

Chapter 31 : “Why I am a Monarchist.”

One is right. The other is also right.

As long as the book is about political monarchism, you as a citizen are either: for monarchy, against monarchy or indifferent. Those who are for monarchy are called monarchists. The non-political monarchism is more difficult to categorize, but in the Swedish case it seems best described as variants of monarchic conservatism: reactionaries (who support autocracy or a strong king with popular support), traditionalists (who support a constitutional monarchy or status-quo) & apolitical (who are interested in royalty as persons, but do not take an interest in their politics; everyday royalism). Apolitical monarchism may not be as apolitical as is asserted, it is after all debated in the Parliament, but in practice it has cultural rather than political ambitions.

In part 1-3 I have tried to describe (non)political monarchism as it emerges from research in history, political science & social psychology. Below I complement with content analysis of the contemporary monarchy debate. I have done my best to avoid being influenced by the republican monarchy interpretation. Not the easiest thing because the republicans have the “problem-formulating-initiative“, implying that the debate is rather lopsided. The monarchists are often content with rejecting the republican arguments without delivering any of their own. This seems to be an effect of the political scientists after the Torekov-compromise having abandoned the subject. The non-political is not really their forte. Below are a number of Monarchic arguments. These, like the Republican arguments, are often of venerable age and found elsewhere in this book. But just in case, I repeat them:

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A. REACTIONARIES

“Paleomonarchism“ (paleo ≈ obsolete)

Since 1959, there is a German monarchic support organization “Tradition und Leben“ which promotes a parliamentary monarchy in the British spirit & also supports the dethroned dynasties of which there are plenty in Germany. A similar British support organization is the “[International] Monarchist League” (ILM) - active since the late 1980s. In 2008, it received competition from a French organization called Conférence monarchiste internationale (CMI). There was also an American organization called the Constantian Society (1970-1999). All argue for the return of the monarchy, but seem out of touch with reality. “Paleomonarchism“ is the American term for their ideology:

“What is a paleomonarchist? Paleomonarchists are faithful to the original political framework of the French Revolutionary era, in which support for monarchy was one of the two fundamental issues (the other being religion) defining the Right, as opposed to the anti-royalist, anti-religious Left. Therefore they see their support for monarchy as an integral part of a counterrevolutionary rightist worldview – perhaps the most, but by no means the only, important political issue. They tend to be drawn to the most traditional and hierarchical forms of Christianity, particularly Eastern Orthodoxy or pre-Vatican II Roman Catholicism. Paleomonarchists tend to see today's constitutional monarchies as, at best, pathetic shadows of what they used to be or, at worst, 'window-dressing for socialist tyranny' (as one such correspondent of mine put it). They are

unimpressed with democracy and yearn for the restoration of traditional monarchies such as those of the Bourbons, Hapsburgs, and Romanovs. Paleomonarchists may be rather indifferent to contemporary royalty, and find it hard to admire ceremonial heads of state who appear to embrace or at least tolerate so much of what traditionalists detest (socialism, secularism, multiculturalism, relaxed moral standards, pop culture, etc.). They would like princes and princesses to adhere to the old standard of marrying only persons of equal rank, or at least not single mothers. They tend to be skeptical of the multicultural transformation (via mass immigration) of Europe and resent the apparent enthusiasm of royals such as Prince Charles for it. In stark contrast to neomonarchists, paleomonarchists reject much of modernity, and monarchism is only part of their desire to 'turn back the clock'.¹

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Setterlind (1955) "Why I am a monarchist" & Svensson (1967) "Why I am a monarchist"

In response to Moberg's debate book, the poet Bo Setterlind (1955) & later farmer Sven Svensson (1967) each published a counter book called "Why I am a monarchist" that point by point tried to refute Moberg's claims. Both counter books had a National Romantic rather than a political science approach meaning that: You cannot separate country and form of government. Sweden without a monarchy is no longer Sweden:

A modern examples was the student association "United Monarchists" (2004-2011), with alternating Michaël Lehman and Jacob E:son Söderbaum as chairman. It was conservative according to the old ideals. Lehman described himself as a "reactionary romantic in the patriotic vein". Söderbaum was also reactionary: "It is vital for the monarchy that the members of the royal family live up to the sacred ideals that by tradition is the princes' lot to live up to." Söderbaum is best known for his blog "Tradition & Propriety" (2008-2011). Another four blogs in the same vein were Per Hagwall's "Monarki.nu" (2002-2006), "Fieldmarshal" (2009-2017), "Throne, alter and sword" (2010-2017) & the pro-monarchic entries in the Flashback thread "Against monarchy" (2006-2019).

