




## PRESS GANG

# Blair wins a place in the Sun

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**NO 1** FOR THE ELECTION COUNTDOWN



## I'm a British patriot

**TONY BLAIR**  
**WRITES EXCLUSIVELY**  
**FOR THE Sun**

NEW Labour will have no truck with a European superstate. We will fight for Britain's interests and to keep our independence every inch of the way. If we are to remain in Europe - and neither main party is saying we should withdraw - it is time to start leading in Europe: getting a Europe on Britain's terms.

Britain has held the balance of power in Europe for centuries and has been the leading European power for a large part of that time. Yet today, with the Tories hopelessly divided and weakly led, we are at the margins. That simply isn't good enough.

The test is success or failure. Success will | It is what is pro-British that | there must be genuine con-

**B**y their friends shall ye know them: the decision of the *Sun* (or, rather, Mr Rupert Murdoch) to back Tony Blair at the general election should come as no great surprise. The *Sun* and its proprietor fell out of love with the Tories when Thatcher was dumped (or “betrayed” as the *Sun* still says) and Black Wednesday confirmed their disappointment with John Major. They have been flirting with Blair ever since.

And, of course, Murdoch likes to back winners — especially winners who will be making decisions that might affect, say, whose little decoding boxes are allowed onto our TV sets. In Australia the Murdoch press has been quite happy to support the Labor Party who, in turn, have generally done their best to ensure that no obstacles are placed in the path of Murdoch business interests.

No, the surprise hasn't been Murdoch's willingness to throw the *Sun* (and, very likely, at least one other of his British titles) behind Blair, but the lack of embarrassment on the part of any section of the official movement. Blair, of course, has been abasing himself before Murdoch since at least 1995, when he (Blair) flew halfway round the world to grovel before the assembled New Corporation executives at Hayman Island. After that, Blair's by-line began appearing with remarkable frequency in the *Sun* and *News of the World*. Co-incidentally, Labour's longstanding parliamentary support for limits on cross-media ownership

disappeared overnight.

But you would think someone in the Labour leadership would perhaps remember the Wapping dispute, or the “Gotcha!” headline, or the Press Council's ruling that a cartoon was “an ugly piece of racism”, or “Up Yours Delors”, or the description of Clare Short as “too ugly to be raped.” But no, not a squeak out of any of them — not even the middle-class “feminists” of the Harriet Harman variety, who might have been expected to have something to say.

Instead, Mandelson and Campbell gloat over their ‘coup’, while Blair assures his friends at the *Sun* that he will veto any move to use the Social Chapter “to import German social security costs” and that “it is no part of a Labour government to start putting unions into any workplace.”

Meanwhile the *Sun* makes no secret of its continuing Thatcherite politics. It is just that “the Tories have all the right policies but all the wrong faces.” Blair, it seems, is now the right face for Tory policies.

None of this is likely to have any significant impact on the election result (the short-term effect of newspapers' political line is greatly exaggerated by media pundits) but it might possibly wake some Labour people up to the truth about Blair and his project to destroy the Labour Party. If it does that, some good may yet come of Mr Murdoch's opportunist move.

*Jim Denham*