

## Chapter 15 : “1954/80 – A new Constitution”

World War I was not good to monarchies in general, and that was true for Sweden as well. Until 1917, the motto was “The King alone rules his realm”. 1917 was the end of that, but it took a long time before the constitution dating from 1809, amended in 1866, reflected this. In the period 1954-1974 it was revised but slowly slowly. The partial revision of 1954-1963, “författningsutredningen”, was rejected by both parties: The monarchists criticized it for eliminating the king's role in the day-to-day government. The Republicans criticized the King's continued influence on forming the government, for example being able to dissolve the Parliament and call for new elections. 1966-1974 the constitution was rewritten “in toto”. A motion by the Social Democrat Nancy Eriksson and others to also consider the alternative of a republic (KU 1966:10) was accepted by the Parliament after five hours of debate but was voted down by a narrow majority in the Constitutional Committee (by lot actually). The atmosphere was tense. Actor Ulf Palme called the exercise “a kick in the behind by a Mrs Eriksson at the head of 34 other bigmouths.”<sup>1</sup> At the castle it was the lid on as usual. Republican Ulla Lindström: “In 1966, when Nancy Eriksson presented her great republic motion, I happened to be at an official dinner where both Prince Bertil and the King attended. The royalty's ability to keep a straight face during the Republican debate earned my respect. They did not budge an inch from their usual neutral treatment of Republican sinners such as myself.”<sup>2</sup>

King Gustaf VI never directly opposed Nancy Eriksson's motion through any political channel (none existed) but made his fears known through detours and through personal conversations. For example, after the cabinet meetings, he spoke privately to Tage Erlander about the fact that he had been extremely hurt by this lack of confidence. Erlander visited Drottningholm Castle to give Gustaf VI his personal assurance that nothing would come out of the exercise. After it was voted down, Gustaf VI had to approve some formulations that referred to it.

The monarchists believed that Gustaf VI needed moral support. It fell upon the the sawmill owner Gottfrid Carlsson in Tutaryds parish in Småland to do something. He started probing the interest for a repeat of the 1914 sympathy demonstration “bondetåget”. This worried the social democrats who thought it a repeat of Mussolini's “march on Rome”. Carlsson felt confident he could gather 100 thousand supporters for his cause: “The foundation of our society, the Christian heritage and the constitution, are discussed in a manner that we in Finnveden in Småland and numerous other places in our country do not consider acceptable.”<sup>3</sup> King Gustaf VI replied very firmly that he did not want such a march. The constitution was determined through official inquiries and parliamentary decisions, not by the street. The leading figures were granted an audience however.

There were other incidents. In 1967 Erlander feared that Sibylla, like King Constantine's mother Fredrika, would try to act in the background by influencing her son. If there was any basis for such a thing, escapes my judgment.<sup>4</sup> There was a rumour. “Princess Sibylla once said of Palme: The king doesn't even react to that awful Palme...”<sup>5</sup> Sibylla would neither confirm nor deny the statement. More likely Erlander, however, reacted to this French canard:

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<sup>1</sup> Expressen, 1966-01-18.

<sup>2</sup> Ulla Lindström. Svenska Dagbladet, 1972-11-11.

<sup>3</sup> Gottfrid Carlsson. Svenska Dagbladet, 1966-07-11.

<sup>4</sup> Olle Svenning. Sveriges siste kung - det kan också firas. Aftonbladet, 2006-04-30.

<sup>5</sup> Åke Ortmark. De okända makthavarna : de kungliga, militärerna, journalisterna. W & W, 1969.

Among the most hilarious incidents was an article that appeared in the continental popular press, originating from a news agency in Paris and signed Max Hector. The article maintained that the Swedish royal house was by no means unprepared for Nancy Eriksson's republican motion. A few weeks before Christmas, Princess Sibylla was supposed to have summoned the members of the royal family to a conference at Drottningholm castle that took place on January 5 [1966], thus in good time before the motion was raised. Sibylla would have said something like this: "Very soon the Social Democrats intend to make an attempt to overthrow the royal house to introduce a republic.

The 83-year-old monarch sat next to Sibylla, looked very sad and nodded silently but confirming. Sibylla continued:

- I would like to remind you how the Swedish socialists have lost the confidence of the voters because of unpopular taxes, inflation and a severe housing shortage. Now the leaders of the Social Democrats see an opportunity to divert people's attention from these sad facts by proposing the introduction of a republic.

