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## IMPERIALISM GOES TO WAR



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# British Features

## LABOUR'S YOUTH MOVEMENTS

JULIAN ATKINSON

In the second part of his article on Labour's youth movements, Julian Atkinson reviews the battles between the Labour leadership and its youth section from 1955 to 1970.

In 1955 Labour destroyed its ailing infant, the League of Youth. The decline of the League was partly due to the organisational constrictions applied to it and the refusal to allow it any political role. But the defeat of Bevanism and the depoliticisation caused by the long economic boom also caused major losses from the constituency parties (CLPs) and the youth organisation. The Transport House apparatus had never welcomed the League of Youth, and as it became progressively enfeebled, the itch to put the League down became too great to be resisted.

In place of the League came the Youth Sections. There were to be no inter-branch connections and national and regional machinery had been dissolved. Within Transport House the Youth Sections were the most popular of the various Labour Youth organisations. The sense of achievement must have been similar to that of the Japanese gardener who first created a full grown tree which stood six inches high. The Youth sections too were perfect in every detail. And they were so small that when they opened their miniature mouths, none of their left wing slogans could be heard.

The Youth Sections were run nationally by a sub-committee of a sub-committee of the National Executive (NEC). This body was rarely convened and sparsely attended. During the political excitement of Hungary and Suez, some rumours of these great events reached the Sections and there was a growth until a peak of 301 branches were in existence. After this a steady and uninterrupted decline took place. The strict supervision and absence of any structure beyond branch level made it certain that the Party would not be troubled by youth. It also seemed to ensure that the Party would have no youth.

### The H-bomb

But some changes were taking place. A new current of radicalism was growing and the focus of its interest was the hydrogen bomb. The majority of Labour youth were critical of the Labour Party's official policy — unilateral disarmament was considered the necessary attitude for Britain to take.<sup>1</sup> May Day 1958 saw the sections involved in raising the issue of the bomb. The youth contingent on the Glasgow May Day march shouted 'Ban the Tories' and 'Ban the Bomb'. The YS contingent in Leeds carried posters against rocket sites and the same was true of Liverpool and London.<sup>2</sup>

In January 1959 a number of Youth Sections attended a co-ordinating meeting in Luton. A statement was issued and sent out to other Youth Sections: 'This meeting considers that the isolation of the Youth Sections from each other is a major cause of their present weakness and thus a threat to the whole future of the labour movement.'<sup>3</sup> The letter ended with a call for a delegate conference in February. The conference attracted 40 delegates from London, the Home Counties and Merseyside. A committee was set up to establish a permanent form of cooperation. A weekend school was arranged and it was decided to build for the Aldermaston march.

These feeble signs of life in the patient were sufficient to seriously alarm the surgeons of Transport House. The London Labour Party circularised all its constituent CLPs and Youth Sections against unofficial actions or bodies. But before

Transport House could send out a punitive expedition national events intervened. Constitutions were about to be re-written.

From 1953, there had been a slump in the individual membership of the Labour Party. Gaitskell and the 'revisionists' such as Crossland and Jenkins had defeated the left in order to modernise and popularise the Party among moderate voters. The fruits of this policy were a haemorrhage of membership and votes as Labour went down to defeat in the 1955 and 1959 elections. The Labour Party found it almost impossible to recruit young people. In February 1959 a series of articles on 'The ageing Labour Party' by Anthony Howard

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appeared in the *Guardian*.<sup>4</sup> They shocked the Party leadership by giving an uncomfortably accurate account of the Party's youth troubles. In addition to irreverent references to 'tired grizzled men and grey-haired care-worn women' they drew attention to the success of unofficial and youthful socialist organisations such as the New Left Clubs.

### The turn to youth

These articles backed up the proposal of Anthony Greenwood that a working party be set up to study the problems of youth recruitment and to report back to the NEC. The working party included George Brinham, Anthony Greenwood, Jim Callaghan, Harry Nicholas and Alan Williams. Also some people with knowledge of youth were co-opted on to the group. Anthony Greenwood told the author in 1965 that the working party made slow progress. He believed that some of the Transport House staff were dragging their heels. Alan Williams wrote: 'By the end of the Commission nearly everybody under forty hated everybody over forty.'

