

Blair landslide signals new British fascist offensive

by Mark Burdman

The British oligarchy has been in a state of flight-forward euphoria since the May 1 general election in Britain. In the days following the landslide victory of Labour Party leader Tony Blair, the British elites have orchestrated an international hype, of the sort usually reserved for characters like Blair's personal idol, the satanic rock star Mick Jagger. The British elites are counting on the "Blair phenomenon," to usher in a new phase of brutal fascist austerity in European countries, according to the usual "Thatcherite" prescriptions, but implemented with a different style than that of the snarling old battle-axe Margaret Thatcher. Those British who matter, know that the global financial system is cracking up, and think that "social democratic"-tinged regimes will be better positioned to "manage" the social and political eruptions that will occur in response to that financial disintegration.

At the same time, Blair's ascension, certified by Britain's ultra-powerful Privy Council over May 2-3, marks a heightened offensive, to extend the power of the British Empire, via the Queen's Commonwealth structure, around the world.

The entire strategy carries enormous risks, however. Very soon, the superstar image of Blair will be replaced by disgust and hatred, as he uses the mandate he receives to do what his predecessor and model from the early 1930s, Labour Party Prime Minister J. Ramsay MacDonald, did, then. In the period leading up to the election, numerous senior British commentators concurred with Lyndon LaRouche's estimation, that Tony Blair would be a reincarnation of Ramsay MacDonald.

MacDonald was elected in 1929, soon before that year's famous stock market crash. After the crash, in close coordination with King George V and Bank of England Governor Montagu Norman, he imposed draconian austerity, predominantly hitting his party's working-class base. As matters worsened, by summer-autumn 1931, he presided over a grand

coalition "National Government," with the opposition Conservative and Liberal parties, so that a cross-party consensus would be fashioned for yet further austerity measures. After that experiment collapsed, MacDonald was rewarded, by being made president of the King's Privy Council, an enormously powerful position, given that the Privy Council, as we shall see presently, is the real repository of power in the United Kingdom. Meanwhile, in those years, 1931-34, the same Montagu Norman was working with his collaborators in Germany, to create the circumstances for Adolf Hitler to come to power.

Serious political observers would do well to keep this historical precedent in mind, before they get too irrationally exuberant over Tony Blair.

Is it only the Queen's hand that is kissed?

On May 1, Blair's Labour (or New Labour, as he has dubbed it) won 418 parliamentary seats, an increase of 146, and 43% of the vote. John Major's Conservatives garnered 165 seats, losing 78 seats, and only 31% of the vote. The Liberal Democrats won 46 seats, a net gain of 28 seats, and 17% of the vote. This is the highest total for a third party in Britain in decades, with the gains made at the expense of the Tories.

Overall, the defeat, ending 18 years of Conservative Party rule, was the worst suffered by the party in over 90 years. No less than six members of Major's cabinet lost their individual seats for the Parliament, including Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind and Defense Minister Michael Portillo. In Scotland and Wales, the party was literally wiped off the map.

No sooner had the election results been announced, than the entire Buckingham Palace/Privy Council structure went into motion. The fact that significant aspects of the Privy

Council involvement was publicized in the pro-Blair *Guardian* on May 2, indicates that the higher-level figures who really run the show in Britain, have no compunction about flaunting their power over events.

On May 2, the defeated Prime Minister John Major met with Queen Elizabeth II, to resign from office. Then, Blair met with Her Majesty, and he became prime minister “the minute he kissed Her Hand by Her permission,” as a Privy Council official described the event. Blair then read a list of individuals who he would like to be ministers in his government. On the following day, there was a two-part ceremony at the Privy Council. The ministers-to-be, who were not yet Privy Councillors, had to take a secret oath, to uphold the actions of the Queen. Then, on May 3, Blair, accompanied by his ministers-to-be, met with the Queen at the Privy Council, where they, too, kissed the Queen’s hand, thereby making them Her Majesty’s ministers, and members of the Privy Council as well.

