

**Not much has emerged unscathed from the doubt, division and crisis that has engulfed British society over the past decade. Except the Royal Family. If anything, it has become more popular. The question we rarely ask is why is it so popular?**

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# The Changing Face of Royalty

THERE IS NOT much consensus left about most of the established institutions of the British state. They have been subject to enquiry, controversy and division as the British political fabric has become engulfed in crisis and change over the last decade or more. Except for the British Royal Family. On a different plane, and somewhere above controversy, they are carrying on regardless.

Walter Bagehot, one of the shrewdest commentators on the British monarchy had a good idea why the British monarchy was such a successful institution. He thought it was precisely because it managed to stay non-controversial:

It never seems to struggle. It is commonly hidden like a mystery, and sometimes paraded like a pageant, but in neither case is it contentious. The nation is divided into parties but the crown is of no party. Its apparent separation from business is that which removes it both from enemies and from desecration, which preserves its mystery, which enables it to combine the affection of conflicting parties - to be a visible symbol of unity (to those still so imperfectly educated as to need a symbol). (*The English Constitution*, 1867)

Over a hundred years on, and the Royal Family is much less hidden and mysterious, the British public more perfectly educated. But the monarchy goes on being an uncontested and enormously popular unifying symbol. It is actually more popular now than in Bagehot's period. In the later years of Victoria's reign there were distinct republican rumblings about the Queen being both costly and entirely useless.

It was her prolific family that kept many of the European monarchies well-stocked. But they did not survive long into the twentieth century. Most of them have been overthrown, assassinated or exiled to Monte Carlo: a thoroughly discredited

bunch of has-beens, often tainted with fascism and corruptly-gained riches. By contrast, the British monarchy has not only survived, but prospered - even overcoming the first Abdication Crisis in its entire thousand-year-plus history, which seemed in 1936 to threaten its very existence. Never more so than now, the British Royal Family has displayed its remarkable power of regeneration, most recently by

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widening its repertoire with the emergent 'young Royals' and replenishing its stock with the triumphal additions of 'shy Di' and Prince William.

So what is it about the Royal Family that keeps them going in Britain when most of the rest of the world has turned to some form of republicanism? It is after all noteworthy that there is so little opposition to the fact of the Royal Family's continued existence in Britain, and that amongst all the movements of contemporary dissent, there is no anti-royalist organisation of any significance; nor does the abolition of the monarchy appear as any important or even achievable section of any progressive party manifesto in Britain.

Arguments against royalty

It is not as if the case against the monarchy is anything secret. It is indeed widely known in Britain and the argument goes as follows. The Royal Family is a political anachronism. The hereditary principle is internationally discredited and Britain should junk its monarchy along with its uniquely hereditary second chamber. Eco-

nomically, it is a drain on public resources, especially through Civil List support of royal parasites and drones. The Queen herself is believed to be one of the richest people in the world and yet her wealth is subject to unique tax exemptions and no adequate public scrutiny.

There is then the more specifically 'left' case against the monarchy which stresses its reactionary character. This position emphasises that, far from being 'above' class conflict in the way Bagehot suggests, it is part of the ruling class and acts in its interests. Examples usually cited are: Prince Philip's robust get-your-finger-out speeches against the working class and the welfare state; family ties and friendships with right wing aristos, oligopolists, and fascist monarchies like Greece and Iran; the affair of the Australian Governor-General which ousted the Labour government in 1975; Angus Ogilvy's involvement in the 'unacceptable face of capitalism' Lorrho scandal; landlordism on Prince Charles' estates and the conspicuous consumption of the young royals, whooping it up with Hooray Henriets while the miners prepare to eat grass.

All such examples are not only empirically demonstrable but form the commonplaces of any pub discussion or Christmas Day family argument about the Royal Family. But the fact remains that anti-monarchical opinion still takes no serious political form in Britain. Furthermore, there is consistent and strengthening evidence of the overwhelming popularity of the Royal Family from all contemporary poll data and more detailed long term surveys, such as Mass Observation. For most people, then, the monarchy's undoubted capitalist and ruling class connections cannot be the most interesting, obvious or salient feature about them.