The report was presented to the NEC a week prior to the 1959 conference after the general election defeat in which the Labour Party had done particularly badly among young voters. Brinham, however, gave no details to conference of the working party's report which had caused considerable discussion on the NEC. A long contribution finally arrived at a breathtaking conclusion: 'If we are going to make a sustained and regular effort to recruit young people to the party, we shall have to devote more resources from the party to the recruitment of youth.'<sup>5</sup>

The contributions from the floor of conference were more useful. The brash, radical MP for Greenwich, Richard Marsh — it was rumoured he had once worn a CND badge at his selection meeting — made some points: 'If we have a youth movement and it is worth having, it will not be polite and respectful but will pass resolutions of no confidence in everybody on the platform, tell us what is wrong with the leadership of the party and inform us how we can have the socialist revolution in the next 24 hours. If they did not do these things they would not be any good to the movement, anyway.'<sup>6</sup>

### The Young Socialists established

In January 1960 the Young Socialists were officially formed and in February a model constitution and standing orders were produced. The new body was to be an integral part of the Labour Party, but it was to have a national structure and a national conference that would take political resolutions and elect a national committee. It was even envisaged that it would control its own youth paper.

The constitution was more liberal than previous ones. But it was only a half-way house to the autonomous movement that the Manchester Left Club had called for in their influential pamphlet calling for 'a new Young Socialist Organisation



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to be set up'. Verbal guarantees that a Young Socialist paper would have a democratic editorial board were suitably vague.<sup>7</sup> Area federations and regional committees were required not to discuss politics. The constitution still firmly 'integrated' the youth under the control of the National Agent's office, which placed a question mark on the ability of the YS to carry out its own campaigns.

The branch-by-branch adoption of the new liberal constitution exemplified the tensions in a set-up that raised expectations but only went halfway to allow them to be achieved. The meeting of the Eltham YS was not atypical. There was a meeting of about 50 Young Socialists. We were politically very inexperienced, some wore CND badges, and some were along mainly for the dances. Two unsmiling middle-aged men at the front had come to get us to adopt the constitution. They were full time workers for the party. One of the Young Socialists asked whether the constitution could be amended and what would happen if we did not vote for the document at this meeting. The man from the London Labour Party replied immediately: 'The first, you can't. On the second, we will close you down.' The meeting went very quiet and then there were a series of whispered consultations. The constitution was proposed and seconded. Two voted for, one against and all the others abstained. Our political education had started.

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## the history of previous youth organisations showed the first victim of inner party struggle was the youth

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Whatever problems were to lie ahead did not impede a rapid growth of the YS. The 288 Youth Section branches in December 1959 rose to 608 YS branches in October 1960 and then to 726 by April 1961. The political roots of the growth of the YS are easy to identify. Large numbers of young people were radicalising. Nuclear weapons was the major focus of their attention. But other issues such as the apprentice strike of April 1960 and the anti-apartheid campaign drew people into the YS. The dangers facing the youth organisation were equally clear. The Labour Party was in crisis as the Left had won its biggest victory over the Right since the War at the 1960 party conference.

The history of previous youth organisations showed that the first victim of inner party struggle was the youth. And although the YS had a less restrictive constitution than its predecessors it soon became clear that the Regional Youth Officers intended to control the branches in their areas. Some 72 per cent of the Labour Party's grant to finance the YS was used in paying the salaries of the RYO's<sup>8</sup>, who were often used in general party work. When they were involved with the YS, they acted as political sheep dogs, or vainly tried to interest young activists in healthy alternatives such as five-a-side football or canvassing.

