

U.K.: Blair Could Well Do a Ramsay MacDonald

by Mark Burdman

As each passing day brings him closer to his political doom, British Prime Minister Tony Blair is actively considering a radical, and high-risk domestic political maneuver, to save his hide. According to well-informed British sources, Blair may well ape his abominable forebear James Ramsay MacDonald, who, as Labour Party Prime Minister during the troubled Summer and Autumn of 1931, formed a "National Government," together with Conservative and Liberal Party opposition figures, so as to impose vicious austerity on Britain's Great Depression-wracked population.

Now, Blair is pondering whether to bring opposition Conservative elements into some kind of "national unity" structure, to outflank the intense opposition he faces from within his own Labour Party to his drive for immediate war with Iraq, and to privatize crucial public services. Blair and his entourage also know, that the fragile British economy is sinking into the mire, because of the rapidly accelerating global financial meltdown, including the bursting of Britain's gargantuan real estate bubble. This latter factor has been brought to wider public attention, by the new International Monetary Fund "country report" warning of the precarious housing bubble in the Great Britain.

After the battering he received, from inside the ranks of Labour during the House of Commons debate on Iraq on Feb. 26, the which we reported last week, Blair will soon face another Labour revolt in the Commons, possibly as early as the week of March 9, against his plan for moving toward privatization of British hospitals.

A British think-tanker, sympathetic to the Blair/"New Labour" policies, warned in the *Wall Street Journal-Europe*, a publication strongly sympathetic to Blair's Iraq war-mongering, that "Blair Is in Trouble." Stephen Pollard, formerly a top figure at the British Fabian Society and now with the Brussels-based, neo-conservative Centre for the New Europe, wrote on March 5: "It is more than possible—some people consider it likely—that he . . . could be gone in a matter of weeks. . . . Be in no doubt: Tony Blair's position is precarious in the extreme." Pollard asserted: "All bets are off. The Iraq crisis has provided the glue by which the disparate strands of the Labour Party . . . have been able to join together in their opposition to a Prime Minister who is viewed by the public as a near-deranged war-monger, and the poodle of a trigger-happy Texas moron. . . . Even within the Cabinet, the knives are out."

Thatcher Reincarnate?

What saved Blair from even worse humiliation, in the Feb. 26 debate on Iraq, was the support he received from the chief spokesmen of the Conservative Party. With a handful of heroic exceptions, Conservative Party debaters were more effusive, in their support for Blair, than virtually anybody in his own party. He was treated, by them, as the new incarnation of their heroine, former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Under such circumstances, London sources report, Blair is considering bringing staunch Iraq war advocate Iain Duncan-Smith, head of the Conservatives, and perhaps other Tory leading lights, into his regime in an official capacity. This, plus his dreams of a "quick victory in Iraq" and the constant psychological manipulation of the population through hyped-up "terrorism alerts" and "terrorism contingency exercises" in London and elsewhere, compose the witches' brew he and his advisors are concocting, to prevent the imminent meltdown of his regime.

A London insider told *EIR* March 5, "Blair could well make a deal with the Conservative Party, upon which he has become dependent on Iraq, and which supports him on key domestic issues. We are coming up to a major realignment in our politics." Our source went on: "Blair could well do a Ramsay MacDonald. There is a very good parallel between the two cases. Remember, that when things got too hot for MacDonald, in mid-1931, he turned to the Conservative Party, to form a 'National Government,' which kept him in power, for some time after that. I could see Blair, now, offering Iain Duncan-Smith some official position, maybe on defense, since Duncan-Smith is a big supporter of the Iraq war. Blair will be needing more help fast, because he will face another Labour revolt, probably next week, in the House of Commons, over his move toward privatization of hospital services. The Tories would support him on that, too."

LaRouche's 1997 Warning

Blair's turn toward the "Ramsay MacDonald model" confirms one of Lyndon LaRouche's most crucial political forecasts in the second half of the 1990s. No sooner had Blair, and his Thatcher-lookalike "New Labour" project, come onto the political scene, than LaRouche warned, that Blair would mimic MacDonald's nefarious antics. After Blair's election on May 1, 1997, *EIR's Feature*, "Blair Landslide Signals British Fascist Offensive," stated, "Numerous senior British commentators concurred with Lyndon LaRouche's estimation, that Tony Blair would be the reincarnation of Ramsay MacDonald." That article recalled how MacDonald, after being elected soon before the stock market crash in 1929, came increasingly under pressure, from the Hitler/Nazi-backing Bank of England Governor Sir Montagu Norman, to impose massive austerity on his own Labour working-class base. This became increasingly politically precarious, so MacDonald, in mid-1931, was summoned to a number of meetings with King

George V, and instructed to form a “National Government,” with the Conservatives and Liberals. We went on to say, “Serious political observers would do well to keep the historical precedent in mind, before they get too irrationally exuberant over Tony Blair.”

