

Sweden, the Crown of the state

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The Head of State is not yet a king without a country but close to it. As Prime Minister Olof Palme said when the new constitution was introduced in 1974: "Today the introduction of the republic is only a pen stroke away"¹. According to the new constitution, the Parliament does not have to automatically select a new royal family if the King and all the members of his family should die along with all the other legitimate heirs to the crown. That this should occur is not, very likely, however. To begin with, some precautions have been taken to prevent the royal family from becoming extinct. In 1979, the non-Socialist majority in the parliament decided to drastically change the law of succession, a constitutional law, which had not been changed significantly since 1810². The amendment gave royal family members of the female sex the same right to the crown. Under the old constitution, only male heirs could claim it. The direct line of succession was maintained, however.

The initiative to change the constitutional law of succession was taken by the non-Socialist parties in Parliament. As was hardly surprising, the Social Democrats and the Communists abstained from voting on this issue, but, perhaps more astonishingly, the King did not seem to be in favor of this change, although he did not voice this opinion until after the birth of his second child, a boy. According to some articles in the press, the King said that he thought the Swedish people were used to having a King on the throne. This was not confirmed, however, by a public opinion poll that clearly showed that a larger proportion of the Swedish people wanted to see the first born, Crown Princess Victoria, as the next head of state³.

Nevertheless, the episode clearly illustrates just how limited the power of the Swedish king is today. More surprising, perhaps, is that this loss of formal or constitutional power has not led to any decrease in the popularity of the King. The concept of the king as head of the state is just as strong as it was before, if not even stronger. The issue of changing from a monarchy to a republic is more or less politically dead in Sweden, even though it is and always has been the first

(1) SIFO, *Opinion research report: The kingdom in the polls*. June 1976.

(2) E. HOLMBERG, e.a., *Grundlagarna med tillhörande författningar*. Stockholm, 1980, p. 786-798.

(3) SIFO, *Opinion reserach report: Victoria eller Carl Philip efter Carl XVI Gustaf*. August 1979.

item on the Social Democrats' party program. Every year the Communist Party ritually submits a private bill to abolish the monarchy, and every time it is rejected by a large majority of the mp's. Despite these traditional manifestations, the role of the King has not been seriously debated at all lately, contrary to what happened in the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s⁴, either in the Parliament or in the mass media.

Today, the King is clearly just a symbol, and his political obligations are few if not almost non-existent. His formal political obligations are reduced to the annual opening of the Swedish Parliament and chairing the Advisory Council for Foreign Affairs and the non-decisive, informative cabinet meetings where the cabinet and the King meet.

The gradual stripping of the King of his power took place in two steps. The first one was an agreement in 1969, signed by the non-Socialist parties as well as the Social Democrats to reduce the King's power. One of the consequences of this agreement was the abolition of the King's right to freely dismiss ministers. The new law, which was passed in 1971, stated that, if the Prime Minister wanted to discharge a minister or the Parliament had expressed its lack of support for a minister through a vote of confidence, the King had to dismiss that person – or the entire cabinet if it was the Prime Minister who lacked support in Parliament. The new law also made it possible for a minister to block a proposal of the King by refusing to countersign the protocol of decision. The King's right to appoint ministers was maintained but later this was also abolished, as well as all other duties in connection with cabinet formation and governmental decisions. This happened in 1974 when the political parties took the second step and agreed on a new compromise whereby the monarchy was kept intact and the King remained as head of the state but with predominantly representative duties⁵. As a special peculiarity, a paragraph was included advancing the age when the King (or the female heir to the throne) would become of age. Previously, the King could become King at the age of 18, but the constitution of 1974 stipulates that he or she has to be 25 years old before this can take place.

The road to a constitutional monarchy where the King plays a largely ceremonial role has been long and winding.

(4) H. TINGSTEN, *Skall kungamakten stärkas? Kritik av författningsförslaget*. Stockholm, 1964, p. 29-71; J. TORBACKE, *Statschefen och regeringen*. In: *Att styra riket, regeringskansliet 1840-1990*. Uddevalla, 1990, p. 62-68.

(5) E. HOLMBERG, e.a., op. cit., p. 185-187; Government Proposition: 1973:90: *Ny regeringsform och ny riksdagsordning*, p. 110-114.

