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THE YOUTH MOVEMENT IN BRITAIN

(1780-1971)

its History
and Perspectives



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YOUTH CLUBS

by Bill Hickey

(For discussion)

Introduction

I have tried to show here how Youth Clubs in Britain offer the YCL a vast opportunity of winning a large section of young workers to progressive ideas and mobilizing them in the struggle against capitalism.

I have not gone into the technical details of Youth Clubs unduly, except where it was necessary to show how the hostility of the controlling body could be defeated and how the young people who work in these clubs could be won over to assist us.

I have written this throughout in the context of a steady move to the left by the working class, and whilst youth clubs are a political force for progress I have tried to show how this is necessarily tied to the strength of the left as a whole.

Although this is only a very rough guide, I feel it is basically how we could expect Youth Clubs to develop over a long period of time, if we pay enough attention to them, and I am convinced of the necessity of doing so.

Youth Clubs - A Tool of Reaction or a Force for Progress ?

In the present capitalist society Youth Clubs are designed to channel young people into more easily accepting that society.

In the formative years when young people's ideas are developing, the tasks of youth clubs, scouts, guides &c. is to create an atmosphere where young people will more easily accept the ideals, values and morals of society. This is done very often from a predominantly Christian outlook. Lord Baden Powell once wrote of the urgency of setting up the Scouts 'because if they didn't young people would increasingly turn to Communism'.

The ruling class knows quite well that if it doesn't keep the kids off the streets and keep their minds occupied, then these kids will be an excellent breeding ground for discontent, which will express itself in various forms of rebellion, vandalism, teenage gangs, &c., so in the same way that the unemployed were given menial jobs in the 20's and the Forces make you clean everything in sight, young people have youth clubs, not only to keep them occupied, but also to give them a definite lead.

Accepting the view that Youth Clubs are used as a weapon of the ruling class, what does this mean to us as Communists? I think we can safely say that the way Youth Clubs are used, whether they are reactionary or progressive, depends entirely on the balance of class forces in society. Even within a capitalist society the working class should in no small way be able to use these clubs for its own benefit.

To a certain extent the holder of the purse strings has almost complete control over these clubs. In the main they are financed by the Government, local councils and charities, or all these.

For the moment we can write off the Government, Labour or Tory, as firmly controlled by the ruling class and definitely hostile towards progressive ideas.

So far as the local council is concerned, we could reasonably expect a Labour Council to be more favourably disposed towards a progressive youth club than a Tory Council, or even a Labour Government. This would entirely depend on the balance of forces between the right and the left, both in the Council Chamber and in the local community, whilst a Labour Council would perhaps not initiate a progressive line of thought, it could certainly be made more reluctant to take action against a progressive club.

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The charitable trusts tend to be dominated by Tory or Liberal minded people. Here we have much less opportunity, because there is virtually no democratic control over these bodies whatsoever. Nevertheless, some of the more Liberal-minded do-gooders would perhaps be reluctant to cut off finances to something they thought was progressive or persuasive.

So from this we can safely say that although we would have to tread carefully, we could still do some good work and make some important gains within the present framework. Everything would depend on the strength of the left forces within the communities. The stronger the left forces become the easier our work within the youth clubs would be and this would, of course, considerably help in the process of the strengthening of the left.

So if the hostility of the controlling bodies or committees could be withstood, what would the position be with the "Youth Leaders" - the rank and file, so to speak. Over the last few years a considerable change has taken place within the Youth Service. The traditional matronly figure of the Vicar's wife of the well-wishin middle aged youth leader is gradually disappearing and is being replaced by a younger, more idealist group of youth leaders, both full-time and volunteer workers.

By the very fact that they have entered into this kind of work, a large proportion of them tend to be more liberal and left-wing than their counter-parts in other jobs. The old type of youth leader saw himself as trying to teach the younger generation to respect the values of his generation, but the new group of youth leaders in the main vaguely sees itself as trying to help their own generation to establish its own views. They also seem to be very sceptical about the powers-that-be and the seemingly endless committees which produce reports but never seem to do anything.

This type of youth worker, far from being hostile to any changes in youth clubs, are basically looking for these changes themselves, admittedly in a vague and confused sort of way with no clear objectives but with their idealist outlook these youth workers are a great potential force for change, which needs to be channeled into the right direction.

The likelihood of winning youth workers over to accepting progressive demands is far greater than in any other section of industry. Perhaps the biggest problem would be the relationship between the workers in a club and the controlling body or committee of the club. Whilst the youth workers have a considerable amount of control over the day-to-day running of their club, there is still a feeling of insecurity. Everything theoretically has to be approved by the controlling body or committee (although this isn't always adhered to). There is a feeling that if you go too far you will have to answer to them for it.

The committee always seem just out of sight, but within earshot, similar to a small firm where the boss could pop up at any minute but where you have no real contact with him.

This would make it more difficult to organize these workers, but a significant advance has been made by the organization of a Union which could be of real assistance to us; probably giving volunteer workers more say would help also (there not being the same relationship with the "boss".)

So far I have tried to show that it is possible to give youth clubs throughout the country a progressive outlook and to use them to the benefit of the working class. Although this would be a long hard laborious process, with many set-backs on the way, and necessarily tied

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to the strength of the left as a whole, it must become an important part of our work, for if we, don't make youth clubs work for us they will certainly work against us.

What is very difficult to define is exactly what is a progressive youth club. At what stage would a youth club stop being a tool of reaction and become a force for progress ?

Also how could we put a progressive club to use ? What would its functions be ?

Basically, instead of being a place where young people are kept occupied and given a lead in order to stop them thinking about the harmful effects of capitalism, youth clubs could become a kind of "Liberated area" where young people can meet and discuss things without the limitations of the outside world. In the same way that the American Peace Movement has opened up coffee bars outside U.S. Army bases where G.I.s can talk with students, buy peace newspapers and listen to anti-war songs, our clubs would also have coffee bars attached to them where young people could enter and enjoy them, away from the normal pressures of the outside world, without someone breathing down their necks all the time. It would be a place where they could listen to anti-war songs and talk with progressive people and perhaps watch a film or buy left-wing papers.

