



**South Tyneside
Stop The War Coalition**



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**Block the Plans for Another
Pro War Government**



Another world is Possible - We must Create it!

The continuation of the criminal pro-war policy, which is not in our name and which is the preoccupation of the major political parties that are part of the present and future arrangements which are being prepared and promoted to be put in place at the next general election. Making preparations to stand anti-war candidates, continuing the work to form an anti-war block with the people, organisations and small parties that also want to take a stand for an anti-war government.

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Preface

This issue of *Silence is Shame* follows a whole period in which the anti-war movement and democratic forces have been engaged in mass actions to condemn Israel's criminal invasion and occupation of Gaza particularly the British governments defense of this indefensible action as well as the recent actions against the burden of the world economic crisis being passed on to the people and the great dangers and further threats of war that this narrative and deepening crisis poses with increased troop deployment in Afghanistan and continuing occupation of Iraq.

Several demonstrations and several large rallies took place in Newcastle. In Middlesborough where there was a demonstration of several thousand. Several hundred, many people from the laygate community, also took part in a protest outside the Town Hall in South Shields. These are among the actions organised over recent months.

In this period also South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition went ahead with its planned discussion forum on the theme of this edition *Block the Plans for Another Pro-War Government*. The Forum raised the importance to focus on making preparations to block the new arrangements for another pro-war government and focus on our agenda of an anti-war government and standing anti-war candidates. It is towards these preparations that this issue of *Silence is Shame* is dedicated.

Block the Plans for Another Pro-War Government

by Roger Nettleship

Another world is possible is the vision of the anti-war movement and of all progressive humanity. How that world will be brought about is the question facing the anti-war movement. The government is continuing to involve Britain in wars of occupation following the invasion and annexation of Iraq and Afghanistan whilst still maintaining previous military occupations and interference and is stepping up its troop deployment in Afghanistan.

At the same time, the government continues to tie Britain to the military ambitions of foreign powers such as the United States and Israel, military alliances such as NATO and it becomes part of a pro-war international arrangement with these states that has led to more than one million people being killed in Iraq and Afghanistan and thousands in Lebanon and Palestine.

People continue to protest and work in whatever way they can all over the country to bring an end to pro-war government. This includes military families who see their loved ones being maimed and killed in wars of occupation which also brings mass killing, misery and destruction on those they are occupying. So, the issue people are facing is how to block new plans for another pro-war government at the next election.

When the people protest, as they have done in their thousands, the only alternative offered is more of the same, of changing around one party with another to run after these global monopoly interests and making new arrangements whether from the “centre left”, “centre right” but increasingly driving society towards fascism and war on a permanent basis. In other words they have no alternative but pro-war government.

For the people there is an alternative. It is to look to the future of a different world in which the best representatives of the workers, of the youth, students , the women, the pensioners, the national minority communities, democratic cirlces, and the people as a whole are the legislators, representing the aspirations and ideals of the electorate and accountable to them. In terms of the tactical line of the anti-war movement at this time it must strike a blow against the warmongers, support candidates of the alternative, particularly those standing on pro-worker and anti-war platforms. When I stood as a worker politician candidate in 2001 in South Shields and in 2005 in Jarrow and Hebburn I felt this was the alternative that had to be taken up and highlighted as the need of the time. It was a stand that workers and other progressive people should come forward and directly intervene in politics and represent their own interests and the interests of society as a whole.

In 2005 Nader Naderi, a computer scientist and small business owner stood in South Shields inspired by the work of the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition stood as an anti-war independent candidate. I as a lifelong communist took up the agenda of my fellow health workers to safeguard the future of the NHS as well as oppose the pro-war agenda. Nader, who was not a professional politician, but had been a local Liberal council candidate, took on the warmongering and anti-social New Labour policies at that time.

In voting for the pro-social, antiwar and independent programme of such candidates, the workers were voting for their own interests. This is what society needs to be able to progress. It is this stand of standing anti-war pro social candidates that we need to take forward and strengthen. That we captured 400 and 800 votes

respectively was surprising to us and a good stand by those people who voted for us given the dominance of the disinformation and entrenchment of the status quo by the political system and media in which the 3 main parties and even the “far right” are generally promoted more than any other genuine political force. So, it is not possible to take the big parties on unless we create new arrangements to give people access to the alternative candidates. The anti-democratic political system works to limit the access of prospective candidates to around 4 weeks before an election that the party in power calls. It calls the election whenever it likes always using the element of surprise to facilitate conditions favourable to itself almost like an attempted coup if it fails and a coup d'etat if it wins.

My view is that by holding this discussion now particularly in the anti-war, workplace and community circles we are creating a genuine alternative to turn the tables on this situation.. The oligarchs of finance, media and big business have long been planning the next reactionary pro-war arrangements that they will promote in the run up to and during the next election.

