

A non-hegemonic media event

The funeral of the former Swedish prime minister Karl Staaff in 1915

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The barrow is closed ...
Sleep, chief, sleep,
while the wintry
dark feuds
pass across the lands!
The barrow is closed,
far shadowing the land ...

Sleep, tired champion!
Vandals' savagery,
wolves' spitefulness
severely thee have tired ...
How well You require your rest.

We will never
fail—nor forget—
Even through cloudy
days and bright
the chief's premature barrow
lights our way, assembles us,
shines high above the country.

This poem, which both begins and concludes at the symbolic grave of a great leader, now resting after a life defying ruthless enemies, was published in the liberal Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* on 12 October 1915.¹ The event the poet alluded to was the funeral, two days earlier, of the former liberal prime minister Karl Staaff, attended by tens of thousands of people in the streets of Stockholm.² In all its indignation and fighting spirit, the three short paragraphs capture the tone of some of the press reports about this huge mediated public event. It took place in a country still dominated by the king and the conservative right, in a media system noted for its diversity and politicization.³ This essay shows that, in a pre-democratic state such as early twentieth-century Sweden, media events did not necessarily voice a hegemonic ideology or harmonious sense of community spirit. Rather, mediated public space, even at the commemoration of a former prime minister, could be imbued with political conflict. Drawing on Nick Couldry's work on media events, I investigate conflicting media narratives, each playing a decisive part in the struggle for or against democracy in Sweden.⁴ I ask how the event and its attendees were represented. In what way was Staaff's funeral politicized?

Staaff's funeral as a media event

In Sweden as in other European countries, funerals of political leaders have for centuries been publicly staged, and thus mediated, events.⁵ When Daniel Dayan and Elihu Katz discussed the concept of media events in their classic book, though, they had a specific time and medium in mind: the second half of the twentieth century, with live television broadcasts of great public events.⁶ From the first, they describe media events as 'a new narrative genre that employs the unique potential of the electronic media to command attention universally and simultaneously in order to tell a primordial story about current affairs', but also as typically representing the estab-



Figure 1.1. Karl Staaff (1860–1915). © Läns museet Gävleborg.

lishment or, more exactly, the centre of society, by harbouring its consensual ideals and agreements. Thus, the focus of media events is reconciliation, being ‘to redress conflict or to restore order or, more rarely, to institute change’. The mood of media events is festive, gripping, and electrifying, and their audiences across the nation—or the world—are expected to join in loyally under the uniting flag of a hegemonic ideology.⁷

Three decades after the publication of *Media events*, the literature on the subject, both empirical and theoretical, is vast.⁸ One key critique has been set out by Nick Couldry in his work on media rituals. He eschews Dayan and Katz's neo-Durkheimian (functionalist) approach that media events are best read as expressions of the social and moral order of society. Couldry finds no "natural" centre ... that we should value, as the centre of "our" way of life, "our" values', and instead identifies two connected myths: the belief that such a centre exists ('the myth of the centre'), and the belief that the media has a natural privilege to provide knowledge about this centre ('the myth of the mediated centre'). According to Couldry, media events should be understood as 'those large-scale event-based media-focused narratives where the claims associated with the myth of the mediated centre are particularly intense'.⁹

As I will argue, the accounts of Karl Staaff's funeral show there was no consensus about what society was or should be. Like Couldry, I cannot agree that mediated public rituals were unpolitical expressions of a pre-discursive societal order and value system. Further, there are good reasons to refute Dayan and Katz's argument that the introduction of electronic media was key to the reshaping of older forms of public ceremonies into a qualitatively new kind of mediated rituals that we may call media events.¹⁰ As I have shown in a recent article, the turn-of-the-century press—and to some extent cinema—employed a range of different practices to create effects like those said to characterize later media events. Journalists set out to wake the senses of the media audience, to emphasize the engagement of society as a whole and to create a mutual awareness among readers of facing the historically charged present.¹¹

According to several media historians, media events in the past were typically co-constructed by many media (in the extended meaning of the word), and it seems fair to say that even in the heyday of broadcasting, television was never the only medium involved in the construction of media events.¹² At the beginning of the twentieth

century, various media together achieved the affordances said to come with television, with its live transmission of moving images and sound reporting.

