



The Terror of Occupation Continues

The illegal Anglo US invasion and occupation of Iraq has caused mayhem and disaster in a region already saddled with the brutal occupation of Palestine by Israel. As we write, as we pass the so-called "handover of sovereignty" date, daily people are being killed, or injured, their lives and homes destroyed. The terror of occupation continues.

This issue of *Silence is Shame* contains informative and moving contributions from activists in South Tyneside and provides the real hope and optimism of the people for a different world without war.

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**South Tyneside
Stop The War Coalition**



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Contents

1. Hope and Optimism - Alan Trotter	5
2. At the Risk of Being Branded Boring.... - Philip Talbot	7
3. The People Must Combat the Build Up to World War! Organise for Anti-War Government! - Roger Nettleship	10
4. The Global Anti-War Movement Continues - Alan Newham	19
5. Alarm, Shame and Hope - Bryan Henderson	21
6. Goodbye Mr President - Peter Murray	23
7. Behaving Like Barbarians The Civilised Age of Man - Alan Trotter	25
8. The “Gift” of a Warmonger and Colonialist to the Iraqi People - Roger Nettleship	27
9. A Citizen’s Considered Report on the Hutton Report of 28.01.04 - Philip Talbot	29
10. Stop Racism and Fascism - Peter Murray	33
11. Freedom (Poem) - Peter Murray	35
12. Rebel (Poem) - Peter Murray	37

Hope and Optimism

By Alan Trotter

'Deep in my heart I do believe that we shall overcome someday' that is the bottom line of every one who is in the Anti-war movement, the one thing that we must hold on to is our unconditional optimism and our enduring hope, without these we are lost. It is often difficult to keep the faith when we read daily of the killing of soldiers and the slaughter of innocent people, when we turn on the TV and see the destruction and havoc caused by bombs.

I take comfort in the fact that there are millions of decent people in this world who want to see the end of all hostilities around the globe, I take inspiration from my friends in the anti-war movement, these good people supported me and gave me the strength I needed when I started to weaken in my resolve and reminded me that it still is a beautiful world, and never to underestimate the power of people who are determined to see a peaceful world. I take encouragement when I hear people talking about their feeling of frustration about being lied to by our government for the reasons of going to war.

There are the people who supported the war and were shameless in their mockery and sneering at the anti-war lobby but are now angry that this situation has continued and shows no sign of coming to an end, these people feel betrayed by this government who continually hoodwink and deceive the people of this country.

Reports of allegations of abuse and war crimes from respected hu-

man rights groups were not read by ministers as they were passed to the government 'in confidence'. An Amnesty International report reveals cases of soldiers killing civilians and turning a blind eye to any ethnic, or political killings.

As we watch the events unfolding on our TVs each evening we witness the violation of human rights, we see men and woman being killed, but surely the most horrifying are the pictures of slaughtered children, we must ask ourselves where is this all going to end and what can we do to make our government listen to the opinions of the ordinary folks.

At times it does seem difficult to see an end to things, but if we believe that we shall overcome someday and that governments will sit around the table to discuss and negotiate in a peaceful and non violent way, if we are to realize our hopes and aspirations we must carry on and draw support from our brothers and sisters and focus on the beautiful, peaceful world that it is possible to live in.

Alan Trotter

At the Risk of Being Branded Boring ...

By Philip Talbot

People get away with murder because of the fears other people have about pointing out the facts of their murderous deeds.

These fears can be serious - obviously murderers are dangerous people and pointing the finger of accusation at them might be dangerous - but also trivial - one does fear being branded a boring obsessive when repeating often repeated facts.-

At the risk of being boring, what follows are some often repeated facts about the murderous illegality of the Bush-Blair-led attack on Iraq and its consequences. All wars are 'murderous' events in a general sense, but the Bush-Blair-directed war in Iraq is 'murderous' in a precisely legal sense because it began with an attack on the sovereign nation of Iraq that was illegal by all standard conventions of international law.

In simple terms, deaths in an illegal war are simply 'murder'. And the illegal murderous war in Iraq is ongoing - suggestions that it somehow ended with the sham 'handover of power' to a puppet Iraqi government on June 28th are further deceptions on the public by the American and British governments.

As the man who ordered British involvement in the illegal invasion and occupation of Iraq - against majority British opinion - Tony Blair stands accused as the principle British 'murderer'.

British government advisers were in fact spelling this out to Blair in legal terms right up to a few days before the start of the war in March 2003. He ignored their advice. Suddenly, just before the war started, the 'official advice' of the government legal advisers was changed. The revised 'official advice' - which made the war seem more legal - was made public, and the previous assessments that the planned war would be illegal were suppressed.

The good news is that, like all truths, the suppressed earlier legal assessments will come out into the open eventually. With the full evidence available to them, future historians should be able to judge clearly that Blair knew he was acting illegally, and hence could justifiably be accused of murder, when he ordered British involvement in invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Before the invasion, the governments of the United States and the United Kingdom misled their own citizens and the wider world by claiming that they had 'overwhelming evidence' that Saddam possessed huge stockpiles of quickly usable 'weapons of mass destruction' - and 'hence' represented a threat that 'had' to be disarmed rapidly with military force.

