

# #1515 Set the Sun on the British Empire (Queen Elizabeth II)

[00:00:00] Intro 9-21-22

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** Welcome to this episode of the award winning *Best of the Left Podcast*, in which we should take a look at the history and legacy of British imperialism and slavery through the lens of the divergent views on the death of queen Elizabeth II, and the growing movement of former colonies to achieve full independence.

Clips today are from the Daily Show, Democracy Now!, Sky News, the *Africa Diaspora News Channel*, *Roland Martin Unfiltered*, *TRT World*, and *It's Been a Minute*, with an additional members-only clip from Democracy Now!. And stay tuned to the end for my take on the definitively correct way to judge some of the more grizzly and monstrous times and events of human history.

## Why Must Everyone Mourn The Queen\_s Passing\_ \_ Between The Scenes - The Daily Show - Air Date 9-17-22

**TREVOR NOAH - HOST, THE DAILY SHOW:** You know, this whole queen saga has been an interesting insight into how people see the world around them, because -- obviously the queen passed away at the age of 96, she's had a good run. She did, no, she did; 96. Like you've lived your best life. My grandma passed away at 96. It was the same thing. As a family, obviously you're [00:01:00] sad to let somebody go, but it's 96, you celebrate that the person's lived the life. They've lived it fully, you know?

And, what was fascinating to me was seeing how angry people were that not everybody had the same opinion of the queen and how much they wanted other people to have that in a really ignorant way, to be honest, you know? 'Cause the queen dies. Obviously there will be people who mourn. There's people who mourn because she symbolizes a nation. There'll be people who mourn because they've grown up with her their entire lives. There'll be people who mourn because she's a family member, she's a grandmother, she's a mother, whatever. We get that.

But I'm shocked that people want others who were under the British empire to share the same level of mourning. Why would they do it? People are like, show some respect! This person died and people are like, so what? Like everywhere -- you know what I mean -- all over Africa, all over India, all -- there's so many places in the world where people go, "Yeah, but do you know what the British empire [00:02:00] did *to us*?" And people are like, "But that's somebody's grandmother. Just show some reverence."

And I actually found it interesting because -- you know what it is most of the time? It's not about respecting the person or what they've done or what they have. In a weird way, it's that people have this strange reverence for fame, you know? It's that a famous person has gone. And so everyone must respect them, regardless of what the famous person's famous for. You can't say to people who have been oppressed by the British crown that they should not in some way, shape or form, say whatever they want.

First of all, the person's gone, right? It's not like they're crying wherever they are. They're gone. That's the first thing to admit. And secondly, you can't expect people to show respect for something that never respected them. [applause] You can't expect people to now buy into this idea that never respected or bought into theirs. I mean, the crown went from country to -- South Africa. We grew up as British subjects in that way. Like we still had that impression. In other countries, it was even more pronounced. you go all around the [00:03:00] Caribbean, you go to India, you go all over the world really, everywhere the empire was. And people go, "Oh, this is why we still have to dress this way. We were told that our clothes were primitive or tribal by the British, you know, our languages were squashed. Our cultures were discarded." That wasn't respect. And people are like, "Yeah, but, but she's a grandmother." And I go like, "Yeah, but, but the people who were subjects were also grandmothers. You know what I mean? [applause] My grandmother literally used to tell me stories about the queen. Like my grandmother also died at the age of 96. You know, my grandmother lived a very different life to the queen. And it's not about comparing the people. It's just saying that she had a different perspective of the queen.

Funny enough, my grand never like hated the queen or anything. I find most African parents, and some in parts of Asia where the empire ruled, they were more shocked than anything else. Older people of color were more just like, "What? The queen is...? Wow." This is a moment in time that [00:04:00] reminds them of so much and where the country was and how they were in Kenya, South Africa, parts of Southern Africa. You can feel that people, they

still understand that it's a momentous occasion, but you can't expect them to mourn it in the same way.

And I think that's something we struggle with in life sometimes is understanding that our relationship with somebody may not be the relationship that other people had with that person. And that's fine. You can say, "Hey, this is my queen. I still love what she represents." That's your queen. But don't expect everybody else to now adopt -- 'cause basically what you're doing is now recolonizing the people and being like, "This is who you support. This is who you cheer for." No. You do your mourning. And they'll live their lives. Long live the king.

## **"Racism Is as British as a Cup of Tea": Kehinde Andrews Says Many Black Brits Don't Mourn the Queen - Democracy Now - Air Date 9-19-22**

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** We're joined by Kehinde Andrews, professor of Black Studies in the School of Social Sciences at Birmingham City University. He's actually the U.K.'s [00:05:00] first professor of Black Studies, author of *The New Age of Empire: How Racism and Colonialism Still Rule the World*. His recent piece for Politico headlined "I Don't Mourn the Queen."

In it, he writes, "My paternal grandmother was born in colonial Jamaica in 1914 and was raised on the fairy tales of the Mother Country and nobility of British royalty. She migrated to Britain in search of better opportunities in the mid 50s as part of the so called Windrush generation, who helped to rebuild the nation after the Second World War. A picture of the Queen had pride of place in her front room and were she alive today, she would have wholeheartedly joined in the collective grief. But my father grew up in the 1960s, facing the cold realities of British racism, and could never feel any warmth to either the nation or its figure head."

Professor Kehinde Andrews, welcome to Democracy Now! Instead of me reading your words, why don't you tell us [00:06:00] that story and talk about the coverage of the queen and what the queen's passing means, not only for Britain but for the Commonwealth and the realms? Do you think this could mean the end of empire?

**KEHINDE ANDREWS:** I think you've captured a lot of that, with the Politico piece. And what is happening today is this collective grief of the country. And as a Black British person, it brings to mind W. E. B. Du Bois's idea of double consciousness, when he said that being Black and being American, sometimes they just clash so much that you feel alienated from the society. And seeing all this collective grief and this mourning and people queuing 24 hours with little kids so they can stare at what was likely an empty box, it just seems like the country has gone kind of collectively mad around this. It's something that we just don't have a connection to, for millions of us in this country, those of us who never saw the queen as somebody representing us, and actually saw the queen as somebody who [00:07:00] represented the very racism that we face on a daily basis.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** I thought it was very interesting how you talked about Black Brits and Black Americans, how here in the United States you're talking about seeing racism every day, on a daily basis, and in Britain, it's not only in Britain, but it is the empire, it is the Commonwealth, that's not so often seen. It was exported to the colonies.

**KEHINDE ANDREWS:** Yeah, I mean, the big difference between America and Britain is that Britain essentially did its racial violence off campus, if you like, so in the Caribbean, in India. There's been very few of us actually in the United Kingdom on the island, only 'til what we call the Windrush generation post-1948. So, whereas in America you have — you know, there's Black people in America before there was America. Racism is coded into all the laws. It's so obviously in the Constitution. In Britain, it's different, because we really have only been here in large numbers relatively recently. But the problems are exactly the same. I mean, British racism [00:08:00] and American racism are the same, right? Britain founded America. It was Britain that first took enslaved Africans to America. So it can seem like racism is different here, but it's actually not. It's exactly the same.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** Gold, tobacco, sugar, cotton. Queen Elizabeth I, you say, launched Britain's slave trade. Talk about these commodities and what they meant for the people where they were grown, those that brought that wealth to Britain that we're seeing transferred from one generation to the next in the royal family.

