

Part II

THE RESISTANCE: A PERMANENT STATE OF REVOLT AGAINST TRUMPISM

The Resistance—the [groundswell of grassroots activism](#) in opposition to the presidential candidacy and subsequent election of Trump—has been phenomenal. MHI has reported on some of the many protests on [our website](#). The protests have dealt with a huge range of subjects. Even Trump's very presence at home and abroad incites oppositional demonstrations.

This opposition, expressed by millions of people across the US, is the principal reason why Trump has not yet done even more harm than he has done to date, and the principal reason why his grip on power appears to be weakening. The Resistance has stayed Trump and Congress' hands through its massive, interracial, intergenerational, multi-gender protests, which have taken many forms.⁴

The protests have been continuous. *This permanent state of revolt across the US underlines the Resistance movement's firm and indefatigable commitment to get rid of Trump, not to reform him.* This was already becoming clear on Day 1 of his presidency. Mass resistance to Trump and Trumpism erupted the day after his inauguration, in the form of Women's Marches that were the largest single-day protest in US history. As [we said at the time](#), they represented a clarion cry "[t]hroughout the country and around the world [B]etween three-and-a-half and five million people served notice to [Trump] and his government that we will not sit idly by as he tries to take away our rights, freedoms, and well-being." The most noteworthy feature of the Women's Marches was that they "opposed not just one facet of Trumpism; they opposed it in its totality. ... [They] took the unprecedented action of rising up spontaneously against *this* President, *this*

⁴ A partial list of the subjects of protests includes immigration; racial justice and white supremacy; gender discrimination; healthcare reform; US warmongering on the Korean peninsula; climate change, science, and truth; collusion with Russia; Trump's support for Turkey's Erdogan; and freedom of the press. The protesters have come from wide-ranging sections of society, including women; African-Americans, Latinos, and other people of color; LGBTQ people; workers; youth; children and their families; the elderly; those with additional support needs; and immigrants. The forms of protest include demonstrations; sit-ins in Congress, meetings, and airports; emails and letters; phone calls; consumer boycotts; football players "taking a knee"; crowds massing and shouting to prevent "alt-right" speakers on campuses; and more. There have been public "die-ins," slo-mo People's Motorcades, and ironic "sponsor a Nazi" marches. Protesters have dressed up as Margaret Atwood's 'Handmaids' and environmentalists have lit up public buildings in green. Graffiti and wall projections have satirized Trump, "RESIST" has been spelled out on the ground for aerial impact, and a giant "Trump Chicken" was inflated within sight of the White House.

government, on its very first day, in opposition not just to some specific policy or action, but to Trump and Trumpism themselves.”

Although the Resistance is naturally centered in and largest in the US, the people of America are also receiving a good deal of solidarity from abroad. To this day, Trump is not prepared to visit the UK, a supposed special ally, for fear of facing humiliating public protests. His [visits to other countries](#) are consistently met with public opposition, and the masses in many countries continue to petition their politicians to stand up to Trump's sexist, racist, xenophobic agenda, whether or not they are facing an imminent visit from him. “No Trump, no KKK, no fascist USA” is being chanted across Europe, and in South Korea during his visit there. Resistance to this American president is global.

Leading Edge of the Resistance Also Challenges the Democratic Party

The soft-on-Trump “left” has persistently tried to dismiss the Resistance, and criticize support for it and our recognition of its importance, by claiming that it is nothing but a tool or project of the Democratic Party. We dare such critics to explain the challenge to the Democrats that has emerged within the Resistance.

Consider, for example, what took place after Trump's September announcement that he was terminating the DACA program, which defers the deportation of 800,000 young people (“Dreamers”), mostly Mexicans and Central Americans, who were brought into the US illegally as children. Reaction to Trump's termination of the program was swift. Marches, hunger-strikes, pickets, and one-day general strikes were surprisingly successful in building support for the Dreamers' cause. This impelled the Democrats in Congress to intervene. They negotiated with Trump in an attempt to save DACA in return for granting him greatly increased border security. *But the DACA youth made it clear that they will not permit the Democratic Party to control or compromise their demands.*

On September 18, Dreamers shut down a news conference called by Democratic House leader Nancy Pelosi to announce her proposed DACA replacement bill. The Dreamers protested because the proposed bill protected only them, not undocumented immigrants who came to the US as adults. During Pelosi's nationally-televised news conference, they shouted her down:

[“Democrats are not the Resistance \[to\] Trump. We are.”](#)

“We are not your bargaining chip.”

“Fight for all 11 million.”

“All of us or none of us.”