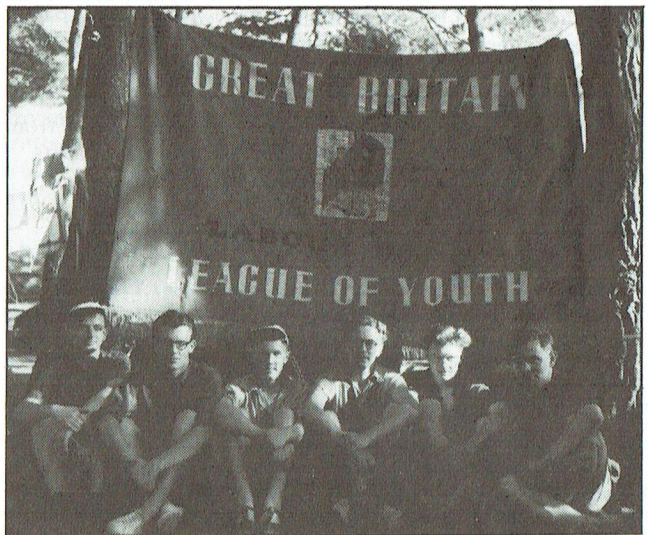
The first serious problem arose over the proposed YS newspaper *New Advance*. There was no elected editorial board. Instead an advisory committee of four was elected from the YS National Committee. One left winger resigned from this advisory body after the first meeting saying that it was a waste of time as it exercised no real control.<sup>9</sup> *New Advance* was launched in November 1960. True, there was no elected editorial board and Transport House just appointed Roger Protz from their Press and Publicity Department, but Protz was of Young Socialist age. The first months of publication did not quiet the alarm of the critics. Only one article appeared on the key issue of unilateralism. The circulation barely struggled to 4000 and those in the know dropped heavy hints that little of this was actually paid for. The majority of the YS members never considered *New Advance* as their paper. The papers produced by the left were to have far more influence and positive support among the YS rank and file.

### The Socialist Labour League

The Marxist Left at this period was far smaller than today. The dominant organisation, in fact the only truly national group, was the Socialist Labour League. This was not the crazed caricature of itself that it became later as the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP). But even by the late fifties elements of degeneration could be seen. It had split from the Fourth International in 1953 and the very erratic functioning of the International Committee did not provide a sufficient counterweight to purely national pressures. After 1956 the SLL won a series of recruits from the CP who were vigorous and incisive but whose politics were often marked by brash crudity. *The Newsletter*, the SLL paper edited by Peter Fryer, was fine in many respects but was marred by ill thought positions — such as support for the United Nations, alongside an increasingly ultra left line on other issues.

This political degeneration became more acute when the SLL refused to take part in the moves to reunify the other Trotskyist forces into the Fourth International which was completed in 1963. It led to a series of splits within the SLL as many of its leaders were expelled or left. The internal regime of the League became extremely undemocratic and dissident members were assaulted. When Fryer left the SLL he was so scared that he went into hiding and squads of SLL supporters were sent to find him. His companion was alternately told that Fryer had had a nervous breakdown and had to be found or that the ports and airports were being watched and Fryer could not escape!

In 1960 these already-existing aspects of degeneration were not fully developed. The youth paper associated with the SLL but published by Hendon North and Wembley North YS branches, *Keep Left*, had a large and growing influence. As early as 6 November 1960 150 delegates attended a *Keep Left* conference in Manchester which supported the Scarborough unilateralist decision and the five MPs, including Michael Foot, who were expelled from the parliamentary party for voting against the defence estimates.



The NEC saw *Keep Left* as a threat. On 23 November it wrote to the Hendon North and Wembley North YS branches that: 'It is not the function of a branch or branches of the Young Socialists to issue a journal for national circulation.' The YS replied quickly to this attempt to censor the spread of opinion. By December the number of sponsoring branches had increased to fifteen, and by April 1961 this number had risen to thirty-five — a figure that included a number of branches that supported other left currents but wished to take a stand against the incipient witch-hunt.

In 1960 the other left groups were very small. The precursor to the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) had under fifty members, mainly based in London. On their initiative a paper *Rebel* was produced, based on YS and Young CND branches. The Revolutionary Socialist League, which later dissolved to set up



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the *Militant* tendency, possessed only nuclei in London, Liverpool and South Wales. Their youth paper *Rally* was duplicated. The embryo of the precursor to the International Marxist Group (IMG) was a handful of people mainly in Nottingham who irregularly produced a local edition of a youth paper also called *Rally*. Only the SLL was effectively nationally organised. This, together with the new wave of radicalisation, meant that the political map was not drawn. Huge areas of the country were unknown to the left groups which had often only vague reports of what other isolated currents were up to. The unified left paper *Young Guard*, founded September 1961, was preceded by a welter of Stanley and Livingstone encounters.

