



# **South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition**



Number 13, April 15th, 2013

Price: By Donation



***For A Future Without War  
For the Peaceful Resolution  
of International Conflicts!  
Britain Out of NATO!  
No Troops on Foreign Soil!  
For an Anti-War Government !***



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# March of the Millions

*by Alan Trotter*

February 15th 2003 was the day when decent folk all over the world came together in unison to say *NOT IN MY NAME* over the imminent invasion of Iraq.

In London an estimated 2 million kindred spirits marched through the streets to voice their opposition to the threat of war speaking for the majority of the population in Britain.

Sadly, we did not manage to persuade our leaders to change course and within five weeks of this march the missiles rained into Baghdad at a horrifying rate killing indiscriminately and the bloodshed continued with the death count climbing higher on a daily basis.

Looking back on the last ten blood stained years many horrifying things have taken place, the atrocities of Fallujah and the carnage brought about by cluster bombs, the use of banned chemical weapons, the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people both civilian and military, routine torture of prisoners, the practice of extraordinary rendition,

the hypocrisy of the media frenzy over 'little' Ali Abbas, the abuses of Guantanamo Bay and our government willing to sacrifice our children by sending 17 year olds to fight in a unjust and illegal war, as well as the manipulation and lies to cover up abuses and outrages throughout these ten lamentable years.

We have seen the creation of the war on terror and the establishing of Islamaphobia to create divisions between people.

Our government continues to finance Trident and is spending billions of pounds on wars all over the globe and yet at home we are watching the destruction of the NHS (it's fair to say military spending is killing us), the education and welfare system and the reduction of benefits to the most vulnerable in our society, while £700million is wasted on subsidizing arms exports every year (CAAT).

At what point are we going to say enough is enough?.

Who if anybody will be held to account?

Where are the guilty ones now?

Who's next.....?

February 2013

**Rally to mark the 10th anniversary of the  
February 15 London mass demonstration  
opposing the attack on Iraq:**

## **For a Future Without War!**

*by Roger Nettleship*

A rally to mark the 10th anniversary of the London demonstration when two million people demonstrated against the attack on Iraq was held in the Civic Centre, Newcastle, on the very day of the anniversary, February 15, 2013. It was organised jointly by the Martin Luther King Peace Committee, Unison Northern Region and Newcastle Stop the War Coalition. Over 60 people enjoyed a reception and buffet, a short film of the demonstration, including the poem by Adrian Mitchell Tell me lies about Iraq, and four speakers representing the peace movement, stop-the-war movement and trade union movement. Speakers were: Lyndsey German convenor of the Stop the War Coalition, Clare Williams Convenor Unison Northern Region, Tony Kempster Vice President of the International Peace Bureau (Geneva) and Honorary General Secretary, Anglican Pacifist Fellowship, and Hazera Begum Former Head Sister for Muslim Students at Northumbria University.

The rally opened with the film of the historic 2003 march by Stuart Monro. Questions and comments were also contributed by the participants who also raised many points

on furthering the work. At the end there was a cultural contribution of progressive rap from Zeinab Raza and an anti-war song from Tony Kempster, who was also one of the speakers, both which were very well received.

The rally marked a new point in the anti-war movement in the north-east. Learning from the experience of the last twelve years, the movement is paying attention to the unity and organisation across wide sections of the people and is further engaging with the trade union movement as their members face endless wars that effects themselves and their families especially in regions like the north-east. The rally affirmed that this great movement against war is not going to stop and will continue to confront the present wars together with the aim of realising a future without war.

Photos and audio files of the speakers and song contributions can be found at the website:  
<http://www.northeaststopwar.org.uk>

February 2013



# **Opening Remarks at the Rally *For A Future Without War***

***Roger Nettleship***

On behalf of the Stop the War coalition, on behalf of the Unison Northern region and the Martin Luther King Peace Committee we welcome you to this rally, “For a Future Without War”. I’m Roger Nettleship, the convener of Newcastle Stop the War Coalition and I’ve been involved with the Coalition since it began and also an international officer for Unison in one of the health branches.

