

Keep

LEFT

Official paper of the
Young Socialists

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Gerry Parmakes

JANUARY 26 must be a day for action. The wage packet of every worker young and old is being threatened by anti-trade union legislation.

Not a single penny piece of the bosses' profits is to be touched by the right wing labour leaders, but it will be a crime, carrying heavy punishment, if we fight for wages under conditions not approved by the capitalist parliament.

This is the outcome of a great conspiracy between the right wing of the Labour Party, the Trades Union Congress, and the employers.

'WARNING SCHEME'

Firstly, the Trades Union Congress early in September agreed in principle to a voluntary 'early warning' scheme, but this was only the thin end of the wedge leading up to George Brown's compulsory legislation.

Secondly, the Labour Party Conference at the end of September ignored the Trades Union Congress's decision and voted for Brown's legislation.

The same right-wing trade union leaders who voted for the voluntary scheme at the Trades Union Congress now swing round

to support for the compulsory proposals.

Step by step the working class and the labour movement were being led into a trap.

TAKEN AWAY

If Brown's legislation becomes law one of the main purposes of trade unionism will have been taken away. If the unions cannot fight for improvements in the wages of their members, what is the purpose of trade unionism?

If the employers' state has the last say, then collective bargaining and trade unionism is finished in all but name.

We appeal to every trade unionist, young and old—**DON'T STAND IDLY BY AND LET YOUR RIGHTS BE TAKEN AWAY. JOIN THE YOUNG SOCIALISTS IN A GREAT LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT ON JANUARY 26.**

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE. WE FIGHT TO WIN.

INTO 1966 with a bang. The right-wing witch-hunters of the Trades Union Congress hit back—not against the notorious George Brown, who enjoys the support of the Tories in legislating against the trade unions, but against the Lambeth Trades Council whose crime is that they want to lobby Parliament on January 26 against the proposed legislation.

All Young Socialists who marched and lobbied against youth unemployment in 1963 will remember with gratitude the role of the Lambeth Trades Council.

It was this council which organised a most efficient early morning free-meal service for the hundreds of unemployed youth who thronged into London after a wearisome cold night huddled together in long distance coaches.

It was the Lambeth Trades Council banner which led the largest contingent, which was the Young Socialists, in the numerous clashes with the police on that day.

We know all about witch-hunting and witch-hunters. Over the past year they have lashed out time and time again against the Young Socialists, but they could not stop our progress.

We started off 1965 with a campaign and lobby on February 4 on behalf of the Old Age Pensioners' increase. Then there was our highly successful Morecambe conference followed by May Day demonstrations, the Vietnam demon-

stration and the magnificent Blackpool turn out for the Labour Party conference.

What other youth organisation can boast of such progress? Certainly not the left-overs of the Labour Party Young Socialists who now bow and scrape before the right wing of Transport House.

Yet there is no secret about our success. We fought back and refused to accept the witch-hunters' decrees. Let Lambeth Trades Council do the same.

Time is on our side. Legislation against the trades unions is on the way. The cost of living and rents are going up and unemployment is on the increase.

Callaghan promises the toughest budget yet and the Tories are planning for a comeback.

The right wing is opening the doors for them all along the line. Those fake lefts and pseudo-socialists who hang round

the 'Tribune' not only refuse to fight Wilson, they, in fact, cover up for him.

The working class will begin more and more to recognise the real state of affairs in 1966—they will be forced by the harshness of events to recognise the great betrayals which are on the way.

Those who fight back today, such as the Young Socialists and the Lambeth Trades Council, will earn the undying gratitude of the workers all over Britain in the months ahead.

Despite the witchhunt we can and will make giant strides forward in the building of the alternative revolutionary socialist leadership during 1966. Let us resolve to transform the actions of the TUC witchhunts into a whimper.

INTO 1966

World news

'MNGUNI', author of '300 Years—a History of South Africa', wrote that a people cannot emancipate itself without first understanding how it was enslaved. Rhodesia is a good illustration of this.

When British imperialism struck down the Matabele and Mashona tribes in a series of bloody wars of dispossession, it had already conquered South Africa.

Not only that, but by the time of the conquest of Rhodesia, British imperialism had vast investments in sugar, diamonds, gold, transport and industry in South Africa.

The first great known civilisation in the Rhodesia area had been the Zimbabwe culture, ruled by the hereditary Monomotapa kings, a Bantu creation laid waste, it is believed, by the Portuguese in their search for Zimbabwe's gold.

By the time that Mzilikazi, a breakaway from Tshaka when the Zulu tribe was being formed during the 1820's, crossed the Limpopo at the end of the 1830's, Zimbabwe was in ruins. Mzilikazi constructed an early type of feudalism, with tribal elements remaining basic, especially with regard to property.

War of dispossession

Thus in Africa the same sort of historical development was taking place as had occurred in Europe and Asia, with this great exception: that first the slave traffic of Europe and then the wars of dispossession cut right across this history and threw Africa's development backwards.

In 1846 the first well-known government of what is now Rhodesia was officially recognised: namely the Matabele tribal 'government' of Mzilikazi was recognised, together with its independence, by the Boer Potechefstroom Republic.

The first serious inroad into this independence was made for British imperialism by the missionaries. Moffat, a Kuruman missionary, and a colleague of the imperialist Livingstone, tried to kid Lobengula, heir to Mzilikazi's throne, into signing a treaty giving Britain virtual ownership over Matabeleland.

Role of the missionaries

The standard trick the missionaries used throughout the conquest of Southern Africa was to present a treaty to an illiterate chief for 'signature', purporting to 'sell' lands to the British or the Boers. But in fact this was impossible under tribal Bantu law, since landed property was communal and could not legally be sold.

Lobengula repudiated the Moffat Treaty when he realised it was a trick to rob the Matabele of their land.

The diamond and gold mine pirates, Rudd and Beit, associates of the notorious Cecil Rhodes,

Imperialism's conquest of Rhodesia

by a Keep Left Correspondent



White settlers stand arrogantly by after hanging three Africans—this picture depicts the very nature of British imperialism's suppression of the Matabele and Mashona tribes.

followed Moffat up with fraudulent 'concessions' of mineral land from Lobengula.

In 1889 the almighty British Chartered Company (really the De Beers Consolidated Diamond Mines Corporation) was formed in London.

This Company had fantastic powers to make war, declare peace, draw up treaties, run businesses of every kind and even to be a government over conquered territory. It was to rule over Rhodesia in the name of the British Crown until the 1923 Constitution, when power was transferred to the local 'White' settlers—again in the name of Britain.

The Company prepared to invade Matabeleland. First they tried to make a treaty with Lobengula.

Wary by now, after his experience with the missionaries, Lobengula refused. Rhodes then attacked, built forts as far as

Salisbury and Victoria and in April 1891 formally annexed Matabeleland as a British 'Protectorate', i.e., protected the territory for Britain against the conquered but rebellious Africans.

