



SWEDEN  
AFTER  
NAZISM

JOHAN ÖSTLING



POLITICS AND CULTURE IN THE  
WAKE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

## SWEDEN AFTER NAZISM



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Johan Östling

Translated by Peter Graves



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# Acknowledgements

I have long been amazed by the baffling and enduring vitality of Nazism. While living and travelling in various European countries I have experienced how our present is permeated by the past. Memories of the war years live on in Belarusian border towns, in Slovenian vicarages and in newspaper debates in Austria; in Brighton, Tübingen and Caen I have encountered a past that will not disappear. Even now, seventy years after the Second World War, National Socialism sets a stamp on politics, art and intellectual thinking. What significance did the Nazi experience have for postwar Europe? That is the question that this book attempts to answer.

The present book is based on my earlier work, published as *Nazismens sensmoral: Svenska erfarenheter i andra världskrigets efterdyning* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008), which in turn first developed within the framework of the National Graduate School of History, Department of History, Lund University. In recent years, as a Pro Futura Scientia Fellow (generously funded by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond), I have had the opportunity to substantially revise the text, to incorporate new research and to adapt the presentation for an international readership. This work has essentially been carried out during periods as a visiting scholar at the Swedish Collegium for Advanced Study (SCAS) in Uppsala, at the Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam and at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science in Berlin; the unique intellectual environment of each of these institutions has given me many new insights. For all of this I am very grateful.

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Johan Östling  
Lund, 1 April 2015





## PROLOGUE

### A Sword of Damocles over the Age in Which We Live

Nazism is without parallel in the history of modern Europe. No political idea has been condemned as unconditionally as National Socialism. Having exerted enormous attraction in the years between the wars, it was transformed into the ultimate political pariah. Since 1945 its admirers have been few, its apologists even fewer.

Nazism, however, did not lose its hold on people's minds. During the postwar period it became the antithesis of civilisation, a profound and cautionary experience that possessed an enigmatic vitality. 'Nazism, like Lucifer in Christianity, has refused to grow old,' writes the novelist Carl-Henning Wijkmark. 'It is a past that clings on tenaciously in the present, a sword of Damocles over the age in which we live.' He sees it as a powerful myth with a glamour capable of casting a spell even on those who reject it: its attraction is that of a nightmare. The journalist Joachim Fest was thinking along similar lines in his major biography of Adolf Hitler. He talked of 'undiminished contemporaneousness'. Decades after his death Hitler still continues to cast a shadow over our age: he surfaces in splenetic political debates, haunts us in art and literature, and is an obligatory item in the cabinet of horrors of popular culture.<sup>1</sup>

The dark mythic nimbus of Nazism encourages us to take a quasi-religious view of it: it is always judged by absolute criteria. In her book on Knut Hamsun, the author Sigrid Combüchen writes: 'The very concept of Nazism has catastrophe built into it. It is the only ideology that cannot be discussed with any degree of nuance; its adult followers must be reckoned as part of that catastrophe, cannot be described as slightly Nazi or very Nazi, understandably Nazi or partly Nazi.'<sup>2</sup>

At the same time, however, the unconditional nature of the condemnation has led to the development of a peculiarly living relationship with National Socialism, that deadest of all ideologies. Instead of being consigned to the rubbish dump of history, Nazism has become the antithesis of the postwar era; it was everything that we are not. This could be described as a counterphobic response, an intense concern with

something we want to condemn, a case of repulsion breeding closeness. Nazism has become a point of negative orientation.<sup>3</sup>

Few people have evoked the relationship between Nazism and the world that followed it as suggestively as the Canadian artist Melvin Charney. In 1982 he was invited to contribute to the Kassel *documenta*, one of the most prestigious exhibitions of international contemporary art. He proposed a two-part installation. The first part would consist of five façades placed along a well-known street in the city, each façade representing one period in the history of modern Germany. The second part would be erected right opposite Kassel railway station and would take the form of a façade reflecting the railway entrance to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Charney wanted to produce a symbolic symmetry between the entrance to the Nazi death camp and the entrance to the railway station in an ordinary West German city. The idea of creating a mirror relationship between wartime and the postwar period proved to be profoundly controversial and led to protests from the people of Kassel. Charney's proposal was stopped and his project now only survives as a photomontage and drawings.<sup>4</sup>

In one of these drawings Auschwitz is depicted against the backdrop of a postwar cityscape with its endless rows of tower blocks and office buildings. In this drawing from the start of the 1980s Charney was expressing something that was both universal and typical of its time. He was a representative of the way the late twentieth century thought about Nazism, especially with regard to the growing fascination with the Holocaust during the last decades of the century. Like other people during that period, his view of the Third Reich was one that was critical of modernity: National Socialism had been anything but an atavistic reaction against modern society and its death camps had, in fact, been well-oiled industrial killing machines, a foul result of technical and rational modernity.

Melvin Charney may have been trapped in a web of contemporary interpretations but he did succeed in capturing something that was universal in the postwar world: the omnipresence of Nazism. The double exposure of the emblematic death camp against a background of postwar functionalist architecture was highly effective. We can interpret it as saying that the lines of history must pass through the gates of the Nazi hell in order to run forward to our own times. Or, conversely, when postwar Europeans look back on their recent past they see the shadowy outline of Auschwitz.

Melvin Charney was asking the big questions about the links between then and now, between the Third Reich and postwar Europe,

between the experience of Nazism and the post-Nazi world. These are the major questions this book will be concerned with.

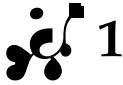
## Notes

1. C.H. Wijkmark, 'Skönheten och odjuret', in I. Karlsson and A. Ruth (eds), *Samhället som teater: Estetik och politik i Tredje riket* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 1999), 383; J. Fest, *Hitler: Eine Biographie* (Munich: Ullstein Taschenbuch, 2000), 13.
2. S. Combüchen, *Livsklättaren: En bok om Knut Hamsun* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2006), 15.
3. Cf. D. Diner, *Kreisläufe: Nationalsozialismus und Gedächtnis* (Berlin: Berlin-Verlag, 1995), 95–111.
4. M. Charney, *Parables and Other Allegories: The Work of Melvin Charney 1975–1990* (Montreal: Centre canadien d'architecture, 1991), 127–28; M. Liljefors, *Bilder av Förintelsen: Mening, minne, kompromettering* (Lund: Argos/Palmkrons förlag, 2002), 147–52.

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## NAZISM AND THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

This study will focus on experiences of Nazism and the lessons those experiences gave rise to. The origins of National Socialism, its manifestations and its organisational forms will not form the subjects of analysis. The spotlight here will be turned on how posterity has experienced and processed Nazism, with particular regard to the conclusions that were drawn from the Nazi experience in the wake of the Second World War. The emphasis will be on the ideological and intellectual arena in Sweden, but the discussion throughout will be set against the general background of postwar Europe.

My task in this first chapter is to define these statements of intent and to develop them further. By the end of the chapter I will have broken them down into more concrete historical problems, but before doing so it will be necessary to place Nazism and its after-effects in a broader historical and scholarly context, Swedish as well as international. That discussion will provide this study with its overarching perspective.

The chapter falls into three parts. The first section deals with what might be called the Nazi epoch and I shall attempt to find answers to how the significance of Nazism in European and Swedish history up to the end of the Second World War might best be interpreted. That discussion forms the necessary background to the second section, in which – on the basis of existing research – I shall consider the continued presence of the Nazi experience during the early postwar period, both in Sweden and in a wider international context. The conclusions drawn in these first two parts lead on to the third section, in which the two fundamental historical problems of this study are defined: What did the Nazi experience involve? What conclusions were drawn from it?

In this first chapter, therefore, there is an alternation between historical contextualisation and historiographical discussion. There is an underlying tension between these two that is both unavoidable and fruitful. For contextualisation, the dovetailing of a defined and limited topic into a wider historical whole, is never a simple and uncomplicated

undertaking. The wider context cannot merely be brushed in as an innocuous background wash since it will always be the thing that defines the direction the analysis will take and the conclusions that can be drawn. It is therefore of the utmost importance that the historical context is allowed to take shape in dialogue with appropriate and substantial research traditions. Conversely, the historiographical discussion must not be allowed to stop at the level of being no more than a catalogue of earlier literature on the subject. It should ideally be possible to arrive at a state of interplay between the research overview and the contextualisation that will result in an analytic orientation with regard to the problem.

## **The Nazi Epoch**

Nazism occupies a central position in virtually every significant interpretation of European history in the twentieth century. Despite the fact that geographically speaking National Socialism was mainly confined to one country (Germany) and that its time as the dominant party ideology only lasted twelve years (1933–1945), it has set its stamp on much of our understanding of the modern history of the continent. That can be explained to some extent by the close association between the Third Reich and the Second World War, the devastating conflict which often seems to be the most important watershed of the century. Since 1945, moreover, National Socialism has had an effect on many of the decisive historiographical and intellectual discussions of the age – democracy and dictatorship, power and morality, war and imperialism, culture and civilisation, welfare and modernity. Because of its extremist nature, it has been impossible to ring-fence Nazism: it has remained a constant presence as the extreme point of comparison and as a historical warning.<sup>1</sup>

The specific meaning of Nazism in twentieth-century European history has, however, varied from one interpretation to another. Popular and political accounts of the Third Reich have presented it as the epitome of dictatorship and the absolute antithesis of democracy.<sup>2</sup> But scholarly debate has been dominated by perceptions of an altogether more elaborate order. Theorists of totalitarianism analysed National Socialism as one variant of a totalitarian system and they pointed to clear structural and ideological similarities with communism.<sup>3</sup> Marxist interpreters considered Nazism to be a form of the fascism that lay immanent in all capitalist societies. The conflict between communism and fascism occupied a central position in this historiography.<sup>4</sup>

In a different interpretative tradition, however, National Socialism has been seen primarily as a peculiarly German development, a German *Sonderweg*. It was only possible to explain Hitler by taking into account the militarist and autocratic traits in German history.<sup>5</sup> Nazism has even been allocated a place in various theories of modernisation: for many years it was considered to be a reactionary, anti-progressive force, but since the 1970s there has been an increasingly common tendency to stress its ambivalent attitude to modernity or its character as an alternative modernity.<sup>6</sup> In addition to these, there are more marginal interpretations: National Socialism as a political religion, as a consequence of secularisation, as a product of the soulless mass society and so on.<sup>7</sup>

All of the main interpretations have added to our understanding of National Socialism. It is, however, quite clear that they need to be supplemented further if we hope to find ways of understanding the place of Nazism in modern European history. There has been a marked tendency to view Nazism as a gross aberration from what was presumed to be the main sweep of history. In my view, however, reducing National Socialism to a mere epiphenomenon or inflating it into some grotesque manifestation of power would both be misleading. My position is one of agreement with the fundamental reading of the twentieth century which views Nazism and its ideological legacy in a wider historical context. In particular, it is important to develop a perspective on the Nazi epoch that can form the basis for the main aim of the current study, which is to analyse experiences of National Socialism and the conclusions that were later drawn from them. The stimulus for doing so is to be found in developments in the international research of recent years.

### *An Ideological Eternal Triangle*

With the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union it was not only the political map that was redrawn: the very preconditions for evaluating the roles played by the ideologies of the twentieth century changed. The recognition that a historical epoch had come to an end prompted the need to take stock of the twentieth century.<sup>8</sup>

One of the contributions to receive most attention was made by the philosopher Francis Fukuyama. Inspired by Alexandre Kojève's readings of Hegel, Fukuyama declared that history was at an end. That did not mean that humankind was now becalmed or that events would cease to occur. What Fukuyama meant was that the fundamental conflicts that had characterised the twentieth century had come to a close. 'Liberal democracy was challenged by two major rival ideologies



– fascism and communism – which offered radically different visions of a good society’, Fukuyama stated. The end of the Cold War meant that liberal democracy and the market economy remained as the only surviving form of society. History was at an end because as a result of the victory of liberalism and democracy humanity had achieved the highest forms of recognition and prosperity.<sup>9</sup>

The debate stirred up by Fukuyama’s thought-provoking ideas attracted many intellectual critics during the 1990s but professional historians rarely became involved, and on the occasions they did apostrophise ‘the end of history’ it was often in a sense different from that used by Fukuyama. Without taking his philosophy of history on board, many professional commentators did however espouse the overarching perspective on contemporary European history that he set out. In a similar way to Fukuyama, the authors of many recent monographs and surveys have viewed the twentieth century as the drama of an ideological eternal triangle. The First World War marks the starting point, the ur-catastrophe that swept away the old order and turned Europe into what Tomáš Masaryk called ‘a laboratory atop a vast graveyard’. In the wake of the Great War the three main players emerged – fascism, communism and liberal democracy in all their various shapes and forms – and the ideological power struggle between them was to put its stamp on the following decades.<sup>10</sup>

Mark Mazower, one of the historians who has analysed the modern history of Europe in terms of the ideological eternal triangle, has stressed the significance of Nazism for the European twentieth century. The idea that National Socialism can be explained away as a deviation from the Western norm is, in his view, untenable – it fits far too well into the main course of European history not to be taken with the utmost seriousness. Nazism was both an answer to and an outpouring of the most powerful ideas, interests and institutions of the time. Mazower argues that Nazism, like communism, ‘involved real efforts to tackle the problems of mass politics, of industrialization and social order’.<sup>11</sup> It is therefore hardly surprising that many observers between the wars saw common features in communism, fascism and liberal democracy. There were those who pointed to the resemblance between Roosevelt’s ‘National Recovery Administration’ and Mussolini’s corporatist aspirations, or between Hitler’s building of the Autobahn and large-scale American and Soviet ventures of the same kind.<sup>12</sup>

Mazower’s arguments are in agreement with the main thrust of the international research work into Nazism and its significance to the postwar period that has been actively pursued since the beginning of the 1990s. National Socialism has increasingly come to be seen as an

integral part of European history, not as a uniquely German *Sonderweg*. Many individual studies have demonstrated similarities between the Third Reich and other countries during the same period, similarities in a range of areas, such as the use of violence, personality cults and racial hygiene.<sup>13</sup> At the same time there have been a number of historians who have contended that Nazism should be analysed as one of a number of competing forms of social organisation during the twentieth century. As a model for social organisation Nazism was situated in a shifting ideological zone in which it shared political methods and elements of thought with other rival viewpoints. It can be seen as a distinct historical ideology, given coherence by its own body of norms, visions and governance.<sup>14</sup>

