

The House of Orange: Today and Tomorrow

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PRESIDING OVER twelve million of Europe's staunchest republicans is the world's most beloved Monarch, Juliana, Queen of the Netherlands. So popular is she, that an Ambassador formerly assigned to the Hague went on public record in 1962 stating the European-unity talks were futile in that the Dutch nation would never permit its Queen to be replaced by a supranational President of Europe. So republican are the Dutch that the words a student spoke after the Heiress Presumptive's marriage, "Beatrix will be the last Queen we shall have, you'll see," seem to be, by many, far too generous in their time allotment.

This dichotomy if nothing else, has precedent dating back to 1579 when William (the Silent) of Orange assumed the leadership of the Republic of the United Netherlands as an elected official while his fellow Heads of State were yet ruling absolutely by Divine Right. The office of Statholder became hereditary rather than elective in 1747 and remained with the House of Orange until the Napoleonic upheaval of Europe. In 1815, the son of the last Statholder became King William I of the Netherlands. With the history of their

nation so closely tied with the fortunes of the House of Orange, the Dutch people have great patriotic loyalty to this family, but not to the concept of Monarchy *in se*. Had the dynasty changed its name—as it should have when the late Queen Wilhelmina abdicated in favor of her daughter in 1948—the Monarchy would have lost its public appeal and perhaps even its support. Not without cause has the Royal Family required its successive Prince consorts to adopt the name of Orange.

It is a short step from loyalty to a dynasty to loyalty to a person. It is even a shorter step to disenchantment with a person and the offering of homage to the great god republicanism. Queen Juliana, until recently the Unreproachable, has of late suffered serious criticism due to her daughters' romantic interests. A member of the States-General voiced his belief, in 1966, that a republican movement was no longer necessary so certainly was the House of Orange on the road to self-destruction. The Parliament itself added its own note of dissent by passing within the past year two laws aimed at limiting the prerogatives and stature of the Crown. The first stated that if a bill were passed

by both chambers in parliament it would become law even if the Queen refused to sign it; the second prohibits any person from occupying the Throne who is not suited to reign. The surprise comes not from the fact that a legislative body places itself above the laws of legitimacy and primogeniture in a hereditary monarchy (the British Parliament proclaimed this right for itself in 1688) but that the lawmakers were specifically ruling out from the succession Juliana's youngest daughter, Princess Christina, who is partially blind. As it was highly improbable that the young Christiana would ever ascend the throne—she has three older sisters—the States-General appeared to be using her as a scapegoat to bear the brunt of its hostility toward the Monarchy.

Such hostility is not universal; there unquestionably remains a love for the Monarchy in the Netherlands, but a love that is peculiar to the Dutch people. It is not based upon disenchantment, as in England where the realization finally dawned that the magic of a Faerie Queene does not mean the reality of Empire, and therefore one must idolize so as not to appear disenchanted; nor is it the idyllic romance in Denmark wherein mermaids, and Royalty, and cobblestones are united in an ecstatic storyland fantasy that Hans Christian Anderson could help produce but never duplicate. The Dutch are practical and strongly individualistic; accordingly they love concrete individuals not abstract concepts. While republics were being propagated throughout Europe, Holland was ruled by two women who greatly endeared themselves to their people.

Queen Wilhelmina, in the eyes of the Dutch, was perhaps the greatest Queen who ever lived. She was a powerful person, held in absolute awe by everyone. Winston Churchill claimed that of all the world leaders he was in contact with during

World War II, Queen Wilhelmina was the only man he met! Her pedestal was so high that her dowdy later years probably served to enhance this image—only one so great could afford to look so ill in public. Photographs taken during and after the war reveal a woman looking older than her years with obviously no interest in fashion. Unfortunately these same photographs do not give a further insight: the very regal fact that no person—dressmaker included, was allowed within three meters of the Queen!

Juliana grew up in the shadow of this great woman and bears the scar unprudently. She is self-conscious, uncertain in public appearances, shy, but hard-working and dutiful. Watching her perform ceremonial duties one gets the impression that she does not like being Queen: on taking the salute during the recent State Visit of the Grand Duke Jean of Luxembourg, the Queen seemed to be in unbearable agony, wishing to be any place but before all those people, the center of so much public acclaim: When she arrived at the Church for the baptism of her grandson, several weeks earlier, an attendant opened the car door for her, but she awkwardly slid across the seat to exit after her husband; when the crowd cheered her, she almost embarrassedly turned to wave—as if this had never happened to her before; during the actual christening, she alone had the courage, and simplicity, to appear bored and almost restless (with legs crossed) during the Rev. Smitt's excessively long sermon.