Armed struggle in 1893

Matabele resistance grew and burst into armed struggle on a large scale in 1893. The Matabele dynamited Bulawayo, their capital, and fought a series of rearguard battles.

They were defeated by superior forces—by the machine-gun, and by the fact that the British used chiefs corrupted by the missionaries as allies in battle and as spies and infiltrators.

The bribing and corrupting of tribal chieftains on a wholesale and retail basis was common at this

time.

This is a point to be remembered when dealing with the Commonwealth African 'quislings' who serve Whitehall and the City; the toothless Organisation of African Unity, which became a hag soon after birth and now shuffles about like a worn-out prostitute in Nairobi, Cairo and Addis Ababa, unable to give effect to its own decisions and slavishly kow-towing to the imperialist, pro-apartheid government of Wilson; and the African Nationalists.

The latter thunder against the 'white man' in the morning only to lick his boots at night.

In those 1890 days the traitors were tribal chiefs. Today, they come from the puny born-too-late African middle class which, alongside the labour aristocracy at 'home', grovels about the imperialist table for slops from the immense super-profits which

the capitalists are making out of semi-colonial 'independence'.

No sooner had he defeated the Matabele than Rhodes carved up the land and began to introduce a system of apartheid in land, labour and state. At the Cape Town City Hall he thanked the Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan and Salvation Army churches and also the Aborigine Protection Society for helping him to conquer the new colony, Rhodesia.

But the Matabele were not yet crushed. After their women had been shot down in cold blood for refusing to allow the British to kill their cattle (in order to drive the men into the 'white' farms as property-less cheap labour) the Matabele revolted, in March 1896.

The British government gave orders: 'Shoot down natives indiscriminately.'

Boy Scout movement

It was then that the Boy Scout movement was formed. Baden-Powell, friend of Rhodes, took the field in May 1896 against the Matabele, disarmed the chiefs and, after inflicting terrible losses on the people, forced 'peace' down the throats of the broken armies of the Matabele.

The Mashona continued a heroic resistance and, after losing over 8,000 troops, were brought to their knees one year later. On the ruins of the conquest, Rhodes, the missionaries, the Boy Scouts, the Boers, the British government, the companies and labour aristocracy proceeded to build a colour-bar colony along the same lines as had already arisen south of the Limpopo.

The British Labour Party itself exported and endorsed the industrial colour bar.

This same colony is now managed by Smith under the same laws made by successive British governments under an Emergency signed by the British governor and declared before UDI in terms of the basic policy of Rhodes: 'I have made up my mind that we shall be masters as we are in India.'

British working class

The Rhodesian workers cannot take on imperialism alone. The responsibility for freedom of the Africans from white domination rests with the British working class. Workers in Britain can only express their solidarity by organising to defeat the bankers, speculators and monopolists, and their faithful servants, the Labour government.

It is not a question of asking for capitalist sanctions against Rhodesia or of sending British troops but of organising around the demand 'Arm the Africans'; 'Scrap the 1961 Constitution'; 'Defeat imperialism'.

It is for these demands that the working class youth throughout Rhodesia and Britain must organise.

Indian food crisis — socialist

programme the only solution

B. Williams, North-East

EARLY this month the international press gave further evidence of India's recurrent and deepening food crisis.

Annual rainfall in the north west India was 30 to 40 per cent less than in previous years, the monsoons came later and finished earlier, and Food Minister Subramaniam estimated a 10 per cent reduction in the autumn crop.

This is equivalent to a loss of 3,000,000 tons of grain. The Ravi or Spring crop was similarly affected and many areas are now suffering from an acute food shortage with prices rising steeply.

Within the current five-year plan estimated food requirements for 1965 were 92,000,000 tons. Actual harvest was 75,000,000 tons.

EXCHANGE CRISIS

This occurred within the framework of a foreign exchange crisis and impending depression on top of which population increases rendered even the estimates for food production unrealistic.

Measures (now available to science) could be adopted to remedy the food deficiency of the Indian peasant.

The Rothamstead Experimental Station for example has designed a machine which, by extracting protein from leaves, could be used to offset some of the worst effects of malnutrition.

The 'Times' has this comment to make:

'Edible protein products that come each year from one acre

contain only one tenth of the protein in the vegetation of that acre.'

One Rothamstead machine running for eight hours could produce enough protein for 6,000 people. Three of these machines are in use in India but quite obviously many more are required.

There are many other technical methods now available which could go a long way to revolutionising Indian agriculture.

It would be wrong, however, to reduce the food crisis to the problems of agricultural production. The real roots of this present crisis are to be found in the crumbling structure of Indian capitalism.

In a subcontinent of 405,000,000 people, still divided on religious grounds and concentrated in rural areas, equitable food distribution becomes a complicated technical

problem for the Indian government.

The Shastri government callously neglects the Indian peasant or tenant farmer—satisfying not the needs of the peasant but the interests of the large landowners from whom he derives his support.

(The leading figures in the ruling Congress Party are Brahmin, which means they are drawn from a religious and economic elite.)

RATIONING

There is also statutory rationing in all urban areas (where the Indian industrial working class is concentrated) with populations over 300,000, and informal rationing in towns with populations over 5,000.

The food crisis is a crisis of Indian capitalism and world imperialism.

In August this year the Indian Planning Commission showed that



one third of the gross national income is distributed amongst 10 per cent of the population—two-thirds subsist at starvation level.

And while Indian peasants and workers starve, Shastri, as a measure against the crisis, calls on the middle and upper classes to grow food in their gardens (!)

It is precisely because the government panders to the rich landowners and Western imperialism that it cannot initiate a food policy to meet the needs of the Indian people.

To do so would be to oppose the national bourgeois elements of which Shastri is an integral part.

Other ill winds, however, are blowing the Indian economy to the point of collapse.

The contested area of the Ran of Kutch and Kashmir, together with the Sino-Indian border dispute, have initiated war preparations.

Shastri himself has admitted that he would rather see India starve than remain undefended.

The arms build up has accentuated the foreign exchange difficulties.

The resources with which extra food (the US already supplies 6 million tons) could be procured are thus being whittled away.

The interests Shastri is defending are clearly not the interests of the Indian working class.

The only real solution to the problems of the Indian working

class and peasantry lies in a socialist programme of land nationalization and control over the banking and merchant interests.

The Indian Communist Party, however, has always played a negative role in this respect.

Indian society is explosive. There have already been riots in Bombay and West Bengal; factories are closing down in South India and thousands of communists have been systematically arrested, but the Indian Communist Party cannot offer any positive leadership.

During the Ran of Kutch dispute, the Kashmir war and the Sino-Indian border war, the Stalinist executive and centrist groups within the Party firmly backed Shastri in the interests of national unity.

BETRAYAL

This was a betrayal of the Indian working class and capitulation to imperialism.

Imperialist pressure is mapping out Shastri's actions yet at the same time is undermining anything he may do to alleviate the complicated problems ensuing from the food crisis.

