

LETTERS

Labour, Livingstone and the War

THE LATEST issue of your "Marxist" journal has an article by a member of the Labour Party urging support for Ken Livingstone in the London election against anti-war candidates (irrespective of the virtues or otherwise of the Respect Coalition) when anyone who is opposed to the war will never vote for the party whose leader led us into it (Martin Sullivan, 'Third Time as Farce', *What Next?* No.28).

Livingstone may have opposed the war last year but since then has crawled back into the imperialist-Labour Party. Also, anyone who opposed the war would not hesitate to vote for a Tory who opposed it – as Ken Clarke said he would have done had he been Tory leader last year. As it was, the best mainstream option we had was Kennedy's partial opposition for the Lib Dems. Now we have a variety of Green, Respect and other anti-war candidates that people opposed to the war can vote for.

I can't see your journal has any claim to call itself a "Marxist discussion journal" if you invite discussion with non-Marxists such as Sullivan.

Patrick Ainley

Ken and the *Sun*

I WAS interested in your defence of Livingstone's time as a hack for the *Sun* (Letters, *What Next?* No.28). My own memories of that time are maybe not so rose-tinted. I seem to remember that Livingstone used his column for a vicious red-baiting assault on the Anti-Nazi League and the SWP.

If the editors believe that red-baiting and ridiculing the left are "political arguments that *Sun* readers never usually get to hear", then frankly they should try reading it sometime.

Darren Williams
Red Party

UKIP: Not Racists or Fascists

AFTER BROWSING the web I came across the article 'Brownshirts in Blazers' [see this issue – ed], which implies the UK Independence Party are racist Nazis. As a member of the UKIP I find this offensive and if you had bothered to do more research on the subject, assuming a reasonable level of intelligence, you would have not bothered with such a poorly thought-out smear article.

UKIP does not care what colour you are, and

even welcomes controlled immigration. All it is against is allowing unlimited people, and that includes everyone in the human race including white people, from coming in and joining the British society thus obtaining all the rights and privileges that this provides.

It is like me asking you to let anybody come and share your house, because you have a spare room, and even if you have 50 people already, having to let them in. Controlled immigration is not the same as shutting up shop to all foreigners.

Articles like yours will only drive people towards supporting the UKIP, and while I am happy about that, I would think you would want people to hear a balanced argument for your case rather than trying to rubbish others.

Matt Davies

Trotsky and the United Front

YOUR ARTICLE on the United Front (*What Next?* No.28) makes some interesting points. However, the assertion that Trotsky advocated something called "the United Front from within" is highly dubious.

I take it this was intended as a paraphrase rather than a direct quote. The reference is presumably to Trotsky's advice to his French supporters in 1934 that they should enter the Socialist Party, on the grounds that it was "necessary to find a place for oneself within the framework of the United Front" in circumstances where the Trotskyists were "too weak to claim an independent place".

The late Al Richardson took this as evidence in support of his view that "revolutionary entry is simply the form this same strategy" – i.e. the early Comintern's United Front strategy – "takes when revolutionaries do not lead any substantial sections of the working class". (See his review of *The Labour Party: A Marxist History* by Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, in *Revolutionary History*, Vol.2 No.3.)

But the quotation from Trotsky doesn't really prove that. In 1934 Trotsky was arguing for participation in an *existing* United Front, namely the alliance between the Communist and Socialist Parties. Simply joining a reformist party when it is *not* part of an alliance of workers' parties, is something rather different.

You could no doubt argue that entryism is based broadly on the method of the United Front, but I think you'd have difficulty finding a quote from Trotsky to back that up.

Dave Roberts