

# THE PEACE FORUM

Feb 18, 8pm, Economics & Geography (A41)  
**Alan Simpson MP: Iraq and prospects for world peace**

March 2, 8pm, Portland (C4/5)  
**Hicham Yezza (NSPM/Arabic Soc)**  
**The Middle East - Obstacles and Opportunities**

March 16, 8pm, Portland (C4/5)  
**Dave Wills (Politics PhD): Surveillance**

April 20, 8pm, Portland (C4/5) - TBC

May 4, 8pm, Portland (C4/5) - TBC

June 1, 8pm, Portland (C4/5) - TBC

**THE FEARSOME PEACE MOVEMENT FOOTBALL TEAM, PLAYING AT  
 THE UNI WORLD CUP**



# CEASE FIRE

Newsletter of the Nottingham Student Peace Movement

Issue 3 - Feb 2004

## EDITORIAL

**Hisham Yezza**

What is there to do now for the Peace Movement? In this post-hutton post-wmd era what can we, as a movement geared towards promoting peace, really achieve? The simple answer is: Everything.

For a start, bringing this government to accountability has not been a vain enterprise, Blair is now in a very precarious situation because of his perceived contempt for the thousands of labour's natural supporters, hopefully, this would convince him that the only way to make amends is, at the least, to ensure that Iraklis are granted fair free elections as soon as possible. Blair should also keep in mind, when meeting ghadafi sometime this year, his sanctimonious preaches about human rights that he seemed to enjoy so much pre-march 2003. He should also remember, when sending yet another cheque to Uzbekistan's Islam Karimov, that some of the money will go on fuel required to boil opponents to death (see Rich Hindes' article inside and [www.monbiot.com](http://www.monbiot.com))

The Nottingham Peace Movement will always be a force for togetherness and constructive positive thinking on the issues of our time, we urge all of you to attend our peace forums, biweekly meetings on crucial matters: from Irak to globalisation to the middle east conflict).

The first of these events will be a talk by Alan Simpson, MP for Nottingham. Who will address various angles relating to the current and future situation in Irak. Please visit our website <http://su.nottingham.ac.uk/~nspm> to check out our upcoming events. The least we can do as university students is spend some of our time understating the world we're living in and the challenges it presents. Peace.

## Bush in Oz

**Lydia Watkinson. Australian Correspondent**

Bush is fond of saying that he 'loves freedom of speech' whenever he is met by any opposition or protest in a foreign country. You wouldn't think so looking at the lengths the Australian and US governments have gone to in order to shield poor Georgie from any criticism or questioning during his mercifully short visit to Australia. He was on Australian soil for 20 hours. During that time a march ban was imposed within 2 miles of the Parliament building where Bush was speaking and all recording or broadcasting equipment was banned from the area. Protestors eventually defied the ban and marched to the US embassy and to the Lodge (The Aussie 10 Downing Street). Even when protestors were allowed to gather, they had to point their speakers away from Parliament, just in case someone should actually hear them. There was even an attempt by the Howard Government to close all the roads in the city, so that if protestors wanted to rally and have speakers, they would have to carry the PA equipment there themselves.

Freedom of the press was also restricted courtesy of the United States Secret Service. The usual set-up for state visits is that both leaders give a joint press conference, where two journalists from the host country and two from the visiting country get to ask questions. Not this time. Bush refused to hold a press conference, avoiding yet another opportunity for anyone to ask him difficult questions. No Australian journalists were even allowed into 'The Lodge' because they didn't have security clearance from the Secret Service. When the Canberra press gallery asked to apply for clearance they weren't allowed no explanation was given.

The only voices of decent Bush heard during his 20-hour visit were those from MPs and their guests inside



The only voices of decent Bush heard during his 20-hour visit were those from MPs and their guests inside Parliament. The public gallery was closed for Bush's speech (unprecedented in Australia) but MPs could still invite guests into the chamber. MPs from the Green Party invited the wife and son of Mamdouh Habib, the Australian held in Guantanamo Bay, to attend- the son was dragged out of the room yelling 'what about my Dad?' Two Green MPs, Bob Brown and Kerry Nettle also interrupted the speech to ask about those held at Guantanamo Bay and the Iraq war, as well as to urge Australians not to enter free trade agreements with the US. They got the usual, ironic response from Bush himself. However, both were physically restrained in the corridor outside the chamber by right wing Australian MPs desperate to impress Bush with Australia's ability to repress dissent towards anything Bush ever does and their general suitability for position of 2<sup>nd</sup> poodle. Kerry Nettle eventually managed to reach Bush to hand him a letter from Mrs Habib, which (surprise surprise) he didn't accept.

Good luck with the protest guys- remember how much our distinguished guest loves free speech, make sure you show him plenty- he didn't get much in Oz.

## Morality Fallacies

Richard Hindes

As the US-UK Axis prepared for and carried out the invasion and occupation of Iraq many of us, opposed to the war pointed to the hypocrisy of the whole thing given Western support for Saddam during the 1980s. This included providing them with arms and equipment which could be used in the development of WMDs, extending huge loans to the country, removing them from the list of countries supporting international terrorism and providing intelligence on Iranian forces

during the Iran-Iraq War (in which the US and other Western countries was officially neutral).

