

Royal Family deal over Harry and Meghan only exacerbates crisis of rule

Robert Stevens
28 January 2020

The deal struck between the Queen and Prince Harry and his wife, Meghan, that sees them ceasing to be “senior Royals” does nothing to draw a line under the ongoing crisis of a critical institution of bourgeois rule.

In what was described as the “hardest possible Megxit” from the Royal Family, the Queen tried to lay down the law to the Duke and Duchess of Sussex following their announcement that they would step back from frontline duties to become “financially independent.”

Harry and Meghan made the decision independently of any discussion with the Queen, with an eye on the millions to be made from exploiting their royal pedigree and celebrity status once free from the limitations of being members of “The Firm.”

After five days of talks, the Queen decreed that the couple would not be allowed to use their “Royal Highness” titles as “they are no longer working members of the Royal Family.” They would also not be involved in promoting “Her Majesty” in any official capacity, will no longer receive public funds for any Royal duties under the Sovereign Grant and would repay the £2.4 million of public money already spent on refurbishing of Frogmore Cottage—their property in the grounds of Windsor castle.

The deal comes into effect this spring, with Harry stepping back from all official military patronages and royal duties.

Security costs for the royals are paid by the state on top of the Sovereign Grant. The *Telegraph* reported that it is understood that Harry and Meghan “will pay towards their own security if they are commercially successful, in a model echoing [former Labour Party leader] Tony Blair’s own arrangements.” Blair has coined in tens of millions of pounds since he left office as prime minister in 2007.

According to reports, the annual security cost of the Sussexes while in Canada will be at least €1.8 million, which is currently being arranged by London’s Metropolitan Police.

While retaining their titles of Harry, Duke of Sussex and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex, the use of their proposed trademark brand, “Sussex Royal,” is still problematic

because of the jealously guarded term “royal.” *Telegraph* Associate Editor Camilla Tominey commented, “Since the monarchy isn’t just a family but a business, what other option was there when two of its major shareholders had declared their intent to start a rival firm in North America?”

Whatever restrictions may be placed on their branding, a lucrative career now beckons for the Sussexes. For all the caveats placed, the couple have been able to secure the fundamentals they wanted. The *Guardian* wrote, “Royals for rent: will Harry and Meghan become the world’s biggest influencers?” It noted breathlessly that “@SussexRoyal broke Instagram’s record for the fastest one million followers (less than six hours). Now it has 11 million and is the couple’s platform of choice for personal announcements—including the one they made on 8 January, revealing their intention to step back from royal duties (1.85m likes).”

Harry and Meghan are expected to spend most of their time in North America. Meghan departed for Canada as soon as the crisis broke. She was joined by Harry, with the couple staying at a \$14.1 million waterfront mansion on Vancouver Island owned by a friend.

Harry is presently worth more than £30 million, after he and William inherited nearly £16 million from Princess Diana upon her death and then millions more in inheritance from the Queen mother. He will still receive income from his father during the transition, either via his private “reserves” or from his vast Duchy of Cornwall estate and financial portfolio worth over £1 billion—from which Charles received an income of £21 million last year. Meghan is worth several millions from her acting career.

But from the perspective of the super-rich billionaires with whom Harry and Meghan rub shoulders, this is small potatoes. It is estimated that Meghan’s position as Hollywood “royalty” and Harry’s status will allow the couple to profit from deals worth tens of millions, if not billions.

Even as they were finalising their break with the Royal Family, the couple were busy securing future lucrative deals

with Hollywood moguls.

In video footage from the London premiere of *The Lion King* last July, Harry and Meghan are seen speaking to Disney CEO Bob Iger. While Meghan was discussing with the music and product billionaires Beyoncé and Jay-Z a few feet away, Harry points at Meghan and is heard telling Iger, “You know she does voiceovers?” Iger responds, “Oh, really?” Harry replies, “She’s really interested.”

A few seconds later Harry tells *Lion King* director Jon Favreau, “Next time, anyone needs any extra voiceover work. We can make ourselves available.” Meghan then makes a “joke,” “That’s really why we’re here, it’s the pitch.”

Jonathan Shalit, a leading celebrity agent, predicts that the Sussexes could become a “billion-dollar brand”: “Never has a member of the British Royal family been available in the commercial marketplace.”

When asked if he would be open to offering Harry and Meghan deals, Ted Sarandos, chief content officer for Netflix, said, “Who wouldn’t be interested?”

There is speculation that Oprah Winfrey could open the way to an interview with one or both that will pay out up to \$25 million. Winfrey attended the Sussexes wedding in 2018 and was a guest at Meghan’s baby shower in New York last year. Last September, it was revealed that Winfrey was working with Harry on a series of documentaries for Apple focusing on mental illness.

The *Times*’ Clare Foges predicted, “The Sussexes will be wintering in Aspen and summering in Tuscany; wining with Oprah and dining with Gates; enjoying the glamour of international summitry without the drudgery of hospice openings in Carlisle.”

The media was anxious to conclude that little damage had been done to the institution of the monarchy, with the *Telegraph* editorialising that the Queen’s “acting in this swift yet compassionate way” supposedly demonstrated the institution’s “remarkable ability to adjust and evolve.”

Such confidence is out of place. The departure of Harry and Meghan demonstrates the continued unravelling of an institution that has helped keep the British bourgeoisie in the saddle for centuries.

Much effort has gone into recasting the Windsors as a thoroughly modern family, despite their continued respect for “tradition” and positions as chief representatives of hereditary privilege. This included the marriage of the second in line to the throne, William, to the “commoner” Kate Middleton and the reinvention of Harry from the “rabble-rousing youth”—who once wore a Nazi uniform at a fancy dress ball—to a “global charity ambassador” and advocate of identity politics alongside his wife.

Megxit, like Brexit itself, expresses the heightened

contradiction between the nation state and its institutions and a globalised economy dominated by a fabulously rich oligarchy which the Sussexes want to plug into.

For all the talk about the response of an “astute” Queen, what is taking place is a desperate rescue operation that is doomed to failure.

Serious upheaval looms as the aging monarch, who will be 94 in a few months and who has seen 14 prime ministers serve under her, will soon depart the scene. Prince Charles himself is 71 years old and it is hoped by all concerned that his occupancy of the throne will be short, only keeping the seat warm for his son and heir, William.

Harry’s resignation has seen the already relentless promotion of William and Kate go into overdrive. This took on an obscene character when Britain’s slavish media shamelessly marked yesterday’s 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz by focusing on photos taken by Kate of Holocaust survivors and their relatives. The *Daily Mail* explained that she “drew her inspiration from Dutch artist Vermeer.”

Moreover, the explosive material keeps building under the foundations of the House of Windsor.

Even as Harry departed to join Meghan, the Queen decided not to let a good crisis go to waste. Stupidly, she tried to bring Prince Andrew back in from the cold, inviting him to attend a church service to be photographed alongside her and be described as acting as “her rock.”

Andrew is accused of having sex with several underage women, procured for him by deceased sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. Within days of this PR stunt, the *Daily Mirror* reported statements of a former police protection officer that Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein’s lover and Madam, had visited Andrew at Buckingham Palace up to four times a day, where they had “picnics together.”



To contact the WSWWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)