

Trump met by protesters in Nashville, Tennessee

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President Donald Trump's March 15 visit to Nashville attracted long lines of supporters together with some 2,500 demonstrators protesting the president's attacks on health care, education and immigrants.

In a campaign-style event, Trump spoke at the city's Municipal Auditorium for about 40 minutes. He spent little time on the issues that had been advertised as the main topics of his remarks, repeal of Obamacare and school vouchers, and instead focused on the pseudo-populist, nationalist rhetoric that dominated his election bid and inaugural address.

Trump pledged "peace through strength" and reiterated his pledge to build a border wall between the US and Mexico. "We subscribe to two simple rules," he declared, "Hire American and buy American."

Earlier in the day he brought the same economic nationalist message to a group of United Auto Workers officials and autoworkers at a decommissioned auto plant outside of Detroit. UAW President Dennis Williams demonstrated his support for Trump's anti-foreigner and corporatist program by sitting next to the president and alongside US auto CEOs in a panel discussion prior to Trump's Michigan speech.

In Nashville, the president resumed his attack on the courts, denouncing a Hawaii federal judge for temporarily blocking his second anti-Muslim travel ban. "A judge has just blocked our executive order on travel and refugees coming in to our country from certain countries," he said. "This ruling makes us look weak, which we no longer are." Trump added, "It's time for us to embrace our glorious national destiny."

Citing his economic nationalism and calls for protective tariffs, Trump sought to cast himself in the mold of the seventh US president, Andrew Jackson (1829-1837), a Democrat and slave owner from

Tennessee. Jackson was a reactionary figure who represented the Southern slaveocracy in alliance with certain commercial interests and corrupt big city political machines in the North. He presented himself as a populist "man of the people" in order to conceal the reactionary interests he defended and attract support from disaffected farmers, artisans and workers.

Security was tight for those entering the aging auditorium in Nashville. Outside, blocking James Robertson Parkway and denying vehicular access to the auditorium entrance, was a line of city dump trucks. The line to get into the auditorium at one point stretched for a mile, and many people were unable to obtain entry to the 8,500 capacity building.

Inside the auditorium there was a scattering of protests, which were quickly suppressed and the protesters removed. Joining the line in the frigid weather were an estimated 2,500 protesters. While voicing a desire for change, many also expressed discouragement and fear about the direction of the political situation.

The *World Socialist Web Site* spoke to demonstrators.

Fred, an Air Force veteran, said he was making the effort to protest Trump's visit so that his children and grandchildren would know "what is going on." He said, "They need to know that he is a man who stands for everything I am against."

When asked about the need for a working class party, Fred did not hesitate. "Absolutely," he said. "We need to listen to our own heads and not the politicians. We are letting them run our country, not only the Republicans, but the Democrats, too! I'd vote for the Green Party if they were strong."

Sylvia is a hairstylist preparing to retire. She said the plan to replace the Affordable Care Act (ACA) would violate everything Trump had promised. "I was hoping

he would be a good guy,” she said. “I was hoping for that, but I was wrong. It looks like seniors are going to be paying.”

Sylvia added that because of her opposition to Trump, she had lost friends and loved ones who had supported him. “But I couldn’t keep quiet,” she added. “If everybody would think what’s best for the country,” she said, a third party would be possible.

Sheila, who worked in IT and then nursing, said Trump’s election was unprecedented. “What is happening is nothing like anything that has happened before,” she told the WSWWS.

Norman said he joined the protest to send a simple message to Trump. “I wanted him to know that not everybody loves him like he thinks they do.” He agreed that the needs of working people were not being met by either of the two parties. “I don’t know if a third party will ever make it in this country, but I agree that both parties, Republican and Democratic, have ignored the working class.”

Kay is an art teacher who works in an elementary school and with disabled adults. She said she was pessimistic about the future and thought the Democratic and Republican parties were no real options. “The two party system is a flawed system,” she said, adding that she voted for Hillary Clinton. “It was a dire moment and she was the only one who could stop him,” she stated, “but it wasn’t very pretty to watch.”



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