

KEEP LEFT

★ A Paper for Socialist Youth ★



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EDITORIAL

We extend fraternal and comradely greetings to the young Scandinavian Socialists now camping at Stubbers Park in Essex. We hope you enjoy your stay in this country and learn something of the British working class through meeting young members of the Labour Party and trade unions.

Unlike the Swedish Democratic Youth we have no mass Socialist youth movement in Britain. The local branches of the national Labour Party are encouraged to have "Youth Sections". These Sections have a low membership and are not allowed to link up regionally or nationally. "Keep Left" looks forward to the time when we, too have a strong national Labour youth movement.

We believe that the future of the human race will be decided by the world working class. In their hands alone rests the power to stop the manufacture of the H-bomb, to free the colonial peoples, and to give a high standard of living to everyone - from the old age pensioner to the Polish peasant. The fight against the H-bomb and colonialism is inseparable from our fight for Socialism, as war and colonies are necessary in the functioning of capitalism.

In this struggle we think the youth have an important part to play. Over the past year, internationally the youth have shown where their future lies. We have seen how the youth of Hungary were prepared to die to achieve national liberation and the right to build real Socialism with workers control. In Britain over Suez, and now in France over Algeria, students have come out on the streets to show their opposition to war. In Poland and the U.S.S.R. again it is the youth who have been in the forefront. In the colonies too, the youth show the way. The courage of the Cypriot youth in their struggles for national freedom matches that of the Hungarians.

"Keep Left" believes in internationalism. We support the opposition of people everywhere to oppression and exploitation and welcome the forging of strong links between the Labour movements of all countries. We hope the visit of the young Scandinavians will result in firm ties between the Socialist youth of Britain, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

CHALLENGE TO COMMUNISTS

Do you remember "Socialist Advance"? Do you remember how left wingers in the old L.O.Y. persistently slated it for having too little politics, and that little for being milk and water, party line stuff? Do you remember how we told Transport House that articles on sport, jazz and knitting while being all very well in their way were worse than useless if they dominated what was supposed to be a paper for Socialist youth? And do you remember how "Socialist Advance" was quietly folded up?

Well, if you are old enough to recall this, take a look at the June issue of "Challenge", paper of the Young Communist League. You will see a publication next to which the late lamented "Advance" reads like selections from the works of Lenin. To call its political level dismal would be the sheerest flattery.

The Labour Movement is experiencing a ferment of discussion. The Communist Party is in the middle of a crisis. On one important issue, conscription, the Party and the League hold opposing views. And King Street (the C.P.'s Transport House)'s contribution to working class youth is - a skiffle competition! Indeed there appears to be a Kremlin directed campaign in progress for the skiffing of the masses! This particular form of culture crops up on no less than 7 of the paper's 12 pages. Besides the musical bias, two pages of sport, and a charming picture of a young lady Bolshevik in a swinsuit, there is a little space devoted to political matter. The centre spread about the problems of young miners is I suppose a try, and no doubt the H-bomb deserves the column inches given to it, (even if the policy is hardly adequate!) - but that's about the lot.

Why is newsprint wasted in this way? Why is "Challenge" together with the Y.C.L. vanishing so clearly and tragically down the drain? The answer, I think, is to be found in the politics of Stalinism. Just as the right wing of the Labour movement cannot hope to rally young people around it (who wants to fight for a programme which would turn the Labour movement into a firm of stock-brokers?) so King Street crushes the enthusiasm which even the enemies of the Y.C.L. see in many of its members. Disgusted by Hungary, young Communists refuse to be strapped in a Stalinist mental straightjacket.

It is not too late for Y.C.L.ers to save "Challenge" from the dust-bin but they can only do it by organising politically against the leadership, by fighting for Socialist principles. Young members of the Labour Party, while not forgetting that their main job is to set their own house in order, must do all they can to help.

UNA MOUNT-STEPHEN
Westminster C.L.P.

Do you agree?

If not, let us have an article of 300-400 words by the 15th July, for publication in the August issue.

Continuing our series "SPOTLIGHT" this month's choice is

NORTH HENDON YOUTH SECTION

The North Hendon Youth Section, co-sponsors of "KEEP LEFT" is a very politically active group. Members spend a large amount of their time each week on different activities in connection with local political work. Membership is not high - there are about thirty members on the books. These members were not gained by "Youth Club type" activities but by a steadfast policy of active participation and study of politics.