It is the tenth anniversary of the biggest demonstration that took place in Britain; with over two million people demonstrating in London against the planned attack on Iraq and indeed, there were demonstrations throughout the whole world on that day in which millions of people took part. This demonstration for the first time – in graphic terms – demonstrated what the people of the world were saying, that this ‘war on terror’ and these wars were not in their name and that another world was possible. In fact on that day I think the New York Times had to admit that the people had become ‘the second superpower’. But not only did the anti-war movement create such a popular mass movement against war, but the fact that Blair carried on with the invasion of Iraq showed how much the executive power of government was at odds with the people’s will. It showed how predatory the Anglo-U.S powers had become,

then and since, where they said that “the rules of game had changed”.

It also placed at the centre, the demand of the people; that warmongers have no right to rule, for an end to pro-war government and for the demand for an anti-war government in Britain. It united the youth and all sections of the people, peoples of all different political views, people of all different religious beliefs, or none and so on. Ten years on their wars are still carrying on, but of course because of this massive anti-war movement they try and reinvent different ways of presenting their wars like “Responsibility to Protect” (R2P) and trying to dress up their wars in different ways, as they have done in Libya and now they are trying in Syria and Mali.

Here in the North East, not only has the anti-war movement continued to organise and maintain the anti-war movement at the centre of the events of the region, but over the last couple of years we’ve striven to give new impetus to this anti-war movement. In particular we have re-engaged with the peace movement in terms of the sections of the people in the university. We’ve started to re-engage with the working class movement and trade unions and this reflected in the organisation of this rally. The first organisation being Northumbria and Newcastle University’s Martin Luther King Peace Committee. I’d like to give a big thank you to Nick Megoran who’s brought this work into the work of the Stop the War Coalition and he asked me to mention how the committee was founded. Newcastle and Newcastle University was the only city and university that offered an honorary degree to Martin Luther King when he visited in 1967 and that the committee has been set up to keep

alive the Christian critique of militarism and advocacy of peace. Secondly, Unison, which is the largest public sector union in the country and I think the largest union in the Northern Region. Again, Unison, their members and their branches have always been involved, if you look at the photographs of the demonstrations, but particularly last year when the regional council delegates came together and passed a motion on the fight for *the alternative to war* as part of the whole fight for the alternative in the region. The fact that this is the responsibility to their members, who are increasingly being drawn into the military and being either killed, or maimed in these wars abroad, which have been being launched by the British government. And then last but not least, Newcastle Stop the War Coalition which was founded in 2001 and has kept the whole anti-war agenda at the centre of the politics of the region. That coalition - which has been called the Tyneside Stop the War Coalition, also we have the South Tyneside Stop the War coalition, Hexham Peace Group and many others in this period, but all of them have come together to represent antiwar movement in the region. I'd like to give a special mention to the Muslim community in the North East and in Newcastle who have played a very important role in our coalition and Mahmoud Kurdi, who is one of their representatives, who supports the actions of the Stop the War movement, the Palestinian Solidarity movement and so on, and enabled us to meet in the Muslim Welfare House every month, so I'd like to make a special mention of that.

So I think this is a great movement and we need to carry it forward together, to build it and strengthen it.

February 15, 2013



# **South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition on the Tenth Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq**

*by Alan Newham*

By the beginning of 2003 the invasion of Iraq had become a forgone conclusion in the minds of most people. The crude manoeuvrings of the U.S. and British governments to find a reason for the invasion – the Weapons of Mass Destruction fiasco, the so called ‘sexed-up’ document prepared for the British parliament with its warning of an ordnance attack on British interests in 45 minutes, the alleged presence of Al-Qaida in Iraq – were there for all to see.

Early in February 2003 a number of public meetings were set up organised by interested people in the South Tyneside area to debate the Iraqi crisis. With the emergence of the national Stop the War Coalition a local Coalition group was formed. They organised public meetings that were publicised and reported on in the local press and included being given a full page in The Shields Gazette to respond to the local M.P. David Miliband who was given a page to voice his reasons for supporting an invasion of Iraq.

What followed in London was the largest national anti-war

demonstration, indeed the largest demonstration of any kind, ever held in Britain. On a local level and during the subsequent ten years following the invasion, the local Coalition have gone on to organised many public meetings, holding local demonstrations, petition stalls and challenging pro-war justifications whenever they arise, through the use of the local press.