This suggestion was simply untrue. That it was untrue can now be regarded as a proven fact, given that more than 450 days into the occupation of Iraq no significant finds have been made of any physical evidence of 'weapons of mass destruction'. To put it briefly, no one can hide huge stockpiles of 'overwhelming evidence'.

Why did the British government mislead the public over Iraq's alleged possession of rapidly usable WMD? The truth is simple: Blair and others knew that by any standard convention of international law it was illegal to invade, occupy, and topple the government of another sovereign nation without proper international sanction - which they did not have.

They needed a 'pretext' to do something that was otherwise, legally speaking, 'out of order'. There was not one to be found, in truth, so they made one up. British public opinion was originally strongly against the war plans, but the people were tricked into accepting - rather than actively supporting - the war by a mixture of lies and scare

stories. The toppling and arrest of Saddam – however odious he might have been – in the manner it was done was equally illegal.

The illegal actions of the U.S.-U.K-led coalition, in the name of a so-called 'war on terror', have corrupted the fabric of international relations - increasing the level of general lawlessness world-wide, and making it a much more dangerous place as a consequence.

A dangerously violent 'can of worms' has now been opened up, to put it simply. There are now untold numbers of 'terrorists' of unknown designations, and a general state of fear and insecurity. The style of the U.S-led assault with ground troops strongly suggests that war-planners believed all along that American and British troops would not be attacked by WMD.

Britain was never under direct threat of a nuclear, chemical or biological attack by Iraq and Saddam did not possess usable battlefield WMD. The invasion took place contrary to the normal conventions of international law, without the support of the UN, and without 'overwhelming evidence' of Saddam's possession of WMD.

The war plan was driven not by 'principle' but according to the power crazed ideas of a right-wing American 'think-tank' The Project for a New American Century. In a statement published in 1997 - signed by, among others, Dick Cheney, now U.S. Vice President, Donald Rumsfeld, now U.S. Defence Secretary and his deputy Paul Wolfowitz - this group called on Americans to support an increase in defence spending to 'rally support for American global leadership'.

Iraq has not been 'liberated' as Bush and Blair and others claim, but has been effectively 'privatised' and brought under the control of American-based corporations. The 'hand-over' of power to a puppet government of Iraqis planned for 30th June this summer is a sham.

The politicians to whom power is supposedly being 'transferred' were not picked by the Iraqi people themselves but by the American and British occupiers.

U.S. and British and other 'coalition' forces will remain as occupying military powers for a potentially unlimited time, and the Iraqi people

will not have proper control over the security, law and finance of their own country.

Under Blair's leadership, and with the British public misled by a stream of untruths, Britain has actively involved itself in a new style of corporate American imperialism, which includes murderously illegal wars.

And events in Iraq are not confined to that troubled country. The entire world is now a much more dangerous place as a result of the Bush-Blair-directed murderously illegal acts in Iraq.

Philip Talbot

The People Must Combat the Build Up to World War!

Organise for Anti-War Government!

By Roger Nettleship

The invasion and continued occupation of Iraq and other countries by the Anglo US forces, the continued occupation of Palestine by US armed Israel, has unmasked the real purpose of the “war on terror.” The fact that the Security Council has endorsed the so-called handover of sovereignty to Iraq has, neither ended the occupation of Iraq, nor has it ended the “war on terror”.

The Preparations of the US for Global Dominance

The attack of September 11, 2001 served as a pretext for the representatives of the US multi-nationals and financial institutions, also supported by British imperialist interests to apply militarist plans on a world scale. This warmongering policy continues apace to date with threats to North Korea (DPRK), Iran, Syria and other countries. Even more of a concern for the peoples of the world is that these wars of aggression waged in succession against Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq can be considered as the first salvos of the third world war. Fidel Castro, speaking on May Day in 2003, declared that *“this policy did not emerge as a response to the atrocious terrorist attack perpetuated against the people of the United States by members of a fanatical organisation that had served other US administrations in the past . It was coldly and carefully conceived and developed, which explains the country’s military build-up and enormous spending on weapons at a time when the Cold War was already over, and long before September 11, 2001.”*

The series of aggressions against, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq has indeed had world-wide consequences. This world Tyranny in the form of some of the most barbaric bombings the world has seen so far, of invasions and occupations of sovereign countries and of subjugation of these populations by overwhelming military force is only the beginning. Blair's government has demonstrated as well as Bush that they will use any means necessary in their "war on terror". Which means interference, subversion, plots, which the US is presently employing against Venezuela and Cuba and Britain against Zimbabwe. It means coups and assassinations which the US government is currently undertaking in Haiti and the British government undertook with the US in Sierra Leone² in 1997/8 with it aim to re-colonise Africa.

Any means necessary, includes their arsenal of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear weapons, chemical and biological, which will be used to defeat the states that it has termed the "axis of evil."³ Bush made nuclear threats⁴ and a US government official said that one million Koreans would die in a war with the DPRK. The DPRK has already suffered the great human tragedy of the Korean war in which an estimated three million civilians died at the hands of the United States and British forces and is once more being threatened. Iran, which in 1980 suffered an equally tragic war between two neighbouring countries, in which an invasion by Iraq backed and supplied with weapons by the United States and Britain, led to the death of one million combatants and people. These are states that the US ruling circles with their partners in crime in Britain, wish to re-conquer as a part of trying to eliminate all opposition to their dominance of the globe.