Therefore it is of the utmost important that we do not give into the pressure not to make preparations. Such pressure is aimed to continue the worker's and the people's marginalisation from politics. Such preparations are going to be decisive in us making headway at the next election. It means we have to take this discussion to focus on preparations to stand anti-war candidates out to the people of the area. Especially where we work and live and all our circles.

The Discussion Forum was a first step in making preparations to encourage the standing of anti-war candidates in workplaces, communities, and all spheres of society and making preparations for the people to support such candidates. It was also a call to continue the work to form an anti-war block with small parties and organisations that wish to take a stand in their communities for an anti-war government so that every candidate is speaking out against the continued wars and occupations, against the continued militarisation of the economy, against the involvement in aggressive military alliances such as NATO, against the stationing

of British troops on foreign soil, for unity of all the people regardless of nationality, race or religion and to defend the rights of all.

Roger Nettleship

April 18, 2009

‘Modern (Re-)Arrangements’ & ‘Blocking Pro-War Governments’ - Notes Towards A Sketchy Review

by Phil Talbot

Tuesday 23 March 2009

As I was sitting writing these notes, the background mainstream media chatter (as represented by the BBC) included yet another government-inspired ‘al Qaeda’ bogey-men scare story (with ‘dirty bomb’ nightmare fantasies added, as if as a bonus distraction from bankers’ bonuses).

They were also plugging a ridiculous seeming (to me) scheme to recruit and train ‘60,000’ (or make up your own number - all government numbers being dubious these days) amateur spooks to counter (the supposed) ‘dangers of radicalization’.

How these ‘60,000’ amateur spies were to be trained in ‘radical spotting’ was for some reason not reported by the BBC - though one can only imagine them using the standard Muslim bogey-men mug-shots (which we have all seen all too often).

People who questioned any of this stuff, it was suggested, were ‘terrorists’ or ‘terrorist supporters’ or ‘dangerous radicals’, or ‘nutty

conspiracy theorists' - or else 'well-meaning but naive trojan horses' (who would let in the 'bogey people').

Also on this day the British police announced they had done some early morning door knocks and arrested some 'violent extremists' in connection with events at protests in Britain earlier this year against the mass murder of Palestinian civilians by Israeli troops in Gaza.

The BBC, parroting police statements rather than actually reporting, mentioned reported injuries to police officers at these events, but not injuries suffered by protestors - even though, in fact, evidence strongly suggests that more protesters were injured by police than police were injured by protestors at the Gaza protests.

Such 'dubious' - and perhaps even 'outright dishonest' - stuff reinforced my belief/fear that the 'establishment' (for want of a better expression) having nearly bankrupted the economy and being almost bankrupt of ideas, could think of nothing better to do than to spread distracting scare stories, narrow the range of debate - and stifle 'opposition' by all available means (while still pretending to be 'democratic').

In the Stop The War movement - which is not ashamed to call itself 'radical' - we work with this sort of 'mass distracting' babble going on in the mainstream media background - while we are trying to do something different ... and more positive ...

In fact we have already championed the idea of 'democratic intelligence' - which is not a '60,000' force of volunteer spies snooping on 'radicals' on behalf of the state, but the pooling - by better informed debate - of the millions of human intelligences - of the majority of people who are anti-war and against 'terrorism' (including 'state terrorism').

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One of the features of the modern day anti-war movement, and this is increasingly apparent in the South Tyneside Stop the War

Coalition and many other anti-war groups in North-East England, is the growing awareness that the anti-war struggle cannot be continued in the old way and that a fresh approach is required.

This is not just some future prospect, but something actually in the making - a genuine 'work in progress', as it were. Of course it is not easy - especially in a world in which the elected British government never stops attempting to narrow the range of public discourse ... and even attempting to make 'being radical' a forbidden concept (or 'thought crime').

One of the greatest achievements of the anti-war work so far is that up and down the country there are numerous genuinely radical and free-thinking groups of activists thinking in unorthodox and fresh ways. In South Tyneside, and other districts in the region, there are now anti-war groups where nothing existed before.

We are 'radicals', but we are not 'terrorists', nor 'terrorist supporters' - we are opponents of 'terrorism', especially organized 'state terror'. Numbers of activists locally are still small, relative to the numbers that become involved in the movement when the threat of war is greatest, but it is clear that a shift is taking place.

Things are shifting from a conception of the anti-war movement as a pressure group aimed at persuading those in power to cease their warmongering activities to a conception of the movement that engages in serious discussion and actions as to how the people can empower themselves and to unite around a programme to defeat the warmongers once and for all.

