

Pinochet's protector, Margaret Thatcher, declares for war against "evil" Milosevic

Chris Marsden
23 April 1999

On Tuesday evening, at London's exclusive Hilton Hotel, former Conservative Prime Minister Margaret (now Baroness) Thatcher gave her first public endorsement of NATO's war against Serbia. Speaking at a gathering to mark the twentieth anniversary of her first assuming office, she described the bombing campaign as being "eight years too late".

There followed a stream of invective against Serb leader Milosevic, who represented a "truly monstrous evil." Thatcher called on the NATO leaders to consider "the deployment of ground troops". Opposition to bombing was, she said, simply "emotional nonsense".

A Downing Street spokesman immediately welcomed Thatcher's remarks, saying, "The Prime Minister [Tony Blair] has always been very grateful of the support Lady Thatcher has given to the government over Kosovo."

Thatcher's endorsement of the US-NATO war against Serbia--and her complete unanimity with Blair--is a telling exposure of the pro-war propagandist campaign that has been waged by the liberal media in Britain. No one would seriously suggest that Mrs. Thatcher has undergone a conversion to humanitarianism on the road to Belgrade. Under the Thatcher government, foreign policy included waging a bloody war against Argentina over the Malvinas, support for dictatorial figures such as Sukharno in Indonesia, and a massive build-up of trade in arms with tyrannical regimes the world over.

For the past six months, moreover, she has led a campaign demanding that General Augusto Pinochet go free. A man responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of workers, socialists and other political opponents, who presided over mass executions, torture and rape, was routinely described by her as a bastion of democracy against the threat of communism, and a valuable ally of Britain.

Thatcher's views on Pinochet were condemned by liberal papers such as the *Guardian* and the *Independent* as the relic of a bygone era. They proclaimed Pinochet's arrest, together with the war against Serbian ethnic cleansing, as the beginning of a new era in which "humanitarian concerns" were finally shaping the foreign policy of Britain and the other major powers. The world, as a result, was now an unsafe place for dictators everywhere.

As far as Thatcher is concerned, however, there are dictators ... and there are dictators. And the deciding criteria for when to feign moral outrage remains whether this meets up with the strategic interests of British imperialism. She knows that the war being waged against Serbia is not in order to end ethnic cleansing or to oppose dictatorship. It is a war to assert the right of Britain and the imperialist powers to dictate the future course, not only of the Balkan states, but also of Russia and the entire world.

An entire layer of liberals and ex-radicals now find themselves allied with Thatcher. This eloquently testifies to their wholesale adoption of imperialist politics, on the basis of a tendentious, selective and therefore empty moralising.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact