



Universidad de Valladolid
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras
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**The Crisis-wealth: the raising of republicanism
in the British Commonwealth of Nations**

Judit García Díez

Tutora: Berta Cano Echevarría

Departamento de Filología Inglesa

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ABSTRACT

Calls for a republican shift are becoming more present in some country members of the Commonwealth since Barbados shifted to a republic in November of 2021. This study will analyse these republican shifts in three countries. The first case to be explained is the already mentioned Barbados in order to see how the process went and the difficulties the government had to face. The second case is Jamaica, a country that sees the Queen's death as the moment to obtain total independence from the British Crown, announced to the now Princes of Wales, William and Kate, by the Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness. The last case is New Zealand, where the idea of the shift is not contemplated by the current government. This part will focus on the relationship between New Zealand and the British crown, how the Treaty of Waitangi is affecting this relation and what is the opinion of the different political parties.

Key words: Commonwealth of Nations, republicanism, British Crown, Barbados, Jamaica, New Zealand, King Charles III.

RESUMEN

Tras la decisión de Barbados de convertirse en una república en noviembre de 2021, algunos países de la Mancomunidad están pensando en seguir los mismos pasos. Este estudio analizará tres diferentes casos de países con esta misma decisión. El primer caso será el de la mencionada Barbados, para ver cómo fue el proceso y las dificultades que el gobierno tuvo que superar. El segundo será el caso de Jamaica, un país que ve el fallecimiento de Isabel II como el momento para independizarse completamente de la corona británica, idea que fue comunicada a los príncipes de Gales, Guillermo y Catalina, por el primer ministro jamaicano Andrew Holness. El último caso es el de Nueva Zelanda, donde la idea del cambio no está prevista por el gobierno actual. Esta parte se centrará en la relación entre Nueva Zelanda y la corona británica, en cómo el Tratado de Waitangi está afectando a esta relación y cuál es la opinión de los diferentes partidos políticos.

Palabras importantes: Mancomunidad de Naciones, republicanism, corona británica, Barbados, Jamaica, Nueva Zelanda, Rey Carlos III.

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1. Introduction

The Commonwealth of Nations is an international union of countries nearly all of which were colonies of the British Empire. It is formed by 54 nations, including the United Kingdom, of which 15 continue to be under the British Crown. At first, there were only a few members: the United Kingdom, the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, the Union of South Africa, the Irish Free State and Newfoundland. Its origins are in 1931 with the Statute of Westminster, an Act that bestowed not only equality to Britain and to the rest of the members but also sovereign right by which the dominions could manage diverse matters, have its own diplomatic regiment and their own representation in the League of Nations as well (Britannica, 2017).

During the 20th century, different countries joined the Commonwealth of Nations and at the same time they became independent by ceasing to be a colony. To give an example of a case to be analysed below in detail, Barbados became a member of the Commonwealth when it achieved independence in 1966 with the approval of the Barbados Independence Act. Originally, in order to be a member of this international union, each country had to promise loyalty to the British monarch. However, not all countries did it. India, for instance, was already an empire with its own viceroy and to join the Commonwealth would mean to lose what it had. Therefore, in 1949, India was the first nation to become a republic keeping its membership by agreeing to have the British Crown as a free association symbol (Britannica, 2023). Therefore, not all new members decided to have the British monarch as head of state. Indeed, there are five countries with their own monarch and 36 nations are republics (Countries, 2023).

Nonetheless, the 21st century has brought some challenges for the British Crown. The death of Queen Elizabeth II on September 2022 has marked the end of one of the longest reigns in history and now her son, King Charles III, has to deal with a Commonwealth that is calling for republics. The preambles and the reasons are becoming more and more decisive in the last decade, although they began with the slavery and the colonization of the past centuries. Various Caribbean countries are willing to follow Barbados's example and to start the

transition to a republican system. As it will be explained later, Barbados shares a colonial past rather similar to the Caribbean countries and other member countries of the Commonwealth. Not only the misappropriation of Barbados's culture and the slave society implementation, but also the slave traffic trade to Jamaica and significant problems regarding the translation of the Treaty of Waitangi in New Zealand are a few examples of issues that are still relevant for the relationship between Commonwealth members and the British monarchy. Moreover, the royal family has been accused of racism by Prince Harry and Meghan Markle at the same time that racial discrimination has been fought by means of movements such as the Black Lives Matter. The current dilemma for these countries after the Queen's death is whether to shift to a republic and to have one of them as chief of state or to remain under the rule of the British Crown, an institution that did not pronounce itself when the Windrush scandal came out and a large number of British citizens with Caribbean or African descendants faced deportation due to bureaucratic matters.

This paper is aimed to show and explain what is currently happening in some realms of the British Crown. Elizabeth II was really respected and loved by the majority of the Commonwealth population. However, not only her death, but also the acknowledging of the colonial past and recent situations have made clear the racism of the Royal family. Now with King Charles III on the throne, the Commonwealth countries can decide whether to continue under the British monarchy or to remove the monarch and to have the opportunity to decide who is going to rule them.

