

The Socialist Equality Party replies to Trump's fascist address to Congress

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In the United States, where the capitalist two-party system has been in place for 150 years, all those genuinely opposed to the policies and interests of the ruling class are denied the right to address the people. However, if the Socialist Equality Party had been given the opportunity to deliver a televised rebuttal, not only to Trump's State of the Union Address but also to the Democrats' reply, this is what we would have said.

Good evening. The Socialist Equality Party welcomes this rare opportunity to present our assessment of the State of the Union.

Speaking as a representative of the SEP, I am addressing these remarks not only to workers and youth in the United States but to our class brothers and sisters throughout the world. You are not our enemies. American working people are opposed to and want no part of any war launched by the power-mad oligarchy in a desperate attempt to solve the crisis of the capitalist system.

What you have watched—if you could stomach it—has been a grotesque and degrading spectacle. There was Trump himself, spewing hate, threats and resentments for nearly two hours. In Spielberg's cinematic biography of Lincoln, there is a scene in which the great radical leader, Thaddeus Stevens, berates a contemptible reactionary congressman. He is, proclaims Stevens, "a moral carcass ... more reptile than man." As I watched Trump bobbing his head up and down, licking his lizard-like lips and mouthing his idiocies, the words of Stevens came to mind.

And then there were the congressmen and congresswomen. With few exceptions, they vindicate the words of another great American, Mark Twain, who observed: "It could probably be shown by facts and figures that there is no distinctly native American criminal class except Congress."

On one side of the aisle sat a pack of Republican fascists, leaping to their feet to grunt "USA, USA!"—the American equivalent of "*Sieg Heil*"—every time their Führer paused for breath.

On the other side sat the cowardly representatives of the fake opposition Democratic Party, hands folded in their laps, enduring nearly two hours of open insults, abuse and incitement from a man who called them "sick people," "crazy," "cheaters" who are "destroying our country." And when it was over, they shuffled out of the chamber and handed the microphone to a former CIA officer, Governor Abigail Spanberger, who delivered a sleep-inducing rebuttal about "affordability" and "competent management."

This is the state of American democracy in 2026. A fascist president and a compliant opposition. A ruling class united in its essentials—the defense of profit, the prosecution of war, the suppression of the working class—and divided only over which faction gets to manage the looting.

No one in that chamber spoke for you last night.

The fight against fascism, against imperialist war, against the dictatorship of the billionaire oligarchy, will not come from the marbled corridors of the Capitol. It will come from below—from the factories, the

warehouses, the hospitals, the schools, the neighborhoods where working people actually live and labor. It will come from the independent political mobilization of the working class on the basis of a socialist program. Or it will not come at all.

Trump's speech was a pack of outright lies. He declared that the economy is "roaring like never before" and that "prices are plummeting." He boasted of gasoline prices and investment commitments conjured out of thin air, and recited a string of cherry-picked and manipulated figures on jobs, wages and tariffs, as if repetition could turn propaganda into reality. This was a salesman's pitch, delivered on behalf of the financial oligarchy, aimed at obscuring the facts known to every worker: that basic necessities are unaffordable, and society is being looted while billionaires gorge themselves at the public trough.

The president—whose agents committed the murder of Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, whose administration justified the killings, whose vice president declared that Good's death was "a tragedy of her own making"—stood before Congress and did not utter one syllable about them. Instead, he taunted the Democrats for refusing to stand when he demanded they affirm that "the first duty of the American government is to protect American citizens, not illegal aliens."

He unleashed a torrent of racist lies, branding Minnesota's Somali community as "pirates," who have "pillaged" tens of billions from the American people. This is the language the Nazis used against Jews as they laid the groundwork for the Holocaust. Trump speaks of "corruption," not in relation to the looting carried out daily by Wall Street, the Pentagon contractors and the billionaires who write the laws but to manufacture a pretext for raids, mass arrests and the federal occupation of cities. He threatened that what was done there will be done elsewhere.

Under the banner of the "Save America Act," Trump demanded measures to bar "illegal aliens and others" from voting and claimed, without a shred of evidence, that "cheating is rampant." This is a preemptive declaration that any election outcome that does not produce a Republican victory is illegitimate. It is a blueprint for voter suppression, intimidation and the criminalization of opposition, with Trump preparing to hold the coming elections under the barrel of a gun, monitored by ICE demanding identification like Gestapo agents in Nazi Germany.

