

Keep Left

The Paper For Socialist Youth

Vol. 7 No. 1

January 1958

SCOTS YOUTH SHOW THE WAY

Labour Must Lead Fight Against War

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for Keep Left. It is six years old today and goes into print for the first time in its history.

Throughout this whole period it has appeared regularly in order to express the views of Labour youth, playing an invaluable role in preventing the complete collapse of Labour youth organisation following the disbandment of the League of Youth by the right wing in 1955. That event resulted in orders flowing in from all parts of the country and 'K.L.' expanded from a local to a national paper.

Today we are sure that we can rely on the firm support of Youth Sections all over the country. Why? Because Keep Left is the paper of the Youth Sections. It is written and sold by the members, who also elect the Editorial Board. Keep Left is your paper—whether you live in Glasgow or Swansea, in Wigan or Brighton.

1958 will also be a year of

even greater import for the Labour youth movement. The young people in the Party have a tremendous task facing them and the fact that our paper is now in newspaper form gives them an instrument for tackling this job.

We think 1958 will bring industrial struggles and a further 'hotting up' of the attacks of the Tories on our standards of living. This means that the young people who work in our offices or on our jobs are going to feel the pinch. Apprentices, young building labourers and shop-assistants are going to realise that this Tory Government actually affects their pockets.

The Labour Party Youth Sections must go all out to give a lead to these people! Young workers on strike in our localities must be contacted. We must recruit to our Sections young people from picket lines and local trade unions, from large factories in our constituencies, from street corner meetings.

Through our paper and through political and social activities we should show them that the Labour youth movement has something to offer them. We must tell them that we believe that it is possible to achieve Socialism in our time and that we are prepared to fight through our Labour movement for the 'common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange'.

Michael Foot

'glad to see ... you ... expand'



I AM very glad to send you a message for your first printed issue of Keep Left. I have always held to the view that the Labour movement needs a strong and active Youth Section and am glad to see that those of you connected with Keep Left are able to expand your work in this way. The best of luck to the paper. Tribune welcomes a new competitor!

● See Other Messages Overleaf

IS the leadership of the Labour Party opposed to the American preparations for an H-bomb war on the U.S.S.R.? Is it in favour of closing down all H-bomb bases in Britain? Will the next Labour Government carry out a Socialist foreign policy—or will it follow in the footsteps of the Tories and their military policies?

The answers to these questions cannot be evaded by the clichés of Parliamentary debate. World War III will engulf our entire planet. No country will escape.

Those who support the stockpiling of H-bombs and guided missiles—whether they like it or not—are paving the way for just such a world. The argument that we must have bigger and better H-bombs in order to frighten the Russians is a Tory argument and has absolutely nothing in common with Socialist internationalism.

Today's war preparations affect young people all over the world—the young American soldier stationed away from home, no less than the young Russian worker whose living standards are kept down by the pressure of armaments imposed by the Soviet leaders.

Young Socialists stake their hopes not on capitalist power politics but upon Socialist internationalism. What does this mean?

Wanted: a policy

The youth of Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union are all shouldering the economic burdens of the most expensive armaments drive in history. To make and pay for the weapons of war they must live a life of constant uncertainty. They have not chosen to live such a life. Together, they have the power to call a halt.

Only one thing is lacking, a Socialist policy and leadership. It is no use our blaming the Russian or American youth for the follies of their leaders, while at the same time we continue to tolerate Tory capitalism here.

The solution is in our own hands. If our leaders were to declare that the next Labour Government would cease war preparations and utilise the wealth saved in building a Socialist Britain, this would be the most powerful of all weapons in solving the problems of the world.

It would immediately show the superiority of life under Socialism. With this policy in operation British Labour could appeal to the people all over the world to force their leaders to do likewise.

Would win world-wide support

Would this mean that Britain would be defenceless in the face of aggression? Of course not. A Socialist Britain basing itself upon an end to the burdens of war and freedom for the colonial peoples would rally the active support of people—both young and old—everywhere.

A united international struggle led by a Socialist Britain against the capitalist war-mongers would make war impossible. The first step is to break down the national barriers and forge international unity against those who prepare for war.

How does the leadership of the Labour Party go about this task? Reading reports of the Parliamentary foreign affairs debate last month one can learn that Mr. Shinwell is in favour of armed bombers patrolling our skies and Mr. Bevan made some devastating remarks such as 'No addition to our armament can make a real change to the inter-

national situation. You can't be deadlier than dead'.

The only demand that came forward from the Labour benches was for summit talks, a meeting between the British and Russian governments.

