

KEEP LEFT



★ A Paper for Socialist Youth ★

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EDITORIAL

This month the Youth Sections "celebrate" their second birthday, for it was at the 1955 Annual Conference that the national and regional organisation of the League of Youth was disbanded and branches renamed Youth Sections.

Two years seems a fair time in which to judge the result of that re-organisation. We said at the time that the policy of breaking down the youth organisation into isolated Youth Sections was not a move to build a strong Socialist youth movement - but a move by the right-wing leadership of the Party to curb the pro-Bevanite L.O.Y. Certainly the state of the Youth Sections today confirms this.

Officially there are 275 Sections - 30 more than when the L.O.Y. was disbanded and many of these 30 came into existence as a result of the Suez crisis. The facilities which are open to these Sections, both in the field of political education and literature are less than available in the L.O.Y. days. We now have recruiting literature from Transport House, an annual summer school, and a promise of a national youth paper. We welcome the decision of the N.E.C. to bring out an official youth paper. Its about time - but youth must have a say in running it! Regional Offices are responsible for running regular political and organisational youth schools. You delegates to the Conference, just look through the regional reports in the N.E.C. Report and add up the number that have held only one youth school, or none at all in the last twelve months. In some regions the Sections have resorted to organising their own schools due to lack of action from Regional Office.

At this year's Conference the question of organisation of youth in the Party is not a main issue on the agenda, but as the Tories start to sharpen their attacks on the working class young people will be among the first to react. The 16 - 26 year olds of this country have never been really hit economically before and when they get the sack for the first time they'll wonder what the hell its all about. When they come into the Labour Party we've got to have something to give them. We've got to have a Socialist youth organisation and a Socialist policy to fight the Tories on.

DEAR READER,

We want to thank you for your interest in the fact that we now have made definite plans to print in January and we hope you will turn up at our Readers' Meeting on October 5th, details of which have already been circulated.

There's one very important way in which Youth Sections can assist "Keep Left" immediately. In order to print in January we still need more MONEY! We are opening a Fighting Fund and ask Youth Sections and individual readers to consider sending us a donation, however small. We realise that very few Youth Sections have much spare cash but we think this is a political question. This is your paper and we have to rely on your £. s. d.

"Keep Left" is printed for and by the Labour youth. Our columns are open to all viewpoints - we don't censor articles received and we print anything Youth Section members send us, though we are short of space. Ours is the only national Labour youth paper in existence. For the paper to expand into printed form more cash is needed.

Which Section will be the first to contribute to our Fighting Fund? Please send your donations to the address on the back page.

EDITORIAL BOARD

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Continuing our series "SPOTLIGHT" this months choice is -

ABERDEEN YOUTH SECTION

Our Section, which includes North and South Aberdeen, has twenty-five ardent supporters. It meets every Sunday night, and although the main drive is political, the social side is not neglected.

Each month during the winter time, three meetings are set aside for political education purposes. In the summer we have picnics, informal meetings, and arrange street corner meetings which are an immense help and are proving a great success with our membership drives.

Most of our members attend Ward and Trade Union meetings and several hold responsible positions, including two Ward Secretaries two vice-Chairmen, and a constituency Secretary. The latter has been a candidate for local government elections in the past two years. These are the occasions when our Section is exceptionally active and vigorous help is given to all wards with small majorities in their previous elections.

In the regional finals of the "Daily Herald" Speaking Contest our Chairman and speaker each were placed second. Finally, I would like to mention that our Section was one of the two winners of the N.E.C. award for The Best Youth Section in Britain, 1956.

At this year's Labour Party Conference the question of conscription does not appear on the Agenda. And, of course it is true that the Labour Party has already stated its policy, i.e. to abolish the call-up. But it is unfortunate that this policy should not be re-affirmed.

The basis of the policy of the NEC has been that a larger regular army could be obtained by paying more. But this is not happening. Rather, the number of regular recruits is falling; the total for all services in July 1956 was 4,808, but in July 1957 it was only 3,064. The fall in recruitment this year is shown like this:

	ARMY	NAVY	R.A.F.
1st Quarter	9,887	2,281	6,798
2nd Quarter	6,912	1,756	4,064

In other words there is a steady fall in the number of young people signing on for regular services. This, at a time when the pay is higher than it has ever been, and when there are signs of redundancy and short time working.

