

# Electors curb New Labour

**T**he British general election of May 2005 has placed significant limits on the freedom of Prime Minister Blair and the right-wing leadership of the Labour Party.

With Labour's share of the vote falling from 40 to 35 per cent, the Liberal Democrats secured a 4 per cent increase to 22 per cent while the Conservative Party increased their share only marginally from 31 to 32 per cent. In Britain's first-past-the-post electoral system this gave Labour with 356 seats (412 in 2001), the Conservatives with 197 and the Liberals with 62. The Labour majority is now 66 as against 166 previously.

Politically, this puts a limit on the ability of the neo-liberal leadership of the Labour Party to push through its policies. In the previous parliament over 140 Labour MPs voted against the government on the Iraq war – with between 40 and 50 rebels regularly opposing it on issues of civil liberties and privatisation. In the new parliament just 33 rebels could be enough to stop such legislation.

## **'Labour MPs opposing the war did significantly better'**

The election was dominated by the Iraq War's illegality, the prime minister's deliberate misleading of parliament and his subservience to Bush. The Liberal Democrats, who took an anti-war position, benefited from this as also did George Galloway, expelled from the Labour Party for his opposition to the war, who won a seat in East London for Respect. Many Labour voters abstained – with turn out lowest in the traditional Labour strongholds of the North East, the North West and Yorkshire. Labour MPs who had opposed the war tended to do significantly better than those who supported it, and the number of Left Labour MPs has somewhat increased. The Scottish Socialist Party saw its vote fall by 30 per cent to less than 2 per cent of the Scottish total. Respect, outside five constituencies with large Moslem populations, failed to secure more than 2 per cent in the 25 constituencies

it contested. The Communist Party gained very small votes in its six contests.

Rob Griffiths, writing in the June 2005 Communist Review, says that the election demonstrates the potential that exists for defeating the right-wing clique in the Labour Party and the critical importance of doing so. He notes that Labour remains by far the biggest party supported by working class voters but that voters have clearly indicated that they want a Labour government rid of Blair and his right-wing policies. Achieving this will depend on sustained political action by the Left: mass campaigning for Left policies that can mobilise the full strength of the trade union movement and also the progressive and Left forces inside and outside the Labour Party. This campaigning, however, will be able to build on the Left-ward shift that has already taken place in the trade union movement over the past two years. As its contribution the Communist Party has launched a Left Wing Programme that advances a comprehensive and practical alternative to neo-liberalism. This is available on the party website.



**BRITAIN  
NEEDS A  
LEFT WING  
PROGRAMME**



## **New Offices for CPB**

The CPB has moved into new offices in Croydon, South London. These provide more space and a more permanent base for the party. Parties internationally should note our new address and phone number:

**Ruskin House, 23 Coombe  
Road, Croydon, CRO 0JD  
phone 0044 208 686 1659.**

## **Coordinating Committee of Communist Parties in Britain**

The Coordinating Committee represents overseas parties with substantial memberships in Britain. Its current membership includes the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Parties of Bangladesh, Chile, Iraq and Sudan together with AKEL of Cyprus, the Tudeh Party of Iran and the Communist Party of Britain. The Committee meets regularly to exchange political assessments, to organise joint theoretical discussions and to plan events of international commemoration. This summer it is organising a seminar on Marxist approaches to Religious Fundamentalism (16 July CPB party centre) and in the autumn there will be an event to mark the 60th anniversary of the victory over fascism (22 September, Cypriot Cultural Centre) and in November a commemoration of the October Revolution.

# Preparations for the G8 Summit

**The meeting of the G8 leaders at Gleneagles in early July will be accompanied by some of the biggest protest mobilisations seen in Britain since those against the war in 2003.**

On Saturday 2 July Edinburgh will host the Make Poverty History march organised by a broad alliance of organisations including the TUC, the major trade unions and Oxfam. The march off will be at 11a.m from the Meadows in Edinburgh and it will conclude with a rally. On Sunday, 3 July a number of other organisations, including Scottish CND and Stop War Coalition, have organised an Alternative Summit in Edinburgh with a series of plenaries and workshops. Plenary speakers include Susan George, George Monbiot, Scott Ritter and Dita Sari. On Monday, 4 July Scottish CND are organising a mass blockade of the Faslane Trident nuclear base on the West of coast of

Scotland. On Tuesday, 5 July there will be a demonstration outside the Detention Centre for 'illegal immigrants' at Dungavel in Ayrshire. Finally, on Wednesday 6 July there will be a demonstration at Gleneagles as the meeting of the G8 commences. There will also be a major pop concert organised by Bob Geldorf at Murrayfield stadium in Edinburgh.

