

Chapter 17 : “1973/76 – On the throne”

1973 CG finally ascended the so-called Silver Throne, a gift to Queen Christina at her coronation in 1650. It consists of moulded and worked silver on a wooden frame and is located in the Hall of State. On each side are two colossal sculptures of Gustav II Adolf and of Karl XIV Johan. Much has been written about CG's youth at the time of accession. However, he and Elisabeth II were of equal age. As King Gustaf V and King Gustaf VI, CG abstained from a coronation. Elisabeth, however, was crowned and even anointed with sacred oil, although the latter was never shown in the newsreels. Some moderation is exercised even in England.

CG's formal accession took place on September 19, 1973. CG, Prince Bertil and the government met at 12:30 in an extraordinary cabinet meeting. All were solemnly dressed, CG in an admiral's uniform and the chain of the Seraphim Order. CG did a lap around the conference table and shook hands. Everything was very formal according to the 1809 constitution: CG began “When my beloved progenitor, the king of the Sweden, Goths and Vends Gustaf VI Adolf died, I have succeeded him as King of our country.” He then informed the government of his name, title and motto. His royal name (or stage name as Hjalmar Söderberg in his day called it) was to be Carl XVI Gustaf. His title was to be shortened to “King of Sweden”. His motto was to be the same as had been voicing since his college years: “For Sweden – With the times”. He gave his royal assurance to make the best of his office, to abide by the Parliament's decisions and the laws. When CG was about to sign his declaration of loyalty, a pencil was missing. He turned to the Minister of Justice, who had a ballpoint pen on him.

According to the constitution, upon the death of the head of state, the current government would resign and the new king would reinstate it as a caretaker government. Elections would then be held and the new king would appoint the government. The parliamentary elections had, however, been held only days ago, on September 16 in fact, why they ignored that paragraph, for which they were criticized.¹ Neither Prince Bertil nor the government seems to have sworn CG allegiance. It has never been commented on but probably it felt too provocative when the councillors oath of loyalty was to be abolished.

At 14:30 CG met the Parliament, the diplomatic corps, the court and others in the Hall of State at the Castle to hold an eulogy to his predecessor. CG and Princess Christina had practised until he was tired of listening to himself. He read it in a loud voice standing in front of the throne and flanked by his personal guard. (The symbolism always estranged the social democratic MPs and the guard, dating back to the 18th century, was abolished the following year.) CG began “Strongly aware of the great and responsible tasks that are now placed upon me in accordance with Sweden's constitution, I want to use this motto to indicate how I shall, to the best of my ability, strive to fulfil the demands made upon a monarch in our time. My admired and beloved grandfather became a symbol of the modern monarchy. I am determined to follow his good example. ... My motto has a broad meaning. A favourable development within our country also increases our opportunities to work for the international community. The time in which we live is constantly changing, which requires an ability to adapt. Innovation must be based on understanding - yes, consensus - to benefit everyone. I shall follow the various strands of opinion in our society on the need for continuous renewal for its further development. ... I want the motto 'For Sweden – With the times' to be understood as an appeal for consensus and development for the good of Sweden. At the same time, it is a

¹ Ulf Björkman. Kungens adjutant. BNL förlag AB, 1987.

personal commitment.”² (Many wanted to take credit for the motto afterwards. Princess Christina claimed that she and CG had come up with it during walks in the garden at Sofiero Castle. The politician Count Ian Wachtmeister claimed that it was determined at a work meeting shortly after Gustaf VI's death.³ Regardless of the author, it was appropriate. CG and everyone around him were obsessed with the idea of creating a modern royal house. There is even an anecdote that CG already at the age of 12 asked Ingrid Björnberg if he could really become a modern future king.⁴ In order to be completely sure, CG called the Swedish Academy who approved the language. Princess Christina later justified the motto as: “We are an old country with a very old tradition of royalty. But we are also a modern country. The fact that we - the royal family - can talk about these issues shows how progressive and modern we really are.”⁵ Perhaps.)

