

The real state of Trump's America: Social misery, dictatorship, war—and an upsurge of class struggle

WSWS Editorial Board
23 February 2026

US President Donald Trump will deliver the annual State of the Union address Tuesday night before a joint session of Congress. Were it honestly titled, the speech would be called “The State of the Rich”—a demagogic exercise in self-congratulation, burying the catastrophic reality of American life beneath a mountain of lies.

The speech is being delivered in the year that the United States is to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. On July 4, 2026, the nation will commemorate the issuing of the document that proclaimed “all men are created equal” and asserted the inalienable rights of “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” The founders fought a revolution against King George III.

Two hundred and fifty years later, Trump's America offers its own answer to the Declaration's ideals: a government of the billionaires, by the billionaires and for the billionaires, presiding over armed raids on immigrant communities, a network of concentration camps spreading across the country, children torn from their parents, and the gunning down of unarmed civilians by federal agents on the streets of Minneapolis.

Hanging over the proceedings is the stench of Jeffrey Epstein. The Justice Department's release of nearly 3 million pages has shaken the upper tiers of corporate America, exposing connections of billionaires, chief executives and senior political figures to a convicted child sex trafficker. The files, as WSWS Chairman David North recently wrote, “reveal the social physiognomy of a degenerate ruling class and oligarchical society in an advanced state of decomposition. Their offenses are rank; they smell to heaven.”

Trump himself is deeply implicated. Attorney General Pam Bondi responded to questions about the ongoing cover-up by boasting that the Dow had hit 50,000. FBI documents reveal that billionaire Leslie Wexner was identified as a co-conspirator in 2019, yet no charges have been brought. Emails show Epstein comparing the girls he trafficked to “shrimp—you throw away the head and keep the body.” This is the ruling class that governs America.

Consider the facts that will be buried beneath Trump's demagoguery. The national debt stands at \$38.4 trillion, or \$113,000 for every person in the country, and is increasing at \$8 billion per day. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projects the deficit at \$1.9 trillion this year, growing to \$3.1 trillion by 2036, with debt reaching 120 percent of GDP, which is higher than at any point in the nation's history.

The dollar fell more than 9 percent in 2025, its worst annual performance since 2017, and remains in bear market territory as BRICS nations increase local currency trade settlements from 35 to 50 percent. Cumulative price increases since 2020 have been devastating: food up more than 25 percent, housing costs still climbing at 3 percent annually, natural gas up nearly 10 percent.

The level of social inequality is historically unprecedented. The top 1 percent of households now control 31.7 percent of all wealth, the highest share since the Fed began tracking such data in 1989. They hold \$55 trillion, nearly as much as the bottom 90 percent combined. The combined wealth of 935 American billionaires surged to \$8.1 trillion at the end of 2025.

Elon Musk, Trump's partner in dismantling the

federal government through DOGE, has seen his fortune balloon to \$726 billion. CEO compensation at S&P 500 companies averaged \$18.9 million—285 times the typical worker’s pay, up from 21-to-1 in 1965. CEO pay has risen 1,094 percent since 1978, while worker pay has increased just 26 percent. Tesla has proposed a \$1 trillion pay package for Musk, exceeding the total annual compensation of the entire federal workforce. The stock market is not a measure of national prosperity. It is a barometer of ruling class enrichment.

But the most sinister dimension of the real state of the union is the deployment of armed federal agents against the population. In December 2025, the administration launched Operation Metro Surge, deploying 3,000 masked ICE and Border Patrol agents into the Twin Cities, Minnesota, in what the DHS itself called the largest immigration operation in American history. On January 7, ICE shot and killed Renée Good, a 37-year-old American citizen and mother of three. On January 24, Border Patrol agents shot and killed Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old ICU nurse, firing as many as 10 rounds into him as he lay on the ground.

The administration has built a network of detention camps across the country, holding nearly 66,000 people—a 75 percent increase, the highest level in history. Congress has allocated \$45 billion for still more facilities, with capacity projected at 135,000. Children are separated from their parents at a record rate. A tent camp at Fort Bliss, Texas, holds 5,000 people on the same ground that served as an internment camp for Japanese Americans during World War II. 2025 was the deadliest year for ICE detention on record.

The Democrats will offer no genuine opposition. Whatever gestures they make Tuesday night will be meaningless stunts. In actual practice, they collaborate with Trump on the issues that matter most to the ruling class. Where their differences with Trump exist, they are centered on tactical questions of imperialist strategy—above all, dissatisfaction with his insufficient support for the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine. But on the drive toward war with Iran, the two parties are in essential agreement.

The Democrats’ selection of CIA veterans—Senator Elissa Slotkin last year, Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger this year—to deliver the party’s response to

Trump’s State of the Union is itself an assurance to the ruling class that they will uphold the military-intelligence apparatus while using “left”-sounding demagoguery from Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez to block the emergence of a mass movement from below.

This is the real state of Trump’s America in the 250th year since the Declaration of Independence: a society riven by class antagonism on a scale not seen since the Gilded Age, ruled by a criminal oligarchy that has dispensed with even the pretense of democratic governance, lurching toward war abroad and dictatorship at home.

But there is another side to the equation, and it is the decisive one. The same crisis driving the ruling class toward fascism and war is propelling the working class into struggle. A developing strike wave, the mass anti-ICE protests, last year’s “No Kings” marches, the ongoing and walkouts by high school students—These are the initial expressions of a social force that neither party of big business can contain.

The critical question is one of political program, perspective and organization. The opposition to the Trump administration cannot be entrusted to the Democrats, who are complicit in everything he does. It must be based on the independent mobilization of the working class.

Workers must form rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood to coordinate resistance, demand an end to the ICE terror, defend immigrants, and prepare for a general strike against the government’s program of war, austerity and dictatorship. The building of such committees, organized on the basis of a socialist and internationalist program, is the only realistic strategy for defeating the fascistic conspiracy of the American oligarchy.



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