

KEEP LEFT

ORGAN OF THE WEMBLEY LABOUR LEAGUES
OF YOUTH

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EDITORIAL

Since Keep Left last appeared there have been a number of developments well worth further study. The position of the privileged classes in the Near East has been seriously threatened, notable examples being Egypt and Persia. Of course, neither Neguib or Mossadeq are the saviours of their impoverished peoples, but they have realised that unless they do something to improve the position of their masses they too will be swept out of power.

In South Africa the coloured peoples' civil disobedience campaign gathers strength. Events may reach a climax sooner than many think, or would like. The repressive, Fascist methods Dr. Malan has adopted will not preserve Imperialism or the subjection of the native population.

The strikes and demonstrations by Belgian conscripts against the extension of their military service has obviously worried N.A.T.O. officials. Despite the incessant war propaganda of the Western capitalists, the peoples of Europe are not impressed. A point that certain sections of the Labour movement here would do well to note was that large sections of Belgian industrial workers struck in sympathy with their conscripted comrades.

The most important development at home is the Trade Unions' determination to press their wage claims. Both prices and profits have increased considerably in the first six months of this year,
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While wages have remained almost static. To this we must add the Tory Government's attack on the social services. Do the Tories still seriously believe that the workers are willing to accept lower living standards in order to prop up the tottering capitalist economy?

Even Mr. Churchill has had to bow to the inevitable and decided upon a "re-adjustment" of our arms programme. Another secret Bevanite?

IN RED VIENNA

At the beginning of July nearly thirty thousand young socialists from twenty-six countries gathered in the Hürndlwald just outside Vienna. This was the 1952 international camp organised by the International Union of Socialist Youth (pronounced 'Yoosey')

The campers lived in "tent-towns", each named after a famous leader of international Socialism. Organisation was in the hands of a camp Parliament, elected by the "towns", and the Parliament Bürgermeister Nathaniel Welbeck, Organiser of the Gold Coast Convention Peoples' Party.

The Africans and Indians were undoubtedly the stars of the camp, and were constantly surrounded by hundreds of continental comrades begging for autographs and snapshots.

We were visited by President Körner, head of the Austrian Republic, and talks were given by Harold Wilson, Andre Philipe, Finn Moe (Norway) and Erich Ohlenhauer (Germany).

Language, of course, was one of the main difficulties. Announcements on the loudspeaker system often had to be repeated in ten languages. Despite the presence of some active Esperantists, conversation was usually carried on in a mixture of pidgin English and semaphore. With the addition of two words of German, this was sufficient for most purposes. 'Freundschaft' (Friendship), is the greeting used by Austrian and German Socialists and was adopted by everyone else; 'bitte' seems to mean 'please', 'don't mention it', 'I beg your pardon', 'excuse me' and practically anything else according to context.

Besides the discussion meetings, many other activities were organised, including sports competitions (an Austrian team won the soccer championship), concerts, and tours of the city. These were both to 'Old Vienna', with its churches and cathedrals, and to 'New Vienna', the schools, kindergartens and workers' flats built by the Socialist administration of the city.

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RITA'S COLUMN.

Well Readers after a well-earned rest from us, we are back again, which means the resumption of Keep Left Editorial Board meetings and how we have missed them, those pleasant evenings spent with good friends, good food and good intellectual conversation - don't you believe it, it's pure bedlam. These Editorial Board meetings seem to get worse if that is at all possible. Everyone at the meeting seems determined to speak at once and on practically any subject. How anyone can call it a Keep Left Editorial Board Meeting nobody knows. Someone with a conscience usually tries to bring the meeting round to its original purpose but most attempts meet without success and we continue to hear of Aunt Fanny's cardigan and occasionally a male voice pipes in with news of the latest cricket score, jet planes and what have you. How the magazine (if it can be termed as such) ever gets printed and further still actually reaches you is an even deeper mystery. Sometimes however, we do get our heads down and this is the case in our October issue, so be sure not to miss your copy. Place your order now and take the opportunity of reading this magazine which is crammed full with viewpoints and talking of viewpoints please don't forget that we're always interested in yours. We cannot unfortunately pay you a guinea for each one published but who wants a guinea. I can well imagine your views on that.....

Our dear friend Sylvia might not have very many ideas, which is just as well, but when she does get one it certainly makes up for an awful lot. When making out the programme for the Summer someone suggested having a ramble. Strange though it may seem Sylvia actually wanted to go. But this was not to be an ordinary ramble or should I say 'rabble'. Leagues all around were contacted and we were very pleased to meet friends from St. Albans, Marlow and Wickham and getting nearer home, Hendon. Chorley Woods was the place chosen. All went well but the party got split up as is often the case and some decided to take the walk through the wood and others the easier, though not as interesting, walk along the road. Needless to say those walking through the wood arrived very late at the tea rooms breathless, dishevelled but full of the wonderful time they had had. We bet they did?! Everyone thoroughly enjoyed themselves despite the usual Bank holiday weather.

As nobody seems to be getting engaged, Pat and John Martin decided to do something about giving this column something to write about. Yes, there will be an addition to the Martin family in November. Just think our first Keep Left baby. This will certainly start us all knitting.

In Red Vienna (ctd. from Page 2)

For me, the highlight of our stay was the torchlight demonstration, in which fifty thousand Socialist marched through the centre of Vienna, while many more looked on.

I shall always look back with pleasure on the Vienna camp. It gave me the chance to make some new friends to exchange views with comrades from other lands and to eat Wiener Schnitzel.

Cyril Smith

THE MARTYRS OF TOLPUDDLE

In 1831 the agricultural workers in the little Dorset village of Tolpuddle were living on 9/- a week - one shilling a week less than the average for the county. At that time tea was 6/-d per pound, sugar 6d to 8d per pound, and candles (the only form of light) 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d for eight.