2. The case of Barbados

2.1. Historical context

On May 14, 1625, when James I was king of England, the first ship arrived at Barbados with English settlers that turned the land into a colony of the British Crown. A few years later, not only the culture but also the Barbados Parliament and the system of representative government were implemented. However, this did not prevent the island from becoming a slave society and of being known as “the jewel in the crown” of the Caribbean. (Bulbulia, 2021a).

During the 20th century, Errol Barrow became Prime Minister of the island and he was considered as a National Hero and the Father of Independence. Even though he did not see the country prepared for a social and political development yet, he made Barbados free in 1966, when the Barbados Independence Act was approved. Nevertheless, it was declared to be “an Act to make provisions for and in connection with the attainment by Barbados of fully responsible status within the Commonwealth” (Paterson, 2022). Therefore, *independence* meant the island was not a colony anymore, but it still depended on the United Kingdom as the act also gave the Queen the power to amend the constitution of Barbados, by which she was recognised as Head of State.

2.2. Mixed feelings

Because it was once a slave colony and it was still very present for the Barbadians, they have not wanted to be under the British Crown. However, the idea of monarchy caused ambivalent emotions as it presents the idea of a fairy tale and the pain of those who died by enriching it (Honoré Poetry, 2022). According to a survey about Barbadians’ opinion towards the British Crown, more than 60% were in favour of shifting to a republican system, 50% preferred the Westminster system and the rest 10% had a preference for maintaining the status quo (Safi, 2021). Indeed, the disappointment with the Royal family has been growing in the last decades due to different detrimental news regarding the Crown, going from the Windrush scandal to the Black Lives Matter movement and the reason why Prince Harry and Meghan Markle split from the family.

The Windrush scandal has its origins in 1950s, right after the World War II, which left Britain with labour shortage. As a consequence, citizens from Caribbean countries, who participated in the war by serving in the British armed forces, went to the United Kingdom (Windrush, 2023). The British Nationality Act of 1948 granted Commonwealth's people not only rights of entry and settlement but also British citizenship (Windrush, 2018). However, the Act did not stop the known as Windrush generation of facing discrimination during the following decades. From 1950 until 1981, Britain did a series of changes in its legislation in order to “reduce the proportion of people living in the United Kingdom who did not have white skin” (Gentleman, 2022). The scandal exploded in 2018, when people from the Windrush generation faced deportation because paperwork related to their residency status was not formalised by the Home Office (Gentleman, 2018a). According to Guy Hewitt, Barbadian high commissioner in London, “Windrush [scandal] would have been one of those significant events that showed the divergence between where the Queen, as the queen of the United Kingdom, and her role as the queen of Barbados, may have been irreconcilable” (Safi, 2021).

In 2020, as a response of George Floyd's murder, the Black Lives Matter movement became popular in the United States and rapidly spread to other countries. According to Adina Campbell (2021), BBC Community Affairs Correspondent, the supporters of this movement “want action to address unequal treatment and oppression that goes all the way back to the era of slavery, but which continues today”. The activist organization of the BLM movement in the United Kingdom was taken by surprise when discovering that the Crown was also supporter, mostly because members of the royal family had been accused of racism by the Prince Harry and Meghan Markle (Siddique et al., 2021). Therefore, the accusation contradicts the support to the BLM movement and it shows attitudes that can be considered confrontational for Commonwealth's Caribbean countries. Indeed, the racist image of the monarchy has promoted the republican sentiment in those realms and it also has proved that, according to Guy Hewitt, Barbados “did make the right decision to have a native-born citizen as head of state” (Quinn, 2021).

2.3. Process of the republican shift

Barrow's idea of Barbados becoming a republic was considered by previous governments to be a responsibility of great weight as it would not only divide society but also cause disturbance with Britain (Safi, 2021). Nevertheless, Mia Mottley, current Prime Minister of the country, has shared the same vision as Barrow and has seen republicanism possible as other Commonwealth Caribbean countries were already republics (Hewitt, 2020). Indeed, Sir Ronald Sanders, regional trade specialist and diplomat, said "[Caribbean countries] became republics because, even though the queen's role was only symbolic, exercising no real executive authority, it was simply not acceptable that a foreign person, residing thousands of miles away with no daily experience of life in a country, could credibly be its head of state" (Welcoming, 2021). Hence, it was during Mottley's administration that the shift was made, although there were doubts about the process related to the Constitution and a referendum.

