

Chapter 95 : Princess Christina (b. 1943).

Princess Christina Louise Helena of Sweden, "Titti" among friends, was born August 3, 1943, at Haga Castle. Her father was Prince Gustaf Adolf of Sweden (1906-1947). Her mother was Princess Sibylla of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha (1932-1972). On June 15, 1974, she married the businessman etc. Tord Magnusson (1941-) and with him had three children 1975-1980.

The literature about Christina consists of short biographies (Holmgren red. 1968; Elgklou 1978: ss. 216-217; Ohlmarks 1979: ss. 144-145; Skott 1996: ss. 297-298; Lindqvist 2010: s. 147; Norlin 2015: s. 277) & a number of newspaper articles. She has also published herself (Magnusson 1994, 2001, 2016 & 2020). See also Chapter 90.

Over the years, Christina has done a number of interviews that could not be used in this context because they were about the family members rather than about herself: Her brother, father, mother and grandfather.

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*Break up! Break up! A new day dawns.
Our great adventure never ends.*
Karin Boje. (1927) In motion.

Christina ("Titti" among friends) would receive a different education than her sisters. When Carl Gustaf's Education Council decided to put him in Broms school, the Castle school was closed down and Christina started at the French School in 1951 after only one year in the Castle school. Birgitta and Desirée had graduated from the French school without diploma, but Christina passed with colours.

The French school was described by contemporaries as very democratic:

A school where you can be yourself; where neither language, religion, race or skin colour matter among comrades, and where good manners and considerate behaviour are considered the prerequisite for learning - even of the intellectual kind. ... In the French school, no one will be discriminated. Once you wear the blue school coat with the initials EC (École Français), everyone is a school mate, whether you are a Princess from the country's ruling royal house, a foreign diplomat's daughter or an ordinary little Swedish blonde with a blunt nose. This was probably to Princess Sibylla's liking, since she chose to let her three youngest daughters begin there right after finishing the Castle school. Princess Birgitta has just "graduated seventh grade", as has Princess Desirée, and now Princess Christina is studying in her last year, at the all-classical branch, with both Latin and Greek on the schedule to become the royal house's first female A-level student.¹

But Sibylla quickly made sure that also Christina was given special treatment:

There were 17 of them in the French school class. All classmates were instructed not to reveal anything about Titti to the press. The comrades were not allowed to say "you", but use the third person "Titti". Likewise the teachers, but they persisted in

¹ Franska Skolan. Svensk Damtidning, 1962:18.

saying addressing her as “Princess”. Apart from that, Titti was treated just like the other students. If she couldn't do her Latin homework, she endured scolding as much as the others.²

[The situation was complicated. The theory of democracy is more beautiful than its practice:] - It was only when I started school that I understood my special position. Or, rather, it was the other children who made me realize it, by always letting me have the deciding word. And of course I took advantage of it. I'm sure I became a bit of a bully. - Was your special position emphasized in your upbringing? - What I first found out was that I was not allowed to do certain things. What was never emphasized, however, was that my position carried privileges.³

Christina's acquaintances were checked so that no “fortune seekers” infiltrated. While Carl Gustaf did socialize with classmates after school, few of Christina's classmates passed the eye of the needle:

Titti was friendly but reserved with her classmates and her classmates did normally not visit the castle. Antonia Ax:son Johnson (future industrialist) was the only person invited. The other classmates were only invited once and that was when the abuterium caps were to be sewn. Only Antonia Ax:son Johnson was invited to Titti's school-leaving party.

She neither had lunch at school but was picked up in the royal car for lunch at the castle.⁴

Christina graduated in 1963. During the summer holidays, she had lived with a French family to improve her language. The grades were good. Christina and Antonia continued their studies at Radcliffe College in the United States. Radcliffe was an educational institution for girls closely associated with Harvard University and with similar demands. Christina wrote an essay on the Swedish emigration to America and also studied music theory and Dutch 17th-century art. She was then called home. It was speculated that Sibylla did not want to see a repeat of Margaretha's love affair or that it was too expensive. There were also signs that the democratic atmosphere “over there” was too massive. After spending a year in America, Princess Christina had divided feelings about her position:

* How do you perceive the role of a princess in a modern democracy as the Swedish one?