The reason for this in the first place is that the Royal Family do not really matter to us. In a real sense, they cannot affect the way we carry out our everyday lives; they are irrelevant to how we try to 'make a living'. Furthermore, as a constitutional monarchy, there is little the Royal Family can 'do' to us politically. Such royal prerogatives as remain, have only been exercised by the present Queen as a result of 'advice'. True, that advice has been controversial - as when the Queen summoned Lord Home to form a government in 1963 after listening only to 'the magic circle' of Tory grandees. But what she can do on her own initiative in terms of 'running the country' is circumscribed and entirely negligible.

At the same time, and precisely because she has no real material power over us, the Queen does wield considerable *symbolic* power through all that 'the Monarchy' implies in Britain. Together with the Royal Family as a whole, she has a strong 'ideological' effect on us - on how we make sense of our lives, on our present values and our beliefs about future possibilities.

### The Best of British

To start with, the Royal Family say something about British identity: what it means to be British. As such, they feature in that litany of assumptions about what the British do best in all the world. The list is common currency across all classes and it reminds us that we British have the best ballroom dancers, runners, actors, broadcasting system, youth culture and rock music in the world. We also have Torvill and Dean and when it comes to the big state occasions, no one can do it like the British because we have the Royal Family and all their pageantry.

It is obvious that the Best of British is now a very thin list - and fast-dwindling, especially in the area of sport. This means that each of our 'best' categories has to carry a heavier load of 'Britishness' with every event and appearance. It is particularly true of royalty because, unlike the other categories, their importance is based on birth, not transitory merit.

But what all have in common is that they are mainly categories to do with ceremony, style and spectacle. And it is indicative of Britain's dramatic post-war decline as a world power that the Best of British list contains nothing of any political or economic significance. Of course, right at the back of popular memory there is still the mother of parliaments and the best judiciary, armed services and police in the world. But there are now such deeply

contested categories that, with the possible exception of the Falklands war, they tend to fit into the Best of British tradition only when they are associated with spectacular occasions like embassy sieges or royal events. For the main claims to any British primacy in the world now rest in the sphere of the cultural; indeed the cultural sphere is having to act as the last consolation for imperialist losses. And given that the Royal Family are the only hereditary and therefore enduring category of Britishness, they bear the full weight of the question: if they no longer existed what would still be great about Britain?

### The wedding and the nation

The requirement that royalty overcompensate for national inadequacy and highlight Britishness at its cultural best was what made the wedding of Prince Charles and Lady Diana Spencer such a spectacular event in 1981. This was a view of Britishness intended for export as well as home consumption. In particular the wedding was addressed to the USA with the message that although it long ago superceded Britain as the major imperialist power, Nancy Reagan could never outshine the Queen and was invited to St Paul's only as an upstart commoner. Besides, we all know that Americans are really even more royalist than the British. And from the great height of capitalist hegemony, American media were only too happy to collude with this quirky consolatory myth of the British.

There was five hours saturation coverage-of the wedding on all three major US networks and it featured as the week's cover story in the international news magazines. *Newsweek* is typical of the general

tone and its story started on these lines: 'And so the Prince finally claimed his Princess, with every dash of clockwork spectacle and storybook splendor at England's matchless command. . . ' And ended: 'For a few shining days, the handsome heir to the throne and the lissome Princess had burnished British glory to majestic brilliance once again.' With quotations in between from members of the public on the royal route saying typically British things like: 'We may be down, but if we can put on a wedding like this, we certainly aren't finished. This shows the world that Britain can still pull it off.' Or, 'The spectators were cooperative. "Did you see our police out there?" asked one young man with green hair and a safety pin through his ear lobes. "They're the best in the world." ' (*Newsweek* 10 Aug 1981)

This last remark had a certain resonance for the time because the royal wedding came in the immediate aftermath of widespread urban unrest in Britain. The more significant, then, that the occasion was represented as a national celebration that cut across all conflict and connected with an image of Britain as a united nation. This image was reinforced by television and newspaper pictures of the crowds on the wedding route which demonstrated a unity across gender, class, ethnic and generational barriers. It was a point emphasised in verbal commentary and photocaptions. 'Jolly good show for commoners and kings', 'Hurrahs from punks and pensioners' was how *Newsweek* labelled its pictures. While the British *Sunday Times* caption across a two-page spread of the vast crowd that walked down the Mall said:

