

Royalty celebrates oligarchy—Trump's second state visit to the UK

Chris Marsden, Thomas Scripps
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US President Donald Trump's second state visit to Britain was a grotesque display of wealth, power and privilege. Britain's royal family, military and government fawned over the would-be dictator and his entourage consisting of leading representatives of the American financial and corporate oligarchy.

The pomp and ceremony at Windsor Castle was designed as a show of power on the part of today's global aristocracy, who used the setting provided courtesy of King Charles III and Queen Camilla to parade their position as rulers of the world.

Trump and his wife Melania were, over two days, treated to a fairytale version of royal life involving coach rides through the grounds of Windsor—the oldest and largest occupied castle in the world—and a tour of its historical treasures. Trump laid a wreath at the tomb of Queen Elizabeth II in St George's Chapel, which includes the burial vault of Henry VIII.

But this was only a prelude to the main event: a state banquet held Wednesday evening. The 160 guests at the white-tie dinner were seated at a 50-metre mahogany table groaning under the weight of the gold, silver and crystal ornamentation, crockery and cutlery, and a floral display worthy of a botanical garden.

The table alone took a week to dress. Service was organised in 19 stations, each with a page, a footman, an under butler and a wine butler.

Charles, Camilla and the Prince and Princess of Wales were joined in welcoming Trump by Labour Prime Minister Keir Starmer and his wife Victoria, Conservative Party leader Kemi Badenoch, Foreign Secretary David Lammy and Home Secretary Yvette Cooper.

The guest list was dominated, however, by Trump's own retinue of oligarchs: big-tech tycoons Jensen Huang of Nvidia, Tim Cook of Apple, Sam Altman of

OpenAI, Satya Nadella of Microsoft, Alex Karp of Palantir, Rene Haas of Arm Holdings and Ruth Porat of Alphabet; plus financiers Steve Schwarzman of Blackstone, Jane Fraser of Citigroup, Larry Fink of BlackRock and Brian Moynihan of Bank of America.

Other billionaires and multimillionaires invited included media mogul Rupert Murdoch, James Taiclet of Lockheed Martin, Leon Topalian of Nucor Steel, Kelly Ortberg of Boeing, and Marc Benioff of Salesforce.

From British corporations, Pascal Soriot of AstraZeneca, Emma Walmsley of GSK, Tufan Erginbilgiç of Rolls Royce, Paula Reynolds of National Grid plc and Charles Woodburn of BAE Systems made an appearance.

To give an indication of the levels of wealth they embody, the combined personal worth of two dozen of the richest at the table was \$274 billion. The average figure per person of \$11.4 billion is over 67,000 times the wealth of the median Briton. Between them, they represented companies with a market capitalisation of \$17.7 trillion, more than the combined value of every publicly listed company incorporated in the UK.

The royal family was poor by the standards of its guests, representing barely a third of a percent of the personal wealth of these two dozen people. But what they bring to the table is "History": a tradition of centuries of rule and luxury, which the new financial and corporate aristocracy finds deeply attractive.

This is what animated Trump's warm recollections of his British roots through his Scottish mother—a committed royalist—and his feeling that the UK was the only country besides the US to which he felt a pull of affection.

King Charles also gave a fawning speech, beginning by portraying the War of Independence in which

America freed itself from Britain's colonial domination as a tragic misunderstanding. Boasting of "just how far we have come" since the Declaration of Independence 250 years ago next year, he lauded "a relationship between our two countries that surely neither Washington nor King George III could possibly have imagined."

Trump is presently seeking to turn the clock back by centuries, eliminating all the democratic and social gains secured as a result of the revolution of 1776 and of the Civil War to abolish slavery, recently complaining that an "out of control" and "woke" elite is obsessed over "how bad slavery was."

Trump would go a long way towards agreeing that throwing off the monarchy might also have been a terrible mistake, perhaps preferring a dual monarchy, on the model of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, spanning the Atlantic. His affinity with the monarchs of old is such that the mass protests against Trump in America have been organised under the slogan "No Kings."

The performance at Windsor Castle was an open rebuttal to this profound democratic sentiment. Trump's breaking of bread together with the British aristocracy and the British and American oligarchy, attended by one of Europe's oldest social democratic parties, is a symbolic moment of political decay—a coming together of all that is rotten in human history.

While the British ruling class looks with envy at US imperialism's place as the world's hegemonic power, after decades of the UK's economic and geopolitical decline, the American ruling class looks back fondly at its traditions of aristocratic arrogance and impunity and at the rapacious, blood-soaked example of the British Empire. They are united in their lust for power and wealth.

It was therefore fitting that Trump's state visit concluded with the agreement on \$250 billion worth of investment between the US and the UK, before a select audience of slavering business chiefs.

Starmer claimed this was proof of his "delivering" for the UK. But workers and young people who watched any of the affair will have seen something else entirely.

On show over the past two days, nearly 162 years after Abraham Lincoln summed up the democratic principle at the heart of the American Civil War, was

its polar opposite: a government of the oligarchy, by the oligarchy, for the oligarchy. Or, as the motto of the British monarchy would have it, "*Dieu et mon droit*" (God and my right).

These conditions impart an explosive character to social relations. In every country in the world, rule by a parasitic ruling class and its monopolisation of social wealth are producing a social disaster.

Wars and genocides play out against the backdrop of an unprecedented theft of wealth from the working class, who produce it, and plunder by the rich, who enjoy it, resulting in what Karl Marx described as an "Accumulation of wealth at one pole" and "of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole."

None of this is compatible with democracy. Trump's establishment of a presidential dictatorship in the United States is echoed in Britain by the Labour government's unprecedented assault on democratic rights, including the arrest of thousands for speaking in defence of the right to protest and opposing an ongoing genocide in Gaza.

These political realities underscore the impotence of all those pseudo-left tendencies in the UK gravitating around former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who claim that the working class must now form a party based on Labour's old national reformist nostrums as an alternative to Starmer's government.

Claiming that this brutal capitalist offensive can be opposed with a commitment to "kindness," "fairness" and calls for minor reforms disarms workers and young people to political reality. The fight against oligarchic rule can be pursued only by the systematic political mobilisation of the working class on an international socialist programme.

Trump and King Charles spit on the revolutionary legacy of America's War of Independence in the name of transatlantic unity. But it is the socialist revolution, waged by the working class of Britain and the United States against their joint oppressors, that will truly reunite the destinies of the two peoples.



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