This support was provided with full knowledge of the regime's human rights abuses, which were extensively documented by the likes of Amnesty International. Saddam's WMD programme and use of such weapons was also no secret to his supporters. In November 1983, for instance, George Schultz, then Secretary of State, received intelligence reports showing that Iraqi troops were resorting to "almost daily use of CW [chemical weapons] against the Iranians." The flow of arms and equipment continued unaffected. On December 20 of that year, Donald Rumsfeld then special envoy of Ronald Regan met with Saddam to discuss matters of mutual concern such as Iran and Syria. Notes of the meeting taken at the time make no mention of references to chemical weapons usage.

Despite the evidence that Western support was pursued with open eyes, those who supported the war with Iraq tended to ignore such support or regard it as a "mistake". We can dismiss the former position as moral cowardice, which leaves only the latter as a serious response. However it seems fair to argue that if such support was indeed a "mistake" (unlikely as that conclusion seems in light of the facts) then our leaders would be doing all they can to avoid repeating it. The more cynical among you may not be surprised to discover that this has not been the case. To consider but one example we turn to the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan.

Islam Karimov was re-elected president of the country in January 2000 after elections in which, according to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) there was no democratic competition. He rose to power in the days of the USSR, where he learnt his trade, and the collapse of the old regime did not interrupt his rule. Human rights groups accuse the government of serious human rights abuses. Amnesty International reports the arbitrary detention of opposition political figures, human rights defenders, devout Muslims (often accused of being "Wahhabists") and homosexuals. Indeed there are over 6,000 political and religious prisoners in the country.

Detainees are frequently the victim of torture and ill-treatment, including having bits of skin and flesh ripped off with pliers, having needles driven under their fingernails, being left to stand for a fortnight in freezing water or even being boiled to death.

Amnesty reports that "upon arrival at a prison camp suspected 'Wahhabists' or suspected members of *Hizb-ut-Tahrir* [one of the Islamic opposition parties] are separated from other prisoners and made to run between two lines of guards who *beat them with truncheons* as they pass" (original emphasis). In August 2000, the Uzbek military rounded up and resettled thousands of Tajik inhabitants from mountain villages in the southern Surhandarynsk region near the border with Tajikistan, which they alleged had been infiltrated by Islamic militants. Amnesty reported that "*the villages were set on fire and bombed, livestock were killed, houses and fields destroyed*" (original emphasis).

Remember, it was it was apparently because of atrocities not unlike these that NATO bombed Serbia, even the excuses are essentially the same with only the names of the "terrorist" groups changed. Nonetheless the West is not getting ready to attack Karimov and his government to show him the error of his ways. In fact US assistance to Uzbekistan has increased massively. In 2002, it received \$500 million, of which \$79 million went to the police and intelligence services, who are responsible for most of the torture. The US claims that its engagement with Karimov will encourage him to respect human rights, however, as George Monbiot notes, "he recognises that the protection of the world's most powerful government permits him to do whatever he wants. Indeed, the US State Department now plays a major role in excusing his crimes."

Under legislation enacted by the US Congress in July 2002, the State Department was required to report to Congress on the progress of the Uzbek government for \$45 million in additional aid to the country. This report listed the improvements had made, but was criticised by Human Rights Watch for exaggerating "Uzbekistan's human rights gains, evidently in order to maintain foreign assistance to that country's government." They alleged that, "In determining progress in these areas, the State Department listed a number of steps taken by Uzbekistan in response to U.S. concerns. Yet for each step cited, Uzbek authorities have adopted repressive measures that undermine its impact." "The State Department did not use this law as it was intended," said Tom Malinowski, Washington advocacy director for Human Rights Watch. "We expected a proactive effort. All we got was a pro-forma report."

Britain's role in the whole affair and specifically that of Tony Blair, "the man who claims that human rights are so important that they justify going to war" (Monbiot) has been little more than contemptible. At the beginning of 2002 Uzbekistan was granted an open licence to import whatever weapons it wanted from the United Kingdom. There have also been moves to censure British ambassador to Uzbekistan, Craig Murray, who has been highly critical Karimov's policy of torture and repression. Mr Murray has been threatened with the sack, investigated on trumped up charges and came under so much pressure that he had to spend time in a psychiatric ward. According to a senior government source, this pressure was exerted at least in part "on the orders of No 10".

It is clear that little has changed in policy circles since the heady days of the 1980s. Human rights remain a powerful propaganda tool, but are of little concern in actual practice. It would not be difficult to find similar examples, of varying degrees of severity, from other countries whose leaders serve Western interests. Consider for instance, Pakistan's "President" Perez Musharraf whose support for the "War on Terror" endeared to him to Bush and Blair despite his thinly veiled contempt for democracy or Western support for the corrupt and autocratic Saudi royal family. In light of this it is clear that claims that Western foreign



policy is driven by moral considerations is at best naïve and at worst a straightforward lie. Whichever, the consequences for the victims are very real, a matter which should be of no little concern to anyone who pays anything more than lip service to basic moral considerations.