This view represents the lowest common denominator in the majority of studies of fascism published since the end of the Cold War. In spite of differences of definition and approach, the perspective on twentieth-century European history they adopt is one in which fascism is seen as a society model in its own right. In this respect Nazism is often considered to be the German variant of a phenomenon common all over Europe in the interwar period. As such it was related to the fascist movements and regimes in Italy, Romania, Austria and most other countries on the continent, but it also showed features that were specifically German. Seen in the broader context these movements had enough in common for it to be possible to talk of fascism as a third alternative existing alongside communism and liberal democracy.<sup>15</sup>

To see Nazism in this light is to be open to the views held at the time; in the words of the historian George L. Mosse, it is to 'attempt to understand the movement on its own terms'. International research has stressed the importance of elucidating precisely what gave fascism its political potential and psychological attraction. If we merely seek economic and social explanations we shall be led astray. A better way of approaching fascism is to see it as one of the ideological standpoints available in the years between the wars.<sup>16</sup>

During the Second World War, however, Nazism emerged as an increasingly strident and radical opposite pole, a model of society based on values utterly different from those of communism and of liberal democracy. In the aftermath of the war the image of National Socialism became even more polarised. Both in Eastern and in Western Europe powerful narratives with intrinsic lessons of their own took shape. Victory over Nazi Germany became proof of the superiority of one's own system, whether that system was the communist people's democracy on one side or liberal democracy and the rule of law on the other. The polar opposition between one's own version of society

and the Third Reich that became fixed at the end of the Second World War would retain its hold over people's minds and be the determining factor in years to come.<sup>17</sup>

From my point of view there are a number of important conclusions to be drawn from the international research on Nazism. One fundamental insight is that National Socialism must be viewed as one of several competing models of society and cannot simply be written off as a hotchpotch of disconnected ideas. Even for those who emphatically rejected it, National Socialism was a very real and living alternative, an ideology that believed it had a particular solution to offer to the problems of modernity. At the same time it is essential that we take seriously the way Nazism was understood in its own time. Research shows that a polarisation – we might even say demonisation – of Nazism occurred in the aftermath of the Second World War. As a starting point, then, we can say that interpretations of National Socialism must be seen in the light of the conditions that created them; that the understanding was formed by actually coming into contact and confrontation with Nazism; that the conclusions do not contradict one another. At the time there may well have been good reasons for rejecting National Socialism vigorously while nevertheless still recognising that it was a player on the ideological field. Indeed, it was precisely because National Socialism was conspicuous as a competing but essentially different type of society that it was so important to condemn it.<sup>18</sup>

All this changed completely when what may be called 'the Nazi epoch' came to an end at the close of the war. That epoch – from the early 1930s to 1945 – was the period in European history when National Socialism, both as a very visible power factor and as an ideological manifestation, put its stamp on the political and intellectual affairs of the continent.<sup>19</sup>

Against this background it is time now to focus on Sweden and to ask what role Nazism played in Swedish politics and intellectual debate during the period in question. The discussion will then lead on to one of the central problems of this study: what were the implications of the experiences of Nazism?

### *Sweden and Nazism*

Sweden had stayed out of the First World War. Universal suffrage was introduced in 1919 but the 1920s, as in many other European countries, was characterised by fierce antagonisms and an unstable parliamentary situation. In 1932 Per Albin Hansson formed a purely Social Democratic government. In order to combat unemployment and to safeguard

national unity he came to a crisis agreement with the Agrarian Party. When the Second World War broke out in September 1939 Sweden declared itself neutral and, in contrast to its neighbours, avoided occupation during the years that followed. 1939 saw the formation of a coalition government in which all of the parliamentary parties except the Communist Party were represented. Hansson, whom the Swedes usually refer to simply as Per Albin, remained prime minister throughout the war.

There is a very considerable body of scholarly literature on Sweden's relations with Nazism and Nazi Germany before, during and after the Second World War. A bibliographical survey carried out in 2002 produced 1,347 references. While some of these may well be of a rather general order, it is nevertheless obvious that the listed items are only a selection. There are, moreover, a number of further studies that have appeared since that date.<sup>20</sup>

It is impossible to sustain a clear-cut line of demarcation in research terms between Nazism and the Second World War. The history of National Socialism naturally cannot be reduced to the history of the Second World War and vice versa, but in scholarly terms the two fields have sometimes overlapped to the extent that it is difficult to separate them. In the Swedish case, for a long time the emphasis was put on the war years. There are therefore good reasons for starting with a discursive synthesis of the historiography of the Second World War before proceeding from there to connect that historiography to the tendencies historical scholarship has shown in its research into Nazism. That will in turn lead on to the core question of this section: what conclusions can we come to about the importance of National Socialism in Swedish history prior to 1945?<sup>21</sup>

Research into the modern history of Sweden took off seriously in the middle of the 1960s. This was particularly true of the history of the war years. A major project, 'Sweden during the Second World War' (Sverige under andra världskriget, SUAV), provided an important knowledge base and during the 1970s some twenty doctoral dissertations were produced within the framework of that project, on topics such as Swedish opinion, supplies policy and foreign relations during the war years. In spite of the scale of the project it has since been a cause of regret that it could not be brought to a full conclusion. No overarching synthesis of the results was ever produced.<sup>22</sup> When writing his major and to some degree semi-official *Svensk utrikespolitik 1939–1945* (Swedish Foreign Policy 1939–1945, 1973) the historian Wilhelm M. Carlgren had access to a wider range of source material than the 'Sweden during the Second World War' researchers but in general he worked from similar

premisses. The same is to a great extent true of Alf W. Johansson's broad-based study *Per Albin och kriget* (Per Albin and the War, 1985).<sup>23</sup>

A notable change of direction in research terms occurred during the 1990s. One of the pioneering works of the new direction was the polemical volume *Heder och samvete* (Honour and Conscience, 1991) by the journalist Maria-Pia Boëthius, who castigated the Swedish policy of appeasement during the war years. In her view the 'Sweden during the Second World War' project was in itself part of the 'conspiracy of silence' that had sustained the consciously adjusted Swedish wartime image.<sup>24</sup> Her book was a scathing indictment that not everyone in the scholarly community was prepared to accept, but in the long run it helped prompt soul-searching even among historians.

One of the most important new insights was that the lion's share of Swedish research into the Second World War up until that point had been carried out within the strict paradigm of small-state realism. In a self-critical reflection in 1995 Alf W. Johansson characterised the typical postwar view of the wartime years as follows: 'Faced with a ruthlessly aggressive Great Power, Sweden had no alternative but to give way.'<sup>25</sup> This was good politics in that it saved the peace. But to maintain such a view and be consistent, however, meant that the ideological perspective on the war simply had to be shelved.<sup>26</sup>

It was precisely this kind of attitude that much of the criticism in the 1990s had in its sights. The interpretative framework of small-state realism meant that essential aspects of the Second World War did not figure in the analysis. Scholars had been far too obliging when they closed ranks in support of the interpretation of the conflict in terms of realpolitik promulgated by the wartime coalition government. By doing so they failed both to challenge this view and to ask urgent moral questions. This became particularly clear in the discussions about the Swedish share (or otherwise) of guilt with regard to the Holocaust. During the 1990s a number of people criticised the 'Sweden during the Second World War' project because none of its studies analysed Sweden in relation to the genocide of Europe's Jews. During the 1970s the Holocaust was not considered to be part of Swedish history.<sup>27</sup>

Along with the moral dimension came the ideological one. The research project 'Sweden during the Second World War' was precisely what its title stated. Since Swedish Nazi parties had played such a limited role as a domestic political movement it had not been seen as a central object for study. The historians involved in the project obviously paid a great deal of attention to relations with Nazi Germany, but how the Nazi experience changed Sweden itself was an issue of subordinate interest. In this respect, too, small-state realism caused the field of view

to be restricted and questions about what effect the ideological trials of strength had had on Swedish identity and orientation remained unanswered.

This last point is also linked to factors within the discipline itself. For most of the postwar period, particularly from the 1960s onwards, historical scholarship in Sweden rested on a foundation of anti-idealism. In the social and structural research that was dominant in historical scholarship at that time, ideas were frequently considered to be the reflection of social strata and economic interests. That was not the case in all of the 'Sweden during the Second World War' dissertations: in several of them, prewar and wartime opinion formation was a central concern.<sup>28</sup> Despite that, however, what was being focused on there was the formation of political opinion and it was not until the 1990s and the reorientation towards the history of ideas and cultural history that attention was directed at wider aspects.

Taken together, all this served to give historical research on Sweden and the Second World War a quite distinctive character. In spite of the substantial amount of empirical mapping carried out from the end of the 1960s, the narrowness of the historical approach resulted in limited understanding. The rigid paradigm – *realpolitik* – discouraged historians from adopting a perspective on the history of the Swedish 1930s and 1940s that would have enabled them to view the period in the light of the ideological divisions that characterised the Europe of the time.<sup>29</sup>

What we can see here is the origin of a marked historiographical split: the study of Sweden and the Second World War ran along different lines from the study of Sweden and Nazism. For long sections we can talk of two parallel tracks of research and it is not until the end of the 1980s that we can see any real signs of them starting to converge, after which they began more and more to merge. The result was that the scholarly work of the 1990s on Sweden during the Second World War focused increasingly on Sweden's relations with National Socialism and the Third Reich. The difference in the names of the two major scholarly projects – 'Sweden during the Second World War' in the 1970s and 'Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust' in the 2000s – reflects this change.<sup>30</sup> In order to be able to answer one of the central questions of the present chapter – what was the importance of Nazism in Swedish history up to the end of the Second World War? – it will be necessary to provide a little more detail about the main historiographical tendencies.<sup>31</sup>

The history of Swedish Nazism was for many years the history of the Swedish Nazi parties. As early as 1942 the journalist Holger Carlsson published a pioneering survey of the various Swedish National Socialist

groupings and in the decades following the Second World War the picture of the Nazi, fascist and nationalist organisations was filled out and completed. On the basis of research available in the 1980s, the political scientist Ulf Lindström concluded that National Socialism as a parliamentary movement had been a marginal phenomenon in Sweden: the Nazi parties polled their best results in a parliamentary election in 1936, winning no more than 0.7% of the votes.<sup>32</sup>

The charting of Nazism as a parliamentary force was supplemented to some extent by analyses of press, cultural and church spheres. These studies, carried out in the 1970s, were often angled in favour of the political and spiritual opposition to National Socialism.<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, studies of a more critical nature investigating the attraction of Nazi Germany were rare.<sup>34</sup>

The substance of the research into Sweden and Nazism was unambiguous: National Socialism was an alien feature in Swedish political culture and its adherents were insignificant both in number and in influence, whereas Swedish cultural and social life had produced a number of resistance activists. Viewed in the broader European context, Swedish Nazism was a marginal phenomenon.

By the end of the 1980s, however, this perception was being challenged in a manner that produced different answers to the question of the significance of Nazism in Swedish history. The changes occurred on a number of levels, helped shift the focus of research, led to reassessments, and brought a new and critical tone into the debate.<sup>35</sup>

The first step involved a more wide-ranging investigation of Swedish Nazi sympathisers. In 1990 the historian Heléne Lööw published her study *Hakkorset och Wasakärven* (The Swastika and the Vasa Sheaf), a more comprehensive analysis of Swedish National Socialism (primarily the parties led by Birger Furugård and Sven Olov Lindholm) than had appeared earlier. Lööw argued that the membership of Swedish Nazi groups was more numerous than earlier studies suggested. The years following Lööw's work saw the publication of both scholarly and more popular works that moved the spotlight from organised National Socialism to the right-wing or academic bourgeoisie. Against the background of the findings of the 1990s, Lena Berggren, a historian of ideas, thought there was good reason to question the established view that Swedish ultra-nationalism (comprising the various shadings of Nazism, fascism and radical conservatism) was no more than a fringe phenomenon.<sup>36</sup>

Taken together these studies broadened the understanding of Swedish attitudes to National Socialism. This was even more true in the case of the significant amount of research emerging at that time

into Swedish anti-Semitism, race biology and sterilisation for reasons of racial hygiene. During the 1990s and 2000s a number of different and distinct studies analysed the repertoire of anti-Semitic stereotypes and patterns of action visible in the first half of the century. In parallel with this, other historians were turning the spotlight on Swedish race biology and sterilisation motivated by racial hygiene.<sup>37</sup>

It is unlikely that questions concerning Swedish anti-Semitism and racism would have been pursued with such vigour were it not for the Holocaust. During the 1990s discussion of the Second World War came to centre on the genocide of the Jews. Ever since the end of the 1970s the Holocaust as a historical and moral phenomenon had been looming ever larger on the international scene and after the end of the Cold War it moved into the very centre of the debate, becoming a kind of ethical starting point for any assessment of the modern history of Europe; that, in turn, meant that scholarly research took on a moral dimension that had often been missing earlier. The trends and structures of the world between the wars were now being viewed in the light of the Holocaust.<sup>38</sup>

The Swedish position in relation to the Holocaust consequently became a crucial field of research. The first major study was published by the historian Steven Koblik as early as 1987 and a number of others appeared from the middle of the 1990s.<sup>39</sup> In the early 2000s political movements were no longer the main focus, the perspective having widened further. Scholars of many disciplines were involved in problematising the situation while simultaneously emphasising that virtually every corner of Swedish society was affected by developments in their larger neighbour to the south.<sup>40</sup>

There can be absolutely no doubt, therefore, that research into Sweden and Nazism has undergone a metamorphosis.<sup>41</sup> A scholarly change of scene of this kind is highly significant and has to be summarised in several stages. As far as Swedish accounts of the Second World War are concerned, it is possible – to borrow a concept from the historian Etienne François – to talk of a general shift in emphasis from patriotism to universalism. During the postwar period the war was seen from the point of view of small-state realism, a perspective that measured Swedish action against a yardstick that was very different from the universal yardstick that became the standard during the 1990s and the 2000s. The changes opened the way for the moral and ideological aspects of the war to be discussed and, in particular, it seemed that the Holocaust would form the point of departure for both the scholarly and the public debate. As far as Swedish research was concerned, it not only meant that concentration was now brought



to bear on anti-Semitism, concessions and refugee policies but that, as the moral perspective gained the upper hand, the main focus of interest shifted from Swedish resistance to Nazism, to Swedish adaptation to Nazism. And, in a more general sense, it is possible to see research on the Second World War and research on National Socialism going hand in hand for the first time.<sup>42</sup>

The above description of the historiographical context has been necessary in order to put our historical understanding in a proper perspective and to illustrate important aspects of the intellectual processing of National Socialism. The overarching aim, however, is to utilise the insights provided by this research as a basis for reaching conclusions about the role of Nazism in Swedish history. The crux of the matter, therefore, is what are the conclusions that may be drawn from the scholarly debate I have outlined? One very obvious problem is that most of the literature is in the form of special studies and there is an almost complete absence of any works of synthesis dealing with the ideological landscape of Sweden. Despite that, certain conclusions can be suggested.<sup>43</sup>

Nazism was manifestly present in the political and intellectual life of Sweden during the dozen or so years before 1945. For some people Nazism represented a challenge to ideals they cherished; for others it represented both a temptation and the hope of a future new order. Nazism in the party-political sense was certainly weak and without any great influence, but many on the radical right and in conservative academic, military and church circles retained significant levels of sympathy for it even during the war years.<sup>44</sup> Though it has seldom been stated, it can be argued that the effect of more recent research has been to normalise the Swedish interwar period, to make it conform more to the standard developments in the Europe of that time, which was a time of ideological division.

