

More antiwar demonstrations throughout Europe

Our correspondents
7 April 2003

Many of the antiwar demonstrations in Europe over the weekend were directed against US army bases in different countries with the demand that the respective governments end all support for the war—active and passive.

On Saturday, 3,000 opponents of the war blockaded the Souda Airbase, a vital NATO facility on the island of Crete. In Italy more than a thousand demonstrators demanded the closure of the Aviano US Airbase in northern Italy, from where US paratroopers were recently transported to open a front in northern Iraq.

Workers and students in a number of towns and cities in Italy responded to a call by the rank-and-file-organisation COBAS for a national strike against the Iraq war on April 2. In Milan a demonstration of more than 10,000 ended up blocking Milan Central Station. In Turin 3,000 took to the streets, after a demonstration on the previous Saturday was violently broken up by police.

In the Spanish pilgrimage town of Santiago de Compostela, 50,000 protested on Saturday against the war. Fifty thousand more took part in an antiwar festival in Madrid. In Turkey, several thousand participants gathered at a rally against the war in Istanbul, which was broken up by police using tear gas. In Zagreb, the capital of Croatia, several hundred people took part in a demonstration against the Iraq war for the first time.

In London, thousands gathered in front of the US Embassy demanding the resignation of British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Antiwar protestors also demonstrated in front of a Royal Navy base in Portsmouth in the south of England.

In France 3,000 people protested in the centre of Grenoble and further protests took place in two towns in Alsace—Strasbourg and Mulhouse. Significantly,

slogans against militarism and the war were in evidence on more than 100 separate demonstrations called to protest against the destruction of the French pension system on Thursday.

In Denmark's capital, Copenhagen, antiwar protesters threw human chains around the embassies of the United States, Britain and Spain. In the Bulgarian capital of Sofia, more than a thousand demonstrators demanded the resignation of the government over its support for the US-British war coalition.

In Switzerland, demonstrations of predominantly young people took place in Zurich and Berne. The city administration in Berne is presently trying to restrict the number of demonstrations. Seventy organisations, trade unions and political parties have already protested against the measure.

In Germany, participants at antiwar protests demanded an immediate end to all hostilities in Iraq, a ban on the US military use of German air space, and a prohibition on the use of US and British military installations in Germany for the war.

In Heidelberg 2,000 people marched to the headquarters of the 5th US-Corps, from where soldiers are being sent to northern Iraq. In Mannheim, Karlsruhe and Nuremberg, hundreds protested against the war. In Eckernförde on the Baltic Sea, pupils organised a demonstration of more than 700.

In Frankfurt, several hundred school students answered the call for an antiwar demonstration in the city centre last Friday. They demanded an immediate end to the war and any German support for it. The posters read: "Bush to Court" and "Close German Air space". Chanting slogans like "Sh.. on Bush, Sh.. on Blair—we don't want any more wars" and "War is Terror", the pupils marched to the US Consulate in Frankfurt-Bockenheim.

Speakers from various schools, a teachers union representative and a clergyman denounced the extent of the destruction caused by the war and pointed to the responsibility of the German Red-Green government.

Marianne Arens, a representative of the *World Socialist Web Site*, also had the opportunity to speak. “Your demonstration is part of a global mass movement against war, on a scale never witnessed before,” she told the students. “But even worldwide protests cannot stop the war by themselves.” She called on students to study the lessons of history and to consider seriously the strategy needed to end the war.

“Who can we rely on in the struggle against this war? Not on the Social Democrats and the Greens in government, who still allow the US army to use German air space and guard its bases with Bundeswehr personnel. Not on institutions like the UN or the EU. Our sole allies are the workers of all the world—the American workers in particular, who have to pay for the war with cuts in social services. In the US, the richest 13,000 families own as much as the poorest 20 million. The struggle against war must be brought together with the social questions,” she said.

Many students applauded when she called for the international unity of the working class. A number of them later spoke to her and said that they already read the WSWS.



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