

# Murdoch's Sun dismisses million-strong London march as "nothing"

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The *Sun* is the flagship publication of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation in Britain. It specialises in sleaze, bare breasts, celebrity scandals, attacks on welfare recipients, asylum-seekers and encouraging every possible variety of jingoism.

Its Monday, February 17 edition gave its views on the previous weekend's antiwar demonstrations in London and internationally. The demonstration was barely reported on the front page, which led on an inconsequential incident between the England football team captain David Beckham and his manager at Manchester United, Alex Ferguson.

The march was only acknowledged to have taken place in a four inch by two inch box under a strap, "War on terror" and a headline, "March won't stop attack on Saddam." Actual coverage of the demonstration was confined to two tiny articles on page five, which led off with the false claim that just six million people had marched internationally and just one million in London.

Where the *Sun* came into its own was the vitriol and contempt heaped on the demonstrations in an equally brief editorial, "March ado about nothing".

"A million Britons had a jolly day out on the anti-war march," it began. "But let's not get carried away. Fifty-eight million other Brits DIDN'T march on London. They weren't suckered by has-beens like [Labour MP] Tony Benn or never-will-be [Liberal Democrat party leader] Charles Kennedy. *The reality is, the big march changes nothing*" (emphasis added).

The editorial concluded with the claim that Prime Minister Tony Blair "on Saturday set out indisputable moral and political arguments" in favour of attacking Iraq and a description of opponents of war as "the wobblers".

Even by the standards one has come to expect from a

newspaper that is little short of a national disgrace, this is an extraordinary piece. If millions of people registering their opposition to war "changes nothing", then democracy is a dead letter. "Government of the people, by the people, for the people" has indeed perished from the earth. The new principle of government has become "irrespective of the people, despite the people, against the people."

And for the fabulously wealthy financial oligarchy that rules the world, that is precisely the case. Rupert Murdoch, a multibillionaire who owns more than 175 newspaper titles with a combined print run of 40 million copies, is Mister International Capital incarnate. He numbers amongst those who call the tune for Blair's government and the most ardent backers of the Bush administration. He does so because the tax cutting and pro-corporate policies championed by New Labour in Britain and the Republicans in the US funnel millions of dollars directly into his pockets.

As to his motives for supporting war against Iraq, he acknowledged in a recent interview, "The greatest thing to come out of this for the world economy, if you could put it that way, would be \$20 a barrel for oil. That's bigger than any tax cut in any country." [See "Media mogul Rupert Murdoch explains why he backs war vs. Iraq"]

Many of Murdoch's publications such as the *Sun* and the *New York Post* specialise in a pseudo-populism—a pretence to be speaking for the common man, articulating his concerns without fear of being politically correct. But their real attitude to working people should now be clear for all to see.

As long as it is a case of pandering to prejudice and creating a favourable climate for political and social backwardness, then Murdoch's media empire will profess itself to be the voice of the people. But woe

betide the people when they have the effrontery to take a stand on higher principles. Then they become “suckers” and “wobblers”, who stand in the way of the pursuit of ever-greater wealth and power by Murdoch and the governments that serve his interests.



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