The programme of this Youth Section is carefully planned. Meetings are held once a week (on rather cramped premises) and for three weeks of the month the programme is 100% political. The remaining spot is reserved for a regular cultural evening and each month a speaker is invited to talk on a different subject. Past subjects have included modern art, classical music, and jazz. As regards the political programme, the policy is to have one invited speaker per month, and in the other two meetings we have either a Y.S. member address the group, or a general discussion. This encouragement of active participation in speaking amongst the members has a definite place in the policy of the Youth Section and is beginning to pay dividends. In an increased confidence in speaking and a readiness to spark discussion. Another method of giving confidence in speaking was a series of Hat Debates giving members a wide range of subjects on which to speak and encouraging a quick mental assembly of ideas.

The most immediate problem facing the Youth Section is the need to increase membership and we are finding great barriers in the apathy that is general throughout the country. Gradually, however, canvassing campaigns are increasing the fold and once these new recruits are consolidated with the group our scope will be enlarged still further. Apart from the normal day to day Party work, members have found time to attend study groups on Socialist theory, and these, together with reading, have done a good job in grounding many members' in the basics of Socialism; a very important factor when there are so many anti-progressive ideas from both main political fronts!

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"DEAR READER

Six and a half years ago a few young Socialists in Wembley got together and decided that the best way to stimulate discussion on political issues was to print their ideas in a news sheet. A few dozen copies of this news sheet was sold only within the Wards of the two constituencies. From this minor beginning, "KEEP LEFT" has grown into a national paper for Socialist youth with sales practically from Lands End to John O'Groats. In the past few months alone the sales of "KEEP LEFT" have doubled over last year's figures. And we have great

hopes that in the next few months sales will be trebled and that it will be printed in newspaper form before very long.

With this in mind, a few months ago we started an expansion fund which has been quite successful. We have had contributions from Streatham Y.S., Devonport Y.S., East Leeds Y.S., Frank Allaun, M.P., and Comrades Colin Henry, John Kennedy, Alan Stanley, Andrew Cameron, Pauline Marshal, and Len Bishop. Very many thanks to those youth sections and readers for their help in this matter. If we are to further increase the size of our paper, still more help is needed. You can help by sending your donation - however large or small - to the address on Page 10.

With the June issue of "KEEP LEFT" we produced a Welsh edition of our paper. This was distributed to most of the Welsh Youth Sections. Next month we will be including a special page of Scottish news in all copies. If there are any Scottish or Welsh comrades in any other Youth Sections who would like to keep up to date on their home news, copies of these special editions can be obtained regularly by writing to the Editor.

To continue to have a national interest we would appreciate receiving news and views from many other Youth Sections. We are always pleased to hear of your activities which will be "Spotlighted" in future issues. Further, we like to have criticisms - whether favourable or not! - on the content of "KEEP LEFT" as only in this way can we print what YOU - the reader - wants.

BERTHA NEWBERY
Editorial Board

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"WHAT IS SOCIALISM?" - (7) What went wrong in Russia?

The Russian Revolution of October 1917 was the start of a world wide movement for the overthrow of capitalism. Millions of working men and women, tired of the war, looked with hope towards the young Soviet Republic. There the Russian workers struggled to hold on to political power, against the efforts of the old land-owners and capitalists backed by world imperialism.

The right-wing labour leaders, having betrayed the movement in 1914 by supporting the imperialis blood-bath, proceeded after 1918 to help the ruling class to retain power. Meanwhile, under the inspiration of the Russian Revolution, left-wingers came together to form the Third, Communist, International.

The workers of the western countries and the colonial masses, even those who still followed the old right-wing, rallied to support the Soviets. The capitalist powers who sent

armies into Russia in the long wars of intervention, were forced to retreat. In Britain, the 'Hands Off Russia' movement of 1920 was as powerful as the recent anti-Suez demonstrations.

