

Chapter 23 : “Family, charity & religion”

The family was very important to Silvia. She went through a lot of trouble for it. That said, she felt quite alien to her father and her two oldest brothers. She was closest to her mother, her youngest brother Jörg, and her aunt in Brazil, Lygia de Toledo Ferreira. These were those she most frequently was in touch with. Her mother used to visit Solliden every summer. In the beginning in the the company of her husband, but in later years he abstained. Probably he found it frustrating to be overshadowed by his daughter.

Silvia's father unexpectedly died in 1990, probably from his heart problems. Silvia's mother died in 1997. Also she suffered from heart problems, and the last few years from depression, shortness of breath and a growing dementia caused by small blood clots. During the 1980s she long periods of time lived at Drottningholm and watched her grandchildren while CG and Silvia travelled abroad. She got on well with them, especially with Crown Princess Victoria who afterwards mourned her deeply. After the death of her husband, she ambulated between her sons and Silvia. From the early 1990s she was cared for by a nurse in her Heidelberg home. She was prescribed medications, finally so many different substances that she did not get out of bed until half the day had passed. By then Silvia was acquainted with her illness and made the doctor reduce the medication. (An alternative version is that she hired an acquaintance - the specialist doctor Barbro Beck-friis - and that the ordinary doctor then relinquished his responsibility.) Jörg photographed the apartment and Silvia had a room at Drottningholm Castle furnished the same, where her mother lived the last one and a half years of her life. She was even served on her old porcelain. By day she was taken care of at the newly formed Silvia home nearby, a 300 m² former villa, now renovated as a hospice. Like all who have experienced a parents mental breakdown, Silvia thought it horrible, but fulfilled her duties as a daughter. A good daughter is constantly at her mother's side and never cries in public.

Silvia's brother Jörg Sommerlath (1942-2006) was an engineer and since 1980 employed as head of the Brazilian Embassy's trade department in Berlin. He was a member of the board of World Childhood Foundation (WCF) and often accompanied Silvia when she visited Brazil on that issue. He also served as Silvia's German “spokesperson”. Jörg had surgery in early 2005 for throat cancer, probably caused by his smoking, but never recovered. Silvia used to travel down to Aachen on weekends, where Jörg was admitted to a nursing home near his brother Ralph, to keep him company. Jörg was stoic until the end: “In my family, you don't complain”; and neither did Silvia.

Silvia's brother Walther Jr. and his wife, suffered a gruelling divorce in the mid-1980s and were unable to look after their son Patrick (1971-). Silvia offered to let him stay at Drottningholm. Patrick arrived sometime in 1986 or 1987. In Sweden, he has got into difficulties because of his friends and his temper. He currently runs an exclusive club called Nobile.

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From the outset, there were suspicions that Walther Sommerlath had a Nazi past. This seems to have been based solely on his presence in Germany during the war, however. 1976, in an interview with Ulf Nilsson, Walther denied this and Nilson had no way of checking. At the same time Sten Hedman Damernas Värld wrote the following article based on God knows what: “They moved to Brazil. But it was not to escape from allied justice. The Sommerlaths

had joined the National Socialist Party but they were forced into it.”¹ No impact however and later he has declared it to be speculation.

In fact, on June 19, 1984, Silvia happened to meet a distant relative of Efim Wechsler at a reception. Much later, Silvia remembered the meeting but not the details. “I remembered that at a reception at Stockholm Castle sometime in the 1980s I greeted a lady who told me that her uncle had met my father in Brazil and that they had swapped trades.”² The lady was now dead but the daughter claimed that the mother and Silvia had had a nice chat. The two had hardly spoken politics or religion, but it should have been apparent that the mother belonged to the Israeli delegation. Maybe so. Johan Åsard of TV4's *Kalla Fakta* (Cold Facts) later made a big issue of the meeting, according to him proving that Silvia already in 1984 knew about the business deal between Walther & Wechsler.

Come the millennium the German archives were in order. In fact, they had been searchable since 1948. Bo Schön apparently checked Walther in connection with compiling a list of the Swedes who fought for Germany. The facts were first published by historian Mats Deland in 2002 in the newspaper *Arbetaren*.³ The publication raised a minor debate if CG could have married Silvia if the matter had been known. Perhaps Swedish security should have been more active? There was a similar affair in the Dutch Royal House that actually resulted in an investigation. The Swedish court avoided taking a stance, stating that Walther Sommerlath “did not belong to the royal house”. The editor-in-chief Anna-Klara Bratt contacted SVT for a possible follow-up to the article, but SVT's publisher Eva Landahl declined, citing that SVT did not have the resources to check if the information was correct. The year after Deland published a detailed account of all the posturing of media Sweden to avoid having anything to do with the information.⁴ Neither the Germans were eager to publish.⁵ When this was aired in a debate program about “Fjäsket för kungahuset” in 2008, Robert Olsson, program manager at SVT, apologized for SVT's own decision.⁶

Her father's membership seems to have been complete news for Silvia. She later explained that he must have acted under duress which no one seems to have believed. However, it is not clear what was expected of her. The likelihood that Silvia would accuse her father of nazi atrocities lay somewhere between zero and non-existence. She was then blamed herself for not condemning her father. However, according to letters to the editor, the Swedes thought that Silvia could not be blamed for what had taken place before she was born. Nothing came out of it. In 2010, TV4 aired a documentary in which Deland followed up on his previous investigation and found that the former owner of Walther's factory was a Jew.⁷ One of TV4's co-owners Hans-Jacob “Nisse” Bonnier - an old school friend of CG - tried to stop the program through a conversation with TV4 CEO Jan Scherman. “Nisse” was invited to dinner at CG & Silvia the following weekend and it could be embarrassing. Scherman called the principal owner Carl-Johan Bonnier who distanced himself from his relative's actions and green lighted the broadcast.⁸ Silvia sent Scherman a Christmas letter:

¹ Sten Hedman. Det började med ett möte på flygplatsen... *Damernas Värld*, 1976:10.

² Johan Åsard. *Drottningens hemlighet*. Ordfront, 2013, s 265.

³ Mats Deland. *Historien om en tysk i Brasilien*. *Arbetaren*, 2002:29.

