

Spanish State: Down with the king! - From the end of “Juancarlismo” to the republican moment

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The republic is the future. This option enjoys broad majority support among people aged under 40, those who neither lived through the transition nor were able to vote for the Constitution. [1] The data shows a notable generational and territorial polarization - also between left and right, with a growing differentiation within the electorate of a key party such as the PSOE - as the main conclusion to be drawn from the results of the 40dB team survey, commissioned by the Independent Media Platform. A survey that has had to be carried out after a crowdfunding campaign in the face of the shameful silence of the Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas (CIS - Centre for Sociological Investigations), which for several years has not polled the public's assessment of the monarchy, precisely since the replacement of the monarch in 2014. However, it seems unquestionable that this snapshot of the current state of opinion sets trends that we consider important to point out.

Among these, as is already being highlighted by sections of the media (*La Marea*, *CTXT*, *El Salto*, *Crític*, *Público*, among others), the most notable is the verification that 48 per cent of the population (including 59.8 per cent of PSOE voters) are in favour of a referendum (compared to 36.1% against) and that if it were held, 40.9 per cent would vote in favour of a republic compared to 34.9% who would do so for the monarchy, with 12.9 per cent undecided. A favourable percentage that reaches higher levels in Autonomous Communities like Catalonia (66.5 per cent compared to 14.6 per cent), the Basque Country and Navarra and in the age cohorts under 65.

Along with this unquestionable data, which shows the majority will to decide on the form of the state, the legitimacy crisis suffered by the monarchy among the general public, especially youth, and, again, in the Autonomous Communities, is undeniable. The monarchy is perceived as “an institution from another era” by 47.9 per cent of the population, who disapprove of Juan Carlos I (a rating of 3.3 out of 10), demand that he be tried for his actions and that the inviolability of the institution be ended, and see Felipe VI as a right-wing king who knew and benefitted from his father's financial operations. [2]

This confirms the failure of the attempts to disassociate the current king from the figure of his father, these have not prevented the shadow of corruption from emerging over a reign without its own history beyond *Juancarlismo*. Despite interventions such as the speech of 3 October, after the brutal repression against the referendum of 1 October, 2017, intended to reinforce the profile of Felipe VI, the disaffection of a part of society towards the monarchy has increased, not only in Catalonia, linking it emotionally and symbolically with the most reactionary sectors.

It is true that there are other responses showing that there is still a significant percentage (with a

score of 6.4) that believe in the myth built around the role of the monarchy emeritus during 23F. [3] 40.1 per cent believe that the monarchy plays a role as guarantor of “order and stability”. However, there is still a response close to a dead heat in relation to “satisfaction” (4.6) or “trust” (4.3) in this institution and a low percentage (27.7 per cent) who believe that the Infanta Leonor will become queen, while there is a division of opinion regarding whether “the tensions with nationalisms (Catalan, Basque ...)” would get worse with or without the monarchy. In short, it seems undeniable that the anti-monarchical and anti-Bourbon sentiment with a long tradition in the history of our peoples is resurfacing at rates that may accelerate in the coming times. Because, as Benito Pérez Galdós already wrote, and despite what the Juan Carlists have wanted us to believe subsequently, “Bourbonism does not have two phases, as superficial historians believe... Here and there, in war and in peace, it is always the same, an arbitrary power that couples the Throne and the Altar, to oppress this unhappy people and keep them in poverty and ignorance ”.

It is also true that disparities appear around what type of republic is preferred, with 48.5 per cent leaning towards a presidentialist type, compared to 29.3 per cent who would opt for another based on their election by parliament and with few powers. This shows that an elitist conception of democracy still weighs heavily on the majority of citizens and that much work will be necessary to help (re) generate a political culture that is republican in its deepest sense, that is, participatory, deliberative and free from all kinds of despotisms so that it culminates in constituent processes.

So, in the framework of the multiple crises that we are experiencing, these results convey a clear tendency to the erosion of a fundamental institution of the 1978 regime, with more than 70 per cent of the population believing a constitutional reform is necessary. A demand that continues to clash with the fear of the establishment that a Pandora’s box will be opened around which aspects of the constitutional text should be reformed, with the consequent polarization between a reactionary monarchical bloc and the potential republican, (con) federal and plurinational bloc that we have to build in the new scenario in which we are entering.

Because, as we wrote in the prologue to the forthcoming collective book, *[¡Abajo el rey! Repúblicas](#)* (“Down with the King! Republics” (Sylone/Viento Sur), “although there may be different nuances about the degree or the advancement of the regime crisis in which we find ourselves, no one can ignore the profound changes that are taking place in the Spanish political system. Changes that everything indicates will worsen in the coming years, as a result of the multidimensional and systemic crisis that we are going through. This is even acknowledged by spokespersons for the regime who contemplate the future with horror as a time of decadence, which has its greatest expression in the ruin of *Marca España*, with its top representative fleeing to a luxury resort in the United Arab Emirates. [4] However, it would be premature to announce its final decline... In the framework of this new period, which we can define as a chronic global emergency, we want to address this crisis of the regime and, in particular, that which in recent times manifests itself in the institution that is key within it, the monarchy, whose degree of impunity, corruption and parasitism allowed by the Constitution itself have provoked the legitimate indignation of the great majority of the citizenry. A whole myth built since the Immaculate Transition has collapsed and, with it, the political, economic and media elites that praised it; something that, by the way, the journalist Iñaki Gabilondo has come to recognize in a clear demonstration of sincerity: “All of this has opened a chapter of shame that has publicly degraded my generation. It has been degraded, those of us who supported the process have degraded ourselves. We have been stripped naked and I feel ashamed”.

Although the spokespersons of the regime contemplate with horror the threat of an era of decadence, it would be premature to announce its definitive failure . We cannot underestimate the ability of the elites to recompose, since the plural social block that can undertake a new phase of regime replacement is still weak. We can find ourselves faced with an equivalence of weaknesses, with a catastrophic, but socially and territorially asymmetric stalemate for those of us who want to

overturn this status quo, with which the monarchical institution could continue to be maintained not so much because of its successes but because of our lack of capacity to finish it off.

Therefore, much remains to be done to reach the republican moment we are betting on, but polls like this one and failures as strident as that of the “¡Viva el Rey!” advertising campaign, recently promoted by the platform *Libre*. and also that of the Trump supporter Cayetana Álvarez de Toledo, give us more reasons to believe that we will continue to advance until we can build a broad movement that makes the slogan “Down with the king!” a proposal for the future.

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P.S.

- Translation IVP. Sunday 22 November 2020:
<https://internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article6915>

Source: *Viento Sur*:

<https://vientosur.info/abajo-el-rey-el-referendum-y-el-rechazo-a-la-monarquia-se-abren-camino/>

Footnotes

[1] The Transition refers to the period after the death of Franco in 1975 and the transition from dictatorship to constitutional monarchy to the adoption the of constitution in 1978.

[2] The king installed by Franco’s design, Juan Carlos 1, abdicated in 2014 amid corruption scandals touching the king and one of his daughters. he was succeeded by his son Felipe VI.

[3] The attempted right wing coup of 23 February, 1981.

[4] Marca España is a Spanish government initiative aimed at improving the country’s image abroad.