Even within the ruling Congress Party foreign aid is resisted lest it conflicts with the interests of the landlords.

Shastri is effectively shackled. Only Marxists can provide an alternative socialist leadership in this explosive crisis.

your opinion please . . .

We invite all our readers to send us their opinions on the Labour government, the trade unions, automation, education, economics—write and tell us what you think.

Exploitation

I WORKED in a foundry in Yorkshire where the employers used immigrants as cheap labour—they employed me at 16 and put me straight onto a core-making job.

As soon as I was 18 the employer sacked me because he knew he would have to pay me a full wage and no more profit could be made out of my work.

I was told by my employer to move to a filthy job as a labourer in another department, but I refused to move, knowing that if I went to a different part of the factory the boss could also demand the right to move other core-makers.

When I asked the manager why he was moving me he replied that there were too many men in the creshop, that he could move young workers but not adult workers. If I did not go onto the other job I could go home be-

cause there would be no other job for me.

Not knowing exactly where I stood, I went to the shop steward and explained to him that the employers were giving me the sack and what could I do?

He told me to accept whatever job the boss said I should do. He also said that the employer had a right to move me anywhere that he wanted to.

Sackings

I argued that it was a question concerning every single worker—to fight against sackings.

The reason they move workers like me to other jobs is so that they can make profit out of us. The employer stated that he had a right to move young workers where he wanted to but not the adult workers, yet two adult labourers were dismissed because they refused to move to another job.

If the manager is concerned about giving adult workers their rights why did he sack these two labourers?

This is a question which concerns both the young and adult workers. The employer tried to move me because I was fighting on behalf of the older workers—where I worked many of them could not speak English—who were forced to work during the dinner time and without breaks.

The flat rate at the foundry was £9 4s. 7d. for a 40-hour week and these workers had to work many more hours to get £18 a week, after tax that leaves them with £15.

What is needed for these workers is a leadership so that they can fight the employers against bad conditions and low wages.

The Young Socialists must provide this leadership which will be a weapon against the capitalists who are trying to increase exploitation.

We must not wait for workers to get the sack, but organise them with a Marxist leadership in an international fight against capitalism.

Bradford Young Socialist.



LENIN

Lenin was the outstanding leader of the Russian working class. When it took power from the Russian landlords and capitalists in October 1917, it was under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party, which was above all the creation of Lenin.

Exiled from Russia for most of his adult life, Lenin returned at the beginning of April 1917. The Tsar had been overthrown and the left-wing parties, including his own Bolsheviks in Petrograd, were settling down to the supposed 'democracy' under the Provisional government.

Lenin awakened the party and the working class with his clear call. Down with the government! All power to the Soviets (workers' councils)! The Russian

workers must take their place—in the **international working-class revolution**

This characteristic of Lenin has the revolutionary youth of today content to rest on his laurels. For him of the working class counted. On humanity from barbarism and destruction.

In every situation he strove to organize the strength of the workers against the bourgeoisie. He always insisted 'Without the revolution, there is no Marxism, there is no revolutionary party.'

Enemies of the working class pitied him as a 'man of action'. But he was foremost a Marxist, who developed

The future for Socialism

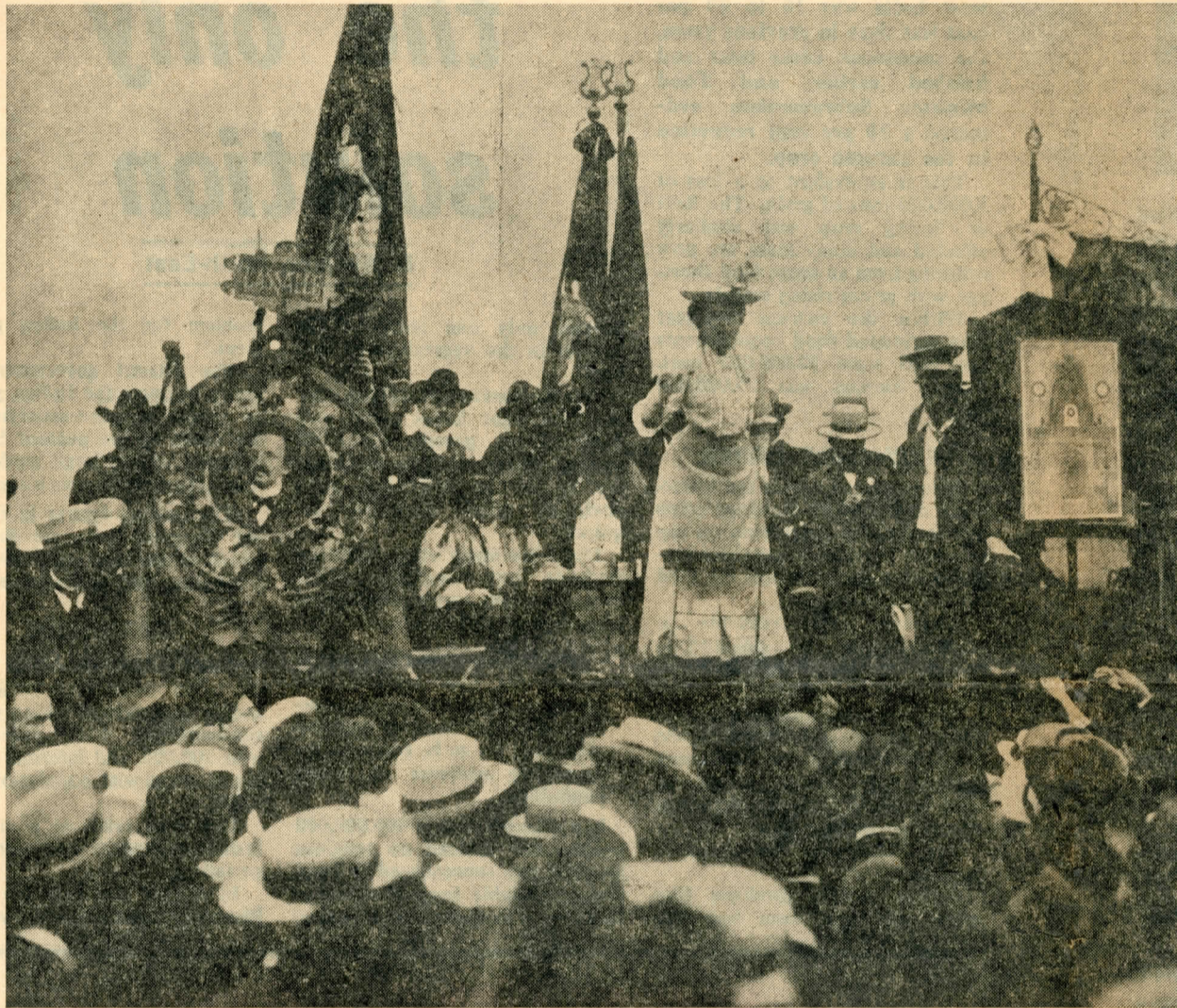
1966 will be a great year for the future of socialism in Britain and all over the world. Keep Left will be right at the centre of the building of the mass Young Socialists movement. Young workers in Britain, like youth all over the world, are being drawn in as the most determined fighters in great class struggles against the employers and their governments.