At the table at Drottningholm were the three married daughters, Margaretha 32, Birgitta 29, Desirée 28, unmarried Christina 23, and the 20-year-old crown prince - all filled with the gravity of the situation.

The French article goes on to say:

- The Swedish monarchy is in a desperate situation, Sibylla said. But there's a way out of it: We must win the sympathy of the Swedish people. It is not unrealistic to expect that the issue of a republic will be decided by referendum. We must therefore win the Swedish people for the monarchy. When you were married off my girls, it meant good publicity and a lot of good will for the royal house. Besides, the king is a beloved person.

The king nodded saddened and thanked them.

- But this is not enough to win the fight, Sibylla continued. We must also marry off the crown prince to truly win the hearts of the people.

Max Hector continues his initiated reporting from Drottningholm thus:

While everyone feasted on the handsome blue-eyed Crown Prince, Sibylla told them what had happened a few days before Queen Louise passed away. The week before her death, the Queen summoned Sibylla and said: - My time is almost up, now only you, Sibylla, can fight! Carl Gustaf is too young, Gusty is too old to cope with and Bertil is too far away. You're the only one who knows how to take them on! But promise me one thing...

The dying queen is supposed to have asked Sibylla to marry Carl Gustaf to some English princess.

- Only the British crown can save the Swedes. We Bernadottes have "duty above all" as our motto. If I know Carl Gustaf right, he will understand. People talk and say that

Carl Gustaf will never be king. Nonsense, the dying queen is said to have exclaimed, he will ascend the throne. The abolition of the monarchy would kill my old husband. It would kill us all. You have to promise me that if a crisis is immanent, then you have to speak to them. You, Sibylla, must help us through the crisis!

When Sibylla had finished her story, Max Hector reports, the entire royal house fell into tears. When they were finished crying, Sibylla told them to be of good cheer:

- I have a plan, it contains many different chess moves, chess moves in the long term, but if we implement them we will win. The main points were as follows:

- The relations with Buckingham Palace had urgently to be improved.
- The news papers must be encouraged to increase their publicity around the royal family.
- One must more resolutely push Carl Gustaf to give him a place in the hearts of the Swedish people.
- Carl Gustaf and Anne of England should as soon as possible get married, at the latest in 1967.

It was the meeting's intention, at least according to Max Hector's protocol, that the filial relations between Skeppsbron and Buckingham Palace should have priority. Reportedly Queen Elizabeth was not particularly keen after Princess Margaretha kissing John Ambler in front of all the British people during a BBC television interview. Margaretha had not even been invited to tea with Elizabeth, despite living in London for a year and a half. But, Mr. Hector points out, the Swedish court had good hopes of being able to repair the damage. The Royal Family unanimously decided that Prince Bertil, who had good connections with Buckingham Palace, should try to smooth the path.

For his part, The King promised to make a good impression on the American picture magazine LIFE, which had asked to make a 16-page article on his everyday life. Could it not even be imagined that the king in this context granted the first interview of his life? The meeting concluded with reports from the Court's press service that the Swedish star photographer Lennart Nilsson had been commissioned to do the photos for LIFE [which was actually true].<sup>6</sup>

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Then it was calm until the formal opening of the Parliament in 1969 three years later:

Folkpartiet (the liberals) had last year [1969] been on the receiving end of the republic/monarchy-conflict. It happened that a number of young MPs led by Per Ahlmark [1939-] demonstrated against the monarchy by not being present at the formal opening of the Parliament in the Hall of State at the Castle.

There was a protest storm without equal. The party's royal supporters organized an internal campaign. The party HQ was flooded with protests: Toilet paper in letters, threatening anonymous phone calls and execution threats (!) were among the most extreme.

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<sup>6</sup> Stig (Gits) Olsson. Gustaf Adolf – Profilen. Malmö: Bengt Forsberg's förlag. 1967, ss. 111-114.

Per Ahlmark admitted that the “heat of the debate” was a surprise and added that he would of course in the future stand before his king - provided that the Head of State came to the Parliament instead of the other way round.<sup>7</sup>

The 1969 ceremonial opening was neither the first nor the last time that anyone ignored the ceremony. “Neither the Secretary of State Ingvar Carlsson (s) nor Folkpartiet's Per Ahlmark have ever participated. They consider the ceremony a tavesty. You pretend the royal house still matters.”<sup>8</sup> Ingvar Carlsson was later rewarded by the society “Republican sailors” for outstanding contributions in the service of the Republic. Maybe for this. Maybe for something else. Palme actually took part in one of Gustaf VI's summer cabinet meetings at Sofiero wearing the club's shirt but he had his own shirt over which was considered cowardly in the extreme and disqualify him for the reward.

