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Republicanism

‘King Charles is a different kettle of fish’: Britain’s republicans believe their time will come

Sunday 11 September 2022, by [MOHAMED Waseem](#), [TOWNSEND Mark](#) (Date first published: 10 September 2022).

Since the Queen’s death, support for ending the monarchy and a desire to debate its relevance have both grown stronger

For Matthew, the Queen’s death is double edged: “There’s cause for celebration in the sense that it might kickstart the end of the monarchy – but it’s frustrating because I daren’t say that to anyone but my wife!”

He admits crafting several Facebook posts arguing that the death of [Queen Elizabeth II](#) ought to preempt the UK’s transition to a republic but has shied away from pressing send. “A lot of people seem very emotional at the moment and I don’t want to be the target of a massive pile-on by trolls,” said Matthew (not his real name).

Other republicans admit they feel bullied into supporting something they don’t believe in. “I feel unable to express an opinion without being branded disrespectful, so therefore I’ve been funnelled into complying with the country’s grief,” said Aisha, who also requested a pseudonym.

“As someone who believes the monarchy is an outdated concept that compromises our democratic right and signifies colonialism, I am suddenly being turned into the bad guy for deciding not to celebrate that aspect of the Queen’s life.

“People blur the line between her as a person who did a lot of amazing things and her as a queen, and that’s where they get defensive,” she said.

However, groups representing the views of Britain’s republicans say that now is not the time to be cowed into suppressing their beliefs.

Aware of supporters electing to self-censor and hearing reports of others admitting they are too petrified to air their views for fear of being cancelled, the main republican campaign group is actively pushing calls to abolish the monarchy.

“Obviously people will be careful not to cause offence, but this is also a public office that needs to be debated,” said Graham Smith, spokesperson for [Republic](#), which is campaigning to replace the monarchy with an elected head of state. “People still have every right to say whatever they think – they shouldn’t feel cowed. But there is a lot of concern, particularly on social media, about being censored or saying the wrong thing.”

As coverage of the Queen's death continues to dominate broadcast schedules, Smith anticipated ambivalence would become the overriding response for millions during the days ahead. "There is an appetite for a lot of this, but there will be a point where people feel it's going too far or going on for too long. There's going to be a lot of people switching over to Netflix and other streaming channels."

The saturation point for many, he envisaged, would be the middle of this week and although he anticipated overt republican and anti-monarchy sentiment to decline around the Queen's funeral, he expected a resurgence soon after, when many predict the UK will enter a different era of debate over the future of its royal family.

Smith believes admiration for the Queen has largely repressed republicanism, with the issue likely to be imbued with renewed energy. "The Queen was the monarchy for most people and has been all our lives. Charles will not inherit that level of deference and respect, and this really does change the whole dynamic," he said.

It was notable, the group said, that even during the hours immediately following the announcement of the Queen's death on Thursday evening, it received a rise in support. Republic recorded more than 2,000 new followers during the 24 hours after the announcement. "We're also getting an influx of people signing up to us," added Smith.

Although polls have consistently shown that the vast majority of Britons back the monarchy - republicans have long accepted they had no chance of changing the system while the Queen was alive - support for the monarchy has been falling.

"Charles is a very different kettle of fish. If support was dropping anyway, it's not going to go up," said Smith.

Polling ahead of the celebrations for the country's first-ever platinum jubilee earlier this year suggested that 62% of Britons said they [supported the monarchy](#). A decade earlier, however, the same polling company - YouGov - reported that figure was 11 points higher, at 73%. YouGov polling also revealed that almost a quarter - 22% - of people in the UK now support abolishing the monarchy, a pronounced increase from a decade earlier.

Mark Townsend and Waseem Mohamed

P.S.

- The Observer. The Guardian. Sat 10 Sep 2022 17.00 BST:
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2022/sep/10/king-charles-britain-republicans-queen-death-ending-monarchy>

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