According to Eddy Ventose, a law professor at the University of the West Indies, the government could have done the process without consulting the population as the referendum was not obligatory. However, critics such as Grenville Philips II, from the political party Solutions Barbados, did not agree with the idea of not taking into consideration what Barbadians opine. Nevertheless, Professor Ventose explained "whether there is a requirement in the Barbados constitution the answer is no, there is not legal requirement for consultation" (Madden, 2021). In the past, many Caribbean countries (such as Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, or Dominica) became republics as well but in contrast to Barbados, their constitution required a referendum as Professor Ventose said. Moreover, as the idea of turning into a republic has been debated for a long time, in 2005 the Referendum Act was passed to "make provision for the holding of a referendum" on the question of whether to become a republic or to continue being a constitutional monarchy. Professor Ventose noted that it was not appointed in the High Court "and therefore there was no requirement for a referendum" (Madden, 2021).

According to Emmanuel Joseph (2021), from the *Barbados Today* newspaper, a part of the country's population was not completely convinced with the idea of cutting ties with the

British Crown after almost four centuries by designating a non-executive president and with the promise of a new constitution. However, while most of the Barbadians approved having one of them as Head of State when the transition happened, others doubted still of its meaning, which helped to perceive the need of information for the country's nation to comprehend the transition process: what system they were leaving behind and to what they were shifting to. Therefore, the Republican Status Transition Advisory Committee (RSTAC), a sub-committee set up by the Cabinet of the Government of Barbados (Republican, 2021) and which is in charge of the legal aspects, decided to write a commission based on two previous ones as well as the deliberations from the Barbadians. According to Bulbulia (2021b), member of the RSTAC, the commission proposed that the "system of government should be a parliamentary republic with the Head of State being the President. Executive power should continue to be exercised by a Cabinet, with the Head of Government being the Prime Minister. The advantage of this system is that it replaces the monarch with an elected president, while simultaneously retaining the present relationship between the formal Head of State and the executive arm of government". Therefore, to review the constitution was necessary in order to adjust it to the republican status. Consequently, the Government decided to modify only the issues related to the President election, their swearing in and their function.

However, members from the RSTAC and from a blue-ribbon panel asked for a revision of the process as they alleged that, based on a source, "there is no constitutional document. They have not yet signed off on a constitutional document. They can't go ahead without having a constitutional change" (Joseph, 2021). For some of the constituents, this implied that the method used by Mottley's administration for transition was not the most adequate. Therefore, the main reason why the RSTAC and blue-ribbon panel members were against the process was due to how it was being done: first, to transition, then, to finish the constitution and finally, to have the new government system by November 30, 2021, which was an extremely short period of time. Sir Woodville Marshal, historian and professor emeritus of University of the West Indies, had a similar opinion to the opposition despite of being in favour of the republican shift. However, he said that "it is not entirely logical to get the Barbadian Head of State before you change the constitution. In other words, you should invert the process...

change the constitution and the result of the change is that you would have a Barbadian Head of State [...], that is the democratic way of doing it” (Joseph, 2021).

2.4. Ceremony and afterwards

After a long time, 396 years in particular, Barbados became an independent nation by shifting into a republic on November 30, 2021, 55 years after slavery ceased in the island. The Barbados Parliament enacted a constitution, which fixed the one amended by the Queen Elizabeth II and which adhered to the idea motivated by Errol Barrow of a free society (Paterson, 2022).

It was a historical moment, not only for Barbados, but also for the Commonwealth of Nations as it was the first republican transition since 1992, when Mauritius became a republic. Therefore, King Charles III was the guest of honour to the ceremony as he was at that time the heir to the throne and he dedicated a few words to the Barbadians by commending how far they had come despite the “appalling atrocities of slavery” which caused damage in the past, and he encouraged them “to make freedom, justice and self-determination to be their guides” (Smith, 2021).

Moreover, it was also time for Sandra Mason, appointed President of the Republic by Prime Minister and Mother of the Republic, Mia Mottley, to declaim the oath of office: “I, Sandra Prunella Mason, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Barbados according to law, so help me God”. Indeed, not only the President, but also other important senior positions, such as the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, or the Commissioner of Police among them, did not give their oath of allegiance to “Queen, her heirs and successors” but to Barbados “according to law” (Smith, 2021).

3. The case of Jamaica

3.1. Historical context

Spanish settlers, on behalf of the Spanish monarchy, arrived at Jamaica in 1494 (MacMillan et al., 2022). However, in 1655 the island was attacked by England, which was under the rule of Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell at that time since king Charles I had been beheaded in 1649.

When Charles II became king in 1660, he granted the *Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa* a charter by which not only gold or food was traded but also slaves. After his death, his brother James, previously Duke of York, turned it into the *Royal African Company*, which trafficked enslaved Africans to the America (Green, 2022). According to Trevor Burnard, director of the Wilberforce Institute for the Study of Slavery and Emancipation at the University of Hull, Jamaica “was easily the largest destination of enslaved people in British America” (MacMillan et al., 2022). One of the most significant voyages of this slaves’ traffic was the case of Zong, a ship licenced by African Royal Charter. In 1780s, it was planned to go from Ghana to Jamaica with 442 slaves; however, due to weight problems during the trip, the crew decided to throw around 140 captive Africans to the sea. At the end, the ship arrived with 208 slaves (History, 2020).