Also, it is interesting to note that a large number of these so-called regulars are conscripts who agree to sign on for an extra year because they then receive twice as much money in the first 18 months. Therefore, any cut in conscription will at once mean the still further loss of regular recruits.

What does all this mean? It means that to keep troops in Cyprus, Germany, Malaya, Hong Kong etc., the Tories must have conscription. They cannot police their Empire without it. But the N.E.C. and the Parliamentary Labour Party have also pledged Labour to much of this.

What happens then when Labour wins the next General Election? Will a Labour Government sell out the youth for the favours of Adenauer (and four divisions for 40 more years)? This was the agreed price that the NEC paid for German re-armament. It was at the same time that the NEC asked Conference to turn down a resolution for a cut in conscription. Because, without Labour's agreement to conscription, Germany re-armament would never have been possible. Thus to abolish conscription means to withdraw British troops from abroad. A policy, which Labour must also support.

Labour must not sell out the youth again. The next Labour Government must end conscription, with no 'ifs' or 'buts'.

PETER GIBSON
Streatham Youth Section

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NEW MINDS FOR OLD

In the hectic stream of modern life it is difficult to lay firm hold of reality and we frequently find ourselves grasping the straws of illusion.

In no field of human endeavours is this more true than in that of education and here most of all, perhaps is it important to get our foundations right for we are building not for a year or a decade but for generations.

The one 'reality' upon which all socialists are agreed as regards education is that it must destroy the old class barriers; nothing is more repugnant to a socialist than that one man should look down upon another for any reason at all. Yet, while we have been busy removing the barriers of wealth and privilege a new insidious menace has been creeping in. Of all forms of class feeling intellectual snobbery is the worst, nor can we pretend that the obscene perversion of the human mind is an unknown phenomenon in the socialist movement itself! The possession of a good brain is a sacred trust for which we are responsible to the whole of humanity not a coveted distinction to be prostituted for our personal advantage.

This attitude towards 'brute brain' is far from evident in our educational system as it stands. By careful selection and segregation we diligently guard our young intellectuals from the foul contamination of the common herd. The top 10-20% of the 'intelligence scale' still has, in the majority of cases, educational facilities lavished upon it at the expense of the remaining 80-90%. This is known as equality of opportunity!

The modern secondary schools have foisted upon them willy-nilly a leaderless mob, the grammar and technical schools have entrusted to their care the makings of an irresponsible intellectual elite (how many grant aided students of the post war vintage are today active in the Labour Movement?) What is our answer to this situation? The comprehensive school is still in its experimental stage and it is too early to judge its social effects. But as Mr. Healey has pointed out it has the grave disadvantage of being difficult to adapt to our present system without considerable wastage. His own proposal of the Grammar School cum County College is an attractive one in that our present system could be easily adapted to it and that it does provide the reality of a comprehensive education without pandering to the illusion of educational equality.

This is an issue that should be close to the heart of every socialist. It is essential that our Movement as a whole be conversant with the various problems involved and the various solutions proposed if we are to grasp this dangerous nettle with a courage worthy of our predecessors.

BRIAN WATKINS
Hornchurch C.E.P.

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PROBLEMS FOR CONFERENCE

The Labour Party meets this month, in an atmosphere far removed from that of apparent economic stability which has influenced the policy of the Party since 1945. 1957 has seen big struggles in industry for wages and trade union rights, a vicious Rent Act, and now with the increase in the Bank Rate, the determination of the Tories to cut down the living standards of the working class, brought sharply into focus.

In this situation Conference meets with three big issues before it - the H-Bomb, Rents, and Nationalization.

On the question of the H-bomb, Conference has to decide whether it really proposes to give a lead, or whether it will try to evade the problem of peace and war with a pious motion about International Agreements. It is surely the task of the Labour Party to show that the development of the H-bomb is part of capitalism's inevitable drive towards war and therefore there is no possibility of an International Agreement between capitalist and non-capitalist states. The Party must say it will not support tests of the bomb, manufacture of the bomb or its use - but will work for the overthrow of capitalism, which is the only way to peace.

The Rent Act too, places on the Labour Party the responsibility of giving a lead on how to fight. The immediate need is for the Party to say that it will repeal the Rent Act as a first priority on its return to power, and begin a campaign now in the country for the removal of the Tory Government, with this as one of its main slogans, coupled with a promise of support and help to those tenants who are prepared to defy the Act, and a request to the trade unions to use their industrial strength to see that the Act is not implemented.

