

# Blair's woes could spell trouble for Gore

by Mark Burdman

British Prime Minister Tony Blair spent the first days of the new year on vacation, with his family, in the Seychelles. While he was basking in the sunshine in the Indian Ocean, far away from his office at 10 Downing Street in London, his government was tearing itself to pieces.

The latest casualty occurred on Jan. 4, when Charlie Whelan, the press secretary to Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown, announced that he would resign. Blair's Downing Street had suspected that Whelan was the source of leaks to the press, about how Blair mentor and ally Peter Mandelson had borrowed £373,000 from Labour Party moneybags Geoffrey Robinson to buy a house. As reported last week, those leaks led to the resignations of Mandelson and Robinson from their posts of, respectively, Minister of Trade and Industry, and Paymaster-General.

Upon resigning, Whelan let it be known, through friends, that he intended to write a book exposing the divisions at the heart of the government. It is no secret that there is bad blood between Blair and Whelan's boss, Brown, with Brown positioning himself as a possible rallying-point, together with Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott, for the growing number of Labour Party members fed up with Blair's "Third Way" efforts to implement Thatcherite neo-liberalism under a Labour cover. Mandelson was widely despised among the Labour constituency base, as the chief architect of the "Third Way" approach.

The infighting has reached such a level of brutality, that London *Times* commentator Michael Gove, writing Jan. 5, likened it to the 15th-century "War of the Roses" between the Lancaster and York families. The same day's *Daily Telegraph* advised, that when Blair "does eventually revisit our rain-swept shores, he will find his Government in a condition to wipe the suntan off his face. The scene is like the end of one of those Jacobean dramas . . . in which the stage is strewn with so many corpses, that the audience cannot stop laughing." Whelan's resignation is "the last of this particular round of gangland slayings," and is indicative of a "senseless slaughter" within top government circles, the paper affirmed.

## Blair-Gore ties run deep

Assuming his attention span permits it, U.S. Vice President Al Gore should pay close attention to these developments in the United Kingdom. He and Blair were closely allied, in forming that transatlantic "inner group" that plotted the mid-



*British Prime Minister Tony Blair. The torments now afflicting his government are not just a matter of personalities, but reflect high-level policy disagreements.*

December bombing of Iraq, and imposed the policy on a beleaguered President Bill Clinton, while Clinton was out of the United States, in the Middle East. At a more fundamental level than the intramural warfare among personalities in the Blair government, the torments now afflicting the British Prime Minister are a consequence of the view among certain high-level circles, that the Iraq bombing has initiated a highly dangerous and unpredictable world situation, especially in light of the simultaneous impeachment crisis in the United States. Blair is paying a price for this, and so, too, could Gore—soon.

The ties between Blair and Gore run deep. According to Tim Hames, the "America watcher" at the London *Times*, and a senior figure in Republicans Abroad-Oxford, the two have been close since the late 1980s. Blair would meet Gore, during trips to the United States in the late 1980s, when he was trying to bring about an alignment between a British "New Labour" and the "Third Way" U.S. "New Democrats." According to Hames, Gore has always been much more loyal to the "New Democrat" view than Clinton has been. Blair's ties to Gore were mediated through Jonathan Powell, then the No. 3 at the British Embassy in Washington, and now Blair's chief of staff. Powell used to live near Gore in Washington. Hames further reports that Gore has been invited by Blair, to make a major policy address in London, some time in the first half of 1999.

A corroborating report comes from University of Edinburgh Professor John Erickson, who told *EIR* on Jan. 4 that

Blair and Gore became cozy in the late 1980s, when the Labour Party began conducting “intensive investigations of the American political scene,” with a special effort to build ties to the “New Democrats.”

### Nostalgic for John Major

As for Blair, the insider view in London is that the crisis around him will continue to escalate, and quiet moves are

under way to find a replacement. From a reading of the British establishment press in the first days of 1999, it is clear that the knives are out for Blair and his coterie.

