

Anti-war protestors speak out in London

Our reporter
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A number of participants in the London demonstration against the war in Afghanistan held November 18 spoke to the World Socialist Web Site.

Freddie from France: I am against the war. Violence cannot answer violence. I have been living in Britain for six months to learn English. I think what is happening now is very scary and I don't agree with it.

The war is about many things, money, revenge, and the right to justice. It is always hard to judge a war in just a few words. I don't think it is possible to stop the war by appealing to the heads of government. It has never happened before, but at least we can show we are against it.

Tyra from London: I am against a war that I believe is totally unjust. We have one of the richest countries bombing one of the poorest countries in the name of the "war against terrorism", which is not really the case. There is a hidden agenda; this involves economics, coming from the oil situation. It doesn't really matter to America, how many lives are lost in Afghanistan.

I think America always had a policy to go in and attack Afghanistan and round that area. They had a regime there—the Al Qaeda, the Taliban—that they needed to bring into line and September 11 hastened that. They used it as an excuse. If they can establish a military base there, then who is going to stop them going into Iraq next?

Becky from Coventry: I am against the attack on Afghanistan, the richest country in the world is attacking the poorest country in the world for greed and power and profit, as usual.

Ordinary people have to believe that they can make a difference. Albert Einstein said that if five percent of the people worked for peace, peace would prevail. If we can inspire enough people to speak out against the war, then the tabloids won't be able to sell their papers saying "bomb Afghanistan", and we can make a difference.

America wants all the countries in the world to be favourable to it so it can put its businesses in there. It wants to get rid of anybody who opposes it, so that it can get all the oil and resources in that area.

Jasmine from London: I think it is very important that a rather unrepresented but very large group of people actually take the reins of representation into their own hands, and make their views heard. It is being filtered out of the mainstream media.

The coverage of the anti-war movement has been cursory, to say the least. For example, the last demonstration we held here under the Stop the War coalition banner was virtually unreported in many sections of the press.

They think it is politically expedient to filter out certain points of view. If you're trying to build a sense of nationhood around a particular political expediency, it is not going to work to a government's advantage to have alternative points of view seriously challenging that.

I don't know if the political leaders like Blair will listen to those of us here on this demonstration, but that should not put people off actually participating.

Mrs Jones from London: A lot of decisions are made without enough information. Nobody wants to see people get harmed, but at the same time we don't want to see terrorism take hold. I don't feel I am getting enough information to make an informed decision. The media is very slanted towards Bush and Blair. I don't have enough information and feel very inadequate and quite vulnerable. I want to gather information today, so that I can be clear in my own mind about what I can participate in.

Terri from Sheffield: I strongly oppose the actions against Afghanistan. A lot of the media coverage over the last week has been very self-congratulatory on the part of the government, trying to give the impression that the war is almost over. We know that is far from

being the case. Hopefully this demonstration will bring that home to people around the UK.

Mohamed from Coventry: I think the war in Afghanistan is unjust. What happened against the World Trade Center was wrong, but it does not justify the destruction of a society that has been suffering from poverty and all types of injustice since 1979.

The regime of [the Northern Alliance's] General Dostum is probably more horrific than that of the Taliban. They are responsible for major atrocities between 1992 and 1995, when the Taliban replaced them. When it suits the Americans, they replace one type of tyranny with another one. As one speaker here said, they have taken away the oppressors, but they have left us with murderers and rapists.

The governments in London and Washington will continue to do what they want to do, irrespective of what the people think. We really need a revolution of some form, to change things drastically. Although these demonstrations are good, nominal measures sometimes don't work, revolution is required.

We need to change the world order to make it better for the most aggrieved people of the world: the poor, the starving, the oppressed, the tortured, and so on.

Mick from Essex: I have come here to listen to the arguments against the war, to listen to other people, to listen to what the Muslims have to say.

I think the war was an excuse by the coalition—the governments in America and Britain—they were going to invade Afghanistan anyway because of the oil. I don't condone the attack on the World Trade Center, but I still think it provided an excuse to go into Afghanistan for the oil barons.

When I saw the first pictures in the newspapers of the coalition troops landing in Afghanistan, as soon as I saw the helicopters go down, I thought, how many oil barons are on that helicopter?

The politicians will probably only pay lip service to this demonstration here today, but they have to take notice of this number of people.

Sabila and Roberto from Spain: This is not a war against terrorism, they are bombing a very poor country. They are bombing people who have nothing to do with this terrorist attack.

In our opinion, the war is a political war. This is a war against Arab people, the Muslim world. It is a war against a different way of living. It is a way for

America to impose its capitalist views.

The politicians like Blair do not respect the people. He is not carrying out Labour policies, they are doing the same policies as Thatcher. It's just about capitalism, privatisation.

It is not possible to end war without putting an end to capitalism. I do not know if working people have the strength to do this, but at least we can demonstrate in the streets. It is important to make people hear what we think.

We support the Izquierda Unida [United Left of Stalinists and radicals] in Spain. At the end of their term, the PSOE [Spanish Socialist Party] were doing the same policies as Blair. It is not a left party any more.



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