The local Coalition today meet regularly in a small group from diverse backgrounds and continue to debate the wider and continuing wars and conflicts taking place around the world. The local Coalition has undoubtedly played a role in presenting to the local population its arguments against war, sometimes when passions and opinions were running in the opposite direction and we continue to do so because war still plagues the world.

The local Coalition continues because war continues; now in Syria and Mali and because we now hear from Afghan President Mohamed Kharzai as he wonders whether the war in Afghanistan was a mistake, a mistake costing billions of pounds to the British taxpayer. Resistance to war must continue until the day comes when governments are elected that will say no to war.

February 2013

## **Stop the War Coalition international conference: Confronting War Ten Years On**

The Stop the War Coalition's international conference, Confronting War Ten Years On, met in London on February 9, to mark the 10th anniversary of the massive two-million-strong demonstration that took place in London on February 15, 2003, to oppose the attack on Iraq by the Anglo-US powers. This demonstration itself was one of countless manifestations throughout the globe on that day. Around 1,000 people registered for the day-long conference to hear speakers from the anti-war movement in Britain and from around the world, and to take part in discussion sessions on the last decade of wars since the demonstration and to confront the current and future wars.

The conference, open to delegates and members of Stop the War Coalition, and to all who paid a registration fee, had three plenary sessions: The consequences of war; The war on terror today; and the International movement. These sessions had a line up of contributors which included speakers from Britain, Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Canada, Germany and the United States. During the conference, parallel sessions were organised for open discussion on: Palestine and the Middle East; Drones and remote control imperialism; Art and war; The new

scramble for Africa and Islamophobia.

This was an impressive conference at this time not only in its upholding of the spirit of the February 15 mass demonstration, but in that it was focused on building that unity and self-reliance to organise the anti-war movement that has grown out of that period. The conference contributors also focused on using that experience of the struggle over 10 years – 12 years from the invasion of Afghanistan – to take forward the alternative agenda of the people confronting war and to fight for a future without war. All the sessions were relevant to the current situation and were packed with participants. In the session on the "scramble for Africa", participants grappled with this latest Anglo-US and French agenda to extend the "war on terror" into Africa as a pretext to intervene in Africa on the military and every other front to further seize the precious resources of the African people. This was not just an important discussion but was also preparation for meetings and actions against the interference in Mali, Libya, Algeria and other African countries. Key to this was the responsibility of the anti-war movement to develop its opposition to the British government's interference in Africa.

In the session on drones, the extent of the criminal involvement of the British government in the collaboration with Israel in the building of these illegal weapons which are used to assassinate the Palestinian people in Gaza and the Afghan people in Afghanistan was exposed. As a result of this growing awareness of Britain's criminal involvement in drone deployment, a national demonstration is planned on April 27 against Britain's drone base in Lincolnshire.



In his contribution in the plenary on The war on terror today, Andrew Murray, Vice-President of the Stop the War Coalition, pointed out that “we need to rebuild the strength from this tremendous conference today to finish off the work we set ourselves 10 or 12 years ago”. He said that in his opinion “we need a strong labour movement not just organisationally confident in its own strength but also with a maturer growing political understanding of imperialism which leads to war and our need to oppose it”.

The conference embodied that it is the responsibility of the people, of the anti-war movement and all the forces of the working class movement and people of Britain, to block these criminals in government who put themselves as judge, jury and executioner of the world’s people.

It is a responsibility to get organised, to strengthen that conviction, to unite in action. And to take up the task to get the organised workers movement in all its forms, including the trade unions, to be part of this movement for a future without war, which means hitting at the source of war, no matter which party in Westminster (or Washington) is in power in the fight for an anti-war government in Britain.

*Workers’ Weekly* Report, February 23, 2013



# The good guy with a gun

*by Les Barker*

The good guy with a gun  
is still killing people  
and he still thinks  
he's a good guy with a gun.

January 2013

Les Barker is a poet best known for his comedic poetry and parodies of popular songs, however he has also produced some very serious thought-provoking written work.

for more of his work visit  
[www.mrsackroyd.com](http://www.mrsackroyd.com)



# The Great Escape

*By Barry Clark*

How often have we seen it?  
How many times?

We know the story  
We know the end, Don't we?

It doesn't get any better.  
Does it?

Steve McQueen, The Great Escape, alpha male, actor  
Hollywood star, recruiters dream.