In 1992, the current Assistant Secretary of Defence Paul Wolfowitz wrote⁵: *"The United States will use its unrivalled military power to manage the global order, if necessary unilaterally and pre-emptively. (...) Our first objective is to prevent the re-emergence of a new rival. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defence strategy and requires that we endeavour to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. These regions include Western Europe, East Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union and Southwest Asia."*

Although the US with its British partner is currently threatening the DPRK, Iran, Syria and other countries that it claims are part of the “axis of evil” these plans reveal that Russia, China and India, Pakistan and even more countries in Europe are potential enemies, which may suffer “pre-emptive wars” from the US in pursuit of its aim to dominate the world.

As a part of this, constant propaganda is done to demonise states in the eyes of the public so as to weaken any support they might have in standing up to this interference in their affairs and outright aggression against them. It also, means using this as a pretext at home to strengthen the arbitrary powers of the state and dismantle the rule of law as has been done in the US with the “Patriot Act” and in Britain with the Terrorism Acts, Civil Contingency Bill and other legislation which has hastily been rushed through, or strengthened.

Anti-war analysts⁶ have said that no sensible human being can accept the current situation where the US, with its stockpile of some 12,000 nuclear warheads, can threaten small countries such as the DPRK, or Iran, upon suspicion of aiming to produce a few nuclear weapons. Where in the UN Charter does it say that a single super-power can do anything it pleases to proliferate its own weapons of mass destruction, while everything is forbidden to all other countries? The UN must be called to account by its members to live up to its charter and decisions so that the big powers stop being allowed to manipulate its decisions and commit themselves to never using nuclear weapons against non nuclear countries and never to be the first to use them. The United Nations must commit all states to complete nuclear disarmament starting with the country that possesses the most nuclear weapons and a complete and simultaneous disarmament of all nuclear countries must be obtained.

The demand for anti-war government has never been more crucial for the future of humankind. This is the number one priority of the people in stopping the build up towards a third world war. The peoples must give rise to such governments that demand the withdrawal of US, British and other occupation forces from the Balkans, Afghanistan and Iraq as well as other parts of the world and dismantle all of their military bases and aggressive military alliances such as NATO and must demand that reparations are paid to all those countries that

have suffered from these wars of aggression.

The Preparations of the People- Another World is Possible!

In Britain, along with the peoples of the world and including the people of the US, an unprecedented mass movement has developed against the “war on terror” under the banner that this is: Not in Our Name! Another World is Possible! Just before the beginning of the illegal and unjustified attack by the United States and Britain on Iraq, along with millions of people around the world, 2 million people demonstrated in London on February, 15th 2003. This represented not just a protest against the attack on Iraq but created a defining moment for the future of anti-war government. It put on the agenda that this was a practical task that could be achieved and that would unite everyone regardless of different ideological, political, religious views to build a new world where conflicts and war are things of the past.

Peoples Assembly for Peace

After the conquest of Iraq and after the start of its occupation by the US and Britain 2,000 representatives of this powerful peace movement met at the second *People’s Assembly for Peace (PA)*, held in London on August 30, 2003. Speaking there a representative of *South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition* said the most important thing about the movement against war is that it is a movement where the people strive to keep the initiative in their hands. Explaining what this meant the representative said that we must build modern political arrangements with everyone fully participating and inclusive democracy that keeps this initiative in the hands of this powerful peoples movement. He said that the discussion needed to be started on how it should be developed so that it started to become this modern political arrangement. He suggested that if it was to blossom as a true tribune of the people then the *PA* has to be developed whereby the agenda is decided on the floor of the Assembly with direct involvement of the whole movement.

Candidates for the Alternative

But, whilst the need to take the demand forward for anti-war government has been recognised by many this work has not yet progressed as it should. Even the mechanism to call such a body as the *Peoples Assembly for Peace* has not yet been sorted out and it has never met since 2003. Instead, what has arisen over recent months are what could be described as serious attempts to build a political alternative in the European and local elections with the *Respect Unity Coalition* and other small political parties and independents which have been part of the anti-war movement taking a stand against war and occupation, the *Greens*, the *Peace Party* the *Scottish Socialist Party*, the *communists* and so on. This has followed on from some initial successes of Candidates for the Alternative in the last general election. Whilst, this has presented an alternative to the mainstream parties in the European Elections and to some extent in the local elections it has not yet taken forward the tasks which will bring about the kind of peoples empowerment that would make it impossible for warmongers like Tony Blair to come to power.

How is the Peoples Movement Going to Give Rise to Anti-War Government?

The same questions remain. How is this peoples movement going to give rise to anti-war government? How will people be involved in finding political solutions to these problems and their initiative released? What are the demands for renewal of the political process?

Anti-war government is about breaking from the idea of uniting around the "left of centre" or "centre ground" of British politics. A "centre ground" that claims to be the most democratic as against the "extreme left" and "extreme right" but which in reality is *itself the real extreme right*. It is this "centre ground" of British politics that is, interfering, and invading sovereign countries on behalf of the interests of the global monopolies on every continent of the world and it is at the same time attacking the whole economic and social fabric of society in Britain with its anti-social measures and abrogation of the legal rights of the people.