George Loveless, one of the workers and a Methodist Lay Preacher, brought his fellow workers together and approached the Vicar of Tolpuddle, Dr. Warren, asking him to arrange a meeting between themselves and their employers.. He did so. At the meeting the Vicar said "I am witness between you men and your masters that if you go quietly about your work, you shall receive for your labour as much as any man in the district, and if your masters should attempt to run from their word I will undertake to see you righted. So help me God".

It was with a shock that the men subsequently learned that Dr. Warren completely denied having made such a promise. The employers had been told that they need not pay more than they wish. They then reduced wages to 7/- per week, and threatened to reduce them to 6/- per week. It was then that the workers started to combine. George Loveless was foremost in everything concerned with the life of this small community - he was looked upon as their leader - and it was to him that the people looked for advice and guidance. He did not fail them. He had read about Trade Unions in London, and the North of England, so why not Tolpuddle? In October 1833, with the help of two delegates from London, the "Friendly Society of Agricultural Labourers" was established at Tolpuddle. Meetings were held at the home of Thomas Stanfield. Trades Unionism had come to Tolpuddle.

On December 9th 1833 a labourer named Edward Legg attended the meeting and asked to be initiated into membership. He was sworn into membership with the usual solemn ritual, in the same manner used by Friendly Societies and Freemasons. There was nothing improper about the ceremony. After the meeting Legg informed his
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employers of all that happened at the meeting. On the morning of February 24th 1834 George Loveless and five others were arrested on a charge of administering an unlawful oath. They were forced to walk for six miles in pouring rain to Dorchester Jail, where they were put into convict clothes, their heads shaved, and forced to sleep on a pile of straw on a stone floor.

In prison the Chaplain informed them, that if they did but know it, they were much better off on 7/-d per week than their employers whom they proposed to ruin by asking for a rise in wages.

They were charged under an Act of 1717, which was passed to put down mutineers in the Navy. It only took the Jury 20 minutes to find them Guilty. On Monday, March 19th, 1834, James Loveless, George Loveless, Thomas Brine, John Stanfield, Thomas Stanfield, and James Hammett were sentenced to seven years transportation. Within three weeks they were on their way to Botony Bay.

George Loveless was not in a fit condition to travel with the others so he was sent to Australia later. Never were they free from the chain between ankle and waist, which was one of the badges of their state and which clanked and rattled at every moment. Their bodies, their clothes, their beds, the very walls of the prison ship were infested with vermin. Punishments were frequent and arbitrary, ranging from a reduction of rations or an increase in the weight of the irons, to a flogging of unspeakable severity.

The journey took 111 days.

The story of their hardships in Australia would take too long to tell in "Keep Left", so I must leave you to imagine (if you possibly can) the life these gallant men led in Australia, working in chain gangs for long hours, no pay, wet, dirty; living under the worst possible conditions - all because they dared to form a Trade Union.

Meanwhile at home there was great agitation for their release.

The Grand National Consolidated Trade Union felt that its own existence was at stake. It concentrated the whole of its force organising meetings and petitions of protest. It quickly established contact with the principal Unions in the North, who collaborated in the agitation. Petitions poured into the House of Commons, presented in many cases by people who expressly disclaimed that they were supporters of Trade Unions, but who were, none the less, revolted by the vindictive character of the sentence.

The Grand National Trade Union called a Grand Meeting of the Working Class on March 24th 1834. This meeting, attended by over 10,000 people, passed a resolution - moved by Robert Owen - protesting against the trial and cruel sentence.

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A petition was agreed at this meeting asking the King to suspend the sentence, it also asked that a Parliamentary Committee be set up to examine the principles and objectives of the Unions. William Corbett presented this petition to Parliament, but it was ordered to lie on the table.

Protest meetings were held all over the country, money came from various Trade Unions already in existence.

Steadily, but surely, this agitation reflected itself more and more in the changed attitude on the part of Members who had hitherto been hostile to the demand for release. Mr. Hardy (Bradford) who on March 26th called Trade Unions a curse by April 14th had so changed his views that he could see no objection to Workmen entering into combinations to bettering their conditions. This was typical of the changed tone Members were adopting.

J.A. Roebuck M.P. speaking as a Lawyer contended that the men were not only morally, but legally innocent. Joseph Hume announced in the House that over 800,000 people had signed petitions for release. Thomas Wakely, the Member for Finsbury, recently elected, presented the petitions.

Wakely presented a motion to the House for a free pardon, but Lord John Russell (Home Sec) opposed and the motion was lost (308 - 82 votes), but a first move had been made.

A conditional pardon was offered for James Hammett, John and Thomas Standfield, and James Bryn, after they had been overseas for two years. George and James Loveless were regarded as ringleaders and were not to be allowed to return to England. On March 14th 1836 after Wakely had presented several more petitions to the House - Lord John Russell stated that His Majesty had been pleased to grant a free pardon to all the men.

The news was immediately communicated to the wives and families of the six absent ones, but a long time was to elapse before their loved ones were to return again to Tolpuddle.

Gordon Poyner

Wembley South L.L.O.Y

DON'T FORGET THE WEMBLEY SOUTH'S GREAT DAY AT BARHAM PARK ON SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 13th at 2.0 p.m. (under cover if wet)

There will be no October Keep Left, but instead the Editorial Board are proud to announce that they will publish a special PAMPHLET

Publisher & Editor - Miss C. Morris, 53 Ormesby Way, Kenton, Harrow
All articles are the personal opinions of the writers and not necessarily of the Editorial Board.