These centuries of being a slave colony came to an end in August 1962, when Jamaica won its political independence, becoming a nation member of the Commonwealth of Nations (Mundle, 2022). In 1960, the United Nations approved a resolution by which the United Kingdom should give Jamaica independence. However, the Caribbean country decided to establish a constitutional monarchy, by which the Queen continued being the head of state. Her responsibilities were assigned to the governor general and the executive power was given to Cabinet, controlled by the prime minister, who concentrated all the power. According to Judge Robinson, the reason behind this decision was that the then-Prime Minister, Alexander Bustamante, and Opposition Leader, Norman Manley “exhibited a lack of confidence in the Jamaican people to govern themselves, free from any constitutional attachment to the British Monarch” (Hamilton, 2022).

3.2. Republicanism in the 2010s

In 2011, the then-Prime Minister Bruce Golding suggested in the House of Representative to cut Jamaica's colonial ties with the British Crown by its 50th year of Independence. He said "I have long believed that if I am to have a queen, it must be a Jamaican queen. I would not wish to see us celebrate 50 years of Independence without completing that part of our *sovereignisation*, for want of a better word". This idea of having a Jamaican as a Head of State is also popular within Jamaica's population, and the Government and the Opposition planned to work together to prepare the Constitution for a replacement of the Queen as Head of State. However, it was not done at that time (Give, 2011).

In August 2015, the British government guaranteed that if Jamaica decided to remove the Queen as Head of State, it would not be an offence. In 2016, as the administration of Andrew Holness, prime minister of Jamaica, was committed to grant a referendum to make the decision on whether to retain the British Privy Council or not, it can be guessed that the administration also had the idea of cutting ties with the British Crown. This would have cost the Governor General, Sir Patrick Allen, his job as he is the Queen's local representative in the country. Ronald Thwaites, from the Opposition People's National Party, said it was time to take the ultimate step. He had taken part during the Portia Simpson Miller's administration between 2012 and 2016, when the warning that the Queen would be removed as head of state was announced but no legislation was brought to Parliament to amend the Constitution (Johnson, 2016).

3.2.1 Polls' results

In 2011, polls about the republican shift started to show what people wanted. Between May and June, Bill Johnson, a veteran pollster, did a poll among 1008 Jamaicans which results were that 60% of the polled believed remaining with the British monarchy would be better in contrast to the 17% thinking it would be worse if the country continued to be under the rule of the British Crown and the rest 23% did not know (Give, 2011). Moreover, another poll was carried out to see whether Jamaica's population preferred keeping the current Westminster system, which means a monarchy, having a Jamaican head of state, or a

republican system. The results showed that most Jamaicans, around 44%, were in favour of continuing with a monarchy whereas 35% chose the republican system and the rest 21% did not know (Espeut, 2011).

Compared to recent polls, the number of Jamaicans aspiring to cut ties with the British Crown has grown. One of the latest polls made on July 22, 2022, by Don Anderson, a statistician owner of the Market Research Limit firm, proved that 56% of Jamaicans were in favour of removing Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State (Mundle, 2022). Now, with King Charles III on throne, another poll by the pollster Lord Ashcroft has showed that 49% of the Jamaica's population, as opposed to 40%, prefer to cut ties with the British monarchy and to remove their current Head of State (Elliards, 2023).

3.3. Royals' visit and Windrush scandal

The now princes of Wales, William and Kate, visited the island in March 2022 as part of their Caribbean tour to Belize, Jamaica and the Bahamas. Its aim was to fortify relations between the British monarchy and the member countries in the Commonwealth of Nations (Kirka, 2022). However, the result of the stopover was the opposite.

According to Kimone Francis (2022), a senior staff reporter, when the royals landed in Jamaica, they were declared *personae non gratae* by members of the *Marcus Garvey-founded Universal Negro Improvement Association*, the United Independent's Congress, and the Opposition People's National Party (PNP). Former PNP general secretary, Paul Burke, said that the resistance to the royals should be analysed within the slavery context in which the monarchy took part (Francis, 2022). The Royal family continues to enjoy the benefits and the wealth from the British Empire, which was the result of hundred years of enslavement. Now, Jamaican population is beginning to feel anti-colonial sentiment, which has motivated them to fight for equality through campaigns inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement (Jones, 2022). Therefore, during the visit, hundreds of activists were asking the monarchy for apologies and reparations aids for slavery and Prince William manifested his "profound sorrow, offering the demanded apology. During his speech, he used his father's words in Barbados in 2021 to describe slavery as an appalling atrocity: "slavery was abhorrent, and it

should never have happened” (Kirka, 2022). However, his apology was rejected by the Advocated Network, a Jamaican alliance of human rights activists, as they interpreted William’s words as empty, without reaching the “level of the formal apology” the country deserved (Kirka, 2022).

