

The Liberal Party Won

What Does This Mean For Anarchists?

Collective Action

May 23, 2019

The party that has rigorously championed the cause of the rich, powerful and ignorantly fearful has won. Most disappointingly, the lack of effective counter arguments from the so-called 'opposition' have left a void the Liberal Party has gladly filled. We're not convinced that the working class are sadomasochistic or stupid, so why has all this come about?

As Anarchists, the idea that our participation in shaping society should begin and end with a ballot box once every while is laughable, even when election time does sometimes come with a sausage sizzle. We have grander visions for a more engaged and directly democratic society that is fundamentally incompatible with capitalist governments. We have a vision for a society based on freely associating communities that govern their own interests and federate with other communities to make large scale decisions — A classless and egalitarian society based on human need and not profit. Without demonstrating this political motif in communities of need, and without enlisting people actively in our vision, can we rightfully be shocked that more working class people are buying into right-wing narratives, centered around xenophobia, fear and trickle-down economics?

If we want to make any kind of meaningful change to society, then our mission has to be to build social movements that are capable of forcing that change, regardless of which party is in power. It won't be easy and it won't happen overnight but it needs to happen. There are deadlines for this project, and we know the Liberal Party are too deep in the pockets of the coal magnates to act in the interests of the planet. This election may make the job more difficult but the job remains the same.

Leftists and activists have reacted with shame, disbelief, despair and anger at the result of the Liberal Party election win. These reactions show that the racism embedded in this country is somehow a surprise to people or a deviation from the norm as opposed to being founding principles of the Australian state's colonial project.

Jokes about moving to New Zealand miss the point completely, especially from those on the radical left. For those of us who are settlers, it is our responsibility to dismantle, organise against and deal with The colonial-capitalist project that is Australia rather than bugging off and leaving First Nations Peoples in the dust. These reactions are neither helpful nor do they get to the root of why this election happened or how we should organise in its wake.

What shouldn't be surprising about this election is that most of Australia don't see class or social equality the same way that we do. If we are going to build movements that are capable of changing anything at all we need to recognise that. Without detracting from the ability for oppressed groups to analyse, dissect and challenge their oppression, our work lies in having difficult conversations with people about the issues that affect their lives. We need to stand and act in solidarity with people targeted by a new and re-invigorated wave of Liberal attacks on workers, women, gender diverse people, the disabled, migrants and the poor. That requires organisation.

As Anarchists, we need to have thought-out alternatives to the profit-driven capitalist society we find ourselves in. If we are against profit as the fundamental driving force of decisions in society, then we must offer some kind of plan for a society based on human-need.

If authority and power in the hands of disconnected rich, white men acting in their own interests don't answer the problems facing communities of colour, indigenous, queer, gender-diverse and working poor communities, then we must have a plan for how power might be placed in the hands of communities and groups of people to govern their own interests.

If we believe the state is a counter-intuitive way to achieve a classless society without oppressive institutions, we must be ready with ideas to pose about how we might reorganise this society without a state. How communities might make economic and social decisions.

If we are for an international revolution where all oppressed people lead their own emancipation, then we must think seriously about how our organisational tendencies make that a possibility.

There are Anarchists that don't like voting, that vote only on consensus, that work only in small affinity groups. Any organisations, campaigns and efforts we take part in must prefigure the structures, principles and ideas that would make it possible to run large-scale Anarchist operations and communities, enough to avert impending climate crisis, rising homelessness and further land-grabs by the colonial state. These communities and operations will have to involve as many people as we'd need to undo the harms done by the attacks of those in power; of colonialism, patriarchy and capitalism. This requires organisation, structure, decision-making, coordination and action.

All of our efforts and strategies must be consistent with how an eventual Anarchist society might actually be operated. Through this practice in our outward-facing work, we show people that a world without leaders is possible and thus show the merit of our ideas in action. If we don't organise to demonstrate and involve people in another possible world, they cannot be blamed for choosing the one presented to them time and time again.

We should be able to offer a vision to people of how an Anarchist society might be better than what we've got now. If all we can do is negate the world we live in without suggesting and building an alternative, we leave communities with no avenue for change but the charade that is the parliamentary process.

Too often Anarchists are the gatekeepers of Anarchism. Anarchism, if it is to be successful, can't belong to a subculture of people, to a clique. It must belong to all people; to shape it, to implement it, to make it better, more relevant and more effective. If we are committed to gatekeeping Anarchism and not finding ways to bring it to people then we will fail. If we are committed to being underground cells so concerned with our security that we disappear into obscurity, we will fail. As well as actions that might require security and trusted relationship, there should be beginner, public-facing events that bring new people in. This requires discus-

sion and coordination that we don't often see among Anarchists in Australia — Long-standing projects of Anarchists to discuss, dissect and disseminate Anarchist ideas to more people and to demonstrate the possibilities of communities and groups organising for human-need in a world bent around profit. This isn't a call for people to join our organisation, but for people to organise together in some capacity.

Building the institutions, services, campaigns and initiatives necessary to sway people to the cause of human-need and not profit, requires meetings and a documented political memory. It requires making mistakes. It requires space to learn and revise strategy. It requires trust built with people who work together over long periods of time. It requires voting on decisions. It requires agreeing on strategy and tactics. It requires discipline and perseverance. If we don't do this, we will fail.

Rather than lamenting this election, let it be a call to action. No one that has been in the crosshairs of our government will have any doubts that the Liberals, emboldened by this win, will strike harder. The question is, what are we going to do about it?

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