

No Kings, No Nazi Führers! Mobilize the working class against Trump's dictatorship!

Socialist Equality Party (US)

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More than 2,500 “No Kings” protests are being held on October 18 throughout the US, in every major city and many smaller towns, as well as in other countries. The Socialist Equality Party supports these demonstrations and calls for the broadest possible participation. The last “No Kings” demonstrations, on June 14, attracted upwards of 10 million people in what is believed to have been the largest single-day political protest in American history.

These demonstrations are taking place under conditions of a mounting conspiracy by the Trump administration to establish a presidential dictatorship. In the days leading up to October 18, administration officials and leading Republicans denounced the protests as a “hate America rally,” branded demonstrators as “terrorists” and threatened to launch investigations against those organizing them. The White House is also preparing to invoke the Insurrection Act, which would give Trump sweeping powers to deploy the military throughout the United States under his direct command.

National Guard troops have already been deployed to major American cities, including Washington D.C., Chicago, Los Angeles, Portland and Memphis. In Chicago, the third-largest city in the country, residents face daily assaults by a combination of police, ICE and Department of Homeland Security agents, while National Guard forces have arrived in preparation for further action.

The language coming from the White House is the language of civil war. Trump has called for the military to be used against the “enemy within.” White House Deputy Chief of Staff Stephen Miller has described even the Democratic Party as a “domestic extremist organization.” Trump has opened up the White House to neo-Nazis, Christian nationalists and far-right propagandists, who are openly plotting the abolition of democratic rights.

What is unfolding is not a temporary aberration or a passing episode. There will be no “return to normal.” With the Trump administration, the American ruling class is breaking with constitutional forms of rule.

The decisive question is: What is to be done? How can Trump’s coup be defeated?

The October 18 demonstrations express deep hostility to the Trump administration’s efforts to set up a fascistic dictatorship in the United States. The central slogan, “No Kings,” articulates vast popular hostility to autocracy, (though we would add to it, in the present-day context of the neo-Nazi program of the Trump regime, “No Führers”). However, anger and outrage are not enough to stop dictatorship. What is required, and what is most critical, is a clear program and political strategy to direct this struggle.

Trump, the oligarchy and war

To defeat Trump and send him to the dustbin of history, it is first necessary to understand what this gangster represents. Trump is not a rogue individual, but the political representative of the American capitalist oligarchy. He is the personification of a ruling class that has spent decades enriching itself through financial speculation, parasitism and the relentless impoverishment of the working class.

Hitler, in his time, was placed in power by the most powerful sections of the German ruling class. As for Trump, the aspiring Führer held a meeting with the leading tech billionaires last month in which he pledged to “make it a lot easier” for them to further expand their wealth. The oligarchs—including Bill Gates of Microsoft, Tim Cook of Apple, Sundar Pichai and Sergey Brin of Alphabet (Google), Mark Zuckerberg of Meta (Facebook) and Sam Altman of OpenAI—responded with effusive praise, lauding his “incredible leadership.”

This past Wednesday, on the very eve of the “No Kings” protests, Trump held yet another gathering of dozens of oligarchs in the White House. According to a report in the *New York Times*, Trump thanked them for the “tremendous amounts of money” they had given to build a White House ballroom that will be used to wine and dine billionaires at future events. “We have a lot of legends in the room tonight, and that’s why we’re here to celebrate you, because you gave,” Mr. Trump told the oligarchs.

Trump, whose corrupt operations were financed by banks during his years as a real estate conman, is their guy. His corruption, total lack of scruples and penchant for violence fit their needs. He has been chosen to deal with an escalating series of economic, social and geopolitical crises for which no conventional, legal, Constitutional and non-violent solutions are at hand. The foundations of the US economy have been rotted out by unprecedented debt and the continued erosion of the dollar’s value on world markets. Above all, they are terrified of the growth of popular opposition to the obscene concentration of wealth in an infinitesimal segment of society.