The same year Prime Minister Tage Erlander (1901-1985) resigned to be replaced by Olof Palme (1927-1986). Gustaf VI granted his resignation at the Cabinet Meeting on Tuesday, October 14, 1969, just before 11 a.m. He gave a short speech and said, among other things: “My dear Tage Erlander. Our personal relationship has always been good, characterized as it has been by full mutual sincerity often spiced with disarming humour.” Afterwards they met in private. Erlander exited with a large silver trophy, 34 cm high and called “The King's Big One”. The Cabinet Meeting was revolutionary in the sense that the ministers in Palme's new government both refused to wear tails and to lay their fingers on the Bible when they swore the oath of allegiance. Afterwards, Gustaf VI invited Tage Erlander and his wife to lunch.<sup>9</sup> CG also attended. The atmosphere was a bit frosty.

In return, Erlander invited Gustaf VI to Harpsund where he as the last person in the line was invited to a rowing tour in the famous row boat signifying “we are all sitting in the same boat”. Erlander declared “that he regarded King Gustaf Adolf as a personal friend” and praised him for the way in which he observed the principles of the constitutional monarchy. “We have been able to talk to each other openly and confidently about contentious issues. Our conversations have often been about serious matters, but have been eased by Your Majesty's habit of bringing out even the brighter sides of life in a way that is probably rather unusual in conversations between a head of state and a head of government. In this way, an atmosphere of trust and cooperation has developed and from this cooperation has in turn emerged not only a respect for each other but also what I dare call a warm personal friendship.”<sup>10,11</sup>

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On August 16-20, 1971, the political parties were able to agree on the constitutional position of the monarchy through the so-called Torekov compromise.<sup>12</sup> Sweden would continue to be a monarchy, not a republic, but in name only. The Republican camp had insisted that the monarchy was to be “relieved” of formal powers. The monarchist camp seems to have been grateful for the fact that the monarchy was preserved, even if only in name. The monarchy's “leading defender”, the moderate MP Allan Hernelius (1911-1986), had shown such a

<sup>7</sup> Michael Jägerblom. Skall Europas kungahus överleva 70-talet? Vecko Journalen, 1970:4.

<sup>8</sup> Expressen, 1969-01-08.

<sup>9</sup> Expressen, 1969-10-14.

<sup>10</sup> Elisabeth Crona. Svenska Dagbladet, 1969-10-15.

<sup>11</sup> Elisabeth Crona. Svenska Dagbladet, 1969-10-16.

<sup>12</sup> Torbjörn Bergman: Multiple Goals and Constitutional Design: How the Swedish King Lost His Formal Powers. Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift, 1992:3, s 209-232.

demonstrative willingness to compromise that afterwards he was jokingly referred to by both parties as the “king killer”. The deciding factor seems to have been that the Social Democratic MP's had orders from the party not to push things to the limit. Support for the monarchy was strong among many of their electorate. Finance Minister Gunnar Sträng later formulated the situation as: “As long as Gertrud, Social Democrat of Emmaboda, has the King and Silvia on the wall of their privy, it is bad politics to insist.”<sup>13</sup> There was also a vote at the party congress in 1969 that the “monarchists” won by 300-50.

The discussions at Torekov were so lengthy that they never arrived at a job description of the new symbolic monarchy with a purely ceremonial head of state. Probably everyone at the end was too exhausted. Arne Gadd (s) later joked that Torekov had reduced the king to “an exclusively heraldic phenomenon”. The chairman of the inquiry, the governor and social democrat Valter Åman (1905-1998) later arranged for a number of unimportant titles and tasks. Much remained unspecified however. It later gave CG some room for manoeuvres.

