

# Andrew stripped of his royal titles: A toxic representative of a toxic institution

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Fallout from the Prince Andrew sex scandal has again erupted in a major crisis for the British ruling class.

The royal family has been forced to all but disown him to preserve their own position. Buckingham Palace yesterday announced, “a formal process to remove the Style, Titles and Honours of Prince Andrew.” This makes him just Andrew Mountbatten Windsor. The scale of the crisis is indicated by the explanation, “These censures are deemed necessary.”

“Formal notice has now been served to surrender” Andrew’s lease on the virtually rent-free Royal Lodge—a mansion. He is reportedly being moved to an undisclosed property on the Sandringham estate in Norfolk, owned privately by King Charles III.

Sources told the *Daily Mail* that these moves were entirely the work of Charles, without pressure from the heir to the throne. But few believe this, given the growing anxiety of Prince William and Catherine over the reputation and future of the monarchy.

Concern to minimise the damage is shared across every layer of the ruling class. When Andrew initially announced he would not use his titles, a Downing Street spokesman said, “We support the judgement made by the royal family.” Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said, “I think the royal family have said that they didn’t want to take up parliamentary time with this. There are lots of other things that Parliament is discussing.”

But the Starmer government and the rest are engaged in wishful thinking.

The royal family is trying to disentangle itself from a sex scandal, but the crisis is not containable. Andrew has lived a playboy life that led him into friendship with the billionaire sex trafficker Jeffrey Epstein. Epstein’s pimping for the super-rich involved everyone from Donald Trump in the US to the British monarchy.

However, Andrew is only the most nakedly venal of the parasitic royal family.

The monarchy has long been cultivated as a pillar of the capitalist order. The overthrow and execution of Charles I in 1649 marked the birth of bourgeois rule out of feudalism. The Restoration in 1660 created a constitutional monarchy to safeguard that rule through a political compromise between the old feudal aristocracy and the new bourgeoisie, solidified by the “Glorious Revolution” of 1688 and the passing of the Bill of Rights the next year.

Over the centuries, the monarchy served the bourgeois state well. It offered a nominally unpolitical and unifying head of state, shrouded and sanctified by “history” and “tradition”, during the bloody growth of the British Empire. Later it provided a tool of global realpolitik in relations with US and other imperialisms, and newly independent Commonwealth states, as the Empire and Britain’s economic supremacy waned.

Particularly in the person of Elizabeth II, the monarchy gave bourgeois rule an appearance of stability and continuity. But the fall of British capitalism’s international position saw a reckless embrace of the naked speculation of financial parasitism. The royals themselves courted this layer.

Elizabeth responded with an attempt to cut the royal retinue down to a more manageable size, but this only made those lower down the pecking order more rapacious and reckless in seeking independent revenue streams from a global financial oligarchy who far outstrip them in wealth. The hitherto most damaging impact of this process, excluding the bitter break-up and divorce of Charles and the late princess Diana, was the fallout with her son, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. This has now been eclipsed by Andrew’s public disgrace.

The immediate trigger for the downfall of Andrew was the publication of *Nobody’s Girl*, the memoirs of Epstein victim Virginia Giuffre who tragically committed suicide in April before its release.

Giuffre was procured by Epstein when she was 17 and working at Trump's Mar-A-Lago resort. She said he paid her \$15,000 for servicing Andrew. Giuffre was photographed with the prince in 2001, when she was 17.

Andrew denied the allegations made, but every effort to defuse the situation only made it worse. A 2019 interview with BBC journalist Emily Maitlis, intended to clear his name, was a car crash. Giuffre wrote that it would help her legal team "build an ironclad case" against Andrew.

Andrew agreed an out-of-court settlement in 2022, paying Giuffre \$12 million—reportedly with bridging loans from other royals including his mother. He also donated \$2 million to Giuffre's charity for the victims of sex trafficking. This temporarily kept him off the stand over details of his interactions with Giuffre.

During the Maitlis interview, Andrew claimed photographs of Epstein and himself together in 2010 were taken when he went to break off relations in person. However, a 2011 email, now identified as being from Andrew, reassured Epstein they were "in this together," and concluded, "We'll play some more soon!!!!"

Giuffre saw the settlement as "acknowledgement that I and many other women had been victimised and a tacit pledge to never deny it again." But she agreed only to a year's silence, so Elizabeth's platinum jubilee celebrations would not be "tarnished" further.

All attempts to avoid a prosecution have now been blown apart, with the removal of his titles leaving him wide open to legal action.

Andrew's continued efforts to peddle himself commercially have also raised broader difficulties. As part of a 2018 governmental trade delegation to China, hustling an initiative to Chinese businesses, he met President Xi Jinping's chief of staff Cai Qi. This has now become politically awkward to the British ruling class, following the collapse of a spying case against two men accused of supplying Cai with information in the context of an escalating US war drive against China.

To stave off the crisis, under pressure from William, Andrew voluntarily relinquished his dukedoms "to put my duty to my family and the country first." But none of this was enough in the face of popular hostility; a recent poll showed a 91 percent negative opinion of Andrew.

The royal family felt compelled to take extraordinary measures. Threatening removal of his daughters' titles seems to have been the final lever to force Andrew and his ex-wife Sarah Ferguson to agree to quit Royal Lodge in Windsor. The 30-bedroom mansion was attracting further outrage.

Andrew paid £1 million for a 75-year "cast iron" lease from the Crown Estate in 2003, requiring him only to pay "one peppercorn" of rent annually "if demanded." Ferguson, divorced from him in 1996, has been living in a wing of the mansion since 2008. She was also bankrolled by her "supreme friend" Epstein for 15 years. She apologised to Epstein for having publicly disowned him to save her own skin.

Formally stripping Andrew of his titles against his wishes would have required an act of parliament, which threatened another hornets' nest. This was last done in 1917, against royals fighting for their German relatives in World War One. These included the Duke of Albany, who stayed in Germany and became a prominent Nazi supporter—one of many in the royal family.

Charles has sought to bypass this by removing Andrew's name from the official roll of the peerage by issuing a royal warrant, effectively meaning he has lost his Duke of York title. But with his daughters keeping their titles, there are still demands that Andrew is formally removed from his eighth position in the line of succession, not to mention calls by Giuffre's brother, Sky Roberts, that he should be behind bars.

Andrew embodies the toxic decay of bourgeois rule and its institutions. The revulsion he arouses is natural and welcome, but this crisis cannot be swept aside by the cosmetic airbrushing of titles and stately homes. It is systemic.

Millions of American workers and youth have demonstrated against the authoritarian regime of Trump under the slogan "No Kings." That is a slogan that must be embraced by the working class in Britain, still confronted by an actual monarchy.

The entire ruling class—pursuing an agenda of social plunder, eviscerating democratic rights and waging trade and military war on a global scale—must be tackled. The monarchy must be overthrown by the working class as part of the struggle for socialism.



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