I. The historical background to and development of the House of Bernadotte

The roots of the present royal family go back to the beginning of the 19th century. In 1809, a peaceful coup d'état was carried out by some members of the aristocracy: the King was forced to leave the country, and the constitution was revised. A new King was appointed, an uncle of the former one, but he was an old man and had no heirs. If Sweden was to continue being a monarchy, a new "house" had to be found. After some setbacks a suitable person was found and appointed crown prince, but he died shortly thereafter⁶, and the crown was offered to one of Napoleon's marshals. His name was Jean Baptiste Bernadotte, and he accepted the offer. In 1810, Bernadotte became the successor to the Swedish throne and was adopted by the incumbent King, Karl XIII.

Although he was not formally the King during that period of time, he actually ruled the country. In 1818 he officially became the King of Sweden. He took the name Karl XIV Johan and managed to increase his power. Since that day, as shown in the table below, seven men of the Bernadotte family have succeeded one another on the Swedish throne.

TABLE
The House of Bernadotte

Name of the King	Reign	Number of years as King
Karl XIII	1809-1818	9
Karl XIV Johan	1818-1844	26
Oscar I	1844-1859	15
Karl XV	1859-1872	13
Oscar II	1872-1907	35
Gustav V	1907-1950	43
Gustav VI Adolf	1950-1973	23
Carl XVI Gustav	1973-	

The constitution of 1809 entrusted a great deal of power to the King. He alone had the right to govern the country. However, on issues concerning the passing of laws, the power was divided between him and the Parliament. Apart from this, there were few other limitations of his power. The Parliament had the right to decide on all matters relating to taxes without hearing the King, and the courts were to implement the laws without his interference. Even in his capacity as the ruler, the King's powers were limited: before he made any decisions, he had to hear his advisers (the ministers) out.

These advisers were collectively responsible to the Parliament for the advice they gave the King, as well as for advice they did not give. The only way the mi-

(6) E. HOLMBERG, e.a., op. cit., p. 787.

nisters could free themselves from that responsibility was by demanding that it be noted in the protocol that they did not agree with the King. The term "King in Council" was used to describe these formal cabinet meetings when the King, surrounded by his advisers, made his decisions.

The strategy is quite clear. One could not hold the King liable for his decisions, but you could at least try to control the King's behavior through his advisers. In matters concerning foreign affairs and defence, the King could take a freer stand vis-à-vis his advisers, not least because he was the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, a fact that further added to his dominance in the areas of defence and foreign policy.

So, with the help of the constitution, a game for three players was constructed. It was to prevail for the rest of the 19th century with numerous conflicts, conflicts between the King and the Parliament, between the King and his advisers, and between the advisers and the Parliament. However, this system with checks and balance of power (and not only between the King and the Parliament) soon proved to be very inefficient when it came to making decisions that would change society more drastically. It was a political system that promoted the status quo – when the Parliament did agree on something, the King and/or his adviser usually disagreed with the Parliament and vice versa ⁷.

Throughout the 19th century, the King battled more or less constantly against the introduction of parliamentary government. Nevertheless, the advisers and the Parliament managed gradually to strip the King of his power. The battle was finally lost in 1917 when the King was forced to appoint not only a Liberal as Prime Minister but also a cabinet that included ministers from the Social Democratic party, a party the King particularly disliked. From that day on, the King has played an insignificant role in the policy making and the formation of governments, with only a few minor exceptions.

II. The impact of the King on government formation

Much of the struggle for parliamentary government in the 19th century concerned the appointment of the King's advisers (the ministers) and their position. The main purpose of every Swedish King during that period was more or less the same. They wanted at all costs to avoid a situation in which the political composition of the Parliament in any way affected the formation of the cabinet. The skills in achieving this goal varied, of course, from one King to another, since they were not equally endowed with political skills, but their techniques were similar. The most important thing was to avoid selecting ministers from one of the dominating groups in the Parliament and instead appointing neutral candidates or at least candidates who did not clearly belong to one side or another. Second, one had to

(7) L. KIHLEBERG, *Den svenska ministären under ståndsriksdagen och tvåkammerssystemet intill 1905 års totala ministerskifte*. Uppsala 1922.

balance the major conflicting interests in the Parliament against each other in the cabinet. Usually this meant that, after a while, the cabinet as a whole or at least several of the ministers became very unpopular in the Parliament, and, as a result of their lack of support from any political fraction, they usually found themselves making enemies in all quarters. Third, the King's own strategy was to avoid at all costs dismissing all of his advisers at the same time, in order to show that he was not giving in to Parliament. The King would put off the dismissal of a cabinet he did not like for as long as he possibly could and instead would let the ministers go one by one at regular intervals ⁸.