Instead of uniting with the “left of centre” what has to be fought for is that the issue is to once again unite around the political values of the working class. The working class is the only consistent force that is fighting to defend the vital industries from destruction, and defending the public services against privatisation, defending welfare payments for the unemployed, sick and their pensions and are standing up for the interests of society on all fronts. It is in this context that the people put forward their programme for anti-war government. Such a programme has to be worked out by the working class and people themselves so they have ownership of it and can fight to implement it.

Whilst there have been gains in the last General Election and the present European elections in people voting for candidates of the alternative, still the majority remain marginalised from politics and there is a real danger of fascism which the present and recent governments have been preparing for. This growing fascism has begun in earnest especially under the cover of the “war on terror” to take away democratic rights and civil liberties and replace the due procedures of law with arbitrary powers of detention without trial.

In addition, the government, state and monopoly controlled media, have waged a relentless campaign to target immigrants and Muslims and allow the most barbaric racist notions through their own propaganda and their proxies in the elections. This is a further attempt to marginalise people from politics and sabotage their efforts to bring about the alternative to their party system. Neither is the issue one of ballot box versus postal vote, as the ruling circles and media pundits suggest, but more to do with the fact that the people are no longer engaged with a political process which brings parties and not people to power.

There are no mechanisms in the political process that engage people in directly deciding the policies and selecting the candidates. This is the very system that deliberately marginalises people from politics and enables them to nurture career politicians who directly represent the arms and other manufacturers and financial institutions so that the demand for the conquest of the world and its resources becomes the work of these politicians. Removing the ability of the rich and powerful to manipulate the party system and select their own career politicians and replacing this party system with worker and peoples

politicians is one of the first steps in fighting for anti-war government.

Over the coming months the anti-war movement must engage itself in these preparations of all working people to bring about anti-war government.

Roger Nettlehip

¹ Speech Given By Fidel Castro Ruz, President of the Republic of Cuba at the May Day Rally, Revolution Square Havana, May 1, 2003 Published in: Ideas Are Worth More Than Weapons –Editora Politica/La Habana, 2003

² Sierra Leone was a British colony until 1961. It was after a military coup in 1992 against the then civilian government of President Joseph Saidu Momoh that Ahmed Tejan Kabbah entered the administration, and he was confirmed as president by elections in 1996. After the coup of May 25, 1997, in which the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council/Revolutionary United Front (AFRC/RUF) led by Lieutenant-Colonel Johnny Paul Koroma overthrew President Kabbah's government, the Anglo-Americans intervened in any way they could to restore the Kabbah regime.

Workers Weekly Vol 28 No 13-14, May 9-16, 1998

<http://www.wnne.demon.co.uk/ww98/ww28-14.htm#african>

³ State of the Union address by US President Bush, January 29, 2002 in which he labelled Iraq, Iran, and the DPRK "and their terrorist allies" as the "axis of evil".

⁴ The U.S. is the only country to have ever used nuclear weapons; those from Hiroshima and Nagasaki are still suffering the consequences. President Bush's March 5, 2003 declaration that U.S. military options include use of nuclear weapons in a pre-emptive first strike was the first time that policy was stated publicly – but not creation of that policy. One speech at a 1982 labour anti-nuclear conference outlined the history of all (then just 12) threats to use "nukes." All involved U.S. threats in the context of a conflict in the "Third World" – including one threat made during the Korean War. Since 1945, at least one threat to use nuclear weapons was issued by every U.S. president (except possibly Ford). Secretary of Defence Rumsfeld's words used to slander North Korea, a "terrorist re-

gime... that has been involved in things that are harmful to other countries” describe Washington to a “T.”

50th Anniversary of the End of the Korean War – Hands Off Korea - Barry Schier

<http://www.change-links.org/Korea3.htm>

⁵ In 1992, while he was Cheney’s undersecretary of defence for policy, Wolfowitz was charged with producing a guidance aimed at formulating a post-Cold war defence posture. The document also seems to have served as a template for the founding statement of principles of the Project for a New American Century, which was signed by a who’s who list of hawks and neocons who now serve in the current administration, including Cheney, Libby, Wolfowitz, Donald Rumsfeld, Elliot Abrams, Peter Rodman and Zalmay Khalilzad.

⁶ “The United States is the only country with nuclear weapons deployed outside its borders,” according to Mindullae. “The U.S. has 12,000 warheads that can reach any point on Planet Earth. North Korea may have two. ... The U.S. military is the greatest threat to world peace.”

Barry Schier (ibid.)

The Global Anti-War Movement Continues

By Alan Newham

In view of the recent moves by the New Labour Government to “move on” from the Iraq war by concentrating on domestic issues; it is important to review not only the activities of the anti-war movement in the UK but to also look at what is happening elsewhere around the world.

