

I am often told that in order to be a Patriot, one must be unfailingly praising of one's home nation. Indeed, to criticise your nation, even in a minor way, is a form of treason. I have never been able to subscribe to this theory, myself, and doubt I shall find myself doing so at any point in my life. In order to improve, one must address faults. To see faults, one must criticise. Since the duty of a patriot is to improve their nation, indeed it is the duty of the patriot to criticise.

I am a Socialist. It is my belief that this country needs fundamental, systematic change in order to be fit for the future. To this end, I believe in the strengthening of Unions and the National Health Service. I believe in reinforcing the rights of minorities, and civil rights for all people in this nation. Most controversially - at least recently - my patriotism has led to Republicanism. In order for the country to be truly modern and truly democratic, as we should be, we should elect our heads of state.

While it is true, the Monarchy does bring in money through tourism, it is also true they take public money for the upkeep of their various palaces. The role of the Monarch is to represent the UK, advise the Prime Minister and government, and roles such as the state opening and dissolving of Parliament, and the approval or rejection of legislation. I would note, however, that the Royal Veto has not been used since the reign of Queen Anne, over two centuries ago. The powers of the Monarch are similar in scope to the powers of the Presidents of Ireland or Germany, and yet we are insistent, the Monarchy remains. One must ask, why?

I have considered this question many times throughout both my political career and my private life. It has been asserted that the direct election of a head of state could lead to a situation in which a politician such as Boris Johnson would be President. I cannot deny this, it is a possibility. However, Mr. Johnson was also elected as Prime Minister, a role more powerful than the head of state in most every parliamentary democracy. Seemingly, we would allow Mr. Johnson to rule as PM, but not to lead as President.

It has also been asserted that the Monarchy provides a national rallying point in times of crisis. I admit, I myself have found some comfort or pride in the Monarch in such times, especially during the Covid Pandemic. Their role as a boost to morale is hard to deny. We cannot take this on its own though, and must look at the other side of the argument: The royal family has always been a source of scandal, as well as pride. Be it King Edward VIII's fascist sympathies, Prince Andrew's various disgraces, or the hiding of mentally unwell family members by the Parker-Bowles' to save the Crown embarrassment. This is only to look back to the 1930's. Indeed, they are a salve upon the national wound in times of crisis, but otherwise, scandal-ridden.

It will come as no great shock to you that I hold these beliefs; I am, after all, the press officer of a Republican APPG within Parliament. I cannot see the benefits to a Monarchy that a Presidency does not also give, and while the former takes, the latter gives. A future in which Britain keeps the institutions of the past because of the stubbornness of some is no future for this country at all. My comrades and I are called "Treason Mongers"; if it is treason to wish for the progress of the nation, then I shall ascribe the name to myself with the same pride as with the sentence "I am British". You may keep your crowns and laurels, I ask only for progress and plenty.