This first became evident in the small conference that the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition organised at the beginning of the occupation of Iraq by US and Britain in 2003.

One speaker reflected the seriousness of the work that our movement is undertaking for the future of humanity when he said: 'Wars of the 21st century are in fact an all out assault on the rights of people around the world. "Rights" that must remain sacred if we are to subscribe to notions of civilised transaction, with a

view to stability of our societies, ultimately leading to a life free from molestation, threat, and danger for all the human family.”

Another suggested: ‘People have to do their own thinking and organising and create new arrangements to give this movement for peace permanent life.’

Another pointed to developing alternative bodies such the Peoples Assembly along a truly democratic path that empowered people from below and also standing anti-war candidates in the public elections.

The important thing is that today people are seriously searching for ways to develop the movement in order to defeat the warmongers. There is also a growing realisation that the key to achieve this is to unleash the people’s initiative by organising in such a way that the people consciously participate in decision-making at every level.

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Still Waiting For David to do the Decent Thing ...

Below is the text of a letter to Shields Gazette, 04 December 2003 signed by Alan Newham and John Tinmouth.

In a letter to the Shields Gazette on Wednesday, 3rd December, Mr. G Smith of Kensington Court, South Shields, called for the resignation of David Miliband (MP for South Shields and Minister of State for School Standards) because of his support for tuition fees.

We consider that there are also other grounds for Mr. Miliband’s resignation. In March this year, shortly before the war with Iraq, the Gazette asked him a number of questions on the Iraqi crisis, one of which was “Is there any scenario in this crisis where you may resign on principle as Clare Short and Robin Cook have threatened to do?” Miliband stated that his “bottom lines are that the Government acts in accordance with international law, pursue international cooperation at every stage.....” Shortly afterwards,

Britain joined with the US in a war against Iraq, without a fresh UN resolution (which it had tried, and failed, because of international opposition, to obtain), and thus condemned by the great majority of international lawyers as illegal. Both Clare Short and Robin Cook resigned. We still await any action by David Miliband, or even a defence of his conduct. Perhaps voters will remember this at the next General Election.

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In February 2009 South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition continued its work with a discussion forum on the topic: 'Block the Plans For Another Pro-War Government'. The forum focussed on making preparations to block new arrangements for another pro-war government in Britain and, more positively, on our agenda of an anti-war government and standing anti-war candidates.

Despite President Obama being elected in America on the promise of 'change' there are many reasons for fearing new forms of pro-war government here and abroad. The present pro-war British government has in recent months enabled the Israeli state to launch a murderous offensive against the civilians of Gaza.

Our local MP David Miliband, who is also the British foreign secretary, has played a key role in defending the Israeli zionists' war crimes against the Palestinians. He also visited the Congo on behalf of the British government to support stepped up interference in Africa.

Mr Miliband and his friends have also plans for further militarisation in Afganistan and Pakistan. And they have ongoing plans to suppress the population here - using the economic crisis (which they have responsibility for) to futher privatisate public services, further impose economic bondage on people, while they continue to protect the wealth and interests of the very rich.

We have all seen how they are nationalising debt and privatising profit - allowing the rich to get richer (and escape all responsibility for the present economic crisis), while everyone else gets poorer. All of these reasons increase the danger of more wars - and should

encourage people bring forward their own anti-war candidates and build on their experience and make preparations to block the plan to elect another pro-war government.

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In our work, South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition keeps in mind a simple (seeming) proposition: 'A World Without War Is Possible'. To 'knowing' and 'worldly wise' people - who might also be described as 'cynics' (such as those in charge of the New Labour Party and 'New' Conservative Party, and too many others) - this is 'hopelessly naive unworldly idealism'.

In response to such 'cynicism', we might modify our 'simple' proposition to: 'A Genuinely Anti-War British Government Is Possible' The carpers might sneer back words to the effect of: '... aren't we all anti-war? ... or rather wouldn't we all be against war ... if THEY - THE ENEMY - weren't such a THREAT to OUR WAY-OF-LIFE ... WE WANT PEACE! ... THEY DO NOT! ... so unfortunately ... WE have to go to war with THEM ...'

And so 'unfortunately' ... to such people as Mr David Miliband, a self-proclaimed 'progressive' (sic) New Labour Foreign Secretary, would have it ... 'We HAD to invade Iraq ... and we now HAVE to increase troop numbers in Afghanistan ... and we HAVE to ... etc etc etc ...'

Faced with such 'spinning gimmicks'... it is useful to back-track ... return to the facts ... (not mere speculations) ... of Mr Miliband's own record in his 'home' South Shields constituency. When he was parachuted in by the New Labour machine, against the wishes of the local Labour Party, he was presented to the local people as 'the Bright Young Man' of 'modern' New Labour. His 'intelligence' was spun to the people at every possible opportunity. Some even believed such spin.