Only the Victory Parade and the coronations of 1937 and 1953 have witnessed crowds as dense as this. In spite of fears in an age that has grown used to bitterness, riots and mindless assassination, the people of Britain and many visitors to London from abroad gave the world a visible demonstration of the power of a great royal event to unite a nation. In a sense it was a wedding to which we were all invited. Even if we were not able to join the hundreds of thousands who jammed the Mall, we could be part of the great audience of 750 million people around the world who could watch it all on television.

Three years on and a lot more bitterness later, this kind of writing about royalty may sound ridiculously over-the-top. But I think on this occasion it was actually true both to the sentiment of 'Britain is great once more' that surrounded the event and to the manifestly 'visible demonstration' of unity being celebrated by the participants of the event. Of course it remains a display: royal occasions confine national unity to



the ceremonial and symbolic plane alone: the crowd disperses and 'real trouble' starts up again.

But the ability to *witness* royal events, even without actually being there, still holds out possibilities of national unity. And as the *Sunday Times* story indicates, British identity relies heavily on such myths of nationhood.

### Broadcasting royalty

The media never created these myths. But they have played a very important part in amplifying them and thereby massively sustaining the view that it is through the monarchy that the nation is unified and great once more. Indeed, the enormous public appeal of the monarchy in the twentieth century has owed a great deal to its ability to adapt itself to the requirements of each new mass medium.

First came the dissemination of the royal voice, most famously through the institution of George V's wireless message to the nation. Then there was the royal image of cinema newsreels. This was particularly crucial for the national morale in the Second World War when George VI refused to move his family to safety from the Blitz and was filmed with Queen Elizabeth walking over rubble to meet bombed-out East Enders.

After the war, the establishment of British television as a national medium is very closely associated with coverage of the Royal Family. The televising of the Coronation in 1953 involved great technical advances in outside broadcasting and launched BBC-TV as a truly 'mass' medium: around the country, local benefactors installed TV sets in community halls; for the first time the television audience was larger than radio's and never declined thereafter; and immediately following the event, demand for sets rose 50%. The day was a considerable triumph for both the monarchy and the BBC - after considerable opposition from parts of the establishment about the propriety of filming what was after all a *sacramental* occasion.

The two national institutions, later joined by ITV, then entered into a fruitful partnership - every big royal occasion offering an opportunity for more extensive and sophisticated coverage. In this partnership, the monarchy is the only national institution for which broadcasting's code of balance, fairness and impartiality does not operate. So for instance, the Queen has a guaranteed slot on the best ratings day of the year to broadcast her Christmas message, now an elaborate travelogue of family

doings and Commonwealth journeys, without being subject to right-of-reply or even professional commentary. But then she is representing Britain to itself as a united - and Christian - country, and after all is an excellent ratings attracter in her own right.

This beneficial mutuality of interests had a further boost with the joint BBC-ITV production, *Royal Family* in 1969, presenting the first 'insider' view of the British monarchy, off-duty and behaving apparently naturally. The success of the production, dispelling fears that this new familiarity - seeing the Family at home in *our* family homes - would diminish respect for monarchy, introduced a new style of informal coverage whereby all royals, with the exception still of the two Queens, appear on special interview and chat programmes, make charity appeals, host programmes about former kings and queens, and like Princesses Margaret and Michael recently, even appear on radio's *Desert Island Discs*.

This approach has coincided with a new public style on the ground: the 'walkabout', introduced on a New Zealand tour in 1973. But just as the Royal Family have learned the need to maintain the procession along with the walkabout, so they are well aware of the cultural assumption that the British don't want a bicycling 'democratic' monarchy. The informal media coverage must be regularly interspersed with the big ceremonial, just as *The Royal Family* was a prelude to *The Investiture* production the same year, which covered the day that Charles became Prince of Wales.

