

May Day 2026

The Trump regime, oligarchy, and the fight for socialism

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This speech was delivered by Joseph Kishore, National Secretary of the Socialist Equality Party (US), at the 2026 May Day Online Rally, organized by the WSWs and the International Committee of the Fourth International.

We meet this May Day under conditions without precedent in American history. The United States is headed by a gang of criminals, the political underworld in power. The Trump regime's war against Iran is a criminal enterprise. It is, by the standards established at the Nuremberg trials in 1945 and 1946, a crime against peace, the highest category of war crime, and the one for which the leaders of Nazi Germany were prosecuted.

And this same government is engaged in a criminal conspiracy against the democratic rights of the American people.

It has defied court orders, asserting the principle that the executive branch is bound by no judicial restraint. It has deployed the military and ICE paramilitaries against American cities, most brutally in Minneapolis, where federal agents murdered Renée Nicole Good and Alex Pretti in cold blood. It has threatened martial law around the 2026 midterm elections. It has denounced the "enemy within" and issued memoranda seeking to criminalize political dissent. It has asserted that, as president, Trump can do whatever he wants.

Tens of thousands have been seized in mass raids by ICE Gestapo agents and locked up in concentration camp conditions. Children have been torn from their parents. The Trump regime has deported immigrants, including many with no criminal record, to the CECOT torture chambers in El Salvador. The administration has moved to revoke the citizenship of naturalized Americans and has indicated that birthright citizenship itself can be abolished by executive decree.

And while the bombs are dropping on Iran, this

government is conducting a war on the American working class. Trump has demanded \$1.5 trillion for the Pentagon, the highest military budget in American history. He has stated that Medicare, Medicaid, education, housing, every minimal social gain won by the American working class over the past century must be sacrificed to pay for it.

In terms of its social physiognomy, the Trump government is a government of the oligarchy, the product of unprecedented levels of social inequality that are not compatible with democratic forms of rule.

There is enormous popular opposition to this agenda. In the past months, we have seen the largest protests in the history of the United States. Millions have taken to the streets in city after city, in towns and rural areas as well. There is a growing strike movement that has involved educators, healthcare workers, meatpacking workers, and other sections of the working class. There is a growing desire to fight.

Despite the scale of this opposition, the Hitler-loving gang in the White House remains in power because the so-called "opposition" is bankrupt and complicit.

Consider what the Democrats have done or not done. After the January 6 coup attempt, they covered up the social and political forces behind it, and they worked to rehabilitate the Republican Party as a partner in the war against Russia. Biden declared that we need a strong Republican Party and then dedicated his four years in office to war. First the US-NATO war against Russia, and then the initiation of the Gaza genocide.

After Trump returned to office, the Democrats pledged "cooperation." They funded the government and they ruled out impeachment, even as the administration operated and continues to operate outside of all meaningful legal restraints.

Their role was exposed in the mass "No Kings"

demonstrations. These protests expressed deep hostility to dictatorship, but they were deliberately organized by the Democratic Party and its adjuncts to downplay the central issue—war.

Many have come forward to perform their assigned role. Two days before the bombing of Iran—two days!—the New York mayor and Democratic Socialist of America member Zohran Mamdani met with Trump in the White House and upheld the fascist president as an ally, in his so-called “affordability agenda.” What a fraud. Bernie Sanders, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and company promote the lie that it is possible to oppose Trump and fascism through the institutions of the state and the Democratic Party.

As for the trade union apparatus, it functions not as an instrument of struggle, but as a mechanism of containment. In Minneapolis, it suppressed the call for a general strike which emerged from below. Nationally, the AFL-CIO and major unions have maintained silence as bombs fell in Iran and then returned to their familiar refrain: “Vote in November!” They have worked systematically to shut down, isolate or suppress every strike of workers. The United Auto Workers bureaucracy, under the so-called reformer Shawn Fain, has promoted “America First” nostrums and adapted to the nationalist framework that is inseparable from war.

The crimes of Trump are not his alone. They are the crimes of the oligarchs who financed him. They are the crimes of the corporate media that has legitimized him. They are the crimes of the institutions, Congress, the courts, the Democratic Party that have enabled him. Trump’s crimes are the crimes of the ruling class. They are the crimes of capitalism.

This is why the struggle against dictatorship is inseparable from the struggle against capitalism itself.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, that immortal document. The grievances listed against King George read today like a rap sheet for the President of the United States. Rule by decree, standing armies, the denial of rights, assaults on free speech, the trampling of the population’s will.

But the lesson of that revolutionary tradition is not to beg a corrupt ruling elite for restraint. It is that oppression produces resistance and that fundamental political questions are resolved through struggle. When governments become destructive to the rights of the people, “it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it.” So says the Declaration of Independence.

The defense of democratic rights today, however, is not

compatible with the existence of the capitalist system. The Socialist Equality Party calls for the building of a mass movement of the working class against war and dictatorship, independent of the Democratic Party and in opposition to the trade union apparatus. This means the development of rank-and-file committees in workplaces and neighborhoods, organs of democratic control and struggle, linking workers across industries and across national borders, coordinating action against layoffs, repression, and war, as part of the International Workers’ Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

The working class is an immense global social force. It is internationally connected by the very process of production. The question posed by history is whether these objective conditions, this objective strength, will be consciously transformed into an international movement to reorganize society in the interests of the vast majority. That requires political leadership. It requires a party. It requires the building of a socialist consciousness on the foundations and heritage of Marxism and Trotskyism, the program of the Fourth International.

This is what the Socialist Equality Party fights for. The danger is enormous, but so is the power of the working class. The task is to transform opposition into conscious struggle against imperialist war and barbarism, against fascism and dictatorship, against oligarchy, against capitalism, through the building of a revolutionary socialist movement in the United States and throughout the world.

On this May Day, I appeal to every worker, every young person, every student listening to this rally: draw the conclusion necessary. Join us and build the Socialist Equality Party.



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