



THE BRITISH MONARCHICAL SYSTEM

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In an age when many of our traditional systems are being questioned, it is worthwhile to examine both the questions and the answers and the alternatives which are available. The British Monarchical system is today being questioned as to its value. Let us examine firstly, the historical development; secondly, the mechanics or workings of the Monarchy; and thirdly, the application of the Monarchy in today's world. In our examination we will not treat of individual Kings and Queens so much, as to deal with the actual way in which the Monarchy developed and now functions.

Monarchy as a system of government developed out of the family system — through the gathering of families into tribes or groups — and the natural leader of the leading family group in the nation became the Monarch, or ruler of the nation. In early history, society was much less complex than at present, and a Monarch had no difficulty in organising the affairs of a nation. The fact of geography contributed in a unique way to the development of the British Monarchy. Being an island people, British history developed in a different way to the countries in Europe. Wars, in the Middle Ages were fought, and decided in campaigns lasting sometimes not longer than 40 days. An irregular army of archers etc. composed of men taken temporarily from their occupations, was raised by the King of the day for the purpose. This factor contributed to the development of what is called Limited Monarchy. In those days, when every able man was a first class archer, and no large regular army was maintained by the King; the ruler did not dare to become too despotic in his exercise of power for fear of retribution by his subjects.

In Europe, Kings raised standing armies much earlier in the piece than did the British; and thus the European Monarchies needed to impose taxes on their peoples to maintain these armies. The power of the sword (army) belonged to the Monarch, and the power of the purse (tax money) belonged to the people, and was

administered by their representatives (Parliaments). In Europe, for example, if the King of France had an efficient standing army; the King of Spain must also maintain one, or submit to foreign domination. To maintain these armies, the European Monarchs gradually gained control of the “power of the purse”, and so became virtually Absolute Monarchs.

Britain developed in a different way, being separated from the conflicts in Europe by the Channel, she had no need of a standing army, until the end of the seventeenth century. So, the parliamentary institution in Britain operated to maintain a balance of power. The development of government took place in a gradual way, not, as in many European countries by revolution, demolition, and then reconstruction. The present constitution of Britain is, to the constitution under which she flourished six hundred years ago, what the tree is to the sapling; what the man is to the boy. The development has been tremendous. Other societies have written constitutions perhaps more attractive. But no other society has yet succeeded in bringing the same degree of progress with stability.

Recognition must be given to the part played by Christianity, British Monarchs have been Christian since very early times. The peaceful development of the Monarchical system has been due in no small measure to the moral restraints imposed by Christianity. As Macaulay states in “History of England”, Vol.I. P.4.

“Yet surely a system which, however deformed by superstition, introduced strong moral restraints into communities previously governed only by vigour of muscle and by audacity of spirit, a system which taught the fiercest and mightiest ruler that he was, like his meanest bondman, a responsible being, might have seemed to deserve a more respectful mention from philosophers and historians”.

In all this development the King possessed great powers, he was the chief of the government, the sole communication with foreign powers, he had the power to coin money, the power to fix weights

and measures, and he was the commander of the military and naval forces. Yet his power was limited as outlined in “History of England”, Vol.1. P.15.

“But his power, though ample, was limited by the three great constitutional principles, so ancient that none can say when they began to exist, so potent that the natural development, continued through many generations, has produced the order of things under which we now live. First, the King could not legislate without the consent of his Parliament. Secondly, he could impose no tax without the consent of his Parliament. Thirdly, he was bound to conduct the executive Administration according to the laws of the land, and if he broke those laws, his advisers and his agents were responsible”.

MECHANICS OF THE MONARCHY

The Monarchy, as it operates today is uniquely fitted for dealing with the complexities and stresses of modern life and politics. The reason for this can best be explained by examining the three great divisions which make up the Monarchical system. The first division is the motivating moral force of Christianity, which is responsible for the development of the other two parts, the Common Law and the Parliamentary system.

Christianity, being much concerned with the love of God for each individual, motivated those who played key roles in the Monarchical system throughout its history to incorporate this principle into the fabric of the whole system. Love is a very ill—defined word these days; it is used to justify lowering of moral standards, to justify a form of misguided pacifism, and to produce an inversion of thought which favours the criminal and forgets the victim or future victims. In the ordering of human affairs, the true definition of love would be — a patient deep and abiding concern for the individual, particularly the innocent. It is concerned with justice and equity, and in dealing with justice, must include penalties for the wrongdoer, both for his own good and for the good of all.

There is a saying that the King can do no wrong. This has been defined by judges as meaning that it is inconceivable that the Crown should wrong any of its subjects. The Monarch's realm must therefore be organised so as to give the least possible chance that any of its subjects will be wronged. It must be based on a love and concern for each individual. This can be best understood by contemplating the basic moral law contained in the Ten Commandments, the first five of which show how to love God, and the second five show how to love one's neighbour.

