

Students stage international protests against war on Iraq

David Walsh
6 March 2003

Tens of thousands of college and high school students in the US and internationally participated in protests March 5 against the impending war on Iraq. Actions, including high school walk-outs, campus rallies, marches and teach-ins, took place at hundreds of sites throughout the US, and activities in solidarity were held in Canada, Britain, France, Spain, Sweden, Australia, Bangladesh and other countries.

The US actions were loosely organized by the National Youth and Student Peace Coalition, which proposed a one-day student strike around the slogans “Books Not Bombs!” and “Stop the War Against Iraq!”

In New York City and Los Angeles large numbers of high school students walked out of classes to show opposition to the Bush administration’s policies. (See links to accompanying articles.)

In the Chicago area some 1,000 students at Evanston Township High School walked out and marched around the 3,600-pupil school, pouring into the streets and stopping traffic. Approximately 450 students turned out for a protest at Oak Park-River Forest High School in Chicago’s western suburbs, while 300 students walked out at Lincoln Park High School. Thirty students at Deerfield High School lined up in the school’s front lobby before classes to hold banners opposing the war as their classmates arrived.

In San Diego, California, students from City College and San Diego High School participated in a “Books Not Bombs” rally downtown. At San Diego’s Mission Bay High School and El Capitan High School groups of students protested the impending attack on Iraq.

In Pittsburgh, 150 high school students protested against the war outside the school board building. (See article.)

Many high school students participated in protests in

the face of threats from school administrators to suspend or otherwise discipline them. In Howard County, Maryland (west of Baltimore), school officials shut down a protest at Wilde Lake High School before it began. One student, Alysa Procida, told a television news reporter, “We were given an ultimatum. Either to leave school property or get suspended.” Protests were permitted at other schools in the county, including Mount Hebron High School in Ellicott City, Maryland, where a dozen students held up signs protesting the war.

In Gainesville, Florida, some 40 high school students carrying signs reading, “Drop books not bombs” and “Peace is a family value” walked out of school and joined a protest near the University of Florida campus.

Three hundred students rallied at Stanford University south of San Francisco, carrying placards that read, “It’s the Middle East, not the Wild West” and “The majority of us didn’t vote for this war.”

Fifteen hundred protesters gathered on the front steps of Penn State University’s administration building. Hundreds rallied at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio and 500 students walked out of classes at the University of Maryland. Students also protested at Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill, the University of Cincinnati and St. Cloud State University in St. Cloud, Minnesota. Thousands of students walked out in Texas, including at San Antonio College.

Students at Shippensburg University, a small state-run school in Pennsylvania, southwest of Harrisburg, staged a protest, as did students at Gifford College in Greensboro, North Carolina. An anti-war piece of theater was performed outside Columbia College, a private arts school in Chicago.

College and high school students staged a protest in

severely cold weather on the University of Missouri-Kansas City campus. One UMKC student told the rally, “We will send soldiers halfway around the world to kill people they’ve never met because we are jealous of their natural resources.” Protesters, who included students from Shawnee Mission North High School, carried signs reading “No War for Oil” and “Who Would Jesus Bomb?”

Students from a number of schools in Colorado, including the Denver School of the Arts and the Community College of Denver, protested the war at a rally in front of the state capitol in Denver. A Boulder Valley [Colorado] School District spokeswoman reported that 300 Fairview High School students took part in a peaceful walkout earlier in the day.

Thousands of youth, mainly high school students, demonstrated in Montreal and hundreds of students braved a fierce snowstorm to protest in Toronto. (See article).

In Britain and Australia thousands more secondary and university students joined in the international protests. (See links to accompanying articles.)

In Sweden, some 5,000 high school students gathered for a rally in downtown Stockholm before marching through the city with banners reading “Stop the War” and “Fight US Imperialism.” One 19-year-old student told a reporter, “I don’t think Bush has the right to come into Iraq and bomb for oil. Millions of children will die.” Smaller demonstrations were held in other Swedish cities, including Goteborg, the country’s second largest city.

Nearly 10,000 students marched through Paris to protest the imminent US assault on Iraq. Students shouted, “Money for School, Not for an Oil War,” “French veto at the UN” and “Bush, Blair, We Don’t Want War.” Secondary schools throughout the eastern part of Paris participated in the strike, and two schools held general assemblies to protest the war. Student protests were held in a half-dozen French cities, from Rennes to Marseilles.

The Students Union organized strikes and demonstrations in several cities in Spain, collaborating with student and youth organizations of the left-wing parties.

In Bangladesh, thousands of students, professionals and politicians marched against the war on Iraq, burning effigies of George W. Bush and carrying signs

reading, “No Blood for Oil” and “War No—Peace Yes.”

Supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* and the Socialist Equality Party intervened in demonstrations in the US, Canada and elsewhere, distributing thousands of copies of the statement “The fight against war: an open letter to students from the *World Socialist Web Site*.”

The WSWs urges readers to send in reports of protests held March 5 at their high schools, colleges or universities.



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