The end of the succession ceremony was a royal speech from the castle balcony facing the crowd and the photographers. The nightmare was that no one would have come to hear it. The audience however was about 25 thousand. CG waved with a bouquet of chrysanthemums and gladioli, singer-general Hilding Asker stated that the assembled people wanted to pay his Majesty their obedient tribute whereupon several male choirs started on the King's song and the spectators joined them. CG: “I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all warmly for the kind greetings that you have addressed to me and my family. I would also like to express my gratitude for the beautiful anthem that you have delivered here today. I suggest that we all join together in a quadruple cheer for our homeland: Long live Sweden! Long let it live!” He then withdrew, but the spectators wouldn't allow him. Each time he tried they chanted “We want to see our king!” CG waved back, sometimes with one hand, sometimes with both. This was repeated eight times.

And so it became quiet for a short moment and in that moment a powerful voice was heard down from the people “live the monarchy”, shouted the voice. The mood eased a little, King Carl XVI Gustaf smiled and then he laughed so the dimples appeared, he laughed and waved and everyone thought this was a great day. It was the day when Carl Gustaf Folke Hubertus, 27 years old, officially took office as King, the world's youngest King, and it was a day that does not belong to the Republicans happiest memories.⁶

As a comment on CG's accession, the artist Lars “Razor” Hillersberg (1937-2004) already in 1968 printed a lithography depicting CG holding a revolver against his head with the text “For Sweden - Out of time”.⁷

CG's reading and writing difficulties soon became widely known during a study visit to Falu old copper mine on October 29. Before that, people had mostly talked about him being slow in the head but otherwise normal. Now the rumours became defamatory. It is traditional for every new king to write his name on a rock wall inside the copper mine. This is done with chalk. Then a worker perpetuates the autograph with a chisel. After shaking hands with all the

² Michael Jägerblom. Så gjorde Carl XVI Gustaf sin glansfulla debut som den yngste bland världens monarker. Vecko Journalen, 1973:39.

³ Thomas Sjöberg, Deanne Rauscher & Tove Meyer. Den motvillige monarken. Lind & Co, 2010. [Intervju med Ian Wachtmeister.]

⁴ Året Runt, 1974:10.

⁵ Pascale Le Draoulec. [New Sweden '88.] The Tribunal, San Diego, 1988-10-01.

⁶ Ebba Samuelsson, Monica Wester, Veronica Wägner & Ebba Wachtmeister. Ett unikt ögonblick i Sveriges historia. Svensk Damtidning, 1973:39.

⁷ Lars Hillersberg. Puss, 1968-01.

municipal representatives present, CG wrote his signature. The surface was uneven so it became “Cal Gustf”. Why this aroused such a spectacle is a mystery. Maybe it was filmed. CG is now known as “Knugen” (which is believed to be an old spelling error from Broms School), almost developmentally disturbed.

That the nickname “Knugen” became so widely known seems to have been due to the punk band Criminal Guitars' 1979 song “Knugen Skuk” (a distortion of “The King's Cock”) written by Mats Pettersson (1957-). Although the record quickly became “radio-prohibited” (=censored by or at least criticized by the Radio Board), it still reached an audience: “Should go shopping, happened to see a newspaper, latest news from the castle: Silvia has had children. Silvia has had children. That made me think of the king's cock, the king's cock, the king's cock. . We all want to see the king's cock, to know it's virtues, the king's cock.” Long afterwards Pettersson stated that the song was a satire on the weeklies, that the royal family was never left alone, that their private life was considered to belong to everyone, and that the song thus in fact was royalist.⁸

CG has also written his name on the Royal Stone at the quarry “Bolagsbrottet” in Halland 1981, next to Oscar II and Gustaf VI. Not the same commotion this time around though.

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CG got a year under the old constitution: He sat in at cabinet meetings, toured Sweden and handed out Orders:

The cabinet meetings were a dubious pleasure. CG them but was de facto banned from speaking. He signed all government decisions, 20-30 per day, which could take up to two hours as he also read the summaries. He wished King Adolf Frederick's name stamp back. This was not real power. It was symbolic. King Gustaf V used to sign with a quill each night after the bridge party. Two aides were busy sharpening and replacing the quills, snatching the documents and sprinkling sand on the ink. King Gustaf VI reserved an hour after breakfast for it and used a fountain pen.

