

## Debacles of Britain's Blair Undermine Gore, 'Third Way'

by Mark Burdman

On May 4, British Prime Minister Tony Blair suffered his worst humiliations since the landslide victory of May 1, 1997 that put him in power. Ken Livingstone, the man whom Blair denounced as "a disaster," and who ran as an independent after Blair's Labour machine brutally rigged the party's candidate-selection contest against him, scored a decisive victory as the first-ever elected Mayor of London, while Blair's own candidate, Frank Dobson, came in a miserable third, behind Conservative Steven Norris.

At the same time, Blair's Labour suffered big losses in more than 150 local council elections across the United Kingdom, losing well more than 500 council seats overall. On the eve of the elections, a Labour Party-linked source had told *EIR*, that "anything more than 350 seats lost would be a big disaster for Blair."

The results have consequences both domestically and internationally. May 4 represents an inflection point, in the emergence of forces in Britain that can accelerate the destruction of the evil Blair government. Livingstone became a rallying point, for trade unionists, industrialists, and others, who are disgusted with the demolition of the physical economy, under Blair and his government. While the government builds up the financial and services sector and other centerpieces of the utopian, post-industrial "New Economy," and pours money into such absurd boondoggles as the Millennium Dome, the remaining sectors of British industry that survived the Margaret Thatcher years—auto, shipbuilding, clothing manufacture, and rail transport, for example—are being wiped out. The much-vaunted National Health Service is in crisis. Reliable estimates, are that approximately 300,000 manufacturing jobs have been lost in Britain, in the three years that "Labour" Prime Minister Blair has been in power!

Internationally, the demolition of Blair will be alarming to those who have jumped on his neo-fascist, post-industrial "Third Way" bandwagon. There are some on the European

continent who could soon pay dearly, most significantly German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who, aside from a short flirtation with "national economic" policies of protectionism and support for industry late last year, has steadfastly adhered to the Blairite agenda, including signing a joint policy declaration with Blair on the "Third Way."

### The 'Third Way Down'

But the greatest damage is likely to be done to U.S. Vice President Al Gore, and to his candidacy for the Democratic Party nomination for President. On May 5, Democratic Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche issued a statement from Wiesbaden, Germany, entitled, "Bad News for Al Gore from London," in which he declared: "In three words, the pattern of British election results can be plainly read as 'Third Way Down.' Yesterday's results do not yet represent a collapse of Tony Blair's government, but they do reflect the fact that the so-called 'Third Way' is crumbling, not only in the United Kingdom, but wherever Blair's Third Way is represented world-wide."

LaRouche asserted: "If this world-wide trend were to persist, as is now most likely, by early Summer the U.S.'s Democratic Party, faced with an inevitable Republican landslide against Gore in the November elections, will soon be working to effect Vice President Gore's withdrawal from the nomination, in order to salvage as much as it can for the November Congressional elections, and perhaps choose an alternate candidate who could rally the voters to defeat Bush's Republicans in the national election. Gore, if he continues to run, will evoke the same net result as President Jimmy Carter's dimly failed, 1980 re-election bid, and the 1988 Michael Dukakis candidacy."

He stressed: "The bottom line, both in London and in the U.S., is, as Clinton campaign adviser James Carville once said of the 1992 general election, 'It's the economy, stupid!'"

Just as it was the collapsing British economy, combined with Blair's thuggish indifference to reality, which caused the 'Third Way' cause to crumble in yesterday's elections, so the issues of the real economy and Gore's thuggish campaign tactics are greasing the skids under 'Third Way' fanatic Gore's support in the U.S.A. What greased the skids under the 'Third Way' in England, is the contrast between the Blair-Gore hype of the so-called 'new economy,' as contrasted with the collapse of both the 'information economy' bubble and the physical economy on which more than 80% of the U.S. family households, in particular, depend for their very existence. In the United Kingdom, the key symptoms were the combination of the threat to the ruined railway network and the municipal public transit systems, and a plummeting of the economy as a whole into a 'Third World' condition, through the virtual extinction of anything resembling real industry."

LaRouche concluded: "The latest results from London are likely to mark an end to the career of the 'Third Way International' in every country around the world. One can almost hear Al Gore saying now, 'Blair who? Never heard of him.' "

### 'An Absolutely Vile Campaign'

As British influentials have stressed in discussions with this correspondent, the London vote was less an explosion of support for Livingstone, than it was a massive rejection of Blairism. Livingstone has to be viewed as a mixed figure. He has, for years, been associated with some of the odder elements of Britain's radical-left spectrum, and has spoken out in favor of such measures as drug legalization.

However, he has also elaborated some unpleasant truths. In mid-April, he charged, in an interview with the publication *New Musical Express*, that International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and World Trade Organization policies are "appalling." He proclaimed that "all over the world, people die unnecessarily, because of the international financial system. . . . In any year since 1981, between 15 and 20 million people have died unnecessarily from the debt burden, because Third World governments have to cut back on clean water and health problems. Every year, the international financial system kills more people than World War II. But at least Hitler was mad, you know."

This drew violent reactions from the British media and political class, who raved that Livingstone would be "lethal for London," particularly because of that city's role as the prime international financial (i.e., speculation) center.