It is important, however, to draw attention to the ambivalences and the tensions. Many of the phenomena that the 1990s and 2000s tended to associate with Nazism were more or less widespread between the wars. Anti-Semitic clichés were common and Jews fleeing persecution were still being excluded as late as the start of the 1940s, but anti-Semitism never gained a lasting foothold in the sphere of national politics. Race biology enjoyed broad political support during the 1920s but was meeting an increasing level of resistance by the middle of the 1930s.<sup>45</sup> Many of the patterns of thought that we now associate with National Socialism were not restricted to the Nazi sphere but were part and parcel of a wider contemporary vocabulary. It is, moreover, difficult to discuss how widespread something was without relating

it to something else. That in turn is made more difficult by the almost complete absence of any comprehensive systematic comparisons that view the Swedish situation in an international perspective.<sup>46</sup>

One important exception to that is the political scientist and historian Norbert Götz and his conceptual history of the construction of the National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* (people's community) and the Swedish *folkhem* (people's home). Drawing on a very wide-ranging body of material he investigated the background to both concepts in terms of the history of ideas and in terms of their political impact, particularly during the years from the beginning of the 1930s to the end of the war in 1945. Götz concludes that there were obvious structural and genealogical similarities between *Volksgemeinschaft* and *folkhem* but that the differences between their ideological contexts led to fundamental dissimilarities in terms of objectives and concrete political action. He emphasises, for instance, that ethnic affiliation never figured as a fundamental element in the Swedish *folkhem* project in the way it did in the Third Reich. The various kinds of exclusion from the community that occurred in Sweden (most notably in the matter of sterilisation) were motivated more by utilitarian factors than by race. In essence, it was a matter of two distinct social systems, which may have shared some elements of ideological vocabulary but in which the actualisation of the social and political order took place under different normative signs.<sup>47</sup>

The conclusion that Götz reaches in his important study positions Sweden in the overarching international context I sketched at the start. His work supports the view that the Swedish social model in the 1930s and 1940s should be seen as representative of the liberal-democratic alternative. Despite being quite clearly related to other ideological alternatives – fascism and communism – it constituted a coherent form of society that was distinct from the others in decisive ways. National Socialism was, however, ever present as a competing vision or mirage, as a challenge or appeal, as a manifest and confusing threat.<sup>48</sup>

This approach – studying the ideological and social development of Sweden against a background of Nazism – has been rare among Swedish scholars. Not, however, completely absent. Ulf Lindström cited a whole series of social and political reasons to explain the limited parliamentary success of the National Socialists. One reason was that the Nazi organisations lost many of their potential voters when Bondeförbundet (the Farmers' League) and Allmänna valmansförbundet (the General Electoral League) proceeded to adapt elements of their own rhetoric and ideology rather than confront the extreme right directly. Thus the established right-wing parties, in order to protect

fundamental Swedish social values, opposed the fascist and Nazi movements.<sup>49</sup> Alf W. Johansson has argued that the consolidation of the Social Democrats' political position during the 1930s has to be seen in the context of the threat from National Socialism. The ideology of community they promoted was not only intended to strengthen social integration but also to respond directly to the Nazi challenge: 'The indirect implication of [the prime minister] Per Albin's ideological message to the Swedish people during the 1930s was that there was nothing that the Nazis could achieve *by dictatorship* in Germany that the Social Democrats in Sweden could not achieve *by democracy*. It would, in short, demonstrate that fascism was superfluous in a country like Sweden.'<sup>50</sup>

To recapitulate: Nazism was very clearly present in Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s, but it was a political movement with numerically limited support and its organised groupings lacked any major influence. There is nevertheless every reason to believe that, viewed as a collective experience, National Socialism had far-reaching significance. Nazism was able to engage its age as few other phenomena have done. Politicians and trades unionists, journalists and media people, authors, artists and academics – all of them watched the development of events in the Germany of the 1930s with foreboding. There were undoubtedly some people who felt the attraction of Nazism as a political model and who went to great lengths to gloss over the excesses of the Third Reich, but there were significantly more people who were horrified by what the Social Democratic finance minister, Ernst Wigforss, called 'the darkness on the horizon'. It is no exaggeration to claim that National Socialism was something that everyone who was politically conscious, regardless of profession or preference, had to relate to. Indeed, it was something that the vast majority had to take a stance on, whether that stance was one of reluctantly waiting and watching or one of passionate engagement. Some saw it as part of a greater crisis of capitalism, humanism and the Western world; for others Nazism in itself overshadowed everything. These reactions summoned up a powerful and emotional involvement that lived on beyond the end of the war. The Nazi experience became a challenging memory.<sup>51</sup>

In the next section I shall move on to the post-Nazi period and begin to address the cardinal questions of this study: What happened after 1945 when Nazism ceased to be a concrete threat or a competing form of society? How was the immediate past interpreted? What significance did the experience of National Socialism have for the postwar ideological climate? In short, what conclusions were drawn from the Nazi experience?

## A Post-Nazi World

The Nazi era came to an end in 1945 but the Nazi experience remained very much alive. The move from conflict and war to the processing and settling of accounts took place in the middle of the 1940s, the point that Mark Mazower has called the 'the century's watershed'. It is tempting to see a movement from war to peace, from ruin to welfare, from dictatorship to democracy during that decade. Even if that is a generalisation that can hardly be said to hold true for the whole of Europe, Mazower is right to suggest that the period forms a kind of transitional decade in the history of the twentieth century. It is quite possible to hold that view without denying the great sweep of continuity that links the interwar period with the postwar period. A number of the political and social movements that had cut deep furrows during the first decades of the century reached the end of the road at this point. During the final phase of the war a change of direction occurred in many fields and a new future was charted.<sup>52</sup>

In 1990 Hans Magnus Enzensberger stated that there was a lack of exhaustive analyses of the early postwar years and he went on: 'Memory of that period is incomplete and provincial in so far as it has not been completely lost as a result of repression or nostalgia.' While the first half of the 1940s is one of the most thoroughly researched periods in modern history, the second half of the decade has fallen by the wayside. There was a long period when it bucked historians' accepted reading of the twentieth century and was viewed as a short-lived interregnum between the Second World War and the Cold War. Latterly, however, it has been possible to discern signs of a marked change affecting research into contemporary history. With the end of the Cold War and the transformation of the continent of Europe, questions suddenly began to be asked about the development of postwar Europe. People began to look at the years immediately after 1945, the short period during which the devastated continent with its polarised climate of opinion was transformed into a stable order with a notable degree of ideological conformity within each of the two Cold War blocks.<sup>53</sup>

This section begins with an overall characterisation of the significant trends in Western Europe in the years after 1945. Following on from this international contextualisation I shall focus on the early postwar period in Sweden. In this context it will become obvious that the approaches taken to Swedish history have taken very little account of the experiences of Nazism. After a general historiographical discussion I shall turn my attention to the small number of approaches that are most directly linked to the problem sphere of the current study, that is to

say, experiences of Nazism and the lessons that follow on from those experiences.

### *The Watershed of the Century*

The upheavals in the wake of the war affected all sectors of society. In the work of reconstruction, which got under way very quickly, it was not just a case of combating the immediate material and human needs but also of realising the idea of the welfare state in its various guises. In large parts of Western Europe this occurred within the framework of the reestablishment of parliamentary democracy with firmer social and judicial foundations than during the interwar period. During the very first years after 1945 the foundations of the postwar world were laid everywhere and they would define the direction for several decades to come, indeed, not infrequently through to the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>54</sup>

It would be some time before historians set about characterising the new political order that took shape after 1945.<sup>55</sup> The general historicisation of the postwar period that has gathered pace since the end of the Cold War has, however, resulted in a much more comprehensive body of research material. In a number of articles the historian Martin Conway has drawn together the threads and summed up Western European development. He writes: 'The most striking feature of postwar Western Europe is the remarkable uniformity of its political structures.' The uniformity of the postwar period stood in sharp contrast to the overcrowded ideological landscape of the age between the wars. The cataclysmic experiences had led to a revitalisation and redefinition of the concept of democracy as a structure underpinning society. As late as the 1930s there was still a whole series of competing options as to the form that government by the people might take; after 1945 support for liberal democracy was almost unanimous. In major countries like France and Italy suffrage was now extended to women for the first time. Conway points out that within the course of just a few early postwar years democracy established itself as the sole political model in virtually the whole of Western Europe.<sup>56</sup>

The background to this remarkable metamorphosis has been sought in a variety of areas. One interpretation has emphasised the significance of the victorious Anglo-Saxon alliance; another argues that it was only with the arrival of the Cold War that democracy took root in Western Europe. A third interpretation takes a more social perspective: an exhausted population, sick of revolutionary ideologies and the devastation of war, gave its support to parliamentary democracy after 1945

since that model seemed best able to combine political stability with economic prosperity.<sup>57</sup>

None of these explanations is without justification, but they say nothing about the most fundamental precondition for the rebirth and establishment of liberal democracy, which was the demise of authoritarian nationalism. The historian Stanley G. Payne uses the generic concept 'authoritarian nationalism' for fascism, right-wing radicalism and anti-democratic conservatism. These ideological currents had formed a heterogeneous block in many European countries from the time of Mussolini's coming to power in Italy in 1922 to Hitler's suicide in Germany in 1945. In spite of internecine rivalry, authoritarian nationalism had occupied an important political space in Europe during these decades, all the way from Salazar's Portugal and Antonescu's Romania to the Estonia of Päts and the Norway of Quisling. It had begun to take shape during the last two decades of the nineteenth century but it was the First World War that acted as the organisational and ideological catalyst. In virtually every European country it offered a real alternative from the beginning of the 1930s, with a full panoply of political parties, paramilitary units and popular movements.<sup>58</sup>

The end of the Second World War signalled a defeat for authoritarian nationalism – a defeat that virtually amounted to annihilation. Autocratic conservative regimes with their roots in the interwar years would continue to rule the Iberian peninsula until the middle of the 1970s, but in the rest of Europe the anti-democratic right had lost all its attraction. The total downfall of Fascist Italy and, even more, of Nazi Germany in 1945 had utterly discredited that particular ideological alternative.<sup>59</sup> The historian François Furet has given a succinct and pithy summary of how the end of the war undermined all future fascist aspirations:

Since the wars of religion history offers few examples of a political ideology, defeated by arms, which has then become the utter and absolute taboo that fascist ideology has become. And yet this ideology grew and triumphed in two of the most civilised countries in Europe, Italy and Germany. Before it became an anathema it had been the hope of many intellectuals, including some of the most prominent among them. But by the end of the war it only existed in a demonic form, and that will certainly ensure that it survives for a long time, but only by immortalising those who defeated it.<sup>60</sup>

The stigmatising of the whole fascist sphere took a variety of forms during the early postwar period. In many countries party members and sympathisers were put on trial – when they were not subjected to more direct lynch law. The judicial processes were frequently linked to media

and political campaigns with an anti-fascist import.<sup>61</sup> Outright purges of the administration, education system and armed forces were carried out in many places, above all in the occupied zones of Germany, though more recent research has revealed that continuity remained strong within many professions. The new party landscape that emerged after the war mirrored these changes. The Nazi and fascist parties showed no signs of success in any of the general elections they were permitted to stand in during the second half of the 1940s.<sup>62</sup>

The rejection of authoritarian nationalism should be seen as one element in the more profound transformation of the ideological terrain. Research into this process, both in terms of detail and in terms of its overarching traits, is far from complete, but it is nevertheless possible to pick out certain general trends.

During the 1940s Western European conservatism underwent profound changes. On the one hand the defeat of authoritarian nationalism delivered a mortal blow to the kind of traditional, non-democratic conservatism which had occupied a strong position in many countries even during the 1930s. It was swept along in the downfall of fascism and was never able to compete in terms of public popularity in the postwar period. To an extent, therefore, there is good reason to talk of a wave critical of conservatism in the aftermath of the war. On the other hand, democratic conservatism enjoyed a renaissance in continental Europe during the same period. Moderation was the new virtue, a desire for stability and for the simple everyday virtues. In West Germany, the Benelux countries, Italy and Austria, the newly founded Christian Democrat parties could capitalise on this. By working for a Western orientation, a social market economy and a welfare state based on Christian family values, they were able to gather those with right-wing sympathies into a major parliamentary grouping. Taken as a whole, it is possible to see how the supporters of authoritarian nationalism were marginalised and the conservative tendency was confined to the democratic domain.<sup>63</sup>

Communism enjoyed increased support in the years following 1945, largely because of the victory of the Soviet Union in the Second World War and the prominent part played by communists in the wartime resistance movements. Communism remained an important factor in the political and cultural life of France and Italy for much of the postwar period; in the rest of Western Europe, however, strongly anti-communist attitudes had developed as early as the end of the 1940s. The Prague Coup, the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War and other significant chapters in the early history of the Cold War helped undermine communism.<sup>64</sup>

The position of liberalism during the first postwar decade was also in direct relationship to experiences during the preceding decade. Classic economic liberalism – laissez-faire liberalism – had lost its shine in Europe after the Second World War. The serious social consequences of the depression between the wars had undermined the idea of capitalism and caused a planned economy to appear to be the best way to organise society. Consequently both the left and the right rejected economic individualism and preached state intervention.<sup>65</sup> At the same time as increasing state intervention, the trend in the judicial and political spheres was to promote the primacy of the individual. Experiences of totalitarian regimes, above all experiences of Nazism, led to a re-evaluation of the individual's place in society. In declarations and in new constitutions the inalienable character of the rights and freedoms of citizens was affirmed.<sup>66</sup>

The tectonic shifts in the ideological geography of Western Europe in the postwar years can thus be linked to experiences of the challenge of totalitarianism during the 1930s and 1940s. The triumph of liberal democracy in the years after 1945 must be viewed in this light. Generally speaking, the rubric 'the decade of transition' is justified. The 1940s stand out as the unambiguous watershed in the ideological century, the decade which marked a rapid change of direction.<sup>67</sup>

### *Sweden in the Wake of the Second World War*

There are good reasons for seeing the 1940s as a crossroads in the twentieth-century history of Europe. The question is whether that is also true of Sweden. Unlike the situation in the great majority of European countries, the end of the war did not signal a great upheaval for Swedish society: it was not necessary to restore parliamentary democracy, no great constitutional reform occurred and no collaborators were put on trial. Industries, infrastructure and institutions were intact. The national coalition that had governed Sweden since December 1939 was replaced by a purely Social Democratic government in the summer of 1945. The undramatic nature of this process is underlined by the fact that the same man – Per Albin Hansson – was the prime minister before, during and after the Second World War. This provides us with one important explanation as to why the scholarly treatment of Swedish history in the early postwar period has followed a different course from much of the international work.<sup>68</sup>

The research that exists on the early postwar years is divided and not very comprehensive. A couple of areas have been well covered but they are often kept separate from one another and, even more than is



the case for the years between the wars, there are few that offer a synthesis.<sup>69</sup> The general surveys of the period that do exist have tended to have a social science orientation and frequently take the 1930s as their starting point. They emphasise the economic crisis and the socio-political offensive or the rise of the Social Democrats to power and changes in the labour market.<sup>70</sup>

Given their focus, these studies are of no more than subordinate interest to this study. They are, however, indirectly interesting in that they credit neither the Nazi experience nor the Second World War with any decisive significance for the direction taken by Sweden. This is also true of the lion's share of the scholarly literature on the early postwar period. It is no exaggeration to state that the history of the developments that occurred in the aftermath of the war has been written as though the ideological, political and armed struggle of the preceding years lacked all significance for Sweden.<sup>71</sup>

This tendency is marked in those areas scholarly work has tended to concentrate on. A discussion of three of the most significant fields – postwar economic planning, the orientation of foreign policy and the intellectual debate – might help to exemplify and demonstrate the manner in which the immediate postwar period has been linked with the crises and catastrophes of the 1930s and 1940s.