The text itself was very brief. The King's task is to open the Parliament and to keep himself informed of the affairs of the kingdom.<sup>14</sup> To determine that the king in addition to this has representative and ceremonial duties, one must read between the lines. The proposal was somewhat more detailed. It proposed, among other things, that the Head of State should participate in two ceremonies, at the opening of the Parliament and at the cabinet meeting in connection with the change of government, in order to highlight their importance. “Otherwise, the representative tasks of the Head of State are largely determined by custom. Certain functions are due to international law.”<sup>15</sup>

The Torekov compromise is often interpreted as a gag law and a call for complete inaction. The bill states: “The Head of State's entire conduct in public must be characterized by his role in representing the nation as a whole. As the Committee elaborates at length, his manner of exercising representation within the country and in relation to other states must not be such as to indicate a contradiction or tension between the Head of State and the bodies responsible for policy.”<sup>16</sup> It would appear easier saying than doing. Åman probably thought of Gustaf V's 1914 speech. In practice, there has been a total ban on opinions, even on trivialities. However all this is up in the air because the extended elaboration on the kings duties and so forth never materialized and has been impossible to locate.

The investigations of 1954-1974 have confused posterity. “[Exactly 20 years were spent resolving problems that most agreed on did not exist, where the discussion consisted mainly of reasoning about hypothetical situations concerning the relations between the head of state, the prime minister and the parliament that had not been existed since the mid-18th century, gradually paired with a total fixation on realizing the written constitution as in every detail descriptive and divorced from tradition. It is not yet clear at this stage how the outcome of this whole political process will be interpreted.”<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> ON. ”Så länge som...”. Rojalisten, 1990:4, s 15.

<sup>14</sup> Nils Stjernquist. Grundlagberedningskompromiss i statschefsfrågan. Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift, 1971:4, s 377-379.

<sup>15</sup> 1974 års regeringsform. Avsnitt 5.4 Statschefen. Prop 1973:90, s 170-176.

<sup>16</sup> 1974 års regeringsform. Avsnitt 5.4 Statschefen. Prop 1973:90, s 170-176.

<sup>17</sup> Mikael Svanberg. Den svenska revolutionen – Några frågor kring tiden när Sverige blev ”en form av republik”. Karlstads universitet. Fakulteten för samhälls- och livsvetenskaper. Politiska och historiska studier

Gustaf VI and Erlander also met after the Torekov compromise. King Gustaf VI deeply regretted that the king would no longer be head of government. Erlander replied that, out of respect for his person, it would not happen during his reign. This respect eventually caused ridicule. In the student union's pissoirs one could at this time find texts that: "It is not the monarchy as such that I have problems with, it is the king [personally] I want to harass" (the columnist Red Top in Dagens Nyheter; The column "Things we rarely hear") and "Preserve the monarchy - The King in Formaldehyde" (the anarchists).

CG was disappointed. He was raised to be king. Now nothing was left for him to do:

The future king of the country admits that he is disappointed with the amendment to the constitution which threatens to limit his significance to the point where his tasks would be confined to virtually mere representation. ... On his future position, he says himself that he must adapt to contemporary thinking and become some kind of salesman of Sweden.

- You may not be able to make any [decisions] directly, but you can talk to people and discuss different solutions.

- It feels rather crazy to first be raised for a certain purpose, to receive an office. Then there's nothing waiting for you, puff! (The king waves his hands in the air.)

- In principle, the Royal House could do something about the matter, but it is customary that no political action is to be initiated because this would bring the monarchy in open opposition to the Parliament. And it is it that makes the constitution. Therefore, no political opinions are advanced, i.e. the court is silent and says nothing.

- I cannot say what I would do if the monarchy was abolished. Should I retire or what? I haven't thought of what I would do if I wasn't elected king. I was born and raised for the task.<sup>18,19</sup>

On March 6, 1973, Chairman Valter Åman met with CG, King Gustaf VI and Marshal of the Realm Stig H:son Ericson to inform them of the outcome. Åman began with describing how the bill would be dealt with and then described the bill itself. Gustaf VI was positive about the information meetings (it was good not to have to be drowned in daily trivia and that the King should continue to sign the credentials of newly appointed ambassadors and be able to appoint dukes. Gustaf VI was opposed to the king no longer being the chief of the armed forces (Åman had already discussed the matter with Prince Bertil during a visit to KAK which resulted in a change of the bill so that the king would hold the highest rank of the defence and ceremonially represent the kingdom outward), the revocation of handing out orders to Swedish citizens (later reintroduced for the royal house) and the abolition of the legal immunity of the head of state (it was reintroduced). CG remained silent.<sup>20</sup> If you were

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<sup>18</sup> Kirstio Kallio. Kvinnan ska stanna vid spisen. Svensk Damtidning, 1972:31.

<sup>19</sup> Kirstio Kallio. Intervju med Carl Gustaf i finska veckotidningen Viikkosanomata. I: Expressen, 1972-07-16.