Steve McQueen, writer, director, producer  
War artist, designer of stamps.

When will The Great Escape be?  
10 years? 20 years? More?

Still, we'll always have the same old story  
Same inevitable outcome

Are we not sick of it yet?  
Has it not past its sell by date?

Steve McQueen, every soldier  
Steve McQueen, conscientious campaigner

Lets end the war  
Lets bring them home

Lets honour the dead  
Lets make The Great Escape

January 2013

# On Rathlin

*by Colum Sands*

On Rathlin, just a few miles off the County Antrim coast, archaeologists have discovered the remains of what might be called a stone-age munitions factory. Porcellanite, a kind of flint stone unique to the island, was once quarried here for the making of axe heads and there is evidence to suggest that these weapons were exported to many parts of Europe from as far back as 4,500 years ago.

So, nothing new about the arms trade then, but wouldn't it be good to think that humankind has moved on from the days when Neolithic man walked the earth. No matter how sophisticated a bomb or war machine might be, it is nothing more than an updated version of the club or axe once wielded by the caveman.

Have a look at what arms exports are worth to your country each year and ask yourself what kind of people are in power today. If the answer gives you the impression that modern day cavemen are still in charge, you have a right to feel concerned.

But there is hope. Think of around two million people taking to the streets of London ten years ago, raising a voice against the invasion of Iraq. Think of the power of online

petitions like [avaaz.org](http://avaaz.org) and the platform they provide for us to make change. They, and those of us all over the world who continue to take a stand against war, represent the development and progress of the human mind.

We all inherit the riddles of history and we all can work to solve them. We can change things for the better if we apply human intelligence and feeling rather than primitive brute force. That's something to bear in mind not only in our everyday lives but also at the next time we approach the ballot box.

January 2013

Colum Sands is a universal storyteller and folk singer who draws on a long Irish tradition of poetic musicality to weave songs for the world.

for more of his work visit  
[www.columsands.com](http://www.columsands.com)



# **A ramble through some of the fictions of 'rancid' (past) foreign policies - and notes towards establishing a more 'true' (future) history**

*by Phil Talbot*

Historical evidence points to a 'rancid' stream of disinformation in the representation of British foreign policy in our mainstream culture over the past decade. The result of such a 'toxic mix' of 'part-truth' and 'outright-fantasy' [masquerading as 'historical fact'] is the often 'absurd' atmosphere we find ourselves in - where the world, as represented in the mainstream media, seems disconnected from the world in which we actually live.

In our own local world, South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition [STSTWC] was founded by a quite small group [less than 100] of 'concerned' people from South Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn, and associated areas, in February 2003 - a month before the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003. A dozen, or so, people from the [then] newly-formed STSTWC travelled to London to take part in the mass anti-war demonstration on 15 February 2003 - when a million, or so, people marched to oppose the then impending invasion of Iraq. That London march is well described as a 'defining moment'. At that time anti-war

opinion in Britain was clearly and over-overwhelmingly 'majority' - not some marginalized 'minority'.

During that march a mass of 'committed' people, from all over Britain, stated clearly - in a complex mixture of vocal and physical ways - that:

- + wars of foreign conquest were NOT in their name;
- + illegal invasions - and following occupations - were NOT liberation(s);
- + another, better, world IS possible.

It is reasonable, on the basis of the number of people involved, to claim that 15 February 2003 event was the 'biggest ever single political demonstration in British history'. Sadly, the mass opposition to their war plans was ignored by Tony Blair and his New Labour Government - including recently resigned South Shields MP [and also former Foreign Secretary - and defeated Labour leadership contender] David Miliband. At that time David Miliband falsely claimed to the people of South Shields that 'yes' there was 'overwhelming evidence' that Saddam and his Iraqi regime possessed 'weapons of mass destruction' - and 'so' - by implication - were 'threats' who 'had' to be removed quickly, by military force [Shields Gazette, 15 March 2003]. David Miliband never even acknowledged that 'error of judgement' - let alone apologized for it. His 'reward' for getting that vital foreign policy issue so grossly wrong was ... to be promoted several years later to the top Foreign Office job in Britain. People like Mr Blair, Mr Bush - and allies such as David Miliband - ignored all the warnings voiced before, during, and after the London February 15 event. They willingly decided in favour of the invasion Iraq, contrary to international law [as all the state-funded international law

advisers in the British Foreign Office actually explicitly warned the then government it would be - prior to the attack], in March 2003 - with the terrible consequences that are now widely known.

