

Gustav V : The Haijby affair.

The affair itself

The Haijby affair - that Gustaf V would have had a homosexual relationship with the businessman Kurt Haijby (1897-1965; b. Johansson) - contains so many unsupported allegations about what took place that it is still being debated. The fascination seems due to both to the royal courts omerte strategy - everyone took their supposed secrets with them into death - to Vilhelm Moberg's debate articles, to a general homosexual obsession, and to Haijby's criminal background, mythomania, charm, dissimulation and verbiage having similarities with people like Johnny Bode & Mille Markovic. There is no reason to trust Haijby's allegations. They only appear likely if they are treated out of context.

The sources are abundant. I sift the information to concentrate on the king and the court administration. There are seven main sources: Governor of Stockholm Torsten Nothin (1955), Chief Justice of Stockholm Alvar Zetterquist (1957), Attorney General Maths Heuman (1978), Haijby's defence lawyer Henning Sjöström (1954), the Attorney General investigation (1952; published 2002), researcher Göran Söderström (1999) & private investigator Dan Korn (2013). There is also an extensive literature of debates and interpretations, three literary works, a plethora of newspaper articles & a film.

Haijby's version was that the sexual activity had begun on May 1, 1912, when he as a scout sold mayflower pins at the castle. King Gustaf V would have unbuttoned his fly and fingered his penis, which later led to a meeting. A newspaper post the next day named his two companions. They were interrogated but denied that such a thing had happened. The sexual activity would have continued in 1933 after Haijby approached Gustaf V for a liquor license for his restaurant Lido. The king would have recognized him and they would have met about 15 times. A check of Gustaf V's audience lists showed that November 28, 1933, he received Haijby and about 50 other people. However, it was difficult to fit the subsequent meetings with Haijby into his schedule. According to *Post- och inrikestidningar*, Gustaf V at the time lived at Drottningholm Castle, departed February 5, 1934, for the Riviera and only returned on April 20. However, according to his diary, he slept over a few times at Stockholm Castle so a small number of meetings were theoretically possible.¹ Haijby had also sought out the governor of Stockholm Torsten Nothin to obtain his licence but had been referred to the System company that handled such things. At the time, Haijby alleged that the king had supported his request, which Nothin interpreted as Haijby having some kind of hold on him, which, given Haijby's track record of manslaughter and fraud, worried him. He asked Gustaf V about the matter in connection with a cabinet meeting shortly afterwards. The King rather embarrassed responded that Princess Ingrid had attended the audience and that it was she who wished that Haijby would be treated favourably. Nothin suggested that Haijby had a hold on one of her brothers, which was denied by her father, the crown prince (the future Gustaf VI), who was also present at the Council.² How it passed with the licence is not apparent but the restaurant went bankrupt in January 1934 and Haijby's wife Anna (1887-1965; b. Holmberg) lost a lot of money. Haijby himself lacked assets.

April 22, 1936, the wife filed for divorce. Under the then law, it was a rather tedious procedure - the parties were to first meet a mediator and then a year of legal separation before the divorce proper. If the other party had been unfaithful, the process could be fast

¹ Korn 2013: s. 82-83.

² Söderström 1999: s. 477.

tracked however. The wife referred to that her husband had been unfaithful - but not with whom. The case was to be decided May 4. A few days in advance, Haijby sought out the court's president, councillor Gunnar Junker, and told him who it was. Junker immediately contacted the court. On May 3, Marshal Oscar of the Realm Oscar von Sydow, Marshal of the Court Reinhold Rudbeck, the Superintendent and head of the court administration Oscar Swensson and the court auditor, lawyer Carl Ljungholm, met to discuss the matter. The choice was between three strategies - to prosecute for Lèse majesté, to buy themselves free or to prosecute. The solution was that the lawyer Conrad Quensel was ordered to offer the wife 15 thousand kronor against a vow of silence and that she be content with legal separation - not divorce. Haijby received 4,500 Swedish kronor as a relocation grant to America.

There everything could have ended if the couple had been satisfied. However, Haijby soon returned from "over there" and regularly requested additional funds not to reveal the deal to the press. For each payment, the court found itself in an increasingly precarious situation. Gustav V urged Swensson to "make it as cheap as possible". But that was not the case. Haijby appeared in the meetings with Quensell as both threatening, heartbroken, cheeky, distressed and unpredictable. Best to please him. 1936-1938 Haijby, according to the court administration's accounts, was paid 112 thousand kronor from Gustaf V's private money - in today's value over three million.