<sup>20</sup> Margit Fjellman. Gustaf VI Adolf. Närbilder av kungen. Bonniers, 1973, s 174-178.

powerless, you had to accept the fact. The silence was taken as proof that he accepted the changes:

SM: Has the king ever known that the monarchy was seriously threatened?

CG: No, maybe not exactly. There was a certain... how can I say... sensitive period in connection with the transfer of the throne. I think so afterwards.

SM: Was the monarchy under political threat?

CG: Yes, you could say that. There were certain moods and certain discussions and a certain feeling... You would change everything...

SM: Did the king act to counter that?

CG: I couldn't do much. (In 1972, the Constitutional Commission proposed that the role of the King be fully representative. The demand for the abolition of the monarchy was averted by Olof Palme at the Social Democratic Party Congress by his saying that they already had a parliamentary democracy, it only remained "took a stroke of the pen" to make it a republic.)

SM: Did you ever raise the discussion privately with Prime Minister Olof Palme?

CG: We didn't talk about things like that, no.

SM: Never! Although the Social Democratic Party Congress called for the abolition of the royal house...

CG: Yes, for many years.

SM: Surely you must have taken it up in private...

CG: (Silence)...No.

SM: I find that hard to imagine.

CG: Mmmm...

SM: Wasn't it tempting to just discuss it sometime...

CG: (Long pause) ...No, but I did say that I was very conscious that it [since 1911] was written into the Social Democratic Party program. Then I didn't have to say much more, I think...

SM: What did Olof Palme reply?

CG: It was not the time to say so much at the time, but we know about his actions afterwards. He dropped the issue at the party congress with the notorious pen line comment. But it felt strange, I think.

SM: In what way?

CG: That it would just hang on a small pen line! In the new form of government there were no instructions about what a modern monarch would do - but I quickly got clear about what I could not do!

SM: Was the king actively against the form of government?

CG: Yes! How can I say... in a situation where I took over a historic task it felt a little strange, if I put it mildly...

SM: Did it feel like a demotion?

CG: Yes, a certain form of mistrust. Of course.

SM: Did the King convey this?

CG: No, that was not possible.

SM: You can't do that if you're king?

CG: No, you can't. But there was a debate, perhaps not in public. We discussed with people in the civil service and...

SM: Lobbying is what we call today.

CG: That is what you might call it. I could not appear in the constitutional debate.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Stephan Mehr. Intervju med kung Carl XVI Gustaf. MånadsJournalen, 1996:5.

The bill as a whole was submitted to the Parliament on 28 March 1973 and was released for comment. On September 15, the same year King Gustaf VI died. On February 28, 1974, the bill was adopted, but since it was a constitutional bill, it had to be approved once more with an interim election. It therefore did not enter into force until January 1, 1975. Sweden then became formally a parliamentary republic because “All public power in Sweden emanates from the people”. In monarchist circles, the form of government was called “Eastern Europe light”. Republicans were half satisfied. Sweden was not a republic but a “sham monarchy”. CG's passivity may be explained by the mood. One of the proposals was that the King could be dismissed by a simple parliamentary decision at the government's initiative.<sup>22</sup> I have not been able to find the proposal. Perhaps it was in the responses to the consultation.

Åman later commented on his relations with King Gustaf VI as “I would like to say that with his tact and great working capacity, King Gustaf Adolf is an outstanding example of how a Swedish official should behave.”<sup>23</sup> A rather harmless person evidently. Maybe not the best legacy you can receive as king.

During the first parliamentary reading of the bill in 1973, the protests had been rather lame, which has been later blamed on Gustaf VI's advanced age and CG's passivity. Probably everybody was relieved that it was finally over. During the reading, the Social Democrat Gunbjörg Thunvall congratulated herself for her pioneering work to be the first or possibly second female member of a constitutional inquiry and hoped for successors. She also took the opportunity to give CG a dig:

One of our tabloids published an interview and pictures of the crown prince in his boat the other day, and it was told that he had learned to control “the Swedish Boat”. Further down in the article, the crown prince is said to hold the steering wheel nonchalantly with his right hand and a newly lit cigarette in his left. I cannot deny that I felt a certain sense of security at the idea that those who, when this proposal is implemented, should bear the main responsibility for the way in which “the Swedish Boat is to be run and who, in reality, are taking the right course, should not do so casually and with only one hand - and at the idea that the Head of State only has a symbolic function.<sup>24</sup>

Nancy Eriksson herself was hoarse at the time but complained in a barely audible whisper over that the Republican issue now prematurely had disappeared from the political agenda. However, she supported the current proposal as a step in the right direction. When some less popular monarch (read CG) took office, the matter could be brought to a conclusion.