But although the international working class was able to stop the crushing of the first workers' state, it was not yet sufficiently organised to end the rule of capitalism in the other countries. The Revolution was left isolated in backward Russia. There, the tiny working class, leading the mass of poor peasants grappled with immense economic and social problems. As a result, there gradually grew up a bureaucratic caste, separated from the workers, interested in holding on to and expanding its own power and privilege, and consequently not interested in building an international Socialist order in which they would lose their positions. This group, which bears many resemblances in its political outlook to the right-wing leaders, turned the Communist International into an instrument of Kremlin foreign policy, in which the interests of international socialism were subordinated to the needs of the ruling group in Russia.

This degeneration led to the defeats and betrayals of the 1920's and 30's, culminating in the rise of Hitler to power, the victory of Fascism in Spain and the war of 1939. The land of Soviet democracy became the home of the secret police, of fake trials, of the execution of thousands of loyal fighters for the socialist cause. Lenin's Russia became Stalin's.

But despite the power of the bureaucracy, despite the destruction of workers democracy, the industry of the U.S.S.R. was nationalised, the economy planned. Despite Stalin, production in Russia rose at a tremendous speed. The tiny handful of industrial workers grew into an army 40 million strong. And despite the degeneration of the commintern, despite the diplomatic horse-trading, the workers' movements, especially the colonial revolution have grown stronger and the stanglehold of capitalism weaker. That is why the workers of Russia, China, and Eastern Europe prepared today to cut out bureaucratic cancer and return to the path opened up in October 1917. Hungary and Poland are just the start of this process.

This sketchy bit of history is intended to show that the main task for the working class is the same as it was in 1914: to build a leadership and an organisation capable of smashing capitalism. The solution to this problem lies in a hard struggle for correct ideas and an even harder one to apply them in day to day work. A careful study of the history and theory of our movement has to be combined with vigorous political and industrial activity.

On this work hangs the future of the human race, for it will decide whether we go backwards to barbarism or forward to a Socialist future. Most of the series has been taken up with discussing how we shall end capitalism. The concluding articles will take up some of the problems to be faced in the construction of the Socialist order.

CYRIL SMITH
Wembley South C.L.P.

LABOUR AND THE H-BOMB

The Tory Government has now presented us with a bigger and better war weapon - the H-Bomb. What's more, they tell us very proudly that this has a destructive ability and an explosion equal to, if not greater than any produced by friend or foe. The British working class can be proud that "we" are the possessors of such a powerful "deterrent" which enables "us" to be a "great" nation in the disarmament talks!

It is easy to understand why the Tory Government is so adamant in its plans to produce and test the H-Bomb. It represents a class which is fighting with its back against the wall. On the one hand the capitalist class is faced with an economic crisis - losing the battle of the export market to Germany, Japan, and the U.S.A., and losing its sources of cheap materials to the Colonial Revolution. On the other hand, together with the other capitalist powers they are no longer in a position to exploit the U.S.S.R., China, and the Eastern European countries where the capitalist class has already been destroyed and their workers' states threaten the West as an alternative system.

In this situation the Tories are driven to desperate measures and are playing a game of give and take with the lives of millions.

What of the British Labour Movement? First we have the Communist Party which refuses to call upon the Soviet Union to give a lead to the world working class and cease production of the H-Bomb; then we have the Labour Party Bureaucrats who refuse to give a lead in a campaign against the tests. Both have illusions in summit talks and bargains made between leaders of the ruling class of the various countries - both have no confidence in the working class to intervene against the bomb.

The fight against the H-Bomb is part of the struggle for Socialism. The capitalist class will never cease manufacturing weapons of war - whether they be nuclear or conventional. Only a Labour Government with a Socialist policy can solve the present crisis. We must call, through our Youth Sections, Parties and Trade Unions for mass demonstrations against the British H-Bomb tests - the Labour Movement must show its strength in an all out campaign against the Tories.

DOT MOULDER
Streatham Youth Section

Views expressed in signed articles are the opinions of the author only and do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Board

OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL:

During the last few weeks, several prominent Labour M.P.s. have stated their opposition to any further nationalisation by a future Labour Government. Their line of reasoning goes as follows:-

That industries should not be nationalised for simply "doctrinaire" reasons. That some industries that have become monopolies will have to be nationalised but that of the remainder only those which it would be to the people's benefit to own should be taken over. One of these "new thinkers" Mr. Richard Stokes, wants the wording of the Labour Party constitution altered from "the ownership and control of the means of production, distribution and exchange" to read "the ownership or control". This last idea means that if the majority of shares in a concern are owned by a Labour Government, then that is sufficient. Our leader Mr. Gaitskell is known to share these views, and no doubt so do many other Labour M.P.s.