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B. TRADITIONALISTS

Traditionalists support a (non-political) monarchic form of government. The ideology was first about a strong state, then about a united nation, but after 1991 lost momentum (for lack of external enemies, viz. Russia). This can be seen below on how the arguments slowly shift from the political to the symbolic. The most important contemporary feature is probably loyalty to the state & the established society. Traditionalists, however, seem to be "unhistorical" in the sense that an interest in the history of the monarchy is no longer an argument for preserving the monarchy. In this spirit, they also have difficulty accepting the opposite: that old political battles would be an argument for abolishing the monarchy.

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Heckscher (1963) "Ensure popular rule"

¹ Theodore Harvey. Two Kinds of Monarchists. <royaltymonarchy.com> (2003).

In the run-up to the constitutional investigation (1954-1963), Gunnar Heckscher, chairman of the right-wing party, published a brochure about the advantages of a monarchy.

“Would it be a loss, if we were eventually to slide into a republican form of government? In my opinion, the answer is *yes*: it would be a real calamity. Not least after the breakthrough of parliamentarianism, it has been shown in Sweden as in other comparable countries that the monarchy is a significant, stabilizing and unifying factor in society. By virtue of the status of “adviser to his councillors“, the monarch can also exercise a moderating influence in the day-to-day work of government, especially on matters with no party political ramifications. Where party politics comes into play, the monarch has learned to stay away. The experience of Denmark and Norway during the war shows, on the other hand, that the monarchy under particularly difficult conditions may constitute a reserve of power of great importance in keeping the people united.

It is very difficult to imagine that an elected president would be able to perform those very functions, whatever his personal merits might be. The usual question to all Republicans, “who will be president?“, always remains unanswered. This is not only because one does not want to mention the name of the person, but mainly because one cannot even say what kind of person could do the job. If a leading politician, such as a former prime minister, was to become president, it is unlikely that he would be content, in the same way as the monarch, with a position where he does not have real political power. The experience of Finland is in this respect very illuminating. If you again choose a lesser known person, there is a risk that he will never accumulate the authority required in really difficult situations. Here you can refer to the French example of 1940. In addition, anyone who has grown up and been trained from the outset for the task of a Head of State can grow into the role far easier than anyone who gets the job only when he has exceeded formable age. The monarch's time of preparation for and experience in this particular task, free from political ambitions, is something that can hardly be replaced by an elected president.”²

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Tarras-Wahlberg & Treslow (1968) “Can the kingdom be preserved?”

Tarras-Wahlberg & Treslow summarizes the arguments for maintaining the Swedish monarchy as it was in 14 points: 8 on politics, 2 on symbolism, 4 on other matters.³

- The monarchy works impeccably in our parliamentary democracy
- The hereditary monarchy guarantees democracy - the monarchic paradox
- The monarch is above the parties
- This non-political position makes the Sovereign especially suited to play the role of Parliamentary Head of State in ministerial changes
- Monarchy ensures a functioning parliamentary system by anchoring government policy in the Parliament and not in the Head of State
- The parliamentary monarchy thus counteracts the concentration of power in the government
- The monarchy is a national asset in crisis situations

² Heckscher 1963: ss. 28-29.

³ Tarras-Wahlberg & Treslow 1968: ss. 124-129.

