



WPJF and Plaid Cymru jointly held a public meeting for the Impeach Blair Roadshow in Wrexham in January. Chair of the meeting, Janet Ryder AM (Plaid Cymru), started by welcoming the sizeable crowd who had come to hear about the move to impeach Blair. She noted that the audience held members of many different peace groups, political parties and faiths, showing the wide-ranging concern in the country about how the Prime Minister can be called to account for his actions.

Janet set out the reasons for the campaign to impeach the PM: He is refusing to take responsibility, but we must know why he acted as he did over Iraq. Does he have an agreement with President Bush? What will he do next time Bush decides to embark on an illegal war? What happened to the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, the basis of our Parliamentary democracy?

Janet then introduced Adam Price MP (Plaid Cymru, Carmarthen East and Dinefwr), to expand on those questions. Adam made a passionate and convincing case for bringing the PM to answer to Parliament, by impeachment, for his "high crimes and misdemeanours" over Iraq. Adam pointed out the irony of the PM's claim to be introducing democracy to Iraq at the same time as he is undermining it at home. The war was personal for Blair - it is unlikely any other leader would have committed Britain to war in Iraq - but also a political matter. We must act to prevent another war and restore the rule of democracy in Britain.

Adam next gave us a brief history of impeachment in Britain. This ancient power has not been used since 1848. Lord Palmerston was impeached when he entered a secret alliance with another country, Russia, to attack a Muslim country, Turkey, a strange echo of the current situation.

The campaign to impeach the PM has produced a report, "A Case to Answer". It is, said Adam, a forensic examination of what Blair said, against what we know he was told. The book reveals a pattern of deception and cites 28 clear examples. It also details some of the facts Blair omitted to make public. Parliament and the British public were not permitted to make an informed judgement, a clear attack on the principle of democracy.

Like the American neo-cons behind President Bush, Blair evidently sees the truth as a tool to be manipulated to influence the public - what right-wing US philosopher Leo Strauss approvingly calls the "noble lie", that the end justifies the means. The PM has a duty to be accurate and establish the facts; consider the infamous "45 minute" claim. As Adam made clear, Blair is either a liar or incompetent. Either way we must question his fitness to be Prime Minister.

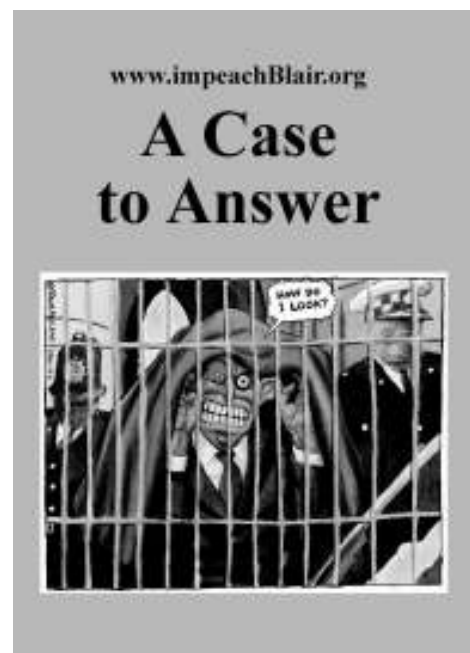
Adam described the impeachment process in detail. Impeachment is a trial in Parliament, with the Lords as jury. The current motion, which has the support of 23

MsP from 5 Parties, calls for the setting up of a Commons committee to review the evidence against the PM and report back to the House, possibly with the Articles of Impeachment (charges). At present the Parliamentary authorities are unsure of the procedure. Adam guessed that if the Commons actually voted to start the process, Blair would resign. The process will not fall at a General Election, but it would be better to get it started before. Adam explained: If Blair wins another 4 years, he could claim that as an expression of support for his actions on Iraq.

As this is a campaign to restore democracy, it is important that this is a not simply a Parliamentary affair. Adam concluded his speech by urging us to encourage our MsP to support the impeachment motion. Many people are disenchanted with the cynical political world; the impeachment campaign offers a chance to re-engage people with politics, to assert honesty over spin.

