

Democrats counter Trump's White House UFC spectacle with nationalist "No Kings" concert

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The June 14 "Rise Up, Sing Out" event, promoted by No Kings and the Committee for the First Amendment, is being staged as the Democratic Party's counter-programming to Trump's UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) 250 spectacle at the White House. The two events differ in style but not in their basic social function. Both are forms of political theater, designed to placate and disorient a population seething with anger over war, inequality, state repression and the open turn by the American ruling class toward dictatorship.

Trump's event, a fascistic celebration of violence, militarism and personal rule, is aimed at his far-right base. The No Kings concert in New York, set to be live-streamed online, is aimed at a different audience—millions of workers and youth enraged by Trump and his government of, by and for the corporate-financial oligarchy, but whom the Democrats are determined to keep trapped within the framework of nationalism, identity politics and electoral pressure campaigns.

The No Kings website describes the event as an effort to "reclaim patriotism as something inclusive, participatory, and rooted in care for one another," counter-posing this to "power, pageantry, or one person's spotlight." It also declares, "Authoritarians want fear, silence, and isolation. We choose joy. We choose community. We choose people power."

There is no mention of the war in Iran or the ongoing the police state operations of Trump's Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) police.

The invocation of "inclusive" patriotism is an effort by the Democrats to market themselves as the true defenders of American democracy. But neither party

has any genuine commitment to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights or democratic rights. For decades, Democrats and Republicans alike have authorized illegal spying on the population, in flagrant violation of the Fourth Amendment. It was under Barack Obama that the US government institutionalized drone assassinations without trial or due process, a practice now being replicated by the Trump administration in its extrajudicial killings in the Caribbean and Pacific. Obama also built up much of the mass deportation infrastructure that Trump has now turbocharged.

What the Democrats call "patriotism" is nationalism, and nationalism is opposed to the interests of the working class. As Marx and Engels wrote in *The Communist Manifesto*, "The working men have no country." Workers in the United States and internationally confront the same multinational corporations, banks and billionaires, who use the nation-state system to divide the working class and intensify exploitation in the interests of profit.

No Kings frames the current struggle, which it labels "authoritarianism" to avoid saying "fascism," in racial and identitarian terms, writing that "America has a long history, rooted in white supremacy, of suppressing the rights of people of color," before asserting that "people-powered movements are how we end authoritarianism."

The claim that racism is rooted in "white supremacy" is false. This position covers up the real roots of racial discrimination and all other attacks on democratic rights—capitalism. It asserts the existence of innate racism in white people, and thereby aids in the division of the working class along racial lines, which is the basic function of racism under capitalism.

The fundamental division in capitalist society is class.

The Democrats invoke identity politics to obscure and divide the common social interests of workers of all races, nationalities and backgrounds.

The contrast with last year's No Kings demonstrations is revealing. In 2025 and 2026, millions joined mass protests against Trump and dictatorship. No Kings itself presents these mobilizations as among the largest single-day protests in US history. But rather than develop this movement into a struggle against the social forces that have produced Trump, No Kings now directs popular outrage into a nationalist concert and live stream followed by what will no doubt be appeals to "remember in November" and elect Democrats.

The class content of the event is underscored by its venue and price. "Rise Up, Sing Out: A Concert for the First Amendment" is scheduled for June 14 at The Town Hall in New York City and is being presented by the Committee for the First Amendment, with appearances and performances by figures such as actresses Jane Fonda, Julia Roberts and Bette Midler, alongside former MSNBC host and Democratic Party operative Joy Reid. The remaining tickets for Sunday's event are currently retailing for over \$330. For those unable or unwilling to spend such sums, No Kings and allied groups have promoted local "watch parties" to view the live stream, staged opposite Trump's White House UFC event.

This is not a strategy to defeat fascism. It is a strategy to contain opposition to it.

The working class is not passive. Across the country, workers are entering into struggle or preparing to do so, from auto parts workers in Michigan, to Hersheypark workers in Pennsylvania, to New York transit workers. Under these conditions, the Democrats and their allies in the trade union apparatus are working consciously to suppress the class struggle and divert opposition back into the Democratic Party.

Dictators and fascists are not defeated by benefit concerts. The American Revolution was not carried out through song, celebrity appearances and appeals to the British Parliament. The revolutionaries of 1776 formed committees, organized militias and built the Continental Army to overthrow the old order. What was historically progressive in the American Revolution was its assertion of universal democratic principles: that "all men are created equal," and endowed with "certain unalienable rights," including

"life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

Those principles cannot be realized today through the Democratic Party, a party of Wall Street, war, mass deportations and police repression. Nor can they be realized through a "patriotism" promoted by either capitalist party, whose purpose is to subordinate workers and youth to the interests of American imperialism and prepare them for world war.

The defense of democratic rights requires the independent mobilization of the working class in the United States and internationally. It requires a socialist program aimed at expropriating the billionaires and reorganizing society to meet human need, not private profit. Only the working class, armed with an internationalist and socialist perspective, can put an end to the conditions that have produced Trump, fascism and dictatorship.



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