At the time of Staaff's death, the daily newspapers were the dominant disseminators of news in terms of volume and reach. Even if the telegraph could communicate news at high speed over vast distances there was generally a time lapse between the event and the opportunity to go to press. One way to remedy this problem was to print a single broadsheet—as was done in this particular case.¹³ Another option was to use a more developed form of telecommunications. The date of Staaff's funeral coincided with the launch of the country's first telephone newspaper, though it was by no means a novelty outside Sweden. From nine o'clock in the evening it delivered a summary of the most important news, which had not arrived in time to be included in the evening editions of the newspapers, and which included updates about the war and—at the end—the funeral of the former prime minister. It was a subscription service by Stockholm Telephone Ltd (Aktiebolaget Stockholmstelefon); subscribers rang the operator before the appointed time and asked for 'The telephone newspaper'. It satisfied the need for news in the evenings, which otherwise prompted people to phone newspaper offices.¹⁴

Another disadvantage of the daily press was the lack of images, making the newsreels in cinemas important as 'visual confirmation' of the newspaper content.¹⁵ However, the production of copies was the Achilles' heel of the film-making process, and newsreels were not available until the day after events, although widely spread at least in the capital.¹⁶ Visual confirmation of the funeral procession was also provided by the popular magazine *Vecko-Journalen*, which included a series of photogravures two days later.¹⁷

Dayan and Katz limit media events to live transmission and thus to the short duration of the actual ceremony; however, drawing on Roel Puijk's analysis of the mediation of the death and funeral of Princess Diana as dramaturgically connected events, I would argue that

Bilder från Staaffs begravning



1. På väg till kyrkan. Fanbärande studenter öppna tåget. Efter komma kranslärare. 2. I Engelbrektskyrkan under jordfästningen. 3. Den med en svensk flagga täckt kistan bäres av åtta studenter in i kyrkan. 4. Arkebiskopen och den dö-

des moder doktorinnan Staaff. 5. Professor Edén talar vid krematoriet. 6. Processionen och åskådarmassorna vid Östermalmstgatan. 7. Den Staaffska graven på Nya kyrkogården.

Figure 1.2. Staaff's funeral showing (1) towards the Engelbrekt Church, (2) the funeral service, (3) student pall-bearers, (4) Archbishop Söderblom and Staaff's mother, (5) Professor Nils Edén's eulogy at the crematorium, (6) the procession and bystanders in Östermalmstgatan, and (7) the Staaff family grave in Nya kyrkogården. *Vecko-Journalen* 42 (1915).

preceding and later events must be included in the definition.¹⁸ Rather than an immediate, simultaneous present, at least in earlier times, we are looking for an extended but still limited temporality, imbued with both anticipation and concluding reflection.¹⁹ Consequently, when studying funerals as media events, all news reporting from the moment of death to the aftermath of the funeral will contribute to the construction of the event as a mediated historical experience. My ambition here, however, is rather to show the politicized character of the event, and hence the study is limited to the reporting of the actual funeral ceremony and the press debate it caused. To account for the Swedish media's politics at the time, the sources range from the socialist *Social-Demokraten* and the liberal *Dagens Nyheter* to the moderate conservative *Stockholms Dagblad* and the conservative *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*.²⁰ My method is a qualitative close reading of the texts, with special attention to how funeral-goers were represented, the basic elements of the account, and the position of the reporter. But first the societal context in which this media event was set.

Karl Staaff and the political scene

To liberals and social democrats, the newly resigned prime minister embodied the fight for democracy against conservatives and monarchists trying to cling to power by maintaining the restrictions on suffrage. How did Staaff achieve this symbolic status and why was it so emotionally charged?