The meetings themselves [1958] usually go very fast - 35, 40 minutes of clubbing - but they have been preceded by a lot of effort also for Mr. Bernadotte's part. He has familiarized himself with the more important matters in advance; The Prime Minister or the Secretary of State - or both - have presented them to him, on a visit to his reception room, for example, or in conjunction with the previous meeting. And should he discover that something has passed him by, he will halt the proceedings for an orientation; no confusion here.⁹

On the cabinet table stands the Swedish constitution collection. On a table at the window facing outwards a red wine bottle and glass. Some people drink wine mixed with water. They pour it themselves after a usher opens the bottle. Formerly the red wine was specially imported - Chateau Lynch-Bage's vintage of 1954, now [1963] it is a simple Burgundy, brand Maçon. There is no dress code but it is customary to dress discreetly. King Gustaf VI sometimes asks

⁸ Magnus Ransheim. Han sjöng ut om kungen. Helsingborgs Dagblad, 2010-06-19.

⁹ Bo Strömstedt. Han sköter sig mönstergillt. Expressen, 1958-12-28.

about the matters being decided, especially if it concerns higher appointments, but mostly nods. When the meeting is finished, the king usually stays for a while and deliberates with some or other councillor. If he is back from Sofiero or from abroad, he signs the attorney general's decree that he has retaken the government of the kingdom.¹⁰ CG wanted to abolish the wine but the members did not want that.¹¹

As chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, CG behaved to satisfaction. There was a difference already at the first sitting. CG was more spontaneous and informal than Gustaf VI, which contributed to a better climate for talks. CG did not vent opinions at the meetings but officials from the Foreign Ministry were often at the castle for discussions.

Oscar II did not tour Sweden-Norway to make himself known to the inhabitants, "Eriksgatan", but the custom was reintroduced by his son Gustaf V. CG visited his home county Jämtland (25-27 March), Uppsala County (13-15 May), Västmanland County (17-19 June), Gothenburg and Bohus County (2-4 September) and Värmland County (9-11 September). The governors used to cram 30-40 events into each visit, which meant a hectic pace with quick transports between the sights. CG stumbled through hundreds of institutions, schools, industries and other things and spoke to or exchanged opinions with several thousand people. The "flow of information" was daunting and quite tiring. CG also insisted, like Gustaf VI, on walking through the major city centres so that the normal Swede could catch a glimpse of him. Like Gustaf VI, CG did not want to surround himself with "a uniformed fence".

The touring was criticized as an unnecessary PR stunt that only benefited the monarchy and not the places CG visited. There was also criticism that he only met municipal politicians and company management, not ordinary citizens. CG defended himself by saying that the writings advertised the places he visited and that he met a lot of people during the visits. If someone wanted to say something, it was just to do so. The value of each individual visit was of course debatable but obviously there was an interest in showing off the business. The criticism that he was guided past a set of Potemkin facades only showed ignorance. You don't build a paper mill just to impress the monarch.

On December 3, 1974, CG awarded the last two Seraphim Orders awarded to deserving Swedish citizens. Recipients were the industrialist Marcus Wallenberg (1899-1982) and the president of the court of appeal and future Marshal of the Realm Sten Rudholm (1918-2008). The Seraphim Order is awarded to each member of the Royal Family (since 1952 also to women) and is the country's highest honour. The insignia consists of a star and a cross worn in a chain or a ribbon. The Chain, is awarded only rarely. It consists of eleven gold seraph heads alternating with eleven blue patriarchal crosses. The ribbon is in silk in a colour called seraphim blue. The Seraphim Order includes a personal coat of arms. Marcus Wallenberg's symbolized his areas of activity. It represented the god Mercury's (Hermes') attribute, a winged rod with two snakes, between two gears. Mercury was the god of commerce, merchants and transport. The shield included a motto: Through innovation there is progress (creando proceditur). The very last orders were awarded on New Year's Eve to Tom

¹⁰ Vecko Revyn, 1963:26.

¹¹ Herman Lindqvist & Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg. Carl XVI Gustaf - Porträtt i tiden. Ekerlids förlag, 2006.

