

Reports on the Resistance: Opposition, Protest, Resistance to Trump Muslim Ban - Day 2

January 30, 2017

Opposition and resistance to Trump's Muslim ban continued for a second day on Sunday, January 29 with more massive demonstrations in American cities, as some corporate CEOs as well as Republican and many Democratic politicians also spoke out against Trump's Muslim ban. Democrats rushed to put themselves at the head of what have been many spontaneous demonstrations around the country. As Democrats race to make themselves the leaders and spokespersons for the movement, it is clear that the new movement will need to find its own voice.



In New York City, with the Statue of Liberty in the background, ten thousand demonstrators turned out at Battery Park to oppose Trump's policy that excludes Muslims from seven nations and refugees, while also giving priority to Christian minorities in those countries. Immigrant organizations, such as Make the Road that has thousands of Latino members throughout the city, were prominent.

There were also demonstrations of thousands in Washington, D.C., Boston, Cleveland, Houston, Atlanta, Los Angeles and other cities. More demonstrations are planned for Monday. Once again everywhere protestors chanted, "No hate. No fear. Immigrants are welcome here" and carried placards expressing support for immigrants, refugees, and Muslims.

Democrats Put Themselves in Front

A few Republican politicians and many Democrats also spoke out against Trump's executive order. Republican Senator John McCain and Lindsey Graham and some eighteen other congressmen criticized Trump's Muslim ban either in principle or for particular aspects of it, such as the detention of Green Card holders, or its crude implementation.

Some CEOs of major banks and corporations have also broken with Trump over the Muslim and refugee ban. Goldman Sachs CEO Lloyd Blankfein, CEO of Goldman Sachs, which has provided Trump with cabinet members, said, "This is not a policy we support, and I would note that it has already been challenged in federal court, and some of the order has been enjoined at least temporarily."

Democratic Party politicians attempted to take advantage of the second day of massive protests to strengthen their party vis-à-vis Trump and to capture the tremendous energy of the mostly young protestors. New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, Sen. Chuck Schumer and Sen. Kristen Gillibrand of New York, Sen. Corey Booker of New Jersey and state Sen. Jerry Nadler all spoke at Battery Park against Trump's order.

"We came to this country for freedom. We came to this country because it is a beacon," de Blasio told the crowd. "We will not let this beacon be put out by Donald Trump."

“Deliver a vociferous ‘No’ to the president and those horrible executive orders... that are against everything that is American,” said Schumer. Some in the crowd booed Schumer, a moderate Democrat who despite tough talk had voted for three of Trump’s nominees. The following day Schumer announced he would put before Congress a bill to overturn Trump’s executive order and was voting against other Trump nominees.

Growing Resistance Needs Independent Voice

The resistance movement is growing and already radicalizing, as always happens in moments of intense struggle, but as yet the movement had no independent voice, and the Democrats who run to put themselves at the head of it are no doubt appalled by Trump’s agenda and anxious to find ways to block him. Yet by and large they represent the Democratic Party establishment that endorsed Hillary Clinton for president and supported her neoliberal and hawkish agenda. Many Democrats in Congress are voting for Trump’s cabinet, rather than waging a battle against him.

The crowds at these demonstrations, their posters, their chants, and their conversations make it clear that they are people who want an end to racism, to Islamophobia, who want gender equality and who want a nation that is democratic, fair, and just, a nation at peace with the world. The Democrats have not and will not provide those things. Barack Obama continued George W. Bush’s wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, and he continued a drone war that killed many innocents, as well as deporting more people than any other president. At the time of the economic crisis of 2008, Obama saved the banks, but not the working people of the country. Hillary Clinton, as she often stated, would have continued Obama’s policies. As the movement grows, it will need to find its own voice, rather than let the Democratic Party speak for it.