

Socialist Youth

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Editorial

FORWARD TO A DEMOCRATIC LEAGUE

Win National Status at Conference

A UNITED choir of Tory and Labour voices sings the praises of democracy. In the League of Youth we think it is time that our leaders learnt that democracy begins at home. We will not tolerate any longer the hypocrisy that plans war for 'democracy', yet denies democracy in its own organization.

Even Morgan Phillips will find that he cannot keep a Conference of Leaguers quiet while the Labour Government fits us for uniforms. This coming Conference of the League of Youth must be utilised to make known our opinions and to continue the struggle for League democracy and a Socialist Youth Programme. It will be miraculous if League views can be expressed at the Conference, so many obstacles have they to surmount—but it is our job to see that this miracle happens. We have struggled consistently for democracy for years now, and we must go forward to victory at the Conference.

Youth has only two roads to travel—the road to war, or the road to Socialism. The Labour leadership supports the drive to war. Is the League to follow blindly along this bloody path? We are not even supposed to discuss it! Delegates to the Easter experimental Conference must not talk about policy. The elder statesmen of our Party can conscript us and sentence us to death, but we must not talk about it.

WHO BREAKS THE CONSTITUTION

To discuss policy would be to break the Constitution, we are told. The Annual Conference of the Labour Party makes policy, so we hear. Then which Conference of the Labour Party decided to spend £4,700 millions on arms. Which Conference decided that Britain should become an air-base for the atomic destruction of the cities of Europe? No Conference took such decisions. The Labour Party rank and file are against such a policy, and especially the youth. We challenge our leadership. Let us tell you what we think of your war preparations. Let us outline a Socialist alternative. You dare not accept this challenge! You are afraid of the tremendous

opposition you would encounter, and you are right to be afraid.

DISCIPLINE FOR THE N.E.C.

The people who shelter behind the Constitution do not appear to have read it. We have. We intend to ensure for the workers "the full fruits of their labour" and we call upon the Party Leadership to take steps to carry out this section of the Constitution—or join the Tory Party. We call on the leadership to implement Labour Conference decisions, on for example, tied cottages and equal pay. At Margate last year a resolution was carried to cut profits and peg prices. Profits and prices are soaring even more rapidly. We say to our

"leaders": carry out your instructions. Talk to us of democracy and Constitution when you have learnt to operate them.

It is neither the Constitution nor the Tory Press which is worrying the N.E.C., however. The League Conference would give no assistance to the Tories. We know they would go to war even faster than the present rate, and the Tory Press would be in no hurry to publicise genuine Socialist ideas. The N.E.C. also objects to the publication of Socialist ideas, however. The last meeting of the National Consultative Committee endorsed a statement of the N.E.C. which is practically a ban on *Socialist Youth*. We have apparently earned the distinction of being banned after our first issue! *Socialist Youth*, however, has many friends, and its army of supporters continues to grow. We will fight back with every ounce of energy at our command, and we are confident of League support. We

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WAR—WITHOUT THE TRIMMINGS

H EALTHY young men, who are ready to die at the drop of a banknote; young fellows who won't ask awkward or embarrassing questions, but just do what they're told; education no barrier, provided the applicants have no dangerous ideas about wanting to live long; who are ready to enter a little venture which we are contemplating.

This affair promises to be very exciting. There'll be plenty of blood, cracked bones, wrenched bodies, ruined cities, etc. This business venture will prove of considerable profit

to us. We hope to corner the world's markets, to pile a load of profits into our coffers, and in general to make things soft for the Upper Class.

All we need is you.

We need your life, which we are certain you will deliver on demand, to safeguard our profits. In return, we promise to deliver a lot of fanfare and blarney; loads of idealistic phrases like Democracy, Freedom, Against Totalitarianism; some charming, homelike trenches, and a vacation on the 38th parallel.

The League Needs a Programme

A Letter from the Editor.

It is now quite evident that there is an overwhelming demand in the League of Youth for full and unconditional National Status—and this is clearly demonstrated by the large number of resolutions dealing with this question which appear on the Agenda for the Conference.

Thus the campaign which was initiated at the Filey Rally, 1949, appears to have reached a successful conclusion, despite certain reprisals which have been taken by Transport House against certain Leagues and individuals. If all League delegates do their duty and vote for National Status resolutions at the Conference, then a great step forward will have been made.

To build a mass League of Youth, we must have a socialist youth policy. By preventing us from discussing matters of youth policy at the Conference, the N.E.C. are greatly restricting the expansion of the League which we all so much desire. It would, therefore, be a great mistake if some steps were not taken to discuss a policy during the Conference week-end. To initiate discussion on this question, a specimen programme is submitted below. We ask all Leagues to discuss this in their branches and let us have amendments, alterations, and suggestions. This is merely a draft, and does not necessarily represent the personal viewpoint of each member of the Editorial Board. In any case, it is the League itself which should decide on the points which it desires

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.