The 400 richest Americans now control more than \$6.6 trillion, while the vast majority of the population is confronting soaring inflation and eroding living standards. US household debt has reached a record \$18.39 trillion, including more than \$1.2 trillion in credit card debt and \$1.6 trillion in student loan debt. Such levels of social inequality are incompatible with democratic forms of rule.

However reckless, bizarre, incoherent and even absurd Trump’s ramblings may appear, there is a logic that connects all facets of his policies: they are aimed at imposing the consequences of the bankruptcy of American capitalism, within the United States and internationally, on the working class.

The ongoing government shutdown, for example, is being used as a battering ram to destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs, dismantle social programs, and strip millions of workers of healthcare, housing and retirement benefits. Measures are already being prepared to slash Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The war on democratic rights is inseparable from the eruption of imperialist violence abroad. The Trump administration has secretly authorized the CIA to conduct covert operations in Venezuela, expanding a campaign of assassinations and regime-change efforts aimed at toppling the government of Nicolás Maduro. In recent weeks, US military forces have attacked vessels off the Venezuelan coast, murdering 27 people under the pretext of “anti-drug” operations.

Trump’s so-called “ceasefire” in Gaza is nothing less than a neocolonial settlement atop the bones of tens of thousands of Palestinians and the rubble of destroyed buildings. These crimes mark a new stage in the decades-long escalation of imperialist war that has now entered the initial stages of world war, encompassing the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Pacific. The capitalist class cannot wage world war abroad while preserving democracy at home; dictatorship is the domestic face of imperialism.

The role of the Democratic Party

That Trump does not speak merely for himself is demonstrated by the absence of serious opposition within the political establishment. Every institution of American capitalism has either endorsed or adapted itself to his authoritarian agenda.

Nine months of the second Trump administration have proven beyond any doubt that the Democratic Party is not a force of opposition but of collaboration and complicity.

In the run-up to the 2024 election, the Democrats warned that Trump was planning to rule as a dictator. They explicitly referred to him as a fascist. But now, confronted with a criminal government that is brazenly violating the Constitution, the Democrats fail to advance any call, let alone strategy, for Trump’s removal from office. As Trump prepares to invoke the Insurrection Act and seeks to criminalize opposition, including the Democrats themselves, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries are issuing appeals for “bipartisanship.” They beg Trump and the Republicans to “work together” to end the government shutdown and “make healthcare more affordable,” while saying nothing about the escalating conspiracy for dictatorship.

Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, the representative of the “left” wing of the Democratic Party, plays a particularly cowardly role. He talks about “fighting oligarchy” without advancing any strategy whatsoever to lead this fight. Trump will not be defeated by blasts of oratorical hot air. Sanders has issued no call for mass opposition and no demand for the removal of the administration. His entire role, along with figures like Democratic Socialists of America member Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and now New York City mayoral candidate Zohran Mamdani, is to channel opposition behind the Democratic Party.

To the extent that any strategy is to be inferred from the disparate statements of the Democrats, it consists entirely of 1) appealing to the Supreme Court to overrule Trump and 2) winning back control of Congress in the 2026 elections. The absurdity of relying on the Supreme Court is self-evident. As for waiting for the outcome of the 2026 elections, there is good reason to believe that if they are even held, it will be with military and fascist para-military forces patrolling the streets of US cities and the ICE gestapo threatening voters outside polling places.

The impotence of the Democrats is rooted in their class interests. Whatever tactical disputes exist between the Democrats and Republicans, both parties are united in the defense of capitalist wealth, the prosecution of imperialist war, and the suppression of popular opposition. The Democrats fear nothing more than the emergence of a mass movement of

workers and youth that would challenge the foundations of capitalist rule. Their differences with Trump have always been centered not on his fascistic attack on democratic rights but on aspects of US imperialist policy, especially the US-NATO war against Russia over Ukraine.

As for the apparatus of the trade unions, it is doing nothing as the Trump administration wages a war on the working class. One would never know, judging from the spinelessness of the AFL-CIO, that unions first emerged as organizations of struggle against capitalist exploitation and political repression. The AFL-CIO and its associated organizations have absolutely no independent policy for the defense of the working class.