Wachtmeister (Commander of the Great Cross of the Order of the North Star, an Order of Officials) and to his brother-in-law Tord Magnusson (Commander of the Order of Vasa, an Order of Businessmen).

CG also began his work of moving the focus of the monarchy from culture to technology, business, social and environmental issues, but this is described later in this book.

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After Sigtuna Hum, CG had made it clear to his surroundings that if he ever felt the need for advice - which would never happen - he would ask for it:

Apparently, the Crown Prince is very firm in these contexts when he expresses an opinion, he does not doubt, does not discuss, does not argue. One gets the impression that proposals from an adviser - i.e. apart from the king [Gustaf VI] himself - can sometimes be rejected with a single short no without further justification; an heir to the throne need not justify his positions, his short words are normally accepted as the obvious line of action, even when the proposer is dismissed without further ado.¹²

He continued to do so as king. CG had temporarily borrowed one of Gustaf VI's adjutants Ulf Björkman (1924-) who was also CIO of the Swedish Air Force. At the end of his visit, he saw it as his duty to give CG some advice based on his experiences under King Gustaf VI. He could have saved himself:

The last night of my service with the young king [March 1974] we spent alone at the castle. We got food in the kitchen, took a couple of night caps and socialized like men. The mohawk got the better of me and when separating I told him some things on my mind.

There were some things the king did - or rather did not - that I did not like.

Standing at the doorstep of the king's bedroom, I spoke eloquently and at length. The King listened in silence and regarded me as a pile of dog shit.

- Do you have anything else to say?
- No, Your Majesty.

He slammed the bedroom door shut. I was alone in the night.¹³

Björkman published his story in 1987. Those who write about CG usually warn him. Björkman did not. Maybe because only 10 pages was about CG, the rest about Gustaf VI. These 10 pages were intensively discussed. Björkman or the publisher tried to give CG a personal copy of the book which CG refused to accept. Björkman was obviously very offended. Long afterwards, CG delivered a half-apology for during the initial period not listening sufficiently to the advice of his surroundings.

“The Reluctant Monarch” published what appears to be an interview with Björkman. He and others are alleged to have reacted to how CG repeatedly ignored his surroundings: Never

¹² Åke Ortmark. De okända makthavarna : de kungliga, militärerna, journalisterna. W & W, 1969.

¹³ Ulf Björkman. Kungens adjutant. BNL förlag AB, 1987.

gave word to the kitchen if he was going to eat at home; during the tours and like ignoring the spectators, especially the children; that he behaved insolently towards foreign diplomats by drinking so much the night before that he received them having a hangover; and that he continued his relationship with Liv Porjé even after he met Silvia.¹⁴ Björkman denies such an interview. The information appears to be from CG's bodyguard Ola Selin.

After the US trip in April 1976 (more on this trip in a later chapter), CG was also criticized for being stiff, cold and even snotty. He defended himself: "By inclination I am perhaps a little reserved and withdrawn. I'm having a very hard time adjusting. Sometimes I am tense, but stiff... No, I find it difficult to understand the criticism. I wavered when justified. What exactly is expected? That I should pat small children on the head and shake hands with as many people as possible?"¹⁵ CG sounded like an echo of his mother who also never patted children on the head or drank coffee with pensioners. Distance, distance, distance. The press photographers also complained. CG's lack of planning and distaste for arranged images made their work more difficult. You never knew what was to happen. His straight-arm greeting looked stiff and unnatural pictures. He had to adapt. CG's aversion to arranged pictures seems to have been founded in childhood, when CG whatever his state of mind would be presented as happy, carefree and full of energy and play.

What CG was most worried about was what was expected of him as a royal person: Could he drive himself? Was it appropriate that he exercised? Didn't it get too showy with uniform, orders and everything? Wasn't these official limousines too ostentatious?¹⁶ Afterwards he summarized his problems as Gustaf VI being 92. He himself 27. The Swedish people had to get used to this fact. He said in an Italian interview: "I find it hard to live up to what people expect of me. ... In our country, the monarchy works excellently because it is old traditions. I cannot comment on the monarchy in general [however]. I personally have to find new ways and new areas to assert the monarchy now that the Constitution has been rewritten."¹⁷ He had role models but none with which he was satisfied. "You should disassemble your role models and use the pieces for creating your own style. A style that fits your personality."¹⁸ The only ones he seems to have listened to at this time were sister Christina and his future wife Silvia Renate Sommerlath. It is unclear what advice they gave.