The difference in these clubs would only need to be marginal because we would be using the same machinery as the ruling class. Only by slightly altering its outlook we would be able to turn the young people in an entirely different direction. We would be able to get to know each other. We would be able to teach young people the values of helping each other via the club. We would be able to mobilize the young people to help the tenants in a rent struggle, or if there is a bad housing problem show them the cause of it through "Shelter". We could use the club in order to campaign for the use of school playing fields, gymnasiums, &c.

All this could be done merely by having an enthusiastic group of progressive young workers in the club and by creating a suitable atmosphere whereby the young people using the club would be encouraged to express themselves more.

From this we could advance to more adventurous things, like an exhibition or a concert for Vietnam, or mobilizing support for the Anti-Apartheid Movement. We should have good opportunities here, because most teachers have supported the S.T.S.T. campaign and the Youth Services Association is affiliated to the N.U.T.

In the same way the V.S.C. was able to move freely in Universities and hold conferences there, the S.T.S.T. would have been able to move within youth clubs.

We should also try to create ties with the Trade Unions and Trade Councils to get them to sponsor or finance clubs. There is no reason why we shouldn't have "Young Trades Clubs" like we have "Trades Clubs."

All this could happen within the existing framework of youth clubs.

It would be a long time before young people become 'acclimatised' to the new outlook and were prepared to move into some of the more adventurous things, but given the right conditions we should be able to set the ball rolling with a determined group of young progressive workers who were prepared to spend a lot of time in what would appear to be an un worthy task.

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We must remember that young people are only as progressive as the conditions in which they live and work allow them to be.

Every now and then the conditions in which they live alter and around a particular issue conditions become ripe for a definite swing to the left. This could be around a rent battle or the closing of a local factory. This is on this type of local struggle that the whole community takes a definite, if temporary step to the left.

This would naturally be reflected in the local youth and if these young people had been going to their local youth club and coming into contact with progressive-minded people and perhaps even discussing this very issue, then that club would be in an excellent position to mobilize these young people, but, what is more important, it would be able to consolidate what would normally be a temporary move to the left.

Things would probably quieten down again and these young people would only think and discuss society and politics occasionally, but suddenly they would again be faced with a situation where the class struggle became more better and more clearer, so they would go into the club knowing that they could get help and advice there, and so again that club would move into action, but this time it would be easier because everyone would remember what they learned last time and what they had talked about since then. So this time they would be able to develop even further and consolidate what they had learned even more. And so it would go on until they have a definite progressive outlook and could take part in more general political activity and help to develop other young people.

From this we can see how working in youth clubs can give us an opportunity to assist and consolidate what is basically a natural development.

One of the things that has hampered us in the past is that people are willing to fight when they are directly affected, but then they forget all about it.

We all know that tenants associations can have hundreds of tenants in fierce struggle with the Council, but within two months of things quietening down they are struggling to get 6 people for a Committee meeting.

Its the same with Trade Unions. Go along to any branch meeting and you will see the same old faces, but as soon as something happens, thousands of workers are brought into the struggle, and then within 2 months you are back to the same old faces again.

What we should do is use a club that people will come to for entertainment, as a link between one struggle and the next, to try and achieve some sort of continuity,

It must be remembered that young people are constantly questioning the established order of things and looking for new ways of making this a better place to live in.

Youth clubs can give us an excellent opportunity of winning the young workers and the local young people over to our ideas and we must not fail to seize this opportunity.

THE BRITISH YOUTH MOVEMENT

by JOHN BOYD

(For Discussion)

Part 1 - The Youth Service, its past and present structure

The origins of today's Youth Service, that is the youth organizations, dates back to the 18th and 19th centuries from several roots. Before this time youth was marked by its age rather than for sociological reasons. This is not surprising for young people and children worked as soon as they were able and up to sixteen hours a day, six days a week. This was very necessary in order to help supplement the inadequate wages of their parents. Leisure and spare time, like holidays were non-existent. On top of this there was no compulsory education until 1870. There were many acts of Parliament relating to children and young persons throughout the 19th Century. Some of these acts limited the age at which children could be employed and the hours they could work. This was the result of various campaigns to improve the lot of children and young people. They helped to alleviate some of the horrible tragedies and conditions of youngsters, and linked with compulsory education cleared the way for recognizing the special needs of youth. At first it was mainly a concern for their spiritual well-being coupled with their physical condition.

About the only exception to there being no youth organization before the 18th century was that the Army and Navy have used boys, for instance drummer and bugle boys. The Royal and Merchant Navies had some training ships for boys, in the main using waifs, strays and orphans. These were hardly youth organizations and were more for recruiting and training boys for the services, just as they are today, some of today's Sea Cadet Units have their origin at this time.

Sunday Schools first appeared in the 1780's set up by the Church. These schools were for the specific purpose of teaching, above all else, young people how to read so that they could understand the Bible to further their religious understanding and reverence. Other subjects were taught such as needlework to occupy the mind. One other stated object of the Sunday Schools was to keep boys, in particular, from damaging property.

The Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) followed next with its middle-class outlook and religious background. This was founded in the 1850's and provided a club-type of atmosphere mixed with a liberal amount of religious study making it more palatable than the church. Boys Sections, however, were not opened until later in the century.

As has already been mentioned, during the 19th century, the conditions under which children and young people worked were appalling. It is well known that they worked down coal mines and in cotton mills before they were half way to ten years of age. This was the time epitomised by such names as Shaftsbury, Barnardo, Dickens and Sherard. These and others were the figure heads of sections of people who were concerned about children and youth. This was also the same fifty years in which the majority of the youth organizations were formed, and was part of the same concern for young people. The principle reasons were moral and religious rather than social and educational ones.

Many people saw religion as the vehicle to obtain "industrious and sober living". About the only deliberate conscious efforts by the ruling class to organize the nations young were the encouragement of the early pre-service organizations, and the Girl Guides a little later, but not surprisingly the Boy Scouts.

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The working class did very little to form youth organizations or movements. In the Trade Unions young workers were probably looked on as a threat to conditions and wages in much the same light as women workers. Elsewhere the working class had organized in nearly every other sphere from pins and cooperative stores to working men's clubs but it had never successfully organized youth, a weakness which is paramount today.