⁴ Mats Deland & Anna Klara Bratt. *Pressens olidliga hovsamhet. I: För Sverige i tiden*. 2003.

⁵ Tove Wennergren. *Tyska tidningar tiger om Silvias far*. *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2002-07-20.

⁶ Stina Dabrowski. *Fjäsket för kungahuset*. SVT1, 2008-01-17, kl 22:00-23:00.

⁷ Mats Deland & Fredrik Quistbergh. *Kalla fakta*. TV4, 2010-11-28 kl 19:20 & 2010-12-05 kl 19:20.

⁸ Martin Ekelund. *Bonnier ville stoppa TV4*. *Aftonbladet*, 2012-07-28.

The Royal Castle December 13, 2010

Director Scherman,

Today it is "Lucia" - the saints of light - may her light be stronger than all dark, evil forces. It is not easy to "swallow" to be equated with Adolf Eichmann in TV4s Kalla Fakta on December 5, 2010.

I would like Director Scherman to take note of the letter that Johan Åsard, Kalla Fakta TV4, wrote to my brother Ralf on December 1, 2010...on top of it!

[Ralph Sommerlath received a DVD, a German translation of the script and a thank you note. He was very upset by the DVD when he realized what he had been involved in and claimed that the program was part of an organized campaign against the Swedish royal house where also Thomas Sjöberg's book The Reluctant Monarch was included.⁹]

Yours sincerely,
Silvia¹⁰

Scherman wrote an upset article in which he repeated what Thomas Sjöberg and Mats Deland had come up with and ended it with:

That's how the façade crackles. First, all the rumours about the king as a party animal, specializing in young ladies, specifically noted in Thomas Sjöberg's The Reluctant Monarch. And then a whole new picture of the Queen's father.

So what happens to all this fancy modernity? Well, the royal house eases from the surface of the earth like Jesus and becomes inaccessible high up in the stratosphere. Then suddenly all the undemocratic powerpuffs think that we should heed the royal decree and "flip the page". They are trying to dictate what stories should be told and what truths should apply. The entourage shields them by shouting: being royal is not an original sin! The media is lying and when was attending a party ever something to be ashamed of! Or: This is nothing new! And that is precisely why there is no reason to talk about it.

Someone should have suggested Silvia to state that sins of our fathers is a thing of the past, but that you do not have to be proud of or defend everything he has done. But this issue cannot however be reduced to the fact that the royal family is surrounded by incompetent advisers.

...

Why dwell on this just because Silvia privately sent me an insinuating and indignant Christmas card? Because the façade is crackling. The royal power has shown its true colours, that is to say that it is far from being an institution of the past.

Like kindergarten children, the royals want to eat the whole cake and at the same time keep it. They want to be open and popular or inaccessible and royal when it

⁹ Rebecka Martikainen. Silvias bror upprörd över tv4-brev. Expressen, 2011-01-23.

¹⁰ Anders Pihlblad. Silvias brev. Politikerbloggen.se, 2011-01-20.

suits them. Large parts of our establishment pay tribute to these kindergarten children.¹¹

Another contribution was from Åsa Linderborg, communist and culture editor at Aftonbladet:

Is this important?

We have been saying for 65 years now that we must never forget the Nazi crimes. Sweden even has a state authority, the Forum for Living History, with the task of keeping the history of Nazism alive. However, if the Nazis and their collaborators are sufficiently notable, they are invulnerable. If you have a high social standing and are part of the ideological superstructure, you are left alone. Here Sweden follows the German pattern.

And it is precisely the ideological function of the royal house that is the crux of the matter. Carl XVI Gustaf and Silvia - who refuse to talk about their parents' political activities or who knowingly deny or lie about them – yet at the same time speak out strongly against anti-Semitism and racism. ... Jan Scherman's New Year's resolution here on Aftonbladet's culture page is of course also ours: We promise to write about the Swedish powers whatever its practitioners are called. This is not particularly courageous of us – we do not risk jail - but none the less it is important when ass-kissing is more common than it has been for decades. ... It is obviously not enough that some journalists - Per Svensson [at Dagens Nyheter], the newspaper “Arbetaren”, Maria-Pia Boëthius, Mats Deland, Annette Kullenberg, Bosse Schön, Thomas Sjöberg and Staffan Thorsell in particular - dare to make a stand. The government must set up a truth commission, not so much to produce the facts - we already know enough - but to seriously ask ourselves the question: Who are these people? What is the background of those who claim to be Sweden's foremost representatives here and to the world?¹²

Silvia was also attacked by the two Jews, writer Richard Swartz and industrialist Pehr Gyllenhammar. They expected Silvia to distance herself from her father's actions, not just to admit what had happened. The debate also resulted in contributions from two of Silvia's supporters: Secretary-General of the Swedish Bar Association Anne Ramberg and Prof Emerita in Criminal Law Madeleine Leijonhufvud:

As is easily understood, the book about the king, much of the subsequent publicity and the television programs about the Queen's father are part of an attack on the royal house and - ultimately – on the current form of government. Linderborg's article, calling for a “truth commission”, clearly affirms this aim, not to seek the truth (!), but to find out who “these people” are.

It is, of course, entirely legitimate to pursue the view that Sweden should be a republic. My point is that when you do that, you should stick to reasonably factual arguments and to what decency demands. The latter includes, among other things, not targeting people for alleged reprehensible acts by their ancestors.¹³

¹¹ Jan Scherman. ”Elitistiska dagisbarn”. Aftonbladet, 2010-12-31.

¹² Åsa Linderborg. Nassarna på slottet. Aftonbladet, 2011-01-04.

¹³ Anne Ramberg. Saklighet efterlyses. Aftonbladet, 2011-01-05.

The criticism of the people in the Swedish royal house is, I believe, often a substitute for a discussion of the fundamental question of what form of government Sweden should have - the current system or some form of republic. Little is also heard about the alternative constitution envisaged by those who wish to abolish the monarchy. Republics differ - should we copy the United States, France, Italy or Finland?