British Monarchs have upheld Christianity ever since very early times; in fact it is claimed that Britain was the first nation to nationally accept Christianity, and because of this British ambassadors claimed and got precedence in Christian Europe. Naturally some Kings and some citizens (even in powerful positions) have not been perfect examples of Christians, but the nature of humanity being as it is, this could only be expected. The important thing to note, is that over the years and the centuries British Monarchs have been motivated by the Christian faith and the result of their actions has been to create and maintain a Christian civilization.

The second division is the Common Law. This was first codified by Alfred the Great, and in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th Edition — under “English Law”, is set out Alfred's Dooms and the Laws of Moses side by side, and except for slight differences in the wording they are identical. British Common Law did not derive from Roman Law, and is quite different to Islamic Law. There have been periods of history when the Common Law was temporarily left in abeyance, but it has always been re-established again for example with events like the signing of Magna Charta. The balance obtained in British constitutionalism is due to the fact that there has always been sufficient Monarchs, judges, lawyers, churchmen, parliamentarians and others so saturated with Christianity that they devised and polished a system of law based on a real love and concern for the individual. The principal safeguards that give dignity and liberty

to the Monarch's subjects are:-

- (a) The onus of proof on the accuser whereby an accused person must be considered as innocent until proven guilty.
- (b) Habeas Corpus (produce the body) which ensures that the Queen's subjects cannot be imprisoned without trial and conviction.
- (c) The jury system so that an accused may, for serious crimes, be condemned only by twelve of his own kind, and this unanimously.
- (d) Rules of evidence which ensures that only facts relevant to the case are presented along with the Mosaic instruction that two witnesses are required to establish a fact - the witnesses being heard separately.
- (e) Independent judges appointed for life and paid sufficiently well as to render corruption unlikely.

Such a system could only have been built by people who considered it a duty to love their neighbour. This is real justice and equity at work with no inversion of thought which forgets the innocent and sympathises with the criminal. Being based on truth and natural law, its basic principles are ageless and apply in any era.

The third division, the Parliamentary system, developed, as mentioned above, from the need of the Monarch to raise money by taxes. It was understood that no taxes be raised without representation from the people. The growth of Parliament reduced the conflict between the Crown and the people. In early times a simple society could be administered by a Monarch alone, but today's modern and complex community requires a much broader type of organisation to run it. The Monarch now rules with Parliament and through Parliament. All self-reliant adults have the responsibility of electing the Queen's advisers. The Monarch is a guiding influence in many ways in the area of politics and international affairs. Being taught and saturated in the details of these affairs since childhood, he or she can act in an advisory capacity to the government of the day, who may or may not be expert. The Monarch's right to advise is well established in the

Parliamentary system, and because the advice is sought and tended privately, he or she can usually remain above the dog-fight of politics.

The Monarch, today, has the constitutional power to even declare war, but does not have the power to raise the money to fight a war. This power is exercised by the Parliament; which gives it considerable power. It is accepted that the Monarch confers authority on the proceedings of Parliament providing it is operating properly and constitutionally. This authority can be withdrawn as it was in New South Wales in the (nineteen-ed) thirties, when the Lang government was dismissed, and the Governor asked the people to elect another government. The fact that the Monarch, or representative normally accepts the advice of Parliament does not mean that he or she is a “rubber stamp”, but confirms to the realities of the present day. The Monarch is always there as a “back—stop” should the Parliament cease to operate properly.

It is through Parliament that reforms are carried out, it gives reformers a forum to state their views, and when supported by the people, the authority to put them into practice. In the case of education, the original reformer was Raikes* (whose statue stands on the Thames embankment) who started his Sunday Schools against great opposition. Note the Christian origin. Being a limit to the number of students that could be taught at Sunday and Church schools, the Parliament stepped in and extended education to all. In this way the Parliament has absorbed into its structure the reforms of many centuries. Examples of reforms are:-

- (a) Free speech.
- (b) Academic freedom.
- (c) Scientific achievement and the industrial revolution.
- (d) Social welfare.
- (e) Mass education.
- (f) Anti-slavery.
- (g) Freedom of the press.
- (h) Freedom of Association. (Trade Unions).

The system is organic and flexible, it can grow and change. It can absorb ideas and allow the growth of learning and the fact that it does this with so little bloodshed is in itself a fantastic accomplishment. Yet Parliament is not the main part of the Monarchical system. When power, such as the power wielded by a Monarch, is given to an assembly, great risks are involved. They will always know what is best for you as an individual and usually have no compunction in applying coercion. “You will have strawberries and cream whether you like them or not”, is no joke. “Power corrupts and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely“ has been well said. It is here that the Common Law plays its part; Parliament can make laws which are legal after the Monarch’s signature has been applied but it cannot interfere with law administration. Here the freedoms and principles laid down in the Common Law, along with the independent judiciary, protects the rights of the individual. Only the law and judges keep us free, with dignity.

The whole system is one of motivating moral force, justice and equity, and the clash of ideas administratively implemented with decency and in order. It could not exist without a Christian Monarch or for that matter without Christian subjects. It was certainly built by such people, and does not give the appearance of a man—made system of checks and balances, but mirrors the balance of nature itself.

