

## On the Path To Unity:

----- By Max Lorkin -----

To unite the young men and women of Australia around the fight for Peace, for the satisfaction of their needs, and for a new Social System is a great mission but not a simple task.

There are 1½ million youth between the ages of 15 and 25 in Australia today and the vast majority of these young people are confronted daily with problems large and small as a result of the crises of Capitalism, it's race for maximum profits and the inevitable drive to war. The effect of Capitalism on these young people is the same irrespective of their differing opinions and views and it is this fact that lays the basis for the building of unity and common action in the defence of their rights.

When they unite and fight for their rights they immediately come up against the warmongers and in reality take the cause of Peace into their own hands, though not yet consciously enough.

Our League needs to seriously undertake manysided day to day struggles in order to play it's full part in the building of this unity. The unity of the working class youth, the most decisive section, is an urgent question for us and one that needs serious examination.

There are in Australia about 54 factories and workshops with over 1,000 workers, 32 in N.S.W., 9 in Victoria, 3 in Queensland, 7 in South Australia, 2 in Tasmania and 1 in W.A.

While not limiting our attention to these, it is obvious that to unite the working class youth and form an alliance with other sections, we must have a strong basis in the basic industries, particularly the metal and the railways. Yet we are still quite weakly organised here. The question is how to overcome this situation.

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Talk of uniting and leading the youth in the factories, or anywhere else, without being closely connected with them there will remain just talk. Bright colorful factory gate meetings where our policy can be explained are important, but of limited possibilities. Well illustrated and youthfully written bulletins, particularly when these are able to relate our policy to happenings in that particular shop or locality, are also of great value. But there can be no substitute for us having our members, who have a Marxist training and ability, working inside the factory over a long period. Our cadres can win the respect of the youth and effectively lead them, provided they are with them. But you just can't bowl up and start leading people.

I feel there is a need for a continual, systematic combing through of our members, with the aim of getting every member possible working among a group of youth in a factory or in other youth organisations, many members of which are factory workers. We must then give constant attention to the theoretical development of these mass workers, assisting them to always improve the quality and effectiveness of their work, their ability to draw their contact into our program of youthful activity, building circles of Challenge readers, and above all building organisation.

This question of the quality of the mass work is an extremely important one. Most of our people are very, very busy, so it is not a question of being busier, but of the quality of our work; a question of the application of our Marxist theory to practice. If the development of cadres is the main thing, every leader needs to be not someone who only shines brilliantly themselves, but one who is brilliant at advancing and creating others.

The question of Branch Secretaries, for example, needs looking into. Many of our Secretaries are not mass workers themselves and so tend to lead the branch away from mass work. On the State Council, we have begun to make significant developments in this direction. Of 19 State Councillors, 12 work in fairly big factories

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and are members of their Unions. Two who work in big establishments are members of their trade associations. Two are in big schools and members of student organisations, one lives in the countryside and belongs to a bike club and two are full-time League workers. This amounts to quite a good mass contact, but our job is to fight much harder to make this contact and that of all members far more effective.

The important thing in each of these places where we have the contact is to find the demand that all agree to and act upon it. A really widespread movement of youth must obviously be based on things their minds are fixed upon. We still however tend to put great efforts and money into various campaigns that interest, and activise, only the "upper crust", while the vast majority, unfortunately, don't even know about them.

While at the same time, there has been almost no written propoganda carrying the voice of the League, the leading youth organisation among the youth. And this at a time when the policy of the ruling circles have had devastating effect on the lives of youth. We are taking very determined steps to overcome this, one being issuing a series of leaflets based on the burning problems of young people and each containing a simple, but fundamental education in Political Economy to be distributed very deliberately in these main places and some others.

For the League to build we must actually fight for immediate things the youth need, be it full wages at 18, increased margins, equal pay, tools, overalls, dirt money or issues like Peace, Democracy, or Socialism itself. Our job of course, is not to allow things to stay at the starting point, but to show their connections with the existence of Capitalism and it's inevitable war drive, and show how Soicalism is a superior system.