**KEHINDE ANDREWS:** Yeah. So, if we think what made Britain Britain, prior to the 16th century, before the British Empire and before Britain got involved in slavery, Britain was a small country in the North Atlantic, doesn't have many resources and wasn't really going anywhere. What made Britain take

off was its involvement in the slave trade. And the Royal African Company, which is the company founded to initially start enslaving Africans for the British Empire, was the company that enslaved more Africans than any [00:09:00] company in the world. Britain was the premier slave-trading nation. And in all the things if you think about what made Britain Britain, first it is gold, then it is silver, and it's then financialization and the stock market, etc. Then it's tobacco. And those were the things which powered Britain's development.

So, on one hand, you had Britain making massive strides, the Industrial Revolution, becoming this great nation at the top of the world. But then look at what happens to the people who had to do that. The Caribbean, for example, is a perfect example, where my family is from, were taken there in chains, made to produce all this wealth. Sugar was the first one that really pushed Britain forward. And then you look 200 years later. How is somebody like Jamaica doing? It's one of the poorest economies in the world. And that's not an accident. That's because the whole country and the economy were designed to drain money out and give it to Britain. And the best example of this is, when they ended slavery in 1838, eventually, the British government paid the largest payment ever, equivalent to about 100 billion pounds, if you look at GDP, to the slave owners, and the enslaved [00:10:00] got nothing and, in fact, had to work off their — had to work for four years 75% of the time as slaves to prove they were fit to be free. And we still see the legacy of that today.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** If you can talk about expressing dissent today in Britain, the whole issue of whether you can say you are against the monarchy, that you want it to end?

**KEHINDE ANDREWS:** Well, it's interesting. I'd say that I've spoken to probably about 20 journalists. I've done interviews like this all week. Not one of them has been with the British press. There has been wall-to-wall coverage of the funeral. I turn any TV channel on, it's just queen, queen, queen, queen, queen, and no dissent, no questioning the role, no questioning the future of the monarchy, none of this. It really has been a week of propaganda, which has come to a crescendo today, where absolutely everything is closed.

And you did report on some of the — you know, the way that protests are being [00:11:00] dealt with. I mean, honestly, if you just looked, stepped back from this and said, “Well, actually, how has this been treated?” it's not too far from fascism, actually. And it is — and people say it's not the right time now. When else would be the best time to question the role of the monarchy? When there is 70-year reign, a very [inaudible] ended, surely now is the perfect time to

wonder why on Earth we would have this monarchy, why on Earth we would represent 14 other countries in the world where the monarchy is the head of state. And even in Britain, this is an old institution — deeply racist, deeply classist, deeply patriarchal. It just needs to go. And this is the perfect time to discuss when it should end.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** If you could also address the issue of those who talk about the queen, like the conservative commentator Candace Owens speaking about British colonization of Africa on her show, The Daily Wire, earlier this month.

**CANDACE OWENS:** The real truth of the reason why people hate the queen has nothing to do with the colonization, has nothing to do — which, by [00:12:00] the way, just to be clear, the Brits invading Africa actually represents — and this is going to get me in trouble — but it was, if you look at how forward it brought the African colonies, it ended up being a net positive. Now, this is, of course, people — it's going to get me in trouble, because people somehow think that Africans were living happily ever after, and things were great, and then the horrible English, British descended upon and murdered everybody, and the French suddenly murdered everybody. And that just isn't the truth. Obviously, the African nations had slavery, just like the European nations had slavery.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** Professor Kehinde Andrews, if you could respond.

**KEHINDE ANDREWS:** Well, unfortunately, some people like to make money from being the Black face of White racism, and Candace Owens has a very good history of this. I mean, that is perfectly nonsensical view of the past.

Actually, when Britain came into — when Europe, in general, and Britain, in particular, came into Africa to enslave people, [00:13:00] Europe was behind, was far behind. In the 15th century, Europe was probably the only place in the world in the Dark Age and came into Africa. And one of the ways — indeed, the main way that Europe takes over is the slave trade. It is draining out Africans to get the commodities — gold, silver, tobacco, etc., etc. And then it enriches Europe so that Europe can colonize. I mean, colonization in Africa was actually [inaudible] for a reason. Most countries on the African continent were not directly colonized by European powers for more than 100 years, because it took centuries of draining out African people, a barbaric system of slavery, which never existed on the African continent, which totally and utterly destabilized Africa so that Europe could take over.

The idea that slavery and colonialism were somehow positive for Africa is, frankly, insane. I mean, just look at global [inaudible] . The poorest part of the world is the place — is the so-called sub-Saharan Africa. The place with the lowest life expectancy is so-called sub-Saharan Africa. Anybody with their eyes open, looking at this honestly, could not possibly think that Africa has benefited [00:14:00] from anything that Europe has done.

## **The royal family: Slavery, colonialism and race - Sky News - Air Date 6-23-22**

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** As of June, 2022, the British crown was still legally head of state in these 15 countries, all former British colonies or protectorates, but increasingly there have been calls for the British monarch to be removed as head of state.

**ANNOUNCER:** Ladies and gentlemen, their royal highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge have arrived.

Please stand.

**PROTESTER:** They shouldn't be welcomed as leaders of the country, as representatives of the head of state. How these two young white people now going to be here, saying we are going to kowtow to them, and we are going to bend, and bow, and kneel to them. Those days are done. The monarchy's are relic.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** In the Caribbean, some people want the royal family to provide reparations for their role in slavery. So what exactly are the monarchy's links to the slave trade?

**BROOK NEWMAN - HISTORIAN:** The royal family's [00:15:00] links to slavery began during the reign of queen Elizabeth I. The crown and the royal family was deeply involved in the slave trade and making money off the slave trade.

Charles II granted a charter to the Royal Adventurers, originally, and they were then reconstituted as the Royal African Company to deal directly in enslaved Africans and to sell them in the new world, but primarily to the colonies in the Caribbean and mainland north America.

**DR. MOHAMED IRFAN ALI - PRESIDENT OF GUYANA:** This was one of the greatest atrocities in human history, and those who suffered in this atrocity are persons from the region, a lot of persons from the Caribbean region and that suffering was not only immense, it was generational, and a lot of wealth was derived from the suffering, a lot of benefits was derived from the suffering.

**BROOK NEWMAN - HISTORIAN:** The brands that were used on the bodies of enslaved people featured the name of Monarch. So for example, the Duke of York, one of the brands that was used by the Royal African [00:16:00] Company with the letters DY, and this was actually instructed to be put onto the bodies of enslaved people. So they are making it very clear that the royal family is involved, that the royal family supports the slave trade, and that actually, because the royal family supports it, that this is a good investment. This is a safe investment. This was seen as the way to build an empire, but also as a way to convert africans to Christianity. That was the primary argument that was made at the time. So the crown saw itself as a civilizing Christianizing force that yes, they were profiting and yes, they were supplying laborers to the colonies, but they also saw themselves as on the right side because they were expanding and civilizing the world.

**ANNOUNCER:** The wise African chiefs have seen the tremendous changes in Nairobi, to which the princess herself referred in her speech.

**PRINCESS ELIZABETH:** The contrast we see today [00:17:00] is a striking tribute to the men and women of all races who have made it a great center of commerce and finance, the crossroads of east Africa, the capital of your colony, and the seat of the east Africa high commission.

