

Charles in Charge

How Will an Already Fractious Britain Fare Under an Ardent Islamophilic King?



by Bruce Bawer

Yes, I watched the queen's obsequies on Monday from start to finish – first the funeral at Westminster Abbey, then the committal service at Windsor, and in between the magnificent procession through the fabled streets of London. And yes, I was moved. And impressed. Never in our lifetimes has there been such a remarkable ceremonial display. It made the opening and closing ceremonies of any given Olympics look like the grand opening of a carwash. And for me the day's events, which I viewed mostly on GB News, were greatly enhanced by the contributions of various historians and royal know-alls, above all the brilliant David Starkey.

Born and raised in America, I never had much truck with

royalty. Yes, I was fascinated by the history of the English monarchs – especially the Tudors, Starkey's specialty. But except for a brief, weird flirtation, back when I lived in Amsterdam, with the Dutch queen Beatrix, who has since abdicated, I always had a proper republican allergy to the idea of ordinary people – "subjects"! – bowing down to their purported betters. The whole set-up wasn't just inequitable and outrageously unfair to taxpayers – why should British citizens support a so-called "royal family" who live not just in one 775-room palace but in several of them, apparently for variety's sake? – but also to the royals themselves, who are doomed by an accident of birth to live exceedingly unnatural lives combining privilege on an unimaginable scale with a degree of inhuman deprivation, on a number of fronts, that would be considered cruel and unusual punishment if imposed on death-row murderers.

Watching *The Crown* on Netflix during the past few years has helped me to appreciate the logic – although that's not quite the mot juste – of monarchy, at least along the British model. In the U.S., our head of government is also our head of state – that is, an elected politician, who by definition is likely to be disliked, if not despised, by roughly half of the population. In Britain, the sovereign is, or is supposed to be, above politics and therefore, according to the theory, can serve as a national symbol uniting Tories with Labourites, Brexiters with Remainers, Pepsi fans with imbibers of Coke.

In his commentaries on *GB News* since the queen's death, Starkey has elaborated on this premise in a way that has sometimes bordered on the mystical. He's discussed the royal family as embodying continuity over the centuries and as thereby playing a crucial role in the preservation and perpetuation of England's – and, later, Britain's – national myth. Again and again, moreover, he's contrasted the British constitutional monarchy favorably with the American constitutional system. Admittedly, at a time when the

Democratic Party and Joe Biden's puppeteers are doing their best to exploit the weaknesses in the American system in an apparent effort to bring the whole edifice crashing down, anything else – up to and including Juche thought – can start looking pretty good.

But the plain fact is that for the British system to work the way it's supposed to, you need somebody on the throne like Elizabeth II – a woman who was so fiercely disciplined, so devoted, heart and soul, to a life of service, that she apparently went through her public paces for over seventy years without a single misstep – smiling, waving, shaking all the oily hands, making all the insipid small talk with nary a grunt or grimace. Furthermore, you don't just need an exceptional individual like Elizabeth in the top job: you need her to be there for a very long time – for, indeed, a record-setting period of time – so that after a certain point, several generations of her subjects have never known another sovereign and she comes to seem, yes, immortal, just like Hirohito before we put him in his place. Still, the question remains: is it ever fair to compel anybody, in the name of duty, to keep her mouth shut about everything going on in her country – even as she herself is officially the very personification of that country?

In any event, could Charles ever possibly be the kind of monarch his mother was – perfectly proper, totally disciplined, always at a lofty but at the same time somehow humble remove? Well, his manifest grief over her death has certainly won him a great deal of good will, both at home and abroad. And his promise to put his pet causes behind him, the good (support for traditional architecture) along with the bad (climate change and, good God, homeopathy) was a relief. But there's reason to fear that he won't be keeping that promise for long. In a September 17 address to a gathering of "faith leaders" at Buckingham Palace, he spoke of his "duty to protect the diversity of our country by protecting a space for

faith itself.” He came very close to apologizing for his own Anglicanism and for the Anglican oaths he would take at his coronation. From any other freshly installed king, this little speech might sound like routine stuff; but Charles isn’t just any king. He’s a king, alas, with a long history of intense admiration for Islam.

