

HELPER

Monthly for Leaders of Pathfinder, Pioneer, Rainbow Playway,
and Elfin Groups of the Co-operative Youth Movement

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OUR JOB VITAL TO-DAY

DURING the past few weeks there has been a great awakening to the perils confronting youth. A series of deplorable criminal cases have been in the public eye concerning young people. Uttered and written comments have been poured out on the subject, for in nearly every case there has been abundant evidence that neglect in childhood and youth have brought these young people into conflict with the law.

One woman writer has pointed out that children up to 14 and seniors from 18 to old age are regulated and controlled at every turn. Yet young people between the ages of 14 and 18 are at large to do what they like, with weakened parental discipline and temptations of all kinds aggravated by the war. This particular writer urged conscription of these young people.

There is another and better method. They should be linked up with a voluntary youth movement, such as co-operative societies are organising. These youth groups provide an outlet for normal interests—educational and recreational.

It has to be realised that the war has imposed a great strain on social relations. Home life has suffered most. Fathers have been serving away from home, sometimes as long as for five years. Mothers have been obliged to leave the care of children and seek employment. Is it surprising that children, neglected in this way, are inclined to develop anti-social trends?

Even if exception is taken to the interpretations of the figures of juvenile crime, none can fail to admit that the social environment is to-day one fraught with dangers for those of tender years. For every case in which

there are actual court proceedings, there must be many more cases which do not reach such a stage, and cases where children's characters have deteriorated as a result of present-day social conditions. When all is said, young people are only at school for a part of their day. There are holiday periods. They obviously need other healthy interests and outlets for their youthful spirit and energy. It is the job of the Co-operative Youth Movement to provide such things.

The present war has lasted longer than the Great War. It has affected more seriously the lives of practically every citizen at a much earlier period than the last. Five years is a long time in the development of the child.

Leaders of junior groups of the Co-operative Movement should realise that in their service they are performing a real social mission. They are safeguarding the next generation of citizens upon whom great problems will fall. They are helping the children of the men and women who have readily given their effort and labour to preserve world freedom.

Returning warriors and workers will not want to find the children they have thought about and dreamed about during the period of enforced separation grown into dead-end kids.

Realisation of the importance of their work should encourage our leaders to throw themselves into the work they have on hand with renewed energy, vigour, and interest. The simplicity of its character, the facility with which this work can be undertaken, should not lead anyone to minimise the full measure of its value when and where it is done well and efficiently.

FILMS

MOTION PICTURES CAN HELP TO TRAIN YOUNG MINDS

FILM-GOING is one of the most universally popular attractions for young people. This was emphasised by a recent social survey of the recreational preferences for young people. Some children visit the cinemas once or twice a week. Many of them prefer seeing a film to reading a book. The usual counter-attraction of senior sections of the youth movement, dancing, does not compete generally with the attraction of films for junior groups. This state of affairs will probably be brought to light by a personal inquiry by leaders into the film-going habits of members of their groups.

Accepting the facts as they are and their probable continuance under conditions of the immediate and fairly distant future, it is up to leaders to see what good can be derived from the recreational habit of film-going. Up to now little has been done to turn film-going from entertainment into something of educational value. Not much has been done by the schools, and there may well be scope for doing so through co-operative youth organisation.

The Youth Advisory Council, in their report on youth service after the war, state: "As might be expected, the most popular way of spending spare-time is going to the pictures. The cinema's primary attraction for young people is pretty much what it is for their elders—cheapness, warmth, comfort, excitement, adventure, romance. In addition, with the constantly improving standard of films made and a growing discrimination in the taste of audiences, the cinema is playing a greater and greater part in educating the imagination and emotions of young people. There are dangers here, so long as films are made which give distorted pictures of life or are based on false values. But the cinema's potentialities for good are boundless, and we urge that more attention be given, both in school hours and in clubs, by discussion, informed criticism, and planned cinema-going, to the use which can be made of it."