During the second parliamentary reading in 1974, however, there were extensive protests both from the circle around Folket i Bild/Kulturfront, from the newly formed Civil Rights Movement (MRR) and from Rikskommittén med folket för kungen (the peoples committee for the king). Three demands dominated:<sup>25</sup> (1) A call for an advisory referendum. (2) Demands maintain or strengthen the position of the king. (3) Demands that the Constitution should also safeguard the status of the family and private property rights; This was commented on by the liberal Per Ahlmark:

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<sup>22</sup> Mikael Svanberg. Demokratisyner på kollisionskurs. Debatten inför författningsreformen 1974. Karlstads universitet. Fakulteten för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap. Politiska och historiska studier, 2013:1, s 54.

<sup>23</sup> Margit Fjellman. Gustaf VI Adolf. Närbilder av kungen. Bonniers, 1973, s 174-178.

<sup>24</sup> Gunbjörg Thunvall (S), tisdag 1973-06-05. Riksdagens protokoll, 1973:111, s 177.

<sup>25</sup> Hilding Johansson. Grundlagsfrågan i Riksdagen – några avsnitt. Statsvetenskaplig Tidskrift, 1976:1, s 27-31.



In the propaganda for a 'no' to the pending proposal, there is much of genuine ideals. ... But there is also an unholy alliance of *other* groups piggy backing on the debate. The extreme right and the extreme left have, with varying motives, temporarily found each other in a campaign whose aims are often extremely dubious. ...

First the extreme right. I am thinking ... of the speeches and articles which seem to be insidiously arguing for real political power for the King. I would just like to take *one* example, an article by [Gustaf VI's personal physician] Professor Gunnar Björck [1916-1996] in Svenska Dagbladet on Monday. "No morally healthy person," he writes, "can in the long run receive pay on condition that he refrains from having an opinion. The history of our country, as in many other countries, is often about a delicate balance of power between the prince, the nobles and the people." It is not clear where *exactly* Gunnar Björck is aiming. But the trend is clear: He envisages situations where an unelected head of state [like King Gustaf V] would have the power to influence political decisions and political opinion-forming. He implies a balance of power where the "prince" can ride roughshod over such politicians who lack vision and judgment.<sup>26</sup>

Be that as it may, the present form of government has been unexpectedly long-lived, giving it a special but probably completely undeserved nimbus. Political scientist Cecilia Åse has devoted an article to the role of the monarch in all of this:

The idea seems to be that a well-informed Head of State will understand how he *should not* take a position. This will avoid giving citizens the impression that there is no agreement between Head of State and Government.

Thus, the concept in the constitutional debate means that, in order to achieve and maintain a position over political affairs, the Head of State must also behave *as if* he were representing the policy being pursued. Any other way of behaving risks being perceived as political. The function of the Head of State is to legitimize the political board and the policy conducted and the monarchy thus grants national legitimacy to Swedish democracy and Swedish political government. [This would imply that Sweden's current parliamentary democracy needs the monarchy to legitimize its decisions. Viz. that Bagehot is still a relevant guide to Swedish politics. Perhaps, but I wouldn't bet on it.]

The Speaker is considered to possess a dual democratic legitimacy: by being elected partly by the people and partly by the members of the Parliament. ... The respective positions of the monarch and the Speaker "above" the political system are thus based on completely different logics. The Speaker is placed "over" party politics and political antagonism by being tightly tied to the democratic and parliamentary system, while the King's position "over" the political opposite is about his legitimacy being greater the further away he is from anything that can be perceived as having a direct connection with political interests, positions or actions.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Per Ahlmark (fp). Allmänpolitisk debatt. Fredag 1974-02-01. Riksdagens protokoll, 1974:18, s 16.

<sup>27</sup> Cecilia Åse. Vi är överens: Om monarki och demokrati. I: Urban Lundberg och Mattias Tydén, red. Sverigebilder : det nationellas betydelser i politik och vardag. Stockholm : Institutet för Framtidsstudier, 2008, Kap 3, s 49-66.