The King was also, from time to time, accused of provoking cabinet crises at times when the Parliament was not in session and so diminishing the Parliament's influence. Quite often the King also opposed his ministers defending the government bills in parliament. The reason for this was that it was easier for the king to keep a minister if the fight over the bill was lost, if the minister was not too committed to it. In fact, a minister who would fight for his bill or even threaten to resign if it was not passed might very well tempt the members of Parliament to vote against it just because of this attitude.

Thus, because the King often wanted to avoid appointing strong political personalities, his choice was rather limited. And the possible candidates knew that chances were that they could rapidly become unpopular with either the Parliament or the King, or possibly both. Confronted with this rather bleak perspective, it is understandable that some of the candidates the King selected for his cabinet accepted reluctantly or de facto refused. The introduction of the office of Prime Minister in 1876 meant that the King's power to appoint and dismiss ministers was reduced. The person who was asked to become Prime Minister by the King was then often given the opportunity to influence the selection of other ministers when a new appointment was at hand ⁹. But eventually it became harder and harder for the King to get the persons he wanted as advisers, even if the total collapse of his strategy was not to take place in Sweden but in Norway.

Although Karl XIV Johan had been a general and marshal under Napoleon, this did not prevent him from siding with the enemies of Napoleon, which in time turned out to be a wise decision, richly rewarded when Napoleon was defeated. In the subsequent peace treaty, Norway was taken from Denmark and given to Sweden, since Denmark had backed Napoleon in the war. Thanks to this, the Swedish King became King of two countries joined in a union under the name of the United Kingdom of Sweden and Norway. This union was to last for almost a hundred years until its dissolution in 1905.

(8) J. TORBACKE, op. cit., p. 43-62.

(9) O. RUIN, Statsministerämbetet : från Louis De Geer till Ingvar Carlsson. In : *Att styra riket, regeringskansliet 1840-1990*. Uddevalla, 1990, p. 94-107.

One of the interesting things about this union was that Sweden and Norway were governed somewhat differently by the King. The process towards democracy and a parliamentary form of government moved much faster in Norway than it did in Sweden. Therefore, the King was, when he appointed ministers in Norway, much more restricted by the political situation in the Norwegian Parliament than he was in Sweden. But in 1905, after years of discussions and conflicts with the Swedish Government, the King was finally unable to form a cabinet in Norway, and the Norwegian Parliament took this opportunity to withdraw its allegiance to the Swedish King¹⁰. A serious conflict then ensued between the two countries, and also a domestic political crisis between the Parliament and the King in Sweden. The crisis ended with the Swedish Parliament ignoring the King and negotiating directly with Norway¹¹.

This was, of course, a serious setback for the King, but he swallowed his pride and appointed a government based on representatives from the dominating parties in the Swedish Parliament. This was the first time that the King of Sweden was forced to appoint a cabinet in which all the ministers were chosen by anyone but himself.

The peaceful dissolution of the union was followed by further steps towards a real parliamentary government. When the issue of the union had been dropped from the political agenda, the government was dissolved, and the King once more had to appoint a cabinet he did not like. The leader of the Liberal party, Karl Staaff, was asked to form a Liberal government. This government did not last long, however, and, within six months, it was replaced by a Conservative cabinet, which was much more to the liking of the King. The short-lived experience of a Liberal government had, nevertheless, been a rather painful experience for the King (in reality the crown prince since the ruling King Oscar II was incapacitated by old age and sickness). Staaff was not only a great believer in a parliamentary form of government, he also disliked any attempts by the King to exercise his power – an attitude he did not hesitate to display at every opportunity¹². These events probably had some significance for what later was to become known as the King's last attempt to exercise his constitutional power.

The year of 1914 is noted in Swedish history not only as the year when World War I started but also as the year when the Swedish King successfully managed to exercise his power for the last time. The background was as follows. The results of the election of 1911 had once again forced the King to appoint a Liberal government, but that government did not have a majority of its own, and the balance between the ones backing a Liberal government and those backing a Conservative one was precarious. From the very beginning, the King disliked his Liberal cabinet,

(10) S. HADENUS, e.a., *Sverige efter 1900. En modern politisk historia*. Stockholm, 1969, p. 31-33.

(11) *Ibid.*, p. 42-46.

