

Chapter 79 : Crown Prince (III) (1933-1950) – World War II before|during|after.

Gusty's 30s and 40s were both a repeat of his 10s and 20s and a preparation for the throne. For a long time, Gusty and apparently the rest of the population perceived Hitler as a new version of Wilhelm II and the Finnish Winter and Continuation War as a repetition of the civil war between the whites and the Reds. As a Bolshevik opponent, Hitler had sympathizers within the Swedish upper class, but as a representative of a republican party he was not a natural ally of the monarchists. When Hitler on April 9, 1940, invaded Denmark and Norway, he on the contrary became a threat. The German pogroms were by then long-established. As Heads of State, it was up to Gustaf V and later Gusty to take a clear position on the issue. They never did. Crown Princess Victoria is the first in the Royal Family to have visited Auschwitz.

*

Between 1933 and 1945, Gusty's archaeological activities were dormant. Instead he engaged in another hobby of flower growing: Rododendron at Sofiero & orchids at Ulriksdal. This with Rododendron had begun already in the 1910s but during the Oriental Trip in 1934 Gusty bought a variety of new species which he hybridized. He also devoted himself to horticulture, fruit growing, agriculture, mushrooms, etc. and bought himself a fishing resort in Tärnaby.

Gustav's period of travelling lasted from 1926 to 1938. The first American journey is depicted in the previous chapter. The other trips were national tours, visits to the Swedish diaspora, state visits in the smaller format, trade trips for the export association and as unofficial "cultural ambassador". I describe them in chronological order:

- May 1926 and the following nine months, Gusty and Crown Princess Louise were on a round-the-world trip: Americas-Hawaii-Japan-Korea-China-Indonesia-India. The America visit (see previous chapter 78) is extensively documented in two books¹ and in American newspaper articles, the rest of the trip more haphazardly.² The China visit is most renowned. During his stay Gusty seems not to have been interested in trade but only in antiques.
- In the summer of 1927, Gusty, Crown Princess Louise, Prince Sigvard and Princess Ingrid were on a national tour to Norrbotten where they travelled to about 20 places. The trip was described very thoroughly and it was evident that the residents were grateful to be noticed.³
- In 1930 Gusty visited Iceland. 1931 Swedish citizens in Estonia. 1932 the northern counties Jämtland & Härjedalen. 1934 Dalarna, Hälsingland and the high coast of Ångermanland.
- September 1934 and the following five months, Gusty, Crown Princess Louise, Prince Bertil and Princess Ingrid toured the Near East: Greece-Turkey-Syria-Iraq-Iran-Palestine-Egypt-Ethiopia. The aim was both cultural exchange and trade. The

¹ Henriksson 1926; Swenne 1926.

² Svenska Dagbladets årsbok 1926: ss. 43-58; [En reskamrat.] "Kronprinsessan på världsomsegling." Vecko Journalen 1926:38, ss. 10-11,33; Boberg 1928.

³ Lagergren 1927.

trip as a whole is documented in a book with Gusty's own pictures⁴ and there are some longer articles.⁵

- In 1936 Gusty again visited Norrbotten. 1937 Romania.
- In 1938, Gusty, Crown Princess Louise and Prince Bertil made a two-month visit to Delaware on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Swedes' arrival. Gusty was bedridden in a kidney stone attack and Prince Bertil took over the program.⁶

He seems to have seen the trips as a welcome break. He escaped the day-to-day politics and at times also the press coverage.⁷ Gusty shared the prevailing Engelbrekt craze who he throughout the 1930s praised with words like: "In our history there are few personalities, so deserving of unanimous praise, like Engelbrekt. Why does his efforts even now garner such support? Well, because he has become for us the embodiment of national popular freedom - Engelbrekt claimed both Sweden's external independence and the individual's personal freedom ..."⁸ Maybe so. Engelbrekt fought the Danes & is supposed to have convened Sweden's first Parliament ever, at Arboga in January 1435.