A Thatcher by any other name

Blair’s landslide has been followed by an outpouring from the various spin-doctors who are usually dragged out on such occasions, to proclaim that the vote constitutes a “repudiation of Thatcherism.” This is nonsense. Admittedly, many Britons were fed up with the effects of 18 years of neo-liberal policies carried out by the consecutive Thatcher and Major governments, and it was apparent to many such Britons that all the talk of “prosperity” that has accompanied the Thatcher-Major years, has been nothing more than a Potemkin Village facade. It is also true, that, especially in recent months, the rampant corruption and sleaze pervading the Major team, and the Conservative Party more generally, had produced considerable revulsion.

However, any Briton who has bought the mythology that Blair is some kind of alternative, is in for a rude shock. Blair has lost no opportunity, to stress his full support for the main thrust of Baroness Thatcher’s policies: fiscal austerity, slashing of the state budget, subordination of economic and financial decisions to the whims of the bond markets, large-scale privatization of state-owned energy and infrastructure assets, and phasing out of the welfare state, via “welfare reform” policies that hurt the most disadvantaged and help Britain’s shrinking number of prosperous subjects.

No sooner had Blair been elected, than the British press was filled with reports that one of his top priorities would be to implement “welfare reform.” To this end, he appointed Frank Field, a Labourite openly admired by Baroness Thatcher, to the number-two post at the Department of Social Security. Over the past months, Field has been one of the “New Labour” elite, who has been cooperating with the neo-liberal Mont Pelerin Society and with London’s Adam Smith Institute, to architect “bipartisan” approaches toward phasing out social welfare systems. In commentaries during the same period, such Thatcherite curmudgeons as Lord William Rees-

Mogg of the *London Times* and Sir Peregrine Worsthorpe, formerly of the *Sunday Telegraph*, have written articles saying that phasing out social welfare will necessarily require the imposition of an authoritarian state, and that it would be better were a “liberal” Tony Blair to preside over this, than a “right-wing” Tory regime.

Others in the Blair cabinet are committed to the same perspective. The new treasurer, Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, has bent over backwards in the pre-election period to ensure the City of London that he will do absolutely nothing to upset “the markets.” He and other Labour economic policy spokesmen have come out squarely against any idea of imposing a tax on financial speculation. New Health Minister Frank Dobson has been given strict instructions to continue the Thatcher-Major “rationalization” of the state National Health Service, to keep health care within very strict, and ever-shrinking budgetary boundaries. New Home Secretary Jack Straw has authored an Omnibus Crime Bill that rivals anything the former occupant of the office, Michael Howard, could come up with. It features such measures, as legally treating youthful offenders as adults in criminal cases, subject to the same treatment and penalties as adults.

The Anglo-Dutch revival

Otherwise highly indicative, is Blair’s choice of various “models” to guide him in “reforming” Britain. As the Australian press has stressed, Blair has been inspired by former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, also a Labourite, who introduced various draconian policies under a “left”-corporatist cover. Blair spent the first years of his childhood in Australia, and has visited there in recent years. Also respecting “down under,” Blair and his team have frequently praised the “reforms” carried out by a Labour government in New Zealand; these “reforms” have transformed New Zealand into a playground for the worst kinds of Mont Pelerin fascist austerity policies (which we will document in upcoming issues of *EIR*).

As *EIR* had reported back in the first days of 1996 (see *EIR*, Jan. 19, 1996, p. 28), Blair at that time made a tour of Asia and Australasia, including stopovers in Australia, Singapore, and Japan. He used the Asia tour to promote the idea that what he called “social cohesion” could be neatly combined with reducing living standards. As *EIR* commented then, this amounted to a “globalist version of Mussolini’s 1930s corporatism, this time with an ostensible ‘Asiatic’ flavor.” The article also stressed that the Blair diplomacy signalled the extent to which the British oligarchy saw in him an opportunity to expand the influence of the Commonwealth in Asia and in other parts of the world.

Perhaps most dangerous, is Blair’s intimate relationship with Wim Kok, the Dutch Labor Party (Socialist International) prime minister. The May 3 *Sunday Times* reported that Kok is Blair’s closest ally in Europe. The British paper reported that Kok has “set the pace” for Britain’s “New La-

bour” party of Blair, by having “slashed welfare benefits as finance minister in the early 1990s.”

The two Labour leaders are already collaborating closely on European policy, in anticipation of the June 16-17 European Union summit in Amsterdam, the paper noted. Indeed, on May 9, Kok and his foreign minister, Hans van Mierlo, flew to London to meet Blair and his foreign secretary, Robin Cook, to coordinate strategies in Europe.

