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# YOUNG MEN & WOMEN

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# FOREWORD

EVENTS which are taking place in Europe and the Far and Near East are putting momentous questions to our generation. The ruthless march of the dictators against democracy, forces us to answer those questions for the good or ill of ourselves, and those who come after us.

If we do not answer for ourselves, others will give the verdict against us; if we do not decide, others will impose decisions upon us.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to set out the issues facing us and draw the conclusions.

We, who love our country and have a sense of responsibility towards the family of nations, are ready now, not merely to answer, but to act.

Issued by

THE EMERGENCY YOUTH PEACE CAMPAIGN  
15 GROSVENOR CRESCENT  
LONDON S.W.



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## ALL YOUTH SERVE FREEDOM AND BROTHERHOOD

The Scouts say: "A Scout is a brother to every other Scout"; young Catholics and Protestants, all Christian youth say: "We are members one of another." Supporters of the League of Nations, in all parties, speak of the "Community of nations," and young socialists and communists speak of "The international which unites the human race."

We have been brought up to believe this; brotherhood, democracy, Christian fellowship means that we cannot be indifferent when the Austrian Boy Scouts are suppressed and their leaders thrown into concentration camps, when Catholics, Protestants, and Jews are persecuted by Hitler's Stormtroopers, when Chinese universities and schools are the particular objectives of Japanese bombardments.

Not only for conscience sake, but for the safety of our own people and human kind, we must protest against and resist this onslaught on freedom and decency.

## A LETTER FROM GERMANY

Three days before the Munich Conference on September 29th, when Hitler was roaring threats at the Czechs and blackmailing the world, we received this letter from Germany:

"FROM THE DEMOCRATIC YOUTH OF GERMANY TO YOU.

"Dear Friends,—We passionately wish you to understand and beg you to tell the English people and especially all young men that we, the democratic youth of Germany, do not want to invade Czechoslovakia. . . .

"We are as much against this as we believe you are. We are to-day the victims of Hitler, as Czechoslovakia and you will be if he has his way. Please tell this to everyone you meet. . . . Stand firm against Hitler; see that there is no doubt about this before it is too late."

## A LETTER FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

After the Munich settlement which betrayed Czechoslovakia, we received a terrible letter, from a leader of the Czech Youth Movement. It reads:

"The people who forced us into surrender had no ideas of the dangers they were calling to life. Not only national, political, economic, and social disaster for this country, but complete loss of faith in justice which was so essential to our people.

"We were international and tolerant—we are chauvinistic; the Jews were our friends—we are anti-semitic; we have been democrats—most of us are no more. Have you ever seen devotion, admiration, and love changed into contempt and hatred in the course of a few days? It happened here.

"Before, Czechoslovakia was your friend and mighty partner, now, next year, as far as we can see, this army will be on Hitler's side. Without enthusiasm and against its own will, but with all its force of men and material. At that time, you will perhaps say that we have betrayed you.

"But remember the summer of 1938, and think, what can we do without faith, without fortifications, without political and economic independence? We lie helpless in the palm of Hitler. . . . I would like to shout with all my force through all the countries and especially to the young people: Do not think that this is the end, that you are to have peace because millions of people have been sacrificed. Beware, by violation of the weak, a just and lasting peace is not achieved!

**"Be on your guard, never let your watchfulness go. Loss of faith is the worst thing that can happen in one's life. We have gone through it, we know."**

### SO FAR, NO FURTHER

It is now for us to keep faith. When Austria was crushed and invaded by Hitler's forces, the Youth Groups of the League of Nations Union called upon youth organisations to take part in a national Emergency Campaign in defence of peace and freedom.

The Campaign was carried out in a series of great meetings and demonstrations supported by the Young Liberals, members of the Labour League of Youth, the Young Communist League, the Branches of the University League of Nations Society, and the University Labour Federation.

The climax of the Campaign was a national rally in the Empress Stadium, attended by over 15,000 young people.

MANCHURIA 1931. ABYSSINIA 1935. SPAIN 1936. CHINA 1937. AUSTRIA 1938. CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1938. When? Where? Is brutal aggression to be stopped? *It must STOP NOW!*

To this end the Youth Groups of the League of Nations Union convened a Conference of Youth Organisations in London, on October 15th, to consider Foreign Policy, Defence, and National Service.

It was attended by 759 people, of whom 273 were delegates from 26 different organisations. The delegates, whose average age was about 22, came from 31 towns of England and Scotland.

### YOUTH CONFERENCE

CAPTAIN LIDDELL HART, the famous military expert, addressed the opening session on policy and national defence. He reviewed the events leading to Munich, the strategic position of Britain at that time and the grave consequences for our future security following that settlement.

#### Rebuild Collective Security

He stressed the need for bringing together the countries willing to join forces in the defence of law, and suggested that unless there was confidence in such a policy and the honesty of purpose behind it, co-operation of the people was likely to be withheld.

#### Neglect of Defence of London

He revealed the inadequacy of the existing anti-aircraft defence system and the chaos which prevailed when the units were called up. Because of this and other inefficiencies, there was much talk of national service as a remedy for the present situation. He thought it a wrong treatment.