Traitor Blair, Traitor MacDonald

When MacDonald made this drastic 1931 move, he was universally denounced, among the working-class Labour Party base, as a “traitor,” and Labour stalwarts were in the habit of turning his photograph to face the wall. Now, in 2003, *EIR* has learned, that a recurrent theme, among Labour anti-Iraq war advocates, is that Blair himself is a “traitor,” of the MacDonald variety.

One Labour individual who addressed this matter publicly, was Lord Kenneth Morgan, a member of the House of Lords, and a professor at Queen’s College, Oxford, who trained some of the people now in the Blair Cabinet. Morgan made a strong attack on the Iraq war policy, during a parallel House of Lords debate on Feb. 26, and wrote an adaptation of this speech, for the March 1 London *Guardian*. In biting language, Lord Morgan stated that Blair’s pro-war message “has been elucidated. The spinners have spun; the plagiarists have plagiarized; and the people are more hostile than ever.” Why is it that no one believes the government? Morgan chalks it up to four reasons: First, no one is convinced that Saddam Hussein is a threat to Britain; secondly, no one is convinced of a link between Iraq and terrorism; thirdly, people distrust the motives of the United States, not because of anti-Americanism, but because of oil and the U.S. hypocrisy in not dealing with an aggressive Israeli regime that consistently defies UN resolutions “and denies fundamental human rights to Palestinians.” The fourth reason is, that “the British people fear war because they think that it will be barbarous and will lead to the death of hundreds of thousands of innocent people in Iraq.”

Morgan also challenged those, like Blair, who compare Saddam Hussein to Adolf Hitler. “What nonsense. Saddam is not another Hitler. Where is his *Mein Kampf*? Where is his dream of universal conquest?”

Morgan concluded: “Tony Blair is a brave man who prides himself on being another Churchill. He must be wary of being another Ramsay MacDonald.”

Nemesis Hits Spain’s Aznar

by Elisabeth Hellenbroich

Spanish Prime Minister José María Aznar, one of the staunchest allies of the Bush Administration in its Iraq war drive, is, like his close friend British Prime Minister Tony Blair, finding himself confronted with a massive political uproar in his own country, which may very well lead to his removal from power. While Aznar’s popular approval still stood at 37% a year ago, it dropped to 18% in January.

The ever-widening gulf between the government and the population—all opposition parties in Parliament, the leading trade unions, and many layers of the Catholic Church (including the Catholic Bishops Conference, the Cardinal of Barcelona, the Archbishop of Tarragona, and the Archbishop of Seville)—springs from several factors. More than 80% of the population are opposed to a war in Iraq, and the majority of Spaniards are disgusted by the intransigent and self-righteous hawkish position which Prime Minister Aznar and his government have been taking. Aznar has been denounced for acting “more in the name or the interest of U.S. President Bush than in the interest of the people of Spain.” Then there is Madrid’s mishandling of Nov. 15 breakup of the *Prestige* oil tanker, off the coast of Galicia, which has caused an ecological disaster, and will have catastrophic economic effects.

Thirdly, there is a deepening gap between rich and poor, thanks to the country’s major economic crisis. Spain’s 21% unemployment is one of the highest in Europe, and growing. As result of the government’s free-trade policy and adherence to globalization, 50,000 Spaniards lose their jobs annually, according to the magazine *Cambio 16*. Discontent is very high among small farmers and fishermen. In addition—as result of the deepening world economic crisis as well as the major repercussions of the Argentine and Ibero-American debt crises, the Spanish banking sector is in a very fragile condition with many banks threatened with going under in 2003.

The outrage against Aznar’s policy, and the conflict between him and the political opposition, broke out in late January, when European newspapers published the “Open Letter of the Eight”—an unconditional “loyalty oath” to Bush Administration war policy delivered by eight heads of state and government. Aznar was the primary organizer of the letter, signed by the leaders of Britain, Spain, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Portugal, Denmark, and the Czech Republic. It became clear during several hours of tumultuous parliamentary debate on Feb. 5, in which Aznar explained his Iraq policy, that key figures of the opposition interpreted the letter as an “act of treason” by the Prime Minister, who had gone behind the

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