But the big debate inside the Party is on the question of nationalization. The NEC have presented the Conference with a document which completely negates Clause IV of the Constitution, so glibly quoted at the beginning of the document - 'To secure for the workers by hand and by brain the full fruits of their industry and the most equitable distribution thereof that may be possible upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service.'

What the document is really saying is that capitalism works; that a socialist state would be no improvement and that all that is required is a few shares, and a 'Code of Conduct for the Board Room', to see that we all get a better standard of living. I wonder if the rise in the bank rate has shaken the convictions of any members of the NEC in the stability of capitalism. This document has stirred up a tremendous wave of opposition throughout the constituties and the trade unions, and the opposition will surely be channelled in support of the National Union of Railwaymen's proposal that the whole document should be referred back to the NEC with an instruction to them to prepare a list of industries to be nationalized by the next Labour Government.

One thing will link the debates of Conference, and that is that the Labour Party must demand, as the representatives of the working class, the resignation of the Tory Government, and that we must use all the strength of the Labour Movement to bring this about. The responsibility of Conference is to see that the leaders of the Party are tied down to a policy which, when implemented will mean real steps forward to the establishment of socialism.

VIVIENNE MENDELSON
Norwood Youth Section

CLASS COLLABORATION - MILLERAND TO MOLLET

The resolution on this year's Conference Agenda from Birmingham Stechford C.L.P. urging the Labour Party to propose the expulsion of the so-called Socialist Party of France from the Socialist International is one which demands the support of all Conference delegates.

The sadistic measures perpetrated by French capitalism, with the support of the French socialist party, to prevent the Algerian people from exercising the elementary right to national self-determination, is a crime against the human race. By actively participating in this dreadful blood-letting, the French socialist party has brought disgrace to the proud name of socialism.

Socialists throughout the world, including many Frenchmen, have expressed their bitter condemnation of Comrade 'Belsen' Mollet's anti-socialist actions. In France, critics of the Government's policies in Algeria are thrown into jail. Reprisals are the rewards conferred on those who express dissident opinions. The disgust which the name Mollet conjures up in the minds of socialists everywhere, recalls a similar disturbance caused by a responsible French socialist leader, Millerand, in the later years of the last century.

Millerand, accepted a Ministerial post in a French capitalist Government, whose Minister of Defence was Gallifet, the officer in command of the reactionary troops who butchered the heroic workers of the Paris Commune in 1871. Socialists took up the cudgels for and against the advisability of comrades entering the Governments of the class enemy. The International debated this question in a heated atmosphere, and a group of French socialists invited the opinion of Wilhelm Liebknecht, the then leader of international socialism and founder of the German Labour Party. His reply gives the classical answer to class collaboration and it could easily be applied to M. Mollet and his caricature of a socialist party.

"The internationalism of socialism is a fact that is daily becoming more evident and more significant. We socialists are one nation to ourselves, one and the same international nation in all the lands of the earth. And the capitalists with their agents, instruments and dupes are likewise an international nation, so that we can truthfully say, there are today only two great nations in all lands that battle with each other in the great class struggle, which is the new revolution - a class struggle on one side of which stands the proletariat representing socialism and on the other the bourgeoisie representing capitalism.

While the bourgeois world of capitalism continues and the bourgeoisie rules, so long are all states necessarily class states and all governments class governments, serving the purposes and interests of the ruling class, and destined to lead the class struggle for the bourgeoisie against the proletariat, for capitalism against socialism, for our enemies and against us. A socialist who goes into a bourgeois government either goes over to the enemy or else puts himself in the power of the enemy.

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In any case the Socialist who becomes a member of a bourgeois government separates himself from us, the militant Socialists. He may be convinced of his own sincerity, but in any case he has not comprehended the nature of the class struggle ... does not understand that the class struggle is the basis of Socialism... We cannot traffic in our principles, we can make no compromise, no agreement with the ruling system. We must break with the ruling system and fight it to a finish".

If the entry of one Socialist into a capitalist government over 50 years ago could raise such passions in our international movement, then surely today, when an entire Socialist Party acting in the interests of capitalist reaction, provides the leadership for a brutal denial of freedom to millions of our colonial friends, our emotions should explode into one colossal demand for the cleansing of international socialism by the removal of the French Socialist Party from the "International".

JIMMY COOKE (Edinburgh C.L.P.)