In 1938 Haijby's homosexual love life caused him trouble - it was punishable until 1944, a psychiatric diagnosis until 1979 - and in 1938 he tried to escape a homosexual charge by during the police interrogation threatening to expose the Gustaf V affair. This led to Torsten Nothin – in his capacity as governor of Stockholm also chief of police - becoming aware of the affair and he discussing it with both Chief Superintendent Swensson and Minister of Justice Karl Gustaf Westman. Nothin promised to stop the blackmail and to keep Haijby under surveillance. Haijby received a minor allowance for moving abroad - to Germany this time - but was expelled in February 1940 after yet another homosexual affair. In January 1941, Chief Justice Alvar Zetterquist was ordered by Nothin to keep Haijby under observation, going so far as to celebrate midsummer with Mr. and Mrs. Haijby. He found it difficult to justify such intimacy with a convicted sex offender, but Haijby could be very charming when he felt like it. This led to rumours that also Nothin was homo- or bisexual, had a white marriage & was a party to the case.³

Marshal of the Realm Oscar von Sydow 1934-1936 was succeeded by Axel Vennersten 1936-1946 and by Birger Ekeberg 1946-1959. Other court officials were also replaced. No one any longer knew the facts. Everyone wanted to avoid a scandal. Haijby was during the war supervised by the security police on the grounds that the king's good name and reputation was a matter of state. It was also this that Haijby came back from Germany as a vengeful Hitler admirer and spoke to his acquaintances about shooting Gustaf V with a gun that he had hidden in a compartment in the wall of his summer home.⁴ During the war he lay low but at the turn of 1945/46 he handed a book manuscript to Zetterquist with himself and Gustaf V as protagonists and lovers. After much discussion he October 14, 1947, received another 15 thousand against the promise not to print the book which he did anyway.

Marshal of the Realm Birger Ekeberg now contacted the Minister of Justice Herman Zetterberg to investigate if there was any possibility of stopping the distribution. Zetterberg

³ Bernadotte 1995: s. 100.

⁴ JK 1952.

discussed the matter with Prime Minister Tage Erlander, who received a copy. The following day, December 10 (?), the government convened. Minister of the Interior Eije Mossberg described the case dramatically beginning "The King is homosexual!" which led Finance Minister Ernst Wigforss to exclaim "The King? So spry at his age? Admirable!" However, the government agreed that there was nothing in the book to justify its seizure. Zetterquist then tried to get Ekeberg to prosecute Haijby for blackmail - rather, that Ekeberg would obtain the King's consent for the Attorney General to prosecute. The book could then be seized pending trial. Ekeberg discussed the matter with the Crown Prince (who was deputizing for the King while he was on the Riviera) but the Crown Prince refused on the grounds that prosecuting Haijby would lead to even greater publicity than if the book was published. Moreover, the evidence was weak. It was not certain that they would win the case. Zetterquist then made contact with the Swedish Booksellers Association, whose members promised to boycott the book. He probably also got in touch with the newspapers because there was only one (scathing) review. Haijby managed to distribute 300 copies. The remaining 700 copies Zetterquist bought himself with money from Haijby's wife, who did not want any scandal she either. Haijby had been promised further sums from the court, but now that the information was public, the payments were over.

The rest of the Haijby affair - the most public part - was about Haijby feeling abused and persecuted by the authorities: In addition to the "exiles", he had 1938 & 1941 been enrolled at the mental hospital Beckomberga for observation. Nothin's actions were investigated by the Attorney General but he escaped prosecution. He and Zetterquist said they had always acted in good faith - i.e. they believed that Haijby spoke the truth about his homosexual relationship with Gustaf V and that by their actions they protected the king's good name and reputation. In 1950 Gustaf V died and the Royal Court - i.e. Gustaf VI - after much agony June 1952 gave the Attorney General permission to start a trial against Haijby for the actual blackmail in 1938-1938. He got six years. The trial convinced both Nothin and Zetterquist that they had been duped. Neither were afterwards convinced that the sexual relationship had ever existed. The same with others, for example Republican August Spångberg (s) who after reading the book stated that it was so vague - moreover written as a novel - that it was impossible to understand what was supposed to have taken place. He interpreted the Haijby affair as friendship gone wrong and that Haijby wanted an allowance.⁵ Possibly he did not reach the following passage in the book:

Barely had I, however, in just the shirt sleeves sat down on the edge of the bed when he suddenly grabbed me and – kissed me right on the mouth. Soon enough he had also pulled me down on the bed. None of us said anything. The matter was too delicate and it was as if the silence, however, set a limit. The old man breathed ever harder, my own heart pounded and I slipped away into the dark losing my free will. But when all was quiet again he kindly embraced me and said he hoped I was not angry on him.⁶

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After the Haijby affair, further information emerged that Gustaf V would be bisexual or "double-barreled" as it was then called:

⁵ Spångberg 1966.

⁶ Haijby 1947: s. 65.