What sort of socialist policy does Labour propose for the summit talks? Talks by themselves are not enough, it all depends upon what sort of policy is to be decided. One can hardly expect the representatives of imperialist America, for instance, to support a Socialist policy—yet we cannot have a lasting peace without such a policy. The talks, therefore, can only have a limited objective, in so far as they provide an opportunity for our Labour movement to further expose the war plans of imperialism and strengthen the socialist forces in their fight against it. This can only be done if Labour adopts a socialist policy.

Two examples

The real fighters for peace are those who mobilise the people to take action now against the war plans of the Anglo American imperialists, by struggling for Socialism.

That is why the call of Scottish Labour to prevent Scotland from being used as a rocket base is so important as a step in the right direction. The Aberdeen Youth Section which is in the forefront of this struggle is to be warmly congratulated. Together with Salford youth they deserve the support of all young people everywhere. Actions such as these are the way to fight war.

Let Youth Sections everywhere go into action at once. Rouse the C.L.P.s for the following policy:

An end to all war preparations; no rocket bases for Britain; cease the tests and stop the manufacture of the H-bomb; throw the Tory war-makers out of Parliament NOW.

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THE news that rocket bases may be set up in the east of Scotland brings an immediate reaction from the Aberdeen Youth Section.

A resolution condemning a 'decision' that 'does nothing to ease world tension' and calling for an end to present military expenditure has been passed.

Labour Parties and trade unions in the area have been circulated with a petition and the holding of protest meetings is being discussed. They maintain that this is not only the concern of Scotland, and call upon all Youth Sections to follow the lead of Aberdeen and the Scottish Labour Party in the fight against this further menace to world peace.

Salford and neighbouring Youth Sections took part in a successful poster parade organised by the City Labour Party in its anti H-bomb campaign. A committee to which delegates are drawn from trade-unions, C.L.P.s, Youth Sections and religious organisations has been set up to co-ordinate the campaign. A film show and public meeting have been held, and further protest meetings, at which Youth Section speakers will participate, are planned.

Youth in Industry (No. 1)**I Am a Miner**

By Courtesy of TRIBUNE

IN 1946 this notice was erected outside every pit-head in the country:

'THIS COLLIERY IS NOW MANAGED BY THE NATIONAL COAL BOARD ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.'

Blue flags with the letters—N.C.B.—fluttered over the mines. There was rejoicing in the villages. Did this mean that the conflict between employers and men was finished? Would miners now have a say in running the pits?

COMPENSATION BY THE MILLION

Soon these hopeful questions were answered. It was announced that the national and regional divisions and pits were to be manned by the former owners, who were paid compensation running into millions. Up to 1956 £310 million had been paid out in compensation. The money had to be borrowed by the N.C.B. in order to pay off this compensation.

The ex-owners are better off than they were under private enterprise when the industry was in decline. The owners left the pits in very poor and deteriorated condition.

Why should it be then, that men who have made millions of pounds from the mines, and destroyed countless families in the course of doing so, should be in a position to receive money they didn't earn?

A GREAT ADVANCE, BUT . . .

Under nationalisation, working conditions have greatly improved in the mines: The five day week; 7½ hour day; holidays with pay; showers and baths at pit-heads; cheap coal for the miners and mechanisation have been introduced in the coalfields. But still we have explosions and a high death rate. The position remains one of unrest and uncertainty.

HAULAGE WORKERS

There are two grades of men in the mines—haulage and face workers. Haulage workers in the main are young—from 16 to 18 years of age. Their wages are decided on a national scale. Minimum haulage wage for 21 years or over is £10 10s. 6d. The haulage worker transports the coal from the coal face

to the shafts. This may be a few hundred yards or miles. Also he is responsible for material and supports supplied to the face-work.

FACE-WORKERS

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Ron Thompson
Miner and member of Wigan
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machines, which remove a great physical burden from the face-workers are not being introduced fast enough because of economy measures.

The face worker has his wages decided at pit-level, between men and management. Very often this causes conflict. Management invariably attempt to undermine the wages and the men refuse to go underground until there is a settlement.

HOW STRIKES HAPPEN

Management and Union officials say 'Go underground and we shall talk this out.' The men have heard that too often. A strike may follow usually lasting for two or three days or even a week. The men may return defeated or victorious—depending on the militancy of the leadership.

Sometimes strikes are broken when management issue dismissal notices. Recently this occurred in a pit near Wigan. Things were organised swiftly. Those served with dismissal notices took up positions at the pit-head. A stand-still

of all work at the pit took place. Thus the management were forced to negotiate on the terms of the men.

NEW DANGER

More ugly factors are now beginning to rear their heads. Absenteeism committees and joint committees of management and N.U.M. representatives at pit-level which have been sanctioned by the N.U.M. In Lancashire these committees are meeting opposition.

