

New Labour's electoral victory

Anarchist Communist Federation

1997

Labour's massive electoral victory points not to coming militancy in the workplace and on the streets in the immediate future, but to a period of quiet in which the new Labour government will be able to carry out attacks on the working class more easily than the Tories had done. They still have the backing of large sections of the boss class, are seen as "having a clear mandate", are still supported by large sections of the media and are establishing an increasingly authoritarian rule, both through government and inside their own party.

They are most likely, in the near or middle future, to meet opposition from three main groups: the anti-roads movement as Labour appears to be continuing with some of the Conservative road-building programme; from workers in education, in both schools and further education colleges where attacks on conditions and jobs will continue, and in the public sector generally, both as a result of wage freezes and the possible imposition of restraints on industrial action. The simmering discontent in the inner cities among the poor and unemployed may also be flashpoints in the near future. All of these are possible areas of tension. However, they must be put up against the fostering of a general consensus and the active aid of the unions in sabotaging any workplace unrest.

What recent events have shown is the increasing coming together of the political class, whether they be Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat or even Green. This presents both dangers in increasing "one-party" authoritarian rule, and possibilities as increasing numbers become estranged from mainstream politics and begin to seek a radical alternative. The so-called DIY culture that the media are commenting on, points to this growing alienation from parliamentary politics and *for* direct action.

As we have repeatedly said, the opportunities for the growth of revolutionary anarchism are the best for some considerable time. The disorientation and indeed collapse of the Left, whether Labour Left, Trotskyist or Stalinist, and the increasing irrelevance of the Green Party, coupled with the growing realisation among many that the unions are there to sabotage struggle, means that a space is opening up. And yet among British revolutionary anarchists there is disorientation, a clinging to localism and indeed voluntary isolation among some. The fragmenting of Class War and the decision by some of its ex-members to turn towards dialogue with others, may point towards increasing co-ordination and possibility for greater united action. The developments there are still fluid, and it is still too early to pass judgement. For our part, we will continue to argue for united activity and propaganda and greater co-ordination where possible,

whilst remaining convinced of the need to create a mass movement for revolutionary change, alongside the creation of a specific anarchist communist organisation with a clear manifesto and programme.

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