1. The usher etc. Nils Lantz (1880-1959) claimed that while Queen Victoria was still alive, she had been molested by the king. The same thing would have happened to two of the chauffeurs at the court, but they were given a raise to keep quiet. He had himself rejected such a proposition with "Yes, but Your Majesty, I am married". And Gustav V replied "It doesn't matter. So am I." The information is in Tage Erlander's diary⁷, and is from a conversation or newspaper interview May 3, 1952. The driver Carl Stensson makes no mention of this in his diary of the time.
2. The servant etc. Engelberth Bengtsson (1897-1978) stated during a conversation in the late 1950s (intercepted by his grandson) that he had been molested by the king, but the record might as well be interpreted as that Bengtsson was upset about the court gossip and everything was a lie: "Uncle Ebbe had apparently been mocked by some employees in the Royal Palace corridors for his sexual association with his employer The King, but he found it disgusting to be accused of anal sex, to have 'taken the monarch from behind'. It had never happened. He clearly wanted to be exonerated by the confession before my parents."⁸
3. There was an episode in the late 1940s, when King Gustaf V allegedly unbuttoned the fly of the photographer of the magazine Allt, Arne Ingers (1912-1982), to inspect the length of his erected penis and invited Ingers to compare it to his own. The episode occurs in two versions. In the first version, the King unbuttoned Inger's fly and urged him to do the same with his own. In the later more detailed version, the King also masturbates him.⁹ According to von Platen, Ingers was very upset on his return. The incident is supposed to have occurred in connection with an interview of King Gustaf V prior to his 90th anniversary. Since King Gustaf V's only elk hunt that year was in September in Hunneberg, the article¹⁰ must refer to some other hunt. No date is mentioned but Gustaf V's vitality indicates 1930-1940, i.e. before the newspaper existed. Since the interview should have taken place during a meal break, there should have been some 20 witnesses - hunters and others - who have not commented on the allegations.
4. Dan Korn (2013) gives some further quotes from diaries and police interviews that he considers evidence that Gustaf V was homosexual: Attorney General Maths Heuman (1978) writes: "Among the circles surrounding the King, it was claimed that in recent years (after the Queen's death in 1930) he would have made sexual gestures towards the environment"; Carl Stenson (1977) (employed 1898-1930) writes some contemptuous postings in the 10s and 20s in his diary about the lack of masculinity of the royal family. He mentions that during Gustaf V's visit to Mainau in 1929, a German driver objected to the king's "friendly nudges and hugs" and that another German driver had left his job when he discovered "the nature of the High Lord". The quotes, however, refer to Gustaf V's liking for speeding, not to anything sexual; The Diplomat Sven Grafström's Diary (1989) contains a post July 17, 1945, about "the quite known fact that H.M. suffers from certain abnormal inclinations". The information was passed on to Grafström by Prince Carl Johan, who was resentful of all the obstacles that Gustav V raised against his marriage to Kjerstin Wijkmark and threatened to go public with this and other unspecified court scandals.

⁷ Erlander 2002: 5 maj 1952.

⁸ Bengtsson 2013: s. 235.

⁹ von Platen 1994: ss. 302-303; von Platen 2002: s. 449.

¹⁰ Ingers 1948.

5. September 28, 1946, during a journey from Tullgarn to Stockholm, Gustaf V's driver happened to end up outside the roadside and the car in a ditch. The place was later called The King's Curve. As the story goes, the king is said to have groped the sex organs of the chauffeur Ledin and he been distracted. Since there were three more passengers in the car, this does not seem likely. The origins of the story is supposed to be Wilhelm Moberg's book *The Old Kingdom*: "[The young chauffeur] had directly caused the accident in that he had lost control over the royal wagon. The fact that the driver had lost control of the car had in turn been caused by His Majesty having for a few moments lost control over himself."¹¹ The book was published in 1953. The name The King's Curve appeared in the newspapers from January 1954.

6. In addition, there is speculation that Gustaf V's hobby of embroidery was deeply unmanly, that his tennis partner during the war Gottfried von Cramm was actually homosexual, that Gustaf V in his correspondence with tennis partner Pontus Qvarnström in 1898 appeared loving, that as king he had the opportunity to hide his possible homosexual love life and that an (unverified) incipient senility would have caused the inhibitions to be broken. Added to that a cultural climate where political powerlessness = lack of masculinity = pansy, fag & sissy. - How Gustaf V formulated himself in the letters to Qvarnström is unfortunately not possible to establish because the publisher Björn Fontander censured the wording and the information is second hand from the researcher Anders Jarlert who had seen the original letters. Since Qvarnström later married Gustaf V's goddaughter, he was not gay himself.¹²

The interpretation of all this is problematic. Data 1-3 is from after the publication of Haijby's book and has such great similarities with Haijby's own data - in some cases literally repeated - that one doubts it. There is a long time between the events and the documentation. Even data 4-6 are of late date and difficult to interpret - they are inventions, hearsay, speculation or so vague and off topic that you do not understand what is meant. Most likely is that everything is imagination, over-interpretation and nonsense. As Nobel Prize winner John Wheeler has said about people's propensity to believe in something just because others do: "Surely [they say] where there's smoke there's fire? No [I say], where there's so much smoke there's smoke."

