

International protests against the US-led war on Iraq

Our reporters
15 April 2003

The WSWS is continuing coverage of the protests held worldwide this past weekend against the US war on Iraq. Below we are publishing reports on demonstrations in Spain, India and Los Angeles.

Spain

Throughout Spain on Saturday hundreds of thousands repudiated the US war on Iraq, with the largest demonstrations taking place in Barcelona and Madrid. Present in all these marches was anger and disgust over the death of Jose Couso, a camera operator for Spanish television killed together with Ukrainian reporter Taras Protsyuk when a US tank fired on the Palestine Hotel in Baghdad. An ever-present slogan on the national protests was a call for the resignation of Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar resignation, who has supported the war.

The biggest march took place in Barcelona, where nearly 300,000 participated. Many of the protesters dressed in black and carried candles in mourning for the Iraqi dead, marching to the somber beat of drums.

On Sunday, April 13, over 100 boats joined the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in a floating protest in Barcelona's harbor against the occupation of Iraq.

Some 200,000 marched in Madrid. Protesters' demands included the closure of NATO bases in Spain, Aznar's resignation, and "No blood for oil." The focus of the Madrid march was a demand for an investigation into Couso's death, which many are calling an act of murder.

India

Widespread protests have taken place in India not only on April 12, but on many days over the past two weeks. In Cochi alone about 80,000 people took part in a march and rally on Saturday condemning the war. In the state of Kerala, sales of Pepsi and Coca-cola have virtually stopped for the last 10 days, and all the

bottling plants in the state are closed.

The Indian public overwhelmingly condemns the US invasion and equally condemns the Indian government for "playing piano" to George W. Bush for two months until the public reaction forced the government to pass a resolution in the Indian parliament last week condemning the US action.

Los Angeles

About 1,500 marchers protested the US occupation of Iraq on Sunday, April 13. This was the first protest since the fall of Baghdad. The marchers denounced President George W. Bush, and called for his impeachment. Many signs and chants made reference to the number of Iraqi dead. Among the protesters was a contingent of Palestinians, denouncing the oppression of the Israeli government.

While the march was more somber than the three previous ones, it did include Aztec dancers and street theatre. The march through the heart of Hollywood attracted the attention of many onlookers, many of whom expressed support for the protesters. Supporters of the *World Socialist Web Site* distributed leaflets and spoke to many of the marchers.

A postal worker who is a regular reader of the WSWS said: "Maybe more people should be here. I'm here because I am against the policies of the Bush administration. The inspectors should have been allowed to complete their work. The whole thing was about the weapons of mass destruction. Now it's about liberating Iraq.

"Look, I just read on Friday that their top scientist said there weren't any weapons in Iraq. I would say that where I work, which is a pretty large facility, people are against the war. I would say about 50 percent oppose it. They are skeptical about the Bush administration. A lot of people feel this war is for

power, for oil, for making money from oil.

“If we had a choice, I wouldn’t vote for the Democratic Party. The Democratic Party has become a corporate party, just like the Republicans. I would vote for a socialist party that supported labor.”

A college student, formerly a Navy sailor stationed in the Persian Gulf, said: “I was there with ‘Operating Southern Conflict’ on an aircraft carrier. Our planes would leave fully loaded with bombs and come back with nothing. They wouldn’t tell us where they’d been. What you see on TV now is only 10 percent of what is really happening over there. The reason why reporters are embedded there is to get people to support the war. When I went abroad, that’s when I realized that we are conditioned in the US to accept the mainstream thinking. Once I went abroad and came back, I had new eyes.

“The Democratic Party is about money. I would not vote for the Democrats. They support the war. They disgust me.”

A radio reporter for a CBS-affiliated station said: “The problem is they are not balancing their news anywhere. To say that embedded journalists are whores is a strong statement, but it’s not inaccurate, because everyone tries to make a name for himself with war. I try to do my job. We are supposed to be trained to ask tough questions, but we’re just repeating what the government says.

“Embedded reporters see things and they won’t report it until the military commanders clear them. And this administration is the most ‘baby-crying’ I’ve ever seen. ‘Mr. Rumsfeld, you said the war was going to be easy...’ ‘No!’ he yells. ‘I didn’t say that!’ But we heard him.”



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