The present coalition British Government, led by the Conservative David Cameron [supported by the previously purportedly 'anti-war' Liberal Democrat party] seems to remain a 'poodle' to big corporation imperialist U.S.-led foreign policy - with the imperialistic aggression now extending from the Middle East into Africa and beyond. Many fear the aim of this ongoing 'rancid foreign policy' is to impose the interests of the 'big' Western corporations on the world - and to plunder 'smaller' countries of their wealth and resources.

Ten years on, like many people of Britain and the wider world, I continue to oppose what I see as the 'crudely violent' styles of foreign policy broadly described as 'the war on terror'. This does not make me a supporter of - and/or 'apologist' for/of - 'terrorism'. On the contrary, I strive to oppose 'terrorism' in all its forms, including the 'state terrorism' of Britain, France, the USA, and other 'big powers'.

People - locally, nationally and internationally - are taking up the questions of how to end 'pro-war forms of government', and of how to defend 'national sovereignty' against 'corporate attack' - and of how to make 'social progress' based on people's own 'peaceful efforts'. We in the Stop The War movement invite people to take part in on-going informed discussions of these issues. We encourage people to think, to discuss, and to act - to make another, 'better', world possible in the here and now.

This issue of *Silence Is Shame* focusses on '15 February 2003', but it is not merely about looking back to that demonstration itself: it is, more positively, about the past, present and future 'progressiveness' of the anti-war movement ... in our local area of South Tyneside, and beyond that ... throughout the country ... and wider world

...

Like all aspirant 'progressive' humans anywhere, we in STSTWC act locally but think globally ...

As the mass demonstrations on 15 February 2003 illustrated, the contemporary anti-war movement is more than merely a movement 'for peace' and 'against war'. It is part of a world-wide popular movement against those 'small circles' at the head of presently powerful states, such as the USA and Britain, which can be reasonably accused of committing 'crimes against peace and humanity' as they pursue 'domination of resources, markets and spheres of influence'. This movement of the people against [in fact, in terms of numbers of people involved] 'small corporate power elites' - of the 'big powers' - involves a positive vision of how to build a better 'world without war' - based on defending the sovereignty of countries threatened by the big powers. The stronger this movement becomes, the harder the 'war-mongers' will find to operate: ... as their under-lying ideas are exposed, again and again, by a 'fundamentally anti-war collective world consciousness' - and as people such as Mr Blair and Mr Bush, are pursued for what can 'reasonably' be described as their 'war crimes'/'crimes against peace'.

While, as a 'coalition', we in the anti-war movement are not a single political party, with a 'fixed ideology', we strive to promote a 'new politics', where people in all sections of

society, of all political, ideological, religious and other beliefs are included in political decision-making'. This 'new [form of] politics' aims to direct humanity away from the rough tracks of 'barbarity' towards the high[er] roads of 'civilization' - in which outright 'conflicts', and the many more 'less violent disruptive problems', are resolved 'peacefully'.

Most people - when asked - say they want to live in a more 'peaceful' world without the present wars, mass poverty, disease and destruction of life and the environment. Anti-war groups such as STSTWC, individually and collectively, desire to plant the 'seeds' of this potential 'better new way' forward ...

Thinking back to February 15 2003 is part of a process towards setting such a more positive 'future agenda' ...  
[Back-Reference: *Silence Is Shame*, Volume 2, 2004  
[www.northeaststopwar.org.uk/southtyne/Silence\\_Is\\_Shame\\_2.pdf](http://www.northeaststopwar.org.uk/southtyne/Silence_Is_Shame_2.pdf)]