## What The "Towel Heads" owe us!

By Farouk azam

Be afraid! Be very afraid. It may just be that the student sitting next to you in lectures is a limb amputator, yep. Don't let his/her hands out of your sight. One swift movement and, damn, there go your legs. And never ask them a question concerning your work, apart from questions on Oil (those questions on Oil can be a real bitch....trust me), cos have nothing to contribute. Always ask if you can use their stationary, otherwise they'll chop off your hands for stealing. Failing all this, they may just blow themselves up to get you, that's real determination.

So says Robert Kilroy-Silk. A man in the know it seems. The ex-MP turned chat show star knows it all. His article in the Express (that fine outlet) has caused controversy and division. Some have gone further and said that it has incited racial hatred.

If anyone had suggested that Black people, or Jewish people were useless there would rightly be an outcry. There is one group where it seems there is an exception, the Arabs.

**It seems that it is ok to say racist things about the Arabs**

Just take a look at Hollywood films for an explanation. Who can forget those 'wonderful' Delta Force movies where the bad guys were always Arab terrorists. But that was the 80's right,

surely that would not happen now? I remember seeing a movie a couple of years ago where Arabs were referred to as TOWEL HEADS. It seems even western popular culture is against the Arabs, or is that the other way round? Hmmm.

Anyway. Depicting Arabs as crazed Islamic fundamentalists is now almost normal. This hatred and paranoia dates back to the crusades, which attempted to wipe out Islam. They killed everything Arab, even Arab Christians were not spared. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 only brought this hatred/paranoia to the surface. So comments by Kilroy don't help. But what did he say?

**"WE OWE ARABS NOTHING" WAS THE HEADING. "APART FROM OIL- WHICH WAS DISCOVERED, IS PRODUCED AND IS PAID FOR BY THE WEST- WHAT DO THEY CONTRIBUTE? CAN YOU THINK OF ANYTHING? ANYTHING REALLY USEFUL? ANYTHING REALLY VALUABLE? SOMETHING WE REALLY NEED, COULD NOT DO WITHOUT? NO, NOR CAN I?"**

He goes on to imply that **"murdered more than 3000 civilian's on Sep 11<sup>th</sup> and then danced in hot, dusty streets to celebrate the murders?"**

By any standards it's a disgraceful article, and full of lies. If you want to know what the Arabs owed us, write to the BBC who showed a week of programmes on Islam, and it brought to the West. **Hospitals, Libraries, Astronomy, Medicine, the list goes on.** If you don't believe me, go to your local library, check it out. The modern world indeed owes the Arabs a lot. This part of History has been hidden, even suppressed, ripped out of the School curriculum.

Some argue the 'freedom of speech' angle. Kilroy plays the freedom of speech card. But with Freedom of speech come responsibilities. Comments like those by Kilroy play into the hands of neo-Nazi groups. Those who preach freedom of speech have to be careful they don't do that. Freedom of speech does not mean that you can be racist, we don't need that kind of society. What applies to one group, should apply to all groups. **We don't need a society where there is one rule for blacks, Jews and**

**the Irish, and another rule-or none at all- for the Arabs**

Racism is racism, whether or not anyone happens to complain

## Peace Man

Susama Agarwala

Istanbul  
20 November  
2003  
27 killed  
400 wounded  
success.

London  
200,000  
Marching for peace  
We only made  
The second headline.  
Why did you do it?  
We were marching for peace, man.

We didn't turn back Bush  
But neither did you.  
We didn't make it to Trafalgar Square  
You missed the White House.  
9 11  
We didn't hear you...  
Until we did.  
We were marching for peace, man.  
Yeah, from Berkeley to Birmingham  
Straight into India, Vietnam  
Then Baghdad or Tehran  
All for peace, man.

Marching  
Heady with hashish or home grown weed  
And half baked ideas of unity  
That wisp away with the smoke  
As we sober up at home.  
"What did you do this weekend?"  
"I was marching for peace, man."

Somewhere in here is an apology  
For walking over fields  
That were green this morning

For not knowing your religion  
Or what it means  
To carry explosives and die  
On a day of fasting.  
For not knowing  
Who we protest, or what we want  
Or why or how or what next  
Whether we like Bush as a man or a President  
Whether the BBC is telling the truth  
Or Blair  
Or where are those weapons of mass destruction  
Or why we care!  
For being the spoiled child  
Crying to have our show stolen.  
'Cause we were marching for peace, man.

Okay, be reasonable,  
You didn't have to kill...that's wrong.  
But you sigh  
And shake your head  
"Our actions kill people  
when we succeed  
Your inaction,  
Your sleep—stoned and snug away  
In your NY apartment  
Bickering over which bonehead to elect  
For your next President—  
For the same wars fought for the same green blood.  
Because you are marching for peace, man."

Peace, man  
In V fingered, tie died T's  
Peace, man  
As we are marching or jumping, or ripping off our bras  
Peace man  
As you rest  
On Saturday  
In parched camps  
For refugees.

**PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST  
PEACE FORUM  
3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004**

**JOIN THE PEACE MOVEMENT  
TODAY! SEND AN EMAIL TO:  
SUNSPM@su.nottingham.ac.uk**