With the tremendous growth of the British Empire, alongside the industrial revolution came many voluntary military adult organizations who had their own Cadet companies. These Cadet Companies were the natural recruiting grounds for the adult companies and are today to be found as part of the Army Cadet Force. Many of these brigades and companies were attached to churches. The Boys Brigade (BB) was the result of combining the activities of the Sunday School with that of military drill. The BB was formed in Glasgow in 1883 and is still the major boys organization in Scotland. The Church Lad's Brigade, the Jewish Lad's Brigade and the Boy's Life Brigade were all copies of the BB. All of them used dummy rifles, except the Boys Life Brigade which concentrated more on First Aid. They all held compulsory drill parades and bible classes. The Girls Life Brigade (GLB) and the Girls Brigade were copies for girls with some of the military training toned down and replaced with First Aid, for rendering to the wounded on the battle field. The aim of these Brigades can be summed up in the Boys Brigade object:

"The advancement of Christ's Kingdom among boys, and the promotion of habits of obedience, reverence, discipline, self-respect and all that tends towards a true Christian manliness."

the stress being laid on obedience and discipline through military drill mixed up with the fear of God. Like "square bashing" in the armed forces this sort of training must partially rob young people of their ability to think for themselves or act on their own initiative.

At the same time as these organizations were being formed at the end of the century the club movement for both boys and girls, separately, of course, were being set up by philanthropists, religious bodies and progressive educationalists. The clubs were a step away from the main 'homes' for boys and girls (like Dr. Barnardo's etc.) and were based on one or more of four major points. The examples of the Mechanic's Institutes and working men's colleges, the soldierly type, sports type, and last by no means least, the temperance type where cocoa evenings were held. Because of these different varieties of club many were linked with the church and many others had working class roots. For instance the National Federation of Women Workers had a committee in 1895 organizing clubs for girls throughout the country. This was one of the very few actions taken by the working class to organize youth.

There were two other significant, but small, contributions by the working class to organize youth Some socialists organized the Socialist Sunday Schools in 1892 to compete directly with the religious Sunday Schools. This small movement set out to teach children Socialist principles using socialist songs and stories. This organization is today known as the Socialist Fellowship. It has taken a modified form compared with that of its foundation when it replaced the religious ideas with socialist ideas but kept the same form as its rival. The other contribution was associated with the Co-operative movement when the British Federation of Young Co-operators was formed in 1906 with units then known as Youth Circles. This was the result of the Co-operative Union encouraging adolescent groups. These appeared in scattered societies with no common object or name and were aimed at Co-operators. Unfortunately this organization went out of existence in 1960. There are signs, however, that it is re-appearing in London at least in the form of the Young Members Organization.

During this period there were still pressures to stop or reduce the employment of young persons. This went along with a movement towards taking an interest in the health of young people and children. Both these trends coincide with the peak of the British Empire and the Boer War. There was also a great interest particularly in the United States although in fact it was world-wide, in what is generally known as Woodcraft. The interest was in the educational and health values. The Red Indians had used woodcraft skill in the backwoods to track-down food, maintain a high standard of health, and to defend themselves for many decades. At the same time as the developing interest in woodcraft there were experiments in new educational methods. The Montessori principle, which is basically learning by doing, being the most important one as far as the youth organizations were concerned. One of the Empire builders, Lord Baden-Powell, used both woodcraft and the Montessori methods in the army with great success. Woodcraft, or a branch of it known as Scouting, was extremely important in the army for the purpose of reconnaissance and intelligence. There were no maps to speak of, aircraft and radios had not been invented either, to add to the expansion of the Empire. Baden-Powell put his ideas into a booklet called "Aids for Scouting". His being the hero of Mafeking helped to popularise amongst educationalists and leaders of youth organizations the ideas of scouting and woodcraft. The booklet was re-written with the aim of introducing the theme around woodcraft into the existing clubs, brigades and schools. Spontaneously both boys and girls used the old and the new book "Scouting for Boys" and formed their own groups. The movement grew rapidly. The then Secretary for War, Lord Haldane, told Baden-Powell,

"I feel that the organization of your Boy Scouts has so important a bearing on the future that probably the greatest service you can render to the country is to devote yourself to it."

In 1908 the ruling class grabbed control of the scout track cart. Along with the central theme of woodcraft was woven God, King and Empire. The Girl Guides Association followed soon in 1910. The title of the guides first manual was "How girls can help build the empire". It was realised that these girls were the future mothers of boys in the generation to follow. To start with Baden-Powell's sister Agnes led the Guides.

The main success of the scouting movement which is now world-wide and still expanding is because it is based on woodcraft. In 1908 it was aimed at all denominations of religion and open to non-religious types of troop as well. It took young people into the countryside and helped them to take an interest in the world around them. The activities were stimulating and unrestrictive in contrast to the rigid brigades. There has been no mass children's or youth organization founded since the scouts and guides.

During the first world war the scouts and guides along with other youth organizations were used as part of the war effort. For instance the Sea Scouts replaced coastguards to release them for war service. The Boys' Brigade, Church Lads' Brigade, and the Jewish Lads' Brigade were affiliated with the Cadet Force which was part of the Territorial Forces Association. Scouts acted as messenger boys at the war office. All the youth organisations were under a strain during the war because many of their leaders were in the forces. Generally young people were causing concern because of the rise in delinquency. The government decided to take on some responsibility for youth. It is from this point in time that the government has gradually taken on more and more responsibility for youth and its organisations. This first step was by the Home Office in setting up a Juvenile Organisations Committee which had the express purpose of encouraging boys to join brigades and clubs.

After the 1st World War and the general reaction against war and all its trimmings there was a major split in the Boy Scouts Association. The breakaway group wanted more woodcraft and less or no imperialist jingoism, they formed an organisation called the Kibbo Kift Kindred. Kibbo Kift means in sombre language 'great strength'. Many people in the working class thought that the Kibbo Kift was the labour Movement's scout organisation, but it became idealistic and sectarian to the extent that it was using woodcraft and back-to-nature ideas as a solution to the ills of capitalist society. Because the Kibbo Kift had become very extremist a small number broke away and formed the small but important Woodcraft Folk in 1925. This organisation had the help of the Co-operative movement, initially this help came from the education committee of the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society.

There were other events in the youth movement indicating the reaction against war and imperialism. The Boy Scouts dropped some of its flag waving, the Boys' Brigade and other Brigades stopped using dummy rifles in their military drill and other organisations toned down some of the imperialist ideas in their programmes of activity. The Boys' Brigade and the Church Lads' Brigade withdrew their affiliation from the Cadet Force in the early 20's.