This international revolutionary movement of youth does not start from nothing. Already the world working class has established invaluable experience and lessons. Marxism, as developed especially by Lenin and Trotsky, attracts thousands of young fighters for socialism as the only theory upon which a new working-class leadership can be built.

In these years of struggle the workers' movement has produced leaders of a new type in history, heroic examples for youth of today.

A study of the life and work of these revolutionary leaders is an indispensable part of the tasks of the revolutionary youth movement.

Above all, they fought for the working class as an international force against capitalism. This January issue of Keep Left commemorates the achievements of three of them, Lenin, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebnecht: Lenin died in January 1924, after a long illness resulting from the bullet of a counter-revolutionary assassin; Luxemburg and Liebnecht were brutally butchered in January of 1919 by the force of the Social-Democratic government of Germany in the course of its suppression of the workers' revolution.



LIEBKNECHT

With Rosa Luxemburg, there was arrested a man, a German lawyer and member of Parliament, co-founder with her of the German Spartakist League and Communist Party. His name, Karl Liebnecht, had become a byword for heroic and outspoken resistance to militarism, imperialism and repression all over Europe.

In 1914 Liebnecht had to make a decision. He was political leader of the German Social-Democratic Party's left wing. After a fight inside the Parliamentary fraction of the Party, he voted in December 1914, against any funds for the German war machine.

He exposed himself to the reactionary and jingoistic wrath of every newspaper, to the danger of police arrest, which came in 1916, and to his eventual assassination in 1919.

Liebnecht was released from prison in October 1918 only because the Social-Democratic leaders considered him more dangerous inside jail than out.

Millions of workers had come to realise, through their own experience of war, the correctness of his stand. Many tens of thousands greeted him on his release from jail.

Philip Scheidemann, Social-Democratic leader, exclaimed: 'Liebknecht has been carried shoulder high

by soldiers decorated with the Iron Cross. Who had dreamed of such a thing happening a few years ago?' Such was the revolutionary situation.

The Spartakist League had circulated many pamphlets throughout the war, anti-imperialist pamphlets which prepared for this the failure of the left to build a Bolshevik Party. They exposed their leaders to the defeat of the Social-Democratic traitors.

These pamphlets had begun with the exposure of the Parliamentary statement of the Social-Democrats which he was not allowed to make. His stand was the only one.

'The present war was not willfully imposed on the nations participating in it and is not in the interests of the German or any other nation. It is an imperialist war, a war for capital, for the world market, for the political domination of the world in order to give scope to industrial capitalism.'

The socialist youth of the world, from Vietnam to Los Angeles and London, have followed in their struggle the nature of imperialism and the need for an international revolution against it. Such a movement will be built on the basis of Liebnecht's work.

LENIN

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Exiled from Russia for most of his adult life, Lenin returned at the beginning of April 1917. The Tsar had been overthrown and the left-wing parties, including his own Bolsheviks in Petrograd, were settling down to the supposed 'democracy' under the Provisional government.

Lenin awakened the party and the working class with his clear call. Down with the government! All power to the Soviets (workers' councils)! The Russian

workers must take their place—in the front rank of the **international working-class revolution!**

This characteristic of Lenin has great lessons for the revolutionary youth of today. He was never content to rest on his laurels. For him only the interests of the working class counted. Only they could save humanity from barbarism and destruction.

In every situation he strove to organise the maximum strength of the workers against their enemies. Lenin always insisted 'Without the revolutionary theory of Marxism, there is no revolutionary party'.

Enemies of the working class picture him as a conspirator and 'man of action'. But he was first and foremost a Marxist, who developed the economics,



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With Rosa Luxemburg, there was arrested a man, a German lawyer and member of Parliament, co-founder with her of the German Spartakist League and Communist Party. His name, Karl Liebknecht, had become a byword for heroic and outspoken resistance to militarism, imperialism and repression all over Europe.

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Philip Scheidemann, Social-Democratic leader, exclaimed: 'Liebknecht has been carried shoulder high

by soldiers decorated with the Iron Cross. Who would have dreamed of such a thing happening three weeks ago?' Such was the revolutionary situation.

The Spartakist League had circulated inside Germany throughout the war, anti-imperialist and anti-war pamphlets which prepared for this revolution. Only the failure of the left to build a Bolshevik-type party exposed their leaders to the defeat of 1919 at the hands of the Social-Democratic traitors.

These pamphlets had begun with the circulation of the Parliamentary statement of Liebknecht which he was not allowed to make. His statement began:

'The present war was not willed by any of the nations participating in it and is not waged for the interests of the German or any other people. It is an imperialist war, a war for capitalist control of the world market, for the political domination of vast territories in order to give scope to industrial and banking capital.'

The socialist youth of the world of today from Vietnam to Los Angeles and London are understanding in their struggle the nature of imperialist war and the need for an international revolutionary movement against it. Such a movement will be the fulfilment of Liebknecht's work.

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philosophy, strategy and tactics of Marxism through a constant and lifelong devotion to the construction of the revolutionary party.

His works 'State and Revolution', 'Imperialism', 'Left Wing Communism', 'Materialism and Empirio-Criticism' and 'What is to be done' are still indispensable classics for all young revolutionaries. They changed the whole course of the Marxist movement.

He fought bitterly against traitors and bureaucrats in the labour movement. 'There is no fight against imperialism without a fight against opportunism,' he wrote. Once again we see how his theory is an indispensable guide to action in the class struggle today.

Lenin was the founder of the Third International along with Leon Trotsky and the other leaders of the Bolshevik Party.

The reactionary bureaucracy represented by Stalin destroyed this International after the tragic death of Lenin. But even though the Stalinists murdered Trotsky, the continuation of Lenin's work, the Fourth International, today is successfully fulfilling the heritage of the internationalist Lenin.

LUXEMBURG

'I hope I die at my post: on the streets or in prison.'

So wrote Rosa Luxemburg to her friend Sonia Liebknecht, during the world war of 1914-18. Her tragic death on January 15, 1919, at the age of 48, was part of the defeat of the working class of Germany in its revolutionary struggles.

She identified herself completely with this revolution: her fate was bound up with it from her youth, when she chose to turn every part of her enormous talents to the cause of the international working class.

Her appearance belied her greatness. This great revolutionary heroine, agitator, leader, brilliant economist, and organiser was left physically frail and slightly crippled by a hip ailment in her childhood.

But her power of logic and burning revolutionary spirit, her lifelong study and command of Marxist theory, made her a commanding figure wherever she appeared.