## The 1961 YS conference

The first YS conference held on Easter Saturday and Sunday 1961 was crucial in creating a national structure and debate. The date itself was controversial as many YS members wanted to attend the four days of the Aldermaston march but had to compromise and sandwich the conference inside two days of marching. The conference was an undoubted success. The 381 delegates present were enthusiastic and noisy. There were political resolutions, even if they had to be vetted by the local general management committee (GMC) before being submitted. The conference decisions showed that the YS was firmly committed to the left.

A resolution calling for unilateral renunciation of the H-bomb and withdrawal from NATO was passed by 222 votes to 97. By 189 to 113 the resignation of Hugh Gaitskell was demanded due to his attitude to the decision of the Scarborough conference. The conference also came out in favour of: democratic control of *New Advance*; a new YS constitution to be drawn up by the YS National Committee; the election of all officers; the right to decide policy by discussion at any organisational level; and unrestricted publication of independent YS newspapers.

The undoubted sensation of the conference concerned *New Advance*. The first issues of 1961 had seen the paper used to fan the flames of an anti-left witch hunt. The editor, Roger Protz, came to conference and distributed a duplicated leaflet. 'For the past six months I have been the so-called editor of *New Advance*. During that short time I have been the subject of some praise and much criticism; the praise has come from Transport House and the criticism from the Young Socialists ... there are two very fundamental things wrong with it:

1. It is not democratically controlled by its readers.
2. It does not campaign for conference decisions.

The NEC is editor of *New Advance*, not me. I carry out their wishes. They have produced a paper FOR Young Socialists, not OF Young Socialists ... *New Advance* must have its freedom. It must be run by an elected editorial board and editor who will base its policy on conference decisions.'

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## few instances of Reg Underhill causing people to laugh are on record

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It was an honest, courageous and naive intervention by a not very political young man at the end of his tether. He got the sack and Reg Underhill, aged 47, was appointed as editor. Reg was not naive and few instances of him causing people to laugh are on record.

But the conference revealed a severe weakness in its attitude to *Keep Left*. The same delegates who voted for withdrawal from NATO, for the 'unrestricted publication of independent Young Socialist newspapers', and condemned the recent attempt to infringe on these rights with the assistance of official party machinery', also voted to express 'concern at the activities of the unofficial Keep Left group and in particular the policies of its paper *Keep Left*.' A motion denouncing the attacks on *Keep Left* from Transport House fell by 172 to 148.

These inconsistencies arose from the nature of the Young

Socialists. In the main they had just entered politics and although overwhelmingly sympathetic to CND and other issues raised by the Left, were suspicious of being manipulated by the more experienced and articulate political 'hards'.

The main responsibility for this unhappy situation did not lie with *Keep Left* but with the Right. The NEC opened a continuous witch hunt with its statement of November 1960. *Keep Left* represented at that time the only nationally organised left current. It was also, because of its growing sectarian excesses, disliked by many on the left. The Right, when it initiates a witch hunt, does not search around to find the most personable and charming of its political opponents. Leftists with flawless skin and impeccable table manners are purged later in the proceedings. The soft left in the YS failed to grasp this elementary law of salami tactics.

## The witch hunt by the Party

The general crisis in the Party demanded a purge. As in the thirties and fifties, the youth section was an early victim. Another factor was the extreme weakness of the organised right. It regrouped in late 1961 around a manifesto and then a paper called *Counterblast*. A small group produced the paper, including Julia Gaitskell, and David Warburton (now risen to great heights in the GMWU). The initiative seems to have come from the pro-Gaitskell Campaign for Democratic Socialism, organised by Bill Rodgers. *Counterblast* was not short of money, from some transatlantic agencies. It just lacked support. After two issues it collapsed.

David Warburton, under the pen-name Victor, was given a regular column in *New Advance* to promote the witch hunt. It also carried a regular series of articles attacking *Keep Left* in the most extraordinary terms. One article began; 'Is there a Trotsky at the bottom of your garden?'