Case in point: when the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies was founded in 1993, Charles became its patron (he still is) and delivered its inaugural address, described earlier this month in the *Middle East Eye* as “electrifying.” Characterizing Islam as part of Europe’s “past and our present” (yes – in the form of armies of conquest), Charles identified “equity and compassion” as the “guiding principle and spirit of Islamic law,” praised the rights that Islam grants women (no mention of forced marriages or honor killings), celebrated the “remarkable tolerance” of medieval Islam, and asked Muslims in Europe to appreciate “the importance of integration” while asking non-Muslims to respect Islam and “avoid actions which are likely to cause deep offence.”

At no point in the intervening twenty-nine years has Charles moderated this message of appeasement and dhimmitude. Au contraire. In 2010, he urged fellow environmentalist fanatics to “follow the Islamic way,” whatever that means; in 2013 he announced he’d been taking Arabic lessons so he could read the Koran in the original. A few weeks ago, it was reported that his charity had accepted £1 million from two half-brothers (which, of course, equals one brother) of Osama bin Laden – a huge scandal-in-the-making that evaporated as soon as the queen died. Years ago, the grand mufti of Cyprus maintained that Charles had secretly converted to Islam. Given his non-secret record, it’s not hard to believe.

No surprise, then, that as soon as Charles ascended to the throne, Muslims – and his fellow Islamophiles – cheered. On September 13, one H.A. Hellyer expressed hope in *Time Magazine* that Charles’s love of Islam could bridge the divisions

between British Muslims and the filthy British infidels who still think they run the place. Yeah, that'll do it. Enthusing about Charles's affection for the religion of peace, Hellyer noted that Charles has reportedly expressed disagreement "with dress restrictions imposed on Muslim women in various European countries." Not a word about his view of dress restrictions imposed on Muslim women in various Islamic countries.

Can this man possibly be a king who stands above the issues in the way his mother did? Besides, is that the kind of head of state that today's Britain needs? We're talking, after all, about a country where the police now systematically ignore the mass Muslim rapes of white working-class girls even as they arrest law-abiding citizens who dare to mention those rapes on social media. Does Britain need a king who stands silently by while such dark official crimes go on in his name – or does it need a king who, in the name of his nation's long and noble tradition of civil liberties, angrily demands an end to them? Queen Elizabeth was indeed a great lady, but she felt obliged to follow her prime minsters' "recommendations" by awarding knighthoods to vile Muslim scum like Iqbal Sacranie, who said that death was "a bit too easy" for Salman Rushdie, even as national heroes like Nigel Farage and Tommy Robinson, who richly deserve royal honors, were passed over.

And think about this. Charles, for all his quirks, is far from the family's black sheep. Imagine if Prince Andrew had been the firstborn. Imagine if, upon Elizabeth's death, a man had succeeded to the throne who we all know traveled on Jeffrey Epstein's "Lolita Express" to his Caribbean island where Epstein and his guests famously pursued the carnal knowledge of any number of illegally trafficked minors. What would the crowning of Andrew I have done to the concept of a monarch who hovers above politics, above conflict, above controversy? How quickly would the House of Windsor have crashed and burned under the weight of the new king's Jeffrey Epstein connection?

Then there's this. Even as the memorial tributes to the queen

were warming the hearts of Brits who cherish the dream of a united multicultural kingdom under one universally beloved sovereign, young Muslim and Hindu men were beating the living daylights out of each other in the streets of Leicester. The corporate media whitewashed the situation, blaming it alternately on Hindu nationalism and on heightened emotions following an India-Pakistan cricket match. Poppycrack. And no, the heavies here aren't the Hindus, whom Britain's elites love to blame in such circumstances because they're educated and affluent and can therefore be labeled as "privileged," whereas Muslims – adherents of a violent supremacist ideology – are always cast as the victims. On Tuesday of this week, the turmoil spread to Birmingham, where 200 masked and hooded Muslim men surrounded a Hindu temple.

Given this jihadist strife – which is commonplace these days not just in Leicester but all over England – does the U.K. (to say nothing of Canada, Australia, and Belize) really want a king who not only refrains from standing up for freedom of speech and public order and against totalitarian religion but who actively embraces Islam, the most tyrannical of faiths, and who has instructed the people who are now his subjects that they shouldn't criticize it? With a man like Charles in charge, which system now looks more appealing: the British one, under which Charles – born into a family famed for its longevity – will remain head of state until he dies, or the American one, under which Biden, if he doesn't kick off first, can (barring widespread voter fraud) be removed at the will of the electorate on November 5, 2024?

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