The economic and political planning in preparation for the postwar period has been the subject of thorough studies. Leif Lewin's thesis on the planned economy debate remains the baseline study in that field. He traces the discussions of the topic from the First World War onwards while focusing in particular on the 1940s. He locates the Social Democrat acceptance of the ideology of the planned economy at the start of the 1930s, at which point liberal thinking was still putting up a marked resistance. Under the clouds of war, however, they closed ranks in support of a war economy. According to Lewin, the Social Democrat strategy at the end of the war took the form of a drive towards a planned economy, a drive that had as its overriding aim the realisation of a programme that in all essentials had been conceived in the 1930s. He describes the planned economy debate of the late 1940s as a domestic ideological accommodation between social democracy and the bourgeois groupings.<sup>72</sup>

The studies of postwar planning by Lewin and others are interesting because they illustrate a tendency conspicuous in research into the immediate postwar era: *the parenthesis thesis*, by which I mean that the Second World War and Nazism were seen as parentheses in the social development of Sweden and that consequently there is no reason to reflect on the impact of the war years on the postwar world. This

commonly held view was in line with that held by the prime minister himself. Per Albin Hansson saw the Second World War as an anomaly in terms of the development of society, a regression that had to be survived. The government was compelled to invest in armaments and military enterprises rather than social welfare. The war was considered to be a distraction from the work of realising the welfare state.<sup>73</sup> And in a similar way, the experiences of Nazism and the Second World War have seldom been considered as relevant to the reforms that were introduced in the first decades of the postwar period. In any research on the welfare state the Second World War has not constituted a significant turning point.

Swedish foreign and security policy is another central chapter in the historiography of the early postwar period. A bibliographical survey of the field carried out in 1997 came up with something approaching three hundred titles. One recurring idea is that the period was a formative one. During the second half of the 1940s, for instance, decisions were taken that decisively defined the direction of Swedish foreign and defence policy for the postwar period: cooperation with our Nordic neighbours, the rebuilding of continental Europe, entry into the United Nations, the formulation of the policy of neutrality in a new world order stamped by the Cold War.<sup>74</sup> The majority of the history and political science studies produced in this area have taken the form of surveys charting the policies followed. From my perspective it is striking how rarely these studies have looked at postwar politics in the context of the defence and foreign policy experiences of the decades before 1945.<sup>75</sup>

The situation is rather different in the case of research into Swedish relations with Europe. *Den ståndaktiga nationalstaten* (The Persistent Nation State) by the historian Mikael af Malmborg is the standard work on Sweden's attitude to Western European integration during its first phase. The picture he gives us is of a country that was to some extent prepared to review its international orientation. The change of direction meant that an older, European internationalism gave way to engagement with the Nordic countries and eventually with the United Nations. The author argues that the totalitarian epoch had led to the Swedish working-class movement distancing itself from the continent. The aim instead had been to promote the interaction of welfare ideology and the politics of neutrality with a national framework.<sup>76</sup> His general conclusions are shared by others working in the same area. The historian Bo Stråth has taken up this question in a series of studies. He describes how the internationalism of the 1920s was channelled into an engagement with Europe, which, however,

as the interwar years passed, was replaced by aversion, not least in the form of anti-papist propaganda. Experiences during the Second World War reinforced this antipathy. Taking a rhetorical image from Kurt Schumacher, Europe stood out as a bastion of conservatism, Catholicism and cartels.<sup>77</sup>

In terms of the history of ideas the immediate postwar period has not been given anything like the detailed scholarly attention given to political and economic history. By and large there is a no man's land between the war years and the early 1950s. A telling example of this is provided by *Svensk idéhistoria* (Swedish History of Ideas) by Tore Frängsmyr, a historian of science, in which the substantial chapter 'During Two World Wars (1914–1945)' is followed, as we would expect, by 'The Postwar Period (1945–2000)'. But this latter chapter actually starts with the rationalism and progress of the 1950s, leaving the second half of the 1940s to disappear into an abyss between two epochs.<sup>78</sup> That said, however, there are nevertheless a number of significant studies of the intellectual and cultural climate in the years following the Second World War. Anders Frenander, a historian of ideas, has concluded that there were no real debates on the cultural pages of the newspapers during the first postwar years but that the strength of anti-communist opinion was marked. Existentialism, totalitarianism and the Third Way were other important themes.<sup>79</sup> So there is no lack of a broader picture onto which historical observations could be pinned but, just as in the case of research into postwar economic planning and the orientation of foreign policy, aspects arising from the history of ideas or from cultural history are not linked to the ideological explosion that took place in the first half of the 1940s.

To summarise, I would argue that the perspective taken by research into the early postwar years in Sweden was one in which experiences of Nazism do not seem to have been considered significant. As with my study, a great deal centred on analyses of constituent moments, debates or turning points that essentially defined the outcome for a long time. This is despite the manifest difference between my approach and the one that has often been dominant. The first years after 1945 have been seen as a discrete, semi-enclosed period, open in a forward direction but with the preceding period being little more than a backdrop. The reasons for a pattern of action or a period of development have been sought in the immediately contemporary period (as in the case of Sweden at a crossroads in foreign policy terms) or in a continuing debate which happened to reach a pitch of particular intensity in the second half of the 1940s (as in the case of Lewin's study of the debate about a planned economy). But the postwar crossroads has not been

seen as the response to a challenge, as the reaction to what had happened, or as a conclusion drawn from historical experience.

This, then, is where the present study differs from most Swedish research dealing with the same period. An important though unstated premise in existing studies is that the Swedes quickly left Nazism behind. Sweden was never dragged into the war, never suffered invasion and, additionally, the domestic Nazi organisations lacked any kind of political influence. Seen from this point of view, Nazism was in many ways a non-experience.

This basic assumption, more implicit than expressly formulated, has affected the direction of research into the early postwar period. It has seemed natural for Swedish historians to ask different questions from those being asked by much of the international scholarly community in recent years. But this view of Sweden and Nazism conflicts radically with the great bulk of the results produced by the scholarly work of the 1990s and the 2000s. The most significant conclusion I could draw from the foregoing section was precisely the role that Nazism did play in Sweden before and during the Second World War. The Nazi parties were small, that's true, and their concrete political influence was limited, but Nazism was nevertheless something which many people took very seriously as an alternative form of society and which prompted real ideological mobilisation. From this point of view Nazism was a key experience.

So very present during the interwar period, so very absent during the postwar period: it is remarkable that this change to a post-Nazi world was scarcely of any interest to Swedish historians. What did it mean once National Socialism was no longer a living threat? What traces did the Nazi experience leave behind? How was the postwar ideological pattern influenced by the experiences of Nazism?<sup>80</sup>

Having said this, there is a small number of studies that touch on these questions, the viewpoint adopted being one that forms a bridge between experiences of Nazism and the trends during the period after 1945. In 1984 the Scandinavianist Radko Kejzlar published an overlooked study of wartime and postwar Swedish literature. He was one of the few to follow up the traces of the war in the cultural life of Sweden. He pointed out that the years 1939–1945 rarely figured in Swedish literature before the end of the 1960s. Kejzlar argued that two groupings emerged during the war, one being a humanistic democratic group and the other a neutralist. This bipartite division would continue into the postwar period. Authors like Eyvind Johnson, Pär Lagerkvist and Vilhelm Moberg held the banner of activist humanism high whereas the majority of writers of the 1950s cultivated a literature

that was defeatist and escapist. At the beginning of the 1960s political engagement came to the fore and Kejzlar sees this as partly being penance for the lapses and omissions of wartime. It was not until towards the end of the 1960s that the policies of the 'years on stand-by' were subjected to close scrutiny.<sup>81</sup>

The thesis on anti-Semitism in Sweden after 1945 by Henrik Bachner, a historian of ideas, took up related questions. In his analysis of the press reactions to the murder of Folke Bernadotte in 1948 he established that the assassination gave rise to markedly anti-Jewish reactions in certain quarters, but that they were limited to a minority of Swedish public opinion. 'Even though Nazi crimes had discredited anti-Semitism, the taboo on anti-Jewish views at this time [the late 1940s] had not yet attained the absolute force that became evident during the 1950s and 1960s', Bachner writes. He then concludes: 'In their minds many people were still living in the political culture that existed before the Second World War when anti-Jewish attitudes and ideas were relatively acceptable'.<sup>82</sup> His studies of book publishing and social debate in the 1950s and 1960s reveal that the Swedish image of Israel was overwhelmingly positive. Even if prejudice did flourish, anti-Jewish attitudes were very rare in publicly expressed opinion. The transition has to be seen as a reaction to the Holocaust, but how the extermination of the Jews affected the attitudes of the postwar world remains to be fully examined.<sup>83</sup>

Both Kejzlar and Bachner were dealing with important questions but the significance of the Nazi experience did not constitute a central problem for either of them. If we limit our horizon to well-qualified reflections on the effect National Socialism had on Sweden, there are no more than a handful of contributions to be taken into account. And those that do exist tend to be sketches rather than systematically conducted investigations.

Svante Nordin, the historian of ideas, has suggested that a consensus came into being during the early postwar years. Influential Social Democratic politicians, cultural-radical intellectuals and liberal social reformers gathered around what were called 'the ideas of 1945', a cultural and social vision for the postwar era. They united in defence of rationalism, democracy and the Enlightenment and they closed ranks in support of the growing welfare state and the Swedish model. Nordin gives a pregnant summary of the trends visible in the early postwar period in Sweden.<sup>84</sup> What remains unclear, however, is precisely how the emergence of this dominant tendency should be interpreted; there is a risk that 'the ideas of 1945' are simply a refinement of 'the ideas of 1789'. There is a temptation to see this current of ideas as being at one and the same time an incarnation of the inheritance from the

Enlightenment together with the absolute converse of totalitarian ways of thought. In my view, what is needed is a more precise definition of the political and intellectual import of these ideas, not least in the form of a thorough discussion of the relationship between the emerging outlook and the historical experiences.

The scholar who has given the most profound thought to this relationship – the after-effects of Nazism in postwar Sweden – is Alf W. Johansson. His view is that the ideological conflicts of the war years and the standpoint taken in terms of *realpolitik* provided the basis for the postwar discourse in Sweden. ‘Neutrality’, Johansson writes, ‘was not only the self-imposed security policy during the war, it also created a mentality’. It was a perception of self that was reinforced in the immediate postwar years when the paradigm of small-state realism – the idea that Sweden, as a small state, had had no alternative than to yield to the aggressive great power – was elevated to a universal truth. Johansson’s view is that with the passing of time this caused a split in Swedish consciousness: on the one hand, any criticism of the wartime national leadership was rejected as being a manifestation of naïve and irresponsible idealism; on the other hand, there was the development of an almost pathological fear of viewing Swedish policies in the perspective that became the dominant one on the continent – a struggle between democracy and dictatorship, humanity and inhumanity, good and evil.<sup>85</sup>

Small-state realism gave moral legitimacy to the doctrine of neutrality, the foremost advocate of which was Östen Undén, the foreign minister. Once peace was enthroned as the highest of all values Sweden had – by definition – been right to stay out of the war. As a consequence of this, the war years were rarely discussed during the 1950s and 1960s. All eyes were fixed on the future and history had no lessons to offer. The drive for modernity overrode everything else in the Swedish perception of self and the war years appeared to be an insignificant pause in the realisation of the most modern of societies. The freedom of publication legislation of 1949 and the debate about the planned economy were certainly regarded as direct consequences of the war but, apart from that, the war left no very deep traces. Johansson continues, however:

But having said this, it has to simultaneously be pointed out – and this is paradoxical – that in its efforts to become the ideal country of modernism Sweden turned itself on a more profound level into the antithesis of everything Nazism had stood for. The development of Swedish society was *in itself* a repudiation of Nazi values. If the Nazi ideal was constructed around the strong heroic individual and that individual’s powerful development, Sweden structured itself as a country designed for the needs

of the weak and the handicapped. [...] In that respect one might argue that Sweden became the most anti-fascist society in the world.<sup>86</sup>

Alf W. Johansson returns to similar kinds of interpretation in other contexts. In his book *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget* (Herbert Tingsten and the Cold War) he provides a characterisation of the ideological geography that took shape after 1945. In his opinion there was virtually universal support for anti-fascism and anti-communism in Western Europe and the U.S.A. The dystopian perception of these two meant that parts of the ideological field were anathemised and, of the two, anti-fascism became the consensus ideology *par excellence*, its core elements being its opposition to racism, dictatorship, nationalism, hierarchy and symbolism. The dominance of anti-fascism not only made any resurrection of National Socialism impossible, it also led to many of the ideas of traditional conservatism being tainted. Nation, church, respect for authority, society as an organism – after the Second World War all of these concepts were loaded with connotations that made them ideologically unusable. In a similar way, anti-communism contributed to the ostracising of the representatives of left-wing radicalism, although anti-communism was never as all-pervasive as anti-fascism. The shock waves that emanated from Nazism shook the very core of liberal society, Johansson asserts, and he argues that the postwar ideologies of Western Europe can consequently be seen as variants of the anti-fascist consensus.<sup>87</sup>

As with Svante Nordin, Alf W. Johansson's associative, virtually essayistic, manner of writing helps to broaden the horizon and open up new perspectives in a fruitful way, but at the same time it does mean that many questions are left unanswered. And one frequently finds oneself seeking in vain for the empirical basis on which conclusions rest. Furthermore, there is the problem that the distinction between self-perception and outer reality is not always adhered to. It is not evident, for instance, whether Sweden was really the most modern state in the world or whether that was no more than the image it had of itself. And that in its turn has to do with an unclear concept of modernisation in which *the modern* becomes identical to the ideals that formed the bedrock of postwar Sweden.<sup>88</sup>

The arguments put forward by Nordin and Johansson stimulate many questions. The most fundamental of these are how we should understand the Swedish experiences of National Socialism: what does the concept of experience actually mean and what is the content of this particular experience? How should we analyse the way the experiences of Nazism and the origin of the dominant postwar order relate to one another?