This central issue seems difficult to bring forward, not least for the politicians, who must push the issue if they want to bring about change. Instead, the current individuals in our royal house are blamed for being bad people. If only they had been blamed for mismanaging their functions. Then there would have been something to discuss. It is not the King and Queen who have decided that state visits should take place, industry visits should be made to promote export and roads should be opened. [My comment: In fact, everything mentioned except state visits has been decided by themselves.] But they have themselves initiated an annual forum for children and youth issues. When the first of these was held in November, the media were noticeably uninterested.¹⁴

A debate in TV4 with some of those involved ended in confusion.¹⁵ Jan Helin, the editor-in-chief of Aftonbladet apologized for many of the articles in his newspaper being so infantile. Jan Scherman was annoyed that Silvia as a public person kept out of the media but he refused to read out Silvia's letter because it was private and addressed to him alone. In the program, only the envelope was displayed, light blue and almost rectangular. On it was written "Director Jan Scherman" in darker blue, but no address and no stamp. According to him, it had been sealed with a royal seal and delivered to his residence in a white envelope.

As Walther Sommerlath's actions should have been known to Silvia's relatives, her ignorance was rather inexplicable. In the midst of the debate, her eldest brother Ralph stated that he had always known that his father was a member of the Nazi Party but had never told his younger siblings. However, he had not known that the former owner of the factory was a Jew. He had asked his father if that was the case, there was a debate on the matter in Germany, but his father refused to answer. Then he had let it be.¹⁶ That her father, mother, brother and who knows how many others had hid the family's past from her affected Silvia deeply. A few months later, she announced that she was conducting her own research into her father's Nazi past. It was unexpectedly time-consuming. She was helped by historian Erik Norberg who in 2011 compiled a report that was not altogether bad for Walther's reputation: he had taken risks to carry out the deal.^{17,18} Mats Deland was not impressed:

One can safely say that Sommerlath [through the barter trade] took a risk, even if it was primarily economic. The response of the Nazi state was likely to have been seizing the company. A more reasonable interpretation, however, is to say that, in addition to blackmailing Wechsler in the face of Nazi Jewish persecution, he also took the opportunity to embezzle the Nazi state. However, not for any higher purposes, but for his own good.¹⁹

¹⁴ Madeleine Leijonhufvud. Silvia har inget att skämmas för. Aftonbladet, 2011-01-11.

¹⁵ Kvällsöppet med Ekdal. TV4, 2011-01-19, kl 22:40.

¹⁶ Fredrik Sjöshult. Silvias bror är mycket upprörd. Expressen, 2011-01-17.

¹⁷ Erik Norberg. En undersökning [om drottning Silvias far]. Hovstaterna, 2011-08.

¹⁸ Erik Norberg. De glömda dokumenten – Berättelsen om Walther Sommerlath och Efim Wechsler. Hovstaterna, 2012-12-20. (Utvidgad och reviderad upplaga med ett förord av drottning Silvia.)

¹⁹ Mats Deland. Drottningens far tjänade på "ariseringen". Aftonbladet, 2011-08-11.

A second attempt was made to bolster Silvia's reputation. Gregor Nowinski, who had made a documentary about the royal family,²⁰ wrote an article about Silvia claiming that because of her marriage to CG she had been “snatched out of the German context”. If she had lived in Germany, she would have researched her family history even “without inquisitorial pressure from the media”.²¹ Maybe, but probably not. Why would she start researching it? She didn't even want her own story to come out. Leijonhufvud added a discussion post about Silvia's voluntary recount of her family history in Nowinski's film. It can be summarized: Silvias recount was voluntary, but at the instigation of Nowinski and merely confirmed the facts in Deland's 2002 article.²² Leijonhufvud thought the journalists did not have to interpret everything to the worst.²³ That is something we can all agree on.

There were five programs on Walther and the debt issue 2010-2012. The TV4 producer in charge, Johan Åsard, summarized them 2013 in a book.²⁴ It resembled a long-drawn media hunting party. Silvia defended her father to the best of her ability - mostly by sending letters to her foreign acquaintances about the background of the media frenzy and about her own version. In Brazil, this led to an unsuccessful attempt to influence former Senator and professor of Sociology Eva Blay, who had researched the subject of Jewish emigration to Brazil and participated in one of Åsards programs. Instead, Blay publicly stated that Silvia as a woman had a special responsibility to curate her family's history and not to pervert it. At the time of the book's release, Aftonbladet published a debate with Johan Åsard, Jan Scherman and Henrik Järrel which, as usual, ended in the question of whether Silvia had acted as queen or in her capacity as private citizen. As queen, she was guilty of downplaying the matter and avoiding taking a political stand against Nazism. As a private citizen, she did her duty as a daughter. CG and Crown Princess Victoria were also asked to apologize for their family's past. CG for his uncle Duke Charles Edward. Crown Princess Victoria, curiously enough for her great-grandfather Gustaf V. This sounds odd until one considers that the Royal House is an institution and therefore should have a White Paper written in which experts present the facts of the case. Not write their own home-brew excuses or let loose their legal Dobermann pincher Madeleine Leijonhufvud. CG had difficulty getting to the authors but succeeded in any case, to prevent Mats Deland from gaining access to the Bernadotte Archives when he wanted to verify information about Charles XV's participation in the foundation of the Swedish Red Cross.²⁵ Small vengeance is also vengeance.

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The duties of a Swedish queen are not regulated by law. Of course Silvia must share representation duties with CG but beyond that what? It was left to her to decide. As a member of a Swedish family, Silvia did not consider herself an immigrant, and she never engaged in such organizations. Silvia also never defined herself as a feminist, with which she probably ment group 8 and the like. Some of her “gender” views were clearly inopportune. She was against abortion.²⁶ She wanted the housewife's work to be valued higher, perhaps paid by the municipality.²⁷ She subordinated herself in all contexts, at least outwardly, to CG: Women's

²⁰ Gregor Nowinski. Familjen Bernadotte. Sex avsnitt som sändes i tv4. Första avsnittet sändes 2010-04-29.

²¹ Gregor Nowinski. Att älska sin nazistiska pappa. Dagens Nyheter, 2011-12-15.

²² Mats Deland. Historien om en tysk i Brasilien. Arbetaren, 2002:29.