This passage from the report deserves some consideration, and seems to suggest a line of useful activity by junior groups. If schools have lacked giving attention to the matter in the past, certainly they may be more vigilant in the future. The new Education Act provides for the greater use of films in teaching and other visual aids.

SPECIAL SHOWS.

The British Film Institute has recently prepared a series of pamphlets and other literature which should prove invaluable for leaders anxious to pursue the matter.

Obviously some films could play an important part in youth work, where special

In connection with the above article, the following publications of the British Film Institute can be consulted. The Co-operative Union, incidentally, is a member of the Institute:—

FILM APPRECIATION FOR DISCUSSION GROUPS AND SCHOOLS, 6d.

FILMS AND YOUTH ORGANISATIONS, 6d.

THE ELEMENTS OF FILM CRITICISM, 2s. 6d. net.

FILMS SUITABLE FOR YOUTH ORGANISATIONS, 1s. 6d. net.

Copies can be obtained from the British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, London, W.C.1.

demonstrations are arranged by societies, and certainly the larger societies have facilities for showing films. Travel films, films dealing with social history and existing conditions, films dealing with first-aid and hobbies, not to mention co-operative films, could occasionally be shown at joint meetings of groups.

The British Film Institute issues a catalogue of documentaries and other films suitable for showing to youth organisations. In some cases these films are offered free of charge, but in many cases there is a modest fee. The catalogue gives full particulars of the length of these films, terms of renting, and the various sources from which they may be obtained. In the case of small groups, perhaps the films shown might be arranged on the night when parents visit the group.

FILM APPRECIATION.

Special arrangements such as those suggested above cannot, of course, be made in every case, but that is no reason why films should not be used as the basis of youth work. "The general public," states Mr. Ernest Lindgren, "is a barely literate child with a mighty new instrument in its hands. One of the most important tasks facing the educationists is to teach young people to use

this instrument to more valuable ends." He goes on to point out that this is work which must fall partly on teachers concerned with the organisation of out-of-school activities, as it has little chance at present of finding its way into the school curriculum.

This writer has observed the lack of ability to criticise films on the part of cinema-goers. They can only express an ejaculation of like or dislike. "The purpose of film appreciation is to enable them to discriminate the different elements which go to make a film, and which are responsible for its effects, and so make their appreciation articulate."

Some of the suggested lines of film appreciation are mentioned in the British Film Institute literature. For instance, there is the historical approach—the comparison of films made at different periods. This line of approach is obviously not the best suited for young people, who have only a limited acquaintance with films. Work of the different film actors and actresses can be compared, and this is a good way of approach where there is genuine interest in the film stars. Comparisons can be made sometimes between the film version and the stage play, the novel or the history book. Fiction films can also be compared with documentaries.

NEWS ITEMS FROM EVERYWHERE

Despite the flying bombs, Grays Playway and Pioneer groups have managed to maintain contacts. These have, however, been of an unofficial character. There are four Playway groups and three Pioneer groups. The leader of one group arranged a party, another group went to the pantomime, and yet another group which has been doing hand-work at their leader's house, raised £2 by a sale of work. A weekly class for Woodcraft leaders has been held since November.

LONDON kin of the Folk have just held a very successful reunion over Christmas, and the next event on their calendar is the holding of a week-end school at Watford. The school will take the form of an indoor camp, and speakers will be giving talks on "Self Knowledge" and the "Co-operative Settlements in Palestine."

Such comparisons, of course, all lead to thought about the different qualities of films, the underlying art of telling a story by a movie. They lead to inquiry as to the technique of the film. Social aspects of films also provoke thought. Does the film home fit in with the home of members of the group? What are the differences between the American street scene and the market street of the group's own home town? Such discussions sharpen the observation of members. Such keener observation is called for outside the actual meeting of the group, when the children see the films.

Leaders who feel disposed to take up this matter of film appreciation as a group activity should consult the appropriate pamphlets mentioned on page 2. These contain bibliographies and books mentioned should be obtainable from public lending libraries. There seems reasonable ground for thinking that such activities would be appreciated in view of the universality of film-going and the reasonable facilities for most people seeing good films. While these activities would undoubtedly be best appreciated by older groups, there is no reason why even young children should not be given an opportunity to cultivate a better film sense.