'Just that one march, then everyone shrugged and went home.' This line, from a best-selling work of fiction [David Nicholls, *One Day*, 2009, p374], indicates indirectly how the Stop The War movement was side-lined - and misrepresented - in popular culture. Those of us who have attended more than a dozen major British Stop The War events since 15 February 2003 - some involving hundreds of thousands of people - and many more smaller events - know this for the 'fiction' of our own 'history' that it really is. The London event of 15 February 2003 has, however, sadly, entered popular culture as 'the march that failed [to stop the war]'. This side-lining of the anti-war movement - by making it seem a futile waste of time - has in fact been part of the 'war-mongering process'. As Noam Chomsky

and others have pointed out, a 'top-down' imposed 'philosophy of futility' is often actively fostered by 'power elites'. Chomsky says in *Hegemony Or Survival* [2004]: 'Business leaders have long explained the need to impose on the populations a "philosophy of futility" and "lack of purpose in life" to "concentrate human attention on the more superficial things that comprise much of fashionable consumption". Deluged by such propaganda from infancy, people may then accept their meaningless and subordinated lives and forget ridiculous ideas about managing their own affairs. They may abandon their fate to corporate managers and the PR industry and, in the political realm, to the self-described "intelligent minorities" who serve and administer power.' It is hence in the interests of [so-called] 'power elites' - and their 'cheer-leaders' in the mainstream media - to make people feel as if any truly democratic political action is essentially 'futile' - a 'waste of time' that will 'achieve nothing'. And so it has been made a 'false truism' of popular culture that 'even that march of more than a million - which represented the majority anti-war opinion - was a waste of time and failed to stop a war'. A Westminster Village 'insider' mainstream political correspondent actually said to me at the time: 'The march is all very well ... but they are going to do it anyway'. Such a world view reduces politics to a competitive game played by a few 'significant players' - with the rest of us side-lined and reduced to spectators/or consumers [or even 'victims'].

The underlying thinking of modern 'power elites' is well illustrated by some comments by Ron Suskind, an American journalist: 'In the summer of 2002, after I had written an article in *Esquire* that the White House didn't like ... I had a meeting with a senior adviser to Bush ... he

told me something that at that time I didn't fully comprehend - but which I now believe gets to the very heart of the Bush presidency. The aide said that guys like me were 'in what we call the reality-based community', which he defined as people who 'believe that solutions emerge from your judicious study of discernible reality'. I nodded and murmured something about enlightenment principles and empiricism. He cut me off. 'That's not the way the world really works any more,' he continued. 'We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality - judiciously as you will - we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out. We're history's actors ... and you, all of you, will be left to just study what we do.'

Of late, the two 'main players' of contemporary mainstream British politics, David Cameron and Ed Miliband, have been competing to be 21st century 'heirs' to the 19th century 'One Nation Conservatism' of Benjamin Disraeli - indeed, rather bizarrely as it might seem to some, it is the Labour leader Mr Miliband who makes the greater claim to the 'title' of 'Disraeli's Heir'. In fact, Disraeli was a flamboyant novelist turned self-styled 'pragmatic' politician, who was frequently short of cash, and who likened political careers to ascents up 'to the top of the greasy pole'. He saw Liberal Party foreign policy in the second half of 19th century as 'faint-hearted', and thought Britain could best maintain its standing as a global power 'actively' and 'forcefully'. The 'empire', he thought, was an 'asset' to be 'cherished'. Much of his public rhetoric was directed towards fostering 'jingoistic' elements of the growing 19th century 'working class' electorate. In effect he tricked significant proportion of British people into voting

against their own better interests - and for him - by appealing to the basest forms of 'jingoism'.

In a keynote speech at Crystal Palace, London, June 1872 Disraeli said: 'When I say '[one nation] Conservative', I use the word in its purest and loftiest sense. I mean the people of England, and especially the working classes of England, are proud of belonging to a great country, and wish to maintain its greatness - that they are proud of belonging to an Imperial Country.' His 'one nation' party was to be closely identified with jingoistic patriotism, the monarchy and above all aggressive empire building. But of course - as with modern war-mongering politicians - one of the abiding fictions of Disraeli's public discourse was that Britain's leaders only ever led the nation into war 'reluctantly'. He echoed a popular music hall song of the time: 'We don't want to fight, but, by Jingo, if we do, we've got the ships; we've got the men; we've got the money too!'