²³ Madeleine Leijonhufvud. TV4 avslöjade ingenting om drottningen - hon berättade frivilligt. Dagens Nyheter, 2011-12-23.

²⁴ Johan Åsard. Drottningens hemlighet. Ordfront, 2013.

²⁵ Mats Deland. Dags att öppna arkivet, kungen. Aftonbladet, 2016-03-16.

²⁶ Amelia Adamo. Ja, även en drottning kan ha dåligt samvete. Amelia, 1999:20.

²⁷ Svensk Damtidning, 1980:37.

emancipation would not be at men's expense.²⁸ - Women's emancipation would not be by emulating men. A mother could contribute to the children's development in a way that her father could not.²⁹ - However, for a while she supported a liberal feminism of the professional women's club variety through the organization Zonta, a female counterpart of Rotary, and over time she thought positively of the gender roles no longer so rigid: "I think all women dream of getting the same chances as men in our society. They want recognition for what they do, either in pay or in words."³⁰ - "Of course everyone should have the same rights, but I get a little disturbed by the fact that many woman forget their femininity. Fight is a word I have difficulty with. Dialogue is more effective."³¹

Silvia was not interested in technology and quickly discontinued her involvement with the Royal Automobile Club, the Royal Motorboat Club and the like. That was CG's responsibility. Neither was she particularly interested in nature, although she enjoyed backpacking, riding tours and working in the garden, i.e. nature as recreation.

This, with the Royal House supporting the woman's movement, seems to be forgotten. Both Sibylla and Queen Louise supported a large number of women's organizations. Queen Louise in 1953 even invited the International Congress of Professional Women, 1,300 delegates from 20 countries, to a reception at Drottningholm Castle.³² They are said to have been inspired by President Roosevelt's wife Anna Eleanor - known for her social commitment - who in 1950 visited Sweden. At the time of her death in 1965, Queen Louise had a woman's honour guard at her coffin. At Sibylla's funeral in 1972, 150 women from the organizations she had protected formed a hedge: Lottakåren, Röda korset, Blå stjärnan, Bilkåristerna, Sophiasystrarna, Scoutförbundet and others.³³ (Civil defence, healthcare & scouting.)

When Silvia became Queen in 1976, there were still gentlemen's clubs. One such, the Traveller's Club, sent an invitation that only concerned CG but had to rewrite the statutes when Silvia announced that she would also be coming. "It is a great privilege to be queen. Then you can influence things - sometimes without even knowing it!" she commented afterwards.

When asked directly what she wanted to do in addition to the representation, CG prompted her with the "World Wildlife Fund" but Silvia was already more interested in the blind young people that CG had met when he was learning diving at Tomtebodan the year before. She was fascinated by CG's depiction of how well they could orient themselves despite their disability. They "saw" with their hands. Then it didn't matter that the water was muddy. After the wedding, she used her position as Queen to familiarize herself with disability issues. All kinds of organizations were summoned to the court or announced that the Queen wanted to make a study visit. She was honorary chairman of the Multiple Sclerosis Congress in Stockholm in September 1980. Several such missions followed.

However, childbirth had priority: Crown Princess Victoria in 1977, Prince Carl Philip in 1979 and Princess Madeleine in 1982. There were rumours of another child but either it was a miscarriage or a canard. In any case, Silvia now felt that she had fulfilled her family

²⁸ Svensk Damtidning, 1981:15.

²⁹ Expressen, 1979-12-23.

³⁰ Britta Svensson. Drottning Silvia berättar. Expressen, 1993-11-24.

³¹ TT, 1993-11-23.

³² Svenska Dagbladet, 1953-07-08.

³³ Svenska Dagbladet, 1972-12-08.

obligations. It was time to devote herself to something beyond childbirth and having her picture taken. The New Year of 1982/83, she and CG officially announced that their activities would take partially different paths. It was a filmed interview. Both seemed tired and uncomfortable to talk about it. Maybe they had quarrelled. It seems as a thought that just the month before had been published an interview with Princess Grace Kelly in which she gave Silvia good advice: “We have the same background. We both come from the people. We're not royal. I just wish she [unlike myself] will wholeheartedly get involved in something. Not just show herself in public.”³⁴ In time, Silvia organized an extensive but rather sprawling charity:

The King and Queen's Wedding Fund Foundation

Prior to the wedding, Silvia and CG created a fund to support research and development in the field of sports for young people with disabilities. The fund distributes something like 600 thousand SEK every year. The fact that it was the court and not the disabled themselves who decided on how to use the use of the money was strongly criticized.³⁵ The Fund has published a book “Kom igen!” (1985) in Swedish, German, English, Spanish and Braille with interviews of athletes who have become disabled and how they shaped their new lives.³⁶ In 1989 Silvia was in Washington and presented it to a Senate committee on disability issues and later in a TV interview.

Queen Silvia Foundation

For her 50th anniversary on December 23, 1993, Silvia received a gift from the Swedish people to support research on children and disabilities. The dividend in 2009 was 380 thousand SEK. She appears also to have received a fund for assisting disabled children to participate in Scouting, presumably at the initiative of CG because the initial funding came from the World Scout Foundation. In 2009 it was \$250 thousand.

Sociedade Beneficente Lar Do Caminho Juquitiba

This was founded in 1968 as a private orphanage for abandoned infants by Donna Jadette and her then husband. In 1974 it was taken over by a group of volunteers. In 1978, it was supported by the Scandinavian Church and Scandinavian companies in the São Paulo area. When Silvia was in Brazil in 1983, she raised \$300,000 in grants.

Queen Silvia's home for young mothers in Rio de Janeiro (Abrigo Rainha Silvia) & Princess Victoria's Disability Center in Rio Claro (Centro de Habilitação Infantil Princesa Victoria)

Abrigo Rainha Silvia was founded in 1988 by the priest Stefan Martinsson from Borås, who was there on a two-year contract for the Luther Aid to improve the situation of street children, but stayed. The home's business is to help pregnant young women by providing them with health care and education. From 1989 the work was led by a local board of Swedes and Brazilians with Silvia as honorary

³⁴ R T Kahn. Sista intervjun med Grace. Året Runt, 1982:43.