**MARLON KAMEKA - ACTIVIST:** So of course that family has benefited from enslavement, and so has many institutions in this country, whether it's the railways, the roads, the banks—HSBC, Barclays. And the enslavers were compensated when slavery was ended, and the compensation didn't stop getting paid until 2015. So people like me were paying actually for compensation for the enslavers, but the people who were enslaved were never compensated. We never even got an apology.

**BROOK NEWMAN - HISTORIAN:** By the 1790s there is a growing groundswell of support for abolition in Britain, but the royal family is deeply opposed to the abolition of the slave trade. George III did not come [00:18:00] out publicly and say that he was against the slave trade, but he made it very clear to his ministers that he would not support abolition as a cabinet measure.

So this was something that the public knew, that the royal family was against abolition, that the royal family believed that the slave trade was crucial to maintaining Britain's wealth and power and its imperial interests.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** Repairing that damage is something that both prince Charles and prince William have tried to do in recent years with some of the strongest words yet from members of the royal family when it comes to links to slavery, and some have seen it as a real shift in attitudes.

**PRINCE CHARLES:** From the darkest days of our past and the appalling atrocity of slavery, which forever stains our history.

**PRINCE WILLIAM:** I want to express my profound sorrow. Slavery was abhorrent and it should never have happened.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** Expressing [00:19:00] sorrow, but not saying sorry.

In Canada, the anger that's been directed at the royal family has all been to do with the treatment of indigenous people while the country was still part of the British empire. In 2021 statues of both queen Victoria and queen Elizabeth II were toppled on Canada Day. It followed the shocking discovery of unmarked graves at school sites where indigenous children had been forcibly taken from their families during the reign of queen Victoria.

**JONATHAN LAFFERTY - YELLOWKNIFE RESIDENT:** My parents, my grandparents, my aunt uncles, and a bunch of them, they all went to residential schools.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** Still scarred, the community?

**JONATHAN LAFFERTY - YELLOWKNIFE RESIDENT:** Still scarred. So it happened to our parents and grandparents, but it's still affecting us.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** Indigenous communities in Australia and New Zealand have also taken issue with the royal family.

Indigenous [00:20:00] Australians say that Britain never acknowledged that Australia was owned by Aboriginal people before it was colonized by the British in 1780.

**PROF. LYNETTE RUSSELL:** The colonization of both countries included violence, it included disease and dispossession, and it certainly included massacre. There's a whole range of things that happened to Aboriginal people, a number of communities, and in fact, I would suggest most were impacted quite profoundly by having their culture either denied to them or their language denied to them.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** In New Zealand, indigenous people have protested the Treaty of Waitangi, a founding agreement between the British crown and a number of Māori chiefs. The agreement contained protections and land rights for Māori people that were never honored. In 1995, the queen delivered an apology from the British crown to New Zealand's biggest Māori tribe for the seizure of Māori lands by British [00:21:00] colonizers, and in 2005, a topless protestor wrote, "get your colonial shame off my breasts," as prince Charles toured the country.

In recent times, the crown has sought to distance itself from colonialism and racial prejudice.

**MEGHAN MARKLE:** May I just say that while I'm here with my husband as a member of the royal family, I want you to know that for me, I am here with you as a mother, as a wife, as a woman, as a woman of color, and as your sister.

**BROOK NEWMAN - HISTORIAN:** The one time someone from outside, the descendant of enslaved people married into the royal family, she was not treated well, and alleged that she had been horribly treated and ended up fleeing the royal family and is no longer an [00:22:00] active royal.

**REPORTER:** Is the royal family a racist family, sir?

**PRINCE WILLIAM:** We're very much not a racist family.

**BROOK NEWMAN - HISTORIAN:** The image of the monarchy in some ways is more important than anything, and by all respects, they have failed, especially recently with the treatment of Meghan Markle, the royal tours, the backlash against the crown. None of it is good and none of it bodes well for the survival of this institution, especially among the younger generations.

**MARLON KAMEKA - ACTIVIST:** And the Meghan Markle case is very interesting, cuz she's a light skin mixed race woman. She's almost white passing to a certain extent. She's much lighter than me. So she has certain privileges that dark skin Black women probably wouldn't have. Yet, she was still attacked by

the mainstream media, by social media trolls, by commentators, by people inside the royal family. So that showed a spotlight on this country that we're not as progressive as we think we are, that we still having issue of race in this country, and I think a lot of times we think the race issue is something that's just focused on America, which is why the uprising 2020, I [00:23:00] think, caught a lot of people of guard, because they're like, "oh, racism just happens in America. It's just George Floyd," but we never wanna look at the racism that actually is taking place in this country.

**RHIANNON MILLS - HOST:** The royals still have a lot of support overseas, but in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, there has been a shift, and we could now see countries following in the footsteps of Barbados by removing the British Monarch as head of state.

**BROOK NEWMAN - HISTORIAN:** There is really no support for maintaining some of these colonial ties in the 21st century, once the queen is gone. They're already many colonies, former colonies, leaving now while the queen is still alive. I think that is really the most sobering aspect of this that Barbados has already left, Jamaica is signaling that it will leave. If these former colonies are already now trying to sever ties and become truly independent, what is to stop other members of the Commonwealth?

**PROTESTER:** Is that okay for you, like having the one family, [00:24:00] royalty, where they're given all the wealth, all of the...? That's not okay for us.

**MARLON KAMEKA - ACTIVIST:** So as a Black person, I just can't relate to a institution that was been founded on colonialism, imperialism and enslavement of my ancestors. Their imagery—imagery that's been used as propaganda—cuz they are the new faces of colonialism, they are the new faces of imperialism, they are the new faces of social hierarchy and class. I think a lot of people are buying into that without actually analyzing what these new generations of royal family act actually represent.

**PROF. LYNETTE RUSSELL:** They are the figurehead for the colonial process, but they are not the people that did the colonialism. I belong to the indigenous community and many, many people that I know are very supportive of the monarchy and many would prefer that we were a Republic. We shouldn't really anticipate that there would be a homogenous Aboriginal view of any, any event, and particularly something as important as say, becoming a Republic.

# Julius Malema Tells Africans Why They Shouldn't Mourn Queen Elizabeth II - African Diaspora News Channel - Air Date 9-14-22

**WONGEL ZELALEM - HOST:** As you all know, the world is mourning Queen [00:25:00] Elizabeth II, but there are people that refuse to mourn her death.

**JULIUS MALEMA:** It will be wrong of me to leave this mic without saying, to Britain and everybody else who care, we do not mourn the death of a colonizer and a murderer who came and killed our people and she's wearing proudly a stolen goods on her head. We have nothing to do with the queen. Today, people Tweet, Hey, we mourn, Hey, we mourn the queen. But when Helen Zile tweeted and said that not everything is bad about colonialism, you all said, Helen Zile is a racist, how can she praise colonialism by mourning and praising the queen? You are celebrating colonialism. You are not different from Helen Zile. We were not [00:26:00] colonized by the land called Britain. We were colonized by the leadership of Britain that killed our people. So we must not be asked to do wrong things here. We are very clear. The queen does not represent anything good.