The present British Labour leader Ed Miliband got his job, in 2010, in part, because he had opposed the illegal attack on Iraq, in 2003, whereas his brother, David - whom he defeated in the Labour leadership contest - had supported it. It was therefore something of a surprise, in 2012, to some to find this previously 'anti-war' Ed declaring himself a devotee of the old imperialistic war-monger Disraeli. Rather bizarrely to some, Ed Miliband in his October 2012 Labour Conference leader's speech presented himself as a natural follower of Disraeli - using the 'one nation' phrase himself more than 40 times in that speech - and he was to be heard using it again repeatedly at the Trade Union Congress 'March for the Alternative' several weeks later. Disraeli's core 'vision', Ed Miliband told the Labour



Conference, was 'a vision of a Britain where patriotism, loyalty, dedication to the common cause courses through the veins of all - and nobody feels left out'. Hence Ed Miliband seems to have swallowed whole the mirage/fiction of Disraeli as a selfless and dedicated servant of the national interest devoted to the well being of the poor.

In fact, as William Gladstone quite rightly said back in the 19th century, Disraeli was 'all show and no substance' - and his entire ideology 'some vast magnificent castle in an Italian romance - a misleading fiction - a brazen fantasy'. In fact, even the phrase 'one nation' actually derives not from one of Disraeli's political speeches but from one of his overtly fictional works: the novel *Sybil* [1845]. [The rather greater 19th century novelist (than Disraeli) Anthony Trollope even dismissed Disraeli's literary fiction work as basically 'fraudulent' - and said he 'affected something which has been intended to strike readers as uncommon and therefore grand'.] Professor Jon Parry, a Cambridge University historian, and Disraeli biographer, has described his fundamental quality as his 'astounding egotism'. Others have been even less kind. Another historian, Dominic Sandbrook, has described him as 'a vacuous egotistical hypocrite who sent British soldiers to die needlessly in foreign wars' - remind you of anyone? - and a 'shameless mountebank' who 'loved the glamour and intrigue of military adventures abroad'.

During Disraeli's longest spell in office in the 1870s British soldiers were sent abroad to fight a literal 'A-Z' of foes - from Afghans to Zulus. As so often happens, the ordinary soldiers from home and the local populations of the distant lands paid the bloody price for the prime minister's 'vanity'. In Afghanistan, in the 19th century, almost 10,000 young

British men lost their lives forcing the Afghans into accepting London's control of their affairs. In south Africa, British troops went down to one of their most humiliating defeats when Zulu warriors slaughtered more than a thousand of them in a devastating ambush [needless to say the popular culture British version of this conflict - as represented by such films as Zulu - has focussed on other aspects].

Critics from even his own time thought Disraeli represented all that was 'worst' about British 'imperialism'. Like many a self-defined 'pragmatic' politician, in the absence of concrete policies or principles, he instinctively fell back on base jingoism.

British history in the 19th century is often represented - by both 'left' and 'right' [even if for different underlying ideological reasons] as 'one long imperial expansion'. In fact - and in some contrast to the present situation [where New Labour and Conservatives seem to compete to be the most enthusiastic in their foreign military adventures - with or without Liberal Democrat support] - there was a strong 'anti-imperialistic' component to the mainstream public discourse in 19th century politics. William Gladstone was no 'left-wing pacifist', but he won the 1880 general election, decisively, against Disraeli by campaigning vocally in opposition to Disraeli's 'unwholesome political cocktail, whose main ingredients were amoral opportunism, military adventures, and disregard for the rights of the others'. Gladstone told an election audience in Glasgow in that year that thousands of Zulus had died 'for no other offence than their attempt to defend against your artillery their homes and families'. Similarly he told the same audience that villages had been razed in

Afghanistan and their inhabitants left in desperate conditions because of the Disraeli-led British government 'bent on conquest'. [It is, by the way, almost impossible to imagine a mainstream leader in contemporary politics using such language about, say, the civilian people of Pakistan killed in 'drone' attacks on their homes.]

Under-pinning such election rhetoric by Gladstone - and in contrast to Disraeli's brutish jingoism - was a strong core of anti-imperialist sentiment among the British public. This sentiment feared the growth of empire - even while it was actually happening - as engendering belligerent forms of nationalism and militarism - and being fundamentally AGAINST Britain's best interests and real national virtues. It was well summed up by the Manchester Radical MP John Bright when he said: 'In as much as 'supremacy of the seas' means arrogance and the assumption of dictatorial powers on the part of this country, the sooner it becomes obsolete the better.' Bright's anti-imperialist 19th century 'vision' of Britain's future - which has, needless to say, largely been reduced to footnotes in the mainstream history books - clearly represents a more 'progressive' one than Disraeli's - and a better example for the 21st century way forward.