- The monarchy provides an increased degree of political stability and inner calm
- The Swedish monarchy is a unifying national symbol and a cultural and historical heritage that should be preserved for future generations
- The archaic ceremonies and traditions upheld by the monarchy give day-to-day politics a historical context and at the same time gravitas to the state's activities which enhances its status
- The overwhelming majority of the Swedish people want the monarchy to be maintained
- The monarchy has a “good-will” and a value in public relations with the rest of the world
- The cost of a monarchy is likely to be less than the cost of a republican form of government
- There are no advantages to a republican form of government

The idea seems to be to maintain the monarchy as an independent power centre & crisis management body in the spirit of King Gustaf V with a cultural historical legitimacy & a popular base. But keep it out of party politics.

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H:son-Ericson (1976) “Memoirs: The White Sea. Sailing in royal waters”

King Gustaf VI's Marshal of the Realm Stig H:son-Ericson speculated after his resignation about the advantages of a monarchy over a republic. Some of its advantages would be:⁴

- The Sovereign has a role to play simply by being a unifying symbol.
- By raising the monarch to his office, he is better suited to a symbolic role than a president who is probably a former politician.
- The monarch has a broader symbolic register than a president. He can represent the country's religion, national peculiarities, family traditions and what else belongs.
- The monarch always attracts more attention than a president because he sits longer and thus becomes better known.
- By not pursuing a personal party policy, the monarch can, without being suspected of hidden motives, promote national and international politics.
- The ceremonial surrounding a monarch with its historical references is far more “pictorial” and “printable“ than that of a newly created presidential office.
- The attention paid to a monarch can be used during state visits, industrial delegations and various events to spread information about Sweden and to get in touch with important decision-makers.
- The more political power is placed in the hands of the government, the more important it becomes with a monarch who, through his position as “Head of State“, is a symbol of a certain degree of stability, continuity and tradition. The fact that the kingdom is old is certainly not a reason for its abolition.

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⁴ H:son-Eriksson 1976: ss. 227-242.

Ögren (red) (2006) "For Sweden - Nowadays : An anthology about Carl XIV Gustaf. "

King Carl Gustaf's 60th birthday, an anthology about the future of the Swedish monarchy was published. I quote the political science arguments of the anthology:

- Fredrik Reinfeldt (m) emphasizes the downright peculiar in the republicans' agitation for abolishing an institution with both popular and parliamentary support, and that as a counterweight to the politicized state apparatus has served Sweden well.
- Inga-Britt Ahlenius complains about the overly strong prime minister's rule, but claims that "The King can appear as a balancing force precisely because he has been deprived of his power."
- Nalin Pekgul (s) points out that a segregated and multicultural country like Sweden needs a neutral head of state with the function of being "the king of the whole people".
- Dick Harrison argues that the monarchy still has a role to play as a "moral example".
- Mats Ögren has three arguments for the continuation of the monarchy: (1) The Head of State shall represent the whole nation. This is easier if he is apolitical. (2) The King with his long tenure and his historical "luggage" is a better representative of the nation than any elected representative. (3) It is an advantage to distinguish "power & gloss". Sycophancy may be unpleasant to the king, but harmless to the nation.
- According to Michael Treschow the king personifies the peoples experience of belonging to the same country. There is a "common point in diversity".
- Stig Strömholm reiterates his arguments in *Svensk Tidskrift* 1973⁵ about the lessons of history & the limits of the rational society: "The European republics of the interwar period, which all fulfilled reasonable formal requirements for democracy but had little more ideological support than aggressive nationalism, proved unviable under the strain of the Second World War." Democracy was not enough. A society also needed irrational elements such as "tolerance, a sense of belonging, morally-founded legal concepts and loyalty". When the administration and public life were politicized, a neutral head of state is needed outside politics. "An institution that embodies the continuity of Swedish society."
- And finally, Niklas Ekdal: Palme and other radicals assumed in the functionalist spirit of the time that the demise of the monarchy was only a matter of time once it had been drained of political power. In fact, the opposite happened. Nobody has been able to fill the gap between a mechanical state power and an ornamental head of state. The king's status as national symbol has been strengthened by his lack of power that has freed him from responsibility, and he now plays a central role as an interpreter of national sentiments, with the potential for opinion-forming that implies.

