

Peaceful protest convened calling for a republic

The Scottish group which campaigns for a republic, Our Republic, gathered on Calton Hill at 3pm on Saturday afternoon, just a few hours after HM The King had been crowned.

Their main demand is for the abolition of the monarchy and the end of entitlement, with cries of "Scotland deserves better" and "Not my King".

The movement demands an elected head of state in place of the King. In Edinburgh, in contrast with the situation in England where members of Republic UK were arrested by the Metropolitan Police, there was little sign of police activity on Calton Hill with just one van standing by.



Our Republic demo on Coronation Day at Calton Hill Edinburgh
PHOTO Alan Simpson Photography



Connor Cloughley of Our Republic PHOTO The Edinburgh Reporter
Connor Cloughley who hosted the rally said people had been arrested "simply for turning up" but that since these anti-protest laws don't exist in Scotland they did not expect any

trouble.

Mr Cloughley said: "Three hours ago a man sat on a gilded throne and had the audacity to ask millions of people across the country to swear allegiance to him, his heirs and successors. Three hours ago, a crown worth millions was placed on his head at the end of an obscene coronation event that cost the taxpayer over £100 million, while families across the country struggle to feed themselves and struggle to pay their utility bills.

"It has never been clearer to me that the days of the monarchy in Scotland are numbered."

He continued: "We have done this throughout our history. From the Declaration of Arbroath in 1320 to the Claim of Right in the late 1600s to the renewal of that Claim of Right 34 years ago by civic and political leaders across Scotland."

He outlined the problem with the monarchy in this way: "The monarchy don't see the people as citizens to lead, they see them as subjects to rule."

Several hundred people braved the weather which had already begun closing in before the first speaker took to the small stage on top of the hill, all under the protection of a gazebo. This crowd was much noisier than the audience in Princes Street Gardens, chanting Not My King at one point and applauding each speaker loudly and appreciatively.

Speakers included Tommy Sheppard MP, Lorna Slater MSP, poet George Gunn, Cllr Ross McKenzie an independent councillor in Edinburgh, Maggie Chapman MSP (who was formerly an Edinburgh councillor Cllr Roza Salih from Glasgow, and storyteller Malini Chakrabarty.



The Green presence was evident with Scottish Greens flags flying above the crowd all facing towards the National Monument in the increasingly misty conditions. Nothing however has dampened the ardour of the independence movement here, and this crowd called out for the end of the monarchy and for an elected head of state to replace the royal family.



Our Republic rally on Coronation Day at Calton Hill Edinburgh
Tommy Sheppard MP PHOTO Alan Simpson Photography

Tommy Sheppard MP was eloquent in his explanation of what is wrong with the monarchy. For those who claim that the Royal Family raises tourist income, he pointed out that it is the buildings that tourists come to see, but that more people visit the Palace of Versailles than any of the royal buildings in the UK. He claimed that even in England there is republican sentiment among around a third of the population and that this is now mainstream opinion. Alluding to the arrests in England he likened it to the way that Russians deal with dissidents in Moscow, and that it is entirely unacceptable.

He said: "We have a system based in the feudal hierarchies of mediaeval times that governs how we conduct ourselves in the

21st century. And we think it is wrong and distasteful for that amount of money to be spent with a gold orbs and gold chariots celebrating an unelected hierarchy, when at the same time, millions of his subjects cannot afford to pay their bills and their children go to bed hungry at night. What sort of kingdom is that?

“I have not seen any manifestations of union jackery flying from the houses. So we are the majority and we must take confidence in our own ability to change, in our own ability to win this argument. Today – the day of the coronation of King Charles III is peak royalty. It gets harder for them as every day progresses. And as every day progresses, more and more people will come to our point of view, and see the compelling and rational arguments that we are making. So take heart, remember to tell your children where you were on the sixth of May 2023.”



Maggie Chapman MSP Our republic rally Coronation Day 2023
Photo © The Edinburgh Reporter
Maggie Chapman called for wealth to be shared. She said: “I am

a republican, a proud republican and I am a democrat. I am a proud democrat. I believe that we should elect our leaders. Leaders should not come from positions of power and privilege and wealth only. Leaders cannot, and must not, be born into it. Leaders should make that decision to choose and should then be held accountable, responsible to those who elect them to serve them. Hereditary titles King, Queen, Lord, Earl, have no place, no place at all in a democracy, never mind a 21st century democracy.”



Cllr Roza Salih at Our Republic rally Coronation Day 2023
Photo © The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Roza Salih is a Glasgow Councillor for Greater Pollok and describes herself as a proud Scottish Kurd . She said: “If we believe in a fair society we should abolish the monarchy. Here, we are in a class war. We see people at the top making a fortune. While working class people are unable to make a living. Is that the world we want to see – no!

“There is one rule for them and another for us. The monarchy is not legal and the law is not applying to them. For example, the inheritance tax. Why do they not have to pay but ordinary

people have to pay Why the monarchy is getting involved in political decision and then deciding that they're not. Don't fool the people the people know the truth? Our country needs to build a new system that delivers justice and equality for all. A vision for a radical independence that puts republican views at the centre of this movement.

"This is not our King. I stand to abolish the monarchy. We can make our own history – a socialist republican Scotland."



Lorna Slater MSP speaking at the Our Republic Rally on Calton Hill on Coronation Day PHOTO © The Edinburgh Reporter

Lorna Slater MSP said that the King has a direct channel to influence legislation in Scotland and that as a government minister she said she "is notable to either confirm or deny that the king has lobbied me or my officials for change to that legislation. That is not a harmless anachronism. That is a twisting of unaccountable power."

Poet George Gunn who had travelled from Thurso to join the rally, read his own poem, the Oath to the Scottish Republic.

The poem began: “My allegiance is to the Scottish people, to all people be called a British subject and to swear allegiance to a king while my country has no place among nations is to be a ghost and to bear disgrace it is the disposition of all citizens our future republic...”



George Gunn poet at Our republic rally Coronation Day 2023
Photo © The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr Ross Mckenzie, and independent councillor who resigned from the Labour Party in February of this year, said he was on Calton Hill on the day Her Majesty The Queen was officially opening The Scottish Parliament 19 years ago, also campaigning for a republic.

He said: “I feel like we’ve been here before. There was a huge amount of radical energy around at that time. The hope that many people had felt when Labour came to power in 97 and when the Scottish Parliament was established that had been completely extinguished following the invasion of Iraq and the realisation that Tony Blair and Gordon Brown were intent on continuing much of Thatcher’s neo-liberal agenda.”



Cllr Ross McKenzie at Our Republic rally Coronation Day 2023
Photo © The Edinburgh Reporter



Our republic rally Coronation Day 2023 Photo © The Edinburgh Reporter



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