³⁵ Marie-Louise Larsson-Severinsson, Olov Andersson & Magnus Tideman. Det relativa handikappbegreppet framväxt och etablering. Högskolan i Halmstad, Wigforssgruppen, 2009.

³⁶ Christina Magnergård Bjers. Drottning Silvia. Ekerlids förlag, 2001 [baserad på intervjuer med Silvia m fl]

member. The funding is exclusively provided by means of offerings and gifts from Sweden and Norway.³⁷

Silvia was also involved in the Luther Help Center in Rio Claro, state of São Paulo, Brazil, which was supported by the wedding fund. The centre was established on November 1, 1991, with a donation of 350 thousand. It supported the 300 or so handicapped children in the local area.³⁸ “We started with very small resources and a dump, recalls the mistress of the court Alice Trolle-Wachtmeister who has been involved in the Victoria home from the start. There were many tasks. The Staff had to be trained. A parents' association to be formed. Transport to be arranged. In addition, the centre needed new premises. The authorities in Rio Claro provided a plot of land and the support association provided the interior and equipment. In Sweden, grants from various companies were applied for. They collaborated with Rio Claro. In 1991, Victoriahemmet was ready. Queen Silvia came to inaugurate it in the company of the King and Crown Princess Victoria. ... Over the years, hundreds of children have received care at the Victoria Home. Now some forty patients come to the center every day. It provides physiotherapy, medical care and some school education.”³⁹ 2001 it was handed over to the local authorities.

Silviahemmet Foundation

In the 1990s, several acquaintances suffered from dementia. One of Silvia's ladies-in-waiting, Madeleine Bergstedt, was a former nurse and actively involved in matters concerning the elderly. Silvia commissioned her to lead an informal work group of experts in the field. The foundation Silviahemmet was funded through donations. The initial funding was 20 million SEK. It costs 3.5 million a year.

The Foundation was founded on February 14, 1996 with the objective education in dementia care on a scientific basis. Silviahemmet itself is a fully renovated former private villa of 300 m² near Drottningholm Castle. The home has an equivalent in Helsinki. For the first five years, some 30 nurses were trained as Silvia's sisters, Silvia's “ambassadors”. Since 2004, the education is conducted in collaboration with Sophiahemmet's college in the form of a two-year online education. As of 2013, 414 nurses have graduated. From 2008, nurses are also trained – as of 2013, 147. The method is exported by “Swedish Care International”.^{40,41,42}

Queen Victoria's rest home

This was originally a rest home for pauvre honteux but is now open to everyone. It can accommodate 14 paying guests. The main building dates from the 1850s. It is run as a foundation with Silvia as patron.

Mentor Foundation

³⁷ Maria Lundin. Han hjälper unga gravida i Brasilien. Borås Tidning, 2009-05-02.

³⁸ Annette Kullenberg. De handikappades främste supporter. Aftonbladet, 1992-09-06.

³⁹ Christina Magnergård Bjers. Drottning Silvia. Ekerlids förlag, 2001 [baserad på intervjuer med drottning Silvia m fl].

⁴⁰ Stiftelsen Silviahemmet. Historien bakom Silviahemmet. (Internet.)

⁴¹ Göran Blomé. Bästa Sverige - Från vikingavälde till EU-monarki. Gullers, 2007.

⁴² Björn af Kleen. Dagarna med drottningen. DN Lördag 2014-05-17.

The Mentor Foundation is an international non-governmental organization for drug prevention among young people. The activity is personal mentoring for the young and parental support. The organization is politically independent and supported by a network of scientific experts.

The idea for the organization originally came in 1993 from two WHO employed Swedes: Christer Elfverson and Dr. Hans Emblad. They advocated the need for both scientifically based and socially accepted methods of drug prevention. This coincided with an increase in the supply of synthetic drugs. Silvia probably heard about them at a congress. (According to other information, they had already met in the 1980s.) By 1994, she had gathered a group of interested people and started a discussion. In addition to Silvia, the group consisted of Crown Prince Henry of Luxembourg, Queen Noor of Jordan, the reformist “Red Prince” Talal ibn Abd al-Aziz of Saudi Arabia [UNICEF representative and acquainted with Silvia since a visit to Sweden in 1983], Princess Anni-Frid Reuss von Plauen (former ABBA member Anni-Frid Lyngstad who married a noble), Dr. Corinne Nardi-Schuler (founder in 1997 of a German branch of mentors) and a number of Swedish and foreign business leaders - among them Bertil Hult & Stefan Persson.⁴³

Initially, Mentor supported WHO alone. Subsequently, support was extended to additional organizations. The motto was “helping the helpers”. The group decided to organize its activities through a central secretariat (based in England) with national branches. Branches now exist in Lebanon/Dubai, Colombia, Germany, Belgium, Lithuania, England, USA and Sweden. Mentor Sweden was founded in October 1996 by Silvia and had 13 employees in 2009. 2012, 22 employees. The chairman of the board is Jan Carlzon, former CEO of SAS. Another well-known member is Annika Falkengren, CEO of SEB. The money comes from H&M, SEB, Tetra Laval, EF, JM, Peab, Posten, Astra Zeneca and others.⁴⁴ The activities has been broadened to include all sorts of addictive substances such as alcohol, tobacco & drugs.

Silvia makes constant inspection trips and is engaged in local activities. Alice Trolle-Wachtmeister: “The Queen is extremely strong minded. When we visit and meet people who suffer in different ways, I have had to leave the room several times because it has become too difficult for me. But the Queen is always there.” Silvia: “It hurts the heart and soul to experience all this misery, but no one is helped by me walking away from it.”⁴⁵

The current operations in Mentor Sweden consist of two parts: The course activities for adults and the mentoring program for young people. The statistics are falling behind, but in 2002-2007 almost three thousand parents attended drug-related courses and an equal number participated in seminars. The Mentor program for young people was preventive and designed to increase integration between different groups in society - generations, businesses and schools, cultures and geographical areas. Between 2001 and 2007, 800 cases of mentoring were started. These lasted one year, twice a month, 2-4 hours a time. In 2012, nearly 5,000 young people participated in Mentor's programs and educational activities. 865 cases of mentoring was started during the year.

