

July, 1935

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**PEACE, FREEDOM
AND PROGRESS**



**DECLARATION *of the* RIGHTS
of AMERICAN YOUTH**

Declaration of Rights of American Youth

ON the Fourth of July one hundred and fifty-nine years ago our forefathers declared their independence from despotic rule in order to realize their inalienable rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Today our lives are threatened by war; our liberties threatened by reactionary legislation; and our right to happiness remains illusory in a world of insecurity.

THEREFORE, on this Fourth day of July, 1935, we, the Young People of America, in Congress assembled, announce our own declaration—"A Declaration of the Rights of American Youth."

We declare that our generation is rightfully entitled to a useful, creative, and happy life, the guarantees of which are: full educational opportunities, steady employment at adequate wages, security in time of need, civil rights and peace.

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO LIFE!

YET we are threatened by wars that are even now being prepared by those who profit by destruction, wars from which we can reap nothing but misery, mutilation and death. We oppose this war and its trappings of militarized youth and mounting armaments. *We do not want to die!* We assert our right to peace and our determination to maintain peace.

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO LIBERTY!

IN song and legend America has been exalted as a land of the free, a haven for the oppressed. Yet on every hand we see this freedom limited or destroyed. Progressive forces are persecuted. Minority nationalities are exposed to arbitrary deportation. The Negro people are subjected to constant abuse, discrimination and lynch laws. Workers who strike for a living wage are met with increasing violence.

These we affirm to be the omens of that modern tyranny, fascism. More brutal, more vicious and reactionary than even that against which our forefathers rebelled in 1776.

We are determined to realize in actuality the ideals of a free America. We demand not only the maintenance but the extension of our elementary rights of free speech, press and assemblage. We oppose company unions and affirm the right of workers to join labor unions of their own choosing in order to advance their economic interests. We consider full academic freedom essential to progress and enlightenment. We strongly oppose Fascism, with its accompanying demagoguery, as a complete negation of our right to liberty.

WE HAVE A RIGHT TO HAPPINESS!

OUR country with its natural resources and mighty industries can more than provide a life of security and comfort for all. But today we are not provided with this security, are not permitted to enjoy its comforts. We want to work, to produce, to build, but millions of us

are forced to be idle. We graduate from schools and colleges, equipped for careers and professions, but there are no jobs. You can find us along the highways, or in Army-supervised Camps, isolated from friends and family. *We refuse to be the lost generation.*

WE urge a system of unemployment and social insurance as an immediate improvement in the condition of unemployed youth and we affirm our right to be employed on all relief projects at equal wages for equal work.

We who are employed express our dissatisfaction with the prevailing low wages, long hours and the intense speed-up which destroys health and stunts our development. We insist upon our right to higher wages and shorter hours.

For the youth on the farms, the right to work means the right to security in the possession of their farms, free from the burden of debts. We stand unalterably opposed to any program which destroys crops and livestock while millions remain unfed and undernourished.

While we proclaim the right to work for ourselves, we also proclaim the right of freedom from toil for all children for whom labor can only mean physical and mental harm. We therefore demand the abolition of child labor with full and adequate maintenance for needy children.

OUR right to work includes the right of proper preparation for work. Education must be available to everyone without discrimination, poor as well as rich, Negroes as well as white, through free scholarships and government aid to needy students. Our educational system should provide for vocational training at adequate wages, under trade union supervision.

We declare that the workers of hand and brain, the producers of our wealth, the builders of our country are the decisive force with which all true friends of peace, freedom and progress must ally themselves. We recognize that we young people do not constitute a separate social group, but that our problems and aspirations are intimately bound up with those of all the people.

We look at this country of ours. We love it dearly; we are its flesh and marrow. We have roamed its roads; we have camped in its mountains and forests; we have smelled its rich earth; we have tended its fields and dug its earthly treasures. We have toiled in it. Because we know it so well, we know that it could be a haven of peace, security and abundance for all. Because we love it so dearly, we demand that it be turned over to the working and farming people of America.

THEREFORE, we, the young people of America, reaffirm our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. With confidence we look forward to a better life, a larger liberty and freedom. To those ends we dedicate our lives, our intelligence and our unified strength.

AMERICAN YOUTH CONGRESS.

THIS Declaration of Rights of American Youth was adopted by the historic Second American Youth Congress at Detroit, Michigan July 4-7, 1935, by 1,205 delegates from 853 organizations representing 1,350,000 American youth. It is the product of the American Youth Congress but it belongs to the youth of America wherever they assemble, whether it be on the farm, in factory, trade union, church, Y's, school, professional, fraternal, language or social groups. Your organization is cordially invited to fill out the blank below and mail your endorsement to the American Youth Congress.

This movement of young people, realizing that they do not constitute a separate social force, but knowing that youth have special problems of their own that must be brought forward, was set up in August 1934, at New York University, New York City. The Youth Congress is an attempt to unite the youth of America on some common problems for the common good of all. It does not endorse any political party, creed or group and is non-sectarian in all its activities.

For more copies of this Declaration of Rights of American Youth or additional information concerning affiliation to the American Youth Congress you are requested to write the National Council of the American Youth Congress at 112 East 19th St., New York City.

ENDORSEMENT BLANK

I [We] hereby
Name of Organization

endorse the Declaration of Rights of American Youth as passed by the Second American Youth Congress at Detroit, Michigan July 4 to 7th, 1935.

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Secretary of Organization or Name

.....
City

.....
Address

.....
Number of Members

.....
Place of Meeting

I [We] want more information about the American Youth Congress. Yes..... No.....