The Jan. 2-8 London *Economist* ran an editorial titled “A Christmas Catastrophe,” which accused Blair of having “connived” with Mandelson in the latter’s efforts to minimize the importance of his cover-up of the massive loan he received from Robinson. The magazine insisted that Mandelson and

## ‘Bra Queen’ supports the Third Way boobs

One of the more curious American connections of Blair’s “New Labour” has come to light, in the wake of the furor leading to his close buddy Peter Mandelson’s resignation as British Minister of Trade and Industry. Of the several scandals that erupted around Mandelson in late December, one concerns the fact that he never declared publicly, that he had flown on the private jet of one Linda Wachner, described in British press headlines as “the Bra Queen.”

Wachner is the chairman and president of Warnaco Group, Inc., a billion-dollar manufacturer of ladies’ and men’s underwear, as well as Calvin Klein jeans. With a personal fortune of \$100 million, she is the highest-paid woman executive in the United States. As a frequent guest at Wachner’s mansion in the Hamptons, the Long Island playground of the New York glitterati, Mandelson found easy access to the U.S. eastern establishment’s rich and powerful. Mandelson and Wachner would often travel together to Great Britain on her Gulfstream executive jet, giving her the opportunity to hobnob with the leaders of both New Labour and the Conservative Party, including Margaret Thatcher, and members of the British royal family.

Last year, Wachner contributed \$20,000 to Democratic Party candidates, but never contributed to President Clinton’s Presidential campaigns. She gave \$45,000 to the Republicans, and \$25,000 to the unsuccessful re-election campaign of New York’s Sen. Alphonse D’Amato. One can see on the walls of her Park Avenue office, autographed pictures of former Presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush. She is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the eastern establishment’s New York-based policy institution.

Wachner is a big supporter of the *New Republic* magazine, which carries her frequent advertisements with homosexual overtones. The owner of *New Republic* is Martin Peretz, widely known as “Al Gore’s mentor.” Peretz has

transformed the magazine from its former left-liberal coloration, to a mouthpiece for neo-liberal “free market” policies and extreme right-wing Zionism.

Wachner represents the new generation of New York garment industry executives, who have taken the industry into the new age of corporate raiding and globalization. Since leading a \$550 million hostile takeover of the Warnaco corporation in 1986, she has systematically closed down the company’s U.S.-based factories, and established foreign-based operations in Mexico, Asia, and the Pacific, in locations notorious for deplorable slave-labor working conditions.

Warnaco’s board of directors includes:

**Joseph Califano**, top Democratic Party figure, had been special assistant to President Johnson and later served in the Carter administration as Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

**Joseph H. Flom**, senior partner in Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher and Flom, the law firm that invented junk bonds and the “artful crimes” of corporate-raiding and asset-stripping. Flom is also chairman of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for scholars. He was appointed to chair the center by President Clinton in 1994.

**Andrew G. Galef**, one of the leading corporate raiders of the 1980s, is chairman of the board of a company called MagneTek, a multinational energy technology company based in Al Gore’s own Nashville, Tennessee. Its new office building received the Energy Star from President Clinton, an award given by the Environmental Protection Agency for “energy-efficient” buildings.

**James R. Jones**, three-time Republican Congressman from Oklahoma and former ambassador to Mexico, is currently chairman of the the U.S Council of the Mexico-U.S. Business Committee, one of the key forums for the implementation of NAFTA.

**Walter F. Loeb**, a director of the Canadian Hudson Bay Company. This is the same company that founded Canada, operating along the same lines as the East India Company. Unlike the latter, Hudson Bay still exists as one of the largest companies in Canada, with a large retail store branch that markets Warnaco underwear.

—Dean Andromidas

Blair “cannot be allowed to get away” with having minimized Mandelson’s misdeeds. Blair’s public comments on the affair amount to “hypocritical nonsense.” The editorial concluded: “It is almost enough to make you nostalgic for John Major,” the sleaze-ridden former Prime Minister whom Blair defeated in the May 1997 general election.

The *Economist* followed this up with a nasty piece titled “Comparative Sleaze Studies,” comparing what is now happening under Blair, to the previous Major government, which was riddled with corruption. This piece concluded, “In the five years of the Major government, two cabinet ministers were forced to resign—the Blair government has already equaled that in a year and a half.”