## Cardinal Points

In the previous section I have been dealing with the area of tension between the historical context and the debate concerning historiographical research. Two lines of argument have been clear: in the first place, in Sweden as in the rest of Europe Nazism was a pervasive and significant reality up to the end of the Second World War, an ideological alternative that virtually anyone who was politically or intellectually conscious had to adopt a position on; secondly, it seems that hardly anyone has reflected on the meaning of the Nazi experience and the conclusions drawn from it during the postwar period even though a great deal of intellectual effort has been devoted to determining how Sweden related to National Socialism.

### *The Historical Problems*

The primary task of this study is to analyse the Swedish experiences of Nazism and the lessons that arose from them in the wake of the Second World War. That objective can be broken down into more circumscribed historical problems. Since they are linked in a sort of logical progression, it seems sensible that the disposition of this book should relate to them.

The first problem has to do with the Nazi experience itself. It is important at the start to define the concept of experience more closely and to discuss in terms of principles the form of historical understanding that it relates to. This I do in Chapter II. The chapter begins with a theoretical discussion, which then moves into a more concrete analysis of the history of the concept, all of this being viewed in a wider international context. Thus at this early stage a bridge is built between the theoretical basis of the study and its empirical investigations.

The next problem involves analysing the conclusions that resulted from the Nazi experience in the wake of the war. The three chapters that follow are devoted to that topic at the same time as the enquiries proceed to deepen our understanding of the experience itself. Chapter III concentrates on the most immediate confrontation with Nazism after the coming of peace. Right from the start this chapter offers support for the view that stigmatisation was not restricted to Nazis in the narrow sense – indeed, the reverse is true, the Nazi experience having generated profound lessons that affected the ideological landscape and warped cultural orientation. In Chapter IV I then turn the spotlight on the emergence of what might be called the ‘ideas of 1945’. My aim here, at the point where versions of the experiences of the past intersect



with projections of the future, is to analyse how the Nazi experience gave rise to a lesson that played a part in two significant but dissimilar debates of the 1940s and 1950s: educational reform and the renaissance of natural law. The ideological tendency visible in both of these debates went hand in hand with a cultural reorientation. Following on from that I consequently concentrate on the German cultural sphere in the aftermath of the war, in particular the orientation away from ‘the German’ that took place during this period. Chapters III–V, which form the empirical core of this study, analyse the way the lessons of Nazism contributed to the formation of the political, cultural and intellectual order of postwar Sweden. My consistent aim is to connect the Swedish experiences with points of international comparison.

The final problem involves the deeper implications of the experience of Nazism during the postwar period. In my final chapter both chronology and perspective are opened up. The conclusions reached up to that point form the basis of a more general characterisation of the connection between the Nazi experience and the postwar ideological territory. And at the same time I discuss the social location and historical transformation of those lessons during the second half of the twentieth century.

My fundamental historical-theoretical view (which is discussed more fully in Chapter II) should make it possible for this study to be more than an analysis of ‘the image of Nazism’, ‘the discourse of Nazism’, and so on. Rather than that, the general problem will consider how people after the events live and orient themselves in the light of profound historical experiences. The centre of gravity of this study is thus neither the experience of Nazism nor the emergence of the postwar ideological order but the interplay between them – *the lessons of Nazism*.

The setting of my study is the aftermath of the Second World War. In a chronological sense, then, it means that I am mainly concentrating on the period between the last years of the war and the time around 1950. The point of departure is motivated by the profound changes brought about by the end of the war: Nazism no longer constituted a living threat, planning in readiness for the postwar period really accelerated and the process of confronting the immediate past began. It is more difficult to settle on an end point and in this respect I am allowing myself a greater degree of flexibility. In the majority of cases the direct settling of accounts with National Socialism was already over by the end of the 1940s and new problems, the Cold War being not the least of them, caused a shift in public focus. There are cases, however, where there are good reasons for following the debates and tracing the ideas

through into the 1950s. And in the last chapter the discussion is broadened further to include most of the postwar era – indeed, in certain cases, all of it.

History, the historian Ingvar Andersson once said in a wonderful phrase, ‘should include the play of all the forces’. It is a great dream, and an unachievable one. Every study has its own particular emphasis and in my case it is the history of ideas. That does not imply that I am using *intellectual history* or *Geistesgeschichte* in a narrow sense and thus only giving space to the grand ideas, but it does mean that my orientation is towards intellectual traditions, ideological pronouncements and cognitive concepts, frequently in their more conscious and articulated versions. What it is concerned with, then, is opinion formation, perceptions, clashes of ideas in the public sphere where the agents are mainly the various elites of modern society: opinion formers, intellectual, political and artistic writers. The book also contains significant elements of what we might call political cultural history. What I am referring to here is partly the interweaving of political and cultural life which stands at the centre of certain parts of the book, partly the broader context of opinion (experiences, processing, memories) that was certainly not always put into words but which nevertheless underpinned the ideological order.<sup>89</sup>

Anyone involved in carrying out research into the twentieth century risks drowning in the abundance of material that the century left behind. The only salvation is to have what the Germans call *Mut zur Lücke* – the courage to be selective. But the selection must never be arbitrary, it must be determined by the historical problems.

### *The Comparative Perspective*

This is a study of Sweden seen in a wider international context. Swedish empiricism provides the foundation of the historical analysis and many of the concrete investigations proceed from Swedish circumstances. The interpretations, however, are consistently related to the wider world. Consequently it is a study in which comparisons play an important part even though they may not take the form of systematic and symmetrical comparisons between Sweden and any other equivalent country.

My ambition, rather, is to bring ‘the Swedish’ into a wider European space. By doing so, Europe – used here in a pragmatic analytic sense, not an ideological or metaphysical one – will become a sort of heuristic background against which Sweden will stand out. Since the end of the Cold War more historians have been criticising the fact that for far too long the history of Europe has been the history of the big countries

of Western Europe. There is justification for that view. In my case, however, it is not a matter of placing Swedish history in relation to the overarching pattern of European development: had that been the case I would have needed to structure in a wide range of south, central and eastern European coordinates. My aim, rather, is to place the history of Sweden in relief and to pin down its distinctive character while at the same time finding approaches that can illuminate the Swedish case.<sup>90</sup>

In practice my focus will often be on Germany/West Germany, but on occasion it will shift to other points of comparison in north-western Europe. There are a number of reasons why Germany should be at the centre of any comparison. Above all it is because of the special position of Germany in terms of twentieth century European history. It was the homeland of National Socialism and the country that once the war was over was most intensely involved in the processing of the Nazi experience. Herein lies an abundance of possibilities for comparison. Over and above that there are significant differences and similarities between Sweden and Germany in terms of their general historical development to make it possible to generate a striking contrast. Last but not least, there is the fact that historical literature about Germany in the period in question is very comprehensive. That is extremely useful for anyone wanting to make point by point comparisons.

Comparison with Germany opens up several rewarding perspectives while simultaneously causing a variety of complications. The postwar situation of Germany provides an enormous contrast to that of Sweden. The institutions of politics and law were declared bankrupt, infrastructure and economy were shattered, material need and spiritual disorientation had reduced existence to a state of utter impoverishment. From 1945 to 1949 Germany was divided into an American, a British, a French and a Russian zone of occupation. The first three became the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) in 1949 while the last-named became the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) later the same year. Developments after the end of the war took the two societies in quite different directions: in the East there was the planned economy of a people's democratic dictatorship, in the West the democratic free-market social state. From my point of view West Germany is undoubtedly the more interesting. During the early postwar period there were attempts there to interpret the experience of Nazism. This occurred, as in Sweden, within the framework of a liberal democratic ideology but, as a consequence of historical traditions and experiences, at times the outcomes were different.<sup>91</sup>

With the historian Jürgen Kocka as my stimulus I can define my comparative working method more closely. Kocka distinguishes four

functions that comparison can fulfil: the heuristic, the descriptive, the analytic and the paradigmatic. Comparison as heuristics implies historical thinking being enriched with new questions and ways of looking at things at the same time the historian being able to discover that important historical problems have been insufficiently investigated. This function is absolutely central in the case of my study, particularly in the opening and closing chapters, where the viewpoint has been allowed to open up. The descriptive aspect of comparison makes it possible to describe phenomena in a way that primarily highlights the distinguishing features. I make most use of this approach in my empirical chapters. The third of Kocka's methodological possibilities is the analytic. Comparative study almost always provides an opportunity to develop a line of thought as to the historical reasons for similarities and differences that have been discovered. This method is primarily used towards the end of my study. Finally Kocka talks of the paradigmatic advantages of comparison, its potential to elevate the observer above provincialism and open the road to alternative interpretations. Once again, it is mainly in my introductory and closing sections that this is brought into play.<sup>92</sup>

It is not, however, my intention to stop short at the stage of having described the international background to Swedish events and analysed the effect that foreign impulses had on Sweden. My aim, with comparison as a tool, is to discuss Swedish experiences primarily in relation to north-west European experiences and in particular to German experiences. To bring a medium-sized country – in this case Sweden – into a discussion of modern European history, which has all-too-often been based on no more than a couple of major powers, will undoubtedly enrich the discussion and introduce a level of multivocality. In that respect this study will not just make a contribution to Swedish history but also, to a very great extent, to international history.<sup>93</sup>

### *Historicising the Present*

It would be possible to justify a study of this kind purely from the point of view of the discipline itself. The survey of research literature revealed significant lacunae in existing knowledge. The current profusion of specialist studies of Sweden between the wars stands in sharp contrast to the small number of studies of the early postwar period. Those that link the two epochs are even fewer, a fact that is particularly noticeable when compared with the international situation.

The power exerted by the Nazi experience on the minds of succeeding generations means, however, that it can never just be an issue of

purely academic interest. For the individual historian, just as for the wider public, the motive for paying attention to National Socialism is virtually always something outside the discipline itself – something political, moral or existential. This is not something that is unique to Nazism, but it does apply to Nazism to a much greater extent than to anything else. That in turn means that it offers particular possibilities and poses particular challenges. It is possible on the one hand to formulate a more elaborate and extensive motivation of the subject than is usually possible. On the other hand, the particular circumstances mean that a historicisation of Nazism brings with it serious complications.

In a frequently quoted article in the first number of the journal *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* the historian Hans Rothfels discussed the concept of contemporary history. According to him *Zeitgeschichte* may be defined as ‘the epoch that has been experienced by those still alive and the scholarly study of that epoch’. Thus, and in contrast to a great deal of older history, contemporary history is not just the name of a historical period but also an active space for memory and experience.<sup>94</sup> Rothfels’s definition has been criticised but has also served as inspiration. One obvious problem is that even epochs that are distant in time can have a tangible existence in the present: the significance of antiquity to Western Christendom is just one of many examples. In this regard the Egyptologist Jan Assmann has made a fundamental distinction between communicative memory and the cultural memory. Whereas the former applies to biographical, self-experienced memories within a limited temporal space, the latter takes the form of culturally transmitted memories which may have their origin in a distant past time.<sup>95</sup> For the generations born before the Second World War National Socialism was both a communicative and a cultural memory. They had personal recollections of the Third Reich and these recollections had an enduring influence on their convictions. And their experiences were also collective experiences that were passed on through institutions, legal texts and public debate.

The experiences of National Socialism continued to leave deep traces on the postwar world. Conclusions reached during the second half of the 1940s survived that decade and are even now a significant element in the legacy of the twentieth century. The value of this study is thus not just that it reveals the significance of the Nazi experience and the lessons it has led to. It is also a contribution to the Swedish treatment of a central chapter of the modern history of Europe.

The stigmatisation of Nazism has had the effect of a stimulant on scholarly activity. Ever since the 1960s research into National Socialism has spread to include an ever wider range of topics and the time is long

past when an overview was a possibility.<sup>96</sup> Simultaneously, however, the moral and ideological force of the denunciation of Nazism has complicated a particular kind of historical approach – what we might call the historicisation of Nazism, fitting Nazism into its historical context. The discussion of that issue took off at the end of the 1980s thanks to a wide-ranging public correspondence between two historians, Martin Broszat and Saul Friedländer. Broszat urged historicisation, arguing that the harsh moral condemnation of the Third Reich hindered historical insights. Friedländer countered his arguments with the warning that any normalisation of Nazism might, in a worst case scenario, serve as an invitation to relativise the Holocaust.<sup>97</sup>

Jörn Rüsen has examined the arguments involved in this discussion from the point of view of a theorist of history and has lifted them onto a general plane. He points out the contemporary history has always come up against problems of historicisation because the temporal proximity of the object of study gives rise to criticism that such an approach is insufficiently historical in outlook. Rüsen questions the suppositions on which the objections are based, pointing out that history does not merely depend on temporal distance but also on whether the past relates in a meaningful and significant way to the present. Nazism certainly does so, both politically and existentially, more than most issues in modern history. The problem only arises if historicisation means the exclusion of all questions of norms from historical discussion. That is not something that either Broszat or Rüsen wanted: in spite of their differences they favoured approaches to Nazism that avoided both political instrumentalisation and moral detachment.<sup>98</sup>

I am in agreement with their position. In my case, however, the problem of historicisation is of a different and milder order since I am not concerned with Nazism in itself but with how the experiences of it played out in the world that came after. I do not need to confront directly the madness of the Nazis, I do not need to identify with the world and the life of the camp commandant. On the other hand, it is important for me to historicise the implications of the Nazi experience and to bring that experience into a more profound historical sphere. That might be interpreted as being a relativisation of National Socialism; in reality, however, it is a relativisation of a historical experience and the conclusions that were drawn from it.

