

Worldwide protests against US-NATO bombing of Yugoslavia

Jerry White
30 March 1999

Tens of thousands of people participated in worldwide protests over the weekend against the US-NATO bombing campaign in Yugoslavia. Serbian émigrés as well as other workers and students opposed to the war protested in demonstrations held in Europe, North America, Australia, New Zealand and India.

In many cities, US embassies and consulates were the target of protests which sometimes erupted into violent clashes with police. In Moscow, an unidentified gunman on Sunday attempted to fire a rocket-propelled grenade at the US embassy and then sprayed the building with automatic weapon fire.

In the United States more than 2,000 Serbian-Americans and anti-war protesters demonstrated in the streets of New York City Saturday. Demonstrators carried signs that read "Stop bombing our parents" and "NATO out of Macedonia" as they marched down Fifth Avenue. Hundreds more protested in San Francisco on the West Coast.

At least 3,000 people protested Sunday in Toronto, Ontario, home to Canada's largest population of people of Serbian descent. Many members of the city's sizable Greek community also joined the protest, one of several organized across Canada. Earlier in the week protesters in Toronto hurled Molotov cocktails, rocks and eggs at the US consulate and clashed with police.

Tens of thousands of demonstrators also protested in NATO countries. Outside the US air base in Aviano, Italy hundreds of anti-US protesters shouted "murderers" as a flight of Stealth fighters took off Sunday. Protesters carried a huge banner reading "Italy must NOT be used."

Other protests took place in Rome, Genoa, Turin and Milan, where approximately 20,000 demonstrated. Outrage against the US is particularly acute in the aftermath of the acquittal, earlier this month, of the

American pilot whose plane sliced through the wires carrying a cable car last year, killing 20 tourists at an Italian ski resort.

Thousands of Greek protesters angered by the air strikes clashed with riot police in front of the US embassy in Athens on Friday. About 10,000 demonstrators, organized by leftist parties and youth groups, marched through the center of the city to the heavily fortified compound. Protesters tossed stones and eggs at the building, burned American flags and lit fires in the streets. The crowd shouted "Clinton--fascist murderer" and "Down with imperialism." The protesters were attacked by 200 riot police who used water hoses and tear gas.

In the northern Greek city of Thessaloniki, where the US has a consulate, about 2,000 protesters threw paint and coins at the building. Meanwhile some 1,000 demonstrators pelted the US embassy in Nicosia, Cyprus with rocks and eggs and burned American flags.

In France, where Socialist Party Prime Minister Lionel Jospin has strongly defended NATO's bombing raids, riot police Sunday used tear gas to disperse about 300 protesters who threw rocks and toppled security barriers in a demonstration in front of the US embassy in Paris. About 50 writers, intellectuals and artists signed a collective text in Paris denouncing "NATO aggression against Serbia."

Other demonstrations were held throughout Germany and in London; Vienna and Salzburg, Austria; Prague in the Czech Republic; and Oslo, Norway. Elsewhere protesters took to the streets in Australia, New Zealand and New Delhi, India. In Russia and Ukraine the Communist Party and ultra-nationalist parties organized protests at American embassies. In Bulgaria's capital of Sofia about 10,000 protesters gathered. In Timisora,

western Romania, the far-right Romania Mare party and the Union of Romanian Serbs held a protest attracting about 1,000 people, according to police reports.

Protests also took place in the former republics of Yugoslavia. In Skopje, the capital of Macedonia, about 200 protesters marched through the streets Friday, denouncing the US-NATO attacks. They seriously damaged the US embassy and burned several cars before being turned back by local police. In Banja Luka, the capital of Bosnia's Serb Republic, a staff member at the US diplomatic mission was injured Thursday after angry demonstrators smashed windows and damaged vehicles. On Friday a British diplomatic outpost was destroyed by fire, and an office of the UN World Food Program was extensively damaged.

In Belgrade thousands of people of all ages attended an impromptu rock concert Sunday to protest the bombing. The concert, in central Republic Square, began while an air raid warning was still in effect and continued after the all-clear signal. Many of the musicians and audience members wore target symbols across their chests in defiance of the US-NATO attack.



To contact the WSW and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact