

# British Parliament endorses terrorism

by Joseph Brewda

On Jan. 25, Nigel Waterson, a Conservative member of the British House of Commons, introduced a "Conspiracy and Incitement Bill," which would have banned individuals residing in Britain, from plotting and conducting terrorist operations overseas. The bill was proposed in the aftermath of the scandal over Britain giving safe-haven to Saudi terrorist Mohammad al Masari, who openly took credit for bombing U.S. military sites in Saudi Arabia in June 1996. Britain's grant of asylum to Masari, and its protection for other international terrorists, provoked an unusual, common protest from the U.S., Saudi, Israeli, and Egyptian governments.

The bill was read before a specially mandated committee in late January, and then on Feb. 14 and 22. Insufficient votes for its passage on its third reading, meant that the bill did not get out of its committee stage, and consequently became a dead letter. Although Waterson is a member of the ruling Conservative party, the government did not endorse his bill, contributing to its defeat.

By so acting, the British government has officially come out in open support for terrorism—that is, as long as it is conducted overseas. George Galloway, from the Labor Party, the House of Commons' leading supporter of Kashmiri terrorism, and a mouthpiece for Lord Avebury, the House of Lords' top terrorist godfather, led the fight against the bill. What follows is taken from Galloway's frank and revealing speech before the committee, as reproduced in the House of Commons official proceedings of the debate on the bill.

"The Bill will change political asylum in this country in a profound and dangerous way. It will change a state of affairs that has existed since Napoleon's time.

"How can the Iraqi opposition get rid of Saddam Hussein except by violent means? There is no other way in which he can be overthrown. Members of the Iraqi National Congress, which occupies a very plush office opposite Harrods, spend every day plotting the violent overthrow of Saddam Hussein. I personally pray for their success, as does every right-thinking, honorable Member.

"We are all in favor of controlling terrorism in Britain. Surely not a single honorable member has any truck with terrorism here, but we are talking about terrorism in other countries, and what is defined as terrorism by foreign dictatorships, where there is no democratic process.

"The legislation is rushed in response to a specific, and, for the government, highly embarrassing refugee case—that of Professor al-Masari, who was a thorn in the side of the government of Saudi Arabia.

"The bill will cause a grave diminution in the political rights of our people, which has been cherished for centuries . . . who welcomed to this country revolutionaries such as Kossuth after the wave of revolutions in 1848. Kossuth was a Hungarian who led an armed, terrorist struggle against the Austro-Hungarian empire from his sanctuary in London. He would have been prosecuted under the bill, had it existed at the time.

"Perhaps some Conservative members wish that Karl Marx had been prosecuted, but this country's reputation would have been gravely diminished if he had been, when he was laboring in the British Museum, and calling for the beheading of the European kings. Several of those monarchs wrote in congress to the British government to ask that he be prosecuted, but the then Conservative government replied that the mere advocacy of regicide was not a crime in Britain, and that Mr. Marx was free and welcome to continue his labors in the British Museum.

"By definition, a tyranny can be removed only by extraordinary measures. It is sometimes possible, although very rare, that massive civil disobedience and huge demonstrations can topple a regime, as some in eastern Europe were toppled, but much more often at one stage or another during a dictatorship, people have to bear arms and take armed action against it.

"Inevitably, in conditions of extreme repression, the leadership of such movements will gravitate to countries such as ours where freedom and liberty prevail. The bill will criminalize such people, even though they have not broken any law in Britain—or at least they would not have done so until the Bill became law—or cause any harm to the Queen's peace in her realm. They will fall open to prosecution in this country under the bill because they are inciting, supporting, or organizing events in distant tyrannies, which are clearly offenses under the laws of such tyrants.

"I repeat the cliché, which is a cliché only because it is so obviously true, that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter. [Cypriot Archbishop] Makarios was a wanted terrorist, and took tea with the Queen in Buckingham palace. [Zimbabwe President Robert] Mugabe was a wanted Marxist Leninist terrorist and then took tea with the Queen at Buckingham palace.

"In this country, there are 580,000 Pakistani Kashmir Muslims. Every man and woman among them supports what they call the freedom struggle in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Today, in mosques up and down the country, people will be collecting money for the *jihad*—the holy war. That money will make its way to Srinagar [Indian Kashmir] and the coffers of the liberation movement. If the Bill became law, those people would be committing an offense every time they did that."