(12) J. TORBACKE, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

which again was led by Staaff, and looked upon his formal advisers as his enemies. In fact, the King immediately started to go behind the backs of his own cabinet and to conspire with the political leaders of the conservative parties in order to overthrow his Liberal cabinet. But the leaders of the conservative parties were reluctant to participate in anything that could be perceived by the public as something like of a coup by the King. This situation persisted for three years, but, in 1914, things started to change quickly. The world was preparing for a war and so was Sweden, although on a smaller scale. How much Sweden should increase its spending on defence soon became a hot political issue. In the eyes of many people, the Liberal cabinet was not advocating the need for a substantial increase of spending, and around the country political manifestos were issued to force more military spending by the government. One of these manifestos took the form of a demonstration where many farmers from different parts of the country walked to the Royal Palace in Stockholm to show their loyalty to the King and the country. To the surprise of the cabinet, the King appeared on castle grounds and not only greeted the people but also declared that he did not share the government's view on defence. This incident was immediately followed by the cabinet's demand that the King renounce his statement to the people, and give his support to the government's view. If not, the cabinet threatened to resign.

The King refused to withdraw his statement and consequently the cabinet resigned. The King was quite pleased with this outcome, as he had finally managed to get rid of a cabinet he had disliked for a long time, but the other part of his plan. He had acted to a large extent on his own, but in the end it turned out that the Conservative parties did not want to gain the executive power in this way. The outcome of this political crisis was, therefore, that the King had to appoint a type of stopgap government that was supported by the Conservative parties in the Parliament although they did not openly participate. This cabinet was expected to stay in power only for as long as it would take to solve the defense issue, but the outbreak of the war forced this government to stay in power for three years.

The stopgap government had a bias towards the German side in the war. This was, of course, favourable in the beginning of the war but later became an obstacle, and the arrogance of Prime Minister Hammarskjöld toward the Parliament eventually caused the government to lose the support of the Conservative parties. In 1917, the King finally had to give in to the pressure and to dissolve his pet concern, that is, the cabinet he had formed in 1914. At first, he did not give in completely. To begin with, his goal was to form a government that did not include members of the Social Democratic party, and, for a few months, the King tried to rule with a cabinet based on members from parties, but its futility became obvious, and a majority coalition government based on Social Democrats and Liberals was formed.

The last time the Swedish King had any significant influence on the formation of the government – or politics in general – was in 1914 and 1917. Even it Gustav

V made some attempts to influence the government's policy during the Second World War.

Gustav VI Adolf, who succeeded Gustav V in 1950, was even less inclined to interfere with the parliamentary principle. In all his 23 years of reign, he was put to test only once. In 1957, strong divergencies on the issue of a new pension system led to the resignation of the coalition government of Social Democrats and the Agrarian Party. The election of 1956 had resulted in almost a stalemate between the Socialist and the non-Socialist parties. The non-Socialist parties held the majority in the second chamber but the Socialist parties held the majority when both chambers were taken into consideration (the two chambers had equal powers, but, if they disagreed on budget matters, they voted as one chamber). In other words, the non-Socialist parties could block new laws by their majority in the second chamber since the two chambers had to agree on law bills, while the Social Democrats together with the Communists controlled the budget.

In this situation, the King tried to sound out both sides. First, the non-Socialist parties were given a chance to form a government since they had the majority in the second chamber, which was seen as the direct expression of the will of the people. When they failed, the bid was passed to the Social Democrats who then once again formed a minority government with the passive support of the Communists¹³.

During almost the entire reign of Gustav VI Adolf, the same person was Prime Minister, Tage Erlander, leader of the Social Democrats. On no occasion did the King refuse or object to the persons nominated by Erlander for ministerial posts¹⁴.

Today, the King has no role in the formation of government. The King's old role as the maker of the cabinet has been taken over by the Speaker in Parliament, but only in part since the Parliament votes on the candidates proposed for the office of the Prime Minister. When the whole process of forming a new government is over, the King is introduced to the new cabinet in a special "Informative Cabinet Meeting", a purely ceremonial procedure.

A. *The King's involvement in policy making*

As noted above, the role of the King in policy making was radically diminished after 1917. The constitution of 1809, however, gave the King special powers with regard to foreign affairs, and, consequently, it was in this field the King was most active except in the formation of new governments. In the 19th century, there were even a few cases where the King tried to act on his own or with the help of advisers other than his own cabinet. These aspirations on behalf of the King were usually put to an end sooner or later by the cabinet, but it was not until the dissolution

(13) Statens Offentliga Utredningar (SOU) 1970 : 16, *Riksdagsgrupperna, Regeringsbildningen*, p. 104-106.

