

September 11: Thousands March Against Racism and Anti-Muslim Bigotry

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Theme: [Religion](#), [Terrorism](#)

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On the ninth anniversary of September 11, thousands of people marched against racism in a diverse show of solidarity that far outnumbered the Tea Party-led hate rallies.

"We had at least 10,000 people," said Sara Flounders, one of the coordinators of the Unity and Solidarity Rally. "And the rally program – with speakers from the labor movement, immigrants' rights coalitions, and clergy from synagogues, churches and mosques – featured the dynamic diversity of almost every community in New York."

Once the opponents of Park51 had made September 11 into a racist attack on Muslims, the question was whether progressive forces were going to allow this poisonous hate campaign to go unchallenged.

Today that question was resoundingly answered in a dynamic anti-racist rally that attracted over fifty speakers and featured noted personalities such as anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan, former Congressperson Cynthia McKinney, and former U.S. Attorney Ramsey Clark.

Protesters carried a wide range of placards that read "Unity Not Racism," "Tea Party Bigots Funded by Corporate \$," "No to Racism and Anti-Muslim Bigotry," "Jobs, Schools, Healthcare, Not Racism and War" and "The Attack on Islam is Racism."

Just naming the rally's co-chairs gives a modest idea of the breadth of the rally's support: In addition to Flounders, they were Sayel Kayed of American Muslims for Palestine; Dr. Asha A. Samad-Matias of the Safrad Somali Association and the Muslim Women's Coalition; Lucy Pagoda of the May 1st Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights; and Amadi Ajamu of the December 12th Movement. Another 48 diverse speakers and cultural groups gave greetings

or performances.

The message from the nearly 50 speakers on the stage of the Emergency Mobilization action was a strong one of solidarity and unity — solidarity with the Muslim community in the United States and unity of all the forces who came that day in the struggle against all forms of racism and scapegoating, against U.S. wars abroad and for jobs, education and social benefits at home.

Larry Holmes of the Bail Out the People Movement rallied the crowd around the lead banner's slogan, "No to Racism and Anti-Muslim Bigotry - YES to Unity, Respect Jobs and Justice!" He explained the need to stand up to racism to build the unity needed in the fight for jobs and against war. Describing the mobilization, Holmes said, "We brought out the real New York City — a city of workers and peoples of color from all around the world. This mobilization started because we were forced to defend our Muslim sisters and brothers. It will continue because we have to open up the struggle against war, against racism, and for jobs, education and health care. There is much more to fight for and now we all know who we can count on."

"What makes the Tea Party dangerous is that they are not in fact a grassroots organization," Flounders said. "They receive millions of dollars from oil billionaires like the Koch brothers and other allies of Wall Street."

"But knowing this makes it all the more impressive that a truly grassroots, people's mobilization like the Unity and Solidarity Rally — without the benefit of buses coming from all over the country and without the backing of media personalities — was able to outnumber the forces of bigotry on September 11."

"With the other unity rallies in Gainesville, Florida and Buffalo, New York, these displays of anti-racist solidarity represent the potential to turn the tide against anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant backlash and become a peoples' movement for jobs, housing and healthcare."

There will be a followup evaluation meeting this Wednesday, Sept 15 to discuss where to go from here, at the Solidarity Center, 55 W. 17th Street, 5th Floor. Let's keep this going for as long as it takes!

For more information and reports see:

www.iacenter.org/muslimsolidarity

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