

WSWS continuing coverage

Massive anti-Trump protests across US

A WSWS reporting team
24 January 2017

Millions of people participated in demonstrations throughout the United States and the world Saturday in a powerful show of opposition to the administration of US President Donald Trump. The protests mark the first signs of the crisis-ridden character of the new Trump administration and the immense social upheavals to come. (See: “The way forward in the fight against Trump”)

The demonstrations against Trump on Saturday were the largest and most widespread protest marches in American history, involving somewhere between 3 million and 5 million people in more than 500 US cities. With protests in at least 100 other cities worldwide, they were the first significant internationally coordinated demonstrations since the US invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Protests took place in over 600 locations on every continent. The rally in Washington DC drew more than 500,000 people, twice the reported size of Trump’s inauguration crowd the day before, with an equal number marching in Los Angeles.

An estimated 250,000 gathered at the rally in downtown Chicago, while as many as 175,000 people joined the march in Boston. At least 400,000 people marched in New York City, home of Trump, as well as 90,000 in St. Paul, Minnesota, at least 75,000 in Madison, Wisconsin, and 60,000 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Internationally, demonstrations took place in Mexico City, Paris, Berlin, Prague and Sydney. Up to 100,000 people marched in London, as well as in the British cities of Cardiff, Edinburgh, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Bristol, and in Belfast, Northern Ireland.

The *World Socialist Web Site* has gathered extensive coverage of the protests and presented an initial report on Sunday, followed by more reports on Monday. We will be providing additional coverage and interviews in the coming days.

New York, New York

In New York City, approximately 75,000 people had pre-registered for the march, but estimates now place the number attending at 400,000 to 500,000. Crowds poured into Midtown Manhattan streets in a procession lasting for hours along 42nd Street and up Fifth Avenue, ending in front of Trump Tower.

WSWS supporters handed out nearly 3,000 copies of the statement, “The inauguration of Donald Trump: An event that will live in infamy.” Supporters found a large audience receptive to a critique of the Democratic Party, as well as many with illusions in it.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer made an appearance along the march route, escorted by police in a cordoned-off area. Schumer, who has postured at times as an opponent of Trump, while also pledging to work with him, drew cheers from many in the crowd.

Likewise, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, whose police force took a distinctively hands-off approach in contrast to previous demonstrations, tweeted that he was “deeply inspired” by the march. Like Schumer, de Blasio has pledged that Trump will find an open hand if he wants to “do real work,” rather than implement policies that hurt New York City.

Kirsten, a 39-year-old Brooklynite marching with her two-year-old in tow, said, “I came out because of my daughter. I’m worried about all the negative changes for women, minorities, gays—for everyone. I don’t see any benefit except for the 1 percent. I’m scared.”

“I’m hoping that this is not just a march and afterwards people are satisfied,” she said. “We can’t back down. But I’m worried, I don’t know how change is going to happen without a collapse of the system, and I don’t know how that happens. It seems like the Democrats are just working with Trump. But it’s not workable. We can’t settle for that.”

Marchers Olivia, Brian and Robin, spoke with the WSWS. Robin said that they had been involved in other protests against war and police brutality, and wanted to be at Saturday’s Women’s March in New York to show solidarity with the marchers in DC.

He said, “I just needed to be around people. I’m afraid of the dangers of the Trump administration. I’m a public defender. We’re going to have to fight to protect immigrants, to defend human rights. I think the real question is whether Trump will be able to do all the things that he says he’s going to do since he will have to work through the democratic process.” He agreed, though, that Trump did not seem to care about following rules, regulations or due process.

Ariane is French and currently studies in the US. “I moved to New York less than a month ago, to study abroad, political studies,” she said. “I was shocked that there is no health care. I couldn’t get my medication, which costs \$800.00. I have to get it from my family in France.

“It’s terrible because it is such a great country, people are so friendly, but people do not have basic human rights to shelter, education and health care. It goes back to capitalism. Trump represents the capitalists, and I think that it will take socialism. Like Marx said, capitalism cannot be ended without a revolution.”

Nadia, from Washington, DC, works for a tech start-up. She said, “I am marching because I see the inequalities and barriers for women and minorities in the tech industry. The biggest barrier is not having money for education because no one can work in the tech industry without an education.

