

Title:

The Abdication Crisis Revisited

Word Count:

547

Summary:

The love affair of Edward, Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) and Wallis Simpson in 1936 is the stuff of romantic dramas.

Keywords:

Article Body:

The love affair of Edward, Prince of Wales (Edward VIII) and Wallis Simpson in 1936 is the stuff of romantic dramas. Alas, reality was a lot less inspiring. Even as she was being wooed by her regal paramour - and while still being married to Ernest Aldrich Simpson, who knew of the Prince's attentions and even discussed the adulterous relationship with him - Wallis had an affair with Guy Marcus Trundle, a car salesman.

So reveal documents released in January 2003 by the Public Record Office in the United Kingdom. Trundle is described as a "very charming adventurer, very good looking, well bred and an excellent dancer". He lived at 18 Bruton Street in Mayfair, London (a prestigious address).

Simpson's first husband was Earl Winfield Spencer. The King met her on January 10, 1931 but was not impressed. Even in the months after May 1934, when he met her for the second time, dined with her and her husband in their London flat and invited them to his country retreat - she did not captivate him. He did take her on a cruise, two years later, unaccompanied by her husband. He tried to introduce her in court, but George V was outraged. Upon his death, the Prince of Wales became King on January 20, 1936. Ernest Simpson - who was having a long-term affair of his own - moved out of the Simpson household in July 1936.

Nor was Wallis the Prince's first American liaison. He contemplated marrying one, Thelma Furness, but then dumped her for Simpson. The British media - though perfectly aware of all the goings-on, reported nothing almost until the King's abdication. The European and American press, in contrast, provided extensive coverage of the developing romance.

At first, the King did not wish to marry Simpson, merely to make her his consort

by changing the law to allow for a morganatic marriage (of people from different classes, with no rights of inheritance). Simpson herself thought of giving up the marriage. Yet, finally, they got married after the abdication, in France. Though Simpson became the Duchess of Windsor, she could not be addressed as "Her Royal Highness".

Additionally, the King was not allowed by the British government to address the British people and the Empire through the BBC.

The government's constitutional experts wrote:

"If the King disregarded it, constitutional monarchy would cease to exist. The King is bound to accept and act upon the advice of his ministers ... for the King to broadcast in disregard of that advice would be appealing over the heads of his constitutional advisers. "The last time when this happened in English history was when Charles I raised His Standard at the beginning of the Civil War on 22 August 1642."

Edward abdicated from the throne on 11 December 1936, making a different speech.

After having abdicated the throne, in exile, not allowed to return on pain of losing their allowance, the couple visited Adolf Hitler in 1937. Simpson was thrilled to be "entertained by Herr Hitler" but there is no proof of further contacts with the Nazi regime with the exception of a telegram from Edward to Hitler, urging peace. Edward was later appointed Governor of the Bahamas. Recently released FBI files identify Simpson as a Nazi sympathizer, though. The FBI suspected her of having an affair with a leading Nazi and spied on her.