Now to me, a Marxist, this is a fundamental question, one that goes right to the roots of Socialist teachings. I suppose that most of the rank-and-file members of the Labour Party who reason this way, and many do, have the nationalisation record of the 1945-51 Labour Government before them.

I agree that the few industries nationalised then are still not working as well as we hoped and all that seemed to happen was a change of bosses. It stands to reason that to try to modernise an industry or service, and pay a crippling burden of compensation as well is impossible if the idea is to make the concern pay its way. The workers are right in complaining that they have no say in the running of these industries. Anyone who works in a factory will know that quite a few good ideas could come from the factory floor, if they were encouraged. Look at the people who now run these industries. Retired Generals, some right-wing trade union leaders and believe it or not, some former owners. Hardly people dedicated to make Socialism work; in fact they are liable to obstruct it.

Socialism means to me the ending of capitalism and production for private profit. It means the introduction of a planned economy with all large concerns nationalised and running for the common good. It means workers' control, with representatives of the factories on the management boards. It means taking over concerns such as I.C.I., Unilevers, and Fords and using their immense resources to finance new railways, roads, power stations, schools, hospitals and a thousand other important things. This is a very rich country and we could all benefit from it.

Take for instance the motor industry. B.M.C., Fords and the Rover Group each turn out practically the same range of vehicles. If these firms were publicly owned, one range of vehicles could be made with the best features of all the rest retained, of course, and we could dispense with the cut-throat competition between firms

which exists today. We could cut production costs enormously, and bring new cars within the reach of the working class. That is just one example; you can all think of many more where Socialist planning, controlled by the workers could cut out waste of money, materials and labour, so bringing down the price, and the cost of living.

I am sure that if the Labour Party explained the benefits of public ownership to the people and admitted their past mistakes explaining how things could be cheap and plentiful, the whole working class would rally to the Labour Party. Then there would be no need to worry about watering down our policy in order to get middle class votes. The opportunity is there, so we on the left, must keep pressing for a clear-cut nationalisation policy from the N.E.C.; one that repudiates the ideas of the "new thinkers" - that ends the people's fear of redundancy and short time, and brings security and plenty for all.

George Andrews
HENDON NORTH YOUTH SECTION

SUPPORT THE RALLY!

We urge all our readers, all Youth Sections, and all young members of the Labour Party to attend the National Labour Youth Rally on Saturday, July 13th. Get out your banners, make posters AND TURN UP IN FULL STRENGTH at the Parade Ground, Hyde Park at 3 p.m.

Here's a chance to show the strength of the Labour youth. Here's our chance to demonstrate our opposition to Tory policies. This Rally will be attended by several hundred young Scandinavian Socialists who will bring their banners. Let our slogans be

YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM!

KICK THE TORIES OUT!

Following the Rally, "Keep Left" has organised a Social for the evening. We hope many of the Labour youth will attend. It will be held at Seymour Hall, Seymour Place, at 7.30 p.m. The nearest tube station is St. Marylebone.

The George Perry Jazz band from Ilford will be playing, and also a skiffle group will be entertaining you. Tickets are 2/- each and should be ordered at once from "K.L." at the address on the back page. Tickets will also be available at the door.

At a meeting of Scottish Youth Sections recently, the possibility of attending the Rally was discussed. One Section had been informed by Regional Office that the cost of a coach would be prohibitive. The Scottish Sections say "We regret that we cannot attend this very important demonstration, but through these columns wish to extend fraternal greetings to all our comrades who are attending the Rally and hope that it will prove to be a landmark in the organisation of YOUTH FOR SOCIALISM".

News from our readers

A TRIUMPH OF YOUTH

The above was the heading which appeared in the local paper at Watford following the results of the recent council elections. It referred to the magnificent performance of the Watford Youth Section, formed just six months ago and only ten in number, in converting a Conservative majority of 190 into a Labour majority of 55 in a ward which had never before returned a Labour Councillor. The paper went on to call this achievement the "coup of the century", made even greater by the fact that this gain gave the Labour Group control on the Borough Council.