TRADE UNION CONGRESS 1957

It is now clear that the T.U.C. took place at a time when the working class will be more and more engaged in the struggle to maintain their living standards and their jobs. Big business is no longer just probing the strength of the working class and its organisations. The 7% Bank Rate means an all-out attack on wages and conditions.

How did the T.U.C. this year prepare organised labour to meet this challenge? The effects of Tory policy over the past period were slurred over. The Council avoided reference to recent battles in the trade union movement, i.e. engineering, busmen, Covent Garden, etc. Instead they devoted their time to telling workers that if they could only work harder this was the way to avoid disputes. The class collaborationist policy could be summed up in the words of Sir Tom himself "It is still an unrecognised marvel of our day that while working together so many get on so well for so long".

And how was the only real practical defence against the employers, that is nationalisation, dealt with? This thorny problem that is facing the right wing of the Labour and trade union movement was skillfully wrapped up in an ambiguous motion with a "little of what you fancy" flavour. W. Heywood speaking on its behalf stated "The General Council regards the Labour Party statement ("Industry & Society") as an adjunct to the nationalisation programme rather than a substitute for it! This commits them to precisely nothing. There is a lesson to be learned in this for comrades who will be discussing this policy statement at Brighton. The capitalist class are showing that they recognise that this is not the time for half measures. "Industry and Society" with its share buying proposals leaves the power in the hands of this class, and that is why this policy statement must be rejected by the rank and file of the Labour movement. The left sounding speeches made at the T.U.C. on pensions, 40 hour week, etc., have no meaning unless they are allied to and part of a socialist policy of nationalisation and the bringing of the industrial strength of the movement behind these demands.

The British working class must bring down this Tory Government who are trying to solve the crisis of capitalism at their expense.

LLOYD OLSON (Battersea, A.E.U.)

NEWS FROM OUR READERS

THANET
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About 14 members regularly attend the meetings of this Youth Section. Recently we have had a discussion on the British press opened by Frank Allaun, M.P.; a "Hat Debate"; and an Any Questions meeting with a team drawn from leading local Party members and trade unionists. The future programme includes a day school on "What is Socialism"; a film show - "The German Story" and a bottle party. Isle of Thanet Section will be featured in the November issue in the "Spotlight" series.

GLYN JENKINS

READING
.....

Last June five young Socialists in Reading discussed with the officers of the Party the idea of forming a Youth Section. On Saturday, September 7th, after two month's door to door canvassing, Reading's Youth Section was officially born. The inaugural meeting on that evening was to have been a purely social affair - comprising a Skiffle Group with a brief appearance by Reading's M.P., Ian Mikardo. The Skiffle Group failed to arrive and was later discovered to have broken down on the way. Never to be daunted, however, by obstacles on the path to Socialism, the organisers quickly found excellent talent among its new members and guests. The evening proceeded merrily with Singalese and American folksongs led by two guests with guitar and harp, English songs and first class piano playing by a member and his friend, a short but very welcome speech by Ian Mikardo and an improvised exhibition of the Sand Dance by a (nameless) member of the Section's E.C.

Out of the forty lads and lasses who enjoyed that evening, the Section has gained fourteen staunch members and is pressing ahead with a programme of topical and fundamental political discussion, social evenings and outings - all planned well in advance. One of our first outings is to the Rally against the H-bomb in Trafalgar Square on September 22nd. By way of contrast the Section is also planning the activities appropriate for November 5th.

It needs hardly be said that several members are already keen readers of "Keep Left".

ERIC MORSE

STOKE NEWINGTON
& HACKNEY NORTH
.....

In July the local paper asked this Youth Section to get four members to write why they were Socialists. Four did this and the contributions were printed in a series called "Spotlight on Politics and Youth", as No. 1, The Socialists. After came the turn of the Tories, and then the Liberals. Much sense could n't be made of the Liberals who seemed to go mad on Jo Grimond.

One Tory wrote "We view with horror the Socialist theories of more and more nationalisation, more and more state control, more and heavier taxation, and their admitted aim that all should be pulled down to one dreary regimented level". Another wrote "I have no desire at all for myself and children to go through life living in a municipalised house and each day going to work in a nationalised office or factory, and after all, that is what the Labour Party has to offer".

After reading this you'll also know why you're a Socialist!

CHARLIE JONES

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SOUTHERN REGION A Regional Week-end Youth School was held at "Hillside", which is set amidst the lovely Surrey countryside. About 60 students attended, all of whom have been eager for schools of this kind. Good evidence of this was given by Ron Hayward (Assistant Regional Organiser) who said that at least 30 applications had to be refused. A large portion of the students were under 20 years old - a sign that there are some young people thinking about how they live today and want to live tomorrow.