It is clear that a myriad of individuals, groups and organisations both here in the UK and around the world, remain active through meetings, demonstrations and other events which show that the world anti-war movement is not a transitory phenomenon in which its participants eventually “move on”. It is especially interesting to note that there are at least 16 major anti-war web sites in the U.S.A., each one with links to other groups and organisations; one site for instance lists links to the *Louisville Peace Web*, the *Colorado Campaign for Middle East Peace*, the *San José Peace Centre*, *Arizonans United for Peace*, *Reno Anti-War Coalition* and *Texans for Peace* among many others. *United for Peace and Justice* a U.S. anti-war coalition with more than 600 member groups are calling for a world wide mass protest during the Republican Convention In New York City on August 29, 2004 under the heading: “The World Says No to Bush!”

At a local level and excellent account of how a community can organise is to be found in an article on the American ZNet website, written by Lou Plummer in March 2004, entitled; “The Anti-War Movement Comes back to Fayetteville”. Fayetteville is home to Fort Bragg one of the three largest military bases in the U.S. The UK Stop the War Coalition website has a list of international peace sites covering Europe, Asia, the Far East and South America all of which show that activity remains high. Also included on their web is a list of Alternative News and Discussion sites, a welcome facility in the fog of propa-

ganda and disinformation during this time.

It is obvious that not everyone has access to a personal computer, therefore for such people reading this – our local *South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition* meets for discussions every Tuesday night at 7.30pm in the Trinity House Social Centre, 134 Laygate, South Shields, where information is available regarding local events.

Alan Newham

The following are a small selection of web sites:-

UK Sites (Selection)

Stop the War Coalition: <http://www.stopwar.org.uk>
The Quakers: <http://www.quaker.org.uk>
Muslim Association of Britain: <http://www.mabonline.net>
Hands Up for Peace <http://www.messengers.org.uk>
Campaign Against Arms Trade: <http://www.caat.org.uk>
Amnesty International: <http://www.amnesty.org.uk>
Voices in the Wilderness: <http://www.voicesuk.org>
South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition:
<http://philiptalbot.users.btopenworld.com/s.t.stop.war.coal.html>
Tyneside Stop the War Coalition:
<http://tyneside.sdf-eu.org/stopthewar/>

International Sites (Selection)

Bring Them Home Now (USA): <http://www.bringthemhomenow.org>
Military Families Speak
Out (USA): <http://www.mfso.org>
Give Peace a Chance (Japan) <http://give-peace-a-chance.jp>
Coalition Contra
La Guerre (Swiss): <http://www.gssa.ch/antiguerrre>
Austria Social Forum: <http://www.socialforum.at>
Non a la Guerre (France): <http://www.noalaguerra.org>
Stop the War (Greece): <http://www.enigma.gr/stopthewar>

Alternative News and Discussion (Selection):

Al Jazeera : <http://english.aljazeera.net>
Indymedia: <http://www.indymedia.org>
Media Watch:
<http://lists.stir.ac.uk/mailman/listinfo/media-watch>
Traprock Peace Centre: <http://traprockpeace.org>
ZNet Magazine: <http://www.zmag.org>

Alarm, Shame and Hope

By Bryan Henderson

The alarming thing about the situation we find ourselves in at this time is that the Prime Minister is in denial that he took the country into an illegal war based on spurious intelligence that has now been proven to be false.

The fact that he refuses to own up to this and resign troubles me greatly. It would only take the infamous George Bush to decide to march into some other country and our P.M. would be right there with him, believing as he does that he has done no wrong and that he and Bush are bravely defending the free world.

Even to write this makes me shudder with disgust at the thought of what he has done in the name of the United Kingdom. How do we attempt to move this country away from this shameful position?

Well, my advice is that every one of us must on every occasion possible emphasize this man Blair's dictatorial attitude and his flawed decision making.

If we can persuade the people of Sedgefield of this fact, then at the next general election he could be sacked in his own constituency.

Bryan Henderson

Goodbye Mr President

By Peter Murray

On June 5th 2004, an old man died of Alzheimer's disease leaving behind a wife and children, who will be deeply missed by his family and friends.

What was so important about this man?

He was a mass killer who was prepared to commit any crime in the interest of increasing the power of the rich and of the United States over the world's poor.

He became President of the United States in January 1981, this was six years after the US defeat in Vietnam and two years after the overthrow of its "puppet" dictatorships in Iran and Nicaragua.

His aim was to restore US power, regardless of the cost in terms of human lives.

Saddam Hussein's Iraq had invaded Iran, late in 1980. He sent Donald Rumsfeld to Baghdad to provide support for Iraq even after it used poison gas on Kurdish rebels.

He backed the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 killing thousands of people and the slaughter of Palestinians in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatilla.

In 1983, he provided US warships for cover for the Israel withdrawal from Beirut by bombing the city. He got the CIA to create a terrorist army, the contras to fight the revolutionary government of Nicaragua. Thousands of people suffered as they set out to murder government supporters and destroy the economy.

In El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, his government financed death squads. Some 40,000 were killed in El Salvador in one year. His man in Honduras was one John Negraponte who takes over as US overlord in Iraq at the end of June.

In southern Africa, he supported the apartheid regime in South Africa as it caused havoc in the border countries of Mozambique and Angola.