Trump's address was also a celebration of imperialist gangsterism and the supposed "right" of American imperialism to invade, bomb, assassinate and abduct at will. In the course of his remarks he treated the military invasion of Venezuela—the killing of civilians and the abduction of its elected president—as a triumph to be applauded. He awarded a Medal of Honor to a helicopter pilot wounded in the raid and narrated the operation with the relish of a man recounting a hunting expedition.

Under the standards established at the Nuremberg trials after World War II, this is an illegal "crime against peace," comparable to the acts which sent the Nazi defendants to the gallows. But for the Trump regime, international law, the sovereignty of nations and the prohibition of wars of conquest are, as Secretary of State Marco Rubio put it, "abstractions," to

be brushed aside. Trump boasted that the United States has “very seriously damaged their fishing industry as well. No one wants to go fishing,” a sadistic and gloating reference to the murders of fishermen carried out in the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Gaza was erased from existence. The word “Palestinian” did not appear in the speech. With American weapons and political and logistical support, tens of thousands of men, women and children have been killed; hospitals were destroyed; universities were leveled; a civilian population has been subjected to starvation and bombardment. Israel continues to carry out airstrikes in defiance of the ceasefire Trump claims to have brokered. Hundreds have been killed since the so-called truce. The genocide proceeds, and the president who enabled it has declared it resolved.

Trump spoke for more than 90 minutes before mentioning Iran, as if no one in the country has any right to know why or when the United States plans to launch a war. And when he finally mentioned Iran, his remarks were confined to a few sentences which explained nothing, while the largest US military deployment in the Middle East since 2003 is currently underway.

The Epstein files—a veritable “Who’s Who” of the US and international ruling class—were not mentioned. Despite the release of over 3 million pages of documents exposing the degenerate social universe of the American and international capitalist oligarchy—the billionaires, politicians, intellectuals, tech executives and royalty circulating through the orbit of a convicted child sex trafficker—the president, whose intimate, decades-long association with Epstein, is documented in photographs, flight logs and witness testimony, said nothing. On the day of Trump’s speech, an NPR investigation reported that the Justice Department had removed or withheld Epstein-related records that reference allegations involving Trump, underscoring the ongoing cover-up by the state apparatus.

The Epstein files expose a ruling class composed of degenerates. Neither party wants them discussed because both are implicated—Clinton and Trump, Summers and Bannon, liberal academics and fascist operatives.

And now we arrive at the Democrats. The Democratic Party is not an opposition party. It is a party of the American ruling class. Its function is to absorb and neutralize social opposition, block the independent political movement of the working class, and ensure that no challenge to capitalism emerges from below.

The party’s official reply was delivered not by a senator or congressperson but by Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger. Always keeping their options open, neither Bernie Sanders nor Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez insisted on delivering the Democratic Party’s response to Trump.

The Democrats, predictably, presented an ex-CIA operative who invoked her intelligence credentials and warned that Trump was “ceding economic power and technological strength to China” and “bowing down to a Russian dictator.” The message was not aimed at working people but at the ruling class: We are reliable, we are serious, we can run the empire with greater competence and fewer public embarrassments.

What Spanberger did not say is a self-indictment. She did not demand the abolition of ICE. She did not speak the names of Renée Good or Alex Pretti. She did not denounce the invasion of Venezuela or the genocide in Gaza. She did not challenge the trillion-dollar military budget or the assault on social programs.

The Democrats do not object to the machine of repression and war. They object only to the crudeness with which Trump operates it.

In order to establish a dictatorship, Trump does not need to physically smash the Democratic politicians. Significantly, when one Democratic congressman, Al Green, held up a sign denouncing Trump’s racism, he was dragged from the chamber by security without any objection from his party colleagues.

The Democrats fear that if they do anything that undermines the obsolete procedures of congressional decorum, it will encourage popular opposition and mass working class action that they cannot control, and which will prove threatening to the capitalist system.

The working class must speak for itself

Governor Spanberger began her remarks by stating that the US was based on the idea that the people could “band together to demand better of their government.”

That’s false. Thomas Jefferson, no coward, actually wrote that when confronted with an oppressive government, “it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government.” The Founders did not “demand better” of King George III. They declared independence and waged an eight-year revolutionary war. That is the tradition that should inspire the working class today.