The evening is to be spent in a Merrymoot (singing, games, stunts), and also instruction in the teaching of Folk dancing to Pioneers.

Numerous areas report very successful events during the past month. Scunthorpe, Perth, Sheffield, Hayes, Wembley, and Stafford all send details of good sums raised for local funds through the holding of toy bazaars. Birmingham, Brighton, Barrow, and Sheffield also reported well-attended demonstrations and exhibitions.

Birmingham Society's Playways and Pathfinders have their specially printed Progress Books. The cover contains space for the name, address, and birthday of the member, and the name of his group and leader. The inside cover gives the Playways and Pathfinders conditions of membership and promises. Several pages are devoted to a list of tasks, and allow space for personal entries.

A MIME GAME ★ A HELPING

B*Y* introducing the game of "The Little Old Frenchman" to Playway and Pathfinder groups it is possible to give co-operative interest and at the same time to discover the aptitude of young members for dramatic work.

For this game one member of the group in turn comes forward and says, "Once upon a time a little old Frenchman came to this town and wanted to do some shopping. He couldn't speak a word of English, he couldn't draw, and of course, he knew it was rude to point. He went into the

"If Britain can pull through the transitional period after the war in an orderly manner, but with a spirit of high adventure, her reputation will be greater than ever. It is worth striving for. There is a sacred duty resting upon young people to make themselves fit for the tasks of citizenship."

—Mr. Herbert Morrison.

co-operative store to buy something, and he had to show them what it was he wanted to buy, and so he did this . . ."

Here the Playway or Pathfinder group member must mime the actions which the little old Frenchman would employ to indicate the commodity which it was he desired to purchase. Remember that miming is gesture without speech, and no word at all must be spoken by the performer, other than when he comes forward to tell of the little old Frenchman's arrival and entry into the co-operative store.

After a fair number of children have performed, it is comparatively easy for the leader to call a brief halt whilst he or she tells a story of how some of the commodities which have been required by the successive little old Frenchmen are acquired for sale within the co-operative stores. Do not fail to introduce colourful phrases into your stories when telling of how the merchandise is brought across the seas or is produced on British farms and transported to local depots.

G. D. D.



KEEP your copy of the HELPER. Later on you will find reference to its pages most useful.

A HELPING

Much has been said about the benefits of the new Education Act and of the advantages it will confer on the present and rising generation. It should not be forgotten, however, that at present there will be in Pathfinder groups young people who will not enjoy many of the advantages this new measure will provide, and leaders can be of real service to children leaving school at a tender age.

Many of these children will be glad to have some guidance as to their future and such advice may very well be more acceptable from leaders of organisations with which they are voluntarily connected than from parents or teachers.

VOCATIONS.

Leaders may also see a side of a child's character which would not be apparent at school or home. They may see expressions of interest which are not discernible elsewhere. This might be used to help the child's future, which will depend largely on (1) his job, and (2) on his interests outside his job. In both respects leaders can be of help.

RESPECT FOR LABOUR.

Some members of Pathfinders may already have jobs. Leaders should know what these jobs are. Opportunities should be given for them to talk about their working lives to let those who are still at school know what it is like to work for an employer. Respect for labour, whatever pursuit it is, should be cultivated. *Even the humblest job* performed well is important to the welfare of the community.

Clearly all members will not be able to have the best jobs, but whatever job they secure they should be helped to make the best of it or to be on the look-out for better opportunities.

At present many young people are denied the guidance of their parents on such matters on account of wartime conditions.

Thus, help in this direction will be better appreciated now than ever before.

WORK

Those children at work should be made aware of the opportunities of their jobs. They should be advised about evening classes which are provided by the co-operative society, local authorities, or other technical institutions

HAND PLEASE ★ ORGANISING

which will help them in their jobs. Sometimes young people take up any job at first and wish later that they had chosen a different type of work.

