

Funding the Future

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I posted this [thread on Twitter](#) this morning:

I had decided that I would leave aside discussion of the monarchy and its role in our society until the Queen's funeral had passed. But now that her death is being used by politicians to further their aims I have changed my mind. A thread....

I have written since the Queen's death about her own significance and about the need to respect her family's grief at her loss, and to respect the grieving of those who feel likewise. I stand by that. But, too much has happened very quickly to ignore its significance any longer.

The good governance of any country requires that it have an effective government that is accountable for the decisions that it makes to the representatives of those who put it in place, and then to the electorate.

It was very hard to say that we had anything approximating to such a government over the summer due to the Tory party leadership election, which left us in limbo for months when decisions on the energy crisis needed to be made.

Now, after only limited debate, and an almost meaningless statement from Liz Truss on what might best be called a non-plan for energy last week, parliament has been suspended indefinitely as a result of the Queen's death. This is utterly unacceptable.

The role of the monarch in the UK is to be part of the mechanism of government. It is not to open hospitals, or to host banquets. It is to be the person who consents to the passage of legislation after giving and receiving advice on the issue.

In that case, if the continuity of the monarchy is to be emphasised the most important thing to happen would be for the business of government to continue - after the appropriate pause for reflection that was provided on Friday and Saturday - starting on Monday morning.

Other business is continuing next week. Debts will also be chased. Schools and other public services will all operate. But the process of accountable government will be suspended. That is a powerful and worrying symbol suggesting there is no accountability in the UK, after all.

There have been ample such other symbols, all of which have been troubling. I was astonished that the Accession Council was not asked its opinion on the ascent of Charles III to the throne: not once were the 200 or so Privy Councillors assembled asked their opinion.

If the so-called 'great and good' were present to offer counsel - as is their task - why was their opinion not sought on the matter laid before them? And yet it was not. A simple call for 'Ayes' and 'Noes' would have sufficed. But it did not happen. So, nor did democracy.

Instead Charles III ascended as of right. And of course, the Accession Council would have confirmed that fact. We all know that. But that is not the issue. Eugenics trumped democracy here - and our leaders didn't even pretend otherwise.

Worse, the accession proclamation said that Prince Charles has 'become our only lawful and rightful Liege Lord Charles the Third'. A liege is the vassal of a feudal superior, where vassal means a person holding rights on conditions of homage and allegiance.

I have to say that I object to the idea that I hold anything as a favour from a monarch who did no more to acquire that right than to be born. Every political sensibility that I have is offended by that idea.

This notion also affronts my senses as a believer in the equality of all.

It offends me as a democrat.

And as a libertarian (and socially I am a libertarian) this suggestion challenges all that I believe about my freedoms and rights.

Let's also be blunt: there is nothing about this that can be reconciled with any declaration of human rights. So the question has to be, why was this wording used?

I know many will say that tradition and ancient forms of wording require this. But tradition would also require support for slavery, child labour, gender discrimination and much else too, so that is no excuse. Those issues were absent. There was, then, no excuse for the language used.

That is, unless its use was deliberate and a reflection of what is really happening on this accession. Might it be, in other words, that the language was deliberate, just as the rush to get Charles on the throne whilst the country is still in shock also very deliberate?

In other words, the whole point of this massively rushed exercise that emphasises status, inherited power, the perpetuation of wealth and control of the populace, coupled with a wholly unnecessary suspension of parliamentary scrutiny, is to highlight the real power in this country?

I wondered until it was announced that the new King would do a tour of the capitals of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. I cannot object to that. I can when he is to be accompanied by Liz Truss as new prime minister.

It could, of course, be argued that the King must act in consultation with ministers. But the message is deeply dangerous. First, it seeks to tie the Crown to the Tory party, which is threatening to the monarchy. Second, it makes the Crown political, and it should not be.

Truss is playing with fire here. We know her own love of media attention. We know too of her party's distaste for inclusiveness and democracy. And we know the links between old hierarchies of power and the Tories. In other words, we know she will tolerate abuse.

But if Truss links traditional, patrician Tory values too overtly to the Crown she risks drawing into public view the unacceptability of its claims to power and loyalty to which I have already referred.

At a time of national crisis all this worries me, greatly. Truss has already made clear that she will allow energy poverty to continue. This was implicit in the statement she made last week. She has also refused to tax the war profits of energy companies.

Truss could not than have made it clearer, already, that she favours an unfair and divided society. Charles has ascended to the throne on the basis of feudal promises, and deeply divisive oaths pertaining to religion. Associating these things is deeply unwise, but is happening.

The point I am making is that democracy, equality, and the right of the citizen to be who they wish is under varying challenges in these arrangements, promoted when parliament, and so democratic accountability, is suspended.

This is not the working of a functioning state. Nor is it the work of what I think a parliamentary democracy should be. There is instead in all this an ancient regime seeking to remind the country where power lies, backed by a prime minister all too willing to reinforce division.

I very much doubt the Queen would have been so unwise as to agree to a tour of the country with a new prime minister, herself deeply unpopular and desperate for publicity. Charles has agreed. That, to me, is a very bad sign, amongst many that are worrying.

Truss has made this period of mourning political. That has to be said. And the unacceptability of this has to be noted. Charles has joined with her in making this the case. It is, then, appropriate to provide a political response.

As a result, please don't suggest this thread inappropriate. Look at what is happening instead and worry for us, our democracy, and the Crown as well if you support it, because it's being put at risk.

Just as governments only rule by consent, so too do monarchs. It seems that far too many are forgetting that. Alienating people will not deliver that consent.

And if you doubt me, just wait to see how long it is before the Mail turns on Charles. I suspect it will not be long. He is far too woke for them. He's a Megan Markle in the making for the tabloids. We are moving to turbulent times.

A wise new King would have avoided being used as a political pawn right now. It is not clear that we have a wise King right now. In a febrile United Kingdom that adds another uncertainty into an already unstable economic situation, and that does not help.

I am worried. It's right to say so given what is happening.