“I watched part of Trump’s speech, and it reminded me of fascism, even though I never saw any of Hitler’s speeches. I saw some of the Soviet Union, and it reminded me of that, except that they got a lot of things right and this didn’t.

“I think it is going to take a grassroots movement to defeat Trump. Our government is not going to help us defend our rights.”

Syracuse, New York

There were several demonstrations in cities in upstate New York, including Rochester and Syracuse. About 2,000 people attended the rally in Syracuse.

Lorraine, who came with her family, explained why she attended: “There’s so much wrong, and I didn’t know how to fit it on a sign. We’re talking about environmental issues, economic issues, gender issues. I don’t know why the wrong of Donald Trump didn’t end with his mocking of a disabled person.

“As a teacher, I’m held accountable for how people behave. I felt there were so many issues that I had to come, to reassure myself that there are still concerns about civility and intelligence in politics. I think we really have to engage in a way that sends a message to the billionaire 1 percent that this is all not ok.”

“The two-party system is not going to move us forward,” she said. “And I’m not even sure that adding a third party is going to move us forward. We have to fight for an underlying foundation of those things that are essentially right, to do and to be in humanity. The two-party system is not supportive of that.”

Rochester, New York

Approximately 1,000 people attended an anti-Trump rally in Rochester, New York, carrying signs saying “Love trumps hate,” “No human is illegal” and other slogans opposed to Trump’s anti-democratic policies.

WSWS reporters spoke to Virginia, who carried a sign expressing opposition to Betsy DeVos, Trump’s pick for education secretary, which read, “Unqualified! Our children deserve better.” Explaining why she was opposed to DeVos, Virginia said, “I’m both a parent and an educator and I work in a 611 program [for students with disabilities].”

Speaking of DeVos, she said, “The lack of preparation, the lack of knowledge of the Americans with Disabilities Act ... [she has] no education background whatsoever, other than having a pocketbook that’s deep.”

Washington, DC

The WSWS spoke to protesters on the Washington, DC march.

John, a legal worker, said, “I agree with the ideal of socialism,” although he admitted he was not sure how society would achieve it. “There are enough resources for all to live harmoniously on this planet, but it is necessary that people need to realize that they have the power and that they must work together.”

He thought that the Democratic Party was “eminently” responsible for the election of Trump. “[President Bill] Clinton continued many of the policies that Ronald Reagan started. Sure, he smiled and assured people that he ‘felt their pain,’ but he took down welfare programs and built the prison complex in this country.”

John insisted that people “should make sure that the leaders they stand behind have their interests in mind,” adding that “Hillary Clinton and Obama sat there on stage with Trump while he was inaugurated.” On the role played by Bernie Sanders in the election, he said, “Sanders was still a Democrat. You cannot be behind someone who doesn’t represent your interests.”

Johnny Silvercloud, an independent journalist covering the march, said that he believed the Republicans holding power now had “two options—they can try to hold Trump’s government to account or they can continue to bend rules and lower standards. It looks like they’ll do the latter.”

“I fear Trump may start a war,” he continued. Silvercloud acknowledged the reckless character of Trump’s economic nationalism and phony populism. “Trump says he’s going to ‘bring coal back.’ I’d ask him, why doesn’t he try to bring the steam engine back also while he’s at it? He can’t do it, society has fundamentally changed and there needs to be an adaptation so that people in the Rust Belt and in Appalachia can have jobs.”

Lansing, Michigan

A crowd estimated at between 8,000 and 9,000 people gathered outside the state capitol in Lansing, Michigan for Saturday’s protest.

Tessa, a retired health care social worker, attended the Lansing demonstration with her husband, Norm, also retired. In regard to health care, she said, “The state does not protect individual rights. Insurance companies are trying to sneak around the laws.

“Trump is obviously mentally ill. I’m surprised that Trump stepped in to quickly attack individual rights. I don’t think there is one cabinet choice that’s appropriate.”

She spoke of Trump’s promises of jobs for Michigan: “It was all lies. He also said he wasn’t going to touch Medicare and Social Security.”

Dave and Lisa are schoolteachers. They spoke of their concerns about education under Trump. Lisa said, “Betsy DeVos has gotten her way everywhere so far, and wants to make education for profit.” Dave added, “Folks who are already struggling won’t be able to benefit at all from the Trump policies.” As to the threat of war, he said, “We have two sons. We’re just not willing to lose them in war.”