As a matter of fact, this 'intelligent Bright Young Thing' of New Labour has proved himself spectacularly unintelligent in some significant respects. As a matter of fact, early in 2003, before the invasion of Iraq, Mr Miliband was asked a straight question by his

local newspaper, the Shields Gazette, to which he gave a straight answer (which he has ever since wanted forgotten).

He was asked whether there was 'overwhelming evidence' that Iraq had 'weapons of mass destruction'. He said, without qualification: 'yes' (there was 'overwhelming evidence').

This was a false statement. Either he was lying, or he did not know what he was talking about. To repeat, on 15 March 2003 the present British Foreign Secretary told the Shields Gazette that 'yes' there was 'overwhelming evidence' that Iraq had 'weapons of mass destruction'.

He has never had the honesty or decency to concede that he was mistaken - nor to retract his gross over-statement. He further told the Gazette as reported on 15 March 2003: 'A week ago in New York the Chief Weapons Inspector Hans Blix published a 170-page dossier that detailed Iraqi stockpiles of weapons of banned material that could be used for weapons of mass destruction. This includes anthrax and nerve gas which has been missing since the 1990 Gulf War.'

He has never conceded that this was a distortion of Mr Blix's careful and thoughtful report to the United Nations - and nor has he acknowledged what Mr Blix maintained, then and since, that 'unaccounted for' ('weapons of mass destruction') material does not mean the same thing as 'still existing' material.

When a Foreign Secretary has behaved in such a reality-distorting way, he does not deserve trust or respect. In our reply to Mr Miliband's statement of 15 March 2003, which was published in the Gazette a few days later, we said:

'In June 2002 the Director of the International Atomic Energy Authority, Dr Mohamed El Baradei, wrote "There are no indications that Iraq has nuclear weapons-usable material of the practical capabilities to produce them." Former U.N. weapons inspector Scott Ritter claims that most chemical-biological weapons were destroyed along with their production facilities during the 1990s. Ritter states that "liquid bulk anthrax, even under ideal storage

conditions, germinates in three years, becoming useless.” So, if the hidden weapons exist, it may be their numbers would be small and most probably redundant. At present we see no “overwhelming evidence”.

Mr Miliband (now with all the resources of the British Foreign Office behind him) has never had the guts or decency to acknowledge that the statement of our small town anti-war group was a more honest and accurate appraisal of the then available evidence than his own at that time.

He hoped it would all be forgotten.

It has not been forgotten.

It is illustrative of the arrogant elitist contempt New Labourites like Mr Miliband actually have for the ‘intelligence’ of the people of their ‘home’ constituencies. With the fog of the false ‘weapons of mass destruction’ claims blown away by reality, Mr Miliband and his New Labour cronies attempted to justify the illegal attack on Iraq by reference to getting rid of the tyrant Saddam Hussein.

Unfortunately the ‘intelligent’ Mr Miliband did not seem to know much about Saddam - or the rest of modern Iraq - which is one of the reasons the whole enterprise has been a literally bloody disaster.

In a statement of principles first published in 1997 and signed by, among others, Dick Cheney, the Bushite U.S. Vice President, Donald Rumsfeld, the Bushite U.S. Defence Secretary and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz - this group calls on Americans to support an increase military spending and attempts to ‘rally support for American global leadership’.

Mr Miliband seemed happy to be a supporter of this NeoCon project - which was not in the best interests of Britain and the wider world. The invasion of Iraq was an example of a new aggressive style of American imperialism - which, at best, Mr Miliband tamely supported, at worst he actively supported - and the world is a much more dangerous place as a result.....

.....Four days before the end of the Bushite administraion, Mr Miliband finally started to distance himself for the Bushite 'war on terror' - publically renouncing the phrase, and even having he impertinence to suggest that he had for a long time not believed in it.

It seemed, to me, too little - and too late.

The Stop The War Coalition contains people of diverse views. Many were never supporters of Labour. Some, like myself, used to be Labour supporters but never will be again. I did not vote in a Labour government to launch illegal attacks on other countries - and although they deny that, (in an almost pantomime 'oh ho we didn't' manner) that is in fact what they did.

I did not expect a Labour government to persecute Muslim people at home - and although they deny that, that is in fact what they are doing.

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Returning to the proposition: 'A World Without War Is Possible.'

It can be supported with two further propositions:

1. A World without War becomes more possible when governments deal in truths rather than bad faith and reality distortion.

2. A World without war becomes more possible when governments do not invade, occupy and plunder other countries illegally - and on the basis of such false claims as Mr David Miliband the 'right honourable' Member of Parliament for South Shields made to his own constituents in March 2003.