(14) O. RUIN, op. cit., p. 103.

of the union with Norway that constitutional changes made it impossible for the King to conduct foreign affairs on his own. It is also in the field of foreign affairs that the Swedish King made his last known appearance in influencing government policy. At one point during the Second World War, the German government put pressure on the Swedish government for permission to transmit troops to Norway. This quickly became a controversial issue for the national government, the Social Democrats in particular, being divided on the issue. In this situation, Gustav V expressed his feelings on the subject in such a way that it was generally believed that he was threatening to resign if the German demands were not sanctioned. This threat is believed to have helped the Social Democratic Prime Minister Hansson to unite his parliamentary group behind a decision in favour of the German demands¹⁵.

Gustav V was known as a King with a mind of his own, always willing to express his opinions. But, more often than not, he would back down, especially after 1917, if confronted with objections. In times of crises, such as the Second World War, the King was almost always very eager to express his support for the government's policy, an eagerness that was sometimes not exactly a blessing for the government, at least not for the Social Democratic Prime Minister because too much involvement on behalf of the King could give the public the wrong impression of who was really running the country. The general picture was, however, of a King who very much played second fiddle when it come to policy making. Gustav V may have given the Social Democrats a few problems off and on during their many years in power, since they never knew what the King might be up to, but, as a rule, he would not express his ideas in public. His successor, Gustav VI Adolf, was even more careful, and there are no reports that he ever entertained any ambition to influence cabinet policy. When he wanted to discuss matters of importance, he would normally do it in private with the Prime Minister and not in front of the cabinet as a whole.

As early as in the 19th century, the formal cabinet meeting – “King in Council” – lost its importance when it came to real decision making. Instead it became the forum for the registration of decisions already taken elsewhere. During the reign of Karl XIV Johan, the ministers had started meeting collectively without the King being present in order to prepare their advice to his Majesty. The King, on the other hand, often met privately with his ministers in order to inform himself on what kind of decisions were pending for the next cabinet meeting. This way, he also learned the cabinet's view on the subjects that were being decided up on. In the last year of the old constitution, this meant that, during a formal cabinet meeting, several hundred decisions could be taken in less than half an hour¹⁶.

(15) W. M. CARLGREN, Gustaf V och utrikespolitiken. In: *Studier I Modern Historia, tillägnade Jarl Torbacke den 18 augusti 1990*. Krisianstad, 1990, p. 50-51.

(16) T. LARSSON, Sweden: The New Constitution – An Old Practice Adjusted. In: J. BLONDEL, e.a., *Cabinets in Western Europe*. London, 1988, p. 201.

According to the new constitution, the King is not even allowed to participate in cabinet discussions or decisions. Instead, the King is informed on three occasions every year. This first occasion is in October, just before the opening of the parliamentary year; the second is a few days before the government discloses its budget to the Parliament in the beginning of January; the third time, finally, is shortly before the closing of the parliamentary session at the end of May or the beginning of June.

These cabinet meetings, which are held to inform the King on policy matters, are prepared in advance by Prime Minister's office in conjunction with the King's court. The meetings normally last for about an hour and every minister gives a brief description of what is going on in his field of responsibility or what is planned for the future. The King can ask questions if he wants to, but the limited time does not leave much room for discussions. Actually, the King can ask the government questions informally whenever he wants to through members of his court or civil servants.

In addition, the King has another way of obtaining information, which can be traced back to the special position the King held in foreign affairs. He is chairman of what is called the Advisory Council for Foreign Affairs (*utrikesnämnden*), which is the place where information between the opposition and the government is exchanged. Everything said in this council is supposed to be top secret, and the King has the right – almost the only official right he has – to decide on extra secrecy with regard to what has been said on these occasions. It is, therefore, hard to know exactly what role the King plays in these meetings, but a fair guess would be that he hardly plays any role at all apart from chairing the meeting and listening to the debate.

B. *The King and the economy*

Managing the economy was the first area in which the King lost his power, and that started already in the 19th century. The constitution of 1809 declared that the power to decide on taxation was in the hands of the Parliament – a tradition believed to go far back in the Swedish history. Karl XIV Johan tried in the beginning to play a role in the field of international economy. These attempts to manipulate the world economy were of limited success and were soon opposed by the Parliament. Further more Parliament soon expanded its power to a much larger sector of the economy than just taxation. An important factor in this development was that, throughout the whole of the 19th century, the MPs with an agricultural background, who constituted the majority in the Parliament at that time, refused to agree on any increase on government spending unless the system of taxation was changed. In other words, it did not take long before the King's power in economic matters was severely reduced.

Today, the King pays taxes like any other citizen except on his expenses and on the income of an 150-year-old trust fund held by the government.