This protest is proof-positive that the Resistance is not a tool or project of the Democratic Party. (The Resistance certainly does include a great many people who vote for Democrats—given the current state of US politics, a progressive *mass movement* without Democratic voters is an impossibility—as well as some people with roles in party institutions, but that is another matter.) The protesters understood that the deal congressional Democrats were trying to strike with

Trump was meant to serve the interests of politicians, not ordinary people, and that it was using them as bargaining chips. *Nonetheless, and in marked contrast to the soft-on-Trump "left," they identified themselves with the Resistance. In this way, they struck an important blow to maintain the independence of the Resistance from bourgeois politicians.*

Saving Health Care

Four times over the summer and fall, the Resistance stopped the abolition of the Affordable Care Act (ACA) that Trump and the Republican-controlled Congress tried to ram through Congress. Through continuous protests, both in the halls and offices of Congress and in the politicians' home districts, women, the elderly, and the sick and disabled forced some of their representatives to back down from their reactionary promises to "repeal and replace Obamacare" and thereby eliminate the healthcare insurance of 20 million or more people.

It has been remarkable to watch groups of ordinary people jamming "town hall" meetings, and chasing their Congresspeople down the block after they have cancelled such meetings or refused to respond to questions that were asked during them. It has been heart-breaking to hear the testimonials of people who will literally die if they lose their health insurance, and to see the police grabbing disabled sitters-in, yanking them out of their wheelchairs, and forcibly removing them from the US Capitol.

From the moment when Trump took his first steps to repeal the ACA, people across the US began creatively and angrily protesting. Numerous different communities and grassroots groups came together to demand that their voices be heard, and that their interests be represented and acted upon. They knew the devastating impact the proposed repeal would have had, and they articulated their opposition to it in no uncertain terms.

Ordinary people took charge of coordinating campaigns and they successfully flooded phone lines and offices of elected representatives to demand that they represent their constituents and vote against repeal. People lined the streets—from Brooklyn to San Diego—in public "Die-Ins," holding tombstone props listing causes of death, contrasting the horrific reality of having to choose between paying rent or medical bills, and stating that "repeal and replace" was meant to benefit the rich at the expense of the poor. Zombie protests in Houston mocked Trump's refusal to kill the bill, while highlighting the life-and-death nature of this issue. When this organic and creative campaign was countered by deplorable instances of police officers manhandling disabled peaceful protesters, those viewing the news reports at home were shocked. All this ultimately forced the hands of a few Republican senators who, on multiple occasions, cast decisive votes against repealing and replacing the ACA.

The various forms of protest showed the determination of ordinary people to defy Trump's agenda. They also showed that tens of millions of Americans are reaching for a different society, a society in which the interests of ordinary people come before the interests of those who dare to rule us, a society in which healthcare for all is a right.

The Struggle Against Racism and White Supremacy

A further feature of the Resistance is widespread recognition of the white-supremacist agenda behind Trump's presidency, and a unanimous commitment to fight this. The Black Lives Matter (BLM) campaign that began four years ago, following the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the murder of Trayvon Martin, was the [first to call out](#) President Trump for being a white supremacist. Since then, there has been some discussion about changes in the tactics and focus of the BLM movement, but what is indisputable is that its anti-racist agenda has converged with that of the Resistance movement, with both finding common ground in opposition to Trump.

As we noted in our [August 2017 editorial](#), awareness of white supremacy has increased and has brought an added dimension to the Resistance. Every new initiative of Trump's in this area—his appointment of Breitbart's Steve Bannon as his Chief Strategist, his attempted imposition of the infamous "Muslim ban" a week after taking office, his never-ending "promises" to build a wall along the US- Mexico border, his attacks against the BLM and even against football players who "take a knee" to protest racial injustice, his defense of the armed white supremacists who terrorized Charlottesville, his intentional neglect of the humanitarian disaster in Puerto Rico—each one of these moves brings forth greater recognition of his white-supremacist agenda and greater opposition to it.

When Trump responded to the murder in Charlottesville of anti-fascist protestor Heather Heyer by suggesting that Neo-Nazis and anti-fascist protestors were equally bad, about 700 solidarity events were held in protest during the weeks that followed. There were protests against police murders and harassment of Black men and women, against judicial systems that never convict white cops for killing Black people, against monuments to the Confederacy and to racists and misogynists, against lack of representation on the local level, as well as against voter suppression by the states. All of these things are now under fire daily; and people are marching, marching, marching.

Since the Charlottesville massacre, white supremacists have been emboldened by the publicity they received, Trump's indirect support, and the growth of their organizations. They have expanded their rallies and speeches around the country. But everywhere they go, they have been met by protesters who invariably outnumber them. There are marches of antifa, and Jews, and mothers with babies in hand. Anti-racists are also engaged in identifying and outing white supremacists, causing some to lose their jobs or to be rejected by their families. They have also had some successes in their efforts to shut down white-supremacist websites and publications.