Although the hidden reason of the tour was to try to stop Caribbean nations of following the example of Barbados (Hall, 2022), the Prime Minister Andrew Holness told the royals about the idea of shifting to a republican system and to remove the then-Queen Elizabeth II as Head of State (Royal, 2022). As a respond, Prince William expressed, on behalf of the British Crown, support and respect for the country’s decision (Prince, 2022).

On the other hand, the Windrush scandal proved what part of the Jamaica population were thinking: “it’s all about the Queen... but what are they doing for Jamaica?” (Lothian-McLean, 2022). As it was said before, in 2018 the Windrush generation, who are the people that moved to the United Kingdom after the World War II, even before the independence of their country was achieved, faced immigration issues because of bureaucracy. A large number of the Jamaican population living there, who in 2017 were estimated to be 15,000 people (Windrush, 2023), were threatened with deportation after working and living in the United Kingdom for decades (Anger, 2018). For other part of this generation, healthcare was denied, jobs were lost and to be homeless was their only choice (Gentleman, 2018b). According to Patrick Vernon, Windrush campaigner and cultural historian, the scandal showed not only what was the posture of the United Kingdom towards Jamaicans (Hall, 2022), but also the xenophobia of the Crown, which did not pronounce itself during and after the misconduct, and many of them did not perceive the racism behind it.

3.4. After Queen Elizabeth II’s death

3.4.1. Mixed feelings

The mix of feelings became even more evident 10 years before the Queen’s death. In January 2012, the Jamaican newspaper *Jamaica Gleaner* published an article with some testimonies answering to the then-Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller’s plan of removing the British

monarch as head of state. Some of them did not see the country in a favourable position to cut ties with the British Crown. A member of the Jamaica Defence Force had the same opinion because the assistance of foreign countries was still needed in many aspects even though Jamaica seemed independent (Baxter, 2012).

Nowadays, Jamaican population is divided into those who mourned the Queen's death and those who see the moment to cut ties with the British monarchy. One of those in favour of the republican shift is Staceyann Chinn, writer and activist, who demands an apology from the monarchy and monetary help to repair the damage caused by slavery by saying "a robust apology, an articulate, eloquent, broadly evidential apology that acknowledges the harm that the British colonial empire has wrought upon so many" (MacMillan, et al., 2022). The idea was amplified by the scholar and advocate Rosalea Hamilton who argues that rather than a financial aid, what Jamaica actually needs is "a process of healing and repairing" (MacMillan, et al., 2022). It is mostly aged people that mourn the Queen's death. The monarch was described as "people person" by Shirley McLean, who had met her multiple times, as well as "a mother figure". Contrarily, younger generations see the monarchy as outdated. Zuri Chinn, Staceyann Chinn's daughter, is one of the young demanders of having a Jamaican as a head of state by saying "we just need someone who can make the place a better place. Care for us, care for the citizens, care for everyone in the country" (MacMillan, et al., 2022).

Moreover, the dispute is also present within members of different political parties. Richard Currie, elected as chief of Maroon Party in 2021, expressed his complete support to Queen Elizabeth II as he and his team are committed to maintain diplomatic relations with the British Crown (Silvera, 2022). However, David Salomon, public policy, and management student at The University of the West Indies, wrote an article for *Jamaica Gleaner* called *Windsors, pack your bags and go* explaining the benefits of having one of them as head of state. One of the roles a monarch has to face is to represent their country. King Charles III, a white person, does not represent the 99% of the Jamaican who are African descendants. Therefore, to have a Jamaican as head of state would symbolize not only the demographics, but also the history

of the country, which was once oppressed by the British Crown, their current rulers (Salomon, 2019).

3.4.2. Process, government, and structure

Although the idea of being a republic has been more popular in the last decade, according to the Minister of Legal and Constitutional Affairs, Marlene Malahoo Forte, the procedure will still take some time. The process begins in the Lower House, where following the constitution and once the Bill has been brought in and read for the first time, a period of three months should pass before the second reading. However, there will be another three months between the second and the third readings which “will result in six months of dead time” as stated by Malahoo Forte (Republic, 2022). However, the Minister expects the process will accelerate once the consensus has been reached, which delay more advances “because the provision is deeply entrenched, as it is meant to have the people think long and hard about the change” (Republic, 2022).

No matter how, before transitioning and shifting from one government system to another, it is useful to clarify what a republic means, as Rosalea Hamilton, PhD and founding director of Institute of Law and Economics, explains in her article *Our “Jamaican Republic” — A *wha dat?**. The term came from the Latin root *res publica*, meaning “public thing”, and, according to Abraham Lincoln, a republic is “a government of the people, by the people, for the people” (Hamilton, 2022). Therefore, the government should be taken as a public matter and, in a republican nation, the citizens are the ones controlling and deciding who represents them, which leads to the term “democratic republics”. According to Hamilton (2022), shifting to a republican system would be beneficial for the country as “this, among other weaknesses in Jamaica’s democracy can be improved in the process of becoming a republic if, and only if, the people see themselves as “owners” of Jamaica and choose to actively undertake the responsibility of ownership”.