### Royalty for export

Both these programmes have been internationally successful and sold worldwide as part of the huge promotion of images of Britishness that all television channels started pushing in the 70s. Huge budget, prestige productions for export like *The British Empire*, *Search for the Nile*, *Churchill*, *Life of Shakespeare*, *Jesus*, *Ascent of Man* and *Civilisation* have had their specifically royal counterparts in such best-selling programmes as *Royal Heritage*, *Six Wives of Henry VIII*, *Elizabeth R*, *Edward VII* and *Edward and Mrs Simpson*. They all declare to the world that not only does Britain have the best television, drama and most cultured men in the world, we also have the most magnificent past - with royalty as our constant reference point. It is a sort of asset-stripping of Britain's imperial memory - and reappears in the 80s series, *Jewel in the Crown*, with its

insistent evocation of Queen Victoria and the Pax Britannica in India.

All the images for sale here amount to a particular celebration of Britishness as a continuous heritage of unfolding pageantry. Through television, the long, unbroken, evolution of 'Our Island Race' is offered for consumption to the cultural tourists of the world. And given that the present state of the nation is so miserable, the idea is to mine all the best bits from Britain's 'unrivalled past' and stick them together as a glamour bundle for the rest of the world. The Royal Family are crucial to this scenario because they have the distinction of being the only embodiment of the best bits of Britishness that is actually still extant and available for home and worldwide viewing. In this way, television does most to promote the Royal Family as Living History.

### British history - the royalty version?

But this image of the Royal Family is not confined to television. It is there, for instance, in the official Central Office of Information handbook on the monarchy. This takes the same view of the historical importance of the Royal Family as all the television spectaculars and emphasises that they have maintained their present eminence by their unique capacity to be both continuous and adaptable. The handbook singles out the present Queen's adaptable speciality as being 'a combination of the formal and the informal' and goes on to say:

'The development of the monarchy during the Queen's reign is only the most recent example of its long evolution in the light of changing circumstances. It is the oldest secular institution in Britain, going back to at least the ninth century. The Queen can trace her descent from King Egbert who united all England under his sovereignty in 829. The monarchy antedates Parliament by four centuries, and the law courts by three. Its continuity has been broken only once (during the republic under Cromwell from 1649 to 1660). There have been interruptions in the direct line of succession, but the hereditary principle has always been preserved.' (*The Monarchy in Britain* HMSO 1981)

Here is a sense of the past as the Genealogy of the Great which literally brackets off inconvenient discontinuities and undermines any dynamic version of history as popular movement, resistance and struggle for change. Its outlook is both static and reassuringly stable. It tells the world that, like their monarchy, the British are subject to minor hiccups but essentially they go on reproducing their true nature: repeating themselves. The Queen herself



gave the same historical message in her 1982 Christmas programme when she chose to broadcast from the very room from which the first Elizabeth had sent out her navy against the Spanish Armada. Four centuries later, the Falklands War had been only the latest episode in Britons' bulldog determination never never to be slaves.

In this way, the monarchy serves as the longest enduring, certainly most visible and successful manifestation of Britishness as a rich and timeless essence; and as such, it offers a guarantee to all the nation of stability through continuity. It can give this guarantee because it is itself continuous, unique of all British institutions in that it is literally able to reproduce itself through hereditary biology. It carries on through the generations, because, as George VI observed, 'We are the Family Firm'.

### The favourite Family

The importance of the British monarchy being a family institution was something Bagehot originally spotted as its major plus point over any republican apparatus. Having a family to head up a state, he said, rendered it 'intelligible' to the people. Whereas the appeal of a republic was abstract, coldly 'rational' and basically 'uninteresting', a royal family offered 'nice and pretty events', an emotional appeal based on its members all-too-comprehensible 'humanity'.

What would now be defined as 'the human interest' aspect of the Royal Family is that it creates a means of *identification* between subjects and monarchy. As nearly

all British people have considerable personal knowledge of families, whether born into, married out of or both, it is possible to identify with the monarchy in terms of *family likenesses*. We can project our own experience of family life onto individual members of the Royal Family and combine it with common cultural stereotypes like bossy sister, black sheep, mother's boy and wayward aunt and recognised generational behaviour like 'sowing wild oats' or 'growing too old for it'. The process of identification heightens the sense of the Royal Family as 'just like us', like all families - as on the cover of last year's Christmas edition of the *TV Times* which features a drawing of Charles and Diana with William round the Christmas tree as if they were *any* young couple with their first baby. It was captioned 'Welcome home *everyone* to a right royal Christmas'.