At the end of the nineteenth century, suffrage in Sweden was limited to about 12 per cent of the adult population.²¹ In theory, the political system was based on the principle of the division of power between the executive (government) and the legislature (Parliament), whereby the government would safeguard the interests of the whole country, elevated from Parliament's party politics and conflicting interests. Yet as Peter Esaiasson states, the king's constitutional right to appoint the ministers as his personal advisors usually resulted in

governments heavily biased towards the interests of the conservative majority of the first chamber. This was only possible if the more radical elements of society were kept out of the second chamber, but when Staaff entered the political scene, growing industrialization and urbanization had resulted in a falling number of peasants and in higher incomes for a considerable group of workers, who now qualified to vote. The tables had turned, because increasing political organization was underway both in and outside Parliament.²²

Born in 1860 into a family of priests and lawyers, Karl Staaff belonged to a generation of liberal and social-democratic politicians whose lives and careers coincided and were deeply committed to the campaign for democracy in Sweden. As a founder and the first chairman of the liberal student association *Verdandi*, he set the tone for a debate that centred on freedom of religion, speech, and opinion—all three still severely restricted in Sweden at the time.²³ Proving the fact that the liberal and social-democratic movements together formed the political left, Staaff in his later capacity as a lawyer defended several trades union members and offered legal advice to those accused of preaching ‘revolting ideas’.²⁴ Thanks to an electoral alliance between liberals and social democrats, Staaff was elected as a member of Parliament’s second chamber in 1896.²⁵

Once in Parliament, the liberals and social democrats put universal suffrage at the top of their agenda. In 1905, Staaff became prime minister, determined to extend the franchise. However, he resigned only the following year because the government bill was rejected by the conservative first chamber. Facing the second chamber, he gave a famously bold speech. In reluctant anticipation of an escalating battle with the first chamber, he warned against the outcome: ‘It will then become a battle over this: shall royal power with the people’s power or royal power with the power of the masters prevail in the realm of Sweden?’²⁶ He explicitly challenged the hegemonic ideology of the political right and the royal family, who considered the societal elite naturally suited to govern in the public interest. He politicized



Figure 1.3. Karl Staaff as an ashtray.
© Hallwylska museet/SHM (CCo).

the category of ‘the people’ and emphasized the element of conflict in national politics.

After his resignation, modest reform was pushed through by the conservatives, which in the event paved the way for Staaff’s return to office in 1911. A strong advocate of the principles of parliamentarism, Staaff set out to realize the liberals’ election programme. Even though he accomplished several social reforms—a new retirement pension for one—his efforts to improve gender equality were less successful. Most important, he stood up to the vigorous opposition of King Gustav V and Queen Victoria, who joined forces with right-wing politicians and extra-parliamentary groups to undermine parliamentary government and secure royal power. The main bones of contention turned out to be the budget and defence, where Staaff called for modest cuts to the enormous costs and more effective planning, making defence the concern of the people, rather than the upper classes and the military. Supported by a right-wing social movement, the king effectively put an end to this policy by instigating

the 'courtyard crisis' (Borggårdskrisen) in 1914, where he openly opposed the government and asserted his authority over 'his' army and navy. Staaff was compelled to resign and parliamentarism was overruled. The following year Staaff died of pneumonia after a vicious smear campaign by right-wing individuals and newspapers. Souvenir ashtrays carrying Staaff's face marked a low point in the ad hominem attacks.²⁷

From the people to the general public

A crucial journalistic practice in media events before the age of broadcasting was the mediation of the public who were present as a way of measuring support in society as a whole.²⁸ However, as Stephen Coleman and Karen Ross argue, the notion of the public is a social construct—an empty space to fill, and always with the potential to be politically contested.²⁹

Naturally, in the reporting of Staaff's funeral the liberals' flagship newspaper, *Dagens Nyheter*, excelled both in the range of coverage and the significance attributed to the event. The front page, which was almost all photographs, announced an occasion unparalleled in Stockholm's recent history. The newspaper thus inferred that King Oscar II's state funeral eight years earlier could not match the funeral of the great liberal 'chief'. The newspaper continued, 'you felt how behind the capital's mighty tribute there was deep and widespread national mourning'. It alluded to the conflict between the right-wing urban elites and the rest of the country. In Stockholm flagpoles were left empty instead of half-masted, 'whereas far out in the remotest outskirts of the country, flags at half-mast testified to the fact that the people knew who he was and what they have lost with him'. Deprived of such symbols 'tens of thousands' of the Stockholmers paid their homage to Staaff only with their silent presence. According to *Dagens Nyheter*, 'Hundreds of thousands' of spectators flanked the route of the cortège, and, although 'every possible vantage point'

was taken from Norrtull at the boundary of the capital to the Nya kyrkogården crematorium a kilometre further north, there was 'no disturbing curiosity', only 'gravity and calm'. In the opinion of *Dagens Nyheter*, those who lined the route represented 'the people'; indeed, the paper designated the event in general as a 'popular tribute'. Even though those walking in the funeral cortège were mostly members of liberal organizations and the women's, temperance, and labour movements, they were described as the people's true representatives, a people's procession.³⁰