The Dutch realize they do not have a grand Queen heading their State; they have never pretended that Juliana is other than the Netherlands' chief housewife. She refused the pedestal for herself upon which the Dutch had idolized Wilhelmina—Juliana was not suited temperamentally to see herself divinized or even excessively royalized. One of the first acts of her reign

was to abolish the curtsy (though she is royal enough to refuse to move forward a few steps when requested by a court photographer for his formal portrait study).

In Juliana's weakness lies her strength—it is precisely her Queenly failings that endear her to the Dutch people. Few republicans, however vehement, predict an end to the Monarchy while she is alive, but even Monarchists can foresee an end to the institution she represents shortly thereafter. The reasons are several, all of which stem from the fact that the younger Dutchmen no longer feel the nationalism of their ancestors, which is best embodied in the person of the head of a historical royal house; the Dutch youth see a supranational unity in which a national monarchy would be too confining and restrictive. Naturally they are in the minority; were a plebiscite to take place today, 70-80 percent of the people would vote for the monarchy. Therefore Dutch youth are content, for the moment, to allow their parents their joy and perhaps join in it a bit themselves. However, their loyalty (if such it is) is to Juliana personally—if her daughters are to gain it, they must earn it in their own right. If they are unable to do so by the time Juliana dies, there can be little need in maintaining A Royal Family.

Given the premise that as other youths come of voting age, they will be similarly inclined toward republicanism, it is still doubtful that their number could form a majority within the next twenty-five years. However, dissatisfaction with certain activities of members of the Royal Family could provoke the people enough to join the more radical groups in reassessing the value or need of the Monarchy in the immediate future.

And the Royal Family has given many occasions for much dissatisfaction in recent years. The marital rift that followed upon the appearance of a faith-healer who

was influencing the Queen's political and private life, though embarrassing, served to draw the Dutch people closer to one another in support of the Royal Family. Unfortunately, the romances of the Princesses were not greeted with the same understanding and the Dutch have many varied views on what these portend for the future of the Monarchy. People from many professions and political backgrounds were interviewed: From bartenders to hairdressers; from artists to teachers, from monarchists to socialists. Except for the Monarchists, and even they had some reservations, they all saw the end of the Monarchy coming within the next few generations.

Princess Irene's engagement to Prince Hugo Carlos initially generated much enthusiasm among the Dutch—she was the first daughter to formalize her marital plans, she was the first member of the house of Orange in over a century to marry into a major Royal Family—but her marriage soon proved to be the most unpopular of all those entered into by Juliana's daughters. First of all there was the question of Irene's conversion to Catholicism, which the Protestants interviewed only found objectionable on the grounds that it was done in secrecy; they learned of it from seeing photographs of Irene receiving the Eucharist in a Catholic Church. Strangely, one Catholic interviewed claimed that the conversion itself was an object of distaste in traditionally Protestant Holland (Catholics and Protestants form about the same percentage of the population), and another went so far as to say that the Royal Family is Protestant and that Irene was wrong in abandoning the religion of her ancestors. But the Queen was then caught in the embarrassment of first denying her daughter's engagement, and then having to contradict

herself the very next night on a national television broadcast.

Carlos proved to be quite troublesome in his own right. The Dutch will bear everlasting enmity towards him for the "insults" he perpetrated against the Queen. He was a "nobody" who obstinately clung to his pretensions to the Spanish Throne; when questioned by Parliament about his nationality, he claimed it to be Spanish, which was not quite the fact, for during this crisis he petitioned the Spanish Government to review this very claim. The ministry of Justice thereupon undertook consideration of "recognition of and not awarding of Spanish citizenship to Don Carlos," but could give no immediate evaluation. Small wonder: Prince Hugo Carlos was born on his family estate which is located in Lignières, France, approximately 100 miles due south of Paris; family members are all French nationals. The real problem, however, was not of nationality, but of politics. Hugo Carlos' chief supporters are Carlists whom the Dutch (rightly or wrongly) consider to be Fascists, and whom Carlos manipulates quite skillfully to maintain his position as Pretender.

As Princess Irene was then second in line for the Dutch Throne, it was not beyond the realm of possibility that she could someday become Queen of the Netherlands. Should Hugo Carlos himself become King of Spain a joint-sovereignty would have resulted that would be impossible constitutionally and emotionally for the Dutch nation. In 1568, William the Silent (Juliana's ancestor) led the Dutch people in revolt against their hated overlords, the Spanish; it took eighty years of fighting before the Treaty of Munster recognized Holland as independent of Spain in 1648. Carlos refused to relinquish his claims so Irene did not seek Parliamentary

approval of the marriage and accordingly lost all rights for herself and her heirs.

Moreover, the Dutch feel that if Carlos did ever rule in Spain, he would head an undemocratic government, insofar as he even now "thinks like a Nazi," and the autocratic Spanish establishment would allow no other type of ruler to follow Franco.

