

March 28 “No Kings” protests: The fight against the war on Iran is at the center of the fight against Trump’s dictatorship

Socialist Equality Party (US)
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Workers and young people are marching across the United States Saturday in the third round of “No Kings” demonstrations. More than 7,000 events are planned in all 50 states. Together with the massive anti-ICE protests that swept Minneapolis and cities across the country in January 2026, these mobilizations express enormous social and political opposition to the Trump administration.

The question that must now be answered is: Toward what end and on what political basis must this opposition be developed?

Opposition to the escalating war against Iran must be placed at the center of opposition to the Trump regime. Under the standards established at the Nuremberg Trials after the Second World War, the initiation of a war of aggression is the “supreme international crime.” Those who launched it are war criminals. And those who—in Congress, in the media and in the political establishment—are providing it political cover are accomplices in these crimes.

The war is now in its fourth week, and the trajectory points unmistakably toward a massive escalation. At least 2,200 U.S. Marines have been deployed to the region. The 82nd Airborne Division is being readied. Trump’s supposed “15-point plan” for peace was designed to be rejected by Iran and to serve as a pretext for a ground invasion.

The consequences of a land war against Iran, a country of more than 90 million people, would dwarf anything the American people have been told to expect. And underlying all of this is the danger of nuclear war. The Trump administration has pointedly refused to rule out the use of nuclear weapons against Iran.

The human cost is already staggering. Thousands of Iranian civilians have been killed in the bombing campaign. The escalation of the war will mean tens or hundreds of thousands of Iranian dead, along with thousands of US soldiers. The economic consequences are already being felt throughout the world economy: Oil prices have risen 35 percent since the Strait of Hormuz was closed, driving up the cost of fuel, food and every commodity whose production and transport depend on energy.

Trump has proposed a \$1.5 trillion military budget—a 50

percent increase over current spending—while demanding an immediate additional \$200 billion to fund the war. These resources will be extracted directly from the living standards of the American working class, from the schools, hospitals, housing and social services that have already been gutted by decades of austerity.

The war against Iran did not begin on February 28, 2026. It is the culmination of an unrelenting 47-year campaign, waged under both Democrats and Republicans, whose central objective has never changed: to overturn the results of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and restore American imperial dominance over Iran and the broader Middle East. It is inextricably connected to the wider war, including the invasion of Venezuela at the beginning of the year and the preparations for further conflict, above all, with China.

The assault on democratic rights is inseparable from the explosion of imperialist violence. From its first day in office, the Trump administration has operated as a conspiracy against the Constitution. The nationwide expansion of ICE deployments has been accompanied by the murder of Renée Nicole Good and then Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, warning shots in blood of what the regime is prepared to do.

The administration has now extended this reign of terror into public infrastructure itself, deploying ICE at airports and, most recently, issuing threats to deploy the National Guard there as well, turning transportation hubs into militarized zones and conditioning the population to the presence of armed federal forces in everyday life. As Trump adviser Steve Bannon bluntly stated, the ICE presence at airports is a “test run” for the 2026 midterm elections: a rehearsal for intimidation and the broader plan to undermine elections and normalize quasi-martial law conditions.

The war abroad and the war on the social and democratic rights of the working class are two sides of the same war. Trump is not a political aberration in an otherwise stable “democracy.” He represents a class—the capitalist oligarchy, which has broken with legality because it can no longer govern through democratic forms. Trump has risen to the head of a political system that presides over unprecedented social

inequality, endless war and the enrichment of a tiny elite at the expense of society as a whole.

The Democratic Party is not an opponent of Trump's regime but a collaborator. The differences between the two parties on the war and on all matters essential to the interests of the ruling class are of a tactical character.

In January, as Trump was massing forces for the assault on Iran, the entire Democratic leadership in the House and Senate voted for the \$839 billion military appropriations bill. Their first public statements after the assassination of Iran's supreme leader were to endorse it. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer declared on the Senate floor on March 2: "I will not shed a tear for Khamenei." Former Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chair Donna Brazile stated this week: "Democrats understand that Iran has posed a threat, not just to the region, the Gulf, but to the world itself."

The *New York Times*, speaking for the Democrats, published an editorial declaring that "there is a reasonable debate to have about the wisdom of this war" and that Trump "could make a fact-based argument for confronting the regime now." This is what passes for dissent in the American establishment press.

The principal fear of the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street and the intelligence agencies, is the development of a mass movement from below that breaks out of its control and challenges not merely the administration but the capitalist system and the imperial state that both parties defend.

The "No Kings" coalition, which consists of groups in or around the Democratic Party, has downplayed the war against Iran in its promotional material. Indivisible, a central force in the coalition, was founded by former Democratic congressional staffers and functions openly as an instrument for Democratic Party electoral operations. The AFL-CIO and major unions are promoted as "co-organizers" of the demonstrations even as they maintain silence—or offer empty procedural objections—on the war and do nothing to mobilize workers' power against it.

Bernie Sanders, headlining the flagship Minnesota rally Saturday, mentions Iran as one item in a litany of "dangerous times," a rhetorical gesture that places no obligation on anyone and commits the Democratic Party to nothing. The role of Sanders, along with Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and other members of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), is to channel opposition behind a pro-war party of the capitalist oligarchy.

The social force that must be mobilized is the working class, in the United States and internationally. Saturday's demonstrations coincide with a growing eruption of the class struggle. In the month since the war began, a widening wave of strikes and strike threats has spread across key industries and services—from the JBS meatpacking strike in Greeley to walkouts and strike votes among education workers, nurses, manufacturing workers, and public sector employees.

The working class is the decisive social force in this society. It produces all wealth. It runs the factories, hospitals, schools,

transportation systems, ports, warehouses and communications networks. But this power can only be realized through conscious political organization, independent of and in opposition to both parties of the ruling class and the trade union bureaucracies.

The Socialist Equality Party insists that the war against Iran must be opposed without qualification and brought to an immediate end, along with the broader US-Israeli assault on the Middle East. But ending the war and driving out the Trump regime cannot be achieved through appeals to Congress, the courts or the Democratic Party, which is a party of Wall Street and the Pentagon and an accomplice in these crimes. It requires the independent political mobilization of the working class—workers and young people acting as a conscious force against war, dictatorship and the capitalist oligarchy.

This means building new organizations of struggle: rank-and-file committees in every workplace, school and neighborhood, independent of the trade union apparatus, which exists to isolate, contain and shut down workers' struggles. Linked nationally and internationally through the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees (IWA-RFC), these committees must unite workers across industries and borders and prepare coordinated action against the war machine—up to and including the perspective of a political general strike organized from below.

The choice that confronts the working class is not between Trump and the Democrats. It is the choice that the great Marxists of the 20th century identified with increasing urgency and which the developments of the 21st have made undeniable: Socialism or barbarism. Either the working class develops its own political program, its own organizations, its own leadership and takes conscious action to overthrow the capitalist system that produces war, dictatorship and social devastation—or that system will continue, in ever more violent forms, to destroy the conditions of human civilization.



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