

Australian senator calls British queen a colonizer while taking oath of office



Greens senator for Victoria, Lidia Thorpe lifts her fist into the air as a sign of a clenched-fist salute, as she marches towards the central table of the chamber, in Australia, on August 1, 2022. (Photo by AAP)

Canberra, August 1 (RHC)-- Aboriginal Australian Senator Lidia Thorpe on Monday branded Britain's Elizabeth II a "colonizing" queen after taking the oath of office as a recently-elected lawmaker.

After being administered the oath in the Australian parliament on Monday, the firebrand Greens Senator for Victoria raised her right fist in a Black Power salute as she reluctantly swore allegiance to the 96-year-old monarch, who is still Australia's head of state.

"I, sovereign, Lidia Thorpe, do solemnly and sincerely affirm and declare that I will be faithful, and I bear true allegiance to the colonizing Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II," she said, drawing uproar from the Senate.

She was forced to undertake her parliamentary oath for a second time after being swiftly shut down by other senators. "Senator Thorpe, Senator Thorpe, you are required to recite the oath as printed on the card," said Senate President Sue Lines. Thorpe reluctantly finished the oath as required and was sworn into parliament.

She later tweeted "sovereignty never ceded" as she shared a photo of her swearing-in. Supporting Thorpe's comments about the British Queen as a colonizer, Greens Leader Adam Bandt wrote on Twitter: "Always was. Always will be."

Thorpe has been a staunch supporter of independent Australia and is highly outspoken about the nation's colonialist history. She has repeatedly argued that the Australian flag represents "dispossession, massacre, and genocide."

Back in June, she told ABC radio that "the colonial project came here and murdered our people. Well, I'm sorry that we're not happy about that. I'm sorry that this flag represents so much trauma for so many people, not all people but so many and they're the people that I'm representing," she added.

Criticizing the practice of giving an oath to the British Queen, Thorpe wrote on Twitter last week: "It's 2022 and we're swearing allegiance to a queen of another country."

"I am here for my people, and I will sacrifice swearing allegiance to the colonizer to get into the media like I am right now, to get into the parliament like I am every day," she was quoted as saying.

Thorpe has called for a "treaty" that would legally recognize Aboriginal historical ownership of the land. Australia was a British colony for more than 100 years, a period during which thousands of Aboriginal Australians were killed.

Although the country gained de-facto independence in 1901, it has never become a fully-fledged republic and the 96-year-old British monarch is still Australia's head of state.

According to the polls, most Australians are in favor of becoming a republic, but there is little agreement on how a head of state should be chosen. After the last election, when leading republican Anthony Albanese was elected as prime minister, the "minister of the republic" was appointed for the first time in the country.

"I do support a republic," Albanese told CNN on Sunday, adding that "our priority this term is the recognition of First Nations people in our Constitution."

Senior Australian politician and minister, Matt Thistlethwaite, last week told Nine newspapers that swearing allegiance to the Queen was "archaic and ridiculous."

"It does not represent the Australia we live in and it's further evidence of why we need to begin discussing becoming a republic with our own head of state," he said. "We are no longer British."



Radio Habana Cuba