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The aftermath

The following years, there was much speculation about Gustaf's sexual orientation (asexual-homosexual-bisexual). The literature was scoured. Victoria, according to the diplomat Fleetwood's diary, would already at the time of the wedding find Gustaf "undeveloped".¹³ It has been interpreted as "sexually" undeveloped¹⁴ but to judge by other things Fleetwood writes he means "socially" undeveloped = chilly rather than amiable, troubled by the demands of society & unable to converse a dinner partner. There is also a disputed opinion that after her pregnancy in 1889, Victoria was so weak that it "adversely affected marital life".¹⁵ Jarlert's interpretation is that the doctors recommended total sexual abstinence.¹⁶ Possibly they

¹¹ Moberg 1953: s. 200.

¹² Fontander 1999; Jarlert 2012: s. 156.

¹³ Fleetwood 1968: s. 82.

¹⁴ Jarlert 2012: s. 70.

¹⁵ Okänd källa. I: Ohlmarks 1983: s. 96.

¹⁶ Jarlert 2012: s. 137.

feared that another pregnancy might kill her. In 1893, the cohabitation was supposedly transformed into a white marriage.

However, such celibacy was considered unthinkable. When historian Lars O Lagerqvist wrote a book about the Bernadotte queens, he interviewed Vecko Journalen journalist Margit Fjellman who was doing a biography of Queen Victoria. He was told that three or four people had been identified as illegitimate children of Gustaf. Which people and according to who was not mentioned but one person would be born in the early 1890s & one person in 1900.

At the same time as his children out of wedlock, Gustaf would according to the interview, have had homosexual relationships.¹⁷ Fjellman¹⁸ stated that Gustaf's first homosexual experience was from 1889 in connection with Victoria's pregnancy with Prince Erik but did not mention any source. Staffan Skott¹⁹ and Gustaf von Platen²⁰ claimed the same. Herman Lindqvist²¹ postponed Gustaf's gay debut to 1892. 2010 he was more cautious: Gustaf may have had two children. But there was no evidence.²²

As regards to the number of children, Lagerqvist mentioned three or four. Fjellman retracted her previous statements. Skott claimed that Gustaf had a child born in 1900. Lindqvist & von Platen gave two, three or four children. In all cases unknown which children and according to who.

Other sources indicate that two of Gustaf's children would be the journalist Anders Lundebeck (1900-1976)²³, and the opera singer etc. Carl Gustaf Svingel (1916-1995).²⁴ Lundebeck is alleged to have even been the child of Victorias & von Blixen.²⁵ Evidence for this has never been produced. The information appears to have originated from Hant-i-veckan journalist Henry Sidoli, based on the fact that their looks were reminiscent of King Gustaf VI. However, Sidoli appears never to have published his article and the information circulated as rumours in journalist circles.²⁶

Since Lars Elgklou²⁷ only mentions the Haijby affair, all later information must come from Lars O Lagerqvist's interview with Margit Fjellman who did not have any sources, nor used her data when she wrote her own biography. "Vecko-Journalen" (the weekly journal) thus came through Fjellman & her boss Gustaf von Platen to justify its nickname "Vecko-Schakalen" (the weekly jackal).

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The Legal rot

¹⁷ Lagerqvist 1979: ss. 90-107.

¹⁸ Fjellman 1980: s. 95.

¹⁹ Skott 1996: s. 111.

²⁰ von Platen 2002: s. 143.

²¹ Lindqvist 2006: s. 472.

²² Lindqvist 2010: s. 102.

²³ von Platen 1996: s. 27.

²⁴ Hadenius 2005: s. 18.

²⁵ Ohlmark 1983: s. 96.

²⁶ Olivebring & Östlin 1996: ss. 150-151.

²⁷ Elgklou 1978: ss. 133,161.

Although Moberg had nothing against bad mouthing royals, his main interest in the Haijby affair came from all these officials prostrating themselves before the majesty. The rule of law completely failed in the state interest to preserve the reputation of the monarchy. Difficult according to Moberg to know if these officials wanted to sit in Gustav V's lap, lie at his feet or just be scratched under the chin. However, I would like to defend them. They were of their time.

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