

## **Make Spin History: Evaluating British Policy in Africa**

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The United Kingdom has had a long-standing relationship with Africa, primarily engendered by the colonial experience. Yet unlike other ex-colonial powers, for a relatively long period in the post-colonial era, Britain did not retain a particularly strong interest in the continent after decolonization. In recent times (i.e. post-1997) however, there has been a *relative* prioritisation of Africa in official policy. Indeed, under Tony Blair and New Labour Africa ostensibly became a major policy concern and there was certainly a great deal of rhetoric about New Labour's "passionate" commitment to the continent. Examining the realities (rather than the rhetoric) of policy and stripping away the spin and media presentations is crucial for anyone wishing to have a coherent picture of what British policy towards Africa was actually like under Blair. Doing so reveals in fact that New Labour's Africa policies have largely continued on the same path as previous governments.