When Carlos was told that his Carlist supporters could not be invited to the wedding in Holland he immediately withdrew from that country and made arrangements himself to have the ceremony in Rome. This is his unpardonable fault, for by his actions he not only precluded the Queen making the arrangements (her position demanded that she do it) but also prevented her attendance because she could not appear to give public support to the Carlists who would be in attendance.

Irene at least took her problems out of the country, her elder sister, Beatrix, brought into Holland problems with a permanence that can only come with an heir to a throne. A hairdresser feels that Juliana would like to abdicate but is afraid to do so at present for fear that Beatrix will immediately have trouble with her Ministers. An artist goes even further and claims that Beatrix will try to gather as much power in her hands as possible, and thus create a national crisis. Certainly a crisis did develop over her engagement to Claus von Amsberg, technically without a title, Mr. von Amsberg was, nonetheless, from the lesser German nobility. His mother was born the Baroness Gosta Freiin von dem Bussche-Haddenhausen; his father's title, "von," is the lowest rank of German nobility—the Dutch equivalent being "jonkheer," a title now borne by the young Prince Willem-Alexander. But this lack of actual title was not the cause of the Dutch concern; unfortunately Claus had been a mem-

ber of the Hitler youth organization, "Jung-volk" and "Hitlerjugend," and also had served (when only 17) with the German army in Italy for three months at the end of World War II. And although he had been cleared by an allied denazification court in 1945 in order to pursue university study, this fact could not make the Dutch forget his background. Matters were especially provoked when Beatrix decided to marry in Amsterdam—the most republican city in The Netherlands—instead of the Hague, the traditional royalist city.

Amsterdam has always been an international city situated in the geographic center of Europe; as a result, its scope, its interests, its orientation has been far too broad to be limited by the nationalism imposed by a monarchy. Moreover, at least 100,000 Jews from Amsterdam were killed by the Nazis during the war—a wound which had hardly healed when the future Queen announced her plans to marry a German in that city. The municipal government actually refused to permit the wedding to take place, so strong was the feeling against it; but Beatrix was adamant and finally the municipality yielded. To this day, no matter how loyal a monarchist, any Dutchman questioned will state that he feels Beatrix was very imprudent in pressing this issue.

When the couple toured the city prior to the wedding, they were cheered and jeered; leaflets calling for the republic were showered upon their canal launch; one such bore pictures of Prince Hugo Carlos, Claus, and a blank space representing Prince Bernhard, with the caption, "Which one of these is the greatest democrat?" The remainder of the leaflet accused each man of fascism.

Tempers were even hotter on the wedding day. Police kept all Provos away from the direct path of the procession. But through an elaborate espionage network the

Provos were able to make their protest heard. Attractive, scrubbed young girls with orange ribbons in their hair, threw the smoke bombs which had been hidden in their handbags. An innocent-looking young teen-ager carried a basket with a chicken; the police stopped him and in total surprise he claimed he had just purchased the fowl and was in process of bringing it home. As the wedding carriage approached the West Church, the chicken was released with a black swastika painted boldly on its back; immediately, a dozen mounted police began chasing the frightened bird down the empty street. Although the guest list for the church ceremony had been carefully checked, one friend of the Provos managed to attend, with a two-way radio; as Beatrix said, "I do," a signal was sent to the thousands outside and an immediate chorus of "Republic, republic" was chanted so loudly that the T.V. monitors inside the church picked it up and broadcast it throughout the nation.

While all the controversy over the wedding was raging, the Government decided to double Queen Juliana's salary to approximately \$1,400,000. This made her Europe's highest paid monarch, in addition to which she has the greatest private fortune of any woman in the world, sometimes estimated as exceeding one billion dollars. Naturally, the Dutch reacted quite negatively to this, and Juliana became the object of much criticism for almost the first time in her twenty-year reign. A Provo cartoon even accused her of demanding the raise, threatening abdication if her wishes were not met.

On January 10, 1967, Juliana's third daughter, Princess Margriet, was married to Pieter Van Vollenhoven, a law student and officer in the royal Dutch Air Force; a marriage which proved least unpopular of those of Juliana's daughters—on the sur-

face. Mr. Van Vollenhoven's common status appeared to bother few, but his personality evokes much commentary. "Sure," said a bartender, "he's a nobody, but at least he's Dutch!" An antiques dealer on the other hand, was almost violent when asked to comment, "Why this marriage?" he asked, "He's so stupid—he wants to be a prince, but he's too stupid!" The merchant then related an incident wherein the car Mr. Van Vollenhoven was driving (with Court license plates) was involved in a minor accident. In panic, he removed the plates; the police discovered him in front of a car which had no apparent registration, trying to hide the license plates beneath his suit jacket.