By the time of World War I she was the most hated woman in Germany, so far as the upper class was concerned . . . and the best-loved of the German workers.

So dangerous was she by the end of 1918 that German capitalists, working through the 'Labour'

The Young Socialists and the Fourth International

Extract from the resolution for the 6th Annual Conference of the YS at Morecambe in 1966.

'We intend to finish with the capitalist establishment, its wars, its secret diplomacy, its business secrets, its stock exchanges, unemployment, violence, evil and corruption. This is the programme of the Young Socialists, the programme or Trotskyism. Under the banner of the Fourth International, shoulder to shoulder with the Socialist Labour League, this programme will be fulfilled.'

politician Philip Scheideman, put a price of 100,000 Marks on the heads of Rosa Luxemburg and her comrade Karl Liebknecht.

For years she had earned the hatred of the comfortable bureaucrats and opportunists who dominated the German Social-Democratic Party.

At conferences she spoke of the revolutionary struggle for working-class power, of international solidarity with the Russian Revolution of 1905, of opposition to imperialist war, in terms which turned their blood cold.

Eventually they were her executioners. It was their government whose troops, vying with numerous counter-revolutionary gangs, smashed the skull of 'Red Rosa' with a rifle butt and threw her corpse into the canal, where it stayed for five months.

But the German working class, defeated in 1919, and the victim of the mass murder and repression of Nazism, will reclaim Rosa Luxemburg as their own.

Like her, the young workers of Germany, East and West, will train themselves as Marxists and revolutionaries against the employers and against the bureaucracy: but next time, as part of the Fourth International, they will win.





BOOK REVIEW

In defense of Marxism
by Leon Trotsky

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Reviewed by Nick Peck

Revolutionary theory versus idealism

Trotsky's last battle

1965 saw the 25th anniversary of the assassination of Leon Trotsky and it is fitting that this should be the year in which the book containing some of the last words of this outstanding Bolshevik revolutionary should be published.

Trotsky's talents as a historian and writer and his position as a maligned and persecuted figure fighting for truth and clarity in the 1930's won him the support of numerous middle class intellectuals, many of whom joined the small Trotskyist groups that were formed during those years.

In 1938 these groups formed the Fourth International, which was based on a revolutionary programme to lead the working class to power. These intellectuals played a very important part in the growth of the movement and the development of Trotskyist journals.

For many, however, this work was seen as a counterposing of one set of ideas with another, without any vital connection with the struggles of the workers against the employers—the fights against unemployment, poor wages, and for organisation.

When theory in the revolutionary movement is seen only as ideas, rather than as the conscious expression of the struggles of the working class, the way is open for the methods of the capitalists to enter the movement.

REACTIONARY

This serves the reactionary role of heading off any revolutionary struggle for power.

Such a position arose at the end of the 1930's, particularly in the American Socialist Workers' Party, and this book is a record of the struggles then taking place for Marxist theory.

'In Defense of Marxism' was not written as a book, but is a collection of letters and articles by Trotsky in the last year of his life, in the day-to-day struggle for the building of a revolutionary party.

In 1939, Stalin (in defence of the privileged position of the Soviet bureaucracy) and Hitler (in the interests of German big business) signed a non-aggression pact whereby Poland was to be shared between them.

The Red Army and the Reich-

swehr moved into agreed occupation areas and this raised the indignation of the middle classes throughout the world.

It is clear that in the preparations for the pact, Hitler had made clear his intention to occupy Scandinavia, and shortly after the occupation of Eastern Poland, the Red Army moved into Finland to protect the exposed Petrograd and the workers' state behind.

These actions—a pact with Hitler, occupation of Poland and Finland—offended the middle-class's ideas of sacred democracy and freedom, and these enraged idealist sentiments penetrated the intellectual circles of the Socialist Workers' Party.

'EXPLANATION'

Instead of theoretically probing for the roots of the development of the bureaucracy, a minority of people tried to give some other 'explanation'.

This minority consisted of three disparate groups.

The first was led by James Burnham, a middle class professor of logic (and today an arch supporter of Barry Goldwater)—

the second was led by Max Shachtman, a journalist and founding member of the Trotskyist movement in America (he today occupies a position on the extreme right wing of American labour) and lastly a third group led by the late Martin Abern, also a founding member of the Socialist Workers' Party.

Burnham's major difference with Trotsky was a philosophical one. He rejected dialectical materialism outright.

Shachtman and Abern were indifferent to the Marxist method—politics, they argued, does not depend on a method—and socialism is not a science.

Their rejection of method and their innate scepticism was in itself a method derived from the ruling class of America: the method of pragmatism.

While Burnham argued that the Soviet Union was a new form of capitalism, Shachtman on the other hand contended that it was a form of 'bureaucratic collectivism' and Abern maintained that the Soviet Union was a degenerated workers' state.

What united all three groups

however was their opposition to Marxist philosophy.

The majority led by James P. Cannon and Farrell Dobbs supported Trotsky against the middle class innovators and revisionists but contributed little or nothing to the theoretical discussion.

PRAGMATISM

After Trotsky's assassination this majority, which failed to develop Marxist theory, also began to succumb to the same class pressures and adopted pragmatism as their method.

Their subsequent evolution to a place on the far right of the radical movement in the United States testifies vividly to the correctness and timeliness of Trotsky's warning in one of the letters reproduced in this book.

'The question of a correct philosophical doctrine, that is, a correct method of thought, is of decisive significance to a revolutionary party just as a good machine shop is of decisive significance to production.'

It is still possible to defend the old society with the material

and intellectual methods inherited from the past. It is absolutely unthinkable that this old society can be overthrown and a new one constructed without first critically analysing the current methods.'

There are people now in the Labour Party Young Socialists who hold the ideas of the Socialist Workers' Party minority, who voted to expel our members from the Labour Party and who are now content to sit in small discussion groups identified with an organisation which has sold out all over the world—from the pensioners in Britain to the workers and peasants in Vietnam.

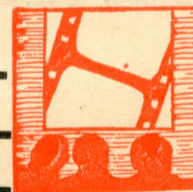
Above all every single Young Socialist branch must train itself in the methods of Marxism. In this way we help to raise the consciousness of the working class and prepare it to take the power.

'In Defense of Marxism' is an invaluable weapon in our struggle to complete the task that Lenin and Trotsky set themselves—the overthrow of capitalism throughout the world.

At the cinema with BOB DICKENS

THE PARTY'S OVER A Tricastle Production

Released by Monarch



This film is supposed to be a story of youthful rebellion against society.

Although a relatively unimportant film, the story on the whole being irrelevant to the struggles of working-class youth, nevertheless it has some interest sociologically.

It is set in the upper middle-class area of West London, mainly around Chelsea, and the plot revolves around two characters.

One is the free-living daughter of an American tycoon. The other is a haggard and loose-living bohemian.