He invaded the small Caribbean state of Grenada. He bombed the Libyan capital of Tripoli. He broke down this rival 'superpower' the USSR by pushing through massive increases in US arms and deployed a new era of weapons of mass destruction – cruise missiles with nuclear warheads located in Britain and throughout Europe.

He sent many former eastern bloc countries into economic crisis, where thousands of people still suffer today.

He supplied cash and modern day weapons to Afghanistan to use against their rivals as well as the Russians. These weapons were used to create destruction on the capital Kabul - long after the Russians had left. Another one of his friends was a certain Osama Bin Laden.

In his home country of America, early in his presidential years he broke the strike of air traffic controllers union PATCO and sacked all its 11,000 members.

He began a huge redistribution of wealth from the working people to the rich, which continues today.

Who are we talking about?

Ronald Reagan, war monger, international terrorist, union breaker, and capitalist fat cat will be missed by his family and friends but not by hundreds of millions of people across the world.

Peter Murray

Behaving like barbarians

The civilised age of man

By Alan Trotter

Here we are at the beginning of the 21st Century and we have the most powerful nation in the world (USA) supported by our (UK) government behaving like barbarians that are lead by Neanderthals. We pretend to ourselves that we are civilised yet we revert to primeval behaviour that shames every decent human being, we kill, maim and slaughter without any honour or respect for humanity. No one can tell what the true amount of children's deaths are, for myself the killing and injuring of innocent children is the most loathsome and obnoxious act of perverse wickedness anyone could be guilty of.

How degrading is it to have a man stripped naked and have him crawl on the floor like a dog, or to have military personnel to gloat over the dead bodies of fellow human beings and sticking cigarettes into the mouths of dead Iraqis, or to threaten male prisoners with rape and to have a man hooded and shackled with wires attached to him so that he thinks he is going to be electrocuted. Over the past few weeks we have all been shocked at the humiliating 'trophy' photographs that have now become commonplace.

When we listen to our illustrious leaders we should bear in mind the heinous crimes that they are guilty of, the crimes against humanity and the human cost of this war, the many thousands of killed and injured innocent people. The war has cost in excess of \$118 billion. These unprincipled and contemptible scoundrels and neo-cons should be taken to the court of human rights where they would have to face their accusers and try to justify their monstrous and criminal conduct.

As Martin Luther King said 'we must all live together as brothers or perish together as fools'.

Alan Trotter

The “Gift” of a Warmonger and Colonialist to the Iraqi People

By Roger Nettlehip

June 28th has brought about the “transfer of sovereignty” by the Anglo American coalition supported by a resolution of the Security Council. Having carried out an illegal invasion of Iraq in breach of international law, having privatised and taken over the oil, docks other assets of the Iraqi people, having destroyed the infrastructure of the country and having caused the death of tens of thousands of people - the Anglo US alliance has appointed an interim government and declared Iraq “sovereign”. Yet Iraq remains occupied by hundreds of thousands of US and British troops and the UN Security Council has been manipulated yet again with lies.

The big lie technique is there again. The troops are their for “security”. Security for what and for whom? Will the Anglo US coalition be there to protect the lives and assets of the Iraqi people, or will it be for US and British monopolies to rob the resources and seal lucrative contracts and suppress any opposition. Facts suggest the latter.

There are no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq unless you count the thousands of depleted uranium ordnance, contamination of Iraq caused by the US and British military undermining the health of the people of Iraq. This is another “gift” of the coalition to the Iraqi people. These days, when questioned Tony Blair only has his “sincere belief.” about the illegal war against Iraq and the devastation that the Anglo-American occupation has and is causing, he replies that the “moral authority” to continue and keep going in Iraq is that before the war in Iraq “Saddam Hussein was in charge, brutalising his people and destroying the country.”

But isn't it the hallmark of a 19th century colonialist that liberation is a “gift” to be imposed. A gift of a colonialist that is really aimed to take away, to exploit the people and their resources. A gift to be

imposed by death, torture and destruction which aims to defeat an insurgent people by any means whilst justifying it in terms of “liberating” the Iraqi people from Saddam Hussein. Not for the first time for the British colonialists but a gift of a second colonial occupation and the interference in the governance of Iraq in the last century.

All that exists in Tony Blair’s mind is the superiority of the Anglo-Americans and his “sincere belief” that the Iraqi people must be better off under the Anglo-American occupation. Tony Blair claims that he “understands the sincerity” of why so many are opposed to this war and this occupation. Yet when those Iraqis residing in their own country, oppose the occupation, speak out, publish newspapers, or join the resistance - do they get Tony Blair’s understanding? No, they are to be crushed mercilessly by the iron fist of Anglo-American coalition and its “western values”.

These “western values” aim to wipe out the culture and aspirations of the people of Iraq as a sovereign Arab nation that contributes to the development and prosperity of the Middle East and all the Arab peoples. The Anglo American values are to turn Iraq into a client nation of the US and Britain and make it serve the oil and other monopolies and act as launching pad for the US military aggression against other Arab nations. These values are the same as Nazi values. Just as the handing out of collective punishment in punitive military strikes and sniper attacks against fighters and civilians alike as in Falluja, Basra, Najaf and elsewhere. They are values of systematic psychological and physical torture quite openly practiced but covered up by political spin to distance the authorities with claims that it is only a few “bad apples”.