Carl Gustaf is extremely ambitious, say those close to the court. He is tremendously tense even when performing tasks that seem quite simple. When he is to receive a foreign ambassador, for example, he studies the person and his country for days on end and when about to meet him avoids all company in order to concentrate. The same with the cabinet meetings. He reads and reads and prepares properly for the issues to be decided. He actually reads more than he needs.¹⁹

The daily routine was not as nerve wracking. CG had breakfast and read the major morning newspapers, the Swedish and a couple of foreign, as well as magazines such as Time and Newsweek. He read his letters. There was still a tradition of "complaining to the king" when nothing else seemed to help. CG forwarded such letters to the appropriate department. Then there were audiences with diplomats, politicians and others. At 13 o'clock he had a work lunch with chief of staff Malcolm Murray, 1st court marshal Björn von der Esch, his old nanny

¹⁴ Thomas Sjöberg, Deanne Rauscher & Tove Meyer. Den motvillige monarken. Lind & Co, 2010.

¹⁵ Omar Magnergård. Svenska Dagbladet, 1976-05-06.

¹⁶ Svenska Dagbladet, 1983-09-14.

¹⁷ Peter Dragadze. [Intervju för den italienska tidningen Gente.] I: Svensk Damtidning, 1975:41.

¹⁸ Clas Göran Carlsson. Om kung Gustaf. Husmodern, 1974:17.

¹⁹ Ebba Samuelsson. Så blir Carl Gustaf som kung. Svensk Damtidning, 1973:35.

Ingrid Björnberg, now responsible for the upkeep, court marshal Colonel Bengt Colliander and the guard-in-chief adjutant. The schedule was discussed. CG informed them if something of note had occurred. They ate from a sideboard. A hot dish, water or beer and coffee afterwards. One or two times a week they had a lunch guest. He usually arrived half an hour before lunch for a private conversation and then got the honorary place next to CG. It could be the International Chairman of Field Biologists Bo Landin, LM Director Björn Lundwall, London Ambassador Olle Jöndal, State Councilors, Bishops, trade union leaders, county governors, artists, high military personnel etc. (One of the advantages of the office was a drastic expansion of CG's circle of acquaintances. Even odd people like Maharishi Mahesh Yogi wanted an audience.) The number of formal meetings decreased. The number of corridor decisions increased. In the evening he met with his peers and perhaps went to the movies together with the adjutant. In order not to attract attention, they usually came at the last moment when the light was switched off. CG exercised as much as his schedule permitted, played squash, jogged and rode, but he soon had to stop riding. It attracted too much attention. He also quit squash. He wasn't good enough.

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In the old constitution there is the formulation “The King's Majesty shall be kept in sanctity and reverence”. The wording is gone but it still applies that CG is not addressed as other citizens:

As Crown Prince it was officially “Crown Prince”, otherwise in the passive form or the third person. In his circle of comrades it was “Tjabo” (derived from the Romany word “siavoro”, meaning “boy” and “son”). Later “Tjabbe”. “You” was tolerated. The nurses called him “The Little Prince” or “The Duke”. In the newspapers it was “The Prince”, “The Little Prince” or even “The Fairy Prince”. CG even used to talk about himself in the third person.

As king, in official contexts it was “Ers Majestär” (“the formal NI form”), a little too bombastic for CG's taste; it was enough that it was used the first time around, and then “Kungen” (“The informal DU form”), the passive form or the third person. After the accession, the court called around to acquaintances and announced that they should stop addressing him in the old way (except in the context of hunting or sports and then only as long as it was not used for emphasizing his rank). When CG was not present, his employees called him the “Chefen” or “CG”. Older addresses like “Konungen” and “Ers Höghet” were no longer used.