#### Co-operate for Freedom

What was necessary was brains, efficiency, and machines, rather than numbers of men. Captain Liddell Hart then spoke of the challenge which the situation presented to youth. "The keynote of your movement," he said, "should be co-operation with anything that fosters freedom; non-co-operation with anything that fetters it. It is spiritual folly to go totalitarian in an effort to stand against

totalitarianism. It is important to devise a test of sincerity, of belief in freedom.

**There is room to-day for a 'new model' of modern Ironsides—men who make some conscience of what they do.**

Following the Conference the National Campaign Committee issued the statements summarised below.

**NOW IS THE TIME**, in spite of all difficulties which past surrenders have created, to take a stand against aggression.

### **POLICY FOR PEACE**

(1) A demand that immediate measures be taken to enable Czechoslovakia to carry out economic reconstruction on independent lines and ensure the maintenance of democracy among her people.

(2) A declaration that the *KEY TO PEACE NOW* lies in the defeat of aggression in *SPAIN*. Demand :

Effective withdrawal of Italian and German troops and technicians and arms from Spain.

The right of the Spanish Government to buy arms and war materials.

(3) A declaration that immediate steps to initiate conversations between Britain, France, and the Soviet Union and other powers, and an understanding with the U.S.A., are more than ever essential if further aggression is to be prevented.

(4) Support for a World Conference, to bring lawlessness and aggression to an end and examine causes and grievances likely to lead to war and recommend remedies by agreement. In any consideration of the Colonial question, the rights and interests of the Colonial people must be decisive.

### **NATIONAL SERVICE AND THE YOUTH MOVEMENT**

#### **The Right to Decide**

We in the youth movement recognise we have special responsibilities as young people and we wish to fulfil them; but we reject completely the theory that youth must give unquestioning obedience to the state and leaders.

### **We Ask All Young People**

(1) Are you prepared to support any form of national service to reinforce the foreign policy at present pursued?

(2) If we are convinced that the policy is wrong, what is the duty of our organisations whose members want to serve the people and do not want to be negative citizens?

### **This is Our Answer**

We will co-operate with any measure that fosters freedom and oppose any that fetters it. We do not support the Government's policy which dismembered Czechoslovakia and associates our country's policy with that of fascist aggressors. We cannot support compulsory national service which would reinforce this foreign policy. If the Government now advocates national service in order to stand up to Hitler and Mussolini, we answer: "Why have you and do you pursue a policy which will strengthen Hitler and Mussolini and weaken the nations which are our friends—a policy which has already led to a 'total and unmitigated defeat for us?'"

### **Oppose Compulsion**

The Government is introducing a register for national service as a first step to compulsory service, because the Government's policy does not receive the backing of the nation. The Government is therefore driven to other methods, which under these circumstances must involve a drastic curtailment of individual liberty.

Youth cannot blindly fall into line without becoming the dupes of a policy leading to disaster.

### **Defend the People**

(1) The right foreign policy is the best defence of the people. We have outlined the policy for which we would willingly serve.

(2) Defence of the people requires a united nation, an extension of democracy, a strong and healthy youth. Real defence, therefore, also means the right domestic policy in relation to working and living conditions.

(3) We are prepared to give our service to make A.R.P. the best possible defence and to participate and take the initiative in all forms of democratically organised measures to protect the people.

(4) We are ready to do everything that is necessary to make Britain strong in defence of international law. This will never be accomplished while a policy is pursued which sacrifices and demoralises our allies and fetters our liberty. Whatever is necessary to arouse and inspire the youth of this country can be carried out through the machinery of the free youth movement. We are prepared to play our part.

### PLANS FOR THE CAMPAIGN

We call upon all young people to take part in this Campaign. Get in touch immediately with one of the local co-operating organisations. Write for information to : MISS M. ATHERTON, 15 GROSVENOR CRESCENT, LONDON, S.W.1.

The local Campaign will start with :

(1) A request to every local M.P. to attend a meeting of youth of military age to hear their views and answer their questions.

(2) A local conference of all youth to consider "Defence and National Service," if possible under the patronage of the Mayor and Council in the Town Hall.

(3) **National Pilgrimage of Youth.** All this work prepares for a great national Youth Peace Pilgrimage next spring to bring thousands of young people from every county in England, Scotland, and Wales to London, with a message to the Government from the young men and women of military age.

SUCH AN UNPRECEDENTED NATIONAL EXPRESSION OF THE DEMOCRATIC WILL OF THE YOUTH OF BRITAIN IS NEEDED IN THIS SITUATION AND WILL BE MORE NEEDED IN FUTURE MONTHS.

(4) **Spain. The Main Necessity is Food.** Plan in co-operation with the Foodship Committee, 15 Great James Street, London, W.C.1, or with the local Aid Spain Committee

WRITE TO

15 GROSVENOR CRESCENT, LONDON, S.W.1.

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*Published by The Emergency Youth Peace Campaign, 15 Grosvenor Crescent, London, S.W.1, and Printed by Rembrandt Photogravure Limited, London and Watford.*