



Guds soldater... 1982

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Nordiska museet

GOD'S SOLDIERS - The Centenary of the Salvation Army in Sweden

This is how it started

1. The Salvation Army is an international organization founded in London in 1865 by William and Catherine Booth.

In 1882 the Salvation Army marched into Stockholm with Hanna Ouchterlony at its head and held its first meeting there on 28 December in the Ladugårdsland Theatre, the present Folkan, in Östermalm. This meeting was quickly followed by others. With cheerful song and stirring music, speeches and prayer the Army created an enormous sensation and attracted large crowds of people.

"Thou broughtest us into the dungeon ... " Psalm 66:11

2. The Salvation Army meetings were occasions for festivity, pageantry and fellowship and attracted, in particular, the many newcomers to Stockholm. But the Army's unusual methods also disturbed and irritated. Newspapers wrote scornfully and trouble-makers broke up the meetings.

The authorities were irritated by the sometimes intractable crowds who collected outside the assembly-halls. With reference to the Municipal Corporations Act the Salvation Army was forbidden in 1883 to hold meetings after nightfall. Through the interposition of King Oscar II in 1889 the persecution ended and the Salvation Army won respect in all quarters. A revival spread through the country.

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3. The disturbances scared the proprietors of assembly-rooms, who for a time closed their establishments against the "wild meetings" of the Salvation Army. The Army then arranged open-air meetings.

To be independent, the Army desired premises of its own. A collection started in April 1885, and in December 1887 the Temple at Östermalmsgatan in Stockholm was inaugurated - the Salvation Army's headquarters in Sweden.

Sea Manoeuvres and Mission to the Archipelago

4. The Salvation Army undertook its first sea manoeuvre as early as Whit Monday 1884. Two hired steamboats left Stockholm and with flags and brass-bands entered Enköping harbour. Sea manoeuvres became a common form of evangelization in the summer months.

The mission among fishermen and the islanders required a boat. A boat was first hired, but in 1890 the Army received from England the first boat of its own - the yacht "Vestalen" (the Vestal). "Vestalen" was followed by several others, among which "Glory", "Segev" (the Victory) and "Hanna Ouchterlony".

"Forward - may that be your motto!" W. Booth

5. The Salvation Army marched out across the country. With ingeniousness and modern methods the soldiers of God spread their message abroad. The Army gained a footing first among the workers in the towns and thereafter spread through the countryside by train, car, cycle and on foot. By the turn of the century the movement had established most of its corps (about 220). Its peak period was at the end of the thirties. Today the Army has 233 corps, 35.600 members and 893 officers.

Foreign Missions

6. Owing to the international character of the Salvation Army, Swedes were assigned to missions abroad from the outset. In 1887 officers were despatched to conduct revival work in Norway and in the same year ten Swedes travelled to India. Today 15 Swedish salvationists are abroad on missionary service. Most of them have medical and teacher training.

Pictures from Corps of the Salvation Army (No text)

The War-Cry

7. Ever since the first issue of "Stridsropet" (The War-Cry) in 1883 the sale of the journal has been one of the main means

of contact with people and of gaining new adherents. In the streets and squares, at railway stations and in restaurants one sees salvationists selling the journal.

The Salvation Army realized at an early stage the importance of the printed word and new journals were brought out in rapid succession to cover different branches of its activities.

From Congresses and Meetings (No text)

From Sunday School to Army

8. In the early days of the Salvation Army they did not dare to admit children to their meetings owing to the crush, but in 1887 instructions were issued that meetings for children should be held every week at all corps. Sunday schools and children's bands grew up and child and junior corps were formed. Since 1915 the Salvation Army has also had a widespread scout and girl guide movement and in the Junior and Youth Leagues the Army has attempted to attract and instruct young people through meetings and suitable occupation.

In the course of the years the work among children and youth has grown. Children's hours on weekdays have been arranged, in the fifties meetings were organized with rockers and their girls, in the sixties an Open House in Stockholm, a "drop-in" at the Salvation Army in Uppsala, and in Vänersborg the mods were invited to a choral evening at the Army in 1965. In the sixties a family camp was organized at the National Youth Centre, Dragudden, at Värmdö, and in 1964 the first confirmation camp was arranged at Dalarö.