There was, for instance, a craze to take up blackcoated work in preference to manual jobs. Many cases could be recalled of young boys who went out in dungarees and who are now people holding highly responsible positions. Many young people love outdoor work, but are prejudiced against it. Those with a bent in this direction could, perhaps, be advised of training courses in agriculture and horticulture.

INTERESTS.

Those children with special talents, such as singing, dramatics, and handicrafts should be watched. These talents may not warrant them developing such activities as careers, but they should be encouraged to develop them as recreational activities. Youth group work will help, but they may be worthy of more advanced courses of training, in which case local facilities should be made known to the members.

For instance, there are times when local repertory theatres require junior players. A note to the manager may well mean that a member will get a chance to play a small part in a local production. This might be the beginning to a theatre career or a useful life-long interest in dramatics.

Members of groups should be encouraged to look for help guidance from the group leader about matters of this kind. This strengthens the social ties of the group, and enhances its prestige in the eyes both of its members and the parents of members.

In this way, too, the group is providing a much needed social service. Furthermore, such advice and interest will help the young people to realise that the influence of the group is not just momentary, for the duration of sessions, but that they are having some protection from the Co-operative Movement in embarking on their careers and their life as grown-ups.

Whether such advice is tendered or not, certainly literature about vocational training, night-classes, etc., should be in the meeting premises, and made accessible to members, even where leaders do not feel competent to tender advice this can be done.

E**V****E****R****E****R****Y** member of Rainbow Playways and Pathfinders should have a membership card which gives full details of membership. These include notes concerning the probationary period.

In the case of the Playways, the promise which has to be learnt and recited, together with the tests which have to be passed are included. Similarly appropriate information is given for the Pathfinders, the difference being that the promise is called the pledge.

Every new member should be given one of these cards so that the boy or girl may have the opportunity of learning the promise or pledge easily, and discover the tests which have to be passed for full membership.

In addition, there are subscription cards, and every member should use one of the national cards.

Every group should have its own registration certificate. Special certificates are issued for Rainbow Playway, Pathfinder, and Woodcraft groups. Registration certificates should be framed and hung on the group's meeting centre.

LEADERS' SUMMER SCHOOLS

DALSTON HALL

Near Carlisle, Cumberland

School for Senior Club Members who wish to become leaders or assistant leaders of Rainbow Playways and Pathfinders—July 28th—August 4th.

School for Leaders of Playways and Pathfinders—August 4th—11th.

Advanced School for Experienced Club Leaders—August 11th—18th.

Leaders' Summer School—August 18th—25th.

School for Senior Club Members who desire to take training to become club leaders and assistant leaders—August 25th—September 1st.

Fee per head is £3 17s. 6d. per week. Application forms will be issued, and only those will be accepted who can fulfil the conditions required for each school, and for whom a deposit has been paid at the time of booking.

Apply to the Registrar, Co-operative Union Ltd., Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester, 4.

POW-WOWS—By KOODOO

A GROUP leader will find that one of the most difficult subjects to tackle in his work with Pioneers and Elfins is that of giving talks or pow-wows, due in the main to the effort required to obtain and hold the interest of the children.

Later it is hoped to write about interesting Pioneers in pow-wows as far as the subject matter is concerned, but I can well give some general experiences here. *Pow-wows must not be treated as an imposition, but as a privilege.*

TASTES DIFFER.

This idea can be fostered easily by perhaps a little mystification to excite curiosity, or by excluding Pioneers who have been lax in discipline or attendance. The headman must never try to force a pow-wow on unwilling ears, or he will spoil it for willing listeners. He must try to make them all willing.

It is an excellent plan to have special pow-wows for specially interested Pioneers, either in a separate room at the group meeting, in the craft-room, or in the headman's home.

Some Pioneers are naturally interested in one sort of thing, others in totally different subjects. In this way, whilst the headman is having to undertake extra work in preparation, the value of the teaching given will repay the effort. The headman can overcome the difficulty of giving old pow-wows to newcomers, and he can broach new subjects with those Pioneers whom he knows will give him a sympathetic hearing.