The Communist Party of Britain contingent for the 2 July demonstration will assemble at the Morning Star stall in the Meadows from 10 a.m. Comrades from other parties will be very welcome. On Sunday 3 July the Communist Party will be running a workshop on

The EU, Neo-Liberalism and the Third World Poverty. Confirmed speakers include Rob Griffiths, Gebhard Hofner of the DKP, Hans Christian Andersen of the CP in Denmark and a representative of the Communist Party of Ireland. This starts at 10 a.m. at Paterson Land on the Royal Mile (central Edinburgh). Quite separate from the Alternative Summit, the Communist Party, jointly with the Labour Party Campaign for Socialism (Scotland), is holding a seminar on Strategies for the Left in the EU after the French and Dutch Referenda. This will be at 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. in the Overseas Club, 100 Princes Street. Confirmed lead speakers include Katie Clark, newly elected Labour MP, and Rob Griffiths. It is hoped that all Communist and left parties in Edinburgh over the weekend will participate. The seminar will be by invitation to permit a free and considered exchange of opinions.



## **Contributions to the London Seminar published in Communist review**

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE seminar held in October 2004, coinciding with the meeting of the European Social Forum, have been published in the February issue of Communist Review. Sixteen Communist and Left parties from across Europe attended the seminar on the EU constitution.

## **Communist University to hear Randall Howard**

THE COMING COMMUNIST UNIVERSITY in London is expecting to hear leading South African trade unionist, and SACP member, Randall Howard at its opening plenary.

Scheduled for 28-30 October in the Party's new headquarters the University will provide three days of debate and discussion on the political economy of imperialism and how mass movements can fight back.

## **75th anniversary of the Morning Star**

**THIS YEAR SEES** the 75th anniversary of the Morning Star – today the only English language socialist daily newspaper in the world. Founded in 1930 by the Communist Party, it is today run by a cooperative society with the shares owned by all major trade unions and many thousands of individuals. It is the policy of the cooperative society that the editorial line of the paper should be that of the Communist Party's programme, Britain's Road to Socialism, while the columns of the paper should be open to all progressive forces.

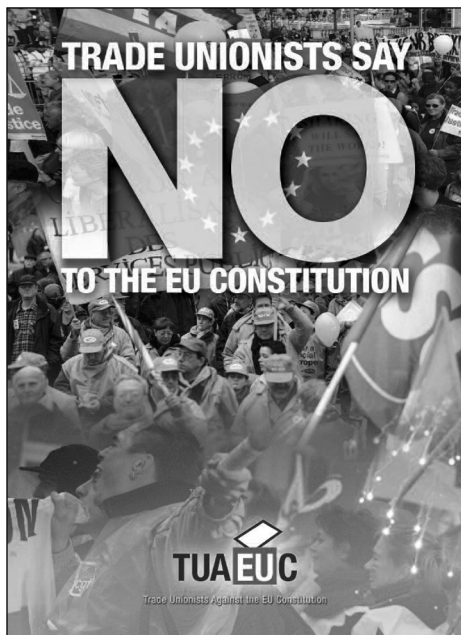
Over the past three years the paper has moved over to colour printing and has been steadily increasing its pages – as well as the breadth of its coverage.

The Trades Union Congress marked the anniversary with a reception in its London headquarters in March and a major Scottish event was hosted by the Scottish Trades Union Congress in April with representative from all Left and progressive parties in Scotland. The final and biggest celebration will be held in London in October.

To mark the anniversary the Star has introduced an online version to make the full content of the paper available internationally on the day of publication.

## EU constitution:

# left celebrates — Blair manoeuvres



**THE DECISIVE REJECTION** of the EU constitution by the French and Dutch votes has been welcomed by the Left and Trade union movement across Britain. Left Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn, writing in the *Morning Star*, heralded the result: 'the immediate reaction from the French Left, enunciated by its Communist Party, was very welcome. It quite rightly claimed that the No victory was due to serious concerns about globalisation, the future of job security, social spending and the accountability of institutions.'

Rob Griffiths, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Britain, described the French result as 'a victory for popular sovereignty over the plans for a European monopoly capitalist superstate'. But he went on to warn that Prime Minister Blair was likely to use his upcoming presidency of the EU 'to smuggle in parts of the defeated EU constitution without a referendum in Britain and other countries'.

This warning was underlined by Brian Denny, convener of Trade Unionists against the EU Constitution. He stressed that big business and their political allies will

continue to push for the most dangerous elements of the EU constitution in whole or in part. He highlights the Constitution's Declaration 30 by which it can be referred back to the European Council as long as 20 of the 25 states ratify.

On 6 June the British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw 'suspended' rather than cancelled the British referendum.

The same day Blair gave an interview to the *Financial Times* in which he defended the core elements of the constitution and called for an endorsement of economic reform — his term for liberalisation. However, he also talked about compromise and that it was not his intention that the Constitution should 'get rid of all the idea of having a social dimension to Europe' [note 'all'].

In talking about the 'social dimension' Blair was also aware that the British trade union movement is moving against the Constitution. Opposition now covers the biggest public sector union, UNISON, the two main rail unions, RMT and ASLEF, and the biggest manufacturing union AMICUS which decided against unless the British government agreed that the Charter of Fundamental Rights applied to Britain. It is highly likely that the TGWU will also decide on opposition at their conference in July.

