

May Day Intervention of Newcastle Stop the War Coalition - May 5th 2012

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on behalf of the Tyneside Stop the War Coalition at the May Day Rally. I just want to make two brief points.

Firstly, the continued success of the anti-war movement is in its blocking of the attempts of those in power at Westminster to mobilise public opinion in favour of war and intervention. And this affects every single one of us, in our communities and in our trade unions. More and more of our people and our union members are being dragged into these aggressive wars abroad which are being waged and supported by almost every political party in government. It is the anti-war movement that stands between us and these wars. So I urge you all to support and get involved in your local anti-war movement. We have a stall at the back there and it is very important that people join in and get involved, either join stop the war coalition, and or get their unions and their organisations to support the anti-war movement. This is something everyone should take up and this year we are looking at building our organisation within the trade unions developing the alternative to war along with the whole alternative to the reactionary attacks on the people on every other front. This is a very important piece of work.

The second thing is in the strategy that our movement takes up. It is quite clear we don't just want to be campaigning every year to stop these wars - we want to stop these wars altogether. We want to have an anti-war government in Britain that doesn't have a pro-war policy, but has an anti-war policy and solves problems internationally through dialogue and without conflict. A government that withdraws from aggressive military alliances like NATO. A stable government that takes a just and peaceful stand in the world instead of the present interfering and pro-war stand.

In this, one of the big challenges we face at the present time is that the ruling elite is trying to move the narrative onto what they call the "responsibility to protect" to justify their interventions. So the anti-war movement has responded in exposing their so-called sanctions and interventions against countries like Syria and Iran as not measures to avoid war but as measures to actually prepare for war and to weaken these countries either internally, or externally in order to attack them.

So this year we will continue to encourage the building of the anti-war movement on Tyneside and throughout the northeast to strengthen the anti-war movement and we also want to build the movement in the trade unions.

Coming up we have a national protest and rally on May 19th at 1pm outside the US embassy to protest against any attack on Syria and Iran, to demand troops out of Afghanistan and no further intervention in the Middle East, we are also going to have a stall at the Monument, Newcastle between 1 and 2pm on May 19th. The other thing is we are having an appeal for funds for the stop the war movement. So if you can spend £25 a year to support stop the war or any amount of money please see our comrades at the back. Thank you very much.

Applause