– I would like to say that I do not really see myself as playing a role. As a young person I try to live a normal life that happens to be split in two - I am a student, a private person, but also a princess, an official symbol of Sweden.⁵

Returning to Sweden, Christina continued with two years of art history at Stockholm University with the goal of becoming a museum curator. She began an essay about the plafond paintings in the state hall at Drottningholm Castle, which she never managed to complete. It was a sore point: “The Swedish studies did not go well. I needed a fixed schedule like in America to get something done. I can't manage free studies. I need the

² Monica Wadstedt. Så har det gått för Christinas klasskamrater. Svensk Damtidning, 1973:15.

³ Adam Inczédy-Gambos & Henrik Palmstierna. Om prinsessan Christina. Husmodern, 1972:17.

⁴ Monica Wadstedt. Så har det gått för Christinas klasskamrater. Svensk Damtidning, 1973:15.

⁵ Göran Lundberg & Lars-Erik Örtengren. Mellanstick : intervju med prinsessan Christina. SVT, 1967-03-04.

pressure to be present at a particular place and time. At least that's how it is for me. Some advantages you have [however] as a princess: You don't have to do your taxes, that's nice. And you get better treatment here and there.”⁶ Additional benefits were that life as a Princess was both pleasant and interesting - a lot of travel & one got to meet interesting people.⁷ Later it emerged that contributing factors to the poor study result was the lack of time because of the representation, that she was treated quite roughly at the seminars and that she was afraid of the criticism she would get when the paper, despite everything a first work, was leaked to the press. She eventually dismissed herself as an academic “drop-out”. Instead, it became representation at home and abroad:

She found the representation duties both boring and difficult. She was embarrassed by the close attention. In the beginning she blushed easily when making a speech. She faced the rostrum and read her speech with a monotone voice. Often she stuttered. She was very unhappy about being photographed on all kinds of occasions. But eventually she learned to appreciate the benefits of being a public figure.

- You get in touch with a huge number of interesting people that you would never get to meet otherwise,” she said. You travel and see a lot. You encounter a lot of different situations and conditions.

Today, Christina is relaxed and natural when appearing in front of the public. She no longer stutters and is not disturbed by the flashbulbs. Instead of turning her head away from the cameras she flashes a dazzling smiles at the photographer and tries to be accommodating in every way.⁸

Like her mother Christina was fond of outspoken “feminist” interviews. In a television interview in March 1967, she even stated that she thought it wrong that woman could not inherit the throne.⁹ Gustaf VI allegedly perceived her as such an asset that he urged her to postpone her marriage until Carl Gustaf came of age.¹⁰ She was so popular that even those who after Sibylla's death, when Christina became first lady of the kingdom, thought it a shame that she was Carl Gustaf's sister. She was fit to be a queen. Everyday life, however, was not as glamorous: “To be the first lady of the kingdom? It is not a full-time job. It is seasonal with most tasks scheduled for April-May. You cannot live [in that way] for occasional and irregular official engagements. It would be a kind of horrible eternal holiday.”¹¹

To occupy herself, she began working part-time unpaid. In 1971 she was posted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' information service where she among other things kept contact with foreign guests on visits to Sweden. 1973 she had an internship at the Red Cross. She planned to continue her training at the Red Cross headquarters in Geneva but in 1974 she married the businessman Tord Magnusson. The marriage was considered a *mésalliance* & her husband kept a low profile.

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Christina's stint as ”deputy princess” ran 1965-1975. The last years, she was known well enough to be threatened with murder by the Baader-Meinhof League. Unlike the sisters, she

⁶ Kerstin Hallert. Svenska Dagbladet, 1973-08-01.