Given that I support the moral anathematisation of National Socialism in the wake of the war, my difficulty consists in finding a point of departure for my critical analysis that does not simultaneously place me in a normative dilemma. My answer – which this study exemplifies – is to rely on the proven virtues of wide contextualisation,

international comparisons, hermeneutic inspiration, coherent argumentation and humanistic values.

## Notes

1. Overarching interpretations of twentieth-century history are discussed in C. S. Maier, 'Consigning the Twentieth Century to History: Alternative Narratives for the Modern Era', *The American Historical Review* (3) (2000); K.H. Jarausch and M. Geyer (eds), *Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 37–108; A. Schildt, 'Überlegungen zur Historisierung der Bundesrepublik', in K.H. Jarausch and M. Sabrow (eds), *Verletztes Gedächtnis: Erinnerungskultur und Zeitgeschichte im Konflikt* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus Verlag, 2002); K.H. Jarausch and M. Sabrow (eds), *Die historische Meistererzählung: Deutungslinien der Deutschen Nationalgeschichte nach 1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoech & Ruprecht, 2002); F. Furet and E. Nolte, 'Feindliche Nähe': *Kommunismus und Faschismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Ein Briefwechsel* (Munich: Herbig, 1999).
2. An important variation, 'the Churchillian interpretation of the Wars', is discussed in D. Reynolds, *In Command of History: Churchill Fighting and Writing the Second World War* (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 2004).
3. See, for example, K. Hornung, *Das totalitäre Zeitalter: Bilanz der 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1993) and G. Besier, *Das Europa der Diktaturen: Eine neue Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2006).
4. E.J. Hobsbawm's wide-ranging work *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991* (London: Michael Joseph, 1994), for instance, offers a Marxist interpretation.
5. J. Östling, 'Tysklands väg mot moderniteten: Hans-Ulrich Wehler och *Sonderweg*-tesen', in L. Berntson and S. Nordin (eds), *I historiens skruvstäd: Berättelser om Europas 1900-tal* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008).
6. R. Bavaj, *Die Ambivalenz der Moderne in Nationalsozialismus: Eine Bilanz der Forschung* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003); R. Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
7. See, for example, M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2001), E. Voegelin, *Die politischen Religionen* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1996) and E. Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York: Rinehart, 1941).
8. J. E. Cronin, *The World the Cold War Made: Order, Chaos, and the Return of History* (London: Routledge, 1996), ix; K. Salomon, *En femtiotalsberättelse: Populärkulturens kalla krig i folkhemssverige* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2007), 21–22. Major works on twentieth-century history include Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes*, G. Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century: Money, Power, and the Origins of Our Times* (London: Verso, 1994), F. Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion: Essai sur l'idée communiste au XXe siècle* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1995) and

- H. James, *Europe Reborn: A History, 1914–2000* (Harlow, U.K.: Pearson-Longman, 2003).
9. F. Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992), 7.
  10. See, for example, Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion*; L. Berntson, G. Hálfdanarson and H. Jensen, *Tusen år i Europa: 1800–2000* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2004). However, the interpretation of the first half of the twentieth century and, in particular, the years 1917–1945, as an ideological triangle drama is older: see H. Rothfels, 'Zeitgeschichte als Aufgabe', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (1) (1953), 7 for an early instance. Masaryk is quoted from M. Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane, 1998), x.
  11. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, xii.
  12. J.A. Garraty, 'The New Deal, National Socialism, and the Great Depression', *The American Historical Review* 76 (4) (1973) and W. Schivelbusch, *Entfernte Verwandtschaft: Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus, New Deal 1933–1939* (Vienna: Hanser, 2005), particularly 7–22.
  13. For general reference, see Schivelbusch, *Entfernte Verwandtschaft*, but also Burleigh, *The Third Reich*, 343–404, J. Baberowski and A. Doering-Manteuffel, *Ordnung durch Terror: Gewaltexzesse und Vernichtung im nationalsozialistischen und stalinistischen Imperium* (Bonn: Dietz, 2006) and P.M.H. Mazumdar (ed.), *The Eugenics Movement: An International Perspective*, vol. 1–6 (New York: Holt, 2007).
  14. G.L. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1999), ix–xi.
  15. R. Griffin, *The Nature of Fascism* (London: Routledge, 1991); S.G. Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914–1945* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); R. Eatwell, *Fascism: A History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1995); R. Griffin (ed.), *International Fascism: Theories, Causes and the New Consensus* (London: Arnold, 1998); Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*; R.O. Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism* (London: Penguin, 2004); M. Mann, *Fascists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). The field is discussed in L. Berggren, 'Den svenska mellankrigsfascismen – ett ointressant marginalfenomen eller ett viktigt forskningsobjekt?', *Historisk tidskrift* (3) (2002); A. Bauerkämper, *Der Faschismus in Europa 1918–1945* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2006), 16–19 and L.M. Andersson and H. Bachner, 'Nationalsozialismen: En begreppsdiskussion', in G. Andersson and U. Geisler (eds), *Fruktan, fascination och frändskap: Det svenska musiklivet och nazismen* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006).
  16. Mosse, *The Fascist Revolution*, x.
  17. J. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget: Från patriotism till universalism under efterkrigstiden', in L.M. Andersson and M. Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Nazityskland: Skuldfrågor och moraldebatt* (Stockholm: Dialogos, 2007), particularly 26–30.
  18. The historian Norman Davies coined the phrase 'the Allied Scheme of History', the triumphal Anglo-Saxon historiography, as a result of victory in the Second World War. Core aspects of it were both programmatic anti-fascism and 'a demonological fascination with Germany, the twice-defeated



- enemy'. See N. Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 39–40.
19. Cf. E. Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche: Die Action française, der italienische Faschismus, der Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: R. Piper, 1963), 23–35 and C. Cornelißen, 'Epoche', in S. Jordan (ed.), *Lexikon Geschichtswissenschaft: Hundert Grundbegriffe* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2002).
  20. S.F. Vedi, 'Bibliographic Companion to the Preceding Research Surveys', in S. Ekman and K. Åmark (eds), *Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research*, trans. D. Kendall (Stockholm: Swedish Research Council, 2003), 275. Ekman and Åmark's invaluable survey is supplemented with Patrick Vonderau, *Schweden und das nationalsozialistische Deutschland: Eine annotierte Bibliographie der deutschsprachigen Forschungsliteratur: 825 Einträge – 439 Annotationen* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2003).
  21. What is meant by National Socialism in this context is partly Nazism as an ideological vision and competing social order, partly Nazi Germany as a power and a foreign policy threat. At the end of the 1930s and beginning of the 1940s the latter understanding would have undoubtedly have been central. In this study, which concentrates above all on the early postwar years, Nazism is understood as the former.
  22. A.W. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen: Aspekter på andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2006), 284–285. See also S. Ekman, 'Introduction', in S. Ekman and K. Åmark (eds), *Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research*, trans. D. Kendall (Stockholm: Swedish Research Council, 2003), 16–30, J. Östling, 'The Rise and Fall of Small-State Realism: Sweden and the Second World War', in H. Stenius, M. Österberg and J. Östling (eds), *Nordic Narratives of the Second World War: National Historiographies Revisited* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011) and J. Östling, 'Sweden and the Second World War: Historiography and Interpretation in the Postwar Era', in Jill Stephenson and John Gilmour (eds), *Hitler's Scandinavian Legacy* (London, New Delhi, New York & Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2013).
  23. W.M. Carlgren, *Svensk utrikespolitik 1939–1945* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1973); A.W. Johansson, *Per Albin och kriget: Samlingsregeringen och utrikespolitiken under andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1985); S. Ekman (ed.), *Stormaktstryck och småstatspolitik: Aspekter på svensk politik under andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1986).
  24. M.P. Boëthius, *Heder och samvete: Sverige och andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1991).
  25. Ekman, 'Introduction', 23–25; Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 285–287.
  26. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 279–280.
  27. See, for example, P.A. Levine, 'Whither Holocaust Studies in Sweden?: Some Thoughts on *Levande Historia* and Other Matters Swedish', *Holocaust Studies* (1) (2005).
  28. A.W. Johansson, *Finlands sak: Svensk politik och opinion under vinterkriget 1939–1940* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1973); K. Åmark, *Makt eller moral: Svensk offentlig debatt om internationell politik och svensk utrikes och*

- försvarspolitik 1938–1939* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlag, 1973); L. Drangel, *Den kämpande demokratin: En studie i antinazistisk opinionsrörelse 1935–1945* (Stockholm: Liberförlag, 1976); T. Nybom, *Motstånd – anpassning – uppslutning: Linjer i svensk debatt om utrikespolitik och internationell politik 1940–1943* (Stockholm: Liberförlag, 1978).
29. The current perception that research about the Second World War seems restricted is not merely a Swedish phenomenon: See Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget'.
  30. The direction research has been taking since the early 2000s is shown by K. Åmark, *Att bo granne med ondskan: Sveriges förhållande till nazismen, Nazityskland och Förintelsen* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2011), 11–40. See also L.M. Andersson and M. Tydén, 'Historikerna och moralen', in L.M. Andersson and M. Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Nazityskland* (Stockholm: Dialogos, 2007), 11.
  31. Excellent historiographical surveys of the field can be found in Ekman and Åmark (eds), *Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research*, trans. D. Kendall (Stockholm: Stockholm Research Council, 2003), in particular Jonas Hansson, 'Sweden and Nazism', Harald Runblom, 'Sweden and the Holocaust from an International Perspective', Svante Nordin, 'Literature on Sweden and Nazi Germany' and Klas Åmark, 'Democracies in the Struggle Against Dictatorships'.
  32. H. Carlsson, *Nazismen i Sverige: Ett varningsord* (Stockholm: Federativs, 1942); Å. Thulstrup, *Med lock och pock: Tyska försök att påverka svensk opinion 1933–45* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1962); E. Wärenstam, *Sveriges nationella ungdomsförbund och högern 1928–1934* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1965); R. Torstendahl, *Mellan nykonservatism och liberalism: Idébrytningar inom högern och bondepartierna 1918–1934* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1969); E. Wärenstam, *Fascismen och nazismen i Sverige 1920–1940: Studier i den svenska nationalsocialismens, fascismens och antisemitismens organisationer, ideologier och propaganda under mellankrigsåren* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970); U. Lindström, *Fascism in Scandinavia 1920–1940* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1983).
  33. B. Landgren, *Hjalmar Gullberg och beredskapslitteraturen: Studier i svensk dikt och politisk debatt 1933–1942* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1975); M. Lind, *Kristendom och nazism: Frågan om kristendom och nazism belyst av olika ställningstaganden i Tyskland och Sverige 1933–1945* (Lund: Håkan Olssons förlag, 1975); Drangel, *Den kämpande demokratin*; W. Sauter, *Theater als Widerstand: Wirkung und Wirkungsweise eines politischen Theaters: Faschismus und Judendarstellung auf der schwedischen Bühne 1936–1941* (Stockholm: Akademilitteratur, 1979).
  34. For example, T. Forser, *Böoks 30-tal: En studie i ideologi* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1976) and J. Olsson, *Svensk spelfilm under andra världskriget* (Lund: Liber Läromedel, 1979).
  35. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget', 38–42. See Chapters III and VI.
  36. H. Lööv, *Hakkorset och Wasakärven: En studie av nationalsocialismen i Sverige 1924–1950* (Gothenburg: Historiska institutionen, 1990); K.N.A. Nilsson, *Svensk överklassnazism: 1930–1945* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1996); S. Oredsson,

- Lunds universitet under andra världskriget: Motsättningar, debatter och hjälpin-satser* (Lund: Lunds universitetshistoriska sällskap, 1996); Berggren, 'Den svenska mellankrigsfascismen'.
37. P.A. Levine, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust, 1938–1944* (Uppsala: Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 1996); L. Berggren, *Nationell upplysning: Drag i den svenska antisemitismens idéhistoria* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1999); H. Bachner, *Återkomsten: Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1999); L.M. Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude ...: Representationer av 'juden' i svensk skämtpress omkring 1900–1930* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2000); H. Carlsson, *Medborgarskap och diskriminering: Östjudar och andra invandrare i Sverige 1860–1920* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2004); H. Blomqvist, *Nation, ras och civilisation i svensk arbetarrörelse före nazismen* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2006); H. Rosengren, 'Judarnas Wagner': *Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950* (Lund: Sekel, 2007); P. Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen: Kurt Atterberg och de svensktyska musikrelationerna* (Lund: Sekel, 2007). See also I. Svanberg and M. Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Förintelsen: Debatt och dokument om Europas judar 1933–1945* (Stockholm: Arena, 1997), H. Blomqvist, *Gåtan Nils Flyg och nazismen* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1999), H. Blomqvist, *Socialdemokrat och antisemit?: Den dolda historien om Arthur Engberg* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2001), G. Blomberg, *Mota Moses i grind: Ariseringsiver och antisemitism i Sverige 1933–1943* (Stockholm: Hillel-förlag, 2003), H. Karlsson, *Det fruktade märket: Wilhelm Peterson-Berger, antisemitismen och antinazismen* (Malmö: Sekel, 2005) and M. Byström, *En broder, gäst och parasit: Uppfattningar och föreställningar om utlänningar, flyktingar och flyktingpolitik i svensk offentlig debatt 1942–1947* (Stockholm: Acta Universitatis Stockholmiensis, 2006), K. Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen: Svensk flyktingpolitik och de judiska flyktingarna 1938–1944* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2008) and H. Bachner, 'Judefrågan': *Debatt om antisemitism i 1930-talets Sverige* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009). On sterilisation, see Gunnar Broberg and Mattias Tydén, *Oönskade i folkhemmet: Rashygien och sterilisering i Sverige* (Stockholm: Gidlunds, 1991), Maciej Zaremba, *De rena och de andra: Om tvångssteriliseringar, rashygien och arosynd* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget DN, 1999), Majja Runcis, *Steriliseringar i folkhemmet* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 1998) and Mattias Tydén, *Från politik till praktik: De svenska steriliseringslagarna 1935–1975* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2002).
38. This historiographical and historio-cultural shift is discussed from a variety of perspectives in P. Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); Runblom, 'Sweden and the Holocaust from an International Perspective'; K.G. Karlsson, 'The Holocaust as a Problem of Historical Culture', in K.G. Karlsson and U. Zander (eds), *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003).
39. S. Koblik, 'Om vi teg, skulle stenarna ropa': *Sverige och judeproblemet 1933–1945* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1987).
40. In addition to previously mentioned texts the following should be noted: A. Ohlsson, 'Men ändå måste jag berätta': *Studier i skandinavisk förintelslitteratur*