The idea of open-air and physical recreation was a natural evolution from woodcraft and was developed between the two world wars. Playing fields associations, cycling clubs, and sports associations mushroomed. School camps were organised to give children in poorer districts a holiday in the fresh air. Royalty had a finger in camps, the Duke of York (later to be King George VI) had some "experimental" camps where boys from different classes were encouraged to mix. The Youth Hostels Association was formed in 1930 and enabled young people in particular to get into the countryside "under their own steam", and the hostels could be used for a cheap overnight stay. The Central Council of Physical Recreation was formed in 1935 with the object of ensuring "that there are opportunities for everyone, particularly young people, to take part in whatever sport or other physical activity attracts them ..."

In the club movement the Girls Clubs had formed a national association to be joined a little later by the mixed clubs. The Boys Clubs formed the National Association for Boys Clubs in 1925.

In the late 1930's the ruling class became very interested in harnessing the youth organisations a little more securely to the establishment. In 1939 after some discussions between themselves, about ten of the leading youth organisations formed the Standing Conference of National Juvenile Organisations (SCNJO). Shortly afterwards the Government made itself responsible for the welfare of youth and made grants to the major youth organisations. The exceptions to these grants were the religious and political organisations. This step was the beginning of the official Youth Service. In 1941 the government made registration of 16 and 17 year olds compulsory. Along with the registration went an interview which had the object of encouraging the young people to employ their leisure time wisely, to join a youth organisation and to assist the national effort. During the war the pre-service organisations, the Army Cadets, the Sea Cadets and the new Air Training Corps, grew rapidly and were used to supply the services. The Young Women's Christian Association provided and ran hostels for Land Army Girls. Certain branches of the Boy Scouts, particularly the Air Scouts, had strong links with the Cadet Forces. The aid and grants from the Government to the major youth organisations continued.

In 1944 the Education Act made it mandatory for all Local Education Authorities to form youth organisations. (A Youth organisation was defined as a body of youth in association with an adult or adults formally constituted and meeting regularly for

purposes within the terms of the Youth Service. The Youth Service was the provision made by local education authorities and voluntary organisations through leisure-time activities for the physical, mental and spiritual development of youth.) This resulted in the setting up of premises such as club buildings, and included financial aid. This is where the Youth Service was expanded and it now consists of both voluntary and state organisations as well as state provided facilities. In this move the religious organisations were included but the political youth groups still excluded.

During the late 1950's a warning was sounded by King George's Jubilee Trust in its "Citizens of Tomorrow" that the Youth Service was in difficulties and that there was a movement by youth away from the youth organisations. On top of this many organisations were in acute financial and leadership crises. The Government took heed of the warning and set up the committee chaired by Lady Albermarle to investigate the Youth Service. Even before its report had been completed machinery had been set up to bolster the Youth Service with money, men and material. Grants were extended to cover nearly all youth organisations except the political ones, and more cash was made available to the statutory Youth Service side as well. Out of the Albermarle report a Youth Service Development Council was appointed to study and look after the Youth Service on behalf of the Department of Education and Science. The members of this Council were appointed for their interest in youth work on a personal basis.

Since the end of the second world war a number of youth organisations have merged together. The Girls' Life Brigade and the Girls' Guildry with the Girls' Brigade of Northern Ireland have formed the Girls' Brigade. There is a Combined Cadet Corps as well as the three pre-service organisations. The Girls Venture Corps is now the girls' pre-service organisation replacing the Girls' Training Corps and the Women's Junior Air Corps. As well as these mergers a number of organisations have had new looks. These are in the main the organisations with a uniform which have modernised their uniforms, altered the age groupings and changed some of the names. Along with these new looks has gone some mild radical changes but the basic ideas and programme remains the same.

The Youth Service has now been extended into some colleges and schools where activities are led by tutor-youth officers. The statutory Youth Service now tolerates commercialism, and there has been some discussion about letting private enterprise run youth clubs and centres. A start has been made in this direction in the bowling alleys and discotheques. Other recent developments have been the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, actually based on the old County Badge Scheme, extensions to the Outward Bound Trust, and the new Task Force for rendering voluntary service to old people and others in need in the community. Task Force has been in acute difficulties due to the withdrawal of voluntary finance. All these latest organisations are open to all young people in school, college, factory and youth organisations.

Ties with the establishment

Because of the origins of the youth organisations the leaders at national level are faithful to the establishment, on the whole they are appointed rather than elected. Some organisations have a semblance of democracy but this is a very thin veil. At local level the leaders are drawn from the working class and the middle class. Many of the local leaders are so occupied and devoted that they do not fully understand all the implications of what they are doing, and where they do and try to make changes they can only meet with limited success. Most of these rank and file leaders have come up through their own organisation and have had no specific training as a youth leader.

Following the Albemarle report the National College for Training Youth Leaders was set up at Leicester. This was to train large numbers of youth leaders and then to inject them into the Youth Service. Other colleges and universities run courses for youth leaders but these are usually linked with sociology courses. The National College for Training Youth Leaders was to be open for a specific period. Alongside the Training college is the Youth Service Information Centre. This Centre collects and collates information on all topics dealing with youth, particularly youth organisations. The Centre has developed into the power house for distributing ideas to the youth leaders in the Youth Service. Some of its projects are carried on in co-operation with the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organisations.

Cash for the Youth Service youth organisations comes from several sources. The Youth Service Development Council distributes grants to the Standing Conference member organisations at national level. The Local Education Authority gives aid at local level. The King George VI Memorial Fund has money distributed through the Standing Conference as well as financing several experiments in youth work. A further source of income for the organisations is from industry: this appears to be getting smaller as the Government grant gets larger. This is particularly the case for the Scouts and Guides.

The Composition of the Youth Service Today

The normal way in which youth organisations are classified is extremely misleading. Normally the organisations are grouped into uniformed and non-uniformed, and then a further vague breakdown within these two groups. I will propose, and will use, the following classification which sorts organisations into groups which will make it easier to understand their role in society.

Care should be taken when examining the statistics. For instance they cover different age groupings. They may or may not include either leaders Northern Ireland, or Scotland and so on. Also a very active girl may belong to the Guides, the Pony Club, the Youth Hostels Association and the Sunday School.