**WONGEL ZELALEM - HOST:** The EFF statement that was released after the announcement of her death.... they wrote this on September 8th, 2022... "The EFF statement on the death of Queen Elizabeth. The Economic Freedom Fighters notes the death of Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor, the Queen of the United Kingdom and the ceremonial head of state of several countries that were colonized by the United Kingdom. Elizabeth ascended to the throne in 1952, reigning for 70 years as a head of institution built up sustained and living of a brutal legacy of dehumanization of millions of people across the [00:27:00] world. We do not mourn the death of Elizabeth because to us her death is a reminder of a very tragic period in this country and Africa's history. Britain, under the leadership of the Royal family, took over control of this territory that would become South Africa in 1795 from Batavian control and took permanent control of the territory in 1806. From that moment onwards, native people of this land have never known peace nor have they ever enjoyed the fruits of the riches of this land, riches which were and still are utilized for the enrichment of the British Royal family and those who look like them. From 1811 when Sir John Cradock declared war against amaXhosa in the Zuurveld in what is now known as the Eastern Cape up until 1906, when the British crushed the

Bambatha Rebellion, our interaction with Britain [00:28:00] under the leadership of the British Royal family has been one of pain and suffering of death and dispossession and of dehumanization of African people.

We remember how Nxele died in the aftermath of the fifth frontier war, how King Hintsa was killed like a dog on the 11th of May, 1835 during the sixth frontier war, and had his body mutilated and his head taken to Britain as a trophy. It was also the British Royal family that sanctioned the actions of Cecil John Rhodes who plundered this country, Zimbabwe, and Zambia.

It was the British Royal family that benefited from the brutal mutilation of people of Kenya, whose variant resistance to British colonialism invited vile response from Britain. In Kenya. Britain built concentration camps and suppressed with such inhumane brutality the Mau Mau Rebellion, killing Dedan Kimathi on the [00:29:00] 18th of February, 1957, while Elizabeth was already queen. This family plundered India via the East India Company. It took over control and oppressed the people of the Caribbean islands. Their thirst for riches led to the famine that caused millions of people to die in Bengal and their racism led to the genocide of the Aboriginal people in Australia. Elizabeth Windsor, during her lifetime, never acknowledged these crimes that Britain and her family in particular perpetrated across the world.

In fact, she was a proud flag bearer of these atrocities because during her reign, when the people of Yemen rose to protest against British colonialism in 1963, Elizabeth ordered a brutal suppression of that uprising. During her 70 year reign as queen, she never once acknowledged the atrocities that her family inflicted on native people that Britain invaded across the world.

She willingly benefited from the [00:30:00] wealth that was attained from the exploitation and murder of millions of people across the world. The British Royal family stands on the shoulders of millions of slaves who were shipped away from the continent to serve their interests of racist, White capital accumulation, at the center of which lies the British Royal family.

If there's really life and justice after death, may Elizabeth and her ancestors get what they deserve.

Issued by the Economic Freedom Fighters."

**Jeff Bezos DRAGGED On Twitter For Criticising Uju Anya's Queen Elizabeth**

# Tweet - Roland Martin Unfiltered - Air

## Date 9-11-22

**ROLAND MARTIN - HOST:** If you look at social media you have seen all different types of responses to the death of Queen Elizabeth II, who died at 96 years old. Woman's gotten a lot of attention is this professor from Carnegie Mellon, Uju Anya. Uh, and she, this was her initial tweet. She said, "I heard the chief monarch of a thieving, raping, genocidal empire is finally dying. May her pain be excruciating". [00:31:00] Ouch. Carnegie Mellon did, uh, offer a response. This was, this was what they posted. Uh, they said "We do not condone the offensive and objectional messages posted by Uju Anya today on her personal social media account. Free expression is core to the mission of higher education. However, the views she shared absolutely do not represent the values of the institution nor the standards of discourse we seek to foster". Um, so here's what's interesting. And this was a tweet here that Uju retweeted. "Reminder that Queen Elizabeth is not a remnant of colonial times. She was an active participant in colonialism. She actively tried to stop independence movements and she tried to keep newly independent colonies from leaving the Commonwealth. The evil she did was enough". She talking about this, this article here, this woman was, uh, it says she was "tortured with axes during Kenya's struggle for independence from British colonial [00:32:00] rule. As Britain celebrates the platinum Jubilee of its Monarch, this old fighter wants to send her a message. Let Elizabeth bring what belongs to me". Let's go to our panel here. It's very interesting when people, they have this view that when someone passes, in the first 24, 48 hours, first week, you can't say anything bad about 'em. You hear the phrase, you can't say anything good about somebody don't say anything at all. Uh, I saw a video, D. L. Hughley, he said that, uh, people should have compassion when someone dies. But I saw these pieces. I saw this back and forth. And these tweets from Uju Anya, she talked about how her family was devastated, how they were massacred. And in fact, that was an interview that she gave and she, uh, said this to the person in the interview. She says, 'I am the child and sibling of survivors of genocide. From [00:33:00] 1967 to 1970, more than 3 million civilians were massacred when the Igbo people of Nigeria tried to form the independent country".

And I said this, and I think it's important for us to say it. So people are angry that individuals who dealt with genocide because of British colonial rule are not celebrating her life the way they want them to. Yet again, people gladly condemned Fidel Castro. And so this goes to what I always talk about, the person that controls the narrative controls how we think and feel. And frankly, the view in this country is don't say anything bad about Queen Elizabeth II

because she was a great, wonderful, happy person and ignore colonial rule and its impact on indigenous people.

**COMMENTATOR 1:** Well, you know, [00:34:00] Roland, this is one of the reasons why the Black Star Media Network is so important. And last night I did a three hour broadcast dealing with, um, Queen Elizabeth II, British colonialism, and slavery. Because I watched a lot of the coverage all day long on MSNBC, that's basically what I had it on all day, watching MSNBC, and they didn't deal with any of that history. Okay. The opulence, when they showed all the footage and going back decades and they showed the gold carriage, the gold carriage drawn by 30 horses and they show all the people in their regalia and things like this, they don't talk about the British colonialism that exploited people, tortured people, enslaved people, to create the billions of dollars. So you see that opulence displayed. Now within the last, maybe three hours, *New York Times* just published an article "In Africa, the queen's death renews a debate about the [00:35:00] legacy of the British Empire" and it deals with Kenya and the Mau Mau Rebellion. Okay. When you go, uh, I did a lot of research yesterday on Queen Elizabeth, but also on Great Britain. When you look at how many African countries they got from the Berlin Conference of 1884, okay, and you look, they got The Gambia, Nigeria where that sister's from, okay. They got Ghana, Sierra Leone, they got Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa. Okay. When, so when you go talk to those African people who have relatives who were killed by the British Empire, they have no love for her. They have no love for King Charles III. But May 19th, 2022, when Meghan Markle married Prince Harry, I did a two hour broadcast and I said, Black people watched the Royal wedding and got teary eyed, but you [00:36:00] forgot about the transatlantic slave trade because I said she married into, this is no disrespect to Meghan Markle, I said, she married into a family of colonizers. They're not colonizers because they're White, they're colonizers because Britain colonized one fifth of the world population a hundred years ago. One fifth of the world population was under British rule and they didn't rule with kindness. They didn't rule with a smile. They ruled with brutality. So I don't wish anything ill on Queen Elizabeth II. I sure as hell don't miss her. And I hope some more join her, seriously. Go study the history of the British Royal Empire and how they got what they got. These are some demons. These are colonizers. That's, I understand I may have expressed it differently than Uju Anya, but I totally understand what she's saying. Cause those were her relatives who were massacred by these White supremists, by these colonizers, who then wanna put a handshake and a smile. They won't even have a conversation about reparations with [00:37:00] Jamaica. Jamaica's about to suit 'em for reparations. They wouldn't even have a conversation about reparations. So I have no love loss for them.

