



A democratic alternative to the monarchy

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Mr Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London
City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London, SE1 2AA

June 10, 2020

Dear Mr Khan

Review of slaver statues

I welcome the announcement of a commission to review statues and landmarks in London. There has been longstanding anger at the celebration of historic figures who are closely associated with slavery and empire and it is right that there is a serious discussion about who we honour with public monuments.

On this point I would ask that British monarchs and other royals associated with slavery and empire are not ignored during this review. I understand this might be a controversial and uncomfortable point, but a review of how we represent and celebrate our past cannot ignore this elephant in the room.

English and British monarchs from at least as early as Queen Elizabeth I and as late as King William IV facilitated, financed, promoted and defended the slave trade. As late as the early nineteenth century, while still Prince of Wales, William IV was doing his best to frustrate the abolitionist cause from his position in the House of Lords. The wealth and prosperity enjoyed by Queen Victoria was in no small part the result of her family's involvement in the slave trade and the Queen's own support for the expansion of the British empire during her reign.

The matter of removing or replacing statues is not an easy one to resolve and I do not wish to tell you which statues to keep or remove. I would just ask that the commission, with your support, ensures that monarchs whose wealth was built on the back of slavery and empire are also given due consideration during their deliberations. Otherwise any moves to question



which legacies are being celebrated or to challenge the way we remember Britain's involvement in slavery, will be compromised on the altar of deference to royalty.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Graham Smith', written in a cursive style.

Graham Smith
CEO, Republic