

Prince Andrew: still too privileged?

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What does Prince Andrew have to do with political economy? Quite a lot.

In this video I explain how royal privilege reveals the deeper structures of inequality that run through Britain's politics and economy.

When the powerful decide their own punishment, democracy fails.

This is not about vengeance — it's about the rule of law, fairness, and whether power in Britain ever answers to the people.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oUHScrxjN9g&si=OcSyCqJS1U0I54vC>

This is the transcript:

What has Prince Andrew got to do with political economy, which is, after all, what this channel is all about? My answer is a very great deal indeed.

Political economy is about how privilege and power are used to avoid accountability when reallocating resources inside society to benefit those who are possessed of that privilege and power. And if royals aren't possessed of privilege and power, then they are possessed of nothing at all because that is what the whole point of their existence is, at least it seems as far as they are concerned.

Now we know that Prince Andrew has been disgraced. I know he denies all the charges against him. And for the sake of the record, I will record that fact. But he has already paid a £12 million settlement without accepting liability for his actions, and he has lost his Royal Highness title.

Now, he has chosen, supposedly, voluntarily, with his arm being, I suspect, twisted very heavily behind his back, to give up his titles, including the Duke of York and others in Scotland and Ireland.

But he has still got the title Prince Andrew, as of right, and the other titles have not been taken away. He has just been given the option of saying he has voluntarily agreed not to use them, and I don't think that this is good enough.

He's retaining privilege by deciding voluntarily what sanctions should be applied to him. And he's keeping the power by retaining the right to style himself as Prince Andrew and eighth in line to the throne. And as a consequence, he and the whole of the royal family are failing to accept their accountability for their responsibility to uphold the rule of law and, frankly, democratic society in this country when Prince Andrew's brother is, after all, our head of state.

Britain claims to be a democracy ruled by law, and yet what is happening here seems to suggest that some are somehow beyond the reach of that law. If privilege shields those with power from the consequences of their action, then justice collapses.

The monarchy cannot be exempt from the standards we expect of everyone else.

Hereditary power is particularly pernicious in this sense. It is embedded power within the framework of political economy. And it helps define the whole nature of inequality in Britain, saying that some are destined to be wealthy, powerful, rich, and to lord it over everyone else, and others are destined not to be in that situation.

It is eugenic by its very nature, and I find that whole idea utterly wrong. There is nothing inside our DNA that does ever predict that we should be powerful or we should be weak. What we've got are cultures that predestine, very largely, some people to those positions, and Prince Andrew was simply predestined by virtue of his birth to the Queen to be in the situation he's in. But when his elite status is protected, it legitimises inequality for everyone else.

Privilege breeds the idea of impunity. And if there's one thing that Prince Andrew now represents, it's that idea that he acted with apparent impunity and without any awareness that he could be held accountable for what he did, and that corrodes democracy.

So what should happen now? Quite simply, parliament should legislate to remove all of Andrew Windsor's remaining titles. He should be reduced to being a commoner, in other words. He has no privilege left to him because of what he has done. Accountability must apply to the royals as much as it does to everyone else.

And this has nothing to do with vengeance. It's a declaration that no one is above the law, and that the rule of law means rules for all. This is not about one man. It's not

about Prince Andrew as such, although he's obviously the subject of this particular video. It's about whether Britain's economy and politics remain structured to protect privilege or are instead reorganised to deliver fairness and justice, which is what we require and which must start at the top if it is to be available to everyone else as well.

Democracy only survives when power answers to the people, and Prince Andrew, Andrew Windsor, is not doing that. And the only way he can be reduced to the level of anyone else and be shown that he is accountable as everyone else is, is by reducing him to the status of a commoner, which is all that he deserves.

So what do you think? Do you think Prince Andrew should keep his titles, even if he doesn't use them? Do you think he should be stripped of them? Do you think it doesn't matter at all? Do you think there are better things for us to be worried about? Or do you think that this is fundamental to the nature of our democracy?

There's a poll down below. Let us know what you think.

Poll

[poll id="233"]

Taking further action

If you want to write a letter to your MP on the issues raised in this blog post, there is a ChatGPT prompt to assist you in doing so, with full instructions, [here](#).

One word of warning, though: please ensure you have the correct MP. ChatGPT can get it wrong.

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