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in its Youth Programme. We submit this as a step in the right direction, and we ask for your co-operation in ascertaining the views of the League.

An Eve-of-Conference meeting will be held at the **National Trade Union Club, Great Newport Street, W.1** (near Leicester Square Underground), commencing at **7.30 p.m. on Good Friday, 23rd March.** We extend a hearty welcome to your delegate to come along and participate.

The League has shown that it wants National Status—now let us show that we want a programme.

Yours fraternally,

Audrey Brown.

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR YOUTH

1. INDUSTRIAL

- (a) Rate for the Job.
- (b) Adequate trade training facilities—technical training in employers' time.
- (c) Shorter working hours, one month's holiday with pay.
- (d) Organizational link up between Trade Union Youth Committees and the League of Youth.

2. EDUCATION

- (a) Free University Education for all who desire it.
- (b) Adequate grants to students.
- (c) Extension of school building programme.

3. FOR SOCIALISM, AGAINST WAR

- (a) Full franchise and legal rights at 18.
- (b) Against conscription for capitalist wars.
- (c) Withdrawal of troops—freedom for the colonies.
- (d) Against capitalist rearmament—for an increased standard of life.
- (e) Break with alliance with American capitalism—end secret diplomacy.
- (f) Against war preparations.
- (g) Nationalisation of the armaments industry without compensation and under workers' control.

4. INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY

Transform the International Union of Socialist Youth into a real Socialist Youth International.

We hope that League branches will discuss this, and send us the views arising from their discussion. This will enable the real opinion of the League to become known.

VOTE AT 18

A Critical View

In your first issue I read with interest the article on the fantastic situation whereby a young man may die by hanging, or perish in a trench, long before he may vote.

This is wrong, but is the lowering of the voting age the right remedy. Would it not be better if the age at which one may legally die or legally kill, were raised?

At the age of eighteen, the average person is still suffering from textbook history, as taught at the average school, about Clive, Rhodes, Peel and so on, the men who, by their honest exploitation, made Britain great, and above the fairy stories about our imposing Royal Line. Names like Tyler, More, Marx, Lenin, Webb, and Lansbury seem to have been, in the main, overlooked. It is, therefore, rather difficult to know how to vote, if this 'schooldays' history still clouds the mind.

There are a great many exceptions to what is mentioned above, for there are some at eighteen who are quite ready to cast their vote and some are still not ready at eighty. But generally speaking, the mind is still in its formulative stage at eighteen, and it is unfair to compel people to vote at this time.

But if a person is too young to vote at eighteen, then that person is certainly far too young to kill or be killed in war. If the age at which one may be conscripted were raised to twenty-one, many conscripts might ask **Why will I be fighting?** and may say **No.** This might explain why the militarists like the conscription age to be so low, but how can a normal sane person justify it? This is just a rough outline of some reasons for raising the age of legalised murder, rather than lowering the voting age. Many people would rather live a few more years without a vote than die early with that often misused symbol of democracy.

May I, in closing, congratulate you for your enterprise in starting what is the League's most daring blow for democracy.

Yours fraternally,

J. F. Mallard.
Dartford L.O.Y.

FOR INFORMATION

To the Editorial Board,

Rally

Dear Comrades,

The Editorial Board of *Socialist Youth* extends a fraternal invitation to *Rally* and its supporters to join with it in the organisation of activity over the Easter Conference week-end.

We are enclosing a copy of a circular giving our arrangements, and we hope you will participate.

We look forward with interest to your comments.

Yours fraternally,

AUDREY BROWN.
Editor.

WHAT'S ON THE AGENDA?

By JACK HAMILTON (Westminster L.O.Y.)

NO one can say that the League Conference Agenda reflects the present situation. Elaborate precautions have been taken to keep political resolutions off the Agenda.

However, the Agenda does show how much the League resents this gagging, by the large number of resolutions calling for National Status. Obviously, a serious attempt has been made by Leagues to try and find a solution to present difficulties. Besides the National Status resolutions, various other interesting items are dealt with.

Hackney South raises the important question of the Youth Sections of the Trade Union Movement, proposing that representatives should collaborate with the League on its National and Regional Committees and at the Annual Conference. So far, this matter has been completely ignored by the Party leadership, but this is one of the greatest fields of work for League activity,

and immediate attention should be given to it with a view to bringing young industrial workers into joint struggle for our common objectives: an end to the exploitation of youth as cheap labour, for full franchise and citizenship at eighteen years, higher education for all, etc.