He lives on a barge, his whole life being completely disjointed and unorganised, with no purpose to justify his existence other than going to parties and getting as many so-called 'kicks' out of life as he can in the true bohemian tradition.

Although supposedly not a rich man, he nevertheless seems to maintain a reasonable standard of living without apparent means of support, spending his days in coffee bars and pubs and continuously smoking cheroots, without the word 'work' being mentioned.

Of course, only offspring of the upper class could maintain this way of life, but as is usual with this type of story, this aspect is discreetly ignored.

A third figure is a young executive employee of the tycoon's company; he is the fiancé of the latter's daughter.

It becomes evident as the plot unfolds that the planned marriage was more of a business arrangement when an explosion takes place between the father and fiancé. The young man then accuses the older of being responsible for the girl's eventual death because of the spoilt, yet sheltered, upbringing she was given.

The circumstances of her death at a party were in fact simple,

although the situation is confused by a somewhat puzzling series of 'flashbacks' as various witnesses tell of what happened—some lying, some half telling the truth.

The story is a mess of personal intrigues (and much soul-searching by the central characters towards the end), exposing probably more than the directors intended.

The truth is that these fictional children of the bourgeoisie, like real-life ones, have gained their 'freedom' from economic troubles at the expense of the working class.

Having done so, they are incapable of doing anything constructive with their lives, being able only to seek ephemeral thrills that vanish as each day starts anew, getting drunk, smoking pot and entering into unstable relationships.

A working class organised by a revolutionary party has little to fear from such spineless opposing people as are depicted in the film, which, it has to be agreed, gives

quite a true picture of life for a large section of upper class youth in London, albeit unintentionally.

The film tries to say that these youngsters are rebelling against society, but, of course, this is completely false.

By far the falsest impression given by the film is the way in which so-called rebellion is idealised, whereas in reality any antagonism to society in upper class youth is engendered by boredom, arising from useless, empty lives which quickly disappears when they get directorships or other positions of responsibility in capitalist society.

Opposition to the established order by working-class youth, on the other hand, stems from the frustration which inevitably arises from wage-slavery.

This opposition is knocked out of them by the police and the rest of the state machine, in the hope that they will eventually settle down in their humdrum jobs for the rest of their lives until, unable to create profits for the employers, they are discarded onto the scrapheap of society to die off as quickly as possible.

Film directors, however, are unable to make films of the working class's everyday struggles except in the most banal and crude way.



Day-school (1)

ON the first Sunday in November a day-school was held in Northolt for the South-West Middlesex Federation.

Besides Young Socialist members from Northolt, there were young workers from Southall, Hounslow and Feltham.

A member of the East London Young Socialists led the discussion off with a talk on the Labour government and the role played by the Stalinists in the Communist Party and the 'fake' left leaders in the Labour Party.

The speaker explained how the ideas of democracy, British supremacy and freedom of speech are really only introduced to workers to confuse and split them.

Then he told how the police have 2,000,000 political people on their files—a quarter of the trades union movement.

He also told of the control the Tory Party exerts over the BBC and the role radio played in the General Strike of 1926.

After this each group of young workers was given questions to discuss and report back on.

The first group discussed how to fight fascism and concluded that a united front of all workers' parties and unions was the first step. Then the fascists must be cleared out by workers' defence squads.

This meant the involvement of many older workers in this struggle.

The second group talked about Rhodesia and concluded that the African workers were to be helped to throw out the white settlers by the support of the British working class.

The last group discussed the role of imperialism and its effects on the British workers. It was concluded that the workers had been dragged into two world wars and countless miseries to serve imperialism.

The British bosses were able to buy off large sections of the labour leadership in this country, but this leadership was now really crumbling as imperialism itself was dying.

Only a new leadership could prevent the bosses from re-establishing themselves by the aid of fascists or any other barbaric system.

Only Trotskyists could provide this leadership.

After the report back an older Scottish trade unionist spoke about the role religion plays in Glasgow, where it splits workers into Catholics and Protestants.

K. Veney,
Secretary, Northolt YS.

Day-school (2)

SCOTTISH Young Socialists met at the Rob Roy Motel, Aberfoyle, at the end of November for their week-end school.

Called by the Glasgow Federation of Young Socialists, the school was attended by YS members from other areas in Scotland and was based around the question: 'What is Imperialism?'

Opening the school, Dave Longley, publisher of Keep Left, pointed out that throughout the world extremely militant and heroic struggles by the working class had been defeated. We could only change this by learning the lessons of these defeats.

Mike Banda, Editor of the Socialist Labour League paper, 'The Newsletter', explained what capitalism was and how it developed, saying that it was based on employers forcing the working class to sell its labour at

a loss, thus creating profit for the employer.

The development of advanced industry in a few European countries and in America had given the capitalists in these countries enormous power: they had conquered nearly all the rest of the world and made these other countries produce profit.

The enormous profits made by the British capitalists enabled them to give a small section of the working class a much better standard of living, to keep them in support of the employers' system and opposed to revolution.

The Labour Party, set up by the trade unions, had only set out to get better conditions through Parliament for a small minority of workers.

Now, as the employers got into economic difficulties, they were able to use the Labour Party to try to keep down the conditions of the working class, by attacking trade union rights, for which generations of workers had made great sacrifices.

In discussion groups a lively exchange of ideas took place, on questions such as: 'Can imperialism be overthrown peacefully?' and 'Is it possible to solve the present economic crisis in Britain by the policy of the Communist Party, i.e., by cutting the Arms bill?'

Most of the members of the groups spoke up, raising questions such as: 'If the workers riot, will this lead to the overthrow of the employers?'; 'Can gangs beat the police?'

During another session it was pointed out that only if the working class fought behind a Marxist leadership, which saw things from the point of view of the real interests of the working class, could the capitalists be defeated and their agents, including the present police force, be replaced with control by the workers.

A further lecture on the betrayals of the leadership of the working class in the colonies gave rise to serious thought on the role of the nationalist leaders.

Later, during the afternoon, members of the school went climbing in the nearby hills. After the school was finished YS members attended a large dance at the hotel.

The standard of discussion at the school was high and the responsible level of discipline made it an important success.

Miles Buchanan,
Glasgow.

Motor industry

THE British motor industry is one of the most chaotic industries in the world today with over half the plants owned by America.

British firms are now finding it difficult to sell cars to the continent and the rest of the world because the German firm, Volkswagen, is providing fierce competition.

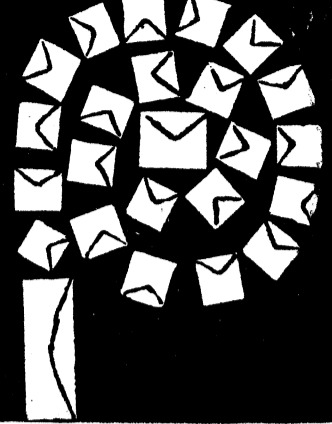
Now on the tail of Volkswagen is the Japanese firm, Honda, which has started car production.