In 1968, when showing his Uppsala apartment to the television reporter Björn Anderö, it angered old timers that he did not address CG in the old way but as “Ers Majestät”. In 1978, when SVT journalist Tom Alandh in an interview addressed him as “You”, an upset audience reported him to the radio committee. Neither was it considered appropriate when the sports commentator Peter Jihde did the same at the Athens Olympics in 2004. Jihde escaped the radio committee though. In 1978, 84 percent believed that they should behave as usual in front the king. 14 percent considered subservient behaviour more appropriate.²⁰

The protocol surrounding CG's person annoyed him and one of his first actions was to relax the formalities. He had bad experiences: “If you take that simple procedure that always gets

²⁰ Sifo, 1978-04. I: Aftonbladet, Dagens Nyheter & Svenska Dagbladet, 1978-05-30.

so silly, that we are several in one room and shall sit down somewhere, I have to sit down first. Because I know they won't sit down before I do it. I'm 23 years old and have to sit down ahead of them [who are older], I think that's ridiculous. Then I sit there by myself. Because then they'll continue standing until determining who should sit next to who and who should sit down ahead of whom. It always happens in this way. Maybe I'll just sit down now. And then maybe someone thinks: Who's that ill-mannered wiener?"²¹ Moreover, it went against his entire upbringing [which included] showing older people - especially older women - respect. The curtsy was replaced by a handshake with a short tick, the bow by a handshake with a short bend. This was commented on by the court: "It has never been mandatory to curtsy in front of the king. Therefore, the custom cannot be abolished. On the other hand, it has been found anachronistic."²² Growing older CG has considered reintroducing it.

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After some time, Vecko Journalen wanted to have newsworthy opinions about CG and therefore hired the Finnish Jörn Donner:

Jörn Donner has followed the king on his tours through Småland in search of "the new royalism". ... Someone shouts "down with royalism" and is removed from the scene by the Security Service, which always has something important to accomplish. Peace must not be disturbed.

...

There are people who say that a new royalism has emerged in Sweden. The mere fact of such an event has prompted some journalists to propose the abolition of these imperial tours, as if the king's journeys were to endanger democracy in the country. As far as the designation itself is concerned, I find it totally wrong. It is pointless to talk about a new royalism. The old royalism, on the other hand, is still alive in certain forms.

...

In a society like Sweden, which has been subject to an extremely rapid transformation and a population movement [from the countryside into the cities] of huge dimensions, there will of course come a moment when people begin to feel nostalgia for old values, red cottages with white corners, pelargoniums, Carl Larsson motifs, oatmeal porridge, lake beaches with peaceful birches and Wasa crisp bread. These values may also include the royal house. It matters less that two hundred years ago the Bernadotte family hardly knew that Sweden existed.

...

The king is supposed to hover over Sweden as if its spiritual essence has been instilled in him by birth. One can imagine that he represents all classes and all interests. ... It does not matter what one makes of the king as a person. The king is king, for better or for worse whether. ... People are interested in many things, in kings, in environmental protection, in biodynamic vegetables or the water content of falu sausages. ... Therefore, I see little cause for indignation. If people really like to sit in a dining room [in Småland] and converse by pecking order and rank, they are welcome.²³

²¹ Elisabeth Frankl. Intervju med Carl Gustaf. Expressen, 1969-12-14.

²² [Intervju med Jan Mårtensson.] Kvällsposten, 1976-01-19.

²³ Jörn Donner. "Det finns ett behov att identifiera Sverige med någonting av kött och blod". Vecko Journalen, 1975:25.

This was not what the Vecko Journal subscribers wanted to read. Jörn Donner would rather return from where he came and stay there. Court reporter Michael Jägerblom stepped in to redress the balance:

The weekly journal interview with King Carl Gustaf took place in the presence of the Chancellor Jan Mårtenson, in a relaxed and pleasant atmosphere.

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Question: Your Majesty, you have been Sweden's Head of State for almost five years. Has the experiences been as you anticipated? The most positive?

Answer: The most positive thing is the close contact I have experienced with the general public, the kindness I have met everywhere. It was difficult to succeed my grandfather, King Gustaf VI Adolf. He was a very old man, there was a huge generation gap, a great shift.