The union bureaucracy responds with plaintive appeals for “bipartisanship” and “compromise,” while refusing to organize any resistance. Sections of this apparatus, including the United Auto Workers and the Teamsters, have openly aligned themselves with Trump’s program of economic nationalism and trade-war policies.

The socialist program to stop Trump’s dictatorship

The Socialist Equality Party calls on all those participating in the “No Kings” demonstrations to take up clear and urgent demands to rally opposition to Trump’s dictatorship. These must include:

- **The removal of the Trump administration from power and the dismantling of its fascistic apparatus.**
- **The immediate withdrawal of all troops from American cities and an end to the militarization of public life.**
- **An end to the persecution and deportation of immigrant workers, and the abolition of ICE and DHS.**
- **The immediate end of all threats and acts of aggression against Venezuela and other countries, and the dismantling of the American war machine.**
- **The defense of free speech and all democratic rights, including the right to protest, organize and speak against the government without intimidation or censorship.**
- **An end to the mass layoffs, cuts to social programs and destruction of living standards.**

These demands cannot be achieved through appeals to the ruling class or its political representatives. They require the independent intervention of the working class, acting as a unified and conscious political force. Workers must organize collectively to resist the attack on democratic rights and prepare a general strike to bring down Trump’s dictatorship.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for the formation of rank-and-file committees in every workplace, factory and neighborhood to coordinate this struggle. These committees must unite every section of the working class—teachers and nurses, auto and logistics workers, public employees, youth and students—into a single, powerful movement. They must become the foundation for a counteroffensive linking the defense of democratic rights to the fight for jobs, wages, healthcare and social equality.

In the development of the struggle against dictatorship in the United States, it is critical to understand its international dimensions. It is necessary to break with all forms of nationalist parochialism. The greatest strength of the working class lies in its international character. American workers must see themselves as part of a global working class, and strive consciously to connect their fight against Trump with the movement of the working class on a global scale. In an epoch when all aspects of the production process are ruled by global economic networks, the strategy of the working class must be international.

The SEP is spearheading the building of the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC) to unite workers across industries and national borders in a global struggle against

dictatorship, inequality, and capitalist exploitation. The establishment of dictatorship in the United States will sound the death knell for democratic rights everywhere. The response must be international, uniting workers across every continent in a common struggle against imperialist war and social reaction.

The entire historical experience of the 1930s demonstrated that the fight against fascism cannot be separated from the struggle against capitalism and for socialism. The defense of democracy requires the expropriation of the financial oligarchy and the transformation of the corporations and banks into public utilities under democratic workers' control. The immense wealth concentrated in the hands of a few must be used to meet human needs, not private profit.

Many of those participating in the last "No Kings" demonstration drew inspiration from the American Revolution. It is necessary to recall that the great uprising of the American colonists in 1775 was provoked by the British monarch's deployment of troops in Boston, New York and Philadelphia to intimidate and suppress opposition to tyranny. Now, as we approach the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, the spirit of revolutionary commitment to the defense of the rights of man must be revived. These are indeed, as the great Tom Paine wrote so memorably, "the times that try men's souls."

The ruling class is in the process of repudiating all the democratic rights established in that revolution and reaffirmed in the great struggle for the abolition of slavery led by Abraham Lincoln between 1861 and 1865. The defense of these rights is now inseparable from the development of a working class movement to achieve its *social rights*: the right to a job and a livable income, to food, housing, healthcare and education. These rights are not compatible with the capitalist profit system.

To achieve these rights and stop the descent into fascism and barbarism, the working class must take power into its own hands, reorganize economic life on socialist foundations, and establish genuine democracy based on social equality. The Socialist Equality Party and its youth organization, the International Youth and Students for Social Equality (IYSSE), call on workers, young people and all those who are committed to the defense of democratic rights and social equality to take up this fight: Build rank-and-file committees in factories, all work places, schools and neighborhoods.

We urge all those who agree with this strategy to join the SEP and turn the immense social power of the working class into a conscious movement for socialism.



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