

The Labour Party has arrogantly thrown the gauntlet to the working class and the Left. We are aware of our responsibility in picking up that gauntlet. The gulf between the working class and the Left is enormous. The size of the task is a daunting one, but the challenge is nothing compared to the political consequences of our failing to act.

RESISTANCE

One possible post election scenario, is that some sections of the working class finding themselves in confrontation with a 'socialist' government, and hungry for real change, end up sharing common ground with the radical right out of sheer desperation. The Left has an obligation to offer the working class something other than the choice between New Labour and a resurgent far-right. Labour are forcing the working class into a fight. As we see, it, the alternative to resistance is either capitulation or collaboration. The setting up of an independent working class organisation is something that has to be done. New Labour have themselves provided us with the opening. So, lets get on with it.

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If you require further information, or have suggestions on how the IWCA could best serve political the interests of the working class, contact:

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Affiliates: Organisations £5 • individuals £1 • Donations welcome
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the Independent Working Class Association

"The Independent Working Class Association has been established to promote and celebrate the political independence of the working class and to pursue the political and economic interests of that class, with no consideration for, and regardless of consequence to the existing political and economic structures."

(founding statement 21 October 1995)

In June 1994, the media reported that Labour had recruited only 6,000 trade unionists from the 4,000,000 political levy payers offered a vote in the leadership poll. Since then Labour has recruited well in excess of its 80,000 target figure. But if they are not trade unionists, who are they? Activists within the Socialist Workers Party who will be campaigning for Labour at the next election already know the answer. "All the indications are that the electoral support and possible membership emerges from the thoroughly rattled middle classes and not from the working class at all." Former deputy leader Roy Hattersley concurs: "we live in the age of the almost universal middle class what they want from a political party is prudent compassion. The near unanimous support for cautious altruism is an electoral blessing."

IWCA

Labour, a middle class party for a middle class people. This is the moment of truth for the entire British Left. Will it continue with the pretence that Tory v Labour represents the very essence of class conflict, while bemoaning the fact that 'socialism' has been abandoned or take advantage of that fact? It's make your mind up time.

LESSER EVIL

Like the Left the working class is increasingly split into pro and anti-Labour camps. And as with the working class only the former are organised. The first step toward reaching the unorganised working class is to organise the unorganised anti-Labour Left. Many working class people are increasingly alienated from Labour. The strategy of the far right is entirely reliant on this alienation. However it is not the job of working class militants to mend this relationship. On the contrary, the task is to make the break permanent. Labour's arrogant contempt in regard to its former constituency is based on the belief that there is no possibility of an alternative to them, and so the working class will be forced to vote for them as 'the lesser evil' regardless. *"The least advantaged - and in some ways the least attractive members of society will undoubtedly vote Labour whatever the party does."* (Roy Hattersley April 1994)

CONSERVATIVE LEFT

One consequence of this analysis, is that their left flank is glaringly vulnerable. Many organisations to Labours Left defend their repeated failure to attack this flank on the grounds that: a) 'Labour is a step to the left' b) 'we are too small to stand against them' c) 'we are the socialist alternative'.

While such organisations present themselves as radical, they are on the wrong side of this natural demarcation line. The one consistent message of the conservative Left is that a politically independent working class is not only impossible - but - undesirable.

As sponsors of The Independent Working Class Association we disagree. Now more than ever what is needed is a politically independent working class organisation. The setting up of such an organisation is the only practical response to the situation we are faced with; the total abandonment, even as a concept of the working class by Labour.

The IWCA will be a clean break with the past and will be seen to be so. Trade unionism as a strategy for total social change is no longer vaguely credible.

For without organisation the working class has no voice. Without a voice there can be no resistance. Without resistance, the British working class fulfils the role ordained for it by the establishment and becomes politically extinct.

CLEAN BREAK

The IWCA is distinct from anything that exists in Britain now or in the recent past. A working class organisation not only independent, but hostile to Labour. It will seek to absorb and unite groups (without demanding that they abandon their distinct positions or organisations) and accommodate individuals on the basis of that platform, while aspiring to be a pole of attraction to the tens of thousands of working class militants who long despaired of the Left ever doing anything worthwhile.

The IWCA will be a clean break with the past and will be seen to be so. From the outset it will be clear that we have rejected entryism and the prospect of reform, be that reform of Labour or the economic system. We will not orientate or

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seek solace from the official 'labour movement'. Trade unionism as a strategy for total social change is no longer vaguely credible. Instead the IWCA will be community orientated and in time community based. It will be led by the working class but not limited to the working class. Essentially it will be a can do organisation; an organisation that can make things happen or prevent them happening. Membership will be openly available and its activists will join with those fighting to achieve immediate results in the interests of the working class.

SELF DETERMINATION

At the heart of the IWCA lies the concept of working class self determination. Therefore the question of a political programme does not arise as this would mean the collective will of the sponsors being imposed in advance. In time, following an appropriate period of common activity a programme will be hammered out in day to day confrontation with the practical needs of the class who will in turn play a key role in the development of that programme. Initiating a dialogue with local working communities will in many cases determine the immediate priorities.