But many miners are unaware of their danger. It is true that men do have days off. The work is strenuous and dangerous. What is needed is a shorter working day and week. For instance, the men in my pit say:

'We don't see any absenteeism committees being set up for lords or ladies, the sons and daughters of wealthy business men. They are often absent on holidays and the like.'

We believe these committees will attempt to stop unofficial strikes because such strikes are regarded as absenteeism by them. They will be a green light for the N.C.B. to sack men who are militant and leaders of strikes. Men in the Union must refuse to participate on these committees.

The demands of the miners are as great now as they ever were:

Miners representatives on all boards and committees—

7 hour day as was the position prior to 1926—

Three weeks holiday with pay—

X-ray units to be set up at every pit (every year many, many miners die or suffer from silicosis or causes related to it).

These demands apply just as much to the Youth in the mines. However, they have two more special demands applicable to their conditions alone:

1. That the adult rate be paid at 18 years (at present it is 21 years).

2. The formation (organized from the Trade Union branch) of Youth Committees. This will encourage youth to be active in the Trade Union and so enable them to play a very important role in the Labour movement.

'More Power to**Frank Allaun M.P.**

'THE YOUNGER' generation is bound to win, that is how the world goes on!' I am quoting the words of Stanley Houghton, the famous Lancashire playwright. He is absolutely right.

It is vital that we have a powerful socialist youth organisation. If there is no Labour youth movement today, there will be no labour movement tomorrow. It is not going too far to say that the future of socialism lies in your hands.

What I would like to see is 50,000 members of the British Youth Sections. Why not? While it may be true that the economic situation for young workers is less grim than 25 years ago, I maintain that there is just as much to fight against—notably the threat of an H-bomb war.

Because I think Keep Left will help to build up such a mass youth organization, I welcome its growth in circulation and its first appearance in printed form.

With best wishes for success and more power to your elbow!

Fenner Brockway M.P.

I AM GLAD to hear that Keep Left is to become a printed journal. The youth of today belong to a generation which is separated from the previous experience of mankind in three ways.

First, the invasion of space means that we are emerging from citizenship of this world to citizenship of the universe. The problems which this will involve are beyond the thoughts of those of us who belong to past generations and must be faced by YOU!

Secondly, the new methods of warfare separate the coming generation from all previous generations, which have so often engaged in warfare. War is now unthinkable, and the youth of today must apply this conviction in practical policies if mankind is to survive at all.

Thirdly, the domination of the earth by the white races is now passing for ever. The peoples of Asia, Africa and the Caribbean are emerging to equality, and youth must build the new civilisation of inter-racial co-operation.

These are the new problems which face YOU! I hope that Keep Left will help to prepare our young socialists for them.

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I WOULD like to say that I welcome the signs of awakening amongst our Youth in the Labour Movement. Looking back in anger is not enough. We want to look forward to the certainty that if our youth keep alight the torch of enquiring minds and display social valour, the pioneers of socialism can apply this to the atomic and electronic age. Then the future of man, whilst perhaps not utopian, will cer-

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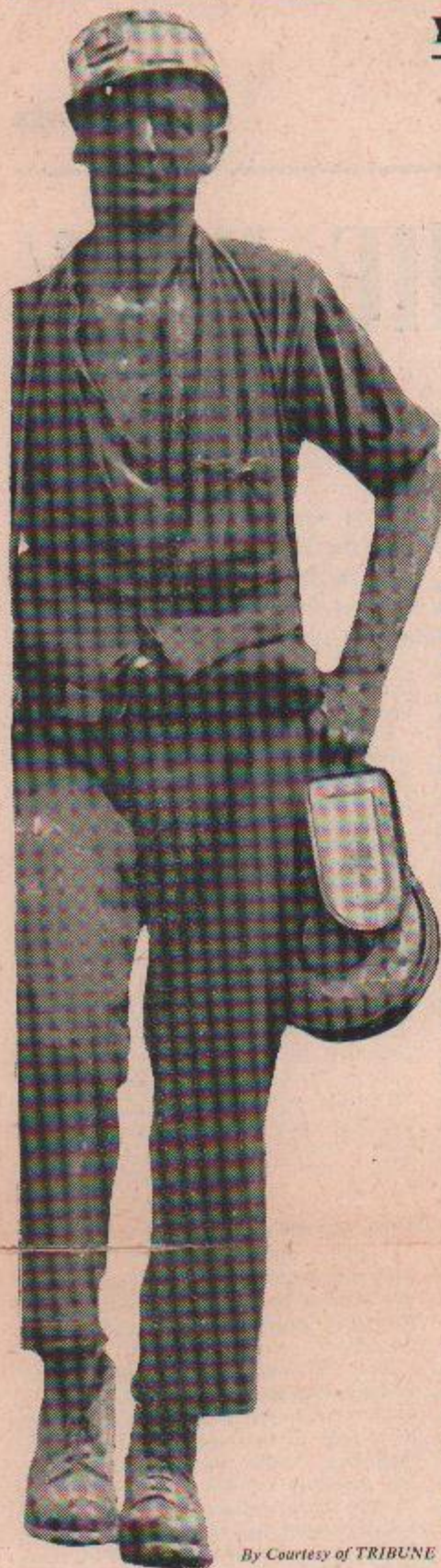
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★ ROUND THE REGIONS ★