The Section took over the ward three weeks before the election canvassed it thoroughly and then, on the day, using the "Reading System" they carried all before them. By mid-evening, the Tories realised the danger and flooded the ward with cars. It is estimated that both parties had eight cars in action and the polling stations were a hive of activity. From nine o'clock to eleven o'clock in the evening there was much nail-chewing and many cigarettes were smoked until the results were announced.

The opinions of the Youth Section members can be expressed thus:- "The result justified the effort". Forward with Youth!

A SMACK IN THE EYE FOR THE TORIES!

A member of the Luton Youth Section, David Harrowell, was elected Labour Councillor for the Stopsley Ward of that Constituency in the recent local government elections. His majority was 506 over his opponent, Mrs. B. Camp (Lib.-Con) who obtained 3,134 votes. Another Youth Section candidate, Mr. Lee was very narrowly defeated.

The local paper reported David Harrowell as saying, when the result was announced, "Well, this is a smack in the eye for the Tory Party, and that's no mistake. I would like to thank the electorate of Stopsley for this magnificent victory and also for the help I was given".

EMPHASIS ON YOUTH

Streatham Youth Section are concentrating on youth and its problems as the theme for its current programme. In June, Bill Court, of the draughtsmen's union spoke on "Youth in Industry" at the Office". During July, Hugh Jenkins, assistant secretary of the actors' union, Equity, will be speaking on the work of his organisation. Alan Williams will be discussing recruitment with the Streatham Section on July 8th. At the end of July the representative of the L.P.'s International Department will give a talk entitled "Youth and Suez". Hikes and outings to theatres are also planned.

News from our Readers

ELECTRICIANS IN CONFERENCE

The Annual Policy Conference of the Electrical Trades Union at Folkestone mainly attracted the attention of the press as a result of the defeat of the Executive Council on its support of the Russian intervention in Hungary, but another item which will interest readers of "K.L." was the fraternal speech on behalf of the Youth delegates.

It is not generally known that the E.T.U. has area and national Youth Conferences which are attended by delegates up to the age of 23. From the National Youth Conference, four delegates are elected to attend the Policy Conference as fraternal observers, and one of the four is invited to make the fraternal address. This year the four delegates were all regular readers of "K.L.". They were Alan Bourne (Llanelly), Don Hopwood (Brixton), Bernard Parkinson (Wigan), and Keith Thrower (Lewisham).

Bernard Parkinson, last year's Chairman of the Youth Conference gave the speech. He pointed out that the separate problems of the youth are due to the fact that youth is more severely exploited than older workers. He asked for the assistance of the older trade unionists for younger members, and he criticised the temporary closing of Youth Conferences owing to the Union's financial difficulties. Youth is on the move, he said at home and abroad. There had been a revival of youth activity in the Labour Party, despite Transport House and not because of it. In the Young Communist League there had been the growth of a critical left wing. Youth had been at the head of the Suez demonstrations. In Germany youth had led the fight against militarisation. In Egypt, Cyprus, Algeria, youth fought imperialism, and in Hungary youth had demonstrated in favour of a genuine Socialist democracy, against bureaucracy and against fascism. These events had had an effect on British youth. Many young people turned to politics and to the trade unions. It was up to the adult movement to welcome and encourage them.

NATIONAL YOUTH SPEAKING CONTEST

Recently, the National Finals of the "Daily Herald" Youth Speaking Contest were held at Caxton Hall, London. Six teams competed, representing the Regions of Wales, Yorkshire, South West England, the Midlands, Southern, and Northern England. The subject teams were asked to speak on was the L.P. policy document "Equality". The winning teams were Yorkshire, Northern, and Welsh in that order. The winning individuals were Kathleen O'Donnell, (S.W.) age 25, Chairman; Audrey Hutchinson (Northern) 21 years old, Speaker; and 15 year old Annette Monaghan (Wales) Mover. One comment - only one speaker, Brian Tritton of Brighton, had the audacity to mention the inequalities within the Labour Party itself. We congratulate him.

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