Reports on March 5 student protests

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The WSWS is continuing to publish reports on the antiwar demonstrations held on March 5. The protests involved students at hundreds of campuses and high schools across the US and internationally, and included walkouts, sit-ins, teach-ins and rallies. The protests won widespread support despite freezing cold temperatures in many areas of the US and threats of expulsion and suspension on the part of some high school administrators.

The protest received international support as well from students in Canada, Spain, Australia, Britain, France, Bulgaria, Greece, Switzerland and other countries, according to organizers.

Supporters of the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party distributed a statement at a number of the protests entitled "The fight against war: an open letter to students from the World Socialist Web Site*". We encourage our readers to* download our statement *and continue to distribute it, and to write in with comments on the strategy it outlines. In addition, we urge students to send in further reports on activities at their high schools and university campuses. Below we post reports from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and from Orange County, California.*

University of Illinois students collect medical supplies

In solidarity with the national student strike, students at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, collected medicines for the organization Voices in the Wilderness to deliver to Iraq for humanitarian purposes. The university provides students with certain medicines as a part of the student health service fees. However, after more than 200 "cold packs" had been collected, administrators blocked further distributions.

Previously, Illinois students carried out a walkout against the war on January 29, coupled with a day of "alternative education," where university professors spoke on subjects ranging from the history of Iraq to historical perspectives on the peace movement. The lectures were well attended, and several hundred students participated in the rally and walkout. Later in the day, Illinois Student Government passed a resolution opposing the war on Iraq.

The central organizational force of the peace movement at the University of Illinois is Student Peace Action, which is affiliated with National Peace Action. Copies of the WSWS statement, "The fight against war: an open letter to students from the *World Socialist Web Site*," was distributed to members of Student Peace Action, and was greeted with interest.

Rally in Orange County, California

Nearly 300 students and their supporters from Orange County, California, the heart of that state's conservative elite, abandoned school and work on March 5 to shout, write and sing their opposition to a possible war on Iraq in a rally in front of the Ronald Reagan Federal Building.

Miguel, a student from nearby Santa Ana College, was eager to speak of why he had put a full roster of classes on the back burner that day. "Basically, innocent people, innocent children are going to be dying at the hands of businessmen who only care about making money," he said, as he waited for his friends to arrive.

In a typical and thinly veiled attempt to preempt any real coverage of the event by the mainstream and local media, the police and building security kept the protesters and cameras separated by concrete barricades. They justified this by stating that they could not guarantee the safety of the media's equipment should violence erupt.

Despite constant harassment from law enforcement over permits and language, those gathered marched around the block in front of the federal building. The commotion brought traffic to a near standstill. The march rallied again in front of the federal building, where an open mike session was held. Speakers from different sections of the antiwar movement, including

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organized labor, the Green party, and various student groups, addressed an enthusiastic audience. An antiwar sing-along ensued, which was in turn followed by a “die-in,” in which demonstrators bodies were traced in chalk on the sidewalk to symbolize the innocent victims of any possible US war. Others used the chalk to write antiwar slogans on the ground and white barricades.

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