The social democrats were not inclined to recognize the liberals as the true representatives of the people. Hence, although the funeral was front-page news in *Social-Demokraten*, the public presence was characterized as 'enormous masses of humans'. The procession was said to have been some 1,500 strong and the crowd lining the route was several people deep, yet the countryside was only alluded to in passing—representatives from liberal and temperance associations, Staaff's friends, and so on. The symbolic support of the labour movement was acknowledged in the careful mentions of the social-democratic associations and politicians who went to the funeral service and the handful of trades union banners carried in the procession.³¹

The attention to detail and significance attributed to the event by *Social-Demokraten* was in stark contrast to the conservative newspapers. In both *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* and *Stockholms Dagblad* the reports were hidden inside the paper. The occasion was simply depicted as 'great ceremonies' and estimates of the number of participants were conspicuously absent, although the *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* did admit that the procession to the cemetery 'was among the grandest ever seen' and *Stockholms Dagblad* wrote of the 'great attendance on the part of the general public'. In their reporting from the church, and unlike the left-wing press, the two conservative dailies emphasized the participation of the elite. The royal representatives, the prime minister with his colleagues, and the foreign delegates were all mentioned, at the expense of the members of the liberal and

social-democratic associations and the temperance and women's movements. The coverage thus depoliticized the event by showing how it adhered to the protocol for a former prime minister's funeral, disregarding the deceased's political affiliation.³²

In a palpable contrast to this, two films of Karl Staaff's funeral survive where the attention is directed towards the public rather than the ceremonies. A newsreel for the film company Svenska Biografteatern first shows the onlookers in some detail outside the church. A smaller group behind a wall, mainly with their backs to the camera, wait for the procession to appear; a schoolboy climbs up and a small child jumps up and down to get a better view. More important, though, the public was filmed from a high angle, capturing the sheer number lining the route, some of them walking behind the crowds in the direction of the procession. Pathé's newsreel has similar shots from an even higher viewpoint, revealing a seemingly endless column of people. It concludes with the camera panning over an open space, filled with a vast crowd of moving people.³³ The newsreels were consistent with the politically charged reporting of the event as a manifestation of democratic mobilization.

Narrating the symbolic content

The most extensive coverage of Staaff's funeral was provided by *Dagens Nyheter*. Filling almost three full pages, the ambitious reporting by a team of three or more journalists covered proceedings at several locations in great detail. The paper used a cross-cutting technique to capture the parallel scenes of the church service and the formation of the funeral cortège in the street, but the narrative was chronological. It started at Staaff's home, from where the coffin was taken to the Engelbrekt Church (a modern church named for the famous peasant leader and freedom fighter of the fifteenth century) for the church service, followed by the procession through the streets of Stockholm to the cemetery for the committal, consigning the body

DAGENS NYHETER.

Nr 276 A (Stockholmsupplagan nr 16299) Måndagen den 11 Oktober 1915

KARL STAFFS JORDAFÄRD

Koffret bär ut från kyrkan

Jordstiftningen i Engelbrektskyrkan

Arkebiskopen och hertigen Staaff

En imponerande och gripande folkhyllning. — Enastående deltagande från huvudstaden och landet. — Arkebiskopens, vännernas och partikamraternas sista hälsning.

Bebudning för det. Och hans kista
 (Text continues with details of the funeral service and the large gathering of people.)

Processionen på väg till kyrkan

Sorgfulla hyllningen i Engelbrektskyrkan.
 (Text continues with details of the eulogy and the atmosphere of the service.)

