

INTERNAL BULLETIN NO.38

FEBRUARY 1983

The Galtieri Gang Rides Again Casey, McVicar, Meehan
League wets throw in the towel Casey
For labour movement based youth work .. Coventry
Reply to comrade Hunt Jagger
(Note: the resolution referred to in this article will be
found in IB 39).

Conference is February 18-19-20.

Further discussion articles and resolutions should be sent to the
centre, if possible typed A4 on Roneo stencils.

Please if possible contribute 20p per copy towards the cost of
producing the IBs and mailing them.

AFTER "HIGH NOON AT GOOSE GREEN" - ANOTHER EPIC OF MAVERICK POLITICS:

The Galtieri Gang Rides Again

Part One (Introduction - not for voting on)

Even a casual reading (they hardly merit anything more than that) of many of the pre-conference documents now being produced with increasing frequency and decreasing political clarity reveals a striking paradox: the more they talk about the crisis of leadership in the working class, the more they talk about the need to build an international party of world revolution, the more they talk about the need for us to provide genuinely revolutionary leadership to the class, etc., etc. - the more that they do all this, the less do they have anything to say about the concrete work we need to be doing in the here and now.

Take the question of the likelihood of a forthcoming General Election, for example. A reprehensibly reformist event, we know, but nonetheless one that sharply raises the level of political debate and activity, and presents real opportunities for intervention by revolutionaries. What should our intervention consist of? Apart from passing references to a resurrected SCLV, one looks in vain through the documents for any concrete proposals.

Another example is the witch-hunt, now beginning to finally gather steam. It is a reality which we, and the reformist/centrist Left need to confront, and defeat. But insofar as the issue is taken up at all in many of the pre-conference documents, one often finds only idiosyncratic nonsense.

As a final example, there is the latest round of anti-union legislation, itself only the harbinger of still further attacks, and the question of our relation to/intervention in the new wave of left caucuses/Broad Lefts in the unions. Levy's document does at least start to get to grips with such issues and acknowledges that "we need proposals on this work (against anti-union legislation) to cope with the new situation". We do indeed need new proposals. The problem is that there is no sign of any such proposals being presented to the national conference.

In place of any concrete proposals on such issues, we are confronted with a hotch-potch of politically semi-literate documents, fantasising about rebuilding the Fourth International (with, of all things, the TILC), and rambling incoherently about liquidationism, programmatic abandonment, transitional demands etc. A variety of shibboleths ("our primary orientation is to the working class") is substituted for specific proposals. Was the background reading for these documents done in the archives of the IMG - or the archives of the Spartacists?

Or in the archives of the Militant? Cunliffe's 'British Perspectives' are characterised by the same bland emptiness and abstract impressionism that permeates anything produced by Militant, the only difference being that whereas the latter are always steeped in addle-headed optimism, Cunliffe's appears to be the product of a fit of manic depression. Kinnell's unending amendments represent an attempt at artificial (extremely artificial) respiration. Euthanasia would be a more appropriate fate for such a document.

Having glossed over the specific tasks facing revolutionaries in Britain, Cunliffe proceeds to perform the same feat world-wide, with the same degree of success. 'Aspects of the international situation and our tasks' ignores most of Europe (e.g. Spain, Portugal, Holland Belgium etc.), virtually the whole of Black Africa apart from the South, and most countries in Arabic Africa as well. The section on 'deformed workers states' mentions only the degenerated workers state of the USSR (doesn't Poland even deserve a mention 'impassim?') whilst China is put into a separate category (does this mean it

isn't a deformed workers state?). And the one area of the world where the document's Mickey Mouse politics would have some relevance is also ignored completely: Disneyland. In terms of coming to an understanding of 'our tasks', the document is about as meaningful as a long-term weather forecast (dark clouds over Britain, violent storms in Central America, rising temperatures in the USA etc.).

But, as in the Falklands debate, it is left to Evington to lead the way in terms of sheer inanity. This person who is going to rebuild the Fourth International can't quite decide whether or not we've turned liquidationist. On the one hand, he warns of the future danger of "sacrificing our political programme and independence of press" whilst only a few paragraphs later he writes that "we have allowed ourselves to become an organisation which has abandoned the method of Marxism and the direct fight for our programme ..., drifting into political accommodation to reformism in practice".

(I didn't know Galtieri was a reformist.)

It seems that we're just partial liquidationists, for Evington talks of how "the complete liquidation of the League has been avoided ..." - but the line of 'reasoning' which leads him to this conclusion only complicates matters further: liquidation has been avoided because "no-one bothered to explain through the IBs just what the idea of convergence and the relationship of S@ to the League actually was." But if no-one understood this notion of convergence - wouldn't that only make infinitely more likely our liquidation into reformism?

In relation to the Register, the document is simply incomprehensible. What is meant by the 'political capital to be made out of the Register'? The kind of 'political capital' which CND could make out of a nuclear holocaust perhaps? And how would registration 'compartmentalise us off from possible allies'? It would be more accurate to assume that 'possible allies' will be somewhat more speedy in registering than S@. But, since Evington is so aghast at the possibility of attempted registration by S@, why doesn't he put forward some ideas about how we can step up the fight against the Register? Could it be that this vanguard of proletarian revolution hasn't got any?

How fitting that in the midst of this mass of political irrelevancies now afloat one should find a piece of flotsam still adrift after the Falklands debate: Layton's "The political problems are as yet unresolved".