**ROLAND MARTIN - HOST:** So, Kelly, what you're now seeing, I saw a story on CNN, I saw some other stories that you're seeing now reporters, now, you know, the next day, follow what people are saying and have to do these stories, because you just kind of can't ignore it. Well, you can, but it's a little hard when now, uh, it is more of a democratic situation where the media isn't the gatekeepers and now people can actually drive independent media with social media. Uh, so they're not talking about it. The public still can.

**COMMENTATOR 2:** I think it's one of the many benefits that we take for granted when it comes to social media and that is, like you said, the gate keeping of information by mainstream media is no longer. We can actually seek out real information. The truth, if you will, about pretty [00:38:00] much anything we want to find out when it comes to the death of Queen Elizabeth, it is interesting to me how, like my timeline has been split. You have the people who love talking about, you know, the Royals and all the glitz and the glam, and, you know, they're mourning her death. But on the other side, similar to the professors, do you see what her and her family have destroyed over the course of 70 years and even beyond that on both ends of the timeline? I think you cannot take away the fact that whenever you are in power to this degree, you can be a nice person individually, but at the end of the day, you got that power by being just demonic, such as Michael said. I didn't wanna say that word, but it really is several crimes against humanity, several [00:39:00] unethical decisions, several evil decisions that brought about this monarchy, this level of power. So I understand people's pain and to some extent, celebration of her passing, because it marks the end of an era and considering how her success or her son is not necessarily nearly as favored as she has been, I'm curious to see just how strong the Commonwealth is going to be after the funeralization of her and him being crowned and all those things. I'm curious to see how he is going to try and keep it all together, if it's even possible in this day and age, because again, we have the information necessary to research and to, frankly, rebel against this properly because we know what happened. We know how they got their wealth and people want their things back. [00:40:00] They want their diamonds back. They want their wealth back. They want their prestige and their dignity back, and people are going to fight for that. Countries are going to fight for that. So I'm curious to see what's gonna happen past these, you know, this mourning period, regardless of how you mourn or celebrate her passing. It's just gonna be interesting to see.

## **Slavery, Colonisation and the Crown - TRT World**

**NARRATOR:** In 2022, her majesty queen Elizabeth II became the first British Monarch to celebrate platinum Jubilee. The celebrations took place over four day bank holiday, millions of Brits partook in street parties and people around the world joining among celebrations, but is celebrating the British Monarch count as fun or does it normalize the monarchy's long history of colonialism? And is it a celebration of British imperialism? Here are four ways in which the British royal family has benefited from colonialism.

They've historically benefited from the enslavement of human beings. In 1562, John Hawkins was the first Englishman to include African people in his cargo. He traded these people for ginger and sugar. On his [00:41:00] next voyage in 1564, queen Elizabeth I funded a vessel for his journey. The British East India company was formed in 1600 to exploit trade with Southeast Asia. They did that by colonizing land and exploiting people through the transatlantic slave trade. The figure who signed the Royal charter allowing this all to happen was also Elizabeth I. Between 1690 and 1807 and estimated 6 million Africans were transported from Africa to the Americas on British Anglo-American ships. The royal family and the British parliament protected the trade. After Elizabeth I's death, the Royal African Company was established in 1660 by the Duke of York. The company transported more than 187,000 slaves who were often branded DY for the Duke of York.

It's difficult to say how much the royals benefited from slavery, but many say it funded the entire British treasury, and it's safe to say that much of the Monarch significance, power, and wealth stems from the enslavement of Africans. Lucy Worsley, the Chief Curator of Historic Royal Palaces says that all royal palaces from the 17th century have an [00:42:00] element of money which is derived from slavery, including Kensington Palace and Hampton Court. The royal family was built on a legacy of stolen land, goods, and atrocities. Queen Elizabeth II's largest diamond, the Koh-i-Noor, was stolen from a 10 year old prince in India, along with his land in the 19th century. It was transferred to queen Mary in 1911 and was handed down to the current queen. Both India and Pakistan have asked for the diamond's return, but it's still very much owned by the crown.

In India, between the 1700s and mid 20th century, an estimated \$45 trillion was stolen by the British under the vestiges of the crown. Famines, which occurred as a result of Britain's non-intervention policy, led to the death of more than 13 million Indians. In 1947, Lord Mountbatten, a Royal and the Viceroy of India, decided he wanted to get Britain out of India quickly. The decision to carve up a country led to 15 million people being displaced, and between 1 and 2 million people dying. Of course, this is just India. At its peak, Britain had colonized

25% of the world's surface. From the Mau Mau [00:43:00] massacre in Kenya to concentration camps in South Africa, Britain under the vestiges of the crown, has a long and bloody history of colonial atrocities, and the royals have historically been at the center of them.

The prestige of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is an organization of 52 independent member states. What it actually is, is a collection of former British colonies and Rwanda and Mozambique. The Commonwealth originated after World War II, when much of India and Africa was becoming independent. The Commonwealth claims that is an association of sovereign nations working towards shared goals of prosperity, democracy, and peace, but critics say that the association promotes new colonialism through free trade agreements, which favor more developed economies. British companies own more than \$1 trillion of Africa's key resources. The queen is ahead of the Commonwealth and Charles has been appointed as successor, which allows the British monarchy to remain in a position of international privilege and go on towards of Commonwealth countries, but that's not all. In the Caribbean, 14 nations are trying to claim reparations from Britain for four centuries of slavery, and Britain is using the Commonwealth [00:44:00] jurisdiction to block the claim.

The queen is the head of state. Most former colonies became republics, but 15 former colonies remain constitutional monarchies with Elizabeth II as head of state. Even though the position is ceremonial and she has no real power, the title is an ongoing symbol of colonial authority, especially when the British crown planted and killed indigenous people in some of these countries, from Jamaica to Australia and Canada. And some of these communities are still reeling from the impact of colonialism.

In 2021 Barbados removed the queen is head of state, and Jamaica's announced that it will follow. No apology, no reparations. In 2018 prince Todd's called Britain's role in the slave trade and atrocity. In 2022, prince William said that slavery stains our history on a tour in Jamaica. The British government has apologized for isolated incidents of torture during the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya, but critics say that it's not enough, that the queen herself and the royal family have not come forward to acknowledge their family's historic role in slavery and colonization.

In fact, the queen aide has been prince Philip was known for his racist gaffs, often made well on tours to the [00:45:00] Commonwealth. Many former colonies have talked about wanting reparations, but none have been forthcoming. In fact, the only reparations that Britain has willingly paid, haven't been to the formerly enslaved, but rather to slave owners. Britain paid £20

million in 1834, a debt that British taxpayers only finished paying in 2050. Are the celebrations of the royals just a normalization of a bloody history of slavery and colonization?

## **Who needs the monarchy Plus, why gray floors and barn doors are everywhere - It's Been a Minute - Air Date 8-16-22**

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** We heard from listeners across a whole spectrum. Some of you had fond memories of the queen.

**PEGGY:** A while ago, I decided to become an American citizen and I couldn't possibly give up my loyalty to the queen. So the day before I was going to be sworn in, I wrote her a letter saying what I was going to do and that I would cross my fingers and say rhubarb, rhubarb, so that I would stay loyal to her.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Other listeners who called in had more complicated feelings. [00:46:00]

**PRANAV:** Here are thoughts on the passing of the queen from a queen, a black queen. Quite frankly, someone who's draped in blood diamonds and literally sitting on the seat of a throne built by colonization and profit from the transatlantic slave trade. How can I do anything but sigh?