Ann Arbor, Michigan

At least 11,000 took part at a demonstration in Ann Arbor, Michigan, filling up the diag at the University of Michigan.

Two high school seniors from north of Detroit, Cameron and Andrew, drove nearly 60 miles to attend the protest.

Andrew said, “This election confirmed a lot of the political beliefs I was starting to develop, so I figured mass demonstrations would be a good place to make connections, and find other people who share my beliefs. I was interested in the Sanders campaign, and I registered for a chapter of the DSA, and stuff like that. But I want to do something to fight against Trump, and so I came here.”

When asked why they feared Trump, Andrew responded, “I am scared of his nationalism, his nativism, and his misogyny. I don’t think he’s quite fascist yet, but it is worryingly close. I think mass demonstrations are a powerful show of unity, and show that masses of people can mobilize toward a cause, and I hope people see this.”

Cameron agreed with these sentiments: “I was disappointed by Sanders giving his support to Clinton. I voted for Clinton, but only because I hated Trump so much. Her role as secretary of state in aiding Saudi Arabia with all the weapons sales there, her stuff in Haiti, her stuff in El Salvador and Nicaragua, I don’t like any of that.”

Regarding the country having been involved in wars of aggression most

of their lives, Cameron responded, “I don’t like war, and the more I read about why we are in these places, the more skeptical I become.” Andrew added, “I too have only recently been researching any of this stuff. This was a big thing for why I was disappointed with Clinton, because she supports these wars. She was not much better than Trump. I thought Sanders was much more moderate on this.”

When reporters challenged the notion that Sanders was against the wars, and that he in fact played the key role in Trump coming to power by throwing his support behind Clinton, Cameron and Andrew did not disagree.

Trump or Clinton, because they are both the same. I voted for Jill Stein even though I am not a supporter of the Green Party.”



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

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St. Paul, Minnesota

Among the nearly 100,000 demonstrators in St. Paul, Minnesota on Saturday, the WSWS spoke to Stephanie and asked her why she attended the rally.

“I came out today because I want to stand up for women’s rights, children’s’ rights, for social and racial justice of all kinds. It’s really heart-warming to see all the signs out here representing so many different causes that have to do with peace and justice for everybody.

“I think a moment like this is really a beautiful moment to realize the power of democracy and the power of the people to stand up against something. And unfortunately it’s taken Donald Trump getting elected for this kind of response and potentially even revolution to happen.”

Asked to comment on the Obama administration and its expansion of George W. Bush’s wars, Stephanie said, “I’m not in favor of any of that. I think back to the election of eight years ago and to the Democratic primaries. Both Obama and Hillary Clinton were the most hawkish of the candidates.”

She added, “But during the 2016 Democratic primary I was pretty much in agreement with everything that Bernie Sanders had to say. I thought it was pretty refreshing to hear on a national stage the beliefs that I’m in line with but haven’t heard in a long time.”

The WSWS pointed out that Sanders endorsed Clinton, and with that, her policies. After a pause Stephanie said, “It’s complicated.” She saw Hillary Clinton as the lesser evil when weighed against Trump, “even though she doesn’t totally align with all of my ideological beliefs. I didn’t agree with her attachment to Wall Street or her views on foreign policy.”

The WSWS also spoke to Johanne who attended the rally with a friend. “I am here to protest all the crap that is going on in Washington, DC,” she said. “I’m for universal health care, democratic rights for everybody, including LGBT, refugees, Somalis, and my Muslim friends and neighbors.”

She added, “There’s a moral depravity in all of this. All the checks and balances have failed us when a man like Trump gets into office. We need to take a good hard look at what got us here. Economics are valued, but we don’t value social issues.

“For instance, everybody’s right to health care, everybody’s right to make a living wage so they can feed their families, affordable child care. We need a complete overhaul of morals. We’re being run off a cliff.

“When you take something away from the people, they become motivated to move. The rich are oppressing us, but we can rise up because there are more of us than there are of them.”

Leticia, a student, said, “I agree, class is the main division in society. I am not allowed to say that in academia though.” She also expressed frustration with the domination of college campuses by the Democratic Party, saying, “There was no way I was going to vote for Hillary Clinton. She’s horrible. When I tried to explain that to people in academia, they told me I was being a misogynist.” She added, “I didn’t want to vote for