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C. APOLITICAL MONARCHISTS

*In principle I am a Republican
but pragmatically a monarchist.*
Ingvar Svensson (kd)

The term "apolitical monarchists" or "neomonarchists" (see below) is unfortunate, but the group is a mixed lot. The King's own "Republicans" (e.g. Prince Eugèn) have the best

⁵ Stig Strömholm. Reflexioner vid tronskiftet. *Svensk Tidskrift*, 1973:10, ss. 442-450.

reputation, and thus have been able to count themselves as both royal and politically correct. Worst reputation have “the everyday royalists“ who like court journalism & the so-called “tail“. I quote the American view:

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Neomonarchism

“What is a neomonarchist? Neomonarchists see monarchy as entirely separate from Left/Right political divisions. Their own political views are likely to range from liberal to moderately conservative, or they may not be very interested in politics at all. While respectful of the religious traditions associated with royalty, they are usually not particularly religious themselves. Neomonarchists are primarily concerned with the support of existing constitutional monarchies, such as the ten currently reigning in Europe, and it is this model of monarchy that they would advocate in the case of any possible restoration. Many of them enthusiastically follow the lives of contemporary royals, and are inclined to give them the benefit of the doubt when they are criticized. Neomonarchists tend to be socially liberal and so are unlikely to object to non-traditional marital alliances such as that of the Crown Prince of Norway with an unwed mother who had confessed to using drugs. They embrace multiculturalism and see monarchy as a potential unifying figure in Europe's increasingly diverse countries, as exemplified by Denmark's part-Chinese Princess Alexandra and the Prince of Wales's interest in Islam. They enjoy contemporary popular culture and welcome royals' interactions with it. *Most importantly, neomonarchists are those royalists who have made their peace with modernity and do not see any fundamental conflict between monarchism (they may prefer to say “interest in royalty”) and liberal democratic values.* Not especially prone to nostalgia, they are nevertheless often quite fascinated by the royal personalities of past eras, and have no problem sympathizing on a human level with members of autocratic royal families such as Russia's Romanovs while rejecting everything that these royals stood for ideologically.“⁶

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Lindner (2010) “Yes, the best time for Monarchy is now.“

Journalist Anders Lindner argues (with value-conservative argument) for the Swedish monarchy as part of the country's cultural heritage & the Swedish political model:

“Supporting the monarchy in Sweden in 2010 is for me a position that relates precisely to our history, present and future, not to profess a bundle of principles to be enforced everywhere. On the contrary, I am convinced that each country would do well to develop its political institutions on its own merits. Indeed, Sweden, albeit partly unconsciously, did so when we modernized the role of the Head of State through successively changed practice until, at the beginning of the 1970s, we adopted a new constitution in which the changes were laid down and the depoliticization of the office was finalized. Gradual adaptation to new realities is necessary even in the case of the basic rules of the game, but there is no good reason to completely renovate if the construction is not broken.“⁷

⁶ Theodore Harvey. Two Kinds of Monarchists. <royaltymonarchy.com> (2003).

⁷ Svensson & Lindner 2010.

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The newspaper debate (2010)

Further monarchic arguments can be found in the newspaper debate in connection with the Crown Princess' wedding.⁸ Republican arguments dominated, but are not reported here. The arguments for the monarchical cause can be summarized as:

- Since the monarchy is supported by both the majority of the people, the majority of the parliament and various governments, it must reasonably have democratic legitimacy.
- The Torekov-compromise has removed the monarchy from the party-political arena (=depoliticized it), but the Sovereign, as a ceremonial head of state, is supposed to continue to represent the nation as a whole.
- After 200 years, the Republican side has still not been able to agree on its alternative form of government. Nor have they been able to point to any serious consequences. The monarchy is seen more as a “beauty spot“.
- Sweden is currently a segregated status-society. The monarchy is de facto more democratic, as one is either a royal (=about a dozen people) or a citizen (=the 10 million remaining).
- Through the traditions of the royal house and the long term of office, its representatives are better suited to a symbolic role. The “brand“ is more established & the independent position “outside politics“ gives their actions greater weight. Whatever one thinks about their personal suitability for the office, they are well educated and trained.
- The Republican ascetic style and fixation at 100 year old issues is counterproductive. Sweden is a rich country with a long history. Pomp, circumstance, ceremonial & tradition gives a truer picture.
- Sweden is enough politicized as it is. A free zone is needed.

