

Summaries

Arne Jarrick

Johan Hjerpe and the mobilization of the artisans

This article treats a riot of journeymen which took place in Riddarhus Square in Stockholm, on Monday, 27 April 1789. Some thousands journeymen and other people had gathered on the Diet's (Riksdagens) last day of meeting in order to induce the assembled noblemen to approve Gustav III's demand for appropriations for the current war with Russia.

The riot occurred against an economic and social background of long-term increasing difficulties for the capital's bourgeois economic activities. The crafts especially were having a hard time holding their own. The immediate political background was the king's coup d'état in February, his populistic and anti-aristocratic propaganda, as well as the nobility's refusal until then to consent to financing the war for an indefinite period.

In the article I have tried in part to reconstruct, sequence by sequence, the dramatic course of events on the 27th April, in part to conduct a discussion, based on that reconstruction, as to what could have guided the actors ethically, as to whether they acted strategically or not, and as to which, partly conflicting psychological needs these people sought to satisfy that day.

The reconstruction is based on the contemporary memoirs of people in different social positions and particularly on the testimony of a participant shop assistant, Johan Hjerpe, who, in his voluminous (and as yet unprinted) diary tells of the riot. Use has also been made of official and unofficial (printed and unprinted) Diet acts. On the other hand, it has not been possible to base the reconstruction on judicial material, inasmuch as no judicial consequences followed the riot. The reason is that the riot was, with all probability, arranged by the police authorities (and ultimately by the king).

The examination of the different materials proves that the crafts' journeymen received some form of economic (monetary or material) compensation for their participation in the mobilization of the 27th April. At the same time the journeymen appear to have been willing to support the king, partly because they were fervent royalists and detested the aristocrats, partly because the riot gave them a chance to satisfy needs which did not directly relate to these political purposes.

In order to deepen the analysis psychologically, I have approached the question from the perspective which has been dominant in recent years' research on preindustrial mass rioting. Since the 1950s George Rudé, Eric J Hobsbawm and other historians have called into question the earlier mass-psychological view of the mass as irrational and primitively steered by instincts. These historians have emphasized instead that the protesting pre-industrial crowds of people generally had well delimited goals for their actions, adapted means to ends, and practiced a selective violence which struck the enemy and spared the innocent.

My own view can be said to lie midway between both these traditions, that is, I produce both the rational and "irrational" bases of the craft journeymen's participation in the riot of the 27th April. In *conscious normative* terms, the journeymen were at the Riddarhus Square quite simply in order to force the nobility to yield their alleged "treasonous" position. The violence was pointed and limited, even if, in terms of their *behavioral ethics*, they were prepared to use violence in order to accomplish their aims, and were largely indifferent to whom or what stood in their way. This was naturally a consequence of the fact that the group did not possess full citizen rights. At that time journeymen were to a large

degree able to act strategically, but in this context their behavior was *unstrategic*, that is to say, it was not systematically thought through. Instead they received, or took, the chance offered them, to give full expression, in controlled anarchistic forms, to needs which had nothing to do with the purpose of their action. They could have felt themselves needed *by and against* different authorities in general and by the king in particular, and this in a period when the craft industries were in decline and the journeymen's time-honoured ritual forms of social intercourse were in the process of losing their functional meaning. They could receive compensation for their wounded *narcissism*, and this they would have been able to get even if the action's expressed goal was not achieved.

Johan Hjerpe, who was in approximately the same social position as the journeymen, found himself at once ethically and psychologically at a distance from them. He had no particular inclination to the war and was afraid of the violent and clamorous crowd. At the same time there were narrow limits to this distance. Like the journeymen, he was fervent royalist and looked upon the peasant estate with a certain condescension. In contrast to aristocratic witnesses, he also attributed to these journeymen independent motives for their participation in the mobilization of 27th April. As such Hjerpe's attitudes also become interesting for the analysis of the social group to which he belonged.

Gösta Johanson

Now it was 1928. The change of government and its prelude

The 1928-year's election to the Riksdag's (Parliament's) second chamber, the so-called Cossack election, was preceded by what was for Swedish conditions an extraordinarily hard election campaign. The election contest stimulated political interest and led to what for that period was an unusually high election turnout. The election results, however, did not change the parliamentary situation: the parties on the left – the Social Democrats and the bourgeois left – still maintained a majority in the Riksdag's two houses.

Despite the unchanged parliamentary situation the election was nevertheless followed by a change in government. Until now the reasons for the cabinet change in 1928 has not been the subject of scholarly investigation. It has been given a great deal of detailed treatment by Ivar Anderson in his biography of Arvid Lindman. Anderson's account, which is constructed substantially from material from the political right, has influenced the prevailing survey works to an important extent.

The matter of Prime Minister Ekman's demission and Lindman's entry into office has been complemented in this article through use of other available material. This had led to new conclusions about the reasons for the change of government and its political background.