In the days leading up to May 4, there was a violent defamation campaign against him in some of the media, especially in Sir Rupert Murdoch's *Times* newspapers. The daily London *Times* and the *Sunday Times* dredged up alleged business misdoings by Livingstone, publicized attacks on him by last-minute defectors from his campaign staff, and ran "exposés" with such titles as "To Know Ken Is To Loathe Him."

On May 1, another tactic was tried. Various "May Day 2000" demonstrations were staged, some of which led to anar-

chist violence. No sooner had the violence ended, than all Livingstone's opponents, led by Blair poodle Frank Dobson, rushed to attack Livingstone, citing an interview he had given in February, supporting "direct action." Dobson said that the London events, and Livingstone's earlier comments, "show just how irresponsible he is. . . . We have three days to save London from the nightmare that would be Livingstone."

This demagogy was made all the more pointless, as Livingstone himself roundly denounced the demonstrators as "mindless thugs" and "idiots," and declared his full support for what the police did to "put an end to the activity of these violent hooligans." On April 10, when he and Dobson appeared before an audience of London police officers, Livingstone received a standing ovation, while Dobson was hissed and booed.

As he voted on May 4, Livingstone charged that he had been the target of an "absolutely vile campaign, from start to finish."

Indeed, London voters were enraged at the way the original candidate-selection process within the Labour Party was run. Clearly, Livingstone won the vote. But, through what LaRouche, in his May 5 statement, characterized as "Mussolini-like" methods, Livingstone was denied victory. London School of Economics Prof. Patrick Dunleavy stressed that voters were "shocked, horrified, and turned off" by the candidate-selection *modus operandi*. "It's nothing short of a scandal," he said.

Several British sources have likened the way Livingstone was treated then, to the way the Democratic Party-Al Gore apparatus has treated LaRouche in the United States. But, as LaRouche says, Gore will now be forced to learn some lessons, fast, from what has happened to his buddy Blair.

### 'Our Industry Is Dying'

A key factor of the campaign in Britain, is that it has been the catalyst for bringing real, fundamental issues to the fore. Livingstone is closely affiliated with the traditional "Old Labour" constituencies, particularly centered in and around Britain's trade unions. In London, he received massive support from the transport, firefighters, police, and other unions, largely because of his absolute opposition to Blair's planned Margaret Thatcher-modelled "privatization" of London's subway, the Underground, or Tube. Privatization has already caused disaster to Britain's rail network, highlighted by a growing pattern of deadly accidents.

The unions, joined by various groups within British industry, are becoming increasingly enraged, in reaction to the collapse of British manufacturing under Blair. As one highly informed British figure told *EIR* on May 4, "The deindustrialization of Britain under Blair is worse than it was under Margaret Thatcher. At least she claimed to have some strategy for modernizing Britain, while Blair and his bunch are doing it for its own sake."

The "tripwire" has been the threatened closure of the Rover plant at Longbridge, near Birmingham, which has been

owned by the German BMW automobile giant. BMW has been attempting to sell the plant, but deals have fallen through. If no buyer is found, and the Blair government refuses to follow traditional Labour policy and bail out the plant, no less than 60,000 jobs—the combined figure of Rover workers as such, and firms that supply the Rover plant—could be at risk. A British influential told *EIR* on May 4, that if Blair now refuses to save Rover, “this will be, politically, a huge nail in his coffin.”

Across party lines, voices are being raised, attacking Blair on this issue. On May 3, former Conservative Party Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine, in a commentary in the London *Times* entitled “Wake Up Blair, Our Industry Is Dying,” referred to the likely imminent closure of the BMW-Rover auto plant at Longbridge, and to the threatened closure of the Ford plant at Dagenham, as “the tip of an iceberg which is heading towards British manufacturers.” He wrote, “It seems that barely a day passes, without an announcement by yet another inward investor or prominent industrialist, that they are looking to lay off workers, slim down production, or move abroad.”

Heseltine wrote that it is not just the auto industry that is being slaughtered, but also, in the area of clothing manufacture, 40,000 jobs have been lost in the past year alone. Heseltine called this phenomenon “carnage,” and blamed it on the

Blair government’s obsession with supporting the “new” service-based industry, and phasing out the “old” manufacturing base. The attitude is that “the former will triumph over the latter, . . . in a fanfare of websites and stock options.” This is all dead wrong, Heseltine charged, and is undermining Britain’s “national interest.”

From within the Labour Party, former Industry Minister Anthony Wedgwood Benn told the *Wall Street Journal-Europe* on May 3 that the Blair government had abandoned all notion of an “industrial policy,” in its pursuit of the Blairite “Third Way.” Said Benn: “We have to start with the question of whether the maintenance of a manufacturing industry in Britain is in the national interest or not. We have to decide—are we going to accept that Britain is to become a third-rank country?” If Blair refuses to intervene, to save plants like the Rover one in Longbridge, he will simply be admitting that he has become “a guardian of global capitalism,” and, then, “people are entitled to ask, ‘What the hell did we elect you for? Why don’t you do something?’ ”

A senior Labour-linked source told *EIR* on May 3, that the collapse of manufacturing touches the most sensitive nerves in Britain today, and that everything is being done by Blair and his ministers to make the matter “not discussable.” However, the dam is bursting, and discussion and ferment are everywhere, over this problem.

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