Next to speak was Mehdi El-Radhi, an architect from Baghdad who now lives in Machynlleth. Mehdi spoke passionately of the plight of ordinary Iraqis under occupation, such as his family, still in Baghdad. He asked "Were the people of Iraq a threat to the USA?" Obviously not - yet it is they who suffer. The Coalition-imposed democracy is a sham and Iraq is devastated. Mehdi closed by saying that he supports the people of Iraq who defend their own homes - "Long Live Iraq!"

The impeachment campaign has already changed the terms of debate about the Iraq war; it is now accepted that Blair lied, the question is, what do we do about it?



**"A Case to Answer", Spokesman Books, £5.
Available from www.impeachblair.org.**

ABERYSTWYTH PEACE FESTIVAL



Members of Wrexham Peace & Justice Forum took part in the All-Wales Peace Festival in Aberystwyth on March 19th, an international day of action called to mark the second anniversary of the start of the war on Iraq.

The theme of the day was "Responsibility and War". In the morning, under a clear blue sky and in glorious warm sunshine, protesters marched through Aberystwyth in a noisy and colourful procession to the Castle where they heard speeches on the Castle Green.



Speakers on the Green included members of the Peace Tax Seven, who explained why they had been withholding that part of their income tax (about 10%) which is used for military purposes. All seven have been taken to court for non-payment of tax. The group is now seeking a judicial review of UK tax policy, arguing that anyone who has a conscientious objection to military spending should be able to insist that the proportion of their tax which would normally be spent on this should be used for peaceful purposes, and that to force people to pay taxes which are then used for killing is a fundamental breach of human rights. More information about the group can be found at:

www.peacetaxseven.com.

After the speakers, there was lunch at the Old College, followed by seminars and workshops in the afternoon.

The themes of the afternoon meeting were introduced by three excellent speakers. First came Ken Booth, Professor of International Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Ken attacked the view that "the end justifies the means", for example that the "liberation" of Iraq justifies the killing of perhaps 100,000 Iraqi people and the torture carried out at Abu Ghraib and other places, or that winning the "War on Terror" justifies the attacks on civil liberties embodied in the Government's new anti-terror laws. Instead, Ken asserted that ends and means are indivisible, that, as Gandhi recognised,

the end (of a better world) can only be reached by means of actions of the highest moral standards.

Milan Rai, the well-known peace activist and author, spoke next, re-examining the Bush/Blair Coalition case for war in Iraq. Mr Blair asks us to "Move on", said Milan, but we cannot, as the lies and deceptions in the case for war have led to the current chaos in Iraq.

The third speaker was Mrs Ahmad, wife of Babar Ahmad. Babar is a UK citizen, a Muslim born and brought up in South London. In December 2003 he was arrested and beaten up in his own home in London in front of his wife and children and held for 6 days under anti-terror laws, then released without charge. Doctors found he had sustained over 50 injuries while in custody, yet the Crown Prosecution Service found "insufficient evidence" to prosecute any Police Officers.

A few months later, in August 2004, Babar was re-arrested and is at present in prison awaiting extradition to the US on unspecified charges. In the US he may be imprisoned indefinitely with no charge and no appeal. Mrs Ahmad spoke eloquently and movingly of her husband's plight; it is impossible to doubt her when she states that Babar is not guilty of any "terrorist crimes". This nightmare is happening in this country right now, and it is vital to support Mrs Ahmad's campaign for justice for her husband. Visit the campaign web site at www.freebabarahmad.com to find out more.

PEACE LIBRARY

The Peace & Justice Centre in Hightown, (where WPJF holds its planning meetings) has a sizeable collection of its library on peace-making, non-violence, reconciliation and current international issues.

Owen, as librarian, can answer queries, and can make books available on short loan to WPJF members, for collection at the monthly meetings.

Contact Owen on 01978 312375.

The library includes books by Milan Rai, Jonathan Schell, Paul Rogers, Diana Francis, Noam Chomsky, John Pilger, Josef Rotblat, Johan Galting, Gene Sharp etc.