

Appendix : Grand Duchess Luise of Baden (1838-1923).

It is difficult to understand Victoria's conflicts with Swedish society without knowing her mother's position in Baden:

The Margraviate of Baden existed as early as the 12th century but was split into small states. The Grand Duchy of Baden was created in 1806 by a merger. From 1806 to 1813 it was part of the Rehn League (France) and subsequently part of the German Confederation (Austria). From 1866 Baden supported Prussia. During the revolution of 1848, Baden was briefly a republic. From 1849 to 1918 it was a liberal constitutional monarchy. Grand Duke Frederick I of Baden, however, had a very strong position through his marriage to Victoria's mother Luise, princess of Prussia & from 1871 the daughter of the Emperor. Luise also had a strong position. However, in 1861, in connection with the "culture struggle", she seems to have been forced to give a public assurance that she renounce her Prussian background and support the liberal constitution of Baden & a secular state.

One often imagines that a patriarchal culture excludes influential women. That is not the case, but women have delegated power on the sufferance of men. In the Duchy of Baden, it took the form that Frederick I introduced Luise into the government and that they appeared as a "co-reigning" prince couple, each with their responsibilities: "She was responsible for the organization, administration and representation of the court, for incoming- & foreign visits, military parades & ditto inspections, for the art of the state and artists & for large parts of the social service."¹ As Prussian princess & imperial daughter, Luise also had a diplomatic function within the family.

Victoria was never given a similar formal role. A Swedish Crown Princess and Queen are completely outside politics in accordance with the 1809 government's form. During the 10 years 1907-1917, however, she took herself with Gustav V's support freedoms similar to her mother's. Gustav V did not unexpectedly have the same reputation of pussy whipped cuck as Luise's husband Fredrik.

According to Jansson (1963: s. 24), Luise was said to have worn the pants in the house: "In the family circle the spouses soon got the name "Wie-Du-willst-Luise" and "Tante Gott befohlen" ("As-you-want-it-Luise" & "Aunt God demands") but there is no source for it.

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Princess Luise Marie Elisabeth of Prussia was born December 3, 1838, in Berlin and died April 23, 1923, in Baden. Her father was King William I of Prussia (1797-1888; 1858 regent of Prussia, 1861 king of Prussia, 1871 emperor of Germany). Her mother was Augusta, Duchess of Saxe-Weimar (1811-1890). Luise had an older brother Frederick (III) (1831-1888) who a few months in 1888 was German emperor before he died and was succeeded by his son William II, the so-called Three-Kaiser-Year. With cognatic succession Luise would have been Empress of Germany. Now on September 20, 1856, she was married to Prince Frederick (I) of Baden (1826-1907; 1852 Regent, 1858 Grand Duke). With him she had three children 1857-1865: Fredrik (1857-1928), Victoria (1862-1930) & Ludvig (1865-1888).

¹ Scheidle 2004: s. 380.

There is no definitive biography of Luise. The following entries are based on references in Libris, Worldcat & Wikipedia. Luise has written her memories (Grand Duchess Luise 1915 & 1923) and there are three longer biographies (Bornehak 1894; Hindenlang 1926; Tschudi 1926), four shorter ditto (Bingemar 1912; Petzold 1933; Prince Wilhelm 1952; Bernadotte 1966; Kiste (2001) and some special studies of her philanthropy (Lauter 1918; Gihring 1963; Kling m.fl. 2002; Scheidle 2004; Müller 2005; Bickel 2011). She is also a minor character in her daughter's biographies (Jansson 1963; von Platen 2002; Hadenius 2010).

Luise's memoirs begin with the Revolution of 1848, which ended with Prussia receiving a long-term constitution that Luise's grandfather King Frederick William IV (1795-1861) was forced to comply with. Previously, there was no such thing. He had a free hand. Prussian domestic politics was during Luise's upbringing dominated by her grandfather's successful counter-revolution, which her father continued. As a result, her father during his reign was the subject of five assassination attempts.

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“It does not pay to be bitter over fate.”²
Grand Duchess Luise on her deathbed

Luise was educated in the spirit of the Enlightenment. The mother handled the discipline and the father spoiled her. Her mother's upbringing was to inculcate “the Weimar heritage“ - a strong sense of duty combined with a rigid etiquette - which the daughter passed on to her granddaughter Victoria.³ Luise was very well read, but seems to have been an autodidact with an obsessive need to prove her knowledge to the environment. She never finished school, but was twice in London 1851 and 1853 together with her parents. In 1851, she visited the World's Fair at the Crystal Palace. On 19 April 1855, she was confirmed. During the summer negotiations with Frederick about a marriage took place. September 30, 1855, they became engaged. September 20 the following year they married. It was not out of love, but they had known each other for years. The information available indicates that Luise was relieved to leave home. Little is known about her life at this time. Luise as a 15-year-old was a serious young lady with hair parted in the middle & a determined face. Luise, aged 18, was portrayed by Bath's court painter Franz Winterhalter as a buxom nymph, but there is no evidence of that. In the photographs of the same time, she looks extremely proper.

