

GUSTAV VASA



NAME: _____

Gustav Vasa



Gustav Vasa was called Gustav Eriksson when he was born in 1496, and was Sweden's king from 1523 until his death in 1560. During his time as ruler he worked non-stop to strengthen the Swedish monarchy. The state organisation was made more effective and easier to run. The king gained more control of the country. He ruled his country with a heavy hand and reacted violently towards his enemies at home and abroad.

Gustav Vasa reformed the church and introduced Protestantism to gain more power over the church. This was done to improve the country's finances. All church property became state property, and the king became head of the Swedish church.

Gustav Vasa wanted the Swedish military to be stronger. It cost a lot of money, so Sweden's population had to pay more taxes. This led to a number of uprisings by the farmers - which were put down with an iron hand. The biggest and by far the most serious was Dackfejden 1542-1543.

During his long reign Gustav Vasa built up a powerful state. Never before had one person succeeded in gaining so much power in Sweden.

Sweden became a hereditary monarchy, where the king's oldest son inherited the crown. Previously new kings were often elected to the position.

Gustav Vasa's family ruled Sweden for about 130 years (from 1523 to 1654). During this time Sweden went from a small, divided country to a great power. This is why many describe Gustav Vasa as founding father and creator of Swedish nationalism. Others see him as a tyrant.

Stockholm's bloodbath led to a Swedish rebellion.

The Danish king Kristian II crowned himself king of Sweden at the Stockholm Bloodbath (massacre) in 1520. Many nobles and citizens were executed. 'Kristian the Tyrant' as he is often called in old Swedish history books, wanted to unify Sweden and Denmark by force.

Gustav Vasa takes power

The war of independence.

When the Danish king 'Kristian the Tyrant' returned to Denmark, he believed he had crushed all opposition and that the resistance leaders were dead. But the young nobleman Gustav Eriksson was already on his way to Dalarna, disguised as a farmhand. He didn't trust Kristian II and had stayed away from the coronation.



Gustav Vasa tried to get the farmers in Mora to rebel against the king, but they refused.

Disappointed, he continued on his way to Norway. The people in Mora changed their minds and sent two good skiers after Gustav to fetch him back. They caught up with him in Sälen, and they returned to Mora together. Gustav was chosen to lead the farmers' militia and their rebellion spread like wildfire. Farmers and mountain men in the neighbouring countryside flocked to their side. The people in Småland and Västergötterland had already started their own

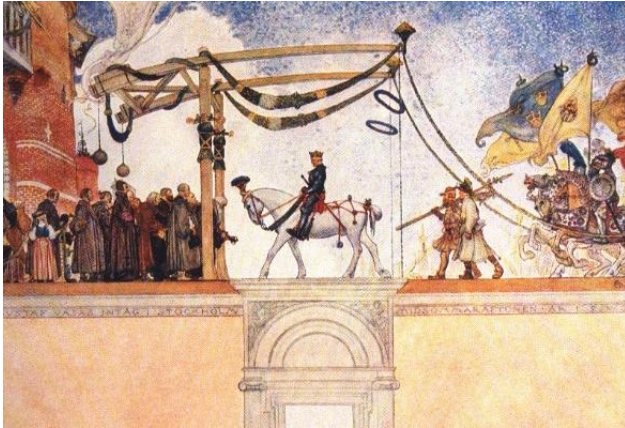


Hanseatic League) Stockholm was finally taken.

rebellions since King Kristian II had raised the taxes and tried to take away all the farmers' weapons.

After half a year of fighting almost half of Sweden was liberated. Thanks to help from the powerful German trading organisation Hansa (also known as German Hanse or the

Having been named king by the powerful lords in the national council on the 6th June, Gustav Vasa entered the capital on Midsummer's Eve in a procession. Sweden broke free from the Kalmar Union with Denmark and became an independent country. The 6th June became Sweden's national day in 1983.



Sweden and the Hansa.

Gustav Vasa had promised the Hansa that they could keep the monopoly they had enjoyed on trade in Sweden since the Middle Ages. This promise had been the guarantee required for the Hansa to help him. When the war of liberation was over there was a huge bill to pay. Where would the king

find this money? From rich churches and monasteries! Time after time he demanded tax payments - the so called 'silver help' (silverhjälpen). When the churches ran out of silver coins, they were forced to melt down bowls, jugs, chalices/goblets and other church silver items. The first repayment sent to the Hansa included 400kg of silver and many cups and other goods.