The Blair-Kok relationship, and Blair’s admiration for the “Dutch model,” should set off alarm bells in all Western capitals, including Washington. For one, this is a reinvigoration of the “Anglo-Dutch” axis, the most important combination of oligarchical power and influence in the world. Second, this “Dutch model,” currently being widely touted in the international media, is one of “austerity by consensus,” with a “Socialist” prime minister “managing” the social-political arrangements, and “taming” the trade unions, i.e., doing the dirty work that would be politically unpalatable for a conservative or Christian Democratic government to implement.

Key features of it include legalized euthanasia, often carried out against patients without their consent; legalization of “soft” drugs, such as marijuana and hashish; and a legal, free trade in male and female prostitutes from the age of 16 (“the age of consent”).

European leaders walk into the trap

Unfortunately, a lemming-like mentality is now prevailing among European leaders, particularly in the core states of France and Germany, on the Blair question. Whether it be German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and French President Jacques Chirac, neither of them Socialists, or the opposition German Social Democrats and French Socialists, European political leaders have been tripping over each other with gushing praise for Blair. They are exulting that he offers a “positive alternative” to the former “Euro-skeptic”-dominated Conservative Party, and that it is wonderful that the new British government has a “pro-European” attitude.

By so thinking, Kohl, Chirac, and others are making a suicidal miscalculation. The British oligarchy, with Blair in power, now believes it can more successfully subvert continental Europe “from within,” and accelerate the process of self-destruction brought about by the European nations’ adherence to the so-called “convergence criteria” mandated by the Maastricht Treaty that was signed in 1992-93.

The British strategy was enunciated hours after the May 1 polls closed by new Foreign Secretary Robin Cook, who said that European policy would be highest on the government’s agenda and that, in respect to Europe, the Blair team wanted to be “in the driver’s seat,” in contrast to Major’s government, which “acted like a back-seat driver.” Cook’s first diplomatic trip, is to Paris and Bonn, during the week of May 5, before he confers with his Dutch counterparts, to work out joint strategy for further destroying Europe, under the Maastricht Treaty.

London’s Kabila gang closes in on Zaire

by Linda de Hoyos

After ten days of intense diplomacy taking him from Kinshasa, Zaire, to Pretoria, South Africa, to Paris, France, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Bill Richardson announced on May 8 that the United States hopes that a “dialogue for a peaceful resolution” to the conflict in Zaire has been established.

Speaking from Paris, where he has sought to coordinate closely with Zaire’s former major sponsor, Richardson reiterated the mission given him by President Clinton: “We believe that there must be no military solution to the political and economic crisis in Zaire. Our long-standing goal has been a negotiated settlement. This should lead to an inclusive transitional government and fair and free elections. We pressed hard in all our meetings for a soft landing to the crisis, that is, a peaceful transition of power avoiding further bloodshed in the country and chaos and violence in the capital.”

South African Vice President Thabo Mbeki, who has been working in tandem with Richardson, announced from Lumbumbashi, Zaire, where he was meeting with representatives of Laurent Kabila, that Kabila had promised to halt the advance of his troops toward Kinshasa—after successfully defending their capture of the town of Kamenge—and that Kabila had agreed to meet Zairean President Mobutu Sese Seko in a second face-to-face meeting, on board a South African Navy ship, as they had met on May 4.

The dispatching of Richardson to Zaire reportedly followed a National Security Council meeting which determined that the United States must play an active role in assuring that Kabila and his foreign troops do not seize total control of Zaire, but are forced into a powersharing agreement with leaders of the longstanding democratic opposition to Mobutu.

Richardson stated from Paris that “the other reason I went to Zaire was to assess the dire humanitarian situation in eastern Zaire. In Kisangani, I saw first-hand the suffering of children—many of them orphans—and adults as they struggled to return to their homes in Zaire and Rwanda. I pressed Mr. Kabila to permit full access for international aid organizations and the United Nations and condemned the abuses, deaths, and murders of innocent civilians.” The situation for many of the 1 million displaced people in eastern Zaire remains dire, as the United Nations Human Rights Commission, the government of Rwanda, and Kabila’s forces hurl accusations at one another for the herding of starving people into boxcars, where many died of suffocation or were trampled to death.