Southern

SOUTHERN REGIONAL WEEK-END SCHOOL

THE week-end school held at Beatrice Webb House by the Southern Regional Labour Party on December 7th and 8th was an outstanding success, much enjoyed by the one hundred young comrades who attended. A week-end of wet and gusty weather, coupled with the fact that Beatrice Webb House is three miles from the nearest 'local', ensured that the comrades spent the maximum possible time in discussion both within the programme and informally.

After the usual welcoming speech from the Regional Organiser, the proceedings began with a lecture, put over in dramatic style, by Miss Sarah Barker (Assistant National Agent) on the history of the party. The audience quickly picked on the long string of names, dates and events to ply questions and air their views on a range of subjects from the role of the Trades Union Movement, the relationship of the Communist Party, Socialism and War, to 'Why we lost the government in 1951.' The later part of the evening was taken up with the expected Social, during which the comrades mixed admirably and began to establish firm contacts between their various Youth Sections.

Notwithstanding the discussions which continued far into the night, there was keen interest in the lecture given on the Sunday morning by Arthur Bottomley, M.P., on 'Britain and the U.S.A.' In answer to the broadside of questions on almost every aspect of political life in the U.S.A. and Canada, including Eisenhower, Nixon, Stevenson, the suppression of the Communist Party, Relations with Yugoslavia, the American Trade Unions, the growing force of Socialism in American politics and several other matters of importance.

The final session was a Brains Trust. The questions were very much to the point, demanding straight answers from the panel, which certainly did its best to respond accordingly. It should be mentioned that all questions were taken verbally (no slips of paper to be lost!)

and every member of the panel was given a very fair go at all the questions which he or she chose to answer.

Another School is to be held in the early part of next year and many of this time's students are already booking for it. It might be an idea to let a few organisers from other regions come along and get some ideas (and education!) there.

North-West

THE FIRST 'KEEP LEFT' MEETING OUTSIDE LONDON

A YOUNG worker in a factory in my area, asked me how to fight redundancy. I said "Keep Left have an article, explaining redundancy and how to fight it."

This was the view of one of the 54 members of Youth Sections from Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire who took part in a meeting organised by the East Salford Youth Section to introduce Keep Left.

Members of the Keep Left editorial board attended, and one of them, Vivienne Mendelson, opened by outlining the attitude which the Board had to the present situation. It was because they saw the prospect of young people involved in industrial and political struggles that Keep Left wanted to reflect the opinions of people in the Trade Union movement and the Youth Sections. One of its jobs was to explain topical situations, another was to tell of the struggles of the past, such as the General Strike, and show how they were related to the happenings of the present.

The decision to go into print in January 1958, taken by members of Youth Sections who had no resources but their own, was an important one.

Janet Sutton then gave details of sales and plans for the future.

Two things dominated the discussion: youth organisation and how to build up Keep Left and make it attractive to young people, not only those already in Trade Unions and the Labour Party, but those not yet organised.

Most people felt that the main need was to build up youth sections everywhere and get them working closely with their constituency parties.

Members from Leeds, Manchester,

Liverpool, Salford and Wigan said they supported the policies of Keep Left because it really represented the views of the members of the Youth Sections.

A member of the Wigan Youth Section said there could be a sale in the pits, amongst young miners, if Keep Left had in it articles about Trade Unions, working conditions or articles of interest to young workers. This was echoed by a speaker from Leeds, who also said that more and more students were becoming interested in politics and Keep Left could also include news from the Universities and Colleges.

Most of the delegates stayed to tea and a social organised by East Salford. There the discussion continued—not only about Keep Left but about everything else connected with Youth and the Labour Party.

London

SHOREDITCH SCHOOL

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Keep Left

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Every success to the new KEEP LEFT!

Ian Mikardo M.P.

'I WAS very pleased indeed to read from your letter of 28th November that Keep Left is now going into print.'