The fact is Blair’s government is mired in warmongering and colonialism. A modern human being, let alone a modern government, cannot have the outlook of a warmonger and colonialist. The outlook of a modern government should hold that the rights of all human beings are at the centre of everything. A modern human being fights for government that respects the rights of nations and peoples and defends world peace. The “Gift” of Tony Blair and his government to the Iraqi people is that of a warmonger and a colonialist.

Roger Nettleship

A Citizen's Considered Report on the Hutton Report of 28.01.04

By Philip Talbot

Summary of Conclusions.

Here I set out the conclusions I have reached so far on the Hutton Report into the question of how Dr David Kelly came to his death and on a group of five other issues.

On the issue of Dr Kelly's death:

I am not satisfied that the Hutton Inquiry which produced the Report of that name was a fit body to establish the cause of death. The inquiry was set up mostly according to the instructions of a Prime Minister who was himself involved in the circumstances leading to Dr Kelly's death, and had a narrow remit that seemed deliberately intended to cover up details of the man's death as well as of wider matters. The circumstances leading to the death should have been fully considered by a full inquest at a coroner's court, with the option of a jury of independent randomly selected citizens to reach a judgement about the evidence - as is proper for a death in suspicious circumstances on the British mainland.

On other issues:

1. On the issues relating to the government's dossier of 24 September 2002 entitled IRAQ'S WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION, my conclusions are as follows:

a. The dossier was obviously misleadingly titled, possibly deliber-

ately, since evidence now clearly shows that Iraq had no substantial usable stocks of 'weapons of mass destruction'.

b. The dossier contained much dubiously sourced insubstantial gossip in the guise of substantial 'intelligence evidence'. The public should be better informed that most 'intelligence' in fact takes this form.

c. The specific '45 minute claim' as to how quickly the [factually non-existent] Iraqi 'weapons of mass destruction' could be launched had no credible identifiable source. It related to something so remote and insubstantial - and in fact unreal - that even the Prime Minister now acknowledges that he did not know then, or even six months later when he ordered the illegal attack on Iraq in March 2003, that the claim made in the dossier, and later repeated several times from by his own mouth, related only to notional 'battlefield' weapons. In other words, the claim in the dossier was false, and the Prime Minister - whether actually lying deliberately, or 'merely' speaking in a state of ignorance [disgraceful in the circumstances, given the seriousness of the issue] - did not know what he was talking about.

d. The dossier that purported to be a serious 'intelligence assessment' was primarily a piece of political propaganda produced by a government wishing to scare the public into supporting illegal war plans.

e. As Mr Hutton himself suggests the dossier is more often 'suggestive' rather than factual - i.e. it points minds in certain directions, and is, in slang terms, 'sexed up' in a 'nod and wink' sort of way.

f. When several newspapers further overstated the already overstated claims made in the dossier as to the weapons potential of the then Iraqi regime, the government did nothing to correct those overstatements - and hence deliberately connived to allow misinformation to remain in the public domain. This indicates fundamental bad faith in the government's conduct of its business. It is reasonable to conclude from this that the government generally and the Prime Minister in particular were more interested in the fiction of propaganda than the truth of fact in the run up to the Iraq war.

2. On the issues relating to Dr Kelly's meeting with the BBC reporter

Andrew Gilligan in the Charing Cross Hotel, London, on 22 May 2003, my conclusion is that Mr Gilligan failed to keep an accurate record of the conversation, and so could not properly substantiate claims he made in later reports based on that meeting.

3. On the issues relating to the BBC arising from Mr Gilligan's broadcast on the BBC Radio 4 Today programme of 29 May 2003, in which he claimed the 24 September 2002 dossier was 'sexed up' and that the government probably knew then the 45-minute claim was dubious, my conclusions are as follows:

a. The substance of the report was probably true, the phrasing careless.

b. The lack of editorial checking of Mr Gilligan's report within the BBC prior to broadcast is astonishing.

c. Had the report been through proper editorial scrutiny before broadcast, then it could have been more carefully phrased, and would then better have been able to withstand the predictable attack on it by unscrupulous government spin doctors such as Alistair Campbell.

4A. On the issue of whether the government behaved in a way that was dishonourable, underhand or duplicitous in revealing Dr Kelly's name to the media, my conclusion is that it did. The government did not in fact have to have a conscious 'naming strategy' - of the sort considered and dismissed by Mr Hutton. Its members knew well enough that they could rely on Westminster 'village chatter' to reveal Dr Kelly's name. Everyone involved, from the Prime Minister downwards, knew that this was the way the system worked. So it is 'dishonourable', 'underhand', 'duplicitous' of the Prime Minister and others to continue to claim they were wholly innocent over this matter.

4B. On the issue of whether the government failed to take proper steps to help and protect Dr Kelly in the difficult position he found himself in, my conclusion is that quite obviously they did not. In what Mr Hutton might describe as 'slang terms' members of the government flung Dr Kelly to the wolves while fleeing into a forest of cover-ups to protect themselves.