**BILLY:** At this moment, those of us who recognize the brutality and the exploitation of centuries of colonialism and slavery have been speaking up about the horrors to the British monarchy and state represent for millions of Asians, Africans, Irish, and others.

**SUSANNA:** Think about the centuries of British empire and all the harm that's been done all over the world, that some of the harm that she could have repaired, that she could have apologized for, the treasures that she could have [00:47:00] returned. And that King Charles now has a chance to.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Thank you to listeners Peggy, Pranav, Billy and Susanna for sharing your thoughts. And Shola, who is based in London, she had similar feelings about the media coverage of the Queen's death.

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** They just had to come out with the exaggerated epitaphs and the whitewashing of her legacy. And I recognize that at this time we have a nation that is mourning and a family that is mourning their loss. But what I cannot do at this time is look at the legacy of Queen Elizabeth II through rose-tinted glasses. It's not possible.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** When you say you heard these exaggerated whitewashed obits right away, what do you feel was whitewashed and deserved a more nuanced treatment?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** Oh, that's such an excellent question. And that's the question every single media outlet should be [00:48:00] asking. People could not handle the fact that their idea of respectability could not be upheld by people who felt that they'd been oppressed by the British empire and British government, both of which she headed.

And you heard the new prime minister of Britain, Liz Truss --

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Liz Truss.

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** -- in a speech, she said the queen is the reason Britain is great today. So I'm like, hold up. How can she be powerful and be the reason for your greatness, but be powerless and not be the reason for the atrocities committed in the name of queen and country?

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Right. So that brings us to this transition, this moment that we're in now. And King Charles III, how do those words sound to you? How does that title and the reality that Charles is now king, how does that land with you?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** I think on one part, I think, well, it's a natural succession, [00:49:00] he's meant to be the heir apparent. But on the other hand, I'm thinking this is 2022. What are we doing? Submitting ourselves to an institution of monarchy, where we are meant to be servants, you know, at working servitude, that we bowing our heads. I'm like, what the hell?

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** It sounds so outdated. Yes. It sounds antiquated.

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** I think: people, wake the heck up. What is going on here? That's my reaction. I would say to King Charles III, I recognize he is the successor. In our national anthem, we have God save the

queen. Now people are singing. God save the king. I'm like, well, hold up, people hold up. What about us? How about God save us too?

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** You are over there in London. So I just wanna get a sense, how is the British public reacting to Charles now taking the throne?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** We have definitely had protestors who are making it clear you can't just automatically ascend to the throne. [00:50:00] Where's the consent? We get that your mother has been on the throne for 70 years. How is there no conversation around, okay, public consent? What's the purpose of the monarchy today? And he automatically becomes king and takes on all of this economic and political power that's been amassed for centuries. But you will find members of the British public who are in mourning because for a lot of people, she is that grandmother, that great grandmother, you look at her and people separate her from the institution that she represents, when quite frankly she's one and the same. Right? And she was very clear that her life of service was through the institution and the institution.

She's gonna be buried on the 19th of September. And there's been wall-to-wall coverage that people are getting tired of that, because like, look, the rising cost of living crisis.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Oh yeah. The British economy is in shambles.

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** Thank you. [00:51:00] Look, we just got a new government. Somebody needs to be scrutinizing the hell out of them.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** So given the way you feel, and the fact that you're not alone in feeling this way about the monarchy and just aristocracy in general, could this moment be the beginning of the end for the monarchy?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** Again, time will tell. I think this moment would definitely be the beginning of more public outspoken discussions. And depending on the government that comes into power, moving the monarchy will be a hot divisive topic. And for those who want to get into power, they're going to play both ways. They're going to go, "What side will get me into Number 10?" And they will make it divisive.

But I think the reality for a lot of people is: enough already with the entrenched inequalities. Because again, when it comes to the British monarchy, you are looking at a class divide, a race divide, a privilege divide, a wealth divide. [00:52:00] And if all they're going to do is more of the same of what Queen Elizabeth II did, people are going to go, "Wow, that's a good job. I don't mind becoming king! Pay me so I can go to events, cut ribbons, shake hands, be driven in a nice limo, you know, all of that.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Yeah, isn't it just largely ceremonial now anyway?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** No, it's not. Oh!

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** See, I'm so American, right? Because I feel like we watch the royals over there with a lot of fascination, but we kind of follow their lives like they're the Real Housewives or something. It's not real.

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** I feel, you know, it is very real and the royal family have real political and economic power. There's just no doubt about it. I mean, people raise the point that the queen was able to secure for herself and her family exemption from sex discrimination laws, race discrimination laws. She was able to secure for herself that her private wealth could be hidden from public view. These are people with power. This [00:53:00] is an institution with power. When the British government at the time wanted to woo your then president Trump, what did they do? They rolled out the queen as their charm offensive, to play the diplomatic role. She is a political head of state. There is nothing ceremonial. They use words like "ceremonial" and "powerless" when it's time to hold them to account.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Wow.

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** But when it comes to benefiting, all of a sudden, oh, how powerful? Oh, she's --

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** It's funny how that works, right?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** I know. And you know what? What did I find the genius in the whole thing? It's how they have sold this narrative to the British public, that all of this is in their best interest. I'm like, how is this in

anybody's best interest but those in power, those at the top tier, of the elite class? I don't get it.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** Obviously it would be very divisive. But what would it take to do away with at least some of the power, if not the monarchy entirely?

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** [00:54:00] I think that what needs to happen would be pretty radical. And when I say radical, it is either the monarchy plays a pivotal role where it represents the many and not the few. And that means leading on real issues like reparation justice, reconciliation, standing in that gap when it comes to race inequality, in the gap, gender inequality, things like that. So that people understand that these are humanitarian issues. They're not political. Because when the Queen's household was seeking and lobby for all those exemptions, Ooh, that was not political. But the moment it comes to the rest of us, oh that's political and the family can't talk about it. That's total BS. You and I know that, right?

So it's the gaslighting. And the problem here as well is, especially when you look at how former colonies have responded the last few months, a few of them [00:55:00] removed the queen as the head of state. But then when we explain to people, when I explain to people that a Commonwealth, which they like to tell a lot about how wonderful, the queen is such a wonderful thing, you know, she presided over the Commonwealth, a family of nations. I'm like, are you kidding me? The Commonwealth is British empire renamed. That's what it is. Basically. There is nothing common about the wealth of the Commonwealth. You can't claim your ceremonial without political power when we see that you are non ceremonial, you do have political power, but you use it for your yourself. That's the problem.

**ELISE HU - GUEST HOST, IT'S BEEN A MINUTE:** A real opportunity for leadership though, if they did want to take more radical approach --

**DR. SHOLA MOS-SHOGBAMIMU:** Oh my goodness! A real opportunity! It would be fantastic. So for instance, for a lot of black communities, and African Caribbean nations and African nations that were former colonies. You know, the words, "I am sorry. I am sorry for the [00:56:00] atrocities, the genocide, the pillage, the rape, the violence wrought upon your people and your nations in the name of the Royal family and the country. I am sorry." The hardest word to say in the English language. They don't wanna do that, because they know: they say that, it'd be time to pay up, because reparations. Now is the time for it.