*

In 1939 the war came. Gusty had from 1924 led or participated in the larger field exercises. Now the professional soldiers took over and Gusty was given a passive role as inspector and observer. As Crown Prince, he attended the same political meetings as his father, but was kept short. He seems to have only spoken four times. This was done in the Foreign Affairs Council (UN) on December 1, 1939 (the Soviet aggression against Finland), in an extraordinary Council on February 19, 1940 (the situation in Finland), in the UN on April 9, 1940 (German aggression against Denmark and Norway) and in the UN on June 23, 1941 (the decision to authorize the transit of German troops, the so-called "midsummer crisis"). On New Year's Eve 1940/41 he gave his father's radio address to the nation.

During the assault on Finland, unlike the Prime Minister and his father, he argued that Sweden should not declare it self neutral but neither should it intervene. Sweden declared itself "non-belligerent". The difference would be that a neutral state does not contribute military aid, which in fact Sweden did in the form of volunteers & weaponry. However, Gusty's own contribution was strictly humanitarian:

During the Finnish Winter War November 30, 1939 to March 13, 1940, a number of relief organizations were formed in Sweden. On March 21, 1940, Gusty was appointed chairman of the Finnish National Committee, which was to coordinate the operations. The committee replaced Prince Wilhelm's organization Central Finland Aid, which for a few months performed a similar function. "After Germany's attack on Denmark and Norway, the Committee April 16, 1940, was asked to change its activities. The request was approved on April 19, 1940. The name was changed to the National Committee only and its activities were broadened to include assistance

⁴ Lagerberg red. 1935.

⁵ Svenska Dagbladets årsbok 1934: ss. 73-77; "Kronprinsparet rustar till Orientresa." Vecko Journalen 1934:35; "Kronprinsparets Palestinabesök." Judisk tidskrift 1935, ss. 9-14; Svenska Dagbladets årsbok 1935: ss. 81-84; R.J. [Robert Josephsson.] "Sex timmar med kronprinsen." Vecko Journalen 1935:5, ss. 22-23.

⁶ Svenska Dagbladets årsbok 1938: ss. 89-95; Henriksson 1939.

⁷ Westman 1987: ss. 145-146; Torbacke 1990: s. 66.

⁸ Älmeberg, 1927: s. 215. [Radiotal av G.A. slutet av 1939.]

to families of conscripted Swedes, humanitarian aid for Nordic civilian refugees within Sweden, support for Finland's reconstruction and humanitarian aid for the homeless in Finland. July 19, 1940, the work of the National Committee was extended to reconstruction work in Norway. On October 25, 1940, the Committee was given the right to use certain funds to help refugees other than Nordic refugees. The support provided to Finland and Norway included: supplies of prefabricated housing and other materials. Finland was also supplied with itinerant laundries and medications. Finnish children were given the opportunity to stay in Sweden. The organization also provided direct grants. The Committee's activities ceased [on December 24] 1942.⁹

At the Germans' attack on Denmark and Norway, Gusty reportedly took strong offence, "We have no reason to kiss the Prussian boots". According to his sons Bertil and Carl Johan he was so upset at the news that he even dropped a porcelain piece. There are four reasonably consistent versions of what happened:

- Ambassador Gunnar Hägglöf: "On 6 April I received a visit to the Foreign Ministry by the princes Bertil and Carl Johan. They wanted to know what I thought. I replied that the communications from Germany seemed more than threatening. 'So did the old man,' Prince Bertil said. 'He was so beside himself, when he heard that the government did not want to mobilize, that he accidentally smashed one of his finest Chinese pots.'"¹⁰
- Minister of Communications Gustaf Andersson in Rasjön: "In the government, we had reason to assume, through warnings from reporters in Germany, that something was in the making towards Scandinavia, but concerning the time when the event would occur, we did not know much more than the public was told by the newspapers. The Council of State was convened on the morning of June 9, and the Foreign Minister [Günther] explained what had happened. He had been visited by the German minister early in the morning, who had assured him that Sweden would be left alone and also indicated that certain concessions were expected in the field of transport. Furthermore, the Minister had urged us not to take any action to assist Denmark and Norway and warned against increasing military readiness. The Crown Prince and Prince Gustaf Adolf were also present. The question primarily concerned the extent to which the armed forces would be mobilized. The King advised caution against arousing suspicion of aggressive intentions, while the Crown Prince urged the mobilization of all armed forces immediately. The latter was also the result of the deliberations."¹¹
- Right-wing politician Ivar Andersson: "[The Crown Prince] insisted on the need for Sweden to maintain its full sovereignty and independence. The conduct against Germany should be firm if moderate. There was no reason to fear, that the Germans would attack as long as Sweden accommodated them."¹²
- Attorney General K G Westman: "Uncertain if Sweden had to do battle, we gathered for the Council of State at 9 o'clock. It was short, because the king had called us to a conversation at the castle. We gathered in his individual floor and he came in