⁴³ Mentor Foundation. Historik. [Internet.]

⁴⁴ Mentor Sweden. Årsredovisning 2007, 2008 & 2009.

⁴⁵ Roger Lundgren. Drottning Silvia – en jubileumsbok. Swedish Royal Media. 2013.

Mentor Sweden had major start-up difficulties. The cause has not been established. The operation in its current form did not start until 2001. After its foundation, Silvia withdrew, but remained a patron and honorary member. As usual with Silvia, she has more influence than is apparent in the organizational chart. The employment of key personnel must be approved by her, e.g. Paul Rompani, from December 2012 Head of Mentor's Central Secretariat in England:

- I heard about the job at Mentor and immediately felt that this was something I wanted to work with. Mentor has an incredibly good reputation and I think a lot is thanks to the Queen's commitment. She's in for real and everyone feels it.

...

- It was the Queen who gave final approval to my employment. When everyone else had given their green light, I was called to the Royal Castle in Stockholm. I was escorted into a big room and there behind a desk was the queen, Paul remembers.

- It was surreal. She was incredibly well informed and basically questioned me for an hour. When I left, I was completely exhausted. Besides, I wasn't sure if I had got the job. She didn't say a word about my chances.⁴⁶

World Childhood Foundation

The World Childhood Foundation (WCF) has a long pre-history. In May 1990, a group of people from mainly the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand convened for a conference in Chiang Mai, northern Thailand, to discuss the increased incidence of child sex in the wake of the Vietnam War and Western tourism. Tourism income was given the unflattering name "semen dollars". The conference founded the non-profit organization "End Child Prostitution And Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes" (ECPAT) with its headquarters in Bangkok. ECPAT continued its work both locally and internationally, and on August 27-31, 1996, in collaboration with UNICEF and others, succeeded in organizing the first World Congress against Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children.

The Swedish government would host the event. In the autumn of 1995, Silvia was asked to act as patron of the congress to which she agreed. Her commitment to the issue had been aroused in 1992 with two high-profile Swedish court cases in Huddinge & Norrköping about the distribution of child pornography. Silvia, as usual, prepared carefully. In addition to books, statistics and testimonies, she watched films about the abuse that the police had compiled from confiscated material. On November 27, 1995, she gave a talk about it in Paris for 26 leading "first ladies" at a conference on Children's Rights organized by the French President's wife Mme Anne d'Estaing. Silvia began with a piece of "high drama":

I have chosen to talk about child pornography, because the number of paedophiles who exploit, abuse, drug and sell innocent children is increasing all over the world. Paedophiles operate in the dark; they can be everywhere. They are teachers, they are lawyers, they are even doctors, and they can be your neighbours, whom you trust. They travel abroad, they organize charter trips, aware that few countries stop and punish them. ... If we all work

⁴⁶ Johan T Lindwall. Silvia har järnkoll på sitt världsimperium. Expressen, 2012-11-21.

together, the Congress [August 27-31 next year] can become the foundation for a global action plan against commercial exploitation of children, so that we can abolish this degrading, unacceptable form of modern slavery, called child pornography.⁴⁷

On July 23, 1996, she went as far as to participate in a televised debate in which she advocated a change in the law so that possession of child pornography would also be punishable, not just distribution. She also wanted to publish names of paedophiles in the press.⁴⁸ She has maintained that position. In 2008, she wanted Sweden to emulate Denmark and Norway, and not only ban the possession of child pornography but also viewing it on the Internet or in other ways.⁴⁹ Such a change in the law was implemented in 2010.

Representatives of 122 governments, UN agencies and nearly 100 NGOs attended the congress on August 27-31, 1996. At the inauguration in Folkets Hus in Stockholm, Silvia would only attend, i.e. be seen and listen. However, she asked to say a few words outside the Minutes. Shortly before the congress, the Belgian police had revealed an unusually harrowing paedophile story in which the victim had been starved to death. Silvia perceived this with child pornography as a completely incomprehensible “wave of decadence that swept the western world” and not least in Sweden.⁵⁰ She was on a state visit to Finland but returned in time to attend the conclusion of the congress. ECPAT Sweden was founded on September 6, 1996. Silvia is the patron of the business but does not work in it.⁵¹ Her role in ECPAT has since been to raise awareness of the problems through lectures and personal contacts with those in power. She has also participated in two subsequent world conferences in Yokohama (2001) & Rio de Janeiro (2008).

The Congress made Silvia realize the extent of the problem. In 1997 she raised the problem in a number of contexts. She spoke with good friends, business leaders and politicians in Brazil. In 1998, she managed to gather support for a relief organization, the World Childhood Foundation, for children and especially girls. Work began in 1999. Street children, sexually exploited children, young girls and teenage mothers were prioritized target groups. One prerequisite was that the organization should not compete with other established children's rights organizations. Thus, instead of collecting funds from private individuals, they turned to companies. Silvia managed to persuade 14 mainly Swedish & German companies to enter with a start-up capital of one million dollars each. The proceeds were used to finance the operation of a Swedish secretariat. Further companies have contributed in various ways. WCF does not run any projects of its own. Organizations apply to the WCF for money. WCF has expanded to include branches in Brazil, Germany and the United States. However, the projects financed must be approved by the Swedish Board, of which Silvia is an honorary member. Other members are Antonia Ax:son Johnson, Madeleine Leijonhufvud and Sophie Stenbeck. In 2007, the company had a turnover of just under \$12 million, divided into about 100 projects on all continents. Since its inception,

⁴⁷ Roger Lundgren. *Drottning Silvia – en jubileumsbok*. Swedish Royal Media. 2013.

⁴⁸ Britt-Marie Mattsson. Debatt. SVT2, 1996-07-23, kl 22:10.

⁴⁹ Ekots lördagsintervju. SR P1, 2008-11-01, kl 12:55.

⁵⁰ SR. Dagens Eko. 2008-11-01.

⁵¹ ECPAT Sverige. Historik. [Internet.]

WCT has funded about 500 projects.^{52,53} In Brazil it is estimated to have helped 120 thousand children. Silvia has also promoted her own projects, such as the Icelandic method Barnahus - that children who have been abused have their own psychologist to turn to.