Layton has got it all sussed out. Scornfully rejecting Kinnell's argument that the Argentine faction adopted their position under pressure from the rest of the Left, Layton explains that "the former majority position was due ... to the pressure of the Left in the Labour Party, like Reg Race. Did they not fear being isolated from the social pacifists and construct their position accordingly?"

In the real world, reformism certainly is an infinitely greater force than the 'world Trotskyist movement'. But not so in the make-believe world of Galtieri-ite 'anti-imperialism' inhabited by Layton and his fellow travellers, where reality is re-defined in accordance with some Byzantine notions of mediaeval schoolmen in America. Layton is quite correct to write that "the political method of the majority must come under examination" - he might learn something. In all honesty though, we doubt it.

It goes without saying that the crowning glory of this political dunghheap is the declaration of the pretentiously titled "Internationalist Tendency" (ET), a less than loveable alien intruder from a different political world, several light years away from reality.

ET's document amounts to: fantasising about rebuilding the Fourth International on the basis of a rump talking shop of lifeless pedants; accommodation to Latin American nationalism, even in the form of semi-fascist dictatorships; retreat from the struggle against social democracy in Britain; a vicarious tail-ending of Irish nationalism; and support for "socialism through genocide" in Afghanistan (albeit, of course, 'critically').

ET's 'internationalism' manifests itself solely in the cosmopolitan nature of its political accommodationism. Behind the pseudo-Trotskyist rhetoric of the document lies nothing more than that which has long been a leading characteristic of fake Trotskyism: prostration before Stalinism. Hardly the healthiest of starting points from which to proceed to rebuild the Fourth International. The most ET could hope to rebuild is the post-Lenin Comintern - of the Third Period.

What these pre-conference documents have in common, though to differing degrees, is a fundamental failure to grapple with the problems of the class struggle which we face today. Instead we find little but timeless shibboleths, religious appeals to the prop-

erties of transitional demands, superstitious incantations of the evils of reformism, and a collapse into programme-fetishism.

There has been much bemoaning the lack of growth of the League since the fusion. But if all that the League has on offer is genocide in Afghanistan, support for mini-colonial ventures in the South Atlantic, bombing Protestant workers in Northern Ireland, and ducking out of fighting social democracy in Britain, then one can only congratulate workers on their good sense in failing to join up.

In reality though, our situation and record of work is hardly as bleak as those so averse to any continuation of it make it out to be. The 'Health Workers for the Full Claim Campaign' and the MCDTUR were both initiatives of the League, which was also the only organisation on the Left ready to switch over to a semi-weekly production of the paper at the time of last year's abortive BL strike. However abortive or limited in their impact such initiatives may have proved, they certainly suggest a more serious approach to trade union work on the part of the League than that implied in much of the contents of the IBs currently in circulation.

The same holds true of other aspects of our work as well. The role of the League in WF would contradict the idea that somehow the League has turned away from fighting the double oppression of women for the sake of a more easy-going life in the LP. In terms of international solidarity work, one could point to the establishment of the Labour Committee on Palestine or the role of the League in the PSC as refutation of the notion we have abandoned internationalism to collapse into a social-democratic insular parochialism. And in terms of the so despised work in the LP itself, there are a number of positive aspects to the work of the League, e.g. in LAW, CLPD, LCI, a number of local Labour Briefings etc.

The progress made has been limited - partly by the failure of sections of the membership to carry out decisions of the League, particularly in relation to the struggle against social democracy. Those so dismissive of the work of the League might be on slightly firmer ground (though in fact they wouldn't) if they themselves had made a more serious effort to carry out such work.

Instead of turning our backs on the progress made, however modest, and following ET on its Oehlerite binge, we would suggest a more fruitful course of action would be to build upon the gains hitherto made in the period ahead. Although infinitely more modest than the various schemata currently being sucked out of different people's thumbs for rebuilding the FI, the following proposals are put forward in the context of attempting to come to grips with some of the major problems which the League is likely to be confronted with in the immediate future.

(We would also suggest that such proposals contribute infinitely more to the rebuilding of the FI than all the bluff and bluster in so many of the current IPs. The FI will be rebuilt by revolutionaries relating to the realities of the class struggle; the FI will not be reborn through political necrophilia with the TILC.)

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Part Two (To be voted on)

General Election

1) Immediately after production of the official LP manifesto S@ produces a broadsheet as our response to it. The broadsheet will take up the political inadequacy of the manifesto and counterpose to it an alternative based on three main elements: vote Labour; fight for a workers' government; for working class mobilisation whatever the outcome of the General Election. The broadsheet will propose an alternative political platform upon which we argue for CLPs to mount their election campaigns, with certain demands in the platform to be prioritised (e.g. unilateral nuclear disarmament, British withdrawal from Ireland, restoration of all cuts in public spending). At the same time as raising the demand for a workers' government in the course of such a campaign, we explain in the pages of S@ in intelligible language the relation of a workers' government to the dictatorship of the proletariat etc.

2) Immediately upon production of this broadsheet, we begin to campaign around it and get CLPs to adopt it and put it into practice. We use the alternative campaign as a means to turn LP branches outwards. (We do this anyway; the approach of a General Election and our proposals for the campaign to be mounted in relation to it provide a better opportunity for putting this into practice.) We fight to get CLPs to hold public meetings, carry out recruitment drives on the basis of the alternative campaign.