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We all have 'bogey-people' we dislike of course.

For a libertarian leftie like me they include:
right-wing war-mongers;

military corporations;
racists, especially ‘white-supremacists’;
... and my local New Labour MP David Miliband (who I believe has
‘betrayed’ Labour values).

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Notes Towards A Clearer Understanding Of ‘The New Face’ Of
(The Project For) The American Century’ ...

Aristotle, Politics:

‘Our observations tell us that every state is an association of persons formed with a view to some good purpose. I say “good” because in their actions all people do in fact aim at what they THINK is “good” ...’

Contrasting with the mostly unimpressive leading characters of modern British politics, like Mr Miliband, is the rather more impressive and genuinely progressive-seeming Mr Obama in America.

Mr Obama, unlike Mr Miliband, consistently opposed the illegal NeoCon adventure in Iraq, and has spoken convincingly - unlike Mr Miliband - of his revulsion at the torture of ‘terror suspects’.

The New Face Of The American Century?

In 2000, a year before the violent events of 11 September, a ‘think-tank’ called the ‘Project for the New American Century’ published the latest of what had been a long-running series of policy statements. This one was called ‘Rebuilding America’s Defences: Strategy, Forces and Resources’. It was a grand sounding document by a grand sounding group, but was, in fact, essentially, a statement of the right-wing war-mongering prejudices of a small group of men, including: Richard Cheney, who went on to become U.S. vice president; Donald Rumsfeld, who went on to become U.S. defence secretary; Paul Wolfowitz, who was Rumsfeld’s deputy and then director of the World Bank; and Richard Perle, ostensibly a private businessman with oil, arms and media interests, in fact a major U.S. foreign policy decision maker with a direct ‘hot-line’

to the White House.

In their 2000 document, these men called for a massive increase in U.S. arms spending, so that American could ‘fight and win multiple, simultaneous, major theatre wars’. They acknowledged, however, that the American People were not then willing to support such action, nor to pay the taxes required to buy the military equipment and fund the wars. What was needed to change minds, they said, was ‘some catastrophic and catalysing event – like a new Pearl Harbour’. It was actually rare to see such machiavellian calculations stated so openly. But it is a fact that these people put their aims - and one might even say hopes - quite openly on the public record – in advance of 11 September.

The events of 11 September 2001 were ‘opportunities’ for such people – something they had been waiting for ... for quite some time. It would be absurd, of course, to suggest that the new U.S. President Mr Obama was a right-wing neo-conservative reactionary like these people. But he does believe, and has regularly restated, that the world ‘needs American leadership’ - and he is the new face of the attempts to create an ‘American Century’.

I do believe, and have regularly restated, that it is not anti-American not to want to live in an ‘American-led Century’. And it is a matter of fact that the same warmongering forces that used the previous American President Mr Bush as a willing front man would also use Mr Obama for similar purposes, even if he was unwilling front-man, given the chance.

With this in mind, it is instructive to look back at some details of the early days of Mr Obama’s campaign to win the American presidency ... On 20 May 2007 the British Sunday Times made what was almost like an official announcement on behalf of the NeoCons: ‘Paul Wolfowitz’s departure from the World Bank signals the end of an ideological era in Washington’.

In the same month, Robert Kagan, who was, with Mr Wolfowitz, one of the founders The Project For The New American Century, emerged as a surprising seeming cheer-leader for Mr Obama

(who had always opposed such Project-inspired schemes as the illegal attack on and plundering of Iraq).

Mr Kagan, it might be added, was not a man not to hedge his bets ... because also at that time he was acting as an informal foreign policy adviser to the man who would emerge as the main Republican challenger to Mr Obama, John McCain.

In an article in the Washington Post, Mr Kagan wrote approvingly that a keynote speech by Mr Obama at the Chicago Council On Global Affairs was 'pure John (F.) Kennedy' (who, despite being a Democrat, and despite being regarded as a 'liberal hero', was also a neo-con hero 'for services to the Cold War').

(It is also worth noting that at the same time Mr Obama was getting his first heavyweight Secret Service 'protection' - much earlier than was usual for presidential candidates 'after fears were raised of a white supremacist plot to kill him'.)

In that speech to the Chicago Council on Global Affairs in the spring of 2007, Mr Obama, whether he intended to do so or not (and it cannot be denied that he is a skilled politician - who knows 'how to hit the marks') ticked many of the 'American Century' tick boxes:

- * He called for an increase in 'defense' spending;
- * He Called for an extra 65,000 U.S. soldiers and 27,000 U.S. Marines so that America could 'stay on the offense' against 'terrorism';
- * He said American had to 'ensure' that it had 'the strongest best equipped military in the world';
- * He talked about 'building democracies', 'stopping weapons of mass destruction' and 'the right to take unilateral action to protect U.S. "vital interests" if necessary';
- * He stressed the 'importance' of 'building alliances' against America's 'enemies'.