Type of Organisation	Number of Organisations In each group	Individual Membership in Each Group		
		1966	1967	1968
Religious	6	201,000	189,000	175,000
Club Religious	11	674,000	855,000	769,000
Military Religious	6	263,000	254,000	261,000
Club	2	427,000	447,000	445,000
Pre-military service	5	99,000	92,000	97,000
Special interest	5	376,000	374,000	366,000
Woodcraft empire	2	1,084,000	1,138,000	1,126,000
Woodcraft working class	1	5,000	5,000	8,000
Working class	2	14,000	11,000	11,000
Grand Totals:	40	3,143,000	3,365,000	3,258,000

There are approximately 7½ million youth aged 12-21 inclusive. Of the 3 million in the youth organisations over 1 million are aged 15-20. This means that the majority of young people are members or have been members of a youth organisation before they are eligible to become members of the labour movement.

The most glaring comparison of figures is the pitifully small numbers in the working class organisations compared with almost any one of the other organisations.

Year	Working Class	Other	Total	Percentage
1921	1,000,000	2,000,000	3,000,000	33%
1922	1,100,000	2,100,000	3,200,000	34%
1923	1,200,000	2,200,000	3,400,000	35%
1924	1,300,000	2,300,000	3,600,000	36%
1925	1,400,000	2,400,000	3,800,000	37%
1926	1,500,000	2,500,000	4,000,000	38%
1927	1,600,000	2,600,000	4,200,000	38%
1928	1,700,000	2,700,000	4,400,000	39%
1929	1,800,000	2,800,000	4,600,000	39%
1930	1,900,000	2,900,000	4,800,000	40%
1931	2,000,000	3,000,000	5,000,000	40%
1932	2,100,000	3,100,000	5,200,000	40%
1933	2,200,000	3,200,000	5,400,000	41%
1934	2,300,000	3,300,000	5,600,000	41%
1935	2,400,000	3,400,000	5,800,000	41%
1936	2,500,000	3,500,000	6,000,000	42%
1937	2,600,000	3,600,000	6,200,000	42%
1938	2,700,000	3,700,000	6,400,000	42%
1939	2,800,000	3,800,000	6,600,000	42%
1940	2,900,000	3,900,000	6,800,000	43%
1941	3,000,000	4,000,000	7,000,000	43%
1942	3,100,000	4,100,000	7,200,000	43%
1943	3,200,000	4,200,000	7,400,000	43%
1944	3,300,000	4,300,000	7,600,000	43%
1945	3,400,000	4,400,000	7,800,000	44%
1946	3,500,000	4,500,000	8,000,000	44%
1947	3,600,000	4,600,000	8,200,000	44%
1948	3,700,000	4,700,000	8,400,000	44%
1949	3,800,000	4,800,000	8,600,000	44%
1950	3,900,000	4,900,000	8,800,000	44%
1951	4,000,000	5,000,000	9,000,000	44%
1952	4,100,000	5,100,000	9,200,000	44%
1953	4,200,000	5,200,000	9,400,000	45%
1954	4,300,000	5,300,000	9,600,000	45%
1955	4,400,000	5,400,000	9,800,000	45%
1956	4,500,000	5,500,000	10,000,000	45%
1957	4,600,000	5,600,000	10,200,000	45%
1958	4,700,000	5,700,000	10,400,000	45%
1959	4,800,000	5,800,000	10,600,000	45%
1960	4,900,000	5,900,000	10,800,000	45%
1961	5,000,000	6,000,000	11,000,000	45%
1962	5,100,000	6,100,000	11,200,000	45%
1963	5,200,000	6,200,000	11,400,000	45%
1964	5,300,000	6,300,000	11,600,000	45%
1965	5,400,000	6,400,000	11,800,000	46%
1966	5,500,000	6,500,000	12,000,000	46%
1967	5,600,000	6,600,000	12,200,000	46%
1968	5,700,000	6,700,000	12,400,000	46%
1969	5,800,000	6,800,000	12,600,000	46%
1970	5,900,000	6,900,000	12,800,000	46%
1971	6,000,000	7,000,000	13,000,000	46%
1972	6,100,000	7,100,000	13,200,000	46%
1973	6,200,000	7,200,000	13,400,000	46%
1974	6,300,000	7,300,000	13,600,000	46%
1975	6,400,000	7,400,000	13,800,000	46%
1976	6,500,000	7,500,000	14,000,000	46%
1977	6,600,000	7,600,000	14,200,000	46%
1978	6,700,000	7,700,000	14,400,000	46%
1979	6,800,000	7,800,000	14,600,000	46%
1980	6,900,000	7,900,000	14,800,000	46%
1981	7,000,000	8,000,000	15,000,000	47%
1982	7,100,000	8,100,000	15,200,000	47%
1983	7,200,000	8,200,000	15,400,000	47%
1984	7,300,000	8,300,000	15,600,000	47%
1985	7,400,000	8,400,000	15,800,000	47%
1986	7,500,000	8,500,000	16,000,000	47%
1987	7,600,000	8,600,000	16,200,000	47%
1988	7,700,000	8,700,000	16,400,000	47%
1989	7,800,000	8,800,000	16,600,000	47%
1990	7,900,000	8,900,000	16,800,000	47%
1991	8,000,000	9,000,000	17,000,000	47%
1992	8,100,000	9,100,000	17,200,000	47%
1993	8,200,000	9,200,000	17,400,000	47%
1994	8,300,000	9,300,000	17,600,000	47%
1995	8,400,000	9,400,000	17,800,000	47%
1996	8,500,000	9,500,000	18,000,000	47%
1997	8,600,000	9,600,000	18,200,000	47%
1998	8,700,000	9,700,000	18,400,000	47%
1999	8,800,000	9,800,000	18,600,000	47%
2000	8,900,000	9,900,000	18,800,000	47%
2001	9,000,000	10,000,000	19,000,000	47%
2002	9,100,000	10,100,000	19,200,000	47%
2003	9,200,000	10,200,000	19,400,000	47%
2004	9,300,000	10,300,000	19,600,000	47%
2005	9,400,000	10,400,000	19,800,000	47%
2006	9,500,000	10,500,000	20,000,000	47%
2007	9,600,000	10,600,000	20,200,000	47%
2008	9,700,000	10,700,000	20,400,000	47%
2009	9,800,000	10,800,000	20,600,000	47%
2010	9,900,000	10,900,000	20,800,000	47%
2011	10,000,000	11,000,000	21,000,000	47%
2012	10,100,000	11,100,000	21,200,000	47%
2013	10,200,000	11,200,000	21,400,000	47%
2014	10,300,000	11,300,000	21,600,000	47%
2015	10,400,000	11,400,000	21,800,000	47%
2016	10,500,000	11,500,000	22,000,000	47%
2017	10,600,000	11,600,000	22,200,000	47%
2018	10,700,000	11,700,000	22,400,000	47%
2019	10,800,000	11,800,000	22,600,000	47%
2020	10,900,000	11,900,000	22,800,000	47%
2021	11,000,000	12,000,000	23,000,000	48%