Such identification also implies an identity of interests: what it is assumed 'we all' share in common. Hence the appeal of any royal wedding is based on a recognition of the importance of all weddings in 'everybody's' family life: the special day for women, traditionally the 'best day of your life', and an established rite of passage into adulthood for both women and men. As Bagehot says, 'A princely wedding is the brilliant edition of a universal fact.' On such occasions, we come together

as a nation of normal families, and Britain, through its monarchy, is indeed the Family of families.

### Royal stars and charisma

But of course the Windsors are not *only* normal and just like you and me, really. They are also special, unique, indeed sacred; invested with the names of Highness and Majesty and Defender of the Faith; appointed, annointed, even, to reign over us by the Grace of God. On one level, these are obviously anachronistic terms, form without content in a predominantly secular society. But they also express the belief that for anyone to be a worthy object of identification they must be as *unlike* us as possible.

This is a modern requirement of any media-promoted star celebrity system and British royalty is often understood in these terms as both 'just like us' and 'not at all like us'. This double dimension is most manifest in the current coverage of Princess Di. She is both 'The Number One Superstar' of the world *and* 'an ordinary working mum' who 'slips round the corner to Sainsbury's when she can'. In this combination she features as main attraction covergirl across the whole range of 'the women's world' sections of WH Smith's and local newsagents from *Harper's* and *Queen* to *Woman's Realm* and the glossy fanzines and partworks like *Young Royals*, *The Royal Family* and *Majesty*.

### In addition to being 'apart' it is essential they remain 'above' their public

The specialness of all stars rests in their capacity to be both understandably 'human' like the rest of us and also somehow incomprehensibly 'other'. They have 'charisma', that extra something that all can recognise but none can name. The Royal Family get invested with this indefinable quality. But they also come the nearest in modern times to the original religious and magical meaning of 'charisma': the divine gift to inspire. And if the magic of monarchy is to go on working, it requires that royalty maintain a distance from their public, as with all stars. But in addition to being 'apart' it is essential they remain 'above' their public.

Of all the Royal Family, it is the Queen herself who must rest on a plane higher than everyone else's - especially if the natural order of British life is to prevail.

The recent scandals that have risked 'dragging the Queen's name down into the dirt' all indicate the extent of moral panic that is generated when some unworthy person comes too near the Queen. The shame of Anthony Blunt, surveyor of the Queen's pictures, in 1979, and subsequently, in the summer of 1982, of Michael Pagan, the palace intruder who entered the Queen's bedroom, and Michael Trestrail, the Queen's personal bodyguard, was not that they caused any harm to the Queen's person - indeed, they all held her in the highest esteem. But that, being who they were revealed to be - a homosexual ex-communist, an unemployed and mentally-disturbed man, another homosexual supposedly risking blackmail - they had invaded the royal presence and contaminated it with their own. This was what was so shocking about the previously 'innocent' photo from the 50s, showing Blunt pointing out some paintings to the young Queen. Recirculated 30 years on, that same shot now encapsulated, in the one frame and on the same level, the germs of moral infection wafting towards charisma.

### Exposing royalty?

The fact that British monarchs are still being invested with the ludicrous qualities of divinity amply demonstrates the case against the monarchy. But then what does that say about the British public? Are we simply a bunch of deferential dumbos, mere suckers for charisma - conned by a royalty spectacle that surely we would have seen through and got rid of by now if it hadn't been for an excessively sycophantic media hype? The left case against the monarchy has tended to be along such lines, and has therefore concentrated on 'exposing' the Royal Family to demonstrate that far from being magical they are: banal, unremarkable as individuals, unnecessary, and only serving as a 'diversion'.