How above is to be achieved without the monarch suffering total paralysis is not entirely clear. Popular support for the constitutional amendment was initially very moderate: 80 percent wanted to keep the king's powers as they were. Seven per cent wanted to reduce them under the draft Constitution. 12 percent wanted to reinforce them (presumably under the previous draft constitution). Two percent were unsure.<sup>28</sup> This has in retrospect been interpreted as meaning that the decision was pushed through by a small group of party activists and republicans and over everyone's heads according to the motto "we are elected by the people - thus we have a mandate to make any decision we feel like".<sup>29</sup> CG has later turned this argument against the Republicans by arguing that since the existence of the monarchy is decided in democratic order, the monarchy is by definition a democratic institution.

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The succession is governed by a separate constitution, the order of succession. This is the shortest of constitutions but has caused endless debate over the years. Female succession as a means of ensuring the survival of the Swedish monarchy was discussed from the 1940s onwards on the grounds that Sibylla only gave birth to girls. The Republicans, especially the Social Democrats and Communists, were naturally opposed to the proposal because they did not want to broaden the succession. The bourgeois tried to handle it as a matter of justice which reasoning does not seem to have convinced anyone. The issue was discussed in the Parliament in 1952 when the Danes were about to introduce cognate succession because Queen Ingrid did not give birth to a boy but three girls. But since Sibylla gave birth to CG it was not considered necessary for Sweden. In 1961 Richard Sandler proposed an equivalent change to Gustaf VI who was not interested.<sup>30</sup>

In 1975, following a motion by MP Anders Björck and others, an investigation was set up on gender-neutral succession, not a pressing necessity but as a pure safety measure it appears. The proposal for investigation was adopted by a narrow margin 151-148. When the proposal was submitted for consultation in 1977, the Swedish Marshal's Office was one of the referral bodies. CG and Marshal of the Realm Gunnar Lagergren are reported to have jointly formulated the answer: That you accept what the Parliament decides. The Royalist position at the time was that "The job is too hard for a girl" and this argument was also used in the Parliament's debates. CG's private view was that, as in Denmark, one could accept cognate succession.<sup>31</sup>

On April 20, 1978, the right-wing government submitted its bill, which was adopted with the figures 159-18. As the succession order is a constitution, it must be approved twice with an intermediate choice. The second time was on November 7, 1979. As in the past, the Socialists abstained. Although the law was to enter into force only on January 1, 1980, it was applied retroactively, causing prince Carl Philip, born on May 13, 1979, to first be upgraded to the rank of heir apparent (crown prince), then downgraded to heir presumptive. This was accompanied by great drama. MP Gunnar Björck wept in the speakers chair.

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<sup>28</sup> Sifo dec 1973. Expressen, 1974-01-10, s 7.

<sup>29</sup> Mikael Svanberg. Demokratisyner på kollisionskurs. Debatten inför författningsreformen 1974. Karlstads universitet. Fakulteten för humaniora och samhällsvetenskap. Politiska och historiska studier, 2013:1.

<sup>30</sup> Expressen, 1961-01-31.

<sup>31</sup> Kirstio Kallio. Kvinnan ska stanna vid spisen. Svensk Damtidning, 1972:31.

The question of succession was the first of CG's many "flops". On May 16, 1979, CG held a press conference on the lawn outside Engelberg's mansion, Fagersta. The subject was the World Wildlife Fund where CG was honorary president, but the conversation also touched on the subject of the newly born Prince. CG jested that "The Communists are my new friends because they voted against female succession. Personally, I want my son Carl Philip to succeed me," which did not provoke any particular reactions on the spot but when it was published.

It was not really a press conference," says Sven Wahlberg, General Secretary of the Foundation. It was an informal conversation in the sunshine. I think the mood was a little jocular. It felt like joint laughter.

Nils Dahlbeck, also involved in the fund, has a similar impression: - The sun shone, the birds sang, the farmers had got started in the fields. The atmosphere was spring happy and after the conversation on the lawn we would have juice and cookies. There was no gambit in the air.<sup>32</sup>

CG refused to explain itself, but the rebuttal procedures and explanations were already in place, apparently created by press spokesman Jan Mårtensson: "Even a king has the right to joke. This is not a proposal on the issue of succession but an expression of CG's personal opinion of the royal house and his own family."