If we do not have these struggles and conduct only a battle of words for Socialism our success will be very limited, because people learn from life; words assist that process, not replace it. But if we examined which branches of the League were actually organising and struggling for anything I am afraid we would find them still largely talking about struggles, and this during a period when the actual struggles of Australian youth have been increasing. This shows the League at a stage of a Socialist organisation still largely divorced from the mass movement.

We need to base our branches of the League firstly on the big industries, because we still have a long way to go to a position where the bulk of the members of the working class youth organisation are part of the basic sections of the working class. Secondly, on the working class areas. Further we need in each of these places a strong group of relatively mature leaders with experience. To expect branches to be built by teenagers alone is asking too much and ignores the experience of the youth movement the world over. The success of our Mildura Branch, where there is such a group of mature leaders, is not unconnected with it's success.

The approach of leading committees to a branch or members is often with a large number of jobs that need to be done. This needs reversing. The approach should be putting to each branch or member, those things which will advance their mass work and then practical, concrete leadership; not general calling for the fulfillment of these tasks. In the words of Stalin, general leadership is no leadership at all, for it leaves people without practical guidance.

There is an urgent need to improve our ideological work. I have heard of examples of people our painting up "Repeal Crimes Act" without knowing what it really meant. If this educational work is not done even very active people eventually drop out of activity. And the educational role of the League becomes nullified.

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It is also necessary to receive and accept the ideological  
guidance of the C.P. of A. if we are to succeed, but care should  
be taken to maintain the organisational independence and the  
broad, non-Party character of the League.

Marxism-Leninism doesn't mean a narrow, small organisation,  
but in fact, it means the very opposite - it means to be based  
widely and deeply among the working class youth, and winning the  
support of its allies.

The Trade Unions are very important for the League as the  
United, mass organisations that fight for all workers young and  
old, male and female. Our League members need to work in the  
Union of their calling, for this unity, on the principle that all  
workers are brothers - brothers in labor and brothers in destiny.  
Some young workers are misled, but they are not our enemies, they  
are our brothers and we must reach out the hand of friendship to  
them in order to win them away from those who are misleading them.

Some of our Leaguers see a contradiction between internal  
work and mass work. In reality, there should be none. Everything  
we do within the League should be aimed at training and educating  
better mass workers. If it does not do this then it should not  
waste our time. Every new cadre created is a further step towards  
uniting the youth and a blow at their enemies, the warmongers and  
the exploiters. Any activity that extends the number, quality  
and contact of our cadres is a good thing. Anything that detracts  
or diverts us from this is a bad thing. When evaluating our  
activity this must be our measuring stick. We could do all kinds  
of great things, but unless they result in permanent gains they  
are bankrupt and lead to a dead end.

There is an urgent need for widespread, youthful activity  
as a form of organisation for the League, because another example  
of our sectarianism is that we mainly have the meeting form of

activity, and this constitutes a barrier to the development of the young people attracted to the ideas of Socialism. The aim of youthful activity is to get more people to struggle, though in a simpler way. But again, the aim is not to stay at the starting point but to create people who will fight for the cause of the people of Australia with every breath in their body. Some of our cultural workers tend to put the cart before the horse, or to say the League should pay as much attention to the art form as to industry, whereas the real position is that precisely because we want to build up in the industries that art forms are of value. And that is why they need attention. If they do not serve this purpose they are of little value.

Big National and International events are of great value, but again the vast majority are unable to participate and many never know about them. So we obviously need youthful forms of activity in a very widespread and permanent way, daily and weekly, in our organisations so as to get the greatest possible participation with it's resulting advancement of people.

The purpose of this article is to stimulate widespread discussion and discussions that will lead to an improvement in our methods of work and attention to people along these lines then we would not only hope for, but guarantee a considerable extension of unity and the League's influence among Australian young men and women in this our Congress and 100th Anniversary of Eureka Year.

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