The Dutch people find him stiff—he alone of all the guests at Prince Willem-Alexander's christening absolutely did not know how to react to the crowds who greeted him—and perhaps a bit pretentious—he insists on using Court plates at all times on his automobile although Claus only uses them when driving to official functions.

It is rumored that his family was decidedly against the marriage in that the bride and groom were from two entirely different "circles." Under duress they attended the wedding but kept strictly to themselves, which afforded Queen Juliana ample opportunity to extend herself in welcoming them and putting them at their ease. Mr. Van Vollenhoven is officially a member of the Royal family, without title. His children will be princes, but they will be a "different class" of princes than the children of Claus and Beatrix.

Strangely, today, the most popular of Juliana's sons-in-law appears to be Prince Claus. He has worked hard to improve his image and has associated himself with the Dutch nation in many ways: he throws out the first ball at soccer matches, joins the nation on a five-day hike and exceeds

the maximum prescribed distance; he has learned the Dutch language so well that he speaks it with less of an accent than does Prince Bernhard. And, of course, he gave the Dutch nation the first male heir to the throne since 1884. Claus, however, is still very much on trial and his first mistake will immediately nullify all the good he has worked so hard to create. Certainly he is aware of his precarious position and prudent enough to handle himself accordingly.

Prince Willem-Alexander was baptized on September 2, 1967. The guests invited to the St. James Church in the Hague serve as an excellent example of how the House of Orange is attempting to reunite itself with all the people. In addition to Government and Diplomatic personnel, there were representatives from each of Holland's eleven provinces, polio patients, athletes, and representatives of the concentration camp victims.

At 11:15 that morning, the church bells began to toll, the sun disappeared behind the clouds that had earlier sent a gentle rain, the sidewalks by the church entrance were packed solidly with people. By the time the limousines arrived at 11:25, the sun was out again. The Queen in an aqua cocktail dress, and Prince Bernhard sporting a new moustache, were in the first car. The mothers of Prince Bernhard and Prince Claus were in the second, and had scarcely disappeared under the gold-velvet, canopied entrance, when the crowd roared as Beatrix, Claus, and Willem-Alexander emerged from the third car. As the three of them were together, it could not be ascertained exactly for whom the crowd was cheering, but the fact is, the crowd *was* cheering, with no indication that any of the three persons was a cause for the diminution of their joy.

The next three cars brought some of the godparents, including H. R. H. Crown

Princess Margaretha of Denmark, Count Ferdinand von Bismark, and Professor J. Zijlstra, a former Prime-Minister. The other godparents were Prince Bernhard, Mrs. Von Amsberg, and Mrs. Renée Bradbrooke Smith. Most interesting was the reaction of the crowd to the occupants of the seventh car: Princess Irene and Prince Hugo Carlos. When the car door opened Irene received the greatest greeting given any person that morning save Willem-Alexander; her reception out-did that given to the Queen.

The ceremony received extended coverage in the communications media; several half-hour movie shorts were shown in the theatres throughout the country. Citizens of Amsterdam had at least two different versions to choose from and in neither theater did the audience evidence boredom or hostility—on the contrary, they appeared very much interested if not enthused.

Not quite two weeks later, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess of Luxembourg paid a state visit to The Netherlands and received their official greeting in Amsterdam. Princess Beatrix and Prince Claus met them at the airport and trained with them to the Central Station where Queen Juliana and Prince Bernhard were waiting. Crowds had begun to queue up in Dam square more than an hour before the

Royal Party was due at the Palace. Only one Provo was in evidence and finally was spirited off by the police after he had continually moved from place to place, apparently seeking an agitation point.

Three open horse-drawn coaches brought the Royal Party to the Palace; each coach was preceded by a unit of mounted cavalry so it was quite easy to determine exactly who was receiving what amount of applause. Queen Juliana and Grand Duke Jean rode in a cream-colored landau; their reception was warm and polite, as was that accorded Prince Bernhard and the Grand Duchess Josephine-Charlotte in the second coach. However, the applause and cheering became loudest and most enthusiastic when Beatrix and Claus arrived—this in republican Amsterdam, this on a day that was not their own!

Beatrix seems well on her way to re-winning a strong place in the hearts of her countrymen. Certainly she gives promise of being the most chic, the most attractive of Holland's three Queen Regents, with the most dashing consort—a glamor ingredient that would bolster any tottering Monarchy. And the house of Orange may not quite yet be tottering—the answers given lightly to an interviewer might not come so quickly when one is within the secret finality of a polling booth.

HIGH COURT BACKS THE ILLEGITIMATE

Headline in *New York Times* on May 21, 1968.

A lot of precedents for that.