Ecpat Sweden was started in 1996 as a campaign when it was believed that state authorities and authorities within the business community would take over the work and that Ecpat Sweden would only function as a lobbying organization. It turned out however, that instead of decreasing, the work has increased.⁵⁴ Gradually, the organization stabilized. (Permanent) Secretary General is Helena Karlén. The Board has been chaired by Lennart Lindgren (2000?-2007), Thomas Bodström (2007-2010), Pierre Schori (2010-2010) and Lars Arrhenius (2010-). There is also an external expert group.

Bodström was Minister of Justice 2000-2006 and chairman of the Committee on Justice 2006-2010. His dual involvement attracted criticism. "The fact that Bodström and Ecpat found each other is not very strange. They share a common craze for dramatic moves and a common disinterest in the rule of law. Nevertheless, it is bizarre that the chairman of a lobby organization is also chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Justice."⁵⁵ Bodström & Silvia were accused by Rick Falkvinge, of the Pirate Party, and others of creating a social climate of moral panic where the legislation against child pornography crimes did not help the children but instead restricted the freedom of the press, for example the 2009 indictment of the translator Simon Lundström for child pornography crimes based on his possession of manga cartoons. Lundströms was convicted but the sentence was overturned in a higher court.

World Child and Youth Forum (Global Child Forum)

WCYF is a recurring conference for the exchange of experience on the work of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child initiated jointly by CG and Silvia. The first meeting was on November 19, 2010. The Convention on the Rights of the Child was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989. For the 20th anniversary "there were many of Europe's First Ladies who gathered here in Stockholm to spread knowledge about the Children's Convention, from Madame Barroso to Queen Beatrix, Queen Paola, Queen Sofia and the Grand Duchess Maria-Teresa, all with a great commitment to these issues. We also brought together several organizations working for children's rights. Then questions were raised about what do children know about their rights, what do families know, what do teachers know? The Ombudsman for Children told us that only one in five children has heard of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We then continued to discuss these issues at home, and now we have created a platform for spreading knowledge about children's rights, both to society at large and to children directly. We want to create a non-political platform where we can help bring together organizations and experts."⁵⁶ 2013

⁵² Word Childhood Foundation. Historik. [Internet.]

⁵³ Childhood 10 years. ISBN 978-91-633-4664-4.

⁵⁴ Louise Hedberg & Frida Sandberg. Samarbete mellan näringsliv & frivilligorganisationer. 2002. Uppsala universitet, Företagsekonomiska institutionen, Magisteruppsats, 2002-01-08.

⁵⁵ Johannes Forsberg. Redaktionen svarar [på Ecpat]. Expressen, 2008-03-28.

⁵⁶ Hovets informationsavdelning. World Child and Youth Forum. Hovets webbsida, 2010-11-15.

the organization had three meetings - the latest with over 400 delegates from industry, government and children's rights organizations.

Some of Silvia's statements were criticized internationally. On October 18, 2000, she addressed the wives of UN diplomats, the Woman International Forum, in which she criticized the United States for not signing the Convention on the Rights of the Child. During the speech she mentioned the stone-throwing children during the Palestinian Intifada 1987-1993, which led to Palestinian protests:

In a question and answer session a question was asked which said: What would the Queen say to those mothers who have children throwing stones at the Intifada? Queen Silvia replied that, as a mother, she would talk to the children in general terms about how it can be dangerous, not to do it and so forth. And then she added: "...but sometimes it seems that it was organized." [Alternatively, "I sometimes get the feeling that they (the children's demonstrations) are organized by other forces."⁵⁷]
"By this, the Queen meant that children who are subject to group pressure have difficulty saying no and that is what she means by "organized", says Elisabeth Tarras-Wahlberg.⁵⁸

Silvia took the trouble to learn sign language to communicate with deaf children when representing. Beginning in May 1981, she attended the Manila School. It was at the same time that Swedish sign language became a recognized minority language, and she received private lessons at the castle once a week. For a while she also followed the teaching on the spot.

[The sign language was] an always equally successful "stunt" on foreign visits. It usually takes place when visiting the Amu Center in Liljeholmen in Stockholm. The king and his male guest disappear among the welds and lathes while the queen takes the stairs up to the deaf school. The regular teacher welcomes the wives, presents the activities and gives the floor to the guest, it may be a visiting queen or the president's wife, who asks the students some question. Then the Queen's one-man show begins! She takes over, she translates, draws and responds. A lot of foreign photographers have desperately tried to catch it through the lens. A queen who speaks sign language, such a thing was not expected.⁵⁹

Silvia was also present at the Paralympics. She had a strong belief in the importance of changing peoples attitudes, both among the healthy and among the disabled themselves: "The disabled must be in our midst in society."⁶⁰ - "I believe in competitions, even smaller competitions, because then you get proof that everything is possible, that you can conquer your problems."⁶¹

Silvia's foundations gave grants to organizations, never to private individuals. Ideally, she supported R&D projects, projects with some pedagogical element and projects with concrete results. Help to self help. The projects would create rings on the water. The lack of money would be offset by efficiency. Parts of the charity have been evaluated by

⁵⁷ Wolfgang Hansson. Silvias attack mot USA i FN. Aftonbladet, 2000-10-19.

⁵⁸ Pehr-Ivar Sohlström. Palestinier rasar mot drottningen. Aftonbladet, 2000-10-23.

⁵⁹ Bengt Falkkloo. Ständigt uppvaktad. Dagens Nyheter, 1993-12-19.

⁶⁰ Svensk Damtidning, 1984:5.

⁶¹ Annette Kullenberg. De handikappades främste supporter. Aftonbladet, 1992-09-06.

independent auditing firms and experts so that the methods are “evidence-based” in the Cochran Institute's sense.

Silvia seems to be pursuing three issues in public: Information on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the prohibition of child pornography and more influence for private charities. This has generated criticism that she has breached the Torekov compromise. Silvia usually answers critics by claiming that she is acting in her capacity of private citizen. Which is formally correct, since the role of the Queen is not regulated in the Torekov compromise, but perhaps not entirely convincing. She also states that humanitarian work is not political.

