

French Lessons for Irish Forelock-Tuggers : “We are a republican country. Why should I pay tribute to a foreign monarch?”

Thursday 15 September 2022, by [Ó FLATHARTA Tomás](#) (Date first published: 13 September 2022).

The Irish élite and its satellites are tugging the forelock to the British Monarchy after the death of Queen Elizabeth II. French left-wing politicians are having none of it. The message must spread in Ireland, and other parts of the world. “We are a republican country. Why should I pay tribute to a foreign monarch?”

Several left-wing mayors are defying government orders to fly flags at half-mast for the Queen’s funeral, earning support from French people who say President Macron and the media are lavishing excessive attention on the British monarchy.

Tomás Ó Flatharta

Report Source : The Times (England, September 12 2022) Charles Bremmer, Paris.

The row was opened when Yann Galut, mayor of the central city of Bourges, and Patrick Proisy, mayor of Faches-Thumesnil, on the Belgian border, announced that they would disobey the instruction from Élisabeth Borne, the prime minister, that town halls and other public buildings must lower the Tricolour to half-mast next Monday, the day of the funeral.

“This request seems incredible to me,” Galut, a former Socialist MP and former senior official in the party, wrote on Twitter. “I respect the sorrow of our English friends but I will not put up the French flag [at half mast] over the municipal buildings of Bourges.” He said later on France 3 television:

“We are a republican country. Why should I pay tribute to a foreign monarch?”

The mayors were applauded by other mayors and left-wing supporters on social media. Alexis Corbière, a senior MP in the Unbowed France party of Jean-Luc Mélenchon, said: “They are right. The way almost all French television channels have been turned into a sort of royal celebrity magazine . . . is starting to look grotesque,” he tweeted, adding in English: “Too much is too much.” Corbière was echoing unhappiness on social media from people who deplore the blanket coverage on television and Macron’s emotional tributes to the Queen and Britain.

Patrice Leclerc, the communist mayor of Gennevilliers, a big Paris suburb on the Seine, said he would also refuse to lower the Tricolour on municipal buildings. “If I put the flags at half mast, it would be for the thousands of dead in the Pakistan floods,” he said.

Philippe Laurent, deputy head of the French mayors’ association and mayor of the Paris suburb of Sceaux, said that his recalcitrant colleagues could be breaking the law and face suspension because they hold state office and are under the orders of the prefects, the state representatives in each departement. “We will do it,” he said, because Britain is a friend of France. “But I can understand

that mayors are a little concerned. I don't remember doing this on the death of any European leader. Sometimes symbols become more important than the underlying substance," he said.

Conservatives have attacked the reluctant mayors. Renaud Muselier, the chairman of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region, said Macron's decision was perfectly acceptable. "She was an exceptional personality. It's a friendly country. They are Europeans even if they have left the EU," he said today. "If they aren't doing it, it is because they want people to talk about them. I condemn their failure because in life, you have to know how to share the suffering of others," he said.

The Élysée palace and Paris ministries and other public buildings also lowered the Tricolour to half-mast on Friday for the day on Macron's orders.

Charles Bremmer

P.S.

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