Marches against police murders of Black youth continue unabated all over the country. St. Louis has experienced nightly marches against police violence for the past two months, ever since the acquittal of a white former policeman who fatally shot an African-American man. The protesters aim to [disrupt the city's economy](#) in order to bring attention to its institutional racism. They have paralyzed the city at night for weeks, and have suffered hundreds of arrests.

Women's Movements in the Forefront

One notable feature of the Resistance is that women, and especially women of color, dominate the field in [intensive](#), [continual](#), and [creative](#) protesting. They know that Trumpism is a threat to

[women's lives and women's bodies](#) in particular. During the 2016 US election campaign, momentum was already gathering against "Trump the misogynist." Women's organizations have continued to be in the forefront of the Resistance, and women have been among the leadership of every kind of anti-Trump action.⁵

Women of color have been leaders in all the protest movements against Trump, from BLM to women's health issues. Issues of unequal pay and advancement were raised by women at the March 8 (International Women's Day) march in midtown Manhattan, as well as at the union and immigrant-dominated march downtown later in the day.

And Trump's misogyny has enraged women, bringing many who had never protested before out into the streets, carrying signs saying "Pussy Grabs Back," in most every kind of protest. The National Organization for Women (NOW) has been consistently speaking out and marching for every particular demand of the Resistance. Recently, it has sponsored [fascinating discussions](#) investigating the [close relationship](#) between white nationalism and misogyny.

After more than nine months of street protests, a Women's Convention, organized by the multi-racial leaders of the January 21 Women's Marches, was held in Detroit at the end of October. Four thousand women attended to discuss defeating Trumpites at the ballot box in 2018, running for political office, fighting sexual harassment and rape, and many other subjects.

Despite a \$295 entrance fee, one apparent aim of the organizers was to appeal to minority and poor women in particular, in order to help overcome the perception that feminism is "bourgeois" and to foster unity among all the anti-Trump movements. Tamika Mallory, one of the organizers of the Convention, implored participants to practice a feminism that unites women across issues of ethnicity, religion, race, gender, and economic status, and to bring change to their local communities. [She said](#), "If your feminism is the difference between Bernie and Hillary [Clinton], it does not represent me. ... I want to know what you are doing on the ground in your community. Who have you saved? Who have you lifted?"

Congresswoman Maxine Waters was another featured speaker. She [concluded her talk](#) "by leading a spirited chant of 'Impeach 45' aimed at Trump."

New and Old Organizations Flourish

[Hundreds of new organizations](#) have sprung up as part of the Resistance. Taking its name from the US Pledge of Allegiance, "Indivisible" was established by former Democratic congressional staff members. Its mission is to "[resist the Trump Agenda](#)." It produces informational material and [offers advice](#)—drawing on lessons learned from the "Tea Party" (a recent right-wing predecessor of Trumpism)—on how to stop Trump from implementing his agenda by targeting the members of Congress in one's local area. It also functions as a clearinghouse to publicize affiliated local groups and their activities, and to facilitate their communication with one another.

⁵ See our [editorial](#) on the Women's Marches and many other articles in our web journal, *With Sober Senses*.

But Indivisible does not set an agenda for these affiliated groups, much less for the Resistance as a whole.

Already well-established civil-rights and civil-liberties groups, such as the American Civil Liberties Union and the Southern Poverty Law Center, have attracted millions of dollars in contributions since Trump was elected and are actively engaged in opposing unlawful aspects of his agenda.

New Developments

Rapid development in the level and scope of Resistance activities goes hand in hand with a development in the spirit and substance of its activities themselves. Encouraged by successes, such as halting the repeal of the ACA, people are developing a keen awareness of the power of collective action.

The understanding that people need to speak for themselves is an emerging theme that feeds the independence of the movement. Every time someone picked up a phone to call their senator, they were saying that their voice can make a difference. As this collective swell of voices began articulating ideas about what repeal of the ACA meant to them, we witnessed a development of the ideas within, and the creativity of, the Resistance movement. The shutting down of Pelosi's news conference by undocumented youth that we discussed above was another expression of the power of people speaking for themselves. These grassroots activists succeeded in articulating an inclusive humanist agenda for migrants' rights to a nationwide audience.

There is indisputable evidence of the intermerging of issues within the Resistance movement. We saw this first on the Women's Marches back in January, as men, transgendered people, and people of color marched hand in hand, and we see it repeatedly in the cross-section of protesters fighting the repeal of the ACA, protesting immigration practices, and confronting neo-Nazi marches on campuses across the US. The most significant new intermerging is the convergence of anti-racist and Resistance movements that we discussed above. This is a new and all-too-rare blow to the racism that remains the critical obstacle to the unification and forward movement of the country's forces for freedom.