Two hundred and fifty years later, the demand of the working class must not be that Trump or the Democrats “do better.” The time has come to break with the politics of self-delusion.

The central lesson of last night’s spectacle is that the working class has no voice in the political system of American capitalism. Neither party represents your interests. Neither party will defend your rights. The entire framework of official politics exists to prevent the working class from recognizing itself as a class, from organizing itself independently, and from fighting for its own interests against the class that exploits it.

This must change. The working class must speak for itself.

The Socialist Equality Party calls for:

The abolition of ICE and the entire apparatus of immigration terror. Immigrant workers are not the enemy of the American working class. They are part of the international working class. The scapegoating of immigrants is the oldest weapon in the arsenal of the ruling class—the deliberate cultivation of racial and national divisions to prevent the unity of the exploited against the exploiters. We demand full citizenship rights for all immigrants.

The murders of Renée Good and Alex Pretti must be independently investigated by committees of the working class. Those responsible—from the agents who pulled the triggers to the officials who gave the orders—must be brought to justice.

An immediate end to all imperialist military operations. Withdraw every soldier from the Middle East. End the blockade of Cuba. End the occupation of Venezuela. Stop the preparations for war against Iran. Not one dollar, not one life for the predatory interests of American imperialism. The trillion-dollar military budget must be redirected to meet the social needs of the working class—healthcare, housing, education, infrastructure.

The expropriation of the oligarchy. The concentration of \$7.8 trillion in the hands of 905 billionaires, while millions lack healthcare, housing, and food expresses the logic of the capitalist system. The banks, the giant corporations, the hedge funds, the tech monopolies must be placed under public ownership and democratic control by the working class. The obscene fortunes of the oligarchy—accumulated through exploitation, speculation, fraud and the impoverishment of the majority—must be expropriated and used to fund a massive expansion of social programs.

The reversal of all cuts to social programs and the establishment of social rights. Restore every dollar stolen from Medicaid. Restore food stamp eligibility. Guarantee universal healthcare, free public education through to the university level, affordable housing, and a secure retirement for every worker. These are not utopian demands. The wealth exists, created by the labor of the working class, but now hoarded by the ruling

class. The task is to take it back.

The building of rank-and-file committees in every factory, workplace and neighborhood. The apparatus of the trade unions, long ago transformed into adjuncts of corporate management, will not lead this fight. Their institutional interests are bound up with the preservation of the very system that is destroying the working class. Workers must organize themselves independently, through democratically elected rank-and-file committees that answer to no one but the workers themselves. These committees must be connected across industries, across state lines, across national borders, through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC)—the organizational framework for the unification of the struggles of the international working class.

The preparation of the conditions for a general strike. The crisis of American democracy cannot be resolved through the ballot box of a rigged political system controlled by two capitalist parties, both funded by the same oligarchs. The power of the working class resides in its labor—in its collective capacity to stop production, to halt the flow of profits, to bring the machinery of exploitation to a standstill. The political general strike is a powerful weapon of the working class, and the conditions for its deployment are maturing rapidly. The task is to build the organizational and political foundations now.

International working class unity. The working class is an international class. Capital operates globally; the working class must organize globally. The same corporations that exploit workers in Detroit exploit workers in Monterrey, in Shenzhen, in Dhaka, in Berlin. The same imperialist system that wages war in the Middle East impoverishes workers on every continent. The struggle against Trump and the American oligarchy is inseparable from the struggle of workers in every country against the world capitalist system. National divisions, racial divisions, ethnic divisions, religious divisions—All are weapons of the ruling class, deployed to prevent the one thing it fears above all else: the unity of the exploited.

The crisis of the working class is, in the final analysis, a crisis of revolutionary leadership. The objective conditions for a mass movement of the working class are not only present—They are intensifying with a speed that astonishes even those who have long anticipated them. What is lacking is the conscious political leadership that can transform the mounting anger, the spreading resistance, the growing recognition that the system itself is broken, into a unified movement for the socialist transformation of society.

In 1775, Tom Paine proclaimed in the immortal pamphlet, *Common Sense*, which inspired the American Revolution: “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”

The new world will be socialist. The power that will build it is the working class.

Join the Socialist Equality Party.

Build rank-and-file committees in your workplace and your neighborhood.

Build the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

Read the *World Socialist Web Site* (wsws.org) every day.

The future belongs not to the oligarchs and their political servants but to the international working class.



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