⁷ Allers, 1969:31.

⁸ Svensk Damtidning, 1976:26.

⁹ Göran Lundberg & Lars-Erik Örtengren. Mellanstick : intervju med prinsessan Christina. SVT, 1967-03-04.

¹⁰ Christina Franzén. Christina och Carl Gustaf har lovat att inte gifta sig. Svensk Damtidning, 1970:7.

¹¹ Kerstin Hallert. Svenska Dagbladet, 1973-08-01.

did not retire to private life after marriage, but continued to perform an official role as a member of cultural associations, stand in for Queen Silvia, etc. She claims to have served as her brother's "sounding board, support and devil's advocate" without providing any details.¹² Some of the advice seems to have been about the extensive writings about her brother's love life. She has been instrumental in efforts to normalize the press coverage of the royal house. Things did not work out. Carl Gustaf believed at the time that he as a public person must tolerate more than an ordinary citizen. Christina, who was royal when it suited her, private when it suited her better, was significantly more aggressive. For example, she forbade the Swedish Women's magazine to attend her announcement & threatened to prosecute Fib-Aktuellt when the newspaper pointed out that the plastic-based colours used by her husband's facade renovation company were harmful to the substrate.

When the children were old enough, she resumed her Red Cross activities. In 1988, she became chairman of the collaborative project The Noah Ark-Red Cross Foundation for the HIV-infected. From 1993 to 2002 she was chairman of the board of the Swedish Red Cross (SRK) and she has had assignment for the International Red Cross (IRK) and the Red Crescent. In 2005, she was awarded their Henry Dunant Medal for her contributions. The explanatory statement read:

Mrs. Christina Magnuson

Mrs. Magnuson has dedicated herself to the Swedish Red Cross and the Movement for the past 30 years, starting out as a volunteer, promoting the Fundamental Principles at the district level. She was elected President of the Swedish Red Cross in 1993 and stayed in office until 2002.

She also served two terms as a member of the Standing Commission of the Red Cross and Red Crescent which appointed her its special representative on the emblem. She travelled around the world advocating for a solution towards an additional emblem for the Movement, free of any religious, political or cultural connotation.

"Born the Princess of Sweden, she would only use this privilege when it could serve the cause of the Movement. (...) Her unselfish commitment to the Movement's work has won the esteem of everyone she has come across in her work", the tribute reads.¹³

The Swedish Red Cross (SRK) is Sweden's largest popular movement with approximately 300 thousand members. Christina was part time executive chairman of the board, two days a week + weekends. The work involved meetings and inspections. The organization was reorganized in her time from 24 Red Cross districts to 10, which should have taken much of her time. Her mandate for the International Red Cross (IRK) was to sit on the permanent commission of the IRK, the supreme decision-making body of the international congresses, every four years. The mission of the Red Crescent seems to have been the chairmanship of a committee to introduce a religiously neutral Red Crescent symbol:

A committee chaired by Princess Christina Mrs. Magnusson put forward various solutions at a conference in Seville, Spain, in 1997. One suggestion was for the Red Cross to acquire a new neutral symbol, a logo shaped like a diamond. Another proposal was to approve the shield of David. Under pressure from the Anti-Defamation League, an important anti-Semitic organization, the US Red Cross has

¹² Jenny Alexandersson. Utställningen om kungen och prinsessan Christinas fina tal. Aftonbladet, hovbloggen, 2013-09-13.

¹³ ICRC, News Release No 05/66, 2005-11-17.

now also become involved. At the Red Cross Conference in Geneva in November 1999, its President, Bernadine Healy, made a passionate speech in which she pointed out that the Red Crescent had already been accepted as a symbol 70 years ago and that the Red Shield of David in Israel stands for the same humanitarian values. But as recently as Svenska Röda Korsets Tidning nr. 1/2000, s. 19, points out that, according to the International Red Cross Movement, Israel has the wrong emblem.¹⁴

Christina also received an honorary doctorate from Karolinska Institutet for her social contributions as honorary chairman of the Foundations Sophiahemmet, the Heart-lung-fund, Solstickan & the Salvation Army's governing body.

