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British General Election

# Breakthrough for RESPECT

- News from around the world -

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**New Labour has won the British general election, and a third term in government, but with its parliamentary majority slashed from 160 to around 66. It also received the smallest share of the vote for a governing party - just 36% - in modern times. The war was the issue which refused to go away throughout the election campaign.**

Millions of traditional Labour voters either stayed at home or voted for anti-war parties. This meant predominantly the Liberal Democrats who successfully masqueraded as an anti-war party throughout the campaign and won more seats as a result - though, given Britain's perverse and undemocratic first-past-the-post system, not in proportion to their increased share of the vote.

[[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/galloway\\_01.jpg](https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/galloway_01.jpg)]

In fact the electoral system was weighted heavily towards Labour in this election. It took an average of 26,000 votes to elect a Labour MP, 46,000 to elect a Tory MP, and a massive 100,000 votes to elect a Liberal Democrat.

The remarkable development to the left of Labour was the results won by the Respect - the Unity Coalition, which was itself a political development which came directly out of the anti-war movement. Its most prominent member ex-Labour MP George Galloway, who was expelled from the Labour party for his implacable opposition to the war, won the election in the East London constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow in a sensational result.

He overturned a 10,000 majority held by the sitting Blairite and pro-war MP Oona King. Young Muslims, in particular, from the large Bangladeshi community in the constituency, flocked to his campaign in droves.

George Galloway is the first MP to be elected to the left of Labour, and in a separate party to Labour, since the Communist Party won two seats (one of them also in East London) in 1945.

Respect stood 26 candidates - some of them in seats where Respect got the best results on the European elections last June others to give a geographical spread. The votes they received ranged from less than 1% to the 38.9% (15,807 votes) won by George Galloway in Bethnal Green and Bow. Nine of the candidates broke the 5% barrier - which saves the £1000 deposit necessary under British electoral law.

The best results by far were in East London and in Birmingham - where there were highly motivated and active campaigns.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Respect101a.jpg>]

In addition to George Galloway's result in East London Respect won 20.7% (8171 votes) in East Ham and came second to Labour. It won 19.5% and also came second to Labour in West Ham. It won 17.2% in Poplar and Canning Town and came third after Labour and the Tories. In Birmingham Sparkbrook and Small Heath it won 27.5% (10,498 votes) and came second to Labour.

These are breakthrough results for a small new left party, and opens up the opportunity to build Respect on a more permanent basis and broaden its support from its current important strongholds to wider sections of the working class.

Read all the [RESPECT](#) results by visiting their website's results page.