

Voices from the protests against Trump's attack on immigrants

Our reporters
15 July 2019

Campaign teams for the *World Socialist Web Site* attended the “Lights for Liberty” vigils across the United States over the weekend, called to protest deportations and the setting up of concentration camps to detain immigrants.

The WSWS spoke with hundreds of people about the need to mobilize the working class, independently of the Democrats and Republicans, under a socialist program for open borders, full citizenship rights for all immigrants, and the immediate liberation of all detained immigrants.

Detroit, Michigan

Around 200 people rallied in front of the ICE Enforcement & Removal Operations Field Office in downtown Detroit. Detroiters rallied at this same spot one week ago, on the Fourth of July.

Goran, an immigrant from the former Yugoslavia, said, “We all should live in a society that provides for our basic needs, to be happy, explore ourselves, our interests and help each other. This system is the most selfish I've ever lived in. It's a rotten system.”

When asked about his experiences in Yugoslavia, he said, “I don't believe in the nation-state system. I was born in one place in the middle of the country and then suddenly [during the break-up of Yugoslavia] I was between two countries.” He added, “I needed a passport just to go where I spent my childhood across the bridge. All of it is BS to keep us in control, to make us dependent. I think it should be abolished. There should be free movement for everyone.”

Amy said, “What they're doing to these children is horrible. The Democrats and the Republicans are the same,” she added. “They both support capitalism. Even Sanders—he calls himself a democratic socialist, but in reality he's a social democrat.”

Ann Arbor, Michigan

In Ann Arbor, Michigan, at least 500 people attended the candlelight vigil at the Federal Building downtown. Despite efforts of the organizers to minimize the political content of the demonstration, the majority of working-class and young attendees expressed opposition to both the Trump administration and Democratic Party.

IYSSE member Carlos Delgado addressed the crowd in Detroit.

New York City, New York

Thousands of people gathered at Foley Square in New York City at a site where migrants are processed every day.

Karen, a paralegal in New York City, said, “Change certainly won't be coming from the top. This has been going on too long, and now that people are aware of it, we have to stand up,” she said. “I don't know what it will take to get [Trump] out of office. The atrocities are on the news every day. We can't wait until there is no one left to stand up against this.”

Laith, a graphic designer in New York City, said, “The US government should take their hands off the Latin American countries. They are responsible for what is happen in Venezuela, in Mexico. We are the land of ‘freedom,’ but we are abusing children here. The Democrats are not fighting, or rather they aren't serving the American people.

“It is not enough to just oppose Trump,” he added. “Any other country would have healthcare and free education.”

Berkeley, California

In Berkeley, California, more than 500 people gathered on Saturday to protest the concentration camps at the border. Alicia, a young community college student from Oakland, signed up to get involved with the IYSSE immediately after speaking to campaigners from the WSWS. After speaking with

the campaigners, Alicia said, “I completely agree that we need a socialist revolution, every major problem today comes down to capitalism.”

Rachel, a young mother, told the WSWS that the camps were “disgusting.” She continued, “My daughter is reading the diary of Anne Frank. When I was telling her about what going on, she said, ‘Isn’t that like a concentration camp?’ We need to raise awareness about this crime.”

San Diego, California

In San Diego, a rally of several thousand was held at the San Ysidro port of entry, the busiest border crossings in the world.

Angel came up to WSWS reporters to take a picture of our sign. “This is one of the best signs here. No one else is bringing up the Democratic Party. The Democrats had nothing to say when the Deporter-in-Chief Obama was president.”

Angel told reporters he was moved by the revelations of Wikileaks and the WSWS campaign to free Julian Assange. “I love the *World Socialist Web Site* and read it often. Chelsea Manning and Assange are really in trouble. The ‘left’ loved Assange back in 2011 when revelations dragged Bush through the mud, but I saw how they turned on him in 2016. That really affected me and was a turning point in my politics.”

David told the WSWS, “I think they should close the camps. Follow the money; I think it's an industry. I’m half Japanese. I have family that was interned at Manzanar. My great uncle was interned and had business in LA. His wife stayed in Manzanar and he fought in the Nisei regiment. So he had to deal with discrimination and imprisonment. I think what's going on now is disgusting.”

Los Angeles, California

Some 500 people rallied at the Metropolitan Detention Center in downtown Los Angeles.

Samantha, who is a junior in high school, said, “I’m here because I see this as an attack on humanity, families are getting separated. You hear about six-year-old children having to raise kids who aren’t even related to them. I can’t even fathom that this is happening,” she said.

Randy is a freshman at Long Beach State University whose parents migrated from Mexico. “There are millions of illegal immigrants here. We put a lot of money into the system, but we are living with the bare minimum. My dad has to be careful when he goes out. They used to do raids when he was at work. Immigrants get blamed for all kinds of problems, drugs,

poverty. But who are the ones at fault? The big corporations, the super-rich, who want quick money. But they are never blamed.”

Washington D.C.

At a rally of about 2,000 people in Washington D.C., Damon, an attorney, told our reporters that he felt that Trump’s assault on immigrants was a “call to arms.”

“I’ve spent too much time looking at screens, watching ICE raids and deportations. Now I’m doing something about it.” Damon told the WSWS that he had volunteered to “bear witness” and represent immigrant families swept up by ICE if any raids happen in the region.

Emma, a Holocaust survivor, told our reporters that today’s world is “screaming,” and that people must use their right to protest now, because under dictatorship “you can trust no one.” Speaking about life in Germany, she said, “You could trade knitting patterns, or recipes with friends and neighbors, but you did not want to know what anyone really thought. You didn’t want to be forced to inform on anyone.”

Norfolk, Virginia

Kathy, a retired nurse, attended a small vigil in Norfolk, Virginia. “I’m a mother, a grandmother, a decent human being, and I’m appalled at what is being done in the name of me, an American, to people who only desire a better life. It’s morally wrong. I’ve also been upset about the Somalis coming to Italy that are left to drown in the Mediterranean Sea.”

When asked about the role of Trump and the extreme right she added, “If you talk about fascism, we’re there. This president does whatever the hell he wants to do and there are no consequences. And because there are no consequences, they continue to ramp it up. The rich talk about anything that helps people as socialism, so fixing the Flint water crisis is socialism and giving food to the poor is socialism. But what about all the tax breaks for corporations?”



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