Sunday school, the scout corps or the music group is for many the first step into the Salvation Army. Thereafter the road goes via the Junior Soldiers and the Corps Cadets up to the work as Soldier of the Salvation Army.

In the Midst of the Everyday Struggle - Social Work

9. "Look hither! During the present fast the Salvation Army has had a special thought for the poor, who fast all the year round, and therefore decided to invite some of the distressed population of the town to a meal at 4 p.m. on March 18."

Hanna Ouchterlony in "Stridsropet", 1885

In the Salvation Army social work has always gone hand in hand with evangelism. In 1890 the first slum station was opened in 'Söder' in Stockholm, and in the same year a rescue-home for prostitutes. The slum sisters started their work in poor families and among women with social problems.

The social work of the Salvation Army was important at the time when the State still had no organization for helping the distressed. The authorities showed their approval by, for example, allowing the slum sisters free travel on the trams and supplying electricity free of charge to the slum stations.

Soup, Soap and Salvation

10. The social work among men started when, in 1890, the first refuge was opened for homeless men. The Army introduced asylums for unemployed and released prisoners, soup-kitchens, warm shelters and baths. In 1912 the first nursing home for alcoholics was opened.

The Army's social work has changed in the course of time: rest-homes and old age homes have been established, maternity homes have been converted into rehabilitation homes for alcoholics and drug addicts, and earlier children's homes are now day nurseries and recreation centres for schoolchildren.

Keep the Pot Boiling

11. The lively activities, both spiritual and social, of the Salvation Army during these 100 years in Sweden have naturally cost money. Several organizations have grown up to support the Army, e.g. the Auxiliary League, the Samaritan League, and the League of Mercy - all founded before the turn of the century.

Money was also collected at bazaars and festivals and in the annually recurring collections; the Self-Denial Week, the Easter Collection, and the Christmas Collection with the well known motto: Keep the pot boiling! The 1980 collections yielded 5,613,058 Sw. crowns.

Trade Dept.

12. Commercial activities in the Salvation Army started as from the first meeting in 1882. Song-books and other booklets were then sold. The work soon expanded, catalogues were issued, and by mail order the Army's people could procure practically everything they needed.

The Trade Department ran a uniform tailoring establishment and for a long time also a printing shop.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!"

13. "Music is one of our call-cries", said William Booth, and song and music have always had a large place in the Salvation Army's meetings and services. In Sweden the guitar was the first instrument used. Jenny Swenson introduced it at the first meeting at the Ladugårdsland Theatre when she struck up the tune "To the land of the pure and the holy we march". Since then the guitar has had its given place at the Army's meetings.

Brass-band music and the Salvation Army have become a single concept and a brass-band was formed in Stockholm already in 1883. Stimulated by the propaganda journeys of the staff band around the country, bands soon arose at many places.

Recently choir-singing has acquired a growing place at meetings; and children's and youth choirs, inspired by musicals and gospel-songs, have brought new rhythms.

The Salvation Army's today roughly 4,300 organized musicians and singers have a reputedly high standard.

In Bonnet and Red Tunic

14. The Salvation Army was really noticed when it came with its uniforms, banners and marches. To be seen, attract attention, and thus get into contact with people, is important for the salvationist; the uniform has an important role in this respect.

As early as 1880 a uniform of military cut was created in London. The men's consisted of tunic and trousers of dark-blue cloth and a peaked cap or helmet-like hat. The women wore a dark-blue tunic or costume, as well as the well-known bonnet.

Jerseys are used together with the uniform. They often had mottos embroidered on the chest and were so cheap that even poor soldiers could buy them.

In the course of the years the uniform has been modernized and adapted according to circumstances. In tropical countries, for example, they wear white or Khaki clothes and sun helmets.

Keep the Pot Boiling!

15. The first "pot" was set up in San Francisco in 1895 to finance Christmas dinners for the poor. The Christmas-pot came to Sweden in 1907 and in that year the Army was able to invite 1 600 needy persons in Stockholm to a proper Christmas dinner.

The money in this pot goes to the Salvation Army's charity organization work.

The exhibition has been produced by Maria Regazzoni-Rapp and Berit Rönstedt, curators at the Nordiska museet. The exhibited items belong to the Salvation Army in Sweden.

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