

King Arthur launches Socialist Labour Party crusade

Anarchist Communist Federation

1996

ACCORDING TO THE millionaire media: "the hard left has been stuffed by Blair", so much so it seems they've left to form their own party. So we have Arthur Scargill's move to create a Socialist Labour Party, which he obviously hopes would unite the disorientated and demoralised Labour left wingers and other assorted itinerants to formulate a new party based on 'class understanding, class commitment and socialist policies' (New Statesman and Society, 17/11/95 page 7). Yet even among the 'hard' left, such as the Socialist Workers Party, there is very little support for Scargill. The SWP's calls to vote Labour 'without' illusions are becoming even more tired and contradictory as Blair romps towards victory (with right-wingers like Lord McAlpine saying: 'I don't think you could put a razor-blade between Blair and Major') with the grudging support of 'most' Labour members who don't want to appear 'divisive'.

Yet what would a Socialist Labour Party have to offer? More of the same it appears or rather Clause Four with knobs on. So Scargill's 'common ownership' still means nationalisation, state ownership not ownership by the working class. Anarchists have consistently argued against both nationalisation and privatisation for very good reasons, arguing against rule by cut-throat capitalist bosses and bureaucratic Soviet-style apparatchik bosses. We can watch 'new' Labour out-Tory the Tories with increasing rhetoric on tax cuts for the middle classes, scapegoating of dole 'scroungers' and 'free' market bullshit that satisfy even the the most ardent right wing nutcases. But what about old/new Labour? Scargill seems to have broken from the usual Trot/Stalinist line by saying: 'Labour have moved irrevocably to the right', whereas the 'official' line is still ranting about 'defeating' the Tories. Anarchists argue that the 'watered-down' social democracy of the parliamentary 'left' and the boring dogma of Trot/Stalinists are equally bankrupt. Anarchists have consistently exposed the the inadequacies of the Labour Party which only introduced welfare reforms in 1945 for fear of popular revolution. At the moment Tony Blair shows comparisons with American style party politics with the only party being the property party and its two wings the Democrats and the Republicans. In this situation Arthur's New/Old 'Socialist' Labour Party looks unlikely even to appear or if it does likely to sink without trace after an election disaster. Anarchists argue that the Labour Party and even a 'socialist' Labour Party would act as a brake on independent working class struggle. We need to continue to build a credible

revolutionary alternative outside and against the mythmakers of both parliamentary politics and the narrow dogmatists of the left. As Errico Malatesta put it over a hundred years ago:

“We struggle for anarchy, and for socialism, because we believe that anarchy and socialism must be realised immediately, that is to say that in the revolutionary act we must drive government away, abolish property and entrust public services, which in this context will include all social life, to the spontaneous, free, not official, not authorised efforts of all interested parties and of all willing helpers”.

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Retrieved on May 13, 2013 from web.archive.org
Published in *Organise!* Issue 41 – Winter 1995/1996.

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