A third article in the same issue indicated that Blair, while riding high in the opinion polls, is fast losing support. The magazine wrote that the reaction of a wide range of people (including within the Labour Party), to the resignation of Blair’s buddy Mandelson, “can be broadly summarized as hahahahah.”

On Jan. 4, British establishment insider Lord Rees-Mogg, writing in the *Times*, likened Blair to Charles I, who, readers may recall, was beheaded in 1649. According to his lordship, the resignation of Mandelson leaves Blair “exposed and vulnerable, terribly isolated. . . . Resistance to Blairism is growing. . . . Tony Blair was wrong to request or accept Peter Mandelson’s resignation. . . . That mistake may well destroy the Blair project. . . . Mr. Mandelson’s resignation suggests that Mr. Blair may be too weak to be a successful Prime Minister. . . . At the moment of decision, he flinched; that usually proves fatal.” Rees-Mogg pointed to the moment when King Charles I signed the death warrant for his controversial chief aide-de-camp, the Earl of Strafford, in 1642. By doing so, “he was also signing his own. No Prime Minister can afford to butcher his friends in order to appease his enemies.”

Rees-Mogg insisted that what Mandelson did, in accepting a large loan to buy a house, and not declaring it, is in the grand tradition of leading British Empire figures who did likewise, including Edmund Burke, Benjamin Disraeli, and Winston Churchill.

### **The Wilde way?**

The aforementioned Jan. 5 *Times* commentary by writer Michael Gove was titled, “Tony Takes a Walk on the Wilde Side: The Third Way Has Always Led to Ruin.” Gove affirmed that it is now evident, that the “Blair project is simply a clique clinging to power.” The Third Way is in service to this end, but it needs a philosophy to cover up its intent: “Mr. Blair is, of course, aware that he should have a philosophy, much as [notorious homosexual] Oscar Wilde was aware that he needed a wife. He finds it hard to be passionate about the idea, but respectable common sense makes it necessary, and so we have the Third Way. Oscar Wilde tried that too, neither old bachelor nor new man but something more novel, and we know where that ended.” Wilde, ended up in prison.

## **Women’s commission calls for New Silk Road**

*The following text was drafted in the hours before President Clinton had called off the air strikes against Iraq on Nov. 14, 1998. It is being circulated by the Women’s Commission for the New Silk Road.*

When the first Gulf War was about to be launched in 1991, Pope John Paul II warned, that this would be a war “from which humanity could not return.” In this war, the largest industrial potential of the region was destroyed, when Iraq was “bombed back to the Stone Age,” and many countries suffered severe economic consequences. Through the combined effort of the destruction of infrastructure, and the embargo of seven years’ duration, well over 1 million Iraqi children have already died; one child is dying every eight minutes. The living standard in Iraq has collapsed to the level of sub-Saharan countries. A new war against Iraq, this time in the context of the ongoing global financial crisis, would throw the whole region into the apocalypse.

Just preventing this war is not enough, we must prevent the reasons it is looming before us now. The very idea of a new crisis around Iraq, represents, in itself, a complete and utter diversion from the efforts on the part of world leaders to find an urgent solution to the world financial and economic crisis.

The world is presently in an accelerating global financial crisis, one that is throwing more and more parts of the world into a deep depression of the physical economy. Entire countries and even continents are disintegrating. Starvation threatens the life of millions of people in Africa, as in Indonesia, Russia and other areas around the globe.

Many regions have been so weakened by decades of austerity imposed by the International Monetary Fund and others, that hurricanes and similar natural disasters have sunk them in the abyss of disintegration virtually overnight, as happened recently in the case of Central America—which shows the speed with which nations can find themselves thrust into a New Dark Age.

What we need is a real perspective of peace through development. Only if the world returns to real economic growth, can there be any hope of stabilizing the many crisis spots existing today.

Governments throughout the world should immediately decide to establish a New Bretton Woods system, which must replace the old, presently bankrupt financial system.