Chomsky more recently has clarified the main contemporary 'dialectic': 'One can discern two trajectories in current history: one [American-led corporate capitalism] aiming towards hegemony, acting rationally within a lunatic doctrinal framework as it threatens [the] survival [of humanity]; the other dedicated to the belief that "another world is possible, in the words that animate the World Social Forum, challenging the reigning ideological system and seeking to create constructive alternatives of thought,

actions and institutions.'

And that, on our small local scale, is what we in South Tyneside Stop The War Coalition are trying to do: '... challenging the reigning ideological system and seeking to create constructive alternathought, actions and institutions ...'

April 2013

# Who Wants War, Who Wants Peace!

## *Friends of Korea Meeting*

Michael Chant the Secretary of the *Friends of Korea* addressed a packed meeting at the Marchmont Centre, London on Saturday April 6<sup>th</sup>. The title of his address was “who wants war and who wants peace.” He said; “to read the monopoly-controlled media, one would think that the DPRK is the provocative and belligerent party, and the US and its allies are responding. But the facts show the opposite story.” Who has the arsenals of destruction? He spoke about the British government and the more than a thousand nuclear weapons that it has built since the Second World War with 45 nuclear tests as well as the enormous nuclear arsenal and nuclear tests of the US and other powers.

He pointed out that the DPRK is taking measures which are designed, and can be seen in this context, to maintain peace on the Korean Peninsula. They state in no uncertain terms that should US launch acts of war, then they should be in no doubt that the flames of war should engulf them. He emphasised. “The DPRK will not be drawn into a the wasteful and destructive arms race that the US provocations are designed to invoke. They have the strategic line of impregnable defence and building the national economy.”

Thus, he said, the DPRK is not Iraq or Libya. It will not submit to nuclear, or any other kind of military blackmail. At the same time as ensuring that it has the nuclear weapon, it stresses that it is working seriously, as a responsible nuclear state, to ensure the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and for a world without

nuclear weapons.

He said the DPRK has the right as a sovereign country to safeguard their national defence, as well as to promote the peaceful use of space. Contrary to the disinformative propaganda of the British government and others, the DPRK is a modern, cultured, advanced society which sets itself an aim of building itself into a thriving socialist country. The launch of the satellite showed the advanced position of DPRK science. Their orchestras and other artistic spheres are second to none.

“Even after the Korean people defeated the U.S. forces in the Korean War and forced them to sign a ceasefire in 1953, the Americans violated its terms from the outset and continue to do so. Besides other wanton violations, they have deployed nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula, all aimed at the DPRK. In recent years, they have begun to conduct ever larger annual war exercises with nuclear armed naval fleets and warplanes.”

He pointed out that the DPRK has repeatedly demanded that the ceasefire be turned into a peace treaty and its security respected by the international community. The country cannot countenance the damage caused to the Korean people and the Korean nation from a repeat of the Korean War and nor should the progressive forces. The people are those who safeguard world peace, not the big powers. It is up to us to uphold the banner of peace, freedom and democracy, and to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Korean people in their hour of need he concluded.

*(We are publishing this report of Friends of Korea because we endorse its sentiments and are extremely concerned about the tense situation on the Korean peninsula and the unjust demonisation of the DPRK and support its right to defend its sovereignty and independence from foreign interference and we demand instead that Britain respects and develops genuine friendship with the Korean people. This is the progressive stand of all democratic people which is independent of individual views of the DPRKs socialist social system of government. - STSWC)*



**PROTEST**

# Ground the drones



**Assemble: 12 noon at Lincoln station**  
**March to rally at 2pm**  
**at RAF Waddington – the UK's new**  
**Centre of Drone Operations**

**Saturday 27th April 2013**

**Ground the  
Drones  
Protest  
Saturday 27  
April**

**Stop Britain  
being a  
launchpad for  
killer drones**

**Coach from  
Newcastle**

**Phone:  
07719946814**

**To Contact *South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition***

**e-mail : [stswc@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:stswc@blueyonder.co.uk)**

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

***Silence is Shame!***

**Published by *South Tyneside Stop the War Coalition*  
c/o Trinity House Social Centre**

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