Overall, the YS was still healthy in 1961 despite the gloom that followed Gaitskell's victory on the bomb at the 1961 party conference. In May 1961 the YS rally at Scarborough attracted 600, of whom 400 stayed for the whole week.

In September a new force appeared with the first issue of the paper *Young Guard*. Since the Easter conference, supporters of *Rebel*, *Rally*, the youth page of *Labour's Voice*, a group of apprentices from Glasgow, and members of the Manchester New Left Club had been discussing. They decided to merge the existing youth journals to form *Young Guard*. Its statement of aims called for:

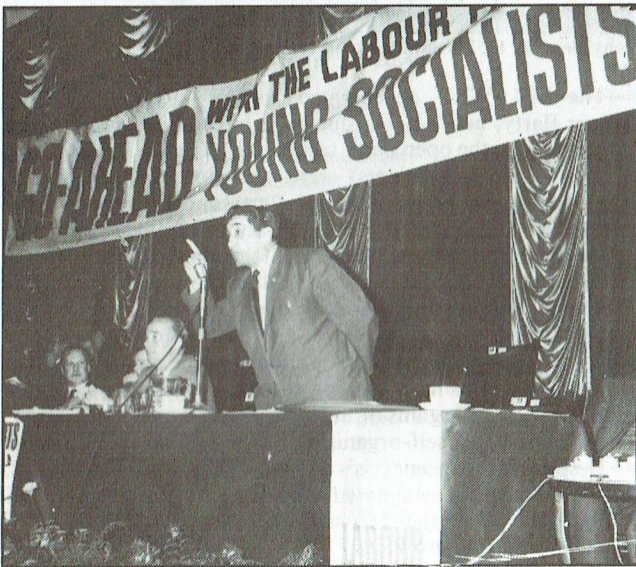
'The return of a Labour Government, nationalisation under workers' control of the banks, insurance companies, land, and major industries; unilateral renunciation of all nuclear weapons and withdrawal from NATO and all existing military alliances; self-determination for all colonial peoples and withdrawal of all British troops from overseas; an internationalist foreign policy based on co-operation with genuine labour movements throughout the world; votes and full legal rights at 18; three-year apprenticeships, full trade union rights and an end to blind-alley employment; free access to the highest educational facilities for all, and replacement of the tripartite system of education by comprehensive schooling; the building of a democratic young socialist movement within the Labour Party pledged to achieve the above programme, working in conjunction with young socialists from other countries'.

The paper was controlled democratically, through regional readers' meetings which elected delegates to the national editorial board. This in turn elected a small working editorial board to produce the journal. At first many independents were involved, which gave an open feel to the NEB meetings. But as time went on and the YS declined, tension between different tendencies increased. At its best *Young Guard* was an attractive non-sectarian paper of the Left, and played a valuable role in educating a new generation of Marxists. At its worst it was an ill-tempered publicly-sold internal bulletin.

There were real differences between the sponsoring groups, on questions ranging from the nature of the USSR to whether it was possible for the colonial revolution to advance into a



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Reg Underhill (above) and Frank Cnapple (below) at 1965 YS conference

socialist revolution. On this last point, Cuba saw a major divide between the 'state capitalist' views of the supporters of the IS (predecessor of the SWP), and the Trotskyists, which reached flash-point during the Cuban missile crisis. In September 1963, supporters of the RSL left *Young Guard* and in September 1964, the *Militant* appeared.

### Keep Left's mass turn

In 1961/2 *Keep Left* produced a tactic to fit its view that a slump and a revolutionary situation were in the immediate offing, involving 'the greatest wave of strike action since the 1926 General Strike'<sup>10</sup> and an economic downturn. Fascism was seen as imminent, and the answer was a turn to social activities — in particular dances — to build a mass working class base. A number of very large 'social' branches were built, but the 'raw youth' — as the cadre called them — moved on very quickly, and only a small number were ever politicised. When the activist organisers moved on from the large social branches, they left nothing behind. Except in a few cases, most branches sponsoring *Keep Left* on the eve of proscription were relatively small.<sup>11</sup>

*Young Guard* had a mass orientation. It was built from CND, and helped to build it. It played a role in the apprentice movement and in the campaign against immigration laws. It was also touched by sectarianism, and did not find a way of waging an effective and open defence against the witch-hunt — although never, as *Keep Left* perpetually alleged, lined up with

the Right. *Young Guard* avoided the hectic approach of *Keep Left*, but IS supporters risked falling into an opposite danger when they envisaged a long period of capitalist boom and a quasi-American depoliticisation of the working class.