...

Question: Something negative?

Answer: Yes, a sad phenomenon is the safety precautions that have become inevitable and are completely different from my grandfather's time. But I have worked very well with my security detail and I have been living with these conditions for some ten years. So I do not want to say that it is so onerous now, you get used to it.

...

Question: Your Majesty often takes the initiative visiting, for example, the large popular movements. Do you think that such visits are important for Sweden's Head of State?

Answer: Yes, absolutely! In some cases, there have been dozens of years between visits. There is so much happening in our popular movements (the trade unions, the educational associations, and others) movements. New people are taking over, there are new problems, new tasks. I think that mutual contact is important. And you learn more through personal visits than by reading everything in the newspapers. I very much appreciate all the many opportunities I get in my office to just contact people and to discuss their problems and joys.

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Question: How is it possible to make time for all these excursions when Your Majesty has official duties, keeps contact with friends and has a family as well?

Answer: I have a TV tape recorder that is automatically turned on at nine o'clock in the evening when Aktuellt begins and records the news broadcast. Whenever I get home in the evenings, I put on the tape and look at the news. I inherited this device from my grandfather and I think it's one of the most sensible things I have!

...

Question: Do you ever find the expected transparency of dealings with the media embarrassing? (Sweden has by far the most "open" royal house and court in the world.) Does Your Majesty consider that you are occasionally treated unfairly?

Answer: I sometimes react to what I feel is an imbalance in the coverage. Some of the key elements of my schedule get very little coverage. The newspapers write more about when we participate in festive occasions. It's a shame.²⁴

²⁴ Michael Jägerblom. En monarki som inte tål att diskuteras är inte värd att ha länge! Vecko Journalen, 1978:17.

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June 15, 1974, Princess Christina married Consul General Tord Magnusson and lost her royal privileges. CG allowed her to keep Princess as an honorary title for use in official contexts (according to the Norwegian custom) and rent Villa Beylon in Ulriksdal Castle Park. CG and family used to celebrate Christmas there.

After the wedding of CG and Silvia on June 19, 1976, it was also time to reward Prince Bertil for long and faithful service. Lilian Craig says: “[It was the end of September.] We had had dinner with the King and Queen at our house. Afterwards, the king went into another room with Bertil and told him that he now agreed to the marriage. When the king and the queen left, Bertil told me. And then I actually cried.”²⁵

In the afternoon [September 30] I [press spokesman Jan Mårtensson] called Prince Bertil. He was genial and in good spirits as usual. We talked about the elections and the wine harvest in France. Especially about a wine variety from Bandol that the prince liked. Then he said: “Yes, I have asked you to come because I am getting marry. Gunnar Lagergren was here this morning and you are the only outsiders who know about it, so you must not call the *Svensk Damtidning*”. And he laughed. “No, by all means. I was just kidding.”

The king had given his permission and now it only needed formal clearance from the government. He hoped that this could be obtained at the cabinet meeting October 8, when the new government took office. Then we could send out a communiqué the same day.

I asked about a press conference and emphasized that the interest from the media would probably be very great.

“Maybe you're right.” And we decided to have a meeting with the press October 10 in the Tylösand villa. But it must be informal. In a shirt and without a tie. “But not until after the golf.” Laughter.

On several occasions, P.B. insisted that he wanted a wedding in an “appropriate” format for the occasion and low key. The wedding was to take place December 7 out in the Church of Drottningholm with lunch at the castle and in the evening a dinner for the closest friends.

”No matter how you do it, some will be left out,” he said of the invitations, “but it can't be helped.”

They would be married by the Archbishop. “I spoke to him and asked if he wanted to to it and I was elated. After all I had been living in sin for thirty-three years. And I told him thus. But those were special reasons, Sundby said. Yes, you can say that!”

“She will be called Princess of Sweden, Duchess of Halland,” he said proudly. “And the communiqué should say that we met at a cocktail reception. There has been so

²⁵ Fabian af Petersens. Prins Bertil. Ett liv. Bokförlaget T Fischer & Co, 1992.

much nonsense about us meeting at a restaurant.” I suggested removing the “cocktail”, leaving just “the reception”.