On Saturday evening a stimulating talk was given by Ron Hayward on "Youth Section programmes and organisations". However, little time was left for questions and discussion, about 20 minutes or so, as the evening social followed soon afterwards. This was particularly unfortunate as many young people were attending as individual members of their Wards and Parties where no Youth Sections yet exist. I do feel that a great deal could have been gained from a full discussion on this subject. The Social on the Saturday evening was most enjoyable. I would, however, have liked to have heard amongst the singing some good Socialist songs. Readers of "K.L." attending youth schools could keep this point in mind for future occasions

On Sunday morning Ian Mikardo, M.P. for Reading, and another member of the N.E.C. spoke on "Another Point of View" comparing China, Vietnam and the U.S.S.R., having recently returned from an extensive tour of those countries. In the afternoon an "Any Questions" session took place - the team composed of Jo Richardson, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Hornchurch, Ian Mikardo and three students. Ron Hayward took the Chair. This session gave the closing of the school a very lively air. Many questions were asked and answered well, and the issue of workers' control in nationalised industries produced an exiting discussion.

NESSIE YOUNG

NORWOOD Norwood Y.S. plan to run a day school in November. They propose to hold it on a Sunday and invite all Youth Sections in London. One of the speakers will be from the Movement for Colonial Freedom. Details will be in next month's "K.L." In contrast a jumble sale is being organised in October, and several dances during November!

MARGARET ALMOND

HORNCHURCH Attendances at this Section's social activities is very high - usually around 70 young people turn up. About 30 of these Comrades are very interested in the political side of the Youth Section. Dennis Hunt is the Youth Organiser, and Jo Richardson the Party's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate. Recently the Section has discussed "Industry & Society" and forwarded a motion to their G.M.C. rejecting the document in favour of a more Socialist policy on ownership with workers' control. Hornchurch Section will be very active in a Council bye-election on 5th October.

RON EDWARDS

SWANSEA We featured the disbandment of this Youth Section by the Swansea Party Labour Association (G.M.C.) in our Editorial a few months ago. We thought our readers would be interested to know that this Section is still closed down.

Last July the Youth Section were told by Alan Williams that the Assistant National Agent was looking into it, and Harold Wilson (dealing with Party reorganisation) said he would make enquiries.

Since that date the Executive of the Swansea Party has had correspondence with Transport House, but has refused to disclose the terms of these letters to the Labour Association. At a recent meeting of the Association delegates asked that the correspondence be read out in order that delegates should know what had been said on their behalf. The officers of the Executive refused and the demand for details of correspondence was pressed to a vote which was lost.

Why this reluctance on the part of the officers of Swansea Party to let members of the Party - whom they are meant to represent - have the terms of letters to and from Transport House?

EDITORIAL BOARD

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"THIS IS THE SHOWDOWN"

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That was how the 'Daily Mail' announced the raising of the Bank Rate. For the Tories have declared war on the working class. The economic crisis was brought to a head when foreign investors began selling their sterling after the franc was devalued. To persuade them to hold on the Tory Government must show them it can stabilise the economy. In plain English, they must get a pool of unemployed so that union organisation can be smashed and wages cut. The intensification of the credit squeeze is intended to do just that. Can they take us back to the 30's, to the dole queues and the means test?

Well, that depends. The cowardly and treacherous attitude of the Labour leaders both right wing Williamson and "left wing" Cousins varieties, has encouraged the ruling class to think that they can get away with it. It is up to us to show them they are wrong. As interest rates soar, and with them prices and the unemployment increases, we must bring the whole might of the Labour Movement against this bankers' government.

Out with the Tories! Labour to power on a Socialist programme! That is the answer to Mr. Thorneycroft.

CYRIL SMITH
Wembley South C.L.P.

DON'T FORGET

OUR "KEEP LEFT"

SKIFFLE SOCIAL - WITH

REFRESHMENTS

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SATURDAY

5th OCTOBER

7.30 - 11.0 p.m.

ORANGE TREE

OPPOSITE EUSTON

SQUARE STATION
N.W.1.

DUE TO LACK OF SPACE WE REGRET WE HAVE TO HOLD OVER TWO ITEMS OF CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED UNTIL OUR NOVEMBER ISSUE.

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