En imponerande och gripande folkhyllning. — Enastående deltagande från huvudstaden och landet. — Arkebiskopens, vännernas och partikamraternas sista hälsning.

Sorgfulla hyllningen i Engelbrektskyrkan.

En imponerande och gripande folkhyllning. — Enastående deltagande från huvudstaden och landet. — Arkebiskopens, vännernas och partikamraternas sista hälsning.

Figure 1.4. The front page of *Dagens Nyheter* (11 Oct. 1915) showing Staaff's coffin carried out of the church, the funeral service in the Engelbrekt Church, Professor Nils Edén's eulogy, Archbishop Söderblom and Staaff's relatives, and the procession on its way to the church. © AB Dagens Nyheter.

to the flames of the crematorium. The newspaper rounded off with a separate article about the liberals' wake in the evening, comprising impressions of the day, and further remarks about Staaff's legacy, which concluded that the 'Unswerving solidarity grounded in liberal ideas' was a binding promise of the future.³⁴

Dagens Nyheter thus had the strongest reason to claim that the funeral revealed the true ideological sentiment of the Swedish people, accordingly constituting a societal centre. The reporters were at pains to prove themselves reliable eyewitnesses, thus constructing the myth of the mediated centre. This was achieved with the witness-ambassador techniques described by Géraldine Muhlmann as a stand-in for a non-present audience, using their bodies as a recording instrument. Detailed descriptions of what the reporters—and other participants—saw and heard were frequent. The use of such 'sensualist positivism' or 'naïve empiricism' stressed the uniqueness of the event: 'Seldom has one seen as here a congregation so united in a sincere feeling of grief and loss, so little distracted by irrelevant thoughts and the pomp and circumstance of customary form.'³⁵

For those who could not be there, *Dagens Nyheter* printed all the speeches in full. The most important was the funeral oration by Archbishop Nathan Söderblom, which, according to the journalist, made a 'strong impression'. Later the subject of a heated debate, it included rather blunt references to the victimization that Staaff had had to endure and to the Eighth Commandment:

He was praised like few others, blamed like few others. In the diverse areas of our public life—and why not even in people's daily intercourse?—the Eighth Commandment should gain the place where insidious or open slander now spread. It is typical of the judgement of the world not to react to slander, yes, perhaps not even to allow such a reaction, when the voices of slander have reached a safe number. For any who is willing to see, at the end of a day spent in resolute work exceptional gifts appear in the deceased, a strong

ability to instil unconditional confidence, faithfulness to the ideals of freedom of his younger years, and a sincere feeling towards the small and neglected in society. Such qualities attract to this bier the gratitude and grief of thousands upon thousands.³⁶

This could be interpreted as a rehabilitation of Karl Staaff and his legacy as well as a stern lesson for his opponents. The archbishop later retreated from this position, reminding the congregation that in the face of death and before God everyone was equal, yet even then he implicitly referred to the ideological implications of Swedish national politics: 'For death, two nations do not exist, and he does not make any distinctions between the leaders, the few, who have tasted the sweetness and hardships of power, and the many who go unmentioned.' He continued that life was 'shut in on all sides', except for in the direction of heaven above, where the soul could 'sojourn'. From this lofty angle, the life of any human appeared 'rather insignificant'.³⁷

The speeches were also reprinted in *Social-Demokraten*, which covered the different elements of the ceremonies but in less detail and from a more distant position. In a separate column, the newspaper's editor-in-chief and Social Democrat party leader, Hjalmar Branting, reflected on Söderblom's oration. The sharp repudiation of the 'traffic of slander' was, he announced, 'the honourable word of an honourable man, candidly pronounced on an occasion when it must be heard both far and wide around in distant, obscure places—and high up'. Still, Branting rejected the notion that human life was shut off to everything other than 'an otherworldly reality'. Quite the contrary, it was bright ideas and good deeds that were incontestably immortal, and thus Staaff's work and legacy would continue to have an influence. Sadly, though, the church had shunned 'those words of gratitude and acknowledgement that the whole democracy of Sweden felt the need to offer up' at his funeral.³⁸