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The Royalist Association

The Royalist Association (RojF) is a monarchic support organization (founded in 1978) with mainly cultural activities, but leading Parliamentary monarchists have held positions. RojF seems to have grown by absorbing former associations - the royalist society, friends of the Royal Swedish monarchy, the Order of the Oscarians, the Neo-gothic League, the Royalist Club, the Society for the Conservation of the Monarchy (SMB), etc. - which are now history. These were student associations & partying societies that do not seem to have taken themselves too bloody seriously:

SMB (1960-) was a small exclusive Order-society, nine people in 1965. Among the members were future Moderate politicians Håkan Hagwall and Kjell Treslow. The Charter consisted of a single paragraph: “The Society is responsible for preserving the monarchist form of government in Sweden.“ This was interpreted at first as eating only monarchist dishes such as castle steak, prince sausage, princess cake, queen jam

⁸ Hoffgren 2015.

and Napoleon pastry. However, Treslow later together with Tarras-Wahlberg wrote a book on the form of government.⁹

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RojF often participates in debates. The most recent controversy is from 2019 where the association in the usual way point by point rejects a Republican post. The moral is that the monarchy is supported by the Parliament & evidence of cultural diversity:

Key Arguments for Monarchy¹⁰

- The Swedish monarchy is a well-functioning state system that interacts with democracy. The political power lies with the Parliament as “all power comes from the people“.
- The monarchy is based on a thousand-year tradition and must be preserved.
- The law of succession is a guarantee that the historical roots will be maintained.
- The heir to the throne is educated and trained from the very beginning to become a good head of state without any political affiliation.
- The king thus becomes an important unifying symbol for the nation as a whole. The king's qualifications for the highest office is thus likely to be greater than that of a politician.
- The monarchy is a cheap form of government.
- The goodwill that the monarchy implies for Sweden is difficult to calculate in money. However, studies have shown that it is likely to many times exceed the costs.

Ideological purpose

Sweden is a country that is constantly ranked at the very top when it comes to matters such as democracy, rule of law and freedom of the press. The fact that the office is inherited has nothing to do with this fact, nor to the freedom and opportunity of the people to participate in the government of the country. There are well-functioning democracies which are monarchies and republics, as well as hard-line dictatorships which are monarchies and republics.

With this in mind, it becomes apparent that the republicans, in the Swedish Parliament and elsewhere, are fighting against windmills. The aim is not, as the Republicans would have us believe, to make Sweden a better or freer country for those of us who live here.

The aim is to ideologically streamline and homogenize society. Monarchy does not fit into their narrow ideal of a society and must therefore be abolished, irrespective of the practical and real consequences.¹¹

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D. MEMORY CULTURE

As the monarchy lost its official position, it became increasingly difficult to discern it. The debates were often about history (= tradition). The present monarchy was of lesser

⁹ Christina Ollén. Monarkister gillar prinsar också. Gaudeamus, 1965:2.

¹⁰ Rojalistiska föreningen. <rojf.se> (2020-10-01).

¹¹ Patrik Åkesson & Leo Pieroni. Replik: Monarkin har folkets stöd. <altinget.se> (2019-05-08).

importance. A reasonable question is how long this can go on before it disappears for real. In chapter 21, sociologist Seymour Lipset argues that it may well take five generations or longer. Thus, if one generation is 30 years, all parties would have tired c. $1918 + 5 * 30 = 2068$. Maybe so. There seems to be a parallel tradition that the memory culture suffices as national symbol. In the 1940s and 1950s Hemmets Veckotidning publish a long series of descriptions of "Swedish Castles and Manors", 1966-1971 published in book form. That these are inhabited by royals, nobility or upper class is nowadays deemed irrelevant, but they are expected to be managed with a modicum of piety. The same applies to churches & historical monuments.

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