Membership figures for the major youth organisations

Organisation	Age Span	1962	1966	1967	1968
RELIGIOUS					
Girls' Friendly Society	G -21	23,000	19,000	18,000	18,000
Salvation Army (Youth Dept.)	B&G -21	99,000	109,000	104,000	99,000
Young Christian Workers	B&G 14-21	17,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
Church Army	B&G -21		17,000	17,000	17,000
Covenanter Union	B 12-19		13,000	12,000	12,000
Christian Endeavour	B&G -21		23,000	20,000	16,000
Sunday Schools	B&G				
			<u>201,000</u>	<u>189,000</u>	<u>175,000</u>
CLUB RELIGIOUS					
Ass. for Jewish Yth.	B&G 8-20	15,000	23,000	23,000	25,000
Catholic Young Mens' Society	B 14-21	25,000	15,000	15,000	15,000
The Grail	G -21	13,000	13,000	13,000	
Catholic Youth Service Council	B&G -21		39,000	54,000	62,000
Methodist Ass. of Youth Clubs	B&G -21	182,000	157,000	180,000	115,000
YMCA	B -21	48,000	52,000	54,000	56,000
YWCA	G -21	20,000	18,000	18,000	13,000
Christian Ass. of Women and Girls	G -21		600	600	700
Church of England Youth Council	B&G 14-21		273,000	394,000	394,000
Congregational Youth	B&G 13-20		35,000	35,000	40,000
Union of Maccabi Ass.	B&G -21		6,000	6,000	6,000
Welsh League of Yth.	B&G -21	45,000	43,000	43,000	43,000
			<u>774,000</u>	<u>855,000</u>	<u>769,000</u>
MILITARY RELIGIOUS					
Boys' Brigade	B -18	159,000	149,000	150,000	148,000
Girls' "	G -21	92,000	92,000	82,000	92,000
Church Lads' Brigade	B 8-21	15,000	12,000	12,000	12,000
Campaigners	B&G -18		10,000	10,000	9,000
Jewish Lads' "					
Jewish Girls' "					
			<u>263,000</u>	<u>254,000</u>	<u>261,000</u>
CLUB					
Nat. Ass. of Boys Clubs	B 13-19	152,000	165,000	165,000	169,000
Nat. Ass. of Youth Clubs	B&G 11-21	205,000	262,000	282,000	276,000
			<u>427,000</u>	<u>447,000</u>	<u>445,000</u>
PRE MILITARY SERVICE					
Army Cadet Force	B 14-18	43,000	40,000	39,000	40,000
Combined Cadet Force	B	74,000			
Air Training Corps	B 14-20	29,000			
Sea Cadet Corps	B 12-18	19,000	35,000	28,000	31,000
Girls' Venture Corps	G 13-20	5,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
			6,000	7,000	8,000
			<u>99,000</u>	<u>92,000</u>	<u>97,000</u>

Organisation	Age Span	1962	1966	1967	1968
SPECIAL INTEREST					
British Red Cross Society (jnrs.)	B&G schl. lvg.	84,000	78,000	76,000	79,000
St. John Ambulance Brigade (Cadets)	B&G -16	65,000	58,000	60,000	60,000
Youth Hostels Ass.	B&G -21	155,000	176,000	178,000	164,000
Nat. Fed. Young Farmers Clubs	B&G -21	40,000	34,000	29,000	32,000
Pony Club	B&G -21	31,000	30,000	31,000	31,000
		<u>375,000</u>	<u>376,000</u>	<u>374,000</u>	<u>366,000</u>
EMPIRE AND WOODCRAFT					
The Scout Assn.	B -21	509,000	489,000	494,000	460,000
Girl Guides Assn.	G -21	557,000	595,000	644,000	666,000
		<u>1,066,000</u>	<u>1,084,000</u>	<u>1,138,000</u>	<u>1,126,000</u>
WOODCRAFT AND WORKING CLASS					
Woodcraft Folk	B&G 6-18		5,000	5,000	8,000
WORKING CLASS COOPERATIVE					
Cooperative Youth Movement	B&G 7-21	16,000	14,000	11,000	11,000
Socialist Fellowship					

Most of the organisations listed are either members, associates or observers of the Standing Conference of National Voluntary Youth Organisations (SCNVYO). The majority of their individual members are in the school age bracket. Older youth, over 21 years of age, do not belong to a youth organisation, although most of them have been members at some time or other. A survey carried out in 1966 showed that over 65% of all men and over 57% of all women had belonged to a youth organisation. One in three men had been in the scouts and one in three women in the guides. One in ten men had been in the pre-service military organisations but only one in a hundred women. This indicates the mass influence and strength of the ideas and philosophies of these organisations.

Youth groups or organisations who have any political connections have up to now not been permitted to take part in the Youth Service. In this way left and socialist ideas are kept out of the Youth Service. This is the major reason, and is a historical one, why the progressive youth organisations are in isolation from the main youth movement. This has left the field wide open to reactionary ideas predominating in the form of military training, religion of the establishment, or empty debates and neutral activity. This ensures that the organisations and their membership are either faithful to capitalism or at least not anti-capitalism. The leaders of these organisations at local level are automatically loyal to the national policies of their group and have terms of reference that are "non-political". Trained leaders come in the main from sociology courses, with again a code of conduct of leaving politics out of youth work. This means in practice leaving out left and socialist ideas.

The Albemarle Report obviously saved the school age group for the Youth Service. Experiments are being carried out to win older youth to organisations or movements to keep them within the fold. A major research project has been started at Keele University to look into the Youth Service, out of this project may come new forms of organising youth.