Martin Luther



In Germany a priest called Martin Luther had protested against the Catholic Church's beliefs and power. His disciple Olaus Petri had started to preach against the Pope's 'false teachings' in Sweden. For a long time the Catholic Church had been very powerful in Sweden, in material as well as religious terms, but now Gustav Vasa broke with the Pope.

Reformation - the king takes over the church's property

Gustav Vasa decided to finally put an end to the power of the church. In spite of tough opposition, he forced through a ruling that church property would be transferred to the state, at a parliament in Västerås in 1527. Some 14,000 properties owned by the church transferred to state ownership, and the king

took at least 3,000 of them for his own property. The kingdom's economy became more secure as a result. Eventually Sweden became a fully protestant country, and the Pope in Rome was no longer head of the Swedish church - Gustav Vasa took over that role. The monasteries closed and the bishops were forced to surrender their castles to the state.

Gustav Vasa's rule

Gustav Vasa ran Sweden as though the country was his own business. He wanted control over everything. The tax collectors were forced to account for every coin to the king in Stockholm, where he went through every calculation with his accountants. Tax collectors who didn't do their job properly quickly felt his fury - the state's treasury was his! No other king in Swedish history has had such control over the country's economy.



In 1510 a large deposit of silver was found in Sala in Västmanland. The mining reached its peak during Gustav Vasa's reign, and more than 40,000 kg of silver were sent from Sala to the Royal Treasury in Stockholm. Later on though, the king's two oldest sons Erik XIV and Johan III would waste it all.

Useful Concepts

Export (Export): Transporting and selling goods abroad.

Tax collector Fogde): A royal servant who amongst other things had to collect taxes from a certain area for the king. The monarchy had many tax collectors responsible for different parts of the country.

Import (Import): Buying and bringing in goods from another country, crossing over a customs border.

Catholicism (Katholicism): A branch of Christianity lead by the Pope.

Competition (konkurrens): When several companies or individuals compete together in a market.

Mercenaries (Legoknektar): Professional soldiers who could be hired temporarily or for a longer period for payment.

Market (Marknad): A place where buyers and sellers meet. A market can be physical (a square, a shop) or virtual (like a stock market or Tradera.se).

Monopoly (Monopol): A market where there is only one company and no competition.

Nation (Nation): A group of people united by common factors such as language, religion, ethnicity, origins, history, culture, traditions, common forms of leadership and social norms. A state which is built around and connected to a nation is a national state.

Protestantism (Protestantism): A branch of Christianity.

Reform (Reform(era)): Change, improve. A change towards a new and (often) better state in society.

State (Stat): Independent kingdom.

Questions:

When was *Gustav Vasa* born and what was his name then?

When was *Gustav Vasa* king? _____

What was the largest rebellion called?

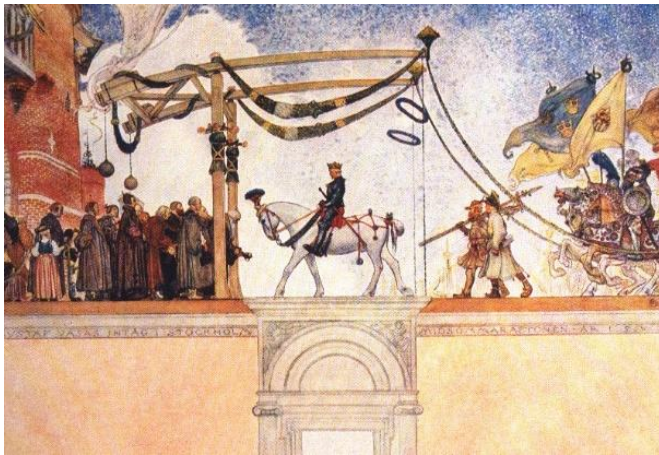
Gustav Vasa introduced the hereditary monarchy. What does that mean?

Which year was the Stockholm Bloodbath?

What do you know about the Stockholm Bloodbath?

Who was crowned king during the Stockholm Bloodbath?

Why do we celebrate the Swedish National Day on the 6th June?



Who painted this picture and what does it show?

What does the word 'monopoly' mean?

How did *Gustav Vasa* raise the money to repay the Hansa?

Who was *Martin Luther* and what did he think of the *Catholic Church*?

What does the word 'reformation' mean?

What happened during the *Swedish Reformation*?

What kind of king do you think *Gustav Vasa* was?

Write the name of the person under the picture.