4. The case of New Zealand

4.1. Historical context: Treaty of Waitangi

At first, in the 13th century, when the Māori discovered and settled in the lands now known as New Zealand, they established a tribal society. Centuries later, specifically in the 16th century, Britain started its colonization. During the 17th century, multiple countries such as Barbados, in 1627, were invaded by the British Empire, and others, including Jamaica in 1655, were annexed (Brain, 2019). Seeing that the colonization lasted until the 20th century, in the 19th century, the New Zealand Company, founded in England, sent British settlers to the Māori territory. However, it was in 1840 that the Te Tiriti o Waitangi, or the Treaty of Waitangi, was signed. The document was written in a short period of time by captain and Lieutenant-Governor William Hobson, who was given the responsibility of maintaining British sovereignty over New Zealand, and also by James Busby, consular representative. The text was translated into Māori immediately so that a part of Māori population could debate before it was signed on February 6, 1840, by 40 Māori chiefs (May, 2002).

The Treaty of Waitangi was considered to set the basis of the relation between Māori people and the British Crown. According to an article by the Ministry for Culture and Heritage (Treaty, 2017), sovereignty was ceded to Britain and the Crown was given the right of buying lands in the English version. In exchange, ownership rights were guaranteed and Māori and British subjects were equal in terms of rights and privileges. However, because it was translated quickly, the translation of some key terms caused misunderstandings. For instance, in the Māori version, *kawanatanga*, which means governance, was used to translate sovereignty. Therefore, Māori thought that the government was traded for lands and that they kept their property rights. Māori did not comprehend what it was being negotiated by the Crown and, whereas the English made sure that their properties would not be altered, the Māori version gave “*tino rangatiratanga*¹ over *taonga*”² (Treaty, 2017).

¹ Full authority

² Treasures, which may be intangible

About 50 years ago, in the 1970s, Ruth Ross, a historian, spread the idea that both versions of the treaty could not come to terms, which was the reason why these issues have been a matter of debate for a long period of time. However, Ned Fletcher, an Auckland lawyer, has recently questioned what were the authors of the Treaty's intentions and whether if both texts, the English, and the Māori, can reach an agreement since the British version had a more principled purpose. Therefore, Britain not only wanted the *kawānatanga*³ for the Crown, but also meant to maintain Māori's *rangatiratanga*⁴ and property's rights. As it can be guessed, Fletcher disagrees with Ross's point of view and says "that means the Treaty is seen as a deceit and a fraud upon Māori, which makes it a very awkward founding document for a nation" (Matthews, 2022). Moreover, Paul Moon, a history professor at the Auckland University of Technology, supports Fletcher's idea by arguing that the initial plan of the British was to seek sovereignty "that would only apply to British subjects who had go to live in New Zealand" (Matthews, 2022).

4.2. Republicanism within New Zealand's politics

There are mixed feelings and opinions on whether to become a republic or not within the government and different parties. Willie Jackson, Minister for Māori Development, is a republican but considers that it is not the moment for the dispute about cutting ties with the British Crown. Jacinda Ardens, from the Labour party and former Prime Minister, thinks similar to Jackson by believing New Zealand and British monarchy will not go too far anymore. Nonetheless, she let the moment of shifting to a republic to a future administration. James Shaw, co-leader from the Green party, is a republican in favour of having a New Zealander as head of state, although he would not lead the party to execute the transition (McConnell, 2022). Marama Davidson, also Green party co-leader, did not forget about the colonist repression when sending her condolences to the Royal family (Harries et al., 2022). Moreover, Davidson sees the Queen's death as the end of an era, which did not honour the Treaty of Waitangi (Doyle, 2022).

³ Sovereignty

⁴ Self-governance

According to John Bishop (2022), veteran political journalist, no step was taken previously because Māori leaders feared to put in danger the relationship with the Crown as it would be damaging for Māori. However, on February 6th, 2022, the Waitangi Day Māori Party launched a petition to split from the British monarchy. One of the arguments of the co-leader Rawiri Waititi was that the country was old enough “to stand on its own two feet” (McConnell, 2022). Moreover, the reason why the Māori party wants to cut ties is because the current Westminster system does not seem compatible with the Treaty of Waitangi (McConnell, 2022). However, according to Carwyn Jones, Pukenga Matua⁵ of Maori law and philosophy at Te Wananga o Raukawa⁶, separating from the British Crown does not mean the end of the Treaty of Waitangi. Indeed, Jones considers that, due to the history of the island, the Treaty can be useful for a New Zealand – Māori partnership after the shifting of systems (Perry, 2022), and, besides, constitutional experts believe that a local head of state will better regulate the duties and ideals of the Treaty (McConnell, 2021). Therefore, the Māori party, supported by the Green party, suggests a constitutional transformation putting the Treaty of Waitangi at the centre (Harris et al., 2022) since Rawiri Waititi, co-leader of the party, sees the document as the base for the new system of government (Perry, 2022). Action has been taken as both parties have already started conversations to make the constitutional reform and the Māori Party, having two seats in New Zealand’s parliament, is encouraging the idea of having a Māori Parliament as well (McClure, 2022b). However, the political reporter Thomas Coughlan (2021) states that the only way the republican issue can reach a referendum is through a political campaign based on it. Unfortunately, the debate lacks a successful policy because it often deviates to broader constitutional topics, not focusing on the matter of a hereditary head of state.