Luise's childbirths in 1857-1865 in the spirit of the time were not too burdensome because the nurse breastfed them & the servants took care of the supervision. Instead, she devoted herself to representation, study and philanthropy. Her mother Augusta had founded a nationwide women's association for the production of clothing for the armed forces and later, through the Red Cross, had also become involved in field healthcare. Luise organized a corresponding “Baden branch“ (women's association 1859; RC 1864). During a visit to Paris in 1867, she was awarded the RC Medal of Merit in gold. After the wars of 1859-1871, the Baden branch continued with a civilian operation of hospitals, orphanages & poverty relief. World War I was Luise's finest hour. She organized emergency aid, homes for war widows & their children, visited the hospitals, gave wounded comfort, wrote letters to relatives, organized an information service, which included Swedish help to locate Germans in Russian captivity, etc. “We are born to sow,“ she wrote in a letter this time, “some seeds end up on rocks, but some

² von Petzold 1933.

³ Jansson 1963: s. 20.

will grow. It is our duty.“ In 1917, she was appointed honorary doctor of the Faculty of Medicine in Karlsruhe.⁴

Luise was also interested in girls' education: For the higher classes, she supported Luisenschule in Karlsruhe (a humanistic high school for girls, 1892-1926), the Victoria boarding school (for girls, 1880-1920) and artistic and photographic training for girls. For the lower classes, she supported a trade and household education. There is a 66-page memo in which she presents her educational ideas about the girls' school education. They would be prepared for a role in the home, not for a role in society. Luise's attempts to prolong the life of an ancient social structure through modern ideas have often been misunderstood as meaning that she was modern. She wasn't. She was a noble matriarch - not a bourgeois queen.⁵

Since Luise wanted to micro-manage the household & its associations, it was long working hours 8-22. She was also expected to behave like a loving wife & mother. There are a couple of episodes where Luise in that spirit plays along for the benefit of the surroundings: When her husband lay dying, she had to be torn from his body so that the doctors could get to him. Luise responded by saying that this was how she was expected to behave. When her daughter fell ill during a visit and Luise by her daughter's doctor Axel Munthe was forbidden to see her, she still went there every day, but locked herself up for an hour in a nearby room.⁶ When her husband died, her grief never ended. There are a few photographs of Luise in her 40s. She looks tired. Actually, she looks more energetic as an 80-year-old.

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In 1888, Luise turned 50. It was a turning point. That year, her father, brother and youngest son died. In 1890, her mother died. At the time of her death, Luise threw herself at her and told her to greet “those who went in advance“. She took over her mother's charity and ambulated several years between Baden & Berlin. In 1897, she underwent surgery for glaucoma and became dependent on oral summaries. When Frederick died in 1907, she lost her formal influence. According to Lennart Bernadotte, who visited her with his grandmother Victoria during World War I, she devoted herself to her memories, her legacy and her approaching death: Wrote her memoirs and planned the decoration of the chapel. She wore black mourning. For a party she wore a white ditto of the same cut. Her bedroom was full with photographs of her husband, family & other dead relatives at *Lit de parade*. But...

Despite her advanced age [c. 80 years], she was still vigorous, straight in the back, using all her her powers to fulfil the duties she considered to be incumbent upon her as the Duchess of Baden. ... She held a strict regiment with her court, which was widely known for its rigidity and supercorrect etiquette. ... [She] loved large intercourse and always invited guests from the court and from circles involved in art and science. ... [She] worshipped the memory of the deceased with a thoroughness, which often sent shivers along the back.⁷

There has never been any doubt about Luise's intelligence, force of will and competence. The view of her as a person is divided though. For the Germans, she is a profeminist

⁴ Lauter 1918; Tschudi 1926: ss. 76-81.

⁵ Scheidle 2004; Müller 2005.

⁶ Jansson 1963: ss. 126-127.

⁷ Bernadotte 1966: ss. 65-66,77.

icon.⁸ For the English, she is the *enemy*: reactionary, intrigant & antisemitic.⁹ For the Swedes, she is a Prussian shrew.¹⁰

⁸ Scheidle 2004.

⁹ Kiste 2001.

¹⁰ von Platen 2002; Hadenius 2010.

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