

As millions march in “No Kings” protests against dictatorship, Democrats focus on escalating the war in Ukraine

Socialist Equality Party (US)
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On Saturday, millions of people will participate in an estimated 2,700 protests in every major city in the United States, under the framework of “No Kings.” The last protests, held in June, attracted between 5 and 11 million people, and the turnout at the second round is expected to be even larger.

The demonstrations reflect growing mass opposition to the Trump administration’s assault on democratic rights and its conspiracy to establish a fascistic dictatorship; outrage over the ongoing genocide in Gaza; anger at the mass deportations of immigrants; and resistance to the mass firing of federal workers and the destruction of jobs and social programs, including Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid.

The demonstrations draw inspiration from the democratic traditions of the American Revolution, whose anti-monarchical spirit is embodied in the slogan “No Kings.” Many participants in the last protests connected Trump’s efforts to overturn the principles of that revolution—to trample on equality, liberty and the rights of the people—with his campaign to dismantle public education, destroy public health, and place all of society under the oligarchy.

One issue that is not motivating masses of people is the demand for an escalation of imperialist war. But this is the central concern of the Democratic Party.

The Democrats in fact agree with large portions of Trump’s economic policies and have systematically enabled Trump’s attack on the working class. Every faction of the ruling elite insists that social programs be gutted, wages reduced, and public spending slashed in order to expand corporate profits. The Democrats therefore view the mass opposition to Trump with profound unease and hostility.

On the eve of the demonstrations, the editorial board of the *New York Times*, the principal mouthpiece of the Democratic Party, issued a statement calling for war against Russia, under the headline, “Russia Won’t Stop Until NATO Acts.”

The *Times* does not publish editorials every day. Indeed,

the last editorial was published one week ago, on October 10. Its decision to issue this call to war on the very day before what could be the largest single-day protest in US history was deliberate. It is meant to signal the Democratic Party’s overriding priorities.

In its editorial, the *Times* declares that “European leaders should make clear that Russian aggression against NATO countries risks a forceful response, including the shooting down of drones … and potentially of Russian fighter planes that enter NATO airspace.”

In relation to Trump, the *Times* writes hopefully that “he has authorized more intelligence sharing with Kyiv to heighten the effectiveness of its attacks, including those on Russian oil and gas facilities,” and that he is considering allowing Ukraine to use Tomahawk missiles to strike deep inside Russia.”

Expressing the outlook of the Democratic Party and sections of the military-intelligence apparatus, the *Times* goes on to express concern over Trump’s “long record of coziness” with Putin and whether he will prosecute the war against Russia with sufficient aggression.

All these actions, the *Times* states, “bring risks, including the dangers of escalation … [but] the only way to contain him [Putin] is with resolute strength.”

The *Times* does not elaborate that the “risks” it blithely acknowledges are those of a nuclear war between the world’s two leading nuclear powers, which would mean the annihilation of human civilization.

The priority of the Democrats is also reflected in the efforts of the organizations officially sponsoring the “No Kings” protests, including Democratic Party-aligned groups such as Indivisible, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and other union bureaucracies. Yellow has been proclaimed the official color of the protests, presented on the “No Kings” website as “a signal of resistance and national self-determination amid invasion” in Ukraine.

The bloodbath in Ukraine is the largest war in Europe

since the Second World War. This imperialist proxy war, instigated and fueled by the United States and NATO, has already killed and maimed more than 1 million Russians and Ukrainians. Ukrainian youth, seized off the streets and conscripted by a corrupt, US-backed regime, are being sent to die in a 21st century hellscape. The effort by the Democrats to besmirch mass opposition to Trump by promoting this murderous enterprise must be rejected with contempt.

From the 2016 election onward, the Democrats centered their critique of Trump not on his attacks on democratic rights but on his perceived unreliability in prosecuting American imperialism's global interests and, in particular, on the conflict with Russia.

The Democrats' first impeachment of Trump in 2019 was not over his crimes against the Constitution but his hesitation in sending weapons to Ukraine. The Biden administration, which came to power calling for a "strong Republican Party," made the escalation of global war its central priority, first by instigating the US-NATO war against Russia in Ukraine and then by financing and backing Israel's genocidal war in Gaza.

Since Trump's return to power, the Democrats have said as little as possible about his consolidation of dictatorial power. The major Democratic leaders have remained silent on Trump's threats to invoke the Insurrection Act and impose military rule even when White House officials have denounced Democrats themselves as "domestic extremists."

The Democrats have now lined up to praise Trump for his fraudulent "ceasefire" in Gaza, which is nothing less than the consolidation of imperialist-Zionist domination atop the bones of tens of thousands of murdered Palestinians. They have reacted positively to Trump's meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and indications that the administration will supply Kyiv with longer-range missiles for strikes deep into Russia. Not a single leading Democrat has spoken out against the mounting preparations for war against Venezuela or the illegal killings of Venezuelan fishermen in the Caribbean.

There is little doubt that sections of the Democratic Party are counseling Trump that an escalation of war—with Russia, China or another target—would provide the necessary framework for "national unity" at home and the suppression of opposition from the left.

Those participating in the "No Kings" demonstrations must repudiate the filthy, pro-war politics of the Democratic Party. The Democrats speak not for the millions who have taken to the streets but for Wall Street and the Pentagon. A particularly foul role is played by figures such as Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who promote the lie that opposition to Trump's dictatorship can be waged

through the Democratic Party.

In its October 15 statement, "No Kings, No Nazi Führers! Mobilize the Working Class Against Trump's Dictatorship!", the Socialist Equality Party explained that the fight against dictatorship requires a clear political program and concrete demands.

At the forefront stands the demand for the removal of the Trump administration from power and the dismantling of its fascistic apparatus. This must be joined with the demand for the withdrawal of all troops from American cities and an end to the militarization of public life; the abolition of ICE and the Department of Homeland Security and an end to the persecution and deportation of immigrant workers; the termination of all US threats and acts of aggression against Venezuela and other countries; the defense of free speech and all democratic rights; and an end to mass layoffs, social cuts and the destruction of living standards.

Every one of these demands, which express the needs and interests of the vast majority of the population, stands in direct conflict not only with the fascistic agenda of the Trump administration but also with the Democratic Party. Both represent the capitalist oligarchy, which demands that society be subordinated entirely to profit, war and repression.

To oppose Trump's dictatorship and the descent into fascism, therefore, requires the independent political mobilization of the immense power of the working class, united across all industries, regions and national borders. The working class must build its own movement against capitalism, the oligarchy and all their political representatives.



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