"Recognising the importance of international Socialism to secure world peace", **Bethnal Green** urge closer co-operation between the League and the International Union of Socialist Youth. It is a pity that this League could not incorporate some proposals in the resolution towards this end, but no doubt if they had done so it would have been ruled "out of the terms of reference of the Conference". However, **Bethnal**

Green have hit the nail on the head, and it is to be hoped that the League of Youth may develop this perspective at every opportunity as a real alternative to the treacherous policy of compromise with and subservience to the reactionary forces in the world today. Surely this is one of the most bitter lessons that the international working class has learnt since the advent of capitalism—we should therefore strive again for the international solidarity of the progressive youth of all countries, both European and Colonial.

A number of branches are pressing for the election of League members as Regional Youth Officers, and that the National Youth Officer should be elected on the same basis—such proposals are absolutely necessary, for the development of the League by League members and not by people who are appointed by arbitrary methods and who are entirely out of touch with youth affairs.

Tottenham have taken the initiative in resisting the invidious campaign which has been and is still carried out by Transport House against members of the League who insist on the right to participate in such movements as the National Status Movements, campaigning within the League and the Party for the recognition of the most elementary democratic rights regarding the national status of the League. Let us then insist at this Easter Conference on the very necessary reforms to League structure for which we have fought so long, and declare our solid opposition to any "witch-hunt" which is directed against our very existence.

THE LOST HUNDRED THOUSAND

By Jack Dipple (Tottenham L.O.Y.)

ON looking through the Resolutions for the League Conference, the enormous influence of the National Status Movement is easily seen. A solid bloc of eight resolutions demanding action on the famous five points, plus subsidiary resolutions on individual points, illustrate the appeal and strength of the democratic ideas pervading the League as a result of a campaign spread over two years.

Yet one resolution mars this picture. **Beckenham Constituency Labour Party**, and it must be assumed, **Beckenham League of Youth**, draw our attention to the "deleterious effect" of the N.S.M. campaign, especially on the relations between Leagues and their local Parties. It is not enough to dismiss this resolution as incorrect, because it is practically certain that at this point on the Conference Agenda, the heavy artillery of Transport House will move into action, and no doubt the sharpshooters of lesser calibre from the backwoods of **Beckenham** will snipe from the floor. It should not be difficult to organise a guerrilla pincer movement to pin down the Transport House Dragoons!

When the National Status Movement campaign was at its height, from late 1949 to the middle of 1950, the League had its **biggest** increase in the number of branches, from about 660 to 770. Not very "deleterious"! Before this period, increases in the number of branches had begun to slacken off. With the advent of the N.S.M., County and Regional Machinery, cumbersome and bureaucratic though it is, started to function more effectively.

The relations between Leagues and their parent Parties were certainly marred in many cases by arguments and sometimes bitter struggles. But

the comrades who were hauled up in front of their Party Officers at that time will remember that this was due to a "pipe down or be disaffiliated" phone call from Regional Headquarters, rather than any intransigence on their part.

In fact, the N.S.M. has had a rejuvenating effect on the League. In spite of the restrictions and the spate of petty legislations passed to the League from the National Executive Committee via that supine body, the National Consultative Committee, in spite of the Gestapo orders to local Agents from the Regional Headquarters, the League has refused to be intimidated. Let us be encouraged that we got the Conference, the only substantial organizational concession made by Transport House in the last few years.

And when we remember the original target of 100,000 members by 1950, comrades, let us lay the responsibility where it really lies, right at the door of the National Executive Committee. We cannot recruit for the League by telling young people that the Army needs them. End this disastrous policy, and we shall build a strong Socialist Youth Organization.

In the meantime we should call upon the Conference Platform to lead a two-minute's silence for the "lost hundred thousand."

EDITORIAL (Continued)

are putting your case. We appeal for your protection and support.

Socialist Youth opposes all war preparations. It stands for a democratic League and a Socialist programme, as does the rank and file of the League. That is the explanation of the proposed victimisation. Afraid to face us at an unrigged Conference, the N.E.C. tries to stifle and ban the aspirations of the League. We are your platform. Help us in the struggle. Tread fearlessly the path to Socialism.

Demand:

National Status and Democracy for the League. Discussion of policy at the Easter Conference. No victimisation—Hands off Socialist Youth.

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SOCIALISM OR WAR

By H. KENDALL (Wimbledon L.O.Y.)

WAR in Malaya, war in Korea, war in Indo-China, war existing or threatening throughout the world. At the present moment millions of men are under arms, and hundreds of thousands gripped in a life and death struggle. It is upon the Socialists of the world that the duty of showing a solution must fall.

For the European workers, the fifty years of this half century have been years of war. Between the wars there has been no peace, only a breathing space and preparations for the next blood bath.

The introduction of the long range bomber and the atom bomb are threatening the very existence of civilised life in Europe. Socialists recognise this grave threat, and unlike all other organisations, they can explain it and point to the final solution.