# Dismantle the Commonwealth Queen Elizabeth's Death Prompts Reckoning with Colonial Past in Africa - Democracy Now! - Air Date 9-12-22

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** I wanted to bring Professor Caroline Elkins into this conversation, your colleague at Harvard, with the African and African-American history department, author of *Legacy of Violence: A History of the British Empire*. You won the 2006 Pulitzer Prize for your book *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. Tell us that story and how — most of, of course, the reason that the reparations went to so many Kenyans, thousands of them, was because of their [00:57:00] activism, but because of your book, as well.

**CAROLINE ELKINS:** Well, thank you so much for having me today.

I think a few things here. First of all, the book itself, *Imperial Reckoning*, really picked up on where — what the literature — and I mean literature — told us. Mukoma's father, Nguigi wa Thiong'o, had written about this in literary form. Humanists are often one or two steps at least ahead of historians, but I was determined to tell the full story of these detention camps, that were set up on a massive scale. Nearly 1.5 million Kikuyu, or Africans, were detained in detention camps, or emergency villages, barbed-wire villages, as a way of suppressing Mau Mau. These documents were then — they denied at the time, first under Churchill and then his successors and finally Macmillan — they denied any wrongdoing, and when allegations did surface that had some credibility, they explained it as the fault of a one-off, [00:58:00] so-called bad apples.

Instead what we find is that when we piece this story back together again, that this was a story about systematic violence, torture, murder and massive cover-up. And the bottom line is that serious crimes happened on the queen's imperial watch. In fact, her picture hung in every detention camp in Kenya as detainees were beaten in order to exact their loyalty to the British crown.

And the question that remains now, that I think we're debating, in some ways, is: How much did she know, and what did knowing mean? Number one. And how do we reconcile this moment in time, particularly in Kenya, around her death? And I think it's here where, one, I think, first of all, we should honor those individuals, those whose families experienced this, Mukoma's and

others', to choose not to mourn. And certainly, based on the history we [00:59:00] know, it is their decision to do so and absolutely within their right to do so and quite justifiable.

At the same time, what I find very interesting is, getting back to Mukoma's point about current President Kenyatta, in fact, with many others, when this case happened at the High Court of London, five claimants, initially test claimants, sued the British government for systematic torture and violence in the detention camps in Kenya in the 1950s, and four years later, the British government settled the case, as you noted in your remarks. But for each of those five claimants that came to London, they each believed that they were appealing not to the British government, but to the queen. The person they wanted to see most was the queen.

And one of them, Wambugu Wa Nyingi, said in his statement, and I quote in my recent book, "If I could speak to the queen, this is what I would tell her." And he says that under her watch, British government tortured [him] , but that he did not hold her personally responsible. And so, when I step back and look at this, what I see as [01:00:00] some of her power is not only the extraction of wealth and land and the rest, but the fact that she herself, as her predecessors did, wrapped herself in empire, deflected from what was being carried out in her name, and beckoned colonial subjects, like Wambugu, to revere her. And to this day, many still do. And in some ways that's how we can explain how governments, like the current one in Kenya, are calling for four days of national mourning.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** So, when we look at the cost of the funeral alone, India's Economic Times says the funeral is expected to cost 6 billion pounds, not to mention the expenditures of the royal family over these decades. How much of that money comes from the pain and suffering of the people of Kenya? What were the resources in Kenya? Of course, most importantly, human [01:01:00] resources, but what was Britain extracting from Kenya?

**CAROLINE ELKINS:** This is an enormous question you touched on, Amy, and one that we're not going to settle in the context of our few minutes here, but I can tell you this. The British government — the moment the queen ascended, in February of 1952, the British government was reeling from the postwar effects, and its economy was in tatters. It decides that it is going to rebuild its economy and its position as part of the big three on the international global stage on the backs of its colonized people through a policy called imperial resurgence. And Kenya becomes an incredibly important part of this, with its

tea and coffee export economy, because Britain needed this money within its monetary policy — we don't need to get into the details about it — they needed this in order to bolster the pound sterling, pay back loans from the war, and rebuild its economy.

So there's no question whatsoever — I think I'm answering your [01:02:00] question in a slightly different way — but there's no question that during Queen Victoria's reign — Kenya would be one example, Malaya, with its rubber exports, Ghana, with its cocoa — that her government, her economy, her nation rebuilt itself on the backs of empire. And that, I think, we're fairly unequivocal about.

So, the question becomes today, in getting back to some of Mukoma's points, it's not just the mourning, but it's thinking about who is — and this, you'd be guaranteed this [inaudible], every single royal occasion, frankly, since Queen Victoria in the 19th century, and certainly under Queen Elizabeth, every royal occasion is an imperial one. So, not only will they be spending money, in some ways, in sort of an elliptical manner that comes from empire over the years, but they will also be holding out the symbols, the signs, the images of empire through medals and statues and the like, reinforcing imperial greatness. And that imperial greatness is inextricably linked to Britain's [01:03:00] monarchy.

**AMY GOODMAN - HOST, DEMOCRACY NOW:** Do you see reparations being a very real now and prominent issue as the queen dies and Charles becomes king?

**CAROLINE ELKINS:** Unquestionably. A few things. There was the case that you gestured to, the Mau Mau case, which I was involved in as an expert witness, but particularly in recent years, the King Charles III and the royal family have become well aware of global demands for a global British imperial reckoning, if you will, based upon the protests, based upon the petitions from formerly colonized people and those still living in Commonwealth realms. It is unquestionable, as well — we can debate all we want how much the queen knew at the time about what was going on. There is no debate whatsoever that this current king has the knowledge that serious crimes happened on his mother's imperial watch. And it's up to him at this point [01:04:00] to jettison, in some ways, the tradition that his mother held so dear. Revise — and going back to the speech that you played early in our program, where he also speaks to Britain's unique history of — and, quote-unquote, “unique history,” and I would add “of imperial benevolence,” that she cultivated and affirmed for 70 years. And he has to reconcile with that. He has to speak to these questions of

reparations. The alternative is to simply carry on, and that's only going to hasten the monarchy's demise. And that, I feel fairly confident in saying.

## Final comments on judging history and moral responsibility

**JAY TOMLINSON - HOST, BEST OF THE LEFT:** We've just heard clips today, starting with Trevor Noah on *The Daily Show* discussing the divergent responses to queen Elizabeth's death. *Democracy Now!* spoke with Kehinde Andrews about British racism and colonization. *Sky News* reported on the UK's history of colonialism and slavery. The *African Diaspora News Channel* read the statement from the African organization, Economic Freedom Fighter. *Roland Martin* [01:05:00] *Unfiltered* hosted a discussion about how the unflattering sides of Elizabeth's legacy have been mostly filtered out by the media. *TRT World* looked at the royal's hand and wealth accumulation in the UK's history of slavery and colonialism. And *It's Been a Minute* explained the whitewashing of the outdated monarchy, the real power they still hold, and why the path forward runs through genuine apologies and reparations.

That's what everyone heard, but members also heard a bonus clip from *Democracy Now!* diving in a bit deeper on the British gulags set up in Kenya in response to a rebellion. To hear that and have all of our bonus contents delivered seamlessly to the new members-only podcast feed that you'll receive, sign up to support the show at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support) or shoot me an email requesting a financial hardship membership, because we don't let a lack of funds stand in the way of hearing more information.