These foreign firms have the latest automated machinery, whereas in Britain the machinery is out of date.

The export of cars from Britain is getting lower every year. Consequently, the bosses in the plants are faced with keeping their profits in the highly competitive market so they use cheap materials and cut down on costs of the parts.

They also stockpile cars in fields near the plants to avoid

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Send us your opinions, branch reports, ideas on how to build the Young Socialists

flooding the market and causing a drop in prices.

Not only are high profits made by the car makers but also by the repairing side of the trade in the big garages.

They charge what they like for repairs and spare parts: mechanics and apprentices are used as cheap labour, often working in appalling conditions.

Only when the motor industry, including distribution and repairing of cars, is nationalized, will we have good cars at last.

Ken Cowgill,
Horsforth, nr. Leeds.

Premises

ONE of the big concerns of many Young Socialist branches is finding premises. In some areas members are shifted from pillar to post trying to establish permanent meeting places, and often police and local councils are ranged against them in the search.

We must realise that our movement is trying to do something entirely new; we want to bring all young workers and students into the fight to establish a socialist system.

It is hardly surprising that those who want to keep things as they are try to stop us growing. When we do find a firm base, therefore, it is an important step forward in our work.

The South Yorkshire Region of the Young Socialists now keep and finance their own premises near the centre of Sheffield, and this has given us a big lead in the building of a Sheffield branch.

We are able to hold weekly record dances and draw in new members continually. Branch members recently decorated the meeting room from top to bottom before holding a Christmas party there.

We have set up a bookshop in the office, and this is well-stocked for selling important political works to members and to other workers and students in the area.

The fight to keep and build up premises as permanent centres for Young Socialist activity gives us not only a strong point among our present members, but we also establish an important gain in the struggle to break workers from the right-wing bureaucrats who, as often as not, are trying their hardest to stop the Young Socialists building.

Sheffield Central
Young Socialist.

Vietnam

DAY after day reports in the press—despite the distortions and misrepresentations—show that the Vietcong, far from being pushed underground, is proving too much for the imperialist troops of the U.S.

With the South Vietnamese armies routed and their crack Ranger battalions decimated, it is only the US marines who stand between the Vietcong and the liberation of Vietnam.

So desperate are the US diplomats that they promise a nuclear intervention if the Vietnamese working class continues to refuse to capitulate.

The imperialists are prepared to go to any lengths to increase their exploitation of colonial workers and peasants in an attempt to solve the crisis which faces them.

This is what US defence secretary McNamara means when he talks of the need to step up the influx of American troops into Vietnam and the possible use of nuclear weapons.

But at the time when the Vietcong are winning they are being betrayed by all manner of so-called socialists. The Soviet Union and Chinese bureaucrats refuse to give material support; the labour leaders in Britain join hands with Johnson against the Vietcong.

Just look at the squawks of the Tribunes every time the Vietcong win a battle. 'Peace' they shout, when it is clear that only socialism can bring peace in Vietnam, or anywhere else.

They effectively serve the imperialists by calling for negotiations instead of the defeat of the US troops.

The threats of the H-bomb, the betrayals of the Stalinist leadership in the Soviet bloc, the sell-outs of Wilson and the 'lefts' can only be met with the building of an international revolutionary movement.

In this task the Young Socialists must take a lead. The militancy of the young Negro workers and the students in the United States, the struggles of the youth against imperialism in Britain, France, Greece and many other countries, must be developed into a revolutionary struggle.

The responsibility for the leadership of this youth lies not with sanctimonious 'civil rights' parsons or with a bunch of 'lefts' who act as if they were gagged—these people do nothing but open the doors for the imperialists.

The young socialists in Britain and revolutionary youth in every corner of the world must meet this responsibility. The Vietcong cannot defeat imperialism on their own—the deciding factor is the solidarity of the working class internationally and the leadership of Marxist parties equipped with an understanding of how to defeat and overthrow imperialism for all time.

Mike Aylot,
Southern Region.

Legislation

NOW the Labour government wants to legislate against the trade unions. This means: an increase in production for the employers, who will only pay the same wages; mass unemployment; government control of wages; state action against trade unions and unofficial strikers; fines for trade unions; jail for unofficial strikers.

This situation will not result automatically in a growth of revolutionary consciousness in the working class. Only those who

receive a Marxist political training in the Young Socialists, under the political guidance of the Socialist Labour League, will be able to chart their way through this situation, developing the workers to a Marxist position.

Young workers experience in a similar way the harshness of a capitalist system which uses them as cheap labour, forces them into dead-end jobs and threatens them with the dole queue.

This is why youth take up the struggle of the old people against the employers, the Tories and the Labour traitors.

Young Socialists must mobilise youth to fight for the policies of the revolutionary movement on campaigns, rallies, meetings and demonstrations to which older workers and adult trade unionists can be drawn.

Such activity demonstrates in practice the possibility and necessity for young and old workers to unite in rejecting the old leadership and to participate in the building of a revolutionary party, able to lead the working class to power.

The Young Socialists must build up strong sections among organised youth and older workers in trade unions.

All sections of workers must join this lobby which is called by the Lambeth Trades Council on January 26, 1966, and must have the following demands:

No sackings and wage-freezing!
No legislation against trade unions!

Independence of the trade unions from the state.

Mike Singh,
Bradford YS.

Norwood

THERE is nothing to do and nowhere to go in Norwood, London, except for three coffee bars, with a minimum charge of 2s., and one or two clubs.

The cinema closed down last year to be replaced by bingo—not exactly the ideal place for youth to enjoy themselves.

For an evening out the only place to go is Streatham. But the price of anything there is even higher than in Norwood.

All this is coupled with the bad housing and overcrowding suffered in this area.

In these types of conditions, some of the youth started taking drugs as a way out.

The Young Socialists say that this cannot change anything because the only way out is for more facilities to be provided and many new houses to be built.

Taking drugs will not do this, it will only physically destroy the people taking them.

How are we going to change things then?

First of all, we must see where the problems come from. We know they arise from the fact that big business is only interested in profit and will not provide any facilities, unless they can get a big profit return. The same goes for housing.

The YS says that to improve our conditions, we must nationalize all the basic industries and the banks, so that we can plan the economy and provide better housing and facilities.

This involves building the YS branches so that we can lead the working class to fight on these and other demands to take the power.

Without doing this we cannot change anything.

D.C.,
Norwood, London, YS.

Merseyside YS lead fight against rent rise

Trades Council lobbied

By a Liverpool Young Socialist

MERSEYSIDE Young Socialists lobbied the December meeting of the Liverpool Trades Council and Labour Party demanding that its members vote against a proposed rent increase for local council tenants.

Posters covered the wall near the meeting hall. They declared: 'Young Socialists say: No Tory policies from Labour Council', 'Serve the workers, not the loan sharks', 'Don't mouth socialism, fight for it', 'Freeze rents, not wages', and others demanded nationalization.