Her cultural interests have focused on dancing,¹⁵ design¹⁶ & the performing arts. Christina started dancing at the age of five and continued at Nina Kozlowsky (a private dance school) until her graduation. Since then, she has been a regular guest at the Opera. She liked the ballet's prerequisites: High culture, elite investment & hard work. She served on the Board of Friends of the Danish Museum and participated in the UNESCO International Dancing Council (CID). She has also been involved in the creation of a form or design museum & served on the board of its friendship association. The same with Ulriksdal's Castle Theatre. It has not been possible to determine the extent of her commitments, but she has at least been an important poster name.

Christina has throughout her life been anxious to hide her own opinions but make herself a mouthpiece. She seems never to have had an agenda of her own. She is a cultural product rather than a living person. She usually calls herself a housewife, but that's a misnomer. She is a socialite or lady-in-waiting & in this way resembles Princess Madeleine, but has infinitely more of hard-nosed worldly wisdom than her rather pathetic niece. Christina is in the habit of complaining that she lacked a task or a role in life, but her de facto role has been to support a fairly sparse royal house, a female version of Prince Bertil.

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Christina has repeatedly been criticized for using her position for her own financial gain. In 1968, after a few sour press comments, Gustaf VI ordered her to return a white mink fur coat that she had received as a gift from the Swedish Fur Farmers' Federation. Christina traded it in for a black topal coat, even more expensive but not as spectacular. She has been allowed to rent a villa in Beylon in Ulriksdal Palace Park as a residence and her work for the Red Cross has been unusually well paid. "Christina Magnusson did not receive a transitional allowance from the Red Cross when she left office in 2002. However, as chairman, she was paid a total of SEK 1,738,463 during her last three years as chairman."¹⁷ Quite unnecessary considering the inheritance of the father and grandfather. Christina was already as young a very wealthy woman & supposedly still is.

When Christina married, she lost her princess title, but King Gustaf VI decided to include "princess" as part of her name. She has, however, in the same way as Prince Oscar had difficulty dealing with her position as bourgeois "honorary princess" & would rather name herself Mrs. Magnusson only. There is a 1999 interview in which she talks about this and her

¹⁴ Anders Brogren. Röda Korset underkänner judisk symbol. <brogren.nu> (2018-01-01).

¹⁵ Magnusson 1994; Anders Jörlén. Prinsessan Christina starkt engagerad för dansen. <dansportalen.se> (2011-08-03).

¹⁶ Magnusson 2001; Rebecka Tarschys. Nybyggt designhus önskas. DN.se, 2002-02-06.

¹⁷ Staffan Heimerson. Prinsessan blev miljonär på sin tid i Röda Korset. Aftonbladet.se, 2009-07-18.

faith. The editing makes her somewhat incoherent, but her credo is a Christian version of the UN's human rights: "Don't ask for whom the bell tolls. It tolls for you." - "Love your neighbour as yourself." In addition, she has the same dramatic attitude to life as Silvia. One should be passionate about one's causes. In her case for the Red Cross. And you shouldn't fear what life brings on. She is an honorary member of SWEA, an association of bourgeois feminists:

We must abandon fear of what lies ahead. The unknown future, is probably not so dangerous. There are many who think that what is known, where I now stand, that is security, and to step outside it would somehow be frightening and difficult to take. I've never felt that way. I like to engage people. To reach people with a message. I think it's exciting to try to explain, talk to people. I have to be passionate about something if I want to reach someone else. That way, I might at least be able to light a spark. I'm not asking everyone to burn as much as I do. But pay it forward.¹⁸

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Since spring 2010, Christina has been under treatment for breast cancer. In 2016, she also suffered from leukemia.

¹⁸ Hjelmqvist & Magnergård, 2000.