In line with its political stance, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* gave only limited space to the various funeral speeches. On the day itself it published a summary of events, merely noting that the archbishop's oration 'made a deep and serious impression on those present'.³⁹ It continued its coverage the next day with accounts of events from the church to the wake. It quoted the key parts of Söderblom's speech including those cited above.⁴⁰ In comparison, *Stockholms Dagblad*'s reporting was more extensive and included the archbishop's words in full. Although the style of reporting was mostly distanced and objective, the reporter's presence shone through a few times, as in the account of the church decorations: 'In the sanctuary, bathed in subdued light, the eye was met by a beautiful display of flowers—from the altar rail's abundance of red to the huge number of wreaths that lay around the catafalque.'⁴¹ Interestingly, though, almost the exact same words with some additional passages could be found in at least two other newspapers, which shows that the journalist had used news agency telegrams.⁴² This again proves the obvious point that it was in the interest of the conservative press to downplay the importance of Staaff's funeral.

As much as the right-wing newspapers wished to minimize the democratic sentiment manifested at the funeral, they could not afford to ignore the spark ignited by the leader of the Church of Sweden. A heated debate flared up in the following week, engaging a wide range of newspapers far outside the capital. Its nuances are beyond the scope of this study, as Staaff's graveside was the point from which so many aspects of Sweden's national politics in preceding years were addressed.⁴³ Here, it will be enough to highlight some of the initial reactions of the archbishop's right-wing opponents.

According to *Stockholms Dagblad* the problem was not that the archbishop's accusations were unfounded, but that the timing was inappropriate, since there was an obvious risk of causing a general discussion about the responsibility for a situation where 'slander, hatred and poison have unfortunately gained such a footing, especially

in the world of politics'. If such a discussion got underway, Staaff's own part would have to be addressed.⁴⁴ *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* took a similar line, implying that Staaff had publicly 'led a great many people to entertain unfounded suspicions'. Still, it insisted, it was not their place to decide whether the anonymous slanders that surrounded Staaff caused a more severe kind of suffering than the more explicit insinuations he was guilty of himself.⁴⁵ The moderate liberal *Svenska Morgonbladet* appreciated the archbishop's reference to the Eighth Commandment, but believed both ends of the political spectrum had equal reason to feel regret. The best solution would be for everyone to shake hands at the grave and promise one another to fight fairly.⁴⁶

Other right-wing papers, such as the moderate *Göteborgs Morgonpost*, went further in questioning the liberal panegyrics, and accused them of using the funeral as an opportunity to do down their political opponents, which gave their grief an air of duplicity. 'For us and for untold others it would have been preferable if Karl Staaff's funeral had been celebrated with pomp without reserve, but so the sad ceremony did not take on the character of an act of political agitation.' The newspaper hoped and wished for a truce.⁴⁷

Conclusion

In Dayan and Katz's pathbreaking work, the concept of the media event is defined with the second half of the twentieth century and its emblematic medium, television, in mind. To them most media events should be regarded 'as "reinforcing" or "hegemonic", in the sense that they remind societies to renew their commitments to established values, offices, and persons'. In some cases, media events can be transformative and instigate societal change, despite their hegemonic origin.⁴⁸

In line with Couldry's arguments for there never having been a society without conflict, no more could be true of an early twenti-

eth-century Sweden, ripe with societal tension. Then as later, the different media had to use a variety of techniques to convince audiences that certain occasions were unique in their historical significance, mirroring the social order and expressing a certain moral truth, to which the media themselves held the only key.

In the early twentieth century, Swedish society was deeply divided economically and socially, and this was reflected in its highly politicized media system. In 1915, at the time of the former liberal prime minister Karl Staaff's death, there was fierce opposition to parliamentarism and democratic reform, firmly anchored in right-wing circles and above all the king and queen. Throughout his career Staaff had uncompromisingly challenged this order, at the expense of his personal reputation and health. When he suddenly died, the liberals turned his funeral into a broad manifestation of support for his legacy of democracy and freedom, encouraged by the other social movements. Naturally, it was in the left-wing newspapers' interests to claim they were printing accurate and true depictions of the event. And in this grand narrative, the many bystanders and spectators were hailed as representatives of the Swedish people, or even Swedish democracy.