The problem with this analysis is not that it's wrong but, how far does it take you



apart from making effective propaganda? For according to this view the monarchy appears only as a simplified and monolithic version of 'false consciousness', with the elitist implication that any pleasure that people get out of royalty merely confirms them as prisoners of ideology who need setting free and the scales removed from their eyes. This approval is well-illustrated in the popular Leeds postcard derived from a *Labour Research* cover which shows someone blindfold with the press coverage of the Charles and Di romance and the caption: 'Blinded by Trivia: What Lies Behind the Smokescreen? 3 million unemployed.' Indeed, the predominant left criticism of the royal family wedding was that its 'magic' took people's minds off the real issues, defined as unemployment and the recent 'riots'. But once it has been stated, this point is so obviously true that we need to consider why it has not been more effective.

Simply 'exposing' the Royal Family by cutting them down to size in various ways is unlikely to be politically convincing because it leaves untouched those aspects of monarchy which people still value it for - as well as once more confirming the prevailing view of the Left as a rancorous lot of spoilsports. More useful would be a carefully specified account of all the ways royalty draws on popular sentiment about areas like Britishness, a sense of a national past, a belief in family life. And how, in the process, it identifies real social needs.

### What royalty does

These needs are to do with the capacity for enjoyment, esteem and recognition. They relate to popular beliefs about keeping cheerful; not getting downhearted; having a good time while you can; letting yourself go; being noticed in a crowd; being listened to, smiled at, thanked. They belong to areas which the Left traditionally consigns to the psychologically piddling and as a consequence it allows royalty to enter this terrain unhindered and colonise it with pleasant memories.

To take the example of royal events. These are enjoyable and cheerful occasions; people are making an effort to be pleasant and everyone has the aim of the event 'going well', being a collective success. Moreover, anyone participating in a royal event will be made 'special' by it and rewarded by people who don't seem to want anything out of you in return, like a vote or increased productivity. This is why people always describe their encounters with royalty as 'a great pleasure' - even when they can recall very little of what was

said. It is also why royalty items feature regularly as 'the good news' tag of daily current affairs, and what keeps viewers sitting through a dreary uninvolved *News at Ten* with the promise of Princess Di being delightful at the end.

All the evidence there is suggests that royalty features as the good news, the good times, for all sections of the population. Even dreaming about royalty appears a widespread phenomenon, and as Brian Masters found in his book *Dreams about HM the Queen* the most common theme for fantasy is 'The day I had tea with the Queen'.

### Royalty versus politics

If such dreams and myths express normally unacknowledged desires for self-esteem and social recognition, then this capacity of royalty to recognise and reward all sectors of society is what makes them appear to be 'on our side', in a way that 'the politicians' are not. In the commonsense view of politics all politicians are lumped together as 'just as bad as each other, when it comes down to it' and only out for number one. By contrast, whatever else they are, members of the Royal Family are never cynical and manipulative. Instead, they are understood to be hardworking, conscientious and caring - well certainly the Queen and Prince Charles - and who'd have their job anyway? - and only wanting the best for us all. Disillusionment with 'the politicians' feeds the general belief that it is the monarchy which best embodies desires for unity and collectivity and expresses the common aspiration: 'if only we could all come together, forget our differences as a nation, be happy.'

If royalty is popularly associated with these needs for enjoyment, recognition and a better future, then it will need a response from the Left that offers more than the political equivalent of the Sex Pistols' 'God Save the Queen, A fascist regime' played loud. A purely oppositional approach to royal events of the Naff Off/ Stuff the Jubilee sort will do nothing to counter the very pervasiveness of royalty's symbolic power.

Some sections of the Left have now started to appreciate that it's time for a few 'counter-hegemonic attractions to the royal spectacular and that street-level festivals, popular, democratic and fun, are required to help broaden the political agenda of the Left. The Communist Party's People's Jubilee' in 1977 was a way of saying that socialists need to develop their own Utopian celebrations of what a collective future could be.



To put on a People's Jubilee in the midst of nationwide celebrations for a royal one shows an awareness that the Left is not going to get very far with simple claims to 'expose' and thereby 'destroy' the monarchy. For, as I see it, the 'problem' about the Royal Family is not so much to do with the popular sentiment they represent as with the fact that it is *they* who are mainly doing the representing. That's why I think that to see them primarily in terms of a diversionary and manipulative 'false consciousness' is not particularly helpful.