5. On the issue of the factors that might have led Dr Kelly to take his own life, I note that Mr Hutton based his own conclusion on a single source: a psychiatrist who, it appears, had never actually met Dr Kelly. My own conclusion is that there is insufficient evidence in the public domain to reach a conclusion about Dr Kelly's relative state of mental health, and that the full circumstances leading up to his death - and wider matters - have yet to be properly investigated.

Philip Talbot

Stop Racism and Fascism

By Peter Murray

Back in February I attended an Anti-racism, TUC sponsored, day in Sunderland, focusing on racism in the community and the workplace. Exploring the myths behind the asylum seeker stories, etc. The day went really well and I was motivated to set up some sort of anti-racism group in South Tyneside.

South Tyneside is a multi-cultural community where everyone gets along just fine. Almost true, as there has been a rise in racially motivated attacks on ethnic groups, including arson. So, therefore there was a need to form a group. Plus the fact that the BNP stood last year in the local elections fielding one candidate, this year they had three candidates plus the National Front had one.

At first I received opposition from several people, because there are already several groups representing ethnic groups. The aim was not to take away from the work that these groups do, but to work with them.

So, over one hundred letters were written to councillors, churches, ethnic groups and trade unions to see if they were interested. The first meeting was a success, with Clare Williams and Kenny Bell as our guest speakers.

It was decided that we would combat the BNP and NF and educate the public on these right wing fascist political parties. For three solid weeks the coalition delivered anti-racist material such as the Searchlight newspaper to areas in which the BNP and NF were standing.

This came with mixed views. Obviously, the BNP and NF were not pleased with our activities, with several letters going into the local press, plus details of our meetings and photographs of people involved posted on the National Front website Red Watch.

Then we had opposition from members of the South Tyneside Labour Group who stated that we were highlighting the BNP, which was true but in a negative way.

We did get great support from the local news paper, the *Shields Gazette*, members of the public, the TUC, Unison, Tyne & Wear anti-fascist Association, the other half of the South Tyneside Labour Group, several independent councillors and the local churches and ethnic groups.

The campaign was a success, but our work is far from done. The *BNP* and *NF* gained approximately a 1,000 votes in South Tyneside. As someone pointed out these are not the only racist/fascists in the area, several of the main political parties have racist tendencies including *Labour*, *Conservative*, the *Liberal Democrats* and the “new boy” UKIP. Our aim is to fight racism wherever it raises its ugly head.

In the future we will be having regular meetings which will be advertised in the local press. We intend to go around the community, educating the people and working with them.

Thank you to all that were involved in the coalition and if you would like more details about joining, or helping in our work please contact at:

South Tyneside Coalition Against Racism & Fascism
c/o Unison
27 Westoe Road
South Shields
Tyne & Wear
NE33 4LS

Tel: 0793 11 42105

Peter Murray

Freedom

By Peter Murray

She fled her home country
Leaving behind her family
She's seen misery and pain
Enough to drive you insane
Now she's in a foreign land
That she doesn't understand.
All she wants is freedom
Somewhere to call home
She's ran away from war
Escaped a life of terror and slaughter
She's seen her husband die
Every night you can hear her cry
Thinking of her children left behind
Sad thoughts constantly in her mind
She's got nothing to give
Because she's got nothing to give
She just wants to live
All she wants is freedom
Somewhere to call home
She's come to this kingdom
Seeking freedom
She's been interrogated
Now she's hated
Asylum seeker, or refugee
Does it matter
She's just like you and me
All she wants is freedom
Some where to call home.

Peter Murray

Rebel

By Peter Murray

Rebel, rebel
Stand up and yell
Our people living in hell
Comrades locked up in a cell
Listen to the story they have to tell
How long do we wait
Why do we hesitate
Action, action
Whats your reaction
You've seen the headlines
Don't stand on the sidelines
They are battles to be fought
Forget what you were taught
Raise your fist
And resist
Fight the war
Do some more
Say your piece
Fight for peace
Hold your banners high
Raise your voices to the sky
Rebel with a cause
No famine, no wars
Take the power back
Stop the attack
Know the real enemy
Rebel in harmony.

Peter Murray

30 June handover A fraud

The supposed transfer of authority in occupied Iraq on 30 June is fast approaching. It is already clear that this will be a farce.

First, those politicians to whom power is supposed to be transferred have no mandate at all from the Iraqi people. They have, in fact, been hand-picked by the Anglo-American occupiers.

Second, the prime minister chosen by Washington is a longstanding CIA agent.

Third, and most important, the USA (and Britain) will retain effective power in Iraq even after the "handover". The US military will remain answerable to no one, and the new Iraqi authorities will lack proper power over security, legislation and finance.

The Stop the War Coalition continues to demand a full military withdrawal from Iraq and the transfer of real sovereignty to those who genuinely represent the Iraqi people.

The Stop The War Coalition will be organising a day of action in Britain on 30 June to protest at this undemocratic farce. These protests will coincide with the actual "transfer" at midnight in Iraq, which is 9pm here. We will see symbolic protests in every community in support of the following demands:

- End to the occupation
- Iraq for the Iraqis
- Bring the troops home now

Stop the War Coalition

020 7053 2153/4/5/6 www.stopwar.org.uk



Contact South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition

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Silence is Shame!

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