C. *The King, the elite and the general public*

Although the constitution has stripped the King of all his previous formal political powers, this may have made him and his family even more popular among the general public than before. An opinion poll of 1990 showed that the Queen and Pehr Gyllenhammar (managing director of VOLVO) were the most admired people in the nation, with the King ranking number three¹⁷. This result clearly shows how strong the support is for the monarchy. The issue of the monarchy is, as we said at the outset, hardly debated at all today, and, consequently, it has been a long time since any opinion poll was taken of the popularity of the King. But, in 1978, a survey was conducted on what the Swedes believed to be the best type of head of state in the long run. In this study 64% said that they believed a monarchy was the best type, while 19% preferred a republic (10% did not think there was any difference, and 7% did not know). The only part of the population where a majority was not in favour of a monarchy, according to this investigation, was – hardly surprisingly – sympathizers with the Communist party, but even here 20% said they preferred a monarchy.

In contrast to this group, women and elderly people and especially those with no higher education were in favor of the monarchy. An interesting question in this investigation was whether they thought the King should interfere or not if there was a serious crisis in the country. The reply showed that 16% thought this was a good idea. The rest felt that the Parliament or the government should be left alone to do the ruling. In other words, a small part of the population still seems to regard the King as something of a last political resort, when the political establishment fails¹⁸.

Lacking any formal political power, the King's influence today is very much based on his role as a social example and a creator of opinions. In both of these cases, the King and his family keep a low profile. The royal family tries very hard to avoid doing anything that can be seen as scandalous, and even the numerous tabloids have difficulties fabricating stories about them that will interest the readers. The message that is passed on to the public this way is generally one of appreciation of traditionally conservative values such as the importance of the family, the church, charity, and a strong defence.

The attraction value of the King and his family is still great, and not only so in Sweden, a circumstance that sometimes is used when the government promotes Swedish industry abroad.

When making public statements, the King is normally very careful about not saying anything that could be interpreted as politically controversial. In recent years however, this picture has changed somewhat since the King has been known to voice his opinions on one or two controversial issues every year. This could,

(17) SIFO, *Opinion research report: Mest beundrade svenskar 1990*. September 1990.

(18) SIFO, *Opinion research report: Kungens arbete*. May 1978.

of course, be the result of slips of the tongue, but it may also be a long-term strategy to tune the King in with what is being debated and the development of the society at large. So far, the success of the King's statements on controversial issues has not been great, and political leaders and other authorities have made it more or less a principle not to comment on any of the King's statements.

To conclude, today's monarchies have all been reduced, generally speaking, to simple representative functions¹⁹. None of them have been, however, quite as denuded of all of the traditional power as Sweden has been: where the crown of the state is purely ornamental.

Summary: Sweden: the Crown of the state

The role of Swedish royal family has been reduced to an almost exclusively ceremonial one during the 20th century, and this reduction of functions has possibly been carried out further in Sweden than in any other monarchy – with the exception of Japan. The Swedish King is for example no longer responsible even pro forma for the formation of the Government, but it took a long time before he was thus stripped of all his power.

By the mid-1800s his influence on the economy had been greatly diminished, and by 1905 (when the union with Norway was dissolved) his influence on foreign policy had also vanished. The last time a Swedish King exerts any real power is in 1914, when he insisted on choosing his own advisors. In reality he only managed to substitute a government he disliked for one which he liked better (even if it wasn't his first choice). But after 1917, when the King is forced to accept a government which included Social Democrats, his influence is reduced to virtually nothing. Officially, however, the King is not reduced to figure-head until 1974, when the new Swedish constitution was passed. The new constitution stated, after a great deal of negotiating between the Social Democrats and the non-socialist parties, that Sweden should remain a monarchy but the Head of State should only have a ceremonial role. Apparently no one in the royal family had any serious objections to this new order and they didn't try to stop it.

Power and influence is not, however, only related to the laws of a country. The King and the whole royal family still exert a good deal of influence over the Swedish people by setting an example. The image the royal family wants to project is that of traditional conservative values; they are all in favor of a strong defence, church going and family life. The present King has given his opinion on a few occasions on rather controversial issues – whether this has been part of a strategy or simply a mistake is impossible to say. All in all the present royal family seems to be quite satisfied with their position as figure-head on the Swedish barge, which, according to the public opinion polls, the Swedish people consider to be a very fitting role for a modern monarch.

(19) J. BLONDEL, *World Leaders; Heads of government in postwar period*. London, 1980, p. 38.