

Bornholm's revolt

Danmark was, at [Roskildefreden](#), forced to surrender Skåne, Halland, Blekinge and Bornholm to Sweden. The new government on Bornholm arrived, headed by Commander *Johan Printzensköld*, more than two months later and immediately took possession of the castle Hammershus. *He, who possessed Hammershus, controlled the whole "country"* - as the people of Bornholm then and later named their home.

The citizens had, according to the treaty, preserved their property, legal system and former privileges as long as these were not contradictory to Swedish law. Sweden was still at war on several frontiers and had great need for new taxes and manpower. Out of a population of approximately 10000, 350 footmen, 45 horsemen and 40 boatmen were subscribed to the Swedish army. That was less than the Swedish king had ordered, but the Governor could not find more men that were suited. The population was *an incapacitated people, that never had been accustomed to any war* as he put it.

Displeasure spread, and a conspiracy arose. Amongst those most known nowadays are *Peder Olsen, Povl Hansen Ancher, Jens Pedersen Koefoed* and *Villum Clausen*, and they were, in a letter from the Danish king, *Frederik III*, encouraged to rebellion. The original Swedish garrison of 116 men was down to around 60 due to illness, but reinforcement was on its way - now was the time to act! Printzensköld suspected something and was rarely seen outside Hammershus without an escorte, but the plan was to invite him as a guest by the Mayor of Hasle, Peder Olsen, and there *take possession of his person*.

When Printzensköld one day rode alone from Hammershus to Rønne, he made a stop in Hasle and had a big row with Peder Olsen over missing tax payments. The original plan no longer seemed possible, so the conspirators were called in a hurry - they should attempt to arrest Printzensköld when he crossed the bridge over the "river" Blykobbe Å. They missed him, Printzensköld had already arrived in Rønne where he went to the Mayor's house as he used to when he was in town. The conspirators forced their entry and encouraged him to surrender. A tumult arose but Printzensköld succeeded to escape and ran towards the harbour. Further down the street Villum Clausen was on guard. When he saw Printzensköld running towards him, he raised his pistol and fired a shot in the moment the Swede was passing. Printzensköld was hit in his left eye and he died instantly.

Swiftly Rønne was searched for Swedes - it was important that the garrison at Hammershus did not know what had taken place. The militia was called in and during the night, Hammershus was besieged. When the light broke late the next morning, the siege became visible from Hammershus. The Officer in Charge sent a drummer and four soldiers to inquire what was going on, but they were quickly overtaken and surrendered. A letter, in the name of Printzensköld, with the conditions for the surrender of the castle against sparing the lives of the soldiers, was put together. The letter was sent by drummer, and the reply was waited for. To apply further pressure, someone showed himself in the clothes of Printzensköld's and on his horse. In the end the Swedes surrendered - the revolt had succeeded and Hammershus was now on the hands of the people of Bornholm.

But how long could the inexperienced people hold against an enemy that was used to warfare? When the reinforcement arrived from Ystad a couple of weeks later, Jens Koefoed succeeded to neutralize them, but it was only a matter of time until Sweden would react. A delegation had been sent to the King in Copenhagen for help and they managed to get 200 Danish soldiers sent to the island. With the King's help, a contract was put together, and the delegation gave Bornholm to the King in return for protection.

Source: [Bornholms Museum](#) and *SKUDET* by Ebbe Gert Rasmussen