Even so it was not Staaff's colleagues or friends, but the archbishop who, in the capacity of his office, fuelled the growing conflict after the funeral. Apparently, the right-wing press were revolted by the politicization of Staaff's grave. This might be interpreted as an expression of the conservative view that conflicting interests did not belong in the public sphere, simply because society was best governed by the wealthy, who by their successful conduct had proven themselves worthy of power. As this study has shown, no matter who was to blame for the hostility of the political climate, in the early twentieth century the performance of democratic ideology in a public space was still considered a provocation in Swedish society. No natural societal centre existed ready for the newspapers to reproduce, and the interpretations of what happened when the former prime minister

was buried would never match. Using the theoretical concept of the media event, we can see beyond the depictions of Karl Staaff's funeral in the daily press, reaching a deeper understanding of the newspapers' role as critical agents in the struggle for or against the development of democracy in the first decades of twentieth-century Sweden. The value of a consequent historicization of political, cultural, and media-related aspects cannot be overestimated.

Notes

- 1 Lundh 1915, 6.
- 2 *Dagens Nyheter* (DN) estimated the spectators to be in the 'tens of thousands' (*tiotusenden*, *tiotusentals*) and 'hundreds of thousands' (*hundratusenden*). Surviving film material confirms that at least the former was true. 'Karl Staaffs Jordafärd' 1915, 1, 7; Pathé 1915.
- 3 Hallin & Mancini 2004, 153–4.
- 4 Couldry 2003, ch. 4.
- 5 Rangström 2015; Grundberg 2005; Gaude-Ferragu 2005; Woodward 1997.
- 6 Dayan & Katz 1992, vii–xi, though they argue that 'certain media events celebrate not only unity but pluralism'. Such examples come under the category of 'contests', an example being the Watergate hearings.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 1–14 at 1, 8.
- 8 Couldry & Hepp 2010, 1–20; Bösch 2010; *Media, Culture & Society* 40/1 (2018), special section, twenty-five years after the publication of Dayan & Katz 1992; Ytreberg 2022, 59–67, 152–5.
- 9 Couldry 2003, 6–9, 45–6, 56 at 45, 67.
- 10 In fact, Couldry 2003, 60 agrees with Dayan & Katz 1992 here.
- 11 Holgersson 2022, 1549.
- 12 Ytreberg 2017; Ytreberg 2014, 169; Ytreberg 2022, 24, 72–4; Bösch 2010; Holgersson 2022; Puijk 2009, 2. Latterly, Couldry has reworked the concept of media events to fit the more complex media landscape of the digital age, see Couldry & Hepp 2010, 9–13. Yet media historians of the early twentieth century deal with similar complexities.
- 13 'Karl Staaff död', *Social-Demokraten* (*SocD*) (4 Oct. 1915).
- 14 *SocD* (11 Oct. 1915), 6; Lindorm 1959, 26. The price for a call to the telephone newspaper was 10 öre (a tenth of a Swedish krona), later charged by the company's collectors. A peculiar trait of this form of news was that the caller could hear when other listeners commented aloud on the news, although this was surely not allowed. At the première this only happened for the war news, *SocD* tells us. Public broadcasts by telephone had begun in 1879, and in 1893 'telephonic journalism' was offered in Budapest in Hungary. Kern 2003, 69.