The Right's conference victory on the bomb in 1961 led to bitterness in the YS, especially since the parliamentary Left helped make it possible by their unwillingness to fight and by their support of various bogus compromise attempts. The Easter 1962 YS conference showed the movement was still basically healthy. Delegates totalled 356, from 756 branches. During the year there had been a joint campaign with the Labour students organisation NALSO, against the Immigration Act, which conference condemned as racist. Less happily, conference also passed, by 156 to 149, a call for compulsory health checks on immigrants.

Unilateralism was readopted, Labour's programme 'Signposts for the Sixties' rejected, and the EEC attacked. There was considerable confusion on various motions on the United Nations; the Right used the opposition of the Left to the UN as a stick to beat them all, especially *Keep Left*. In a stage-managed provocation against *Keep Left*, three YS members from the West Midlands alleged they had been attacked by *Keep Left* supporters. One, who was given delegates' credentials to address conference, later withdrew his statement. The whole event had been planned at a meeting in Lord Walston's flat in the Albany, attended by George Brown, Julia Gaitskell, and Chris Cowling, the editor of *Counterblast*.<sup>12</sup>

Unfortunately, conference accepted the delegate's first version. *Keep Left* had no policy of using violence, but some of its supporters did sometimes get out of hand. In the end conference agreed by 186 votes to 150 to call for an investigation into *Keep Left*. The door was opened for a purge.

### George Brown attacked

The YS crisis exploded on May Day 1962. In Glasgow, Gaitskell was booed and heckled by the YS, which had played a leading role in the demonstrations against Polaris submarines in Holy Loch. In London George Brown spoke in support of the US H-bomb tests at a May Day rally. As the YS contingent moved in, stewards snatched their unilateralist placards. The platform was stormed, the microphone was torn from George Brown's hands, and a banner with the message 'No tests' was gently tapped on his head. The action was undeniably stupid. It broke with democratic norms and nearly got a lot of YS

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the sudden look of fear in those piggy eyes as we crowded over the protecting barriers I still remember

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members, including the author, expelled. But the sudden look of fear in those piggy eyes as we crowded over the protecting, crowd-barriers I still remember.

These events gave the NEC its excuse to move. *Keep Left* was proscribed and an investigation ordered into *Young Guard*. Seven NC members of the YS were to be interviewed. The Glasgow Federation was closed down and Roger Protz, then the editor of *Keep Left*, was expelled by his constituency party. The three *Keep Left* NC members were expelled and the number of YS branches began to decline.

The new NC organised an unemployment demonstration for November, which the NEC rescheduled for February 1964. About 1,500 young people turned up, 28 MPs spoke at a poorly attended meeting in Central Hall, and there was a rally at Speakers Corner. Credit must go to the *Keep Left* NC majority — though typically, they soured the event by organising their own meeting from which known supporters of other tendencies were chucked out although it had been advertised as open to all.

The 1964 conference showed the YS in decline, with only 347 delegates. The left won the policy votes again but the infighting was worse. There were persistent rumours that *Keep*



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Left was about to split, in spite of again winning seven of the 11 NC places. *Keep Left* held an ugly meeting at conference. Roger Protz, the main speaker, delivered a careful, low-key speech on unity of the left. But John Robertson, chair of the outgoing NC, then made a statement. He had earlier warned the conference that attempts were pending to have him expelled for selling the proscribed *Keep Left*. 'Young Guard are political scabs' he ranted. 'If you do not get out of our way we will go over your bodies ... *Young Guard* was formed to lead the witch-hunt and smash *Keep Left* ... *Young Guard* supporters say that the unemployed don't want to work. If you are not 100 per cent with us, then you are 100 per cent against us.'<sup>13</sup> Protz left the SLL shortly after. Robertson was also to join IS later, and argued that the whole performance was delivered on the personal orders of Healey.

