

THE LAST ADULT: REFLECTIONS ON THE PLATINUM JUBILEE OF QUEEN ELIZABETH II

Posted on February 6, 2022

The EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVE



Where the rest of the world's leaders seem intent on impressing us with themselves, she appears to respond in the opposite manner—with quiet duty.

Category: [COMMENTARY](#)

Tags: [England](#), [monarchy](#), [Queen Elizabeth](#), [UK](#)

To-day, Sunday, February 6, 2022, marks the 70th anniversary of the day on which a young girl, travelling in Kenya, was informed that her beloved father had died back in England. From the moment after he drew his last, his daughter was Queen Regnant of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Ceylon, Pakistan, and numerous other territories.

All across the British Commonwealth and Empire, Accession Proclamations were read. They generally began:

WHEREAS it hath pleased Almighty God to call to His Mercy our late Sovereign Lord King George the Sixth of Blessed and Glorious memory, by whose Decease the Crown is solely and rightfully come to the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary.

After enumerating the local authorities (Governor-General or whatever) who were doing the proclaiming, they announced that these:

do now hereby, with one voice and consent of tongue and heart, publish and proclaim that the High and Mighty Princess Elizabeth Alexandra Mary is now, by the death of our late Sovereign of happy memory, become Queen Elizabeth the

Second ... to whom her lieges do acknowledge all faith and constant obedience, with hearty and humble affection; beseeching God, by whom kings and queens do reign, to bless the Royal Queen Elizabeth the Second with long and happy years to reign over us.

Certainly, He has answered those prayers in terms of years being long, if not always happy.

The young Queen was greeted with waves of adulation. Both her British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, and his Labour Party opponent, Clement Attlee, expressed the hope that her accession would be the start of a “new Elizabethan Age.”

Elizabeth had already brightened the dark skies of still-rationing postwar Britain in 1947 with her wedding to Philip, Prince of Greece and Denmark (thus becoming the last British Royal to marry a Royal). Earlier that year Elizabeth had turned 21 in the midst of a tour with her family in South Africa. On that occasion she made a broadcast to the entire Commonwealth, in which she said:

I declare before you all that my whole life whether it be long or short shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great imperial family to which we all belong.

So it has been.

The coronation the following year was an extraordinary ceremony, broadcast around the world in all its beauty.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=52NTjasbmjw>
Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II: Westminster Abbey 1953

For better and often far worse, Great Britain, the Commonwealth, and the world at large were to change in innumerable ways after her coronation. Eisenhower's betrayal of our British and French allies at Suez in 1956 simply capped an American strategy begun by FDR and continued until the Portuguese withdrawal from Africa in 1975—pushing our European friends out of their colonial possessions in concert with our Soviet foes.

In Church, State, and Society, the 1960s ignited a downward slide of religious, cultural, and moral values that continues to this day. In her first decades as Queen, Elizabeth had such figures as Churchill, Duplessis, Diefenbaker, Menzies, and Holyoake as her Prime Ministers; now she and her peoples are saddled with the cast of dictatorial comedians who prattle and dither from their respective lecterns.

This points to a problem that many do not understand about the Queen's role—she reigns, but does not rule. Thanks to the so-called Glorious Revolution of 1688, the usurpation of much of the remaining Royal Prerogative by Prime Ministers under the first two (German-speaking) Kings George, along with the defeat of George III's attempt to rectify that situation by the results of the American Revolution, the Queen is bound by law and custom to assent to whatever propositions the supposed "representatives of the people" place before her.

As if this were not bad enough in itself, the headlong decline of the political talent pool into the comedic sewer which it has become makes it ever more grotesque. Worse still, in 17 of her realms (most recently, Barbados), the political class has not been content to settle for the power which the Westminster System gave them, but have instead churlishly snatched the top ring for themselves. In the 15 which remain—including the United Kingdom—politicians and bureaucrats constantly strive to erode symbols of Royal authority.

The Queen's own family has been famously touched by the collapse of moral values in the contemporary period: all but one of her children is divorced, Prince Andrew continues to be caught up in a seemingly endless sex scandal, and grandson Harry fled to America with the odious Meghan. To cap it all, this past year, her ever-loyal husband, Prince Philip, died.

Yet through all of this, Her Majesty has soldiered on. More than any other religious or political office-holder in the world, she has given an appearance of continuity and dignity. In a time when the Catholic Church boasts a shrewish pope and the United States a near-senile president, Queen Elizabeth conducts herself in the manner that she always has. I myself might wish that she would take a more active stand in certain matters—but that is, perhaps, the point. Where the rest of the world's leaders seem intent on impressing us with themselves, she appears to respond in the opposite manner—with quiet duty.

When she dies, all sorts of questions will arise. Republicans in her various realms shall doubtless want to use the occasion to drive their nations down the same Banana Republic road that places like Sierra Leone and Fiji have done. Prince Charles (for whom, having read his writings extensively, I have a lot of sympathy) shall doubtless be attacked by the media in every way possible—all in hopes of weakening the institution. Much as I enjoyed his shutting down Parliament in *Charles III*, I highly doubt he would actually do it. All of that shall be unpleasant.

But what I shall miss most about her when she dies is—well—her. She has been Queen as long as I can remember. Trends have come and gone, regimes risen and fallen, the Church's hierarchy gone mad, then sane-ish, then mad again—but through it all, she has been there.

In a world that is filled with public figures adolescently obsessed with self, the Queen has been the last adult.