- (Nora: Nya Doxa, 2002); G. Andersson and U. Geisler (eds), *Fruktan, fascination och frändskap: Det svenska musiklivet och nazismen* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006); A. Jarlert, *Judisk 'ras' som äktenskapshinder i Sverige: Effekten av Nürnbergglagarna i Svenska kyrkans statliga funktion som lysningsförrättare 1935–1945* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006); G. Richardson, *Beundran och fruktan: Sverige inför Tyskland 1940–1942* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1996); B. Almgren, *Illusion und Wirklichkeit: Individuelle und kollektive Denkmuster in nationalsozialistischer Kulturpolitik und Germanistik in Schweden 1928–1945* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2001); Liljefors *Bilder av Förintelsen*; B. Almgren, *Drömmen om Norden: Nazistisk infiltration i Sverige 1933–1945* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2005); I. Lomfors, *Blind fläck: Minne och glömska kring svenska Röda korsets hjälpinsats i Nazityskland 1945* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2005). Many important results from the research of recent years can be found in C. Brylla, B. Almgren and F.M. Kirsch (eds), *Bilder i kontrast: Interkulturella processer Sverige/Tyskland i skuggan av nazismen 1933–1945* (Ålborg: 'Institut für Sprache und internationale Kulturstudien, 2005), L.M. Andersson and M. Tydén (eds.), *Sverige och Nazityskland* and in Åmark, *Att bo granne med ondskan*. This latter work provides in many ways a synthesising and concluding report of the research programme 'Sweden's relations to Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust'.
41. Hansson, 'Sweden and Nazism'.
  42. E. François, 'Meistererzählungen und Damnbrüche: Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung', in M. Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen: 1945 – Arena der Erinnerung*, vol. 1 (Berlin: DHM, 2004); C. Bryld, "'The Five Accursed Years': Danish Perception and Usage of the Period of the German Occupation, with a Wider View to Norway and Sweden', *Scandinavian Journal of History* (1) (2007); Östling, 'The Rise and Fall of Small-State Realism'.
  43. Hansson, 'Sweden and the Holocaust from an International Perspective', 194–195, calls for a more synthesising coverage of the ideological landscape of the first half of the twentieth century. Two major works with synthesising ambitions have appeared in recent years: Åmark, *Att bo granne med ondskan* and Y. Hirdman, U. Lundberg and J. Björkman, *Sveriges historia: 1920–1965* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2012). However, none of these works aims to map the ideological landscape.
  44. Cf. Kent Zetterberg's review of Lööv's dissertation, 'Nationalsozialismen i Sverige 1924–1950', *Historisk tidskrift* (2) (1992) and Heléne Lööv's *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979: Pionjärerna, partierna, propagandan* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2004).
  45. See Chapter VI.
  46. In the case of certain issues, particularly those to do with sterilisation, Sweden has been discussed in relation to other countries, for instance G. Broberg and N. Roll-Hansen (eds), *Eugenics and the Welfare State: Sterilization Policy in Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2005).
  47. N. Götz, *Ungleiche Geschwister: Die Konstruktion von nationalsozialistischer Volksgemeinschaft und schwedischem Volksheim* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2001), 529–543. A kind of counterweight to Götz's study is provided

- in L. Trägårdh, *The Concept of the People and the Construction of Popular Political Culture in Germany and Sweden, 1848–1933* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1996).
48. An example of the Swedish attitude toward the Nazi social model is given in N. Götz and K.K. Patel, 'Facing the Fascist Model: Discourse and the Construction of Labour Services in the USA and Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s', *Journal of Contemporary History* (1) (2006), 65–73.
  49. Lindström, *Fascism in Scandinavia 1920–1940*, 305–307.
  50. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 148–151 (quoted 151).
  51. E. Wigforss, *Minnen: 1932–1949* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1954), 76.
  52. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, x.
  53. H.M. Enzensberger, *Europa in Ruinen: Augenzeugenberichte aus den Jahren 1944–1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1990), 16. From the point of view of historical scholarship Enzensberger's statement was an exaggeration because there had long been a rich body of research dealing with the earliest phase of the Cold War. A number of collections have been devoted to the upheavals of the early postwar period, for instance, I. Deák, J.T. Gross and T. Judt (eds), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000), D. Geppert (ed.), *The Postwar Challenge: Cultural, Social, and Political Change in Western Europe, 1945–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), R. Bessel and D. Schumann (eds), *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History During the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), and N. Frei (ed.), *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik: Der Umgang mit deutschen Kriegsverbrechern in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006). The period is also central in several larger works of recent years on modern European history: Mazower, *Dark Continent*; R. Vinen, *A History in Fragments: Europe in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2001); James, *Europe Reborn*; T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Penguin Press, 2005). Changing historiographical trends are dealt with in M. Mazower, 'Changing Trends in the Historiography of Postwar Europe, East and West', *International Labor and Working-Class History* (58) (2000).
  54. T. Judt, 'Preface', I. Deák, J.T. Gross and T. Judt (eds), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); D. Geppert, 'Introduction', in D. Geppert (ed.), *The Postwar Challenge: Cultural, Social, and Political Change in Western Europe, 1945–1958* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); M. Conway, 'The Rise and Fall of Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945–1973', *Contemporary European History* (1) (2004).
  55. K.D. Bracher, *Zeit der Ideologien: Eine Geschichte politischen Denkens im 20. Jahrhundert* (Stuttgart: Jahrhundert, 1982), 271–290.
  56. M. Conway, 'Democracy in Postwar Western Europe: The Triumph of A Political Model', *European History Quarterly* (1) (2002), 59. See also Conway, 'The Rise and Fall of Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945–1973' and S. Reynolds, 'Lateness, Amnesia and Unfinished Business: Gender and Democracy in Twentieth-Century Europe', *European History Quarterly* (2) (2002).

57. Conway, 'Democracy in Postwar Western Europe', 68–70. See also K.H. Jarausch, *Die Umkehr: Deutsche Wandlungen 1945–1995* (Munich: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 2004) and A. Bauerkämper, K.H. Jarausch and M.M. Payk (eds), *Demokratiewunder: Transatlantische Mittler und die kulturelle Öffnung Westdeutschlands* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005).
58. Payne, *A History of Fascism*.
59. Nolte, *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche*, 23–58; G.L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1975), 3–6; Paxton, *The Anatomy of Fascism*, 172–173.
60. Furet, *Le passé d'une illusion*, 411.
61. Deák, Gross and Judt (eds), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe*; Frei (ed.), *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik*. See also Chapter III.
62. N. Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik: Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (Munich: Beck, 1996); T. Fischer and M.N. Lorenz (eds), *Lexikon der 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' in Deutschland: Debatten und Diskursgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus nach 1945* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 92–106.
63. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 317; T. Buchanan and M. Conway (eds), *Political Catholicism in Europe: 1918–1965* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); A. Schildt, *Konservatismus in Deutschland: Von den Anfängen im 18. Jahrhundert bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998).
64. Judt, *Postwar*, 88 and 217–225. For France and Italy: T. Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 2–5 and 118–138 and P. Ginsborg, *A History of Contemporary Italy: Society and Politics 1943–1988* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), 186–209.
65. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 185–209.
66. Mazower, *Dark Continent*, 185–209.
67. In spite of this, research into the actual transition has been very sparse. 'We have given enormous thought to how Europeans got into fascism and war; the time has come to understand, on social and cultural as well as political and economic terms, how Europeans got out', as stated in Bessel and Schumann (eds), *Life After Death*, 13
68. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 276–278.
69. An exception to this is Hirdman, Lundberg and Björkman, *Sveriges historia*, in which the presentation takes the form of a welfare narrative structured around the dynamic interplay between political history and social transformation. See my discussion in J. Östling, 'När allt mätbart blev bättre i Sverige', *Respons* (5) (2012). The historian Marie Cronqvist points out in *Mannen i mitten: Ett spiondrama i svensk källkrigskultur* (Stockholm: Carlsson bokförlag, 2004), 14–15, that two of the most important Swedish postwar themes, *folkhemmet* ('the people's home') and neutrality, have had the spotlight shone on them, but that the relationship between the two has to a great extent been pushed aside. Her study is a contribution to the analysis of this situation.
70. N. Stenlås, *Den inre kretsen: Den svenska ekonomiska elitens inflytande över partipolitik och opinionsbildning 1940–1949* (Lund: Arkiv förlag, 1998), 33–34.

71. See, for instance, S. Carlsson, *Svensk historia: Tiden efter 1718* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1980), 595.
72. L. Lewin, *Planhushållningsdebatten* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967). Later scholars in this field have argued among other things that the Swedish debate, too, should be seen in the light of the Cold War and the contemporary postwar programmes in Europe: T. Jonter, *Socialiseringen som kom av sig: Sverige, oljan och USAs planer på en ny ekonomisk världsordning 1945–1949* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1994); Ö. Appelqvist, *Bruten brygga: Gunnar Myrdal och Sveriges ekonomiska efterkrigsolitik 1943–1947* (Stockholm: Santéus, 2000). Aspects of postwar economic policies are also addressed in B. Karlsson, *Handelsolitik eller politisk handling: Sveriges handel med öststaterna 1946–1952* (Gothenburg: Ekonomisk-historiska institutionen, Göteborgs universitet, 1992), C. Sevón, *Visionen om Europa: Svensk neutralitet och europeisk återuppbyggnad 1945–1948* (Helsinki: Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 1995), Stenlås, *Den inre kretsen* and N. Almgren, *Kvinnorörelsen och efterkrigsplaneringen: Statsfeminism i svensk arbetsmarknadspolitik under och kort efter andra världskriget* (Umeå: NRA Repro, 2006).
73. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 269.
74. A.M. Ekengren, *Sverige under kalla kriget 1945–1969: En forskningsöversikt* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University, 1997). Since then many contributions have been added to the history of Swedish foreign and security policy during the first postwar decades, including S. Ottosson, *Den (o) moraliska neutraliteten: Tre politikere och tre tidningars moraliska värdering av svensk utrikesolitik 1945–1952* (Stockholm: Santéus, 2000), M. Petersson, 'Brödrafolkens väl': *Svensk-norska säkerhetsrelationer 1949–1969* (Stockholm: Santéus, 2003), S. Ekecrantz, *Hemlig utrikesolitik: Kalla kriget, utrikesnämnden och regeringen 1946–1959* (Stockholm: Santéus, 2003) and R. Dalsjö, *Life-Line Lost: The Rise and Fall of 'Neutral' Sweden's Secret Reserve Option of Wartime Help from the West* (Stockholm: Santéus, 2006).
75. Ekengren, *Sverige under kalla kriget 1945–1969*, 8–9; Charles Silva and Thomas Jonter (eds), *Sverige inför en ny världsordning, 1945–50: Formativa år för svensk utrikesolitik?* (Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska institutet, 1995); Karlsson, *Handelsolitik eller politisk handling*, Jonter, *Socialiseringen som kom av sig*; C. Silva, *Keep Them Strong, Keep Them Friendly: Swedish-American Relations and the Pax Americana, 1948–1952* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1999); T.B. Olesen (ed.), *The Cold War and the Nordic Countries: Historiography at a Crossroad* (Odense: University of Southern Denmark, 2004).
76. M. af Malmberg, *Den ståndaktiga nationalstaten: Sverige och den västeuropeiska integrationen 1945–1959* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1994).
77. B. Stråth, *Folkhemmet mot Europa: Ett historiskt perspektiv på 90-talet* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1993); B. Stråth, 'The Swedish Demarcation of Europe', in M. af Malmberg and B. Stråth (eds), *The Meaning of Europe: Variety and Contention within and among Nations* (Oxford: Berg, 2002). Similar conclusions were reached in other studies: K. Misgeld, *Sozialdemokratie und Außenpolitik in Schweden: Sozialistische Internationale, Europapolitik und die Deutschlandsfrage 1945–1955* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 1984); K. Misgeld, *Den fackliga europavägen: LO, det internationella samarbetet och Europas enande 1945–1991* (Stockholm: Atlas, 1997).

78. T. Frängsmyr, *Svensk idéhistoria: Bildning och vetenskap under tusen år: 1809–2000* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2000), 299–302.
79. A. Frenander, *Debattens vågor: Om politisk-ideologiska frågor i efterkrigstidens svenska kulturdebatt* (Gothenburg: Gothenburg University, 1999), 78–108; T. Stenström, *Existentialismen i Sverige: Mottagande och inflytande 1900–1950* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1984); A. Berge, *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel: En socialdemokratisk bild av hoten mot frihet och fred 1945–1962* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1990); B. Skovdahl, *Tingsten, totalitarismen och ideologierna* (Stockholm and Stehag: B. Östlings bokförlag, 1992); T. Forser and P.A. Tjäder, *Tredje ståndpunkten: En debatt från det kalla krigets dagar* (Staffanstorps: Cavefors förlag, 1972).
80. There is, as pointed out earlier, a certain amount of literature about Nazism in Sweden from the period immediately after 1945, but it tends to focus on surviving groups attracted to authoritarian nationalism: Lööw, *Hakkorset och Wasakärven*; K.N.A. Nilsson, *Överklass, nazism och högerextremism*; Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979*; S. Bruchfeld, 'Grusade drömmar: Svenska "nationella" och det tyska nederlaget 1945', in C. Brylla, B. Almgren and F.M. Kirsch (eds), *Bilder i kontrast: Interkulturella processer Sverige/Tyskland i skuggan av nazismen 1933–1945* (Ålborg: 'Institut für Sprache und internationale Kulturstudien, 2005); C. Mithander, "'Let Us Forget the Evil Memories": Nazism and the Second World War from the Perspective of a Swedish Fascist', in C. Mithander, J. Sundholm and M. Holmgren Troy (eds), *Collective Traumas: Memories of War and Conflict in 20thcentury Europe* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007).
81. R. Kejzlar, *Literatur und Neutralität: Zur schwedischen Literatur der Kriegs und Nachkriegszeit* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1984).
82. Bachner, *Återkomsten*, 85.
83. Bachner, *Återkomsten*, 148–150.
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86. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 283.
87. A.W. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget: Antikommunism och liberalism i Dagens Nyheter 1946–1952* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1995), particularly 224–37. See also A.W. Johansson, 'Vill du se ett monument? Se dig omkring!: Några reflektioner kring nationell identitet och kollektivt minne i Sverige efter andra världskriget', in K. Almqvist and K. Glans (eds), *Den svenska framgångssagan* (Stockholm: Fischer & Co., 2001) and A.W. Johansson, 'Inledning: Svensk nationalism och identitet efter andra världskriget', in A.W. Johansson (ed.), *Vad är Sverige?: Röster om svensk nationell identitet* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2001).
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90. Davies, *Europe*, 7–16.
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94. Rothfels, 'Zeitgeschichte als Aufgabe', 2; G. Metzler, *Einführung in das Studium der Zeitgeschichte* (Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag, 2004), 12–19.
95. J. Assmann, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen* (Munich: Beck, 1997).
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98. J. Rüsen, *Zerbrechende Zeit: Über den Sinn der Geschichte* (Cologne: Böhlau, 2001), particularly 217–28. See also M. Wiklund, 'Det historiska berättandet och historiekulturens förnuft', in J. Rüsen, *Berättande och förnuft: Historieteoretiska texter* (Gothenburg: Daidalos, 2004), 24–25.