** Raikes is credited with getting education for poor people, it was actually Hanna Moore, a lady who was unlucky in love, who did not mope and say “poor me” but started Sunday Schools for the poor (the children had to scrounge during the week). She was noticed by Lord Raikes who funded her program.*

AUTHORITY

All authority in our community comes from the Crown and this authority comes from God as shown during the Coronation service, when: The Monarch is handed the sword (from off the Altar) the Archbishop saying:-

“With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the

Holy Church of God, help and defend all widows and orphans, restore the things that I gone to decay, maintain the things that are restored, punished and reform what is a mess, and confirm what is in good order; that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue; and so faithfully serve out Lord Jesus Christ in this life, that you may reign forever with In in the life which is to come”.

The above charge is self explanatory and here then is the Sword of Justice which must be applied for the protection of the Monarch’s realm. (It is of interest to note that no particular church is mentioned and this being so, whenever British influence and power has gone, so have all denominations). The application of all this is clearly illustrated in the Presentation of Regimental colours. Here the Regiment is lined up with the national flag and the colours bearing its battle honours placed on piled drums to their front. The consecration of these colours takes place as follows:—
Chaplain—General or Commanding Officer: To the Service of God and the hallowing of His Holy Name.

All: We dedicate ourselves afresh. (Note that in the protection of the realm they are in the service of God).

C.G. To the love of our Queen and country and to the welfare of mankind.

All: We dedicate ourselves afresh. (Protection of the realm is without doubt to the welfare of mankind).

C.G. To the maintenance of honour and the sanctity of man’s plighted word.

All: We dedicate ourselves afresh. (Treaties are to mean something).

C.G. To the protection of all those who pass to and fro on their lawful occasions.

All: We dedicate ourselves afresh. (The British navy carried this out for centuries).

C.G. To the preservation of order and good government.

All: We dedicate ourselves afresh. (No comment is needed here).

C.G. To the hallowed memory of our comrades, whose courage and endurance add undying lustre to our emblems.

All: We dedicate our colours. (It is accepted that those gone before earned the battle honours and must be respected and emulated. It

is the same with us, we did not build our magnificent heritage but we must protect it and emulate our remarkable forbears).

C.G. In continual remembrance of our solemn oath and in token of our resolve faithfully and truly to keep it to the end.

All: We dedicate our colours.

The soldiers were told to see their duty in this light by the Monarch and/or advisors and this faith has kept Britain in the forefront of opposition to dictators and warlords.

APPLICATION TODAY

The most important practical role played by the Monarchy today is to provide a focal point of loyalty for the nation. That a focal point is needed is a fact of life, which undoubtedly originates in natural parental authority to which every child is subject in a normal home. From this comes the concept of a “parent image”. The words homeland and fatherland spring from this idea. Modern examples of national “parent images” can be seen in the way in which public relations men built up Stalin as the “Father of the Soviet“, likewise with De Gaulle in France, and American Presidents are publicised in the same way. However in the British world, the parent image is consistent and continuing and exists in the Monarch.

The major constitutional role of the Monarchy is to provide a division of power, and to put and keep politicians in their proper place as the peoples rulers, but also as the peoples servants.

When financial speculators threatened the stability of the world’s major currencies in 1967, the Queen declared a Bank Holiday (which had never been done before) which closed the Gold Market and enabled the currencies to be stabilized. The Monarch was the only person in this case with the authority to do this.

The death of Australia’s Prime Minister, Mr. Harold Holt, in December 1967, provided an example of the smooth working of a constitutional Monarchy. Mr. McEwen was brought to the Prime Ministership until the time when the Liberal Party elected another

leader. The contrast between this changeover and the situation in the U.S.A. after the assassination of President John Kennedy is worthy of note.

ALTERNATIVE TO MONARCHY

The only democratic alternative to a Monarchy is a Republic. Power in a Republic is far more concentrated than in a Monarchy. This fact leads to instability, as the election of a President can be a divisive act. For it can be that 51% of the people vote for him, and are willing for him to exercise the power; but 49% of the people do not wish this. When elected, a President must support those who promoted him, which means that he is a continuing divisive influence on his nation unless he obtains sufficient powers to totally quell all opposition — hence the tendency towards Caesarism in all Republics. It will also be realised that a Republic built on “the will of the people” must become willful and selfish; whilst a Monarchy which claims it exists only by the will of God, must, by its very nature, point to a higher cause, that of God and duty.

CONCLUSION

Such is the British Monarchical system which fills all the needs of natural humanity such as Parent Image, family life, liberty, dignity, the discipline of moral law, and the peace of a balanced community in which learning can flourish. It has withstood attack from without and within, and will survive and endure if all are personally loyal to the Monarchy and all it stands for.

The British Monarchical system is the highest pinnacle of achievement in the ordering of human affairs and without doubt it is our destiny to protect and nurture it and keep it as an example to all the world.