SHORT TALKS BEST.

Once having gained the reputation for giving interesting pow-wows the headman will have made the Pioneers willing to listen to him. To help this willingness, he must see that his pow-wows are kept short. Twenty minutes is usually the utmost limit of endurance, and best includes the time for discussion.

It is a great asset if the pow-wows are illustrated. The charts already obtainable through Folk sources are, of course, necessary if giving talks on the subjects covered by the charts, i.e., Camp Craft, Map Reading, Direction Finding, First Aid, and Self Knowledge.

HOME-MADE CHARTS.

Where possible leaders should make rough charts for other subjects not covered by the

above, as a chart will give the Pioneers something upon which to focus their attention. It will help them to visualise what the headman is telling them, to keep the thread of the talk clearly in their minds, and it will act as a prompt for questions. The chart will help the headman too, and if the diagrams or pictures are well arranged, he can dispense with notes and just say a little about each illustration in turn.

On the question of preparing your own charts, anyone can draw a few shapes or diagrams sufficiently well to illustrate a talk. Pioneers are not generally very critical on this matter, and they might, indeed, be highly amused. If, however, drawings are quite out of the question, their place may

WOODCRAFT TRAINING CAMP WYRE FOREST

Folk Leaders' Training Course—July 21st–28th.

Folk Leaders' Training Course—July 28th–August 4th.

New Folk Leaders' Training Course—August 4th–11th.

Training and Activity Camp for the 14–15 year old Pioneers and Folk in their teens who wish to become Helpers—August 11th–18th.

Fee per head is £1 10s. per week. An application form will have to be completed and a deposit of 10s. paid before any application can be accepted.

Application Forms are obtainable from the Registrar, Co-operative Union Ltd., Holyoake House, Hanover Street, Manchester, 4.

be taken by pictures in books, suitably interleaved, to ensure quick reference.

ENCOURAGE QUESTIONS.

He need not be put out by questions. In fact, these should be encouraged in the process of giving the pow-wows whilst the question is fresh in the Pioneer's mind.

Questions should be taken as the Pioneers think of them. Except that during a pow-wow they should be restricted to the subjects of the pow-wow, this point about questions applies to all work with Pioneers. Healthy-minded children are usually full of questions. Their parents can rarely satisfy them, and

Our National Organisers

The Co-operative Youth Movement has now a small band of trained organisers to assist societies in developing youth work. It is proposed to let leaders know something about the organisers who are ready to help them.

No. 1.—J. L. WILLSON

IN 1935 the Educational Executive of the Co-operative Union decided to appoint a full-time officer to assist societies in developing co-operative youth work. For many years societies had been performing such work, but the time had come for co-ordinating and extending it. The Co-operative Movement, as often is the case, was thus in advance of many other organisations.

Mr. Willson was appointed the first organiser in January 1936, when the late Professor Hall was advisor of Co-operative Union studies.

Born and educated in Leicester, Mr. Willson went to Durham University. He was bent on becoming a schoolmaster, and took his training certificate and graduated at the University with the degree of M.A.

After teaching in Leicester some years, an urge to specialise possessed him. Child psychology became his special subject,

they are often afraid to ask their teachers. *It is up to the headman of a Woodcraft Fellowship to do his best to answer all the questions his Pioneers may put to him, and to encourage them to ask more.* If he cannot answer directly he must be prepared to look up the answer or help the Pioneer to look it up.

Some of the most important points of Woodcraft instruction can be most effectively tackled in this way, and the Pioneers can come to feel that Woodcraft fills an important gap in their young lives, that it can give not only exercise and self-expression, but can bring them to an ever greater understanding of this mysterious and complicated world. This, after all is said and done, is what the Woodcraft Folk sets out to do for its Pioneers.

and soon he transferred to work in helping problem children for the Leicester Education Authority. He was given special facilities to train children, who through no fault of their own were apt to develop into bad citizens.

Mr. Willson could tell some interesting stories about hopeless cases which he helped to turn from seeming tragedies into successful, happy individuals.