Youth Service Development Council

This brings us chronologically to the 1970's and automatically to the Youth Service Development Council's (YSDC) report "Youth and Community Work in the 70's."⁽¹⁾ This report covers a wide vista of work including young adults, youth, and the top ages of the childrens' organisations. There are proposals from two committees who investigated youth work in schools and youth work with adult organisations. In addition the Department of Education and Science (DES) has examined the question of youth leader training.

Briefly the report states:

That only 29% of youth are attracted to the Youth Service but this falls off at 19-20 especially for girls. On the other hand the voluntary youth organisations are more successful at this age. It is recognised that the youth service has failed to equip young people to meet many problems in the changing scene for youth. For instance the raising of the school leaving age, the ending of National Service, a technological society, the "generation gap", the expansion of further education and the implications of a multi-racial society. Further the youth service has not a broad enough appeal in attracting and unattached. The public, industry and commerce are not aware of the youth service and its facilities and educational establishments consider the youth service as of secondary importance. This is despite the Newsom and other reports having called for youth wings and relations between youth organisations and educational establishments. The report states, "we see merit in extending the concept of the educational priority area to the Youth and Community Service".⁽²⁾

It is recommended that both schools and colleges should have maximum communal use. Agreement was not reached on the provision of recreational facilities to include young adults in further education by the youth service. But did recognise that institutes and colleges should provide more than just classes and that there should be maximum communal use of the buildings.

The youth service should be the responsibility of the DES and continue its links with the educational provision. The primary aim of the Service should be the social education of young people to help find and create a place in changing society with a critical involvement in their community. Their involvement is to include both commercial and non-commercial enterprise with a special need of both sexes being able to meet and mix informally to establish healthy relationships.

The council in trying to answer 'What kind of Youth Service do we want?' asked itself, 'What kind of society do we want?' coming up with the answer an 'active society'. To achieve this there should be 'community provision' meaning the supply of buildings, 'community organisation' which is the co-ordination of existing groups rather than developing new ones, and 'community development' especially in education.

There is a special appeal to the youth organisations of the political parties which are seen as having a useful role. Political education is seen as the one great vacuum in the lives

1. Youth and Community work in the 70's: DES: HMSO 1969.

2. Page 2.

of young people, but the report states, "We recognise the difficulty and question the wisdom of using public funds to support party political groups." (1) It is also recommended that the trade unions should take positive steps to involve young people in meetings and committee work.

The 14-20 age range of the Service is artificial and should be dropped so that young people can use the Youth Service for as long as they wish. At the lower age range special attention should be paid to the 13 year olds with a view to extending this downwards as finance permits. Youth work with the school ages must develop involvement and responsibility to help make education more informal to assist in better teacher/pupil relationships.

The juvenile image of the Youth Service must be replaced by non-directive and self determination methods getting adults to accept youth as social equals. One of the major criticisms of present youth provision is that it isolates the young from the rest of society. Further "Work with young adults must, in the future, therefore, no longer be a device for the social control of them by others and it must be seen not to be, lest it be mistrusted." (2)

To assist in new approaches such as wide based clubs, tutor youth officers in schools and colleges, up-dating of evening classes, campuses and youth wings at schools and colleges, further youth leader training is required. The stop gap one year course initiated by the Albermarle report needs to be lengthened to two years with a view to a three year course in the future. Training Colleges should have a Youth Leader option and other colleges have small training units.

To administer all these proposals the initiative is to be left with the DES and to assist in this direction the DES wants a working paper on schools/youth service, and cooperation between all the social services dealing with youth.

The government is still to discuss and adopt the report following the public discussion at the end of 1969.

In the society we live in at present the report is a large step in the correct direction. The state is taking on, at a painful tortoise pace, more responsibility for its youth instead of leaving it to the "voluntary" effort. The YSDC have put forward many fine proposals which in turn will require plenty of money to make the Youth and Community Service a reality. The report contains many hardy annuals such as using schools and colleges for community work. This particular proposal appeared in the 1944 Education Act with county colleges being used by schools as well as youth organisations. The position to date is that there are no county colleges and we still have, by and large, the same school buildings of 1944.

Unfortunately unless substantial sums are forthcoming the report its recommendations and proposals will founder on the rocks with many other educational and "community provision" wrecks. The YSDC "... have had to accept that it is unlikely that there will be any substantial increase in these funds available for all parts of the community service." (3) The report then falls into the usual suicidal trap of attempting to spend the present level of inadequate money in a pinching Peter to pay Paul game in order to finance new schemes and proposals. In 1967-8 in England and Wales a total of £10

1. Page 81
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million was expended on the Youth Service by the LEA's. In more realistic terms that hardly needs comment, this averages out to £2 per head of population in the youth service age range. Some authorities spend up to £4 per head and others less than £1 per head. To be successful the financing of the service must be statutory and payable by the LEA's with a DES grant as with education. This goes further than the report, already quoted, in saying "We see merit in extending the concept of the educational priority area to the Youth and Community Service."⁽¹⁾

These latest proposals would help enrich the lives of young people and children as well as some adults. Given the correct opportunities and initiative the range of activities and amenities available could extend from playing in an orchestra to just "knowing how to chat up birds."⁽²⁾ The idea of the community aspect of the service will assist youth out of its isolation as well as helping adults to recognise that they are social equals. This in turn will help to overcome some of the problems arising from the sectionalising of the population into children, youth, working adults, and old people.

It is doubtful whether the best parts and worthwhile sections and ideas of the new service will materialise without the interest and pressures of the labour movement, both at a local level and national level. The labour movement must take an interest in the new service and help to carry the service into the next steps ... The next steps beyond a successful youth and community service would include such facilities as communal restaurants, activity and recreational centres for all instead of the more orthodox evening classes. There could be other more exciting projects and amenities. This of course is going outside the scope of this discussion but presents a brief picture of what a real live community service could be which would include youth in all the other sections of the population. This type of community service would help alleviate the desperate need for the service in the new towns, housing estates and new "concrete villages" being built in our cities. This problem appears to have been overlooked in the report.

There is a natural step forward from the Albermarle report to this one in the proposed involvement of the political youth groups in the new service. At the same time as recognising the importance of the political youth groups the report in para 213 suggests that "... there are levels of recognition ... which do not involve material aid". The Albermarle report proposed, and it is now common practice, that church youth organisations be given financial assistance from government funds. The same facilities and financial aid should be available to all youth organisations and groups including political ones in the new service.

