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# Operating a Socialist Sunday School.

by Kenneth Thompson

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Our Lyceum or Sunday School was organized by the Young People's Socialist League Study Class on February 21st, 1909, and has now 29 enrolled members. Mrs. Lucile Kenworthy was elected General Instructor, and proved to be a competent teacher in music as well as lesson work. On the event of Mrs. Kenworthy leaving the state, Mabel Cowdery was elected instructor, and has proven herself to be an efficient and practical teacher by always teaching and pointing out the class struggle, always careful to avoid using such terms as justice, right, etc., so often used by Socialist reformers who don't understand the Socialist philosophy, and do not know what the Socialist movement means. In this way the children are passed over the period of utopianism that so many of us had to, or have to, labor through.

There is a standing committee of 3 members of the Young People's Socialist League — Edwin Goetze, Martin Borveit, and Kenneth Thompson — who held the general instructor to prepare the lessons for each Sunday's work.

We have secured leaflets with lesson work from various publishers, but as yet have failed to find anything suitable for this work, and have so far been dependent on the work prepared by the instructor or the committee. We use Moyer's *Songs of Socialism*, and the children have sung and given a red flag drill at two entertainments given by Branch Oakland.

The children select their own officers. The officers consist of Chairman, Secretary, and Treasurer, and they are given instruction in conduct-

ing business meetings. This is one of the practical lessons that is not taught in any other school for children.

The school is called to order by the Chairman, who calls on the Secretary for the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting. The children are then asked for any suggestions they may have for the school work, and in this way the instructor often gets valuable help. It also makes the children feel that it is their work and they take a greater interest in the school.

The lessons are carefully worked out so that the class struggle is always before the children as the basis of the Socialist philosophy, and without the class struggle we would have no Socialist movement; always careful not to blind their young minds with any false conceptions of "justice, right," etc., other than class justice. We show them that these words are used by reformers, and are meaningless to class conscious Socialists.

The League had a picnic for the school at Piedmont Park in April, and we all had an enjoyable time. Some of us had a lively time caring for the young revolutionists.

At Branch Oakland's annual picnic at East Shore Park, on May 16th, the Branch gave special prizes for races by the Sunday School children. After these were over there were races for all children present.

We have had a prize contest on for regular attendance, also a "World Advertising Receipt" contest, of which the terms and prizes were as follows: "Any boy or girl, a member of the Progres-

sive Lyceum, collecting \$500 worth of advertising receipts before August 29, 1909, the date of our next picnic, will in return have their photograph, with a short article telling of their work, printed in the *World*. In addition to the above, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd prizes, ranging in value from \$1.50 to \$5 will be given to the three who collect the most receipts in the same time." This contest was made possible as a result of the interest taken in this work by the *World* Press Committee. This committee is elected by the Socialist Party of Oakland and assists the editor in conducting the party paper, *The World*.

The Socialist work among children is one of the most important branches of the party work, and should be encouraged in all cities and towns where there is a party organization. We find that the minds of the children are open and they are willing and eager to learn what the Socialist philosophy and movement means. The children of today will be the class conscious voters and industrialists of tomorrow if taught in a Socialist Sunday School, so, comrades, let us see to it that we encourage and help along this important branch of Socialist work.

*Edited by Tim Davenport.*

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