'Personally I like it,' wrote the Neo-Con Mr Kagan of this speech, not surprizingly perhaps.

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Follow The Money ... Towards A Better Understanding Of Power Structures ... and (Their) Re-Arrangements ...

Much play was made in the later stages of Mr Obama's election campaign of the reportedly many 'small contributions' which, added together, had, apparently, funded it on a large scale.

Earlier on in the campaign he seems to have been more reliant on 'usual suspects' big donors. One of these was Mr John Canning a Chicago investment banker. Mr Canning had previously funded the 2004 Bush campaign. He said in May 2007 that he was 'disenchanted' with the Bushites. He added: 'I know lots of my friends in this business are disenchanted and are definitely looking for something different.'

In other words: the money-people can be spotted both following and directing the drift of power ...

In a word: a 're-arrangement' was going on ... By the summer of 2007 the head of fund-raising for Mr Obama (whether officially or unofficially is not entirely clear) was a woman named Penny Pritzker. On the evidence that she voted against Mr Bush and for the defeated Democrat candidate John Kerry in the 2004 Election, Ms Pritzker might be thought a 'faithful' Democrat. In fact she was the head of her family firm, the Hyatt Hotel Chain, which had also donated in 2004 to the Bush campaign. (This might be known as 'hedge(-fund)ing)one'sbets'.)

Another prominent pitch-hitting-(playing it both ways) 'switcher' was Mr Tom Bernstein. He was to Yale with Mr Bush. He formerly co-owned the Texas Rangers baseball team with Mr Bush. In 2004 he donated heavily to the Bush campaign. In the spring of 2007 he joined the ranks of the Bushite 'disenchanted' ... and prominently switched his support to Mr Obama.

As did One John Martin, founder of a militaristic seeming lobby group called 'Republicans For Obama'. Mr Martin was a reservist in the American Military who had joined the forces AFTER the

attack on Iraq - which Mr Obama always opposed.

He said in the spring of 2007: 'I disagree with Obama on the war, but I don't think it is a test of his patriotism. Obama has a message of hope for the country.' This sort of endorsement from unlikely seeming supporters was crucial to Mr Obama's 'coalition building'.

As the film maker Spike Lee (a man with a keen eye for detail) noted, there was a striking contrast between the Obama rallies and the McCain rallies in the subsequent election campaign. Mr Obama's rallies were 'multi-coloured', varied, representing an obvious broad-coalition. Whereas Mr McCain's were 'all white'. It was like a modern 21st century vision of America contrasted with something from the 1950s. There could only be one winner if America wanted a future ...

For those of us in other parts of the world who welcomed Mr Obama's victory (as something genuinely 'progressive' seeming) ... welcoming his victory was not the same as giving him unqualified support ... And to be sceptical about his statements of 'the world needing American leadership' is not to be anti-American ...

Phil Talbot

March 23, 2009

Reference Texts Include:

Sunday Times, 06_05_2007 'Republicans Defect to the Obama Camp'
Sunday Times, 06_05_2007 'Security Net For Democrat with Rally Appeal'
Sunday Times 20_05_2009 'Decline and Fall Of The Neo-Cons'
Silence Is Shame, Volume 1, 2003 'The Plot of the Project: A Review'

Personal Thoughts

by Alan Trotter

I consider myself as a gentle and peaceful sort of man who has a sense of fairness in most things.

When I read reports from UNICEF and Oxfam stating that armed conflict in the last decade has resulted in the deaths of two million children across the globe, the rage I feel for this brutal barbarous waste of young lives is difficult to describe.

This is unforgivable no matter what the cause, motive or reason. The only way we can prevent this horrific amount of deaths getting worse is by putting an end to armed conflict and war-mongering policies.

We must start talking to people instead of using violence.

We must get rid of hideous weapons like Trident - that costs an estimated £78 Billion and has the potential to kill 320 million people. It is madness. Sheer madness.

The folk musician Colum Sands wrote:

*'On the ones who we went and elected
The power has gone straight to their heads
There's money for weapons and war games
And nothing for hospital beds'*

We have the choice to follow the road we are on ... and go headlong into Armageddon, or try and save this delicate planet of ours, and give all a children a decent future.

Martin Luther King said we do have a choice:

'We can live together as brothers, or perish together as fools.'

I don't think we can argue with that.

Alan Trotter

April 2009

Personal Thoughts

by Doreen Henderson

There is so much wrong with this country at the moment I hardly know which calamity and government catastrophe to start with. Take the credit crunch: a world-wide debacle not caused by ordinary people in Britain, nor those in the poorer Third World, but these are the people who have to suffer through the greed and incompetence of bankers and governments.