Maurice Orbach M.P.

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There is a great need for awareness among the young, there is

too much of the attitude 'I couldn't care less'. Someone's got to care. Our whole future is in the hands of the Labour Party—and the Labour Party's future is in the hands of Youth.

I am sure that Keep Left will serve a most useful purpose in giving opportunities for discussion and for reports about the youth sections of our great movement.

I wish the editors and contributors well in their endeavours.

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FOR THE first time in their lives, many young people may soon be facing unemployment and a reduction in their living standards as a result of the policies being pursued by the Tory Government. By continuing to manufacture and test nuclear weapons this same Government is increasing the danger of world destruction.

In this situation, the need for a strong Socialist youth movement has never been greater. By arousing the interest and enthusiasm of youth for Socialist policies and ideas Keep Left is playing an important part in the building of such a movement. The appearance of your paper in its new printed form is a great step forward and will be welcomed by all genuine Socialists.

★ ROUND THE REGIONS ★

Southern

SOUTHERN REGIONAL WEEK-END SCHOOL

THE week-end school held at Beatrice Webb House by the Southern Regional Labour Party on December 7th and 8th was an outstanding success, much enjoyed by the one hundred young comrades who attended. A week-end of wet and gusty weather, coupled with the fact that Beatrice Webb House is three miles from the nearest 'local', ensured that the comrades spent the maximum possible time in discussion both within the programme and informally.

After the usual welcoming speech from the Regional Organiser, the proceedings began with a lecture, put over in dramatic style, by Miss Sarah Barker (Assistant National Agent) on the history of the party. The audience quickly picked on the long string of names, dates and events to ply questions and air their views on a range of subjects from the role of the Trades Union Movement, the relationship of the Communist Party, Socialism and War, to 'Why we lost the government in 1951.' The later part of the evening was taken up with the expected Social, during which the comrades mixed admirably and began to establish firm contacts between their various Youth Sections.

Notwithstanding the discussions which continued far into the night, there was keen interest in the lecture given on the Sunday morning by Arthur Bottomley, M.P., on 'Britain and the U.S.A.' In answer to the broadside of questions on almost every aspect of political life in the U.S.A. and Canada, including Eisenhower, Nixon, Stevenson, the suppression of the Communist Party, Relations with Yugoslavia, the American Trade Unions, the growing force of Socialism in American politics and several other matters of importance.

The final session was a Brains Trust. The questions were very much to the point, demanding straight answers from the panel, which certainly did its best to respond accordingly. It should be mentioned that all questions were taken verbally (no slips of paper to be lost!

and every member of the panel was given a very fair go at all the questions which he or she chose to answer.

Another School is to be held in the early part of next year and many of this time's students are already booking for it. It might be an idea to let a few organisers from other regions come along and get some ideas (and education!) there.

North-West

THE FIRST 'KEEP LEFT' MEETING OUTSIDE LONDON

A YOUNG worker in a factory in my area, asked me how to fight redundancy. I said "Keep Left have an article, explaining redundancy and how to fight it."

This was the view of one of the 54 members of Youth Sections from Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire who took part in a meeting organised by the East Salford Youth Section to introduce Keep Left.

Members of the Keep Left editorial board attended, and one of them, Vivienne Mendelson, opened by outlining the attitude which the Board had to the present situation. It was because they saw the prospect of young people involved in industrial and political struggles that Keep Left wanted to reflect the opinions of people in the Trade Union movement and the Youth Sections. One of its jobs was to explain topical situations, another was to tell of the struggles of the past, such as the General Strike, and show how they were related to the happenings of the present.

The decision to go into print in January 1958, taken by members of Youth Sections who had no resources but their own, was an important one.

Janet Sutton then gave details of sales and plans for the future.

Two things dominated the discussion: youth organisation and how to build up Keep Left and make it attractive to young people, not only those already in Trade Unions and the Labour Party, but those not yet organised.

Most people felt that the main need was to build up youth sections everywhere and get them working closely with their constituency parties.

Members from Leeds, Manchester,

Liverpool, Salford and Wigan said they supported the policies of Keep Left because it really represented the views of the members of the Youth Sections.

A member of the Wigan Youth Section said there could be a sale in the pits, amongst young miners, if Keep Left had in it articles about Trade Unions, working conditions or articles of interest to young workers. This was echoed by a speaker from Leeds, who also said that more and more students were becoming interested in politics and Keep Left could also include news from the Universities and Colleges.

Most of the delegates stayed to tea and a social organised by East Salford. There the discussion continued—not only about Keep Left but about everything else connected with Youth and the Labour Party.

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