⁵ Lead academic

⁶ Māori tertiary education provider

4.2.1. Monarchists vs republicans

In 2018, the Crown experienced a small renaissance in popularity in New Zealand due to the royal wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle, although there has been a small republican movement willing to end relations with the British monarchy (Hubbard, 2018).

Dean Knight, the then-current head of the New Zealand Republic lobby group, argued that Queen Elizabeth II was overly British to rule the island as she did not reflect the New Zealand values. He also believed that their head of state should be one of them, a New Zealander and to replace the current one would not be xenophobic as the role is aimed to represent the nation they are. Indeed, he considered as a failure not having a Māori head of state since this is the second largest ethnic group after the European descendent, and it represents around the 17% of the population (Māori, 2022). According to a New Zealand Republic's poll in 2016, this idea was shared by 59% of the surveyed whereas 34% voted in favour of continuing with the current monarchy (Eleftheriou-Smith, 2016) and in 2019, the results were truly similar being 55% for a New Zealander head of state and 39% supporting the British monarch (Holden, 2019). In contrast, Sean Palmer, chairman of the non-partisan organization Monarchy New Zealand, said that it is not a big deal to not have a New Zealander head of state as a considerable part of the New Zealand population is living in other parts of the world and that the current system is the most effective in other countries. He also saw having the British head of state as an advantage in terms of speaking on behalf of them as the Queen was particularly representative to gain the attention of the world. Moreover, the problem that Knight perceived is sharing the head of state with other 15 Commonwealth members; therefore, each of them receives limited attention from the monarch. In fact, Knight claimed that, more than a monarch, Elizabeth II was just a visitor when going to other Commonwealth countries, as she travelled as the British queen rather than as a Commonwealth queen.

Regarding independence, both sides, republicans and monarchists, are too far of coming to terms due to their different values, although monarchists have tried to make up their arguments about the idiosyncrasy of not having a head of state. Palmer, to support the organization's monarchical view, took as examples constitutional monarchies such as

Sweden, Denmark, or Spain, where wealth seems to be more equally distributed than in republics. On the other hand, Knight argued that most of the members of the Commonwealth have become republicans and they are still part of it and, therefore, to cut ties with the British Crown would not mean to separate and isolate New Zealand. He considered that the process of shifting will not be extremely complicated since there is already a medium to do it due to previous cases and because, according to Knight, they have “a de facto head of state in the Governor-General” (Hubbard, 2018). Hence, by giving the right to be head of state to the governor-general, the process will be faster. Then again, Palmer disagreed with this plan as he maintained that changing the current system will put in danger democracy because, as it was said before, constitutional monarchies are the ones running in most democratic states.

4.3. After Queen Elizabeth II’s death

Although in 2022 the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee was celebrated due to her 70 years on the throne, it is a well-known fact that Elizabeth II did not go to New Zealand since the beginning of the 21st century. However, she was the first monarch to visit New Zealand in 1953, the year of her coronation (Doyle, 2022). Then, she went back nine more times: three to celebrate the Waitangi Day anniversary in 1963, 1974, and 1990, and other six (1970, 1977, 1981, 1986, 1995, 2002) for other reasons (Queen’s, 2022).

The current Kingitanga⁷, Tuheitia Pootatau Te Wherowhero VI, and the Makau Ariki⁸, Te Atawhai, showed their condolences to the Queen’s parting by praising the relation between the British monarch and the late Māori Queen Te Arikinui Te Atairangikaahu. During the speech, he said “Queen Elizabeth personally signed into law the Waikato Raupatu Settlement Act 1995 – the only New Zealand legislation given Royal Assent in person by the Queen. This act is significant in the life and history of our nation and is held in the highest regard by the Kingitanga as honouring a Queen-to-Queen relationship” (Doyle, 2022). Moreover, the Queen, who was aware of the importance the document had, expressed regret by the way British governments did not pay attention to the treaty (Cooke, 2022).

