

Queen's funeral

Revolutionaries protest, reformists prostrate

The Spartacist League is proud to say that on the day of Elizabeth II's funeral, we successfully organised the *only* demonstration against the monarchy in London. Over 100 people responded to our call. A small number, certainly, but every single person who was there knew that to simply show up required swimming hard against the stream, braving potential threats of arrest and attack by monarchists. While all so-called socialist and republican organisations stayed home, paying the ultimate homage to Her Majesty, those who came can proudly say that they took a stand, defiantly chanting, "Down with the monarchy!"—in Windrush Square, Brixton. Our modest demonstration was the only organised outlet for the growing disgust at the depravity of the British monarchy and the crimes of British imperialism.

Speeches at the demonstration included one by a Greek comrade denouncing the reactionary role of British imperialism in subordinating Greece. A US comrade motivated the need for

a third American revolution to sweep away US imperialism and racial oppression, invoking the first revolution against British rule and the second against slavery. A statement from a Quebec comrade was read denouncing the British monarchy as "the cornerstone of Québec's national oppression". Greetings from our comrades in South Africa stressed that "with the blessing of 'God and the monarchy', racist colonialist pigs like Cecil Rhodes carved up southern Africa, dispossessing the native peoples of their land and dividing them according to the needs of Britain's rulers".

Our main speaker denounced "the monarchy and the United Kingdom" as "a prison for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland's Catholics" and King Charles III as the "colonel-in-chief of the brutal Parachute Regiment that shot and killed 14 people on Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972". She hammered on the urgency of workers opposing the monarchy, taking power and running the country.



Workers Hammer

19 September: Rally in Windrush Square, Brixton, on day of Elizabeth II's funeral.

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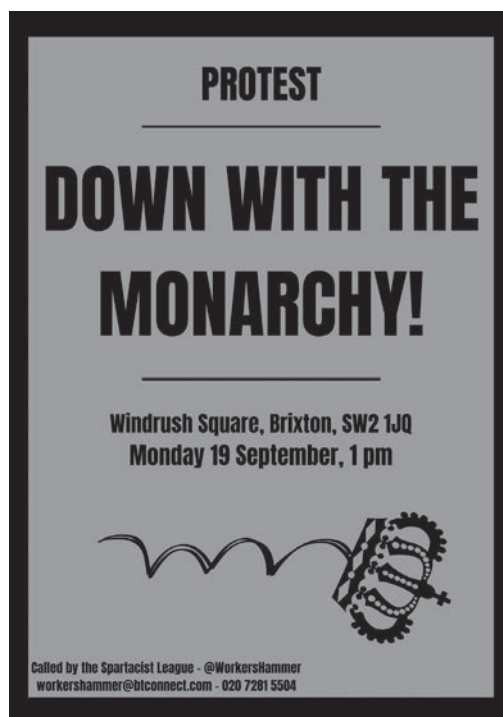
Crucially, we directed our fire at the trade union leaders and Labour lefts who claim to stand against the monarchy and for the working class but who disgustingly mourned the Queen, with abject eulogies or by criminally cancelling strikes. One of the most popular chants at the demo was “Starmer, Corbyn, TUC: crawling to the monarchy!”

We do note one who did not crawl: Steve Hedley, formerly a leader of the RMT. While he could not attend, we appreciated the message he sent us, despite our political differences. His message, read at the rally, called the TUC “boot lickers” for cancelling strikes and noted, “When the Labour Party and much of the so called revolutionary left and even so called republicans acquiesced by their silence a small band of rebels kept the flag flying.”

A few rebels also took a stand in Cardiff and Edinburgh. But in London, the fact that only we and a small number of bravehearts came out is a condemnation of the British left. The Queen’s funeral was one of the largest gatherings of capitalist masters, imperialist overlords and crowned heads ever seen. All these criminals covered in blood descended on London from the four corners of the earth to pay their respects to the British monarchy—the embodiment of one of the most brutal and reactionary empires in all human history. It was crucial to take a stand against this carnival of reaction.

But the rest of the “socialist” groups not only *did nothing*, they *boycotted our demonstration*. We invited left groups and MPs in London and beyond and none of them even dared to re-tweet our call. This from people who always accuse *us* of being sectarians.

One argument we have heard to justify this abstention was that while all socialists supposedly oppose the monarchy, the cost-of-living crisis was more important. What a pathetic excuse! One has to be wilfully blind not to see that it is precisely the trade union leaders’ bowing to the Crown which



poured cold water on workers’ struggle. The task of socialists is precisely to make clear the connection between the destruction of the standard of living of working people and the domination of a parasitic ruling class—best embodied by the royal family. Sweeping away this rot is the only way to solve the current crisis.

Those “socialists” who refuse to take a stand against the monarchy under the pretext that it is less of a priority than the price of energy will never achieve anything for the working class. Even fighting for the most modest reforms requires hard, militant class struggle. As our rally speaker insisted: “A leadership that is too spineless to oppose the monarchy will never have the backbone to confront the ruling class of this country.”

But the real reason why groups like the Socialist Workers Party, *Socialist Appeal*, the Socialist Party and other supposed “revolutionaries” boycotted our demonstration is not found in faulty logic but in the syphilitic chain of Labourism. All these groups have spent the last months building the authority and credentials of trade union tops like Mick Lynch, Sharon Graham and Dave Ward. They have spent years building good relations with left-Labourite MPs like Sultana or Corbyn, boosting their authority among workers. They think this is what “socialist” work consists of. The last thing they want is to destroy all this by calling the left Labourites’ bowing to the Queen by its right name: *betrayal*. Doing so would instantly make them outcasts in “respectable” Labourite circles and most likely split their organisations. To take such a stand was precisely what was posed in joining our demonstration.

The death of the Queen, just like the other major events of recent years, was a test for those who claim to be fighting for socialism. On one side were those who fought and took a stand against the bourgeoisie, their monarch, their royalist media and their servants in the ranks of the workers movement. On the other side were those who bowed to Crown and Capital and made all sorts of excuses for doing so. Those of us who were in Brixton on September 19 know which side we are on.

—Spartacist League/Britain
22 September

To hell with half measures

**Workers must run
the country!**

Spartacist League forum

Saturday, 15 October, 2 pm

**Birkbeck, University of London,
Room B36**

Malet Street, London WC1

Nearest Tube: Russell Square or Goodge Street

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