

House of Windsor reaching end-phase?

by Mark Burdman and Mary McCourt

The crisis confronting Britain's House of Windsor is approaching dimensions far greater than the 1986 "Palacegate" controversy over Buckingham Palace's unwarranted interference in British political affairs.

Over the Oct. 24-25 weekend, Harold Brooks-Baker, editor of *Burke's Peerage*, genealogical bible of the British elites, warned that the public scandals now hitting the House of Windsor, could create a constitutional crisis. If Royal Family members continue to be perceived in the popular image as "the protagonists of Dallas and Dynasty," Brooks-Baker said, "we will come to the end of the monarchy." He warned that Britain is nearing a crisis of the magnitude of the abdication of King Edward VIII.

The immediate issue that has provoked this stern warning, is the rash of scandal stories throughout the British press about the marital difficulties of Prince Charles and Princess Diana.

The implications of a split-up of the marriage of an heir to the throne could become so politically sensitive, that the Queen organized a "Windsor summit" between herself and the Windsor clan, for the Oct. 31-Nov. 1 weekend. The Oct. 25 *Sunday Express* reported that members of the British Parliament were privately saying that, should there be a serious rift in the Charles-Di marriage, it would be doubtful that Charles could succeed to the throne.

On Oct. 28, top gossip-insider Jean Rook, the self-professed "First Lady of Fleet Street," wrote in her *Daily Express* column that, because of her "very silly family," Queen Elizabeth II would be undergoing the "most traumatic" year since she took over the crown 35 years ago. Rook denounced Prince Charles as "feeble-kneed" and "selfish," and blasted the rest of the royal brood and kin. It was not the scandal-mongering press that was to blame for the Windsors' woes, but their own actions: "No newspaper can make a pig's ear out of a genuine silk purse," Rook commented, warning in conclusion that the Queen had better get her family under control at the weekend summit, "if the monarchy is to go on at all."

All-out factional war

As the October 1987 global financial-economic crash worsens, the tensions and fissures among factions in the British Establishment are coming to a head. Such tensions

have not been seen since the abdication of the pro-Nazi Edward VIII in 1938, and the subsequent dumping of appeaser Neville Chamberlain.

The Windsors, historically and now, represent a gnostic "New Age" element in the West, hostile to the values of Judeo-Christian civilization, a hostility expressed on many occasions by both Prince Charles and his father, Prince Philip. In another sense, the Windsors are key components of a powerful grouping in international Scottish Rite Freemasonry and Anglicanism, that seeks a global strategic-cultural deal with the Soviet Union and a secular diminution of the power of the United States.

Pitted against this, is a traditional "old boys" element in Britain's intelligence and military establishments, what might be called the "British nationalist" crowd, which opposes the U.S.-Soviet New Yalta rapprochement, and supports a strengthened Atlantic Alliance and Anglo-American relationship.

The factional warfare plays itself out on many fronts, many of them taking on odd "cabinet warfare" aspects. In the visible political world, only the shadows of the reality are seen. Notably, as was the case in the 1986 "Palacegate," one trigger is the issue of the Commonwealth.

Queen Elizabeth II is monarch of Britain and of many member-nations of the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is a treasured institution for Buckingham Palace. It is a good institution through which to uphold certain questionable historical practices, as the drug-trafficking *cum* money-laundering complex in certain of the Commonwealth countries testifies to.

So, the Queen is most sensitive to attacks on the Commonwealth, as when Mrs. Thatcher opposed the Commonwealth majority on sanctions against South Africa in 1986, and as Mrs. Thatcher, even more resolutely, repeated this opposition during the Commonwealth summit in Vancouver over the Oct. 17-18 weekend.

By the same token, the Queen is not permitted, under British law, particularly under the 1701 Act of Settlement, to meddle in politics. In July-August 1986, when Buckingham Palace's press spokesman indicated Palace displeasure with Mrs. Thatcher, in statements made to the press, this triggered "Palacegate." This year, the Queen twice made political statements while at the October Vancouver Commonwealth annual conference, one pertaining to the political troubles in Fiji, and one pertaining to an internal battle in Canada. But it is, still, the war over South Africa policy, with the Queen fearful that Mrs. Thatcher's attitude will break apart her precious Commonwealth structure, that raises the most tension.

On Oct. 25, soon after the conclusion of the Commonwealth conference, the *Mail on Sunday* weekly reported that the Queen was preparing for a "confrontation" with Mrs. Thatcher, and that Her Majesty was "very angry indeed" about Mrs. Thatcher's uncompromising attitude on South Africa at Vancouver.