### Royalty as them and us

The phrase that best sums up what the Royal Family are about and how they work is: 'unbending the springs of action.' It was adopted by Richard Hoggart to describe the effect the popular press has when it borrows the language of the working class against the interests of the class. In *Uses of Literacy* he shows how the press takes on the style and vocabulary of 'us' the ordinary working people and turns it in the interests of 'them' the bosses, the establishment. In the process, he suggests, peoples' potential for self-activity is undermined and transformed into a quiescent acceptance of their own subordination. I think something like this happens with the way royalty works - particularly as they are represented through the media, which is mainly how we now encounter them. Their particular appeal and outstanding success is based on their capacity to represent *both* 'them' and 'us' in the same unifying instance. The effect is then, that because they come to represent us, it appears that we don't need to act for ourselves.

## The workers asked for, and got, the Queen

To give an example of this 'unbending' operation, here is an editorial from the *Daily Star* which also encapsulates many of the royal themes I have already mentioned. It appeared shortly after Prince Andrew's homecoming from active service in the Falklands and when interest in his romance with the actress-model Koo Stark was at its height. It is headlined: 'Andrew: A Prince of Our Time' and reads as follows:

'What a marvellous young Briton is our Prince Andrew!

He risks his life in the Falklands after telling his mother and the Prime Minister that he would resign his commission if he was not allowed to go on the *Invincible*.

He returns to Portsmouth, puts a red rose in his mouth and dances like a matador to show his joy at being home.

He spends the first part of his holiday with his family. Then he selects the girl of his fancy for an island holiday in the sun.

He does not worry about his friend's background or that his holiday might start a controversy. He likes the girl. She likes him.

So off they go on holiday. Andrew seems to be a little upset that the world's Press has accompanied him to Mustique and restricted part of his holiday.

Newspapers can be excused for paying him so much attention. We want to bring to our readers part of Andrew's joy.

There is too much gloom in this country. The *Daily Star* believes that Britain has a bright and happy future. That future is secure in the hands of a dazzling young Prince like Andrew.

Our message to Andrew on his return home is: "Good on You lad!"'

*Daily Star* 13 Oct, 1982

There is a good deal to be said about this editorial, but here I just want to point out how the special privileges of dazzling princes, that include the right wealth and social background for exclusive West Indian holidaying and recall the feudal right of *droit de seigneur* with women, are elided into the qualities he is presumed to share with 'all of us', the whole nation - particularly the prioritisation of family life and having a good time. He is also specifically identified with the nation's men as a true Brit, daring, adventurous and dutiful, prepared to die for his country and thus *forgo* his princely privileges. And although we know he went to the Falklands as one of the officer caste, he remains Randy Andy, one of the 'lads', as blokeish as the men who wrote 'Lock up Your Daughters' on the sides of the homecoming ships. So the *Daily Star* tells its working class readership: leave it to good old Andy, he'll see us right and Britain will come through. And a prince is suddenly transformed into a working class hero.

### Who can represent us?

It is of course a threadbare editorial. It has no material consequence and any future that Prince Andrew could control would have symbolic resonance only: he is clearly quite beside the point when it comes to 'real' political and economic change. But that is precisely the extent of the problem about the 'representativeness' of the Royal Family. Because where are we to learn of the real forces for change and who is representing them?

When the GLC was deciding who should open the Thames flood barrier in May this year they put it to the workers who built it that the ceremony should be performed by the relatives of their four workmates who had been killed. The workers asked for, and got, the Queen. The media were delighted with pictures of Red Ken bowing to the Queen and carried fulsome stories of how well the Windsor and Livingstone families had got on: 'How Ken became a royal success. And his Mum loved it all too.' (9 May 1984). Probably some on the Left will read this episode as a further confirmation of the GLC leader's sell-out, swallowed up into an establishment maw via royal sycophancy. But if that is all they see, they won't have grasped how much it is also a crisis of representation. For who is there to represent us? So long as the choice remains Randy Andy, his mother, or any other royal, then 'we the people' still have a mighty long haul to get our own act together.