Liverpool's housing account is £11 million in the 'red', owing, mainly, to the interest being paid back on old loans. To meet the deficit, Labour leaders in the city are proposing 10s rent rises immediately and a 40 per cent increase over the next three years.

Discussion

Nearly 30 Young Socialists discussed these increases when they met for their regular Monday Marxist class. They decided to lobby the Trades Council, and to go onto the Kirkby, Huyton, Speke and Walton housing estates with a petition.

The petition declared:

'The City Council must immediately commit itself to a policy of no rent increases under any circumstances. Furthermore, if Liverpool's housing is being crippled by the payment of high interest rates, then these payments must be immediately suspended.'

Commenting on the meeting of leaders of the Labour Council with Economics Minister, George Brown, and Housing Minister, Richard Crossman, in which a request was made for government help, it said:

'There will be no extra subsidies unless the banks, finance companies, insurance companies and building societies are nationalized.'

Response

The petition called on the Trades Council and Labour Party to implement its annual meeting decision to oppose rent increases, and to organise a campaign, along with affiliated organisations and tenants' associations, 'to defend the living standards of working-class families'.

The petition met with a big response and, at a meeting later, Young Socialists agreed that they were not simply collecting names, but advancing a political fight.

From Kirkby Young Socialists members reported complaints

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from almost every house of rents being too high already.

One housewife had commented: 'These places are not worth it. They were shoved up. How can the council be in the 'red' with us paying over £2 for places like this?'

On Walton estate, members heard complaints of damp ruining carpets; in one case, within a year.

In Speke, an old age pensioner told the Young Socialists: 'I'm not affected, but I'll sign because others are'.

Later 40 workers in the Standard factory read and signed the petition.

One worker took petitions into the English Electric factory to 'show what the young lads were doing'.

In all areas, it was reported, adult workers and housewives have welcomed youth leading the fight against the increases.

Fight still on

In the Trades Council meeting a resolution from the executive was defeated in favour of an amendment re-affirming opposition to rents and rate increases. It also called for assistance from the government and reduced interest rates.

The Young Socialist campaign played a part in getting this resolution through.

But the fight of the Young Socialists is still on.

The Trades Council opposed the rent rise, but still did not decide to organise the working class of Liverpool in socialist struggle against it.

The Young Socialist has to take a lead in that and seek to join up trade unions, factory committees and tenants in the struggle.

West Middx choose speaker for contest

Keep Left Reporter

HOUNSLOW Young Socialist, Phil Butler, was chosen at the Middlesex Regional Speaking Contest to represent the region at the Keep Left annual general meeting speaking contest.

Sixteen-year-old Phil has been a member of the Young Socialists for only two months, his contribution: 'The Purpose of Keep Left' showed that he understood that the working-class youth must have a newspaper of its own, in order to organise youth into a mass party capable of leading the working class to overthrowing capitalism.

Woolf workers strike for full trade unionism

Keep Left Correspondent

WHEN immigrant workers came to Southall, in Middlesex, they joined the local labour movement without waiting for any invitations.

They immediately set to work organising and joining their respective unions in local factories.

This fact put fear into the hearts of the local trade union officials, and enraged the fascists.

Young Socialists and rank-and-file trade unionists, on the other hand, were strengthened and encouraged by these workers.

Early in December 700 workers came out on strike at the Woolf Rubber factory for 100 per cent trade unionism, a pay increase and an end to victimisation.

The majority of these workers are immigrants and last year, with the support of the Young Socialists, they waged a successful strike

against the management.

On Tuesday, December 7, the majority of the strikers attended their Transport and General Workers' Union branch. Officials spoke to them for a short time and then told them to go home, even though the union meeting had not in fact finished.

Two members protested against this, especially as at least one alleged member of the British Nationalist Party was allowed to remain in the meeting.

Because they refused to end their protest, the officials called the police to throw them out.

Young Socialists must now fight for a large delegation to the January 26 lobby of parliament from Woolf's, to extend support for the strike, to throw the British Nationalist Party out of the trade unions and to resist interference by police in the trade unions.

No dispersal of immigrant tenants

-says YS

THE worst overcrowding and insanitary conditions are suffered by working class families in Brixton. In one road of 200 houses, live 4,000 people and there are now 13,500 families on the waiting list, which increases by 200-300 each month.

Even these are not true figures however because many people see so little hope of getting new accommodation that they don't even put their names on the waiting list.

The Lambeth Borough Council, in a recent statement, 'Immigration from the Commonwealth', blames this situation on the coloured workers. The document states that because there are so

many immigrants, it is impossible to build enough houses and that they do not have enough money. The document leaves nothing to the imagination as to the Council's attitude towards the immigrant population.

They say: 'As a direct and immediate consequence of the influx... the Council could not fulfil its statutory obligations... as regards overcrowding and insanitary conditions... there was no hope whatsoever of the Council being able adequately to house either present or future immigrants.'

Solution

The solution to this problem, says the Council, is to disperse the immigrant population. This reminds one of the policies of the racist South African regime.

Nowhere in the document does it mention the real reasons why there isn't enough money to build the necessary houses, i.e., when the Council borrow money for rebuilding it has to be paid back over a period of years.

With the high interest rates demanded, the Council is forced to pay back a tremendous sum of money—much more than the original sum borrowed.

Vast profits, which eventually come from the working class, go

into the hands of the bankers. Profits made by the owners of the land and the building and building supplies industries also add to the cost of building.

This racist statement is the kind of thing that encourages race riots, and most certainly attempts to split the working class.

Nationalization

This attack is only one aspect of the actions the employers are taking against the working class; the increases in the cost of living, especially the rents, and now the threat of anti-trade union legislation are some of the other attacks.

The Young Socialists say the only way to solve the housing problem is to organise the working class on the policies of nationalization of the land, the banks, the building and building supplies industries and, in fact, all the basic industries.

- NO DISPERSAL OF WORKERS!
- MAKE THE COUNCILS REFUSE TO PAY INTEREST TO THE BANKS AND MAKE THEM USE THIS MONEY TO BUILD MORE HOUSES!
- NATIONALIZE THE BANKS, THE LAND, AND THE BASIC INDUSTRIES!
- WORKERS UNITE TO FIGHT FOR SOCIALIST POLICIES!

Norwood Young Socialist.

YORKSHIRE BAZAAR A GREAT SUCCESS

Keep Left Correspondent

YOUNG Socialists from all over Yorkshire participated in the first Christmas bazaar held in the north by the Young Socialists.

It is estimated that at least 2,000 people from Leeds entered the large Corn Exchange to buy from stalls containing high quality goods made by Young Socialist members.

Various side shows from a for-

tune teller to roll-a-penny attracted many people and raised a considerable amount of money.

During the day many youths showed interest in the Young Socialist recruitment stall where 14 people signed forms to join the organisation.

The bazaar was a big success and many supporters considered it one of the best to be ever held in the Corn Exchange.