What was the first thing Blair and Brown did when they came to power in 1997? Give control to the Bank of England, instead of properly nationalising it. Why do we need so many banks? Why did we bail out the failing banks, which just gives them licence to carry on as before, with no conscience nor remorse for the misery they have caused to thousands and thousands of 'hard working families'. (Have you noticed how politicians use that phrase 'hard working families' when they have done something wrong or are going to?)

Why did the government not give the working classes a chance to run the banks? We have a nucleus already up and running in Credit Unions - a system which has been a success. I would advise any one interested in the concept of 'People's Banks' to read

'From Mondragon to America' by Greg McLeod.

My next grievance is the MPs second home scam. At the time of writing at least five of the supposed 'socialist' Labour Party MPs have been caught 'red-handed fiddling'. One of them, the employment minister Mr McNulty, tried to lessen the scale of his 'theft' by stating that he had not taken any money since January. Wasn't 'January' about the time that Ms Smith the home secretary was exposed for a massive 'fiddle' on her sister's house? Did Mr McNulty perhaps take fright? You can compare this to what happens when one of us ordinary people 'fiddles' our benefits: we could go to jail, be forced to repay the fiddle money back, or do 200 hours of community service work.

Can you guess which of these sentences 'fiddling' MPs will get? Right: none! Instead, it has been suggested by some MPs that instead of the 'second house' expense fiddle loop holes they should get a £40,000 pay rise! How dare they, when thousand and thousands of us are loosing our one and only home through the total incompetence an immorality which pervades this New Labour government.

Finally I cannot go without mentioning the 25th anniversary of the Miners' Strike. All the rubbish that was spouted 25 years ago is still being peddled by people like (the former Labour leader, now 'Lord') Neil Kinnock. There is still the same bias from the BBC. The same mantra being spouted: 'the miners weren't given the right to a democratic vote on the strike'. We now, in 2009, have a prime minister who was not voted into power by the British people. (He even became New Labour leader without a proper vote.)

Then there are the people like 'Lord' Mandelson, 'Lord' Goldsmith, 'Lord' Robertson and other unelected people who now practically rule the country. All are unelected. No one has a 'democratic vote' on them. How dare these people criticise Arthur Scargill and the miners of the past when they have such an 'undemocratic' record like that? It was not the miners who lost the strike in the 1980s. It was the TUC and the Labour Party who lost the strike FOR the miners - as they lost the General Strike in 1926 - through lack of support for fellow working people.

I could also mention Gaza, Iraq, Afghanistan, but I am sure those who know me will know where my vote is not going in the next general election. I would even say to people: 'Think hard and think twice before you vote at all!'

Doreen Henderson

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza

by Lalon Amin

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza, for you I cry,
Knowing that as I write another child will die.
Women suffer, elders cry as your children shiver in fright.
Why has the world forgotten the Gazan plight?

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza, for you I weep,
Knowing that children lie in shelters not so deep.
750 of you have been killed.
Why has the world allowed your blood to be spilled?

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza, for you I pray,
Knowing that your leaders won't listen nor care.
In our schools, your blood flows.
Why has the world ignored your cause?

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza, for you I hope,
Knowing that amongst the death and misery, your children can't cope.
God protects your sons and daughters,
Why has the world not stopped the guns and mortars?

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza, for you I protest,
Knowing that not as a Muslim nor Jew, but as human I contest.
Your children killed as they play, which brings me tears.
Why have the world's leaders only thought of their political careers?

Oh Gaza, Oh Gaza, for you my heart bled,
Knowing that your children cried alone next to their dead.
How did we let this crime take place?
Why has the world let them slaughter the Gazan race?

No to Israeli War Crimes! Hands Off Gaza!

Statement of Tyneside Stop the War Coalition – January 3, 2009

The Tyneside Stop the War Coalition, encompassing the South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition and all the stop the war groups condemn the ongoing Israeli aerial bombings of the Gaza Strip that began Saturday, December 27 and call for an immediate cessation of all aggression against the Gaza Strip and Palestinian people. The heinous Zionist crimes constitute a form of collective punishment by the Israeli State, backed by the U.S. imperialists, and by the British government aimed at crushing the heroic resistance of the Palestinians to the unjust and illegal occupation. The Palestinians have rejected and repelled — and continue to reject and repel — all efforts and machinations to extinguish their national and historic right to self-determination and their lands.