⁷ Māori king

⁸ Queen consort

After the process of grieving, Te Pati Māori⁹ co-leader Debbie Ngarewa-Packer believed it was time to talk about the importance the Crown has in New Zealand. According to constitutional experts, the split of both sides is more than likely to happen because anti-royal feelings have been increasing since the Queen's passing away and her son Charles has taken the throne. King Charles III is not causing and probably will not cause the same national affection as her mother did because the Commonwealth sees him as "remote and eccentric, who exhibits little empathy for the people" (Norquay, 2022). Dr Andrew Butler, co-author of the *New Zealand Bill of Right Act: A Commentary*, is in favour of having one of them as their head of state "who acts more or less the same way as the Queen did, somebody who stands above politics and represents the best of her country" (Norquay, 2022). To demonstrate it, Butler takes as examples Germany or Ireland, which became a republic "and it was very straightforward" (Norquay, 2022).

4.3.1. Mixed feelings

Over time, several generations have been starting to see monarchy as a problem because now it is easier to learn and to know about colonization. Maia Gooday, from Te Rarawa iwi¹⁰, says "I don't look at the dismantling of Māori culture and treating us as second-class citizens and taking away our taonga and treasure something to value" (Duff, 2022). Indeed, Carwyn Jones, lead academic, questions whether the Crown can amend the damaged caused by the colonization or needs to be dismantled to start taking actions (McClure, 2022a). Moreover, recent scandals not only have contributed to that problematic image of the British Crown but also Prince Harry and Meghan Markle drawing apart from the royal family and the relationship between Prince Andrew and the paedophile Jeffrey Epstein have bestowed it a racist and classist image. Therefore, New Zealanders have begun to realize that the British monarchy, with all its wealth and privilege, cannot exist in this period of time as it does not have any relation with common people's lives at the other side of the world (Duff, 2022).

⁹ Māori party

¹⁰ Tribe

Regarding the racism issue, when the Crown was accused by Meghan Markle, the royal family decided to solve it privately. However, the political reporter Glenn McConnell considers that the Commonwealth have the right to know the names of the accused as the member countries value the diversity there is in them. He also added “we need to know if a future head of state believes their citizens are somehow damaged or worth less because of the colour of their skin” (McConnell, 2021), probably referring to King Charles III, who is neither respected nor considered to be the best option to rule the Commonwealth of Nations. Indeed, McConnell (2021) sees the royal family as “unsuitable to lead”, opining that New Zealand would not lose anything if they cut ties with the British monarchy if it was not because of the Treaty of Waitangi. Conversely, Geoffrey Palmer, former prime minister, among other, does not see the treaty as an obstacle to change the current system of government (McConnell, 2021). However, previously, it was said that what New Zealand wanted was a New Zealander as head of state. Nonetheless, recent polls regarding the question of becoming a republic show something different. A Reid Research poll in 2022 (McCullen, 2023) has exposed that 48% of the surveyed did not want to become a republic after Queen’s death on contrast to 36% in favour of the shift.

5. Conclusion

With Queen Elizabeth II gone, King Charles III has to deal with what he has inherited: not only a throne with a large history behind but also a Commonwealth of Nations in crisis. This dissertation has aimed to explain the reasons and the current situation of Barbados, Jamaica, and New Zealand, three member countries which in the past suffered the colonization and the slavery from the British Empire. The awareness of the history of these nations is one of the main reasons for the raise of the republican calls. In addition, diverse situations, such as the Windrush scandal or the accusations of Meghan Markle to the royal family, have contributed to the racist image of the Crown.

This dissertation has studied the cases of Barbados, Jamaica, and New Zealand, since each of them is in a different part of the process of becoming a republic. It can be said that Barbados has achieved its main goal of being completely free by removing the then-Queen Elizabeth II as head of state. This case has been of extreme interest since it was the first nation to shift in the 21st century; therefore, it is probable that the rest of the countries willing to take the step will follow Barbados's example. However, the processes will be distinct due to constitutional issues and whether the government decides to have a referendum or not, as it happened in Barbados. Moreover, after the part of Jamaica, it can be considered that it will be one of the first countries to remove the current King as head of state since it has been an issue of debate for a long period of time and the Prime Minister, Andrew Holness, has already told the now Princes of Wales, William and Kate. Nonetheless, the process would still take some time as there are a few issues to deliberate. What is clear is that out of these three cases, New Zealand is the latest one to discuss cutting ties with the British Crown. The nation has some internal matters to solve since the population is more divided than Jamaican. Moreover, it is likely that both Jamaica and New Zealand would decide to remove the British monarch to choose one of them as head of state.

Regarding the sources used for this paper, it was necessary to go to newspapers, not only from the three mentioned nations but also from the United Kingdom, since it is a truly recent matter that is happening in these days. To read diverse articles from newspapers was crucial

in order to corroborate the varied news in each of them and to have different political points of view to offer and expose a more accurate opinion from the population and the political parties.

As it was said, the raising of republicanism within the Commonwealth of nations is an ongoing matter. With just the case of Barbados it can be expected that a new wave of changes and transitions is going to happen in the following decades. This can be considered as a historical matter, and since history has always been made, further studies related to this topic will show the unique processes of the Commonwealth nations in removing the King as head of state.

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