Silvia's surroundings believe that she should have received greater recognition for what she has done but private charity is obviously controversial in Sweden for many reasons: (1) It is “the mercy of the upper classes to the poor”. (2) Non-profit organizations compete with each other for the money. (3) Even Queens are subject to envy, a supposedly Swedish trait. Silvia has not been knighted for her efforts, but she has received foreign medals, honorary doctorates and applause from her peers. In 2004, Forbes ranked her 68th on its list of the world's most powerful women. The response from official Sweden, however, is reminiscent of Ebba Wallenberg-Bonde's experiences in the 1940s and 1950s. Nothing is for free, not even for high finance and royalty. Silvia eventually adopted a philosophical approach to the whole thing: “I try to do the best I can. And then you get accepted by the people. Or not.”⁶²

On her 70th anniversary, former Minister of Industry and leader of Centerpartiet Maud Olofsson thought that the population should be reminded of Silvia's efforts and took the initiative for a jubilee book: Roger Lundgren “Drottning Silvia - en jubileumsbok” (2013). It was in three parts: One where Silvia talked about her life, one where the people around her told stories about her, and one that summarized the anniversary year. Silvia appears in the book as an epitome of virtues – beauty, intelligence, compassion, commitment, self-control and feet on ground. Certainly an asset for the country but not so easy to be married to.

*

And why was this charity important to Silvia? That question is actually easy to answer. It was good for character and it corresponded to the demands she made of herself as Lutheran. She held on to the catechism, on firm moral standards and on a personal responsibility for her actions. The possible grace at the end must be earned. The meaning of life was work. When the god daughter Josephine Génétay felt lonely and lost Silvia's advice was “When you feel lonely, you can seek the meaning of life outside of yourself.” She was once asked: “Is the Queen afraid to die?” - “[Yes.]” - ”Why?” - ”I'm afraid not to be finished on this earth. Not to be prepared.”⁶³ Twenty years later there was less of performance anxiety:

- Is not faith put to difficult tests in this de-Christianized age, where even humanist thought is disappearing, where good news stands on the sidelines, while negative ones dominate?
- Yes, but that is precisely why you have to fight on and put your energy into helping others. But to do that, you have to be at peace. How else to give? It'll be too hard. You wear yourself out if you don't have your own faith and peace of mind to fall back on as a source.

⁶² Lasse Granestränd. Drottning Silvia saknar att kunna vara spontan. Dagens Nyheter, 2009-03-22.

⁶³ P D Lindeberg. Unik intervju med drottning Silvia om kristen fostran. Växjöstifts hembygdskalender, 1981.

- But a source needs refilling. How is it done? Perhaps the work with disabled people gives you some kind of inner satisfaction that replenishes.
- No, I'm not doing it for that. I do not have that motive. It is a personal interest that has emerged and grown. Incidentally, nobody here knew that I was taking sign language lessons. I didn't do it to make it a gimmick, a thing.⁶⁴

I believe in goodness. Of course, I see that there are other forces as well [such as evil]. But I believe in the good and I am trying to help. To do that you have to be in a positive state of mind, you have to look into the future and believe in it.⁶⁵

I do not think that this whole philosophy of life has to be so complicated. ... I think it is important to be there for one's fellow man. It gives so much back. Respect for other people is also essential to me. To be honest and to try to identify with one's fellow humans is to show them respect. I'm trying to act like that.⁶⁶

In 1979, the Court congregation published a prayer book which was also published abroad.⁶⁷ The main reason was that Silvia had questions about which evening prayers for children existed. Court preacher Hans Åkerhielm provided her with a selection. In a later edition, Silvia also included a prayer about how it is to age.

Religion has always been a serious matter for both my parents. Now, as an adult and with my own children, I am happy to have received something that gives me so much, a security perhaps, a security that comes from trust.

- If you have confidence, it may not always be easy, but easier, to be happy; it is reflected in everything. If you're sad, you receive help, strength, hope. Our time is running out, it is running between our fingers. For me, faith is a stronghold...

And a prayer?

- Yes, prayer. But I can't talk about it any other way than to show how important prayer is to me; that is the firmament that one will give to one children, show them the how and the why; then it becomes their business.

- Sometimes, I have to admit, my day is like a wheel spinning away without me having time to feel anything. Then the evening prayer with the children will be the moment when I catch up, when everything falls its place ...⁶⁸

CG also participated in the prayer hours: grace and evening prayer. The evening prayer was "Gud som haver barnen kär" (God who loves all children).⁶⁹ In 2009 Silvia published her own prayer book with nature photographs of CG.⁷⁰ Foreword: "This is a Christian prayer book but I would be pleased if also those of another faith can find something that can unite us all as human beings in our country." Accordingly, the book contained Our Father and the Lords blessing in a variety of languages spoken in Sweden: Swedish, German, English, French,

⁶⁴ Brita Åhman. En face : Ansikte mot ansikte. Drottning Silvia. 1987, sida 103-115.

⁶⁵ Christina Magnergård. Drottning Silvia : hennes egen berättelse. TV4, 1998. [Intervju med Jürgen Schröder.]

⁶⁶ Christina Magnergård Bjers. Drottning Silvia. Ekerlids förlag, 2001 [baserad på intervjuer med Silvia m fl].

⁶⁷ Hovförsamlingen. Victorias bönbok. Stockholm: Norstedt, 1979.

⁶⁸ Carl Otto Werkelid. Drottning Silvias tro och tillit. Svenska Dagbladet, 1988-12-23.

⁶⁹ Svensk Damtidning, 1983:1.

⁷⁰ Drottning Silvias bönbok. Stockholm: Verbum, 2009.

Spanish, Brazilian Portuguese, Finnish, Northern, Lule & Southern Sami, Arabic and Syriac/Aramaic. Silvia's hope was that everyone will find their feet in our peaceful country. One of the prayers says "Thank you for letting me sleep well tonight and not hear cannons and auto rifles all around me".

Silvia also believes in fate or, more accurately, her destiny. Sometimes you get the impression that she tracks herself in tarot cards. Sometimes that she quotes from William Henley's poem *Invictus* (undefeated): "I am the master of my fate; I am the captain of my soul." Humility has never been Silvia's strongest suite.