The French result in particular has offered the Left an opportunity to strengthen its position within the

anti-EUC, anti-euro movement. The strategy of the Left campaign against the Constitution has been develop the broadest unity across the political spectrum excluding only racists and fascists. But they know that they can only defeat Blair and the New Labour leadership if the lead is taken by the trade union movement. For this reason

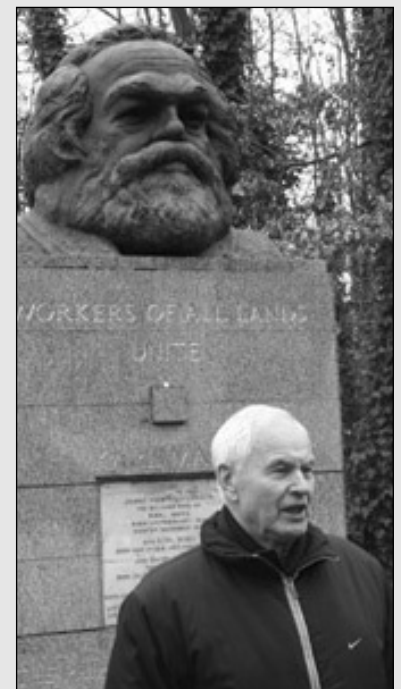
Brian Denny writing in the *Morning Star* called on trade unionists to maintain the momentum of the struggle against EU neo-liberalism and the services directive. He stressed that the New Labour aligned secretariat of the TUC would seek to bypass opposition by the major TUC affiliates to support Blair's attempts to resuscitate the Constitution.

## Hans Modrow speaks at Marx's Graveside in Highgate Cemetery

Hans Modrow, former leader of the German Democratic Republic and Honorary Chair of Germany's Party of Democratic Socialism, gave this year's oration at Marx's graveside, an event organised annually by the Communist Party. Speaking on the urgent contemporary relevance of Marx's work, Comrade Modrow said:

'Marx knew that private ownership, coupled with a capitalist market, only recognised one dominating law — that of maximising profits. For this all means of exploitation are being used, as is war. Neoliberalism is the current phase of globalised capitalism, turned against the last remaining forms of social accountability in areas of health and education, water and others. What is still preserved nationally is being annihilated in the EU by the imposition of the new constitution. This can be seen as the core of the ownership question. We destroy ourselves if we don't grasp this.'

The full text of Hans Modrow's address is carried in the June issue of *Communist Review*.





## Communist movement in Britain

Comrades around the world have enquired about the organisations in Britain which describe themselves as 'Communist'.

Three of these are very small 'ML' parties from the Maoist tradition with no significant presence in the working class movement. Somewhat bigger, the New Communist Party broke away from the original CPGB in 1977 and publishes the New Worker.

Although it frequently attends international Communist conferences, the NCP is rarely seen at labour and progressive movement events in Britain.

The Communist Party of Scotland was set up in 1991 by a group in Scotland who remained in the CPGB until it liquidated itself in 1990. The CPS stands for Scottish independence.

Our party, the Communist Party of Britain, emerged from the earlier struggle against revisionism in the CPGB in the 1980s and is linked politically to the Morning Star daily newspaper. It represents over 80 per cent of the organised Communists across England, Scotland and Wales. It is the only Communist party registered by Britain's Electoral Commission as eligible to stand in elections.

There is also a tiny sect of no more than 30 members, of Trotskyite origin and orientation, which has recently hijacked the name of the 'Communist Party of Great Britain'. It issues a new-sheet called the Weekly Worker.

# Perspectives for Cuba Solidarity work

**From Sue Michie, member of the executive of Cuba Solidarity Campaign**

**T**he forging of better trading relations with key partners such as Venezuela and China and continued growth in tourism has seen Cuba's economy grow at 5 per cent in 2004. This recovery is set to continue to the benefit of the population through increased spending in health, education and the social sector.

The threat to Cuba continues to come from an intransigent US government seemingly intent on pursuing a policy of aggression against the island. Within days of the US election result, Roger Noriega, Bush's

spokesperson on western hemispheric affairs promised the Cuban right wing in Miami that Bush was committed to "liberating Cuba in this term." With its so-called Commission plan to assist a 'Free Cuba', the Bush regime has a blueprint for the actions it will take to force a regime change on the island.

The priority for the Cuba Solidarity movement is to build a broad based campaign against the US blockade, for Cuba's sovereignty and in defence of Cuba. Within this framework we must highlight the cases of the Miami Five and the demand to extradite the terrorist Luis Poasda Carrilles from the US to stand trial in Venezuela.

Working with the Trade Unions and developing parliamentary lobbying is key. We must demand an independent UK foreign policy on Cuba through promoting trade and dialogue with Cuba to ensure that the UK does not act as Bush's key European ally on the issue. Working across the political spectrum is important. Alliances must be forged with all those opposed to Bush's policy of isolating Cuba.



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