Leicester is not a town blessed with a University, but the facilities of a university are provided through a University College. Mr. Willson was appointed lecturer in psychology at this college. His work made him realise the fruitful possibilities of educational work outside the school.

This led him to the Co-operative Movement, where he has played a remarkable part in the development of youth work, and helping that work to achieve high standards.

He is a member of the Standing Conference of youth organisations, and has brought co-operative youth work to the notice of many national bodies which hitherto ignored the Co-operative Movement. Mr. Willson's personality has won the confidence of the Educational Executive, whose support for his schemes of development has been readily forthcoming. Thus within a comparatively short time remarkable progress has been made by the Co-operative Youth Movement and the successful projects of Tong and Dalston Halls have been launched. Mr. Willson is secretary of Co-operative Centres Ltd.

At college Mr. Willson was a crack oarsman, and he retains his interest in outdoor activities. He has two young boys of his own, so that he is kept well up-to-date with the ways of modern youth.

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In the new handbook of youth organisations Mr. J. L. Willson contributes the section dealing with the Co-operative Youth Movement. The handbook will be of great value to education departments of societies, and leaders will find reference to this work useful, although they will not require to invest in personal copies.

BOOKS TO HELP YOU

THERE can be few leaders who have not felt the need at various times for some stand-by to have on hand for filling in the gaps in their programme.

"My Daily Work," by J. R. Crossland, is a small, cheaply-priced volume which can prove invaluable to leaders, particularly of Rainbow Playway groups. "My Daily Work" contains the story of the way in which persons engaged in various occupations earn their living. Material is interestingly presented, and if the leader was to read one episode a week it would be a useful addition to the programme of any group.

At the close of each working life story suggestions are listed under two headings:—"Things to write about" and "Things to do." Therefore, after reading the story, the leader can change over to a period during which the Playway member can engage, either in written work or in pictorial or model presentation of the subject matter.

This small volume should certainly be valuable to leaders and Playway members alike. (Nelson, 1s. 3d.)

"Dramatised Ballads," by Tobitt and White, is a publication suitable for use with both Rainbow Playway and Pathfinder groups,

and though particularly suitable for Playway groups, it is of value to leaders of Pathfinder groups by reason of illustrating so clearly the means whereby the songs more suited to their age can be adapted for dramatic work with the 11-14 year olds.

This book, which contains the music and dramatised actions of twenty songs, demonstrates the delightful possibilities of the folk ballad for dramatisation. The introduction should be read carefully, and then by the aid of the actions which are clearly shown for each applicable line in the songs, dramatised ballads will be presented which, with words, music, and actions, are harmonious patterns.

Presentation of such ballads does not make the demand of many plays, and children are spared the tedium of learning long parts. The music is simple, yet beautiful and appropriate, and three such ballads, when interspersed with items from individual performers, would provide a programme for public presentation much superior to that so often attempted with pretentious children's plays. (Harrap, 4s. 6d.) G. D. D.

LAST MINUTE LINES

The Ministry of Information is arranging special programmes of films to be shown at the youth summer schools.



The Co-operative College, Manchester, offers a special correspondence course in youth leadership. Leaders will find this course invaluable, and the charge is modest.



"A large number of boys and girls leave elementary and primary schools with the one idea of having enough money for the cinema two or three times a week."



"The empty minds of many grown ups, who seem incapable of amusing themselves when thrown on their own resources—

such as when they were fire-watching—are due to faulty training as children."—Mr. John Garrett, headmaster, Bristol Grammar School.



Children's leisure can easily be over-organised. All we need do, I believe, is to give the children a lead in organising their leisure.—

Miss E. M. Lowe, L.C.C.



The Biggin Hill (South Suburban) Rainbow Playways and Pathfinders held a sale of work recently, and raised £10 1s. 7d. Of this sum, half has been sent to St. Dunstan's, and the other half to Tong Hall in order to purchase some gift for the centre.

Address all Communications to the
National Youth Organiser
Co-operative Union Ltd., Holyoake House
Hanover Street, Manchester, 4