On the same day Michael Jägerblom called from Veckojournalen and tried to pump me on the engagement. I feigned “complete ignorance” and referred him to Beth Palmstierna, the prince's court marshal.²⁶

On December 7, 1976, Lilian Craig became Princess and was elevated to 2nd Lady of the Realm. Persistence wins. She did not receive the Seraphim Order then but 1995 on her 80th anniversary. To the chagrin of his brothers Prince Bertil got to keep his title of prince. After the wedding the bride told the journalists in her Swenglish that she had become a Swedish citizen in mid-November and would now take Swedish language lessons. Her first official appearance was at the Nobel fête shortly afterwards. Her application for Swedish citizenship apparently took some time to process. CG had time to award her the highest denomination of the North Star Order before it went through and she became ineligible.

The ending of the year was extremely dramatic. Silvia had the year earlier given CG a black Labrador puppy named “Eros” (a Greek god of love - son of Aphrodite) as a birthday present for him to have something to remember her by while separated. CG named it Ali after the boxer Muhammed Ali. During the Christmas celebrations at Princess Christina's villa in Beylon near Ulriksdal Castle, the following occurred:

Someone had invited a young Chinese model he met during a flight to celebrate Christmas very discreetly and incognito at Ulriksdal castle, where he had an office. The girl had never been so far north before and did not realize the effect of severe cold. Sometime late at night, she went outside in a thin dress in order to cool off and fell asleep in a snowdrift.

The king... had gone out with the dog Ali. Then Ali finds the girl in a snowdrift and the king and he saves her from freezing to death. Returning with a lightly dressed Chinese in his arms surprised the other Christmas guests, to say the least! There was a lot written about it in the newspapers, also internationally ... [and there were many letters about it from a certain] Mohammed H. He regretted that the King's dog was named “Ali”. The original Ali had been a relative of Mohammed. To name a dog after him was an insult to the Muslims of the world. And he now wanted to change the dog's name into something more profane. I [Jan Mårtensson] wrote an off-putting letter explaining that Ali was a common dog name in Sweden, apologizing and being sorry if it was perceived as an insult. That was definitely not the intention.

But that wasn't enough. We understood that when an alarming telegram arrived from the embassy in Pakistan, where the residence was surrounded by furious people who were going to avenge the insult. The King quickly realized the gravity of the situation and Ali was renamed Charlie, which was announced to the embassy. When this was proclaimed, the masses returned home, happy and satisfied with this sign of royal wisdom. ... Care should be taken when baptizing dogs.²⁷

Mohammed H's full name was Hafiz Mohammed Idrees, a 29-year-old Pakistani, who at the time was the head of the Islamist foundation in Nairobi, Kenya. The Pakistani reaction was

²⁶ Jan Mårtensson. Att kyssa ett träd. W & W, 2000.

²⁷ Jan Mårtensson. Att kyssa ett träd. W & W, 2000.

allegedly provoked by the Pakistani journalist Targheb Hussein, who read about the matter in a Danish newspaper. The Indian journalist Syed Naqvi has also been mentioned. Idrees is the leader of an umbrella organization called “Defense of Pakistan Council” (DPC) consisting of some 40 small groups with the agenda of creating a Pakistani mini caliphate. As Flashback expresses it: He can receive it in the arse. The letter of reply from the court read like this:

His Majesty the King has asked me to reply to your letter concerning the name of his dog.

This dog is registered under the name Eros which is his official name. As a nickname he used to be called Ahly, however. This is a rather common dogs' name in Sweden as elsewhere. Needless to say there have been no intention whatsoever to hurt their feelings with this name.

His Majesty has decided to change the nickname of His dog from Ahly to Charlie in order to create no further misunderstandings.²⁸

This story about Ahly seems a completely meaningless fabrication but was probably intended to make CG appear as infallible as the Pope. The incident had a tragic aftermath. Chinese model Liza Kristiane sought a residence permit but committed suicide before she received the decision.

²⁸ Brev till Mr Hafiz Mohammed Idrees. 1977-02-03. I: Kvällsposten, 1977-03-05.