And now, I just have some thoughts on the debate over [01:06:00] presentism. This concept got juiced a little bit this week because Bill Maher talked about it, but it's really been in the background of a lot of discussions we've been having for years now, as we've been debating how to understand our history. Generally, this has been over the legacy of slavery in the US, but the debate maps pretty well onto the UK's specific history of slavery and colonialism, so it's fitting for today.

Here's how the argument generally breaks down. People like us say that things like colonialism and slavery are bad now, obviously, and were bad in the past. Other people, and this could be anyone from the Bill Mahers of the world who enjoy being curmudgeonly contrarians to actual white supremacists or Neo Confederates looking to bolster their bigotry or at the very least their skewed

version of history with some [01:07:00] seemingly legitimate logical argumentation.

These people will make the counterargument that although these systems are generally seen as bad now, they were not always seen that way. Therefore, the existence of such systems should not be criticized overly harshly. "To judge these systems and the people who instituted and maintained them would be to commit the logical fallacy of presentism," these people will say. We are applying modern morality to the past, which only serves to distort our understanding of history, not clarify it. That's the main claim.

But then, people like us will reply that this argument sits on a foundation of moral relativism as though actual morality changes over time, and it would've been impossible to see the immorality of slavery and colonialism during their own historical [01:08:00] periods. Besides, we will also point out, this argument is really just a way of excusing, bad behavior to avoid having to apologize, make amends, or pay reparations. So in essence, it's an argument that serves powerful. Not surprising, there are a lot of those. Plus, not to mention, it also allows the legacy of those past injustices to be ignored so that no modern person today need to confront how they may have benefited from an injustice they had no personal say in, which makes people feel sad.

And on the note of morals changing over time, we would add that there were always abolitionists and anti imperialists in those historical societies, giving lie to the idea that at least an approximation of our modern version of morality was unseeable in the past.

So if humanity could have theoretically understood the immorality of slavery, but didn't by and large, then was it [01:09:00] immoral to work within that system at the. In essence, the question is, "is it moral, by definition, to do something because everyone or nearly everyone else is doing it?" And I would guess that most people would reflexively answer no to that question. No, something does not become moral just because lots of people do it, or even because it is enshrined in law. So although slavery and colonialism were social, political, and legal norms, that didn't make them magically ethical.

However, something kind of slippery happens to the idea of morality when something immoral is also normal. An immoral action taken by the individual living in the society in which that action is commonplace carries less moral responsibility than an action that is widely seen as immoral by society. For a quick definition of moral responsibility and those who [01:10:00] have it, from Wikipedia, "moral responsibility is the status of morally deserving praise,

blame, reward, or punishment for an act or omission in accordance with one's moral obligations." And who has moral responsibility? Continuing, "philosophers refer to people who have moral responsibility for an action as moral agents. Agents have the capability to reflect upon their situation, to form intentions about how they will act, and then to carry out that action."

So, to differentiate between that which is moral and moral responsibility, I could say that upholding a system of racial segregation is universally immoral, but the moral responsibility applied to a person, a moral agent, depends on other factors, like whether or not the society you live in has made racial segregation a social, political, and legal norm. So what I would argue is that people in history were moral [01:11:00] agents, but that the structures of society impede each individual's ability to reflect deeply on their situation, form thoughtful intentions about how they will act, and then take those actions based solely on their individual moral compass. We are capable of rationality, but we are not always rational. We are individuals with agency. But we are also social creatures who take our cues on right and wrong from those around us.

A philosopher may be able to write a thesis on why slavery is wrong, but if every major society for thousands of years has had some form of slavery, including yours since the time you were born, then it would be pretty difficult to think rationally outside that box, all by one's self. So who is right in the debate between those who condemned the immorality of the past and those who excused the past as being another time with another set of morals that should be seen purely on its own terms? Did [01:12:00] people of the past have the moral responsibility to act in ways that would've been contrary to the norms of their own time in society, or is it morally justified to simply go along with the rules of the day?

Well, I already said that people like us, myself included, are the ones who criticize the wrongs of the past, but the truth is that I do think it's important to include nuance about how moral responsibility for the individuals involved declines in cases where immoral behavior is structurally normalized. So to me, it's not an either/or question. Systems, such as slavery and colonialism that we now see as immoral, didn't used to be moral, but nor were people involved entirely morally responsible for their actions in upholding those systems, because the systems we live in bend our actions and our beliefs to fit the norm of the system itself. We're not merely individuals, we're members of groups [01:13:00] that socialize us from birth to fit into the group.

This means that the systems of the past that we judge to be universally immoral can be given 100% of the criticism we have for them, but as for the people

involved, even those who enthusiastically supported the immoral systems, we should go a bit easier on them, and here's why.

Number one, I think the judging systems harder than people has the benefit of being morally and sociologically correct. Therefore, two, this framing of history will stand up better to criticism against accusations of presentism without giving a pass to past injustice. But also three, my hope is that it strikes a path toward deescalating the debate over our history altogether. Most of these debates are less about the facts of history and more about how we feel about the facts of history. In the US, those who oppose teaching a thorough accounting [01:14:00] of racism and slavery have actually begun to say out loud that it's because they don't want their kids to be made to feel bad by learning uncomfortable truths.

So whether a person is defending the monarchy, downplaying the horrors of colonialism, or even defending the enslavement of Africans as a net positive, I would argue that these are mostly emotional defense mechanisms to avoid having to feel bad about the past.

So here's my compromise. We should all agree on the universal immorality of these systems, but we can go relatively easy on the people involved, because moral responsibility can and should be judged on a sliding scale. So if your great grandfather owned slaves or helped colonize Africa, those actions should be seen as immoral, but the moral responsibility largely falls on the systems of slavery and colonialism, not the individual slave owner or colonizer [01:15:00] because it's the systems by and large that convince people that their immoral actions are in fact perfectly moral. Make sense?

I'm glad we get this all worked out, and now we can start teaching real history without everyone getting their feelings hurt and we can stop all being mad at each other all the time. And since we've agreed that indisputable injustices were committed, regardless of the more flexible moral responsibility framework we've employed, and that lasting harm was caused, we can get those apologies and reparations flowing.

Now I was joking a bit at the top of the show when I said I knew the definitively correct way to look at history, but this is the best I've come up with so far. But if you are a historian, or philosopher, or study the philosophy of history, or the history of philosophy, and have any thoughts on this, I would love to hear them.

As always keep the comments coming in at (202) 999-3991 or by emailing me to [jay@bestoftheleft.com](mailto:jay@bestoftheleft.com). That is going to be it for [01:16:00] today. Thanks to everyone for listening. Thanks to Deon Clark and Erin Clayton for their

research work for the show and participation in our bonus episodes. Thanks to the Monosyllabic Transcriptionist Trio, Ben, Ken, and Brian for their volunteer work, helping put our transcripts together. Thanks to Amanda Hoffman for all of her work on our social media outlets, activism segments, graphic designing, web mastering, and bonus show cohosting. And thanks to those who support the show by becoming a member or purchasing gift memberships at [bestoftheleft.com/support](https://bestoftheleft.com/support), through our Patreon page, or from right inside the Apple Podcast app.

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So coming to you from far outside, the conventional wisdom of Washington, DC, my name is [01:17:00] Jay!, and this has been the *Best of the Left Podcast* coming to you twice weekly. Thanks entirely to the members and donors to the show from [bestoftheleft.com](https://bestoftheleft.com).