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USA

# **Bernie Sanders' rallies tens of thousands as unions prepare national protest**

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**With President Donald Trump and Elon Musk continuing to move fast and furious against the American people's social welfare systems and the unions, the resistance to Trump is growing in different forms and taking to the streets around the country.**

Senator Bernie Sanders is on a national "Fighting Oligarchy Tour" drawing tens of thousands to his rallies where he speaks out forcefully against President Donald Trump, the Republican Party, and the billionaires who are now dominating U.S. politics. With the song "Power to the People" blaring from the loudspeakers, he steps to the podium and, as always, speaks for the 99% and condemns the 1% who, working with Trump, are taking control of the country.

Sanders, a political independent who ran for president twice on the Democratic ticket, is accompanied by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, a Democrat who represents a New York City district in the U.S. Congress as they hold rallies in both Democratic and Republican dominated states. Both Sanders and Ocasio-Cortez are democratic socialists who are part of the progressive left wing of the Democratic Party.

The people attending Sanders' rallies are angry with Trump, disappointed with the Democratic Party, and looking for someone who will speak out, not for them, but with them. As Sanders says, "Not me, us." Sanders tells the crowds, "We can organize at the grassroots level. We can become strong trade unionists. We're not going to let the billionaire class have all of the power. Our message to them is: People fought and died to create a democratic society. You're not going to take it away from us."

Sanders is calling upon people to build a movement that can defend social security, Medicaid, and public education, as well as the federal workers and their unions that are under attack. Sanders is also planning to force votes in the Senate on blocking \$8.8 billion in arms for Israel. "(Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin) Netanyahu has clearly violated U.S. and international law in this brutal war, and we must end our complicity in the carnage," says Sanders."

The situation of federal workers is particularly dire. Empowered by Trump, Musk has fired about 40,000 federal workers. And on March 27, Trump signed an executive order ending collective bargaining, that is, effectively destroying the unions of tens of thousands of others. Several national labor unions are calling for their members to turn out for massive "Hands Off Our Union!" protests in cities across the country on April 5.

One of those unions, the Communication Workers of America wrote, "Our jobs and our freedom to bargain contracts are under attack. Billionaires are calling the shots in Washington, leading to mass layoffs, cuts to funding for cancer research, new hurdles for Social Security recipients, and the dismantling of the independent agencies that hold employers accountable when they violate our rights.... When our employers violate our collective bargaining agreements, when they refuse to bargain fair contracts, when they stand in the way of workers' organizing to join our union, we use every tool we have to protect our rights."

Federal workers from a wide variety of agencies that have faced cutbacks and mass firings have been particularly active in protests against Trump and against his henchman, the billionaire Musk. Federal workers are divided among several unions, such as the American Federation of Government Employees and the National Treasury Employees Union, and others. And not all federal workers are in unions. So, worker activists created a new organization, the Federal Unionists Network to help bring workers into the unions and into action.

So, we have a political movement inspired and led by Bernie Sanders and a workers movement made up principally of federal workers, two movements that, if they continue to grow and converge, could give real meaning to the term "the resistance."

PS:

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