.

The League must produce speakers who are not only eloquent, but who are capable of bringing socialist ideas to the ears of youth.

GREETINGS

We have received several messages expressing good wishes for the future of *Socialist Youth*, including:

Richmond and Barnes League "... welcomes the ... establishment of an independent youth paper."

Wandsworth Central League "welcomes it as a forum for the opinions of Labour Youth."

Edmonton League "believes that it can help to build a strong League."

East Islington League "sends greetings and good wishes."

Lambeth League "believes that it can do much to assist the League."

Holborn and South St. Pancras League "hopes it will stimulate discussion."

Holborn and South St. Pancras Labour Party "welcomes the new youth paper."

The Editorial Board acknowledges these encouraging greetings, and wishes to assure the comrades that *Socialist Youth* will endeavour to justify the confidence expressed.

The Young Republic

By JOHN HAYNES, Harrow-Weald L.O.Y.

OUT of the wreck of war-torn Europe arose something new—the first communist country to refuse to bow down to the dictates of the mighty Russian Bureaucracy.

Let us examine this phenomenon and see how it is that a small country like Yugoslavia, insignificant until the courage of her partisans made her front page news during the war, can defy the might of Russia and her satellites. The answer to this intriguing question is, I feel, partly found in the youth of Yugoslavia.

The organised Yugoslav youth are mainly to be found in the *Peoples Youth of Yugoslavia*, which grew up out of alliances of the Youth Sections of the Liberation movements.

The youth of Yugoslavia are not looked upon as a peculiar section of the community with more enthusiasm than sense, a section to be tolerated and kept "in line," but are accepted as an intelligent section of the community, whose views are worthy of consideration. The result is that the young people of Yugoslavia feel that they have a real interest in the future of their country, and therefore they co-operate wholeheartedly in the creation of a new Yugoslavia.

It is the youth who lead the workers of Yugoslavia in the establishment of a new industrial country, it is the youth who enthuse the workers to build new factories, new roads and new towns.

We are often told that youth cannot have rights without responsibilities, but in practice we find that we have plenty responsibilities but very few rights. The youth of Yugoslavia have their rights, so they gladly accept responsibilities. This means that they have accepted the tasks of youth. These tasks are to aid in the rebuilding of the country, to educate themselves politically and technically so as to create a Workers' State free from bureaucracy, to make themselves physically fit and learn to defend their country from the forces of Imperialism and Bureaucracy.

The importance of youth in Yugoslavia is best shown in this extract from Tito's speech to the Joint Congress of the Union of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia and the Peoples' Youth in 1949.

"When the war was over and our ravaged country had to be raised from its ruins, our youth again, through its sacrifice and work, gave proof of its selflessness, of loyalty to the cause for which tens of thousands of our young men and women had died in the field of battle."

We must remember that it is the youth of a country who must pay the price of that country's folly, therefore youth must lead.

CREDENTIALS PLEASE

They tell me M.I.5 is growing,
They tell me it's formed a new branch,
That Morgan has asked it to watch us,
This rival to dying "Advance."

But don't you believe them, Comrade,
They've got the wrong end of the stick,
Really T.H. just loves us,
It's for help that they're sending the
"dick."

So next time we meet unofficial,
Leaguers who seek a back seat,
Won't have to give up their tickets,
We'll check 'em by sizing their feet!

O. O. E.

BUILDING THE LEAGUE

We intend to devote some of our space to League news, and shall welcome reports of the activities of your League.