Gustaf Petré, a constitutional expert, made a similar assessment: "With the 1974 form of government, the King has no political functions. That is why he has been given a freer position which allows him to speak on various issues. By tradition, he does not express any opinion on controversial issues. This means issues discussed in the Parliament."<sup>33</sup>

CG's resistance to female succession is deeply rooted. Female succession violates tradition. Besides, you never know where it ends if you change anything. The lineage is split in two and the name disappears. Women Heads of State have a lower - in Saudi Arabia non-existent - status. On November 23, 2003, when asked directly by SVT Rapport if he was still critical of the amendment to the constitution, he answered: "Of course. I think it is a simple issue. A constitution that is applied retrospectively, that's odd." CG is also opposed to the removal of the religious obligation for the king to be a practising Lutheran of the Augsburg confession.

In a Sifo survey in 1979,<sup>34</sup> 40 percent voted for Crown Princess Victoria as heir to the throne, 27 percent for Crown Prince Carl Philip. Women's equal rights was clearly a thing. The feelings on the subject were not so strong however. In February 2010, an opinion poll was conducted on whether CG should abdicate in favour of Crown Princess Victoria but 64 percent wanted him to remain.<sup>35</sup> The later development 2010-2013 seems to have had more to do with CG as a person than with women's rights. In November 2010 (following the publication of "The Reluctant Monarch"), support for CG had fallen to 51 per cent.<sup>36</sup> In April 2011 the support was 60 percent.<sup>37</sup> In May 2011 it was 44 per cent.<sup>38</sup> In December 2011 it was

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<sup>32</sup> Jonas Hultkvist. Inget utspel av kungen. Svenska Dagbladet, 1979-05-19.

<sup>33</sup> Jonas Hultkvist. Inget utspel av kungen. Svenska Dagbladet, 1979-05-19. [Uttalande av Gustaf Petré.]

<sup>34</sup> En dag blir hon Victoria I. Vecko Journalen, 1979:32.

<sup>35</sup> Henrik Brors. Folket vill att kungen sitter kvar. Dagens Nyheter, 2010-03-01.

<sup>36</sup> Maria Crofts. Bara hälften vill ha kvar kungen. Dagens Nyheter, 2010-11-27.

<sup>37</sup> Marit Sundberg. Kungen får stöd av folket. Expressen, 2011-04-27.

<sup>38</sup> Jens Kärrman. Fler vill att kungen ska abdikera. Dagens Nyheter, 2011-05-28.

again 64 per cent.<sup>39</sup> In December 2012 it was 62 percent.<sup>40</sup> (Support for CG ≈ remaining more than five years on the throne. Not completely comparable.) In December 2013 after CG treating several journalists as dirt, the support was down to 39 percent.<sup>41</sup>

What remains in the order of succession is quaintly enough that, in order to marry, the children still have to obtain the permission of CG and the government. For the crown princess, the throne was at stake if she wanted to defy him. For Prince Carl Philip and Princess Madeleine, it was a financial issue: Inappropriate marriage = no consent = no appanage. What is required of the husband or wife is unknown but seems to boil down to him or her being politically “safe”. Putins nephew need not apply. It was a set up for family conflicts but these have been absent.

§5. The prince and princess of the royal house may not marry, unless the government at the request of the King consents. If it still takes place, he or she has forfeited the inheritance rights to the kingdom for himself, children and descendants.

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For a short time at the end of 1918 all the Nordic countries were monarchies: In 1918-1944, Iceland shared king with Denmark under Christian X. In 1918, the white side had won the Finnish Civil War and Finland was to become a monarchy. The winner was Prince Charles Frederick of Hesse. He was appointed King on October 9, 1918, but the Western powers refused to recognize him, and he resigned the throne on December 14, 1918.

King Charles Frederick I was in good company. In 1918, 31 monarchies were abolished; until the birth of CG, 19 monarchies; and until his accession a further 58 monarchies. That there are so many was because the states of the German Empire, the small kingdoms of Yemen and the states of the Commonwealth were all are considered separate monarchies. And that does not include the Indie Maharajas. A more conservative statistic is nine (1918), 19 (1919-1945), and 20 (1946-1972). During CG's 40 years on the throne, 15 more monarchies were abolished. Those who believe that kingdoms are forever have much to prove. Regrowth has been poor.

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<sup>39</sup> Erik Wiman, Josefin Sköld & Niklas Eriksson. Var fjärde svensk vill att kungen granskas. Aftonbladet, 2011-12-06. [Sifo-mätning 2011-12-05.]

<sup>40</sup> Mattias Sandberg. Ny Sifundersökning. Aftonbladet, 2013-01-02.

<sup>41</sup> Jens Kärman. Allt fler vill att kungen ska lämna tronen. Dagens Nyheter, 2013-12-21.