⁹ Rikskommittén 1942; Riksarkivet 1999; Westerlund 2008: s. 315.

¹⁰ Hägglöf 1972: s. 39.

¹¹ Andersson 1955: ss. 244-245.

¹² Andersson 1969: s. 38.

accompanied by both the crown prince and the heir prince. P.A. [Per Albin] and Günther felt that we should take further emergency measures by continuing the mobilization of the army in stages and in such a way that the Germans did not have reason to take our measures as a pretext for a preventive strike against us. The Crown Prince gave four speeches in support of mobilization, suggested a standoffish response to the German demands, stating that the most important thing for a people was not to keep the peace but to save their soul. Gustaf believed that one should not rush in and was quite impatient with the crown prince's contributions. It was agreed upon that we would consult on the measures later. The king left, but stopped at the door and looked around for the Crown Prince, who was engaged in the rather slow work of convincing Bramstorp to change his views. The king then took a few steps back into the room and urged him quite impatiently to come. Both son and grandson were in opposition.

The German note, about which we spoke before the king, contained 4 paragraphs. The first was that Sweden would not undertake any mobilization and redeployment measures, which could be considered directed against Germany. Of the other three, the most annoying was that the Swedish fleet would stay within the three-mile limit on the coast from Blekinge to Strömstad. It was this point in particular that the crown prince considered impossible to accept, as it was contrary to Swedish sovereignty and agreeing to it would be demoralizing.”¹³

Älmeberg comments in his biography: ”Gustaf Adolf's many posts on this day were and remained unique in the history of the Cabinet and Foreign Affairs Committee.”¹⁴ Älmeberg continues: The next day, Gusty & Edmund met with Chief of Defence Axel Rappe and Chief of Staff Olov Thörnell, ”who apparently had to change their position in the face of the arguments of both princes. What was said at the meeting is still unknown. The Supreme Commander then called Sköld, who requested a new cabinet meeting in the evening. Now Hansson again proved to be the most reluctant to raise readiness and do something that the Germans would dislike, but Sköld and Günther managed to get the government to decide on full and general mobilization. The crown prince's seemingly hopeless position two days earlier had now prevailed.”¹⁵

During the transit discussions the following year Gusty was privately against some of these but abided by the decision. The meeting was afterwards surrounded by many rumours: That Gustaf would have threatened to abdicate if he did not get his way about the transit. This statement is however from several years later, uttered in a speech by Social Affairs Minister Gustav Möller and based on oral information from Prime Minister P.A. Hansson to himself only, information that has never been verified because Hansson at the time of the speech was dead. (Se chapter 66.)

It has not been possible to find any information about what Gusty did the rest of the time 1942-1950. He probably arranged his collections & helped his father in office. An alternative interpretation is that Gustav V, because his son's opposition, to him tantamount to breaking his oath of allegiance, forbade him from ever attending or speaking at cabinet meetings. After the war, however, he must at least have filled in while his father was on holiday in Nice. There are some irritated outbreaks of Erlander and others in that direction. Gusty seems ill informed on just about everything. In view of Gusty's politics, there should have been

¹³ Westman 1981: s. 87.

¹⁴ Älmeberg, 2017: s. 236.

¹⁵ Älmeberg, 2017: s. 238.

some kind of purge of the court after his accession (= that key persons preferred to withdraw to private life rather than compromise), but no such information has been found.