The Israeli Zionists decision to launch its devastating attack on Gaza on the Jewish Sabbath after Christmas was hailed by them as “a stroke of brilliance” and that the stroke of surprise had enabled and “increased the number of people who were killed”. They used the same Anglo-US phrase “we left them in shock and

awe". They have cheered the killing of Palestinian Policemen and civilians alike as well as the bombing of Mosques, government buildings and their university.

This criminal and bloody assault on Gaza one of the most crowded and oppressed parts of Palestine has been condemned the world over by peace and justice loving people as another crime of the imperialist system of states and their cats paw Israel. It was not so long ago that the Israelis Zionists launched their attack on Lebanon killing thousands. They have not learnt anything from this defeat at the hands of the Lebanese resistance and they will fail again and again in the face of the heroic Palestinian resistance.

Like any occupied people the Palestinians have the right to resist and to take up arms to do so, because the Israeli state is trying to extinguish their right to exist. Despite of the withdrawal of Israeli troops and settlements in the Gaza strip three years ago, Israel maintains complete control of the territory by sea, air and land. And since the elections won by Hamas in 2006 Israel has punished 1.5 million people with and inhuman blockade of essential supplies, backed by the US Britain and the EU. During the last seven years 5,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel army many in the West bank. The Israelis have an army supplied by US with some of the most advanced weaponry. During the same period some 16 Israelis have been killed mostly by homemade rockets.

The Israeli Zionists are the authors of the break down of the ceasefire. Hamas is blamed for the break down of the ceasefire last month but it was in fact sunk by Israel's assassination of six Hamas fighter in Gaza on November 5 and its refusal to lift the siege of the embattled territory as expected under the Egyptian brokered deal.

For us the biggest concern must be that the British Government has failed to condemn this attack by Israel on Gaza. They have tried to place the blame firmly on Palestinian peoples elected administration and police whilst making some mealy mouthed words in calling for an end to the violence on both sides.

Miliband was forced because of the opposition of the Palestinians and people of Britain and the world to shift his position, but he

only gave some general call for and end to the violence. Gordon Brown, the Prime Minister only called on Israel to show restraint but not to demand an immediate cessation to their criminal assault on Gaza. David Cameron the conservative leader also stopped short of calling for a ceasefire.

We in the stop the war coalition call on the workers and their organisations, youth, students, democratic and peace loving people of Britain to condemn this brutal Israeli aggression, demand its immediate cessation and to organise and participate in actions organised around the country.

No to Israeli War Crimes! Hands Off Gaza!

Long Live the Heroic Palestinian Resistance!

***Motion from South Tyneside
Stop the War Coalition***

Block the Plans for Another Pro-War Government

Recognising that another world is possible is the vision of the anti-war movement and that present pro-war government continues to defy the will of the British people in prolonging the occupation of Iraq, in stepping up its occupation of Afghanistan and in continuing its policy of interference in other sovereign states.

Recognising that the continuation of this criminal pro-war policy, which is not in our name, is the preoccupation of the major political parties that are part of these present and future arrangements which are being prepared and promoted to be put in place at the next general election.

Recognising that, with the severe economic crisis, leaving in place such pro-war arrangements is extremely dangerous for the lives and liberties of the people of Britain and the world. That young people will increasingly be used as cannon fodder for wars of aggression and occupation, to defend the privileged positions of global monopolies and “British interests” and that this will lead the world into an even more dangerous situation.

Recognising that the movement for change must rely first and foremost on its own strength, organisation and sense of justice.

We resolve that the anti-war movement makes preparations to block these plans of present and future pro-war government so as to bring about an anti-war government.

We resolve that the movement should encourage the standing of anti-war candidates in workplaces, communities, and all spheres of society, and make preparations for the people to support such candidates.

Also, we resolve that the anti-war movement continues to work to form an anti-war block with small parties and organisations that wish to take a stand in their communities for an anti-war government so that every candidate is speaking out against the continued wars and occupations, against the continued militarisation of the economy, against involvement in aggressive military alliances such as NATO, against the stationing of British troops on foreign soil and to take the stand for unity of the people of all nationalities and to defend the rights of all.

End Motion

Adopted by South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition for inclusion in the Agenda of the National Stop the War Conference

March 25th, 2009

REMEMBER GAZA... End the siege now!



**National
demonstration**

**Saturday 16 May,
Assemble 12 noon, Central London**

**Free Palestine
End Israeli occupation
End the arms trade**

Called by

- Palestine Solidarity Campaign • British Muslim Initiative
- Stop the War Coalition • CND

www.palestinecampaign.org

To Contact *South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition*

e-mail: stswc@blueyonder.co.uk

website: <http://www.northeaststopwar.org.uk/>

[click on southtyn](#)

Silence is Shame!

Published by *South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition*

c/o Trinity House Social Centre

134 Laygate, South Shields, NE33 4JD

Phone: 07796267722