

PEACE & PROGRESS

a party for human rights

invites you to a public meeting

UK terrorist laws: targeting dissent and resistance

organised in opposition to the new Counter Terror Bill 2008

Saturday 26 April 2008

2.30 p.m.

Garden Court Chambers
57-60 Lincoln's Inn Fields
London
WC2A 3LS
(nearest tube: Holborn)

Guest speaker: **Ian Macdonald QC**

Ian Macdonald has been a barrister for 45 years and a QC for the last 20. Renowned for his defence of those affected by immigration controls in the UK, his work also includes the defence of those accused of terrorism. He was appointed by the Attorney General as a Special Advocate in proceedings before the Special Immigration Appeals Commission but resigned in December 2004 in the light of the condemnation of the House of Lords of indefinite detention without trial of suspected international terrorists. In his resignation statement, he said: *"the detainees have not been targeted simply as a group of foreigners suspected of involvement in international terrorism. The overwhelming focus has been on the fact that they are muslims"*.

To reserve a place at the meeting, contact Peace & Progress on 07888 841586 or by email at mail@peaceandprogress.org. Spaces are limited.

For more information or for an analysis of the measures proposed in the Counter Terrorism Bill 2008, contact Peace & Progress as above.

In December 1998, almost three years before the events in the USA on 9/11, the British Government put forward proposals for a review of terrorism legislation. It included a review of the definition of terrorism, rejecting the advice of the senior Lord given the task of examining the legislation. In the Terrorism Act 2000, it put forward a definition of terrorism that was so wide it criminalised any action that challenged any government in the world, no matter whether that government was itself anti-democratic. Since the Act came into force in February 2001, three others Acts have been passed to allegedly protect the British public against the threat of terrorism (2001, 2005 and 2006). There is now another piece of legislation before Parliament, the **Counter Terrorism Bill**, which MPs will vote upon after the local elections in May 2008.

The focus of opposition to the Bill (and to a significant extent of campaigning against counter-terrorism measures) has been upon the extension of pre-charge detention from 28 to 42 days. But the **Counter Terrorism Bill 2008** makes sweeping changes, which go far beyond anything that has been seen in the UK before. Although the emphasis is allegedly terrorism, the impact will be felt beyond those individuals and communities targeted under anti-terrorist laws and practices. It is a fundamental assault upon the principles of the European Convention on Human Rights in which British politicians played such a crucial role in the drafting in the light of the horrors of the Second World War.

Peace & Progress: a party for human rights, invites you to join us for a meeting led by a prominent lawyer and political activist in order to find new ways of working together to oppose the Counter Terror Bill 2008 which is the latest attempt to undermine the fundamental democratic rights and values of British society.

The Labour Government has introduced one set of values for itself and another for those with whom it does not agree.

“counter-terrorism measures are capable of application to speech or actions concerning resistance to an oppressive regime overseas...the creation of an offence of encouragement of “terrorism” ... is to criminalise any expression of a view that armed resistance to a brutal or repressive anti-democratic regime might in certain circumstances be justifiable....The Home Secretary ... defends the scope [of the definition of “terrorism”] on the basis that there is nowhere in the world today where violence can be justified as a means of bringing about political change”

Joint Human Rights Committee Report, 28 November 2005 (paragraph 12)

“We should have been clear we were removing Saddam because he was a ruthless dictator suppressing his people”

Jonathan Powell, Chief of Staff to Tony Blair, 1997-2007 (interviewed in The Guardian Weekend, 15 March 2008)