The causes of the first and second world wars, and the causes that are leading towards a third world war, are rooted in capitalist society. There can be no lasting world peace while capitalist society sprawls its filthy tentacles across the world. The first world war was a war between the colonial powers to re-divide amongst themselves the loot stolen from the working people. The second world war began as another attempt of the defeated powers to gain the loot they failed to gain before. It developed into a war to destroy the conquests of the workers' revolution in Russia. The results were twofold. First, the Allied Powers, by their bombing offensive and military conquests, finally destroyed Germany, their main capitalist competitor. This was accomplished, however, at the cost of subservience to American Imperialism. Secondly, the military and political conquests of the Soviet Union and the socialist movement were so strengthened as to threaten the very basis of world capitalism.

In 1951, we find the capitalist world frantically preparing to stop the growth of the international workers' movement, by military methods.

The forces of Communism claim to be the sole defenders of peace. They seek to ally the workers and capitalists in order to gain a breathing space for peace. Capital will have peace only on its own terms; the surrender of the national and international working class to its rulers, the end of the march to Socialism, an impotent Trade Union movement sold body and soul to the boss. Yet even such a surrender would yield only a brief respite. A Stalin-Truman pact will break under the pressure of historical necessity as surely as the Stalin-Hitler pact before it.

Socialist Youth must maintain a position independent of both Stalinist and capitalist blocs.

Peace without Socialism is impossible. Prosperity without Socialism cannot last. Freedom is stunted, limited, and destroyed wherever capitalism remains. Our task is to explain to the workers that they cannot obtain peace without overthrowing the capitalist system that causes war, to show on every possible occasion that the fight for peace is the fight to destroy the capitalist class and establish Socialism.

Our task is to lead the Labour movement in Britain to establish Socialism and free the colonial peoples in the Empire.

To establish a Socialist Britain is to knock out the lynchpin of capitalist war preparations.

The strengthening of Socialism and the working-class movement is the only road to peace.

Let Socialist Youth take the lead.

A Letter from Canada

The Collingwood Unit of the Co-operative Commonwealth Youth Movement, C.C.F. Youth, received a copy of *Socialist Youth*, and found our approach and analysis followed closely. A committee was elected to write to you and ask for a corresponding member in your organization. We feel it is very necessary to have an exchange of views with a socialist youth organization in a different country. You have a much larger organization, and, understandably I think, British youth is more class-conscious than Canadian, but still you might pass on a few ideas we could use in organization, propaganda, and tactics. If it is possible, a

summary of your education programme would prove to be quite valuable.

The creation of a real Socialist International appears to be a vital necessity to many of us here, and we are anxious to have first-hand information on developments and conditions in Europe. If there is any information that you need or desire from us we will be only too pleased to provide it if it is within our ability to do so.

Every wish for success from the Collingwood C.C.Y.M.

Comradely yours,

Anne Rodgers.

Dear Comrade

Many Leaguers will have been amazed to see that, just shortly after the appointment of an Ambassador to Spain by the British Labour Government, Transport House is circulating an appeal for money for persecuted Spanish Socialist Youth.

We are informed that the Spanish Socialist Youth organization is being attacked and persecuted by Franco's agents. I hope that the Leagues will respond generously to this appeal for help, but financial aid surely is not enough. It is disgusting that our Government should have sent an Ambassador to Spain, simultaneously with the circulation of this appeal from Spanish Socialists. Leagues of Youth should immediately pass resolutions of sympathy for Spanish Socialist Youth, and protest at the Government's hobnobbing with Franco. All the information necessary is contained in Transport House's own circular letter to Leagues. I assume that if Transport House knows what is happening in Spain, the Government should also know. Or is this a case of the right hand not knowing what the left is doing (and suffering)?

Yours fraternally,

John Head.

Richmond & Barnes L.O.Y.

I have been reading and studying *Socialist Youth* since its inception and its continued virulence has prompted me to write these few constructive criticisms.

There can be no doubt of the sincerity and earnestness of your contributors, but I do feel that there is a need for something more than individual variations of the one theme they all proclaim. While I deplore the failure of *Advance* as a youth paper, *Socialist Youth* does little more than act as a banner for slogans and as an exhaust pipe for a lot of hot air.

The Leagues of Youth urgently need an independent paper which will provide a platform for discussion on all subjects relating to youth. At the moment with the *Socialist Youth* we have an independent paper, yes, but when are we going to read articles which are constructive in their context and more like the contributions of serious minded sensible young people than the spoutings of disillusioned soap-box orators.

This letter is away from your usual 'peace' and 'everything is wrong' theme. I do hope, however, that you will take note of my criticisms. Meanwhile, all success to your paper.

Yours fraternally,

Ron Balch.

South Hackney L.O.Y.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Why not send us an article on the lines you want to see, Ron. This paper is intended to be a platform for the League, and the articles printed so far are a representative selection of those submitted to us. The more articles we receive, on all topics and from all points of view, the easier our job will be—and the better our paper will be. So sit down and write, comrades!