Due to conflicts with an influential Conservative-Liberal group, the foreign minister in the Non-conformist- Liberal government, Elial Löfgren, was not nominated as candidate to the second chamber by Stockholm's Liberal electoral association. Löfgren ran on a private list but was opposed by the capital's major Liberal newspapers and was defeated in the elections to the second chamber.

When, on account of the election results, the foreign minister announced his resignation from the government, King Gustaf immediately brought to the fore the issue of the *whole* government's demission. By taking up to reconsideration the *whole* government's position at such an early stage, the monarch broke with the parliamentary rules of the game. One day later the monarch called to him Sigurd Ribbing, member of the consultative council of state, and tried to convince him to influence the prime minister to submit the *entire* government's request for demission. By this remarkable course of action – to discuss the government's resignation with one of the members of the non-political consultative council of state rather than with the head of government – the monarch broke in a still more serious fashion with the parliamentary rules which in 1917 he promised to respect in the future.

When it thus became clear that the king intended to secure the whole government's resignation, Prime Minister Ekman submitted his request for demission.

In his conversation with Ekman and Löfgren King Gustaf claimed – since the bourgeois parties' proposals for collaboration were immediately and decidedly rejected by the bourgeois left parties – that he did not want to have Lindman as prime minister in an “eventual” Conservative government. The king also conveyed to Ekman the idea that he would rather have Ekman remain as prime minister.

The course of the governmental crisis which is documented here indicates clearly and unequivocally, however, that the monarch in this respect played the role of marionette in Lindman's hands. The leader of the second chamber had functioned as an unconstitutional advisor to the monarch, who, in the attempt to stop the government's labor relations legislation, willingly ran Lindman's errands. That the king, against this background

of unconstitutional advising, should not want to have Lindman as his constitutional advisor is wholly improbable. In the king's conflict with the foreign minister about the appointment of an ambassador to Rome, Lindman had, in addition, unquestionably been prepared to produce a governmental crisis, even at the price of a constitutional conflict.

After the so-called Rome affair, a tense and irritating relationship prevailed between the king and the foreign minister. Löfgren's resignation therefore cannot have been unwelcome to the monarch. Nonetheless, when the king brought to the fore the whole government's demission, he did it in all likelihood in accordance with Lindman's request and desires.

Arvid Lindman had thus reached his goal, which he had purposefully and energetically sought for at least ten years' time. What is both surprising and sensational is that Lindman, as late as 1928, a decade after democracy's and parliamentarianism's breakthrough in Sweden, did not hesitate either to use the royal power for his domestic political ends or to act as an unconstitutional advisor to the monarch.

Eva Queckfeldt

Is History Dying. The Lack of a Sense of History in Postwar Sweden

“History-mindlessness,” or the lack of a sense of history, has been a phenomenon that has drawn much attention during the entire post-war period. It is a phenomenon, however, that has been more talked about than investigated. There does not even seem to exist a uniform definition of the very concept of “history-mindlessness.” The term can evidently mean either that one lacks a knowledge of the past or that one does not care about it, and this either because one considers history to have no effect on oneself or because, in this complicated world we live in, one cannot learn anything from “history.”

The research on “history-mindlessness” that has been done has most often focused on the schools and on the *school* subject “history”. This is of course interesting and important, but it does not directly address the question as to whether “history-mindlessness” is a *general* phenomenon in society.

In an attempt to tackle “history-mindlessness” in another way, I carried out, in 1984, an investigation of the interest for, the knowledge of, the past in several Swedish daily newspapers. By using these papers’ respective texts as source material, I was able to distance myself from the usual connection with the teaching subject.

The investigation worked partly from the hypothesis that history-mindlessness – that is, as concerns the knowledge of, the interest for, the past – has been increasing during the post-war period. This hypothesis has been confirmed: history-mindlessness has, in fact, increased in post-war Sweden.

The next task then was to try to offer an explanation for the growing history-mindlessness. The likely causes are partly that the post-war period has been one of dramatic material growth: people have had it better and do not care so much about the past, which they experience as the time when they had it worse, and partly because new decision-makers have appeared on the scene, persons who clearly experienced the old society’s unpleasant sides.

This still does not suffice to give a complete explanation for our time’s history-mindlessness. We also need to include the fact that the past, starting from the year 1945 and going backwards, was quite a terrible one – atom bombs over Japan, concentration camps in Europe, mass slaughter in both world wars, worldwide depression in the 1920s and 1930s, and so on. We need also take into consideration the fact that today’s developments in the mass media have produced an enormous increase in the amount of news material. It is simply not possible to explore in depth, to give a background to, all that has been presented.

Nevertheless, I am not pessimistic as concerns the increasing history-mindlessness. In many respects our world may certainly appear to be unique – something which is also in fact true – but the past we bare with us still, we *can* learn something from it, and – despite claims often made to the contrary – there exists an interest in the past among us humans. It is an interest which we historians ought to be able to capture and develop. The rich West ought to be *able to afford* to keep a past!