## The split of Keep Left

Easter 1964 had seen a series of seaside scuffles between 'mods' and 'rockers' *Keep Left* argued that this was part of the Tory tactic to divide the working class, and raised the slogan 'Mods and rockers, unite to fight the Tories'. The right took this as their signal for a purge. Streatham YS was suspended after a fracas in which YS members had gone to a local bowling alley to intervene in a threatened fight between 'mods' and 'rockers' and try to recruit these young people in the Labour Party.<sup>14</sup> The first meeting of the YS's new NC condemned the suspension, and was adjourned by Reg Underhill and never reconvened. The eight Left NC members held their own meeting and adopted a pre-election manifesto.

The impending general election made Transport House even more determined to deal with the YS. In June the NEC expelled John Robertson. After a rowdy picket in his defence, Len Williams warned for the NEC that 'the future of the YS might have to be considered after the election.'<sup>15</sup> In February 1965 *Keep Left* held its own conference and announced the formation of a breakaway YS. The NEC reorganised the old YS as the Labour Party Young Socialists, which held its first conference in Malvern in November 1965.

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## any attempt to transform the YS into a campaigning organisation was hindered by Transport House

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Despite restrictions there was some political discussion at the conference, and the new constitution was heavily rejected. But the YS was in serious trouble and could not pull itself back to become a serious and outgoing part of the labour movement. The Right's relative strength in the YS had increased. The Left was still in disarray. In Autumn 1964 a moderately successful 'Save the YS campaign' was run by *Young Guard*, *Militant*, *Tribune* and NALSO. The newly formed *Militant* saw its role as providing 'a conscious socialist lead for the labour movement, particularly the YS... our aim is to be the Marxist voice of the YS and militants in the labour movement.'<sup>16</sup>

*Militant* was severely critical of *Keep Left's* split. Its supporters also involved themselves in moving the expulsion of *Keep Left* members. One S. Mani, a member of the *Militant* editorial board and Wandsworth YS, moved the expulsion of three *Keep Left* supporters, after some provocation, it is true, as they had led 30 lads into a YS meeting and intimidated existing members. For once, *Keep Left's* slanders that the rest of the left was an accomplice in the witch-hunt, could be backed with evidence. Worse than Mani's behaviour (which he later admitted was wrong) was that *Militant* justified it. This ended a short-lived fusion between the *Militant* and forces around *The Week*, who split away to found what later became the IMG.

The major reason for the failure of the YS from 1960 to 1965 has to be laid firmly at the door of Transport House. The constant witch-hunting created an atmosphere in which fratricidal sectarianism could develop. Any attempt to

transform the YS into a campaigning organisation was hindered by Transport House. The restrictive YS constitution, though it appeared liberal, gave its NC no executive powers to



Tony Benn at 1957 Youth Rally in Hyde Park

The SLL/WRP degenerated further after leaving the Labour Party, but that was due to its already-present political failures, not to the open party tactic itself. The SWP, IMG, and ICL (or their forerunners) were able to intervene in the radicalisation outside the Labour Party and to grow without degenerating. The only tendency to stay solidly locked into the Labour Party in the late sixties and all through the seventies was the *Militant*. By 1970 it had won political control of the YS. It interpreted the *Keep Left* split as demonstrating that nothing existed outside the Labour Party and YS. Its influence was to insulate the LPYS against all the shocks of the class struggle in the 1970s. Its ideas have been preserved as in a peat bog, unaffected by the Left's gains on such issues as women's liberation, Ireland, and black self-organisation.

Despite all the recent crisis and growth in the Labour Party, the YS has relatively stagnated. The task of building a mass YS able to intervene in the class struggle has still to be achieved. turn outwards and grow.

*Keep Left's* 'mass line' was vitiated by its profound sectarianism and increasingly eccentric politics. *Young Guard*, after the decline of CND, failed to provide any set of programmatic or campaigning objects. After 1965, the impact of the Labour government produced the hibernation of the YS. Wilson's betrayals on trade union rights, racism and Vietnam meant that the new generation of radicals was repelled by the Labour Party.

**JULIAN ATKINSON** is a former national secretary of *Labour Student*, and an active member of NATFHE and the Labour Party in the East Midlands.

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