The crying need for more youth leaders, along with the appropriate facilities, can easily be seen by examining the relevant statistics for 1967-8. In that year in England and Wales the LEA's paid 932 full-time youth leaders, 10,000 part-timers and 660 youth officers. There were 2,000 LEA fully maintained centres. In addition to these there are the leaders and facilities of the national voluntary youth organisations such as scout leaders and huts. The estimated number of young people in the age range guided by these leaders is 5 million!

1. Page 2

2. Page 3

This report has been compiled in the context of a capitalist society, and whatever Youth Service is developed out of the report, now and in the next few years, will be inherited by a Socialist Britain. With this in mind there is a need to raise and discuss some important and fundamental questions. What sort of Youth Service do we want in a Socialist Britain? Is there a need today for a mass socialist orientated working class youth organisation?

Within the Labour Movement these questions would be opening up new fields of thought. This is because in the whole history of the British Working class the question of a mass working class youth organisation has never been successfully tackled. The only exceptions were the National Federation of Women Workers at the end of the last century, the Socialist Sunday Schools, and the Cooperative movement. The latter having done most work in this field compared with any other section of the labour movement. This is in contrast to nearly every other sphere of life in which the working class has had some form of organisation. The only time it looked as though there might have been a mass organisation was in the early part of the short life of the Kibbo Kift Kindred. Although it was, at one time, looked upon by many as the labour movement's scout organisation it never became part of the labour movement. This is despite the fact that many well known progressive people, prominent in the trade unions, Labour Party and ILP having been members and supporters of the Kift. The Kift became ultra sectarian because of the ostrich in the sand philosophy and thinking based on taking people out of society and building small desert island communities at camps. This was to try and take people away from factories, desks, smoky cities, and slums to create a new society based on woodcraft and Red Indian mythology. The Kift failed to become the youth and children's organisation of the labour movement because it did not see the necessity to change society and the need for the class struggle to obtain that change. Also the Kift had continued the major fault of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, an authoritarian organisation rather than a democratic one. The Kift also failed on another score in that it turned from being a children's and youth organisations. At the same time the labour movement failed to see the necessity of having its own youth wing and did little if nothing to adopt, support, or influence the Kift. The position is a similar one today, the labour movement on the whole, only pays lip service to youth and is really very afraid of having a youth section. This is mainly because of the embarrassment it would cause the right wing leadership as well as other far reaching reasons.

This lack of interest in children and youth is a reflection of the nation wide position in Britain and probably dates from the industrial revolution. (Perhaps a better historian and sociologist could throw some light on this unique position in Britain.) For instance today, in most countries, particularly industrialised countries of course, good films are produced specifically for children and young people. The British film industry is the major exception which has never produced this sort of cinema. Another facilities for youth by the state. The present provision is a post second world war phenomena and still a small one compared to the real need. Previous to this period a small one compared to the main by sectarian interests such as the churches, land owners and big business. The labour movement could and should take the lead to see that this large void of disinterest in youth is remedied before rebellious steps in and wins youth to its side. Although youth is working class leadership in the present period it lacks class understanding and

A further and more important reason why the labour movement must take an interest in youth and children is for the sake of its own future existence. The labour movement must develop its own

mass socialist orientated working class youth organisation backed up by a children's organisation. These two together, a children's and a youth organisation, would ensure that the labour movement would have a natural recruiting ground for its membership and cadres. In addition there would be many other benefits. One of these benefits would be that of a larger proportion of the population having a progressive outlook on life. More people would be aware of, for instance, the class struggle, the history of the labour movement, socialism, and so on. This does not mean that all of the people who had been in these organisations would be active socialists or revolutionaries, but at the very least they would be sympathetic to the class struggle and socialism rather than completely unaware and apathetic towards them.

There are a number of steps which could be taken to develop a mass socialist orientated working class youth movement or organisations.

The present working class youth organisations should be given every support by the labour movement from "official" recognition to finance and realistic premises. Trade unions, trades councils, and cooperatives should make their members aware of their own youth and children's organisations so that they can use them to the full and support them. Members of the labour movement should be given a clear understanding of, for instance, the difference between the autocratic methods and principles of the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides as opposed to the democratic and coeducational Woodcraft Folk. From this awareness not only would members of the labour movement encourage their children to join the present organisations but some of them would step forward and swell the ranks of the leaders who are the key to such organisations. This would ensure that the working class organisations grow in a healthy way with some of them growing into mass organisations. In addition, because the working class organisations have a democratic structure and can change and can become more attractive and acceptable to a broader section of young people and children they will further develop new and revised forms aiding the growth of mass membership and influence.

Alongside and hand in glove with the development and growth of the present organisations could go another or other new organisations launched by say the TUC. The TUC is the only body in the labour movement rich enough and representative enough to promote a new youth and children's organisation. What form this new organisation would take should depend largely on several factors. Young people should have the largest say in its formation and character. The current campaign for a youth TUC could be one of the first steps and the prime body, when formed, to discuss and lay the basis of a new organisation. The present working class youth and children's organisations should also be included in any discussions to draw on their invaluable experience advice and help.

With a successful mass working class youth movement would come a number of broad benefits to the youth and children of Britain. There would be a whittling away of the para-military organisations such as the pre-service cadets and the brigades. There would be pressures and success, at the moment only expressed at a level of shorts versus long trousers, in democratising and de-empiring the Boy Scouts and Girl Guides. This would ensure that many youth and children's organisations would be drawn closer to the working class and labour movement and would eventually sever their allegiance and service to the capitalist establishment. This is "correct and proper" because most of their membership and leaders are from the working class.

The prime and biggest step is for all of us in the labour movement to realise that young people's problems cannot be left for

young people to solve by themselves, at the same time it must be recognised and accepted that youth must be allowed to have its say in its own organisation and to commit its own mistakes, however painful and hard it may appear. Adults and the labour movement have committed many mistakes, one of the biggest is in ignoring its own youth and children.

The above far reaching and long term proposals are a contribution to the discussion, which is decades overdue. They will help towards winning youth for a better life and for socialism and will eventually help to pave the way for youth to play a key role in realising a Socialist Britain and to taking part in running a Socialist Britain.