- 15 McKernan 2018, 37.
- 16 *DN* (12 Oct. 1915), 10–11 noting that the film of the funeral greatly moved packed audiences; ‘Veckans biografpremiärer’, *SocD* (12 Oct. 1915), 4. For the film makers who competed to distribute film of the funeral of King Oscar II in 1907 as quickly as possible, see Idestam-Almqvist 1959, 225–7.
- 17 The front page gave the publication date as Sunday 17 October, but an advert in *SocD* (12 Oct. 1915), 4 said it was available from 12 October; *Vecko-Journalen*, 42 (1915); photographs were also published in the popular magazine *Hvar 8 Dag*, 3 (17 Oct. 1915).
- 18 Dayan & Katz 1992, 147–60; Puijk 2009, 9–13.
- 19 Holgersson 2022, 1550.
- 20 According to the Nya Lundstedt Dagstidningar (NLD) database at the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm, circulation was as follows: *SocD* 28,000 in 1915; *Dagens Nyheter* (Stockholm edition) 70,902 in 1915 and (national edition) 14,829 in 1915; *Stockholms Dagblad* 35–40,000 in 1913; and *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* 30,000 in 1912. Another possible choice of liberal source material would have been *Aftontidningen*, which was closer to Staaff himself. It covered the event in detail, but its circulation was far less impressive than *Dagens Nyheter* (35,000 in 1915). For Staaff’s relationship with the two newspapers, see Lundström 2001, 92.
- 21 Esaiasson 2010, 33.
- 22 *Ibid.* 31, 34, 65.
- 23 Kihlberg 1962, 9, 41–8, 58–68; Holmberg 2015, 23–7.
- 24 Esaiasson 2010, 25–6.
- 25 Kihlberg 1962, 221, 229.
- 26 Kihlberg 1963, 9–14, 73–74, at 74; Esaiasson 2010, 74; Johnson 2015, 86–9 at 88.
- 27 Kihlberg 1963, 229–32, 262–71, 293–326, 417–19; Johnson 2015, 89–92; Esaiasson 2010, 34, 99–102; Hadenius 2005, 123–45.
- 28 Holgersson 2022, 1558.
- 29 Coleman & Ross 2010, 2–3.
- 30 ‘Karl Staaffs jordafärd’, *DN* (11 Oct. 1915), A edn, 1, 7.
- 31 ‘Karl Staaffs likfärd’, *SocD* (11 Oct. 1915), 1.
- 32 ‘Karl Staaffs jordafärd’, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* (NDA) (10 Oct. 1915), 4; ‘Karl Staaffs griftefärd’, NDA (11 Oct. 1915), 5; ‘Karl Staaffs begrafning’, *Stockholms Dagblad* (SDB) (11 Oct. 1915), 5. *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* published a short article on the day of the funeral, but it was only followed up by a minor report, it too hidden inside the paper, with no illustrations.
- 33 ‘Karl Staaffs jordafärd’ 1915; Pathé 1915.
- 34 ‘Karl Staaffs jordafärd’, *DN* (11 Oct. 1915), A edn, 1, 7, 8; ‘Minneshögtidligheten på Strand Hotell’, *DN* (11 Oct. 1915), 8.
- 35 Muhlmann 2008, 22–4; see Couldry 2003, 67; ‘Karl Staaffs jordafärd’, *DN* (11 Oct. 1915), A edn, 7.
- 36 *Ibid.* 7.
- 37 *Ibid.* 7.

- 38 Branting 1915, 2.
- 39 'Karl Staaffs jordafärd', *NDA* (10 Oct. 1915), 4.
- 40 'Karl Staaffs griftefärd', *NDA* (11 Oct. 1915), 5.
- 41 'Karl Staaffs begrafning', *SDB* (11 Oct. 1915), 5.
- 42 See 'Karl Staaffs sista färd', *Göteborgs Morgonpost* (*GM*) (11 Oct. 1915), 5; and 'Härads höfding Karl Staaffs jordafärd', *Svenska Morgonbladet* (*SM*) (11 Oct. 1915), 4.
- 43 See, for example, 'Hos pressgrannar', *DN* (12 Oct. 1915), 8; 'Hos pressgrannar', *DN* (13 Oct. 1915), 4–5; 'Hos pressgrannar', *DN* (15 Oct. 1915), 7; 'Hos pressgrannar', *DN* (17 Oct. 1915), 5.
- 44 'Vid Karl Staaffs bår', *SDB* (11 Oct. 1915), 5.
- 45 'Mänskligt, allt för mänskligt', *NDA* (11 Oct. 1915), 3.
- 46 'Efter döden', *SM* (12 Oct. 1915), 4. *Dagens Nyheter* interpreted it as a fit of bad conscience. But then, there had been no comparable attacks on the honour of Swedish men on the right wing. 'Hos pressgrannar', *DN* (13 Oct. 1915), 4. For *Svenska Morgonbladet's* line on religion, see Lundström 2001, 34.
- 47 'Missljud vid bären', *GM* (12 Oct. 1915), 4.
- 48 Dayan & Katz 1992, 147.

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