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This is the author’s preprint version of this article.
A young woman marries the Prince of Wales and is dismayed to find he has a mistress. The marriage fails, and the couple are soon living separate lives. The establishment feels the Princess has an inappropriate connection with the common people. She is suspected of having affairs, sometimes with untrustworthy foreigners, and former servants are induced to betray her confidence. When she dies, before her time, the streets of London overflow with grief-stricken crowds intent on paying tribute to a woman they loved more than their reigning monarch.

Sound familiar? *Plus ça change ...* The Rebel Queen is Queen Caroline, the estranged wife of George IV, Prince Regent from 1810 to 1820. When he became king, he tried to divorce his detested wife to prevent her from reigning as Queen Consort. There was a trial in the House of Lords: she didn’t exactly win, but the divorce didn’t go through. George was, however, finally rid of his wife of 27 years in 1821 when she died, probably of cancer.

*Rebel Queen* is a fascinating history of those times and of a woman whose importance as a focus for radicals is not well known. Hugely entertaining and informative – and Diana is not mentioned once.