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## THE EXPERIENCE OF NAZISM

'The past is never dead. It's not even past.' William Faulkner's words in *Requiem for a Nun* express a fundamental insight: the past does not cease to exist simply because it becomes history – it can become even more living, even more saturated with meaning, with the passing of time. That is undoubtedly true of Nazism. The theory of history that underlies this study must be structured with that as its cardinal point of departure.

Humanistic reflection houses a whole repertoire of answers to the question of the way the past is replayed in the present. One tradition regards historical experience as a sort of collective memory. This idea was introduced by the sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who argued that among the things that unite a community (a nation, for example) is a collective idea of how important aspects of their past should be understood, *la mémoire collective*. The distinction between history and memory was central. By history was meant objectively true and unchangeable history; memory, however, was subjective, inconstant and subordinate to the needs of the present. The historian Pierre Nora has taken the concept further, stressing the distinction between universal scholarly history and the associative local nature of memory.<sup>1</sup>

Another concept that frequently surfaces in the debate is 'historical consciousness', which reveals the mutual relationships between interpretation of the past, understanding of the present and perspectives on the future. It refers to the context people find themselves in when they orientate themselves in time, formed as they are by their pictures of the past and their expectations of the future. Historical consciousness links the past, the present and the future and emphasises the interplay between them. The concept of 'historical culture' has developed to cover the concrete manifestations of historical consciousness, those artefacts, institutions and arenas in which a particular meeting between the past, the present and what is to come is articulated.<sup>2</sup>

Both collective memory and historical consciousness have been used in order to analyse the presence of National Socialism during the post-war period. Using the concept of memory the means of expression of the past can be interpreted in a scientific way. Something similar may be claimed for historical consciousness, which additionally accommodates the important linkages between the then, the now and what is still to come. These concepts are, however, not ideal for my purpose. To some extent the main question for me involves other problems: on the one hand, how experience of an epoch-making historical phenomenon (Nazism) was interpreted and worked after 1945; on the other hand, how this led to conclusions that in their turn set their mark on the political and intellectual order of the post-Nazi world. The concept of experience is a better tool for analysing this double operation and, what is more, it accommodates a conclusive appeal that does not only put the past in contact with the future but also connects it to the ideological and cultural orientation of a society.

This chapter will define what is meant by the Nazi experience. First of all, I shall introduce the concept of experience and its place in a hermeneutic reading of history. That will be followed by a historical analysis of Nazism as it was conceived and perceived in Sweden. Finally, the particular characteristics of the Swedish experience will be discussed against an international background.

## History and Experience

'Paradoxically enough it would appear that the concept of experience is among our least investigated concepts', the philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer commented in *Wahrheit und Methode*.<sup>3</sup> Gadamer wrote that in 1960 and since then the concept of experience has surfaced on occasion in discussions in the human sciences, including in the clashes between hermeneutics and deconstruction during the 1980s and 1990s. Nevertheless, Gadamer's own thoughts on the concept of experience still provide the most significant starting point. The discussions in his *magnum opus*, anchored as they are in the hermeneutic tradition from Schleiermacher, Dilthey and onwards, open a door not only on the concept of experience in history but even more on an understanding of historical experiences.<sup>4</sup>

According to Gadamer, all theory of experience (*Erfahrung*) hitherto suffers from one and the same weakness, which is that 'it orients itself towards science and therefore overlooks the inner historicity of experience'. Following on from Heidegger he takes a critical view of

both the empirical and the phenomenological view that what is experienced is the 'directly given'. Rather, experience deals with how we are linked to other people in the past. The relationship takes the form of a progressive exchange of questions and answers, confirmations and reassessments. One important starting point is that experience is valid as long as it is not refuted by new experience. It has to be secured and is by its very nature in need of constant confirmation; but if that is not forthcoming, new experience can be acquired.<sup>5</sup>

The acquisition of experience is, moreover, a process that breaks up any generalisations that are inadequate. Gadamer likens this to Karl Popper's conceptual pairing *trial and error*, although 'those concepts all too often proceed from the fact that human experiences are determined by the will rather than the passions'.<sup>6</sup> In terms of language it is expressed in the way we talk about experience in a double sense. Experience is partly something that is incorporated and confirms our expectation. And it is partly something we do: 'When we make an experience of something, we say that until that point we had not seen things properly but now we know better what is at issue. Thus the negativity of experience has a curiously productive meaning. It is not just about seeing through and correcting a fallacy but of achieving an expansive knowledge.'<sup>7</sup>

Another way of expressing it is to view experience as a learning process. In this process our convictions and knowledge are constantly being confirmed but, equally, it brings us face to face with new circumstances and ideals. The result of this is that it is, strictly speaking, impossible to have the same experience more than once. Only something that is unexpected can pass new experience to someone who already has experience.<sup>8</sup> For example, historical experience alters the meaning past events have for us. Thus the historical experience of the Second World War does not confirm our understanding of the First World War as the war to end all wars; instead, after 1939, the First World War takes on a new meaning when the events it was associated with are moved into a different context.<sup>9</sup>

### *Historical Experience and the Lessons Thereof*

The historian Reinhart Koselleck built a bridge between a philosophical understanding of experience and the historical discussion. He had studied under Gadamer and been profoundly influenced by his hermeneutic approach. Koselleck took from his teacher the idea that language incorporates experiences, but that the experiences are also integrated into a linguistic context that pre-exists the actual experience. He was

also receptive at an early stage to other influences that led him to orient himself in the direction of conceptual and social history. To a greater degree than in a philosophical tradition, his thinking was consistently formed in dialogue with historical empirical data. His theoretical statements on the concept of experience sprang from a historian's desire to make events in the past comprehensible and to view the discipline of history as – to use his own word – an *Erfahrungswissenschaft* (discipline of experience).<sup>10</sup>

Koselleck's concept of experience has much in common with that of Gadamer but he pushes the arguments further and makes them more concrete. To him experience is a category of knowledge that contributes to making history possible. In his article “‘Erfahrungsraum’ und ‘Erwartungshorizont’” (Space of Experience and Horizon of Expectation) Koselleck presents his core definition of the concept of experience, a definition that I would like to apply to my own work. ‘Experience’, he writes, ‘is the present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered. A rational reworking is included within experience, together with unconscious modes of conduct which do not have to be present in awareness. There is also an element of alien experience contained and preserved in the experience conveyed by generations of institutions.’<sup>11</sup>

Experience then may be regarded as a process of reworked events, albeit that this happens more or less consciously. It is not, however, a matter of the cumulative integration of everything that the past contains. ‘Experience’, Koselleck argues, ‘is characterised by the fact that it has reworked past events and is capable of actualising them, that it is saturated with reality and that it incorporates fulfilled or lost possibilities into its own conduct.’ In other words, experiences are closely associated with historical events both when we are conscious that we are relating to them and when we are unconscious that we have them as points of orientation. In that respect experience is the present past.<sup>12</sup>

An experience can accommodate faulty remembered images, which can be corrected, and new experiences can open up unsuspected perspectives. Experiences that happened once can be changed with time. ‘The events of 1933 happened once and once only, but the experiences that are built on them can change with time’, Koselleck writes with reference to Germany. ‘Experiences form layers one upon another, and they penetrate one another. And new hopes or disappointments, new expectations, influence them retrospectively. Thus even experiences are altered, even if those that once happened are always the same.’<sup>13</sup>

Experiences can, in short, lead to both self-examination and to self-confirmation; indeed, it is worth asking whether experiences, those

of a more thoroughgoing order anyway, do not as a matter of course lead to both the testing and the confirmation of one's own ideals and the things one hold to be true. The business of acquiring experience is something of a learning process. Those who undergo experiences learn lessons from them as they do so, and the conclusions they draw may serve to reinforce convictions that are already firmly held, but they may also give rise to radical self-examination.

It will be helpful in this context to introduce the concept of the 'historical lesson'. It is not to be found in Koselleck, but it is possible to extrapolate it from his reasoning. A historical lesson is a collective term for the conclusions that can be drawn from a historical experience. It implies that the experience carries a particular meaning which in a specific set of circumstances and for a specific group elicits a moral, political, existential or other form of conclusion. In other words, 'the lessons of Nazism' refers to the conclusions that were drawn from the Nazi experience.<sup>14</sup>

A historical lesson is anchored within one's own norms and refers to the ethos that is embraced by an individual or collective. It may be self-confirming in that it consolidates a value system, but it may just as readily be self-questioning and thus challenge previous convictions. These are the two main instances of the historical lesson, the basic types that define the nature of the conclusions – confirmatory or questioning – drawn from experience.

My use of the concept of the historical lesson is analytical and not normative, and I use it in order to examine the conclusions that were drawn at a distinct historical stage. In a wider and more comparative perspective, however, which is mainly applied in the concluding sections of this study, possibilities exist to open out the discussion as to why a particular historical lesson became dominant at the expense of the others. This kind of reading of history presupposes a sort of indeterminism in which historical events are not predetermined and in which the conceptual pair – experience/expectation – is of great significance.

### *Experience and Expectation*

Adopting Koselleck's approach means that it is possible to discuss historical contexts and transformations without the need to resort to causal explanations. To give an example: it was not the storming of the Bastille and the course of the French Revolution in themselves that gave rise to the criticism of developments in France by conservative Englishmen. Their conclusions were based rather more on their *experiences* of the



French Revolution, that is to say both on rational processes (intellectual analysis, political considerations, historical comparisons) and on more unconscious attitudes (perceptions of the social order, attitudes to the people, fear of revolt). In this interpretation the pronouncements, behaviour and actions of both individuals and the collective are analysed as results of the learning process they have been through.

To do full justice to this form of historical interpretation it needs to be put together with another of Koselleck's significant insights, which is that experience (*Erfahrung*) is intrinsically linked to expectation (*Erwartung*): no experience without expectation, no expectation without experience. 'Hope and memory or, in more general terms, expectation and experience (expectation, of course, includes more than hope and experience goes deeper than memory) constitute both history and the knowledge of it and they do so by demonstrating and proving the inner connection between the past and the future, yesterday, today or tomorrow', Koselleck writes. That which is past and that which is to come can in other words link up by means of these categories. Historical experiences, processed or unconscious, intervene in any discussion of what is to come when the lessons learnt from historical experiences are being formulated as ideas about the future.<sup>15</sup>

In his writings Koselleck strives to show that experience and expectation are anthropologically given conditions for histories and that the significance of this pairing has been marginalised through the course of history. For my purposes it is sufficient to take the pair concepts, experience/expectation, as a form of historical understanding. Expectation resembles experience in that it is both interpersonal and personal. Hope and fear, desire and will, even rational analysis and human curiosity, are constitutive elements of expectation. On the other hand the two concepts do not link the past and the future as a mirror image: an expectation can never be totally derived from an experience.<sup>16</sup>

What Koselleck talks about is 'the space of experience' (*Erfahrungsraum*) and 'the horizon of expectation' (*Erwartungshorizont*). By the first of those he means everything that has been experienced and that has been gathered together in an imagined space, a place where 'experience derived from the past is collected into a whole in which many layers of disappeared times are present without giving any indication of the before and the after'. The horizon of expectation is the line beyond which a new space of experience opens up, one which as yet cannot be surveyed. What can be expected of the future is thus limited in a different way than that which has been experienced of the past. 'Expectations that are held can be overplayed, experiences that have been had can be collected', is how Koselleck summarises it.<sup>17</sup>

According to Koselleck's theory of history, the split between experiences and expectations widened more and more with the beginning of the new age. During the so-called *Sattelzeit* (from roughly 1750 to 1850, sometimes also called the *Schwellenzeit*) when many of the fundamental political-social concepts were taking on new meanings, the two historical categories drifted apart. Expectations gained the upper hand and the experiences had up to that point meant less and less when it came to interpreting new experiences.<sup>18</sup> The philosopher of history, Anders Schinkel, questioned Koselleck's thinking on this point because in Schinkel's view this thesis is incompatible with other aspects of the theory. According to Schinkel's interpretation of Koselleck's argument, experience and expectation are inextricably linked and cannot be separated. The relations between the two historical categories can, however, change – as, of course, can the content.<sup>19</sup>

Thus Schinkel stresses the generic connection between experience and expectation. From the point of view of my arguments, that supports the important notion that there is an interplay between historical experiences and ideas about the future. On the one hand, experience is intertwined with dreams, fantasies and hopes; on the other hand, the actual acquiring of experience can be likened to a learning process, the meaning of which is encapsulated in the historical lesson that is the sum of the recurring reviews and confirmations of the course of events. The process is dialectical in so far as experience and the lesson learnt from it are formed within the tradition in which expectation arises. This expectation is simultaneously stamped by experience.

The relationship of the historical lesson to experience and expectation is not, however, totally symmetrical. There are times when the historical dimension is dominant and the lesson leads on to a certain attitude to the past; but there are times when it is more oriented towards the future and does not involve processing historical experiences in anything like the same way.

## Nazism as a Concept

When the Nazis came onto the political scene during the 1920s they were initially a marginal phenomenon but, as their influence grew, more attention was paid to them both inside and outside Germany. Once they had come to power in 1933, however, a stream of reportages, essays and newspaper articles about National Socialism was published, a flood of observations and analyses that showed no sign of ebbing until the Cold War was at its height at the end of the 1940s.

From this torrent of material it is possible to extract the import of the Nazi experience in early postwar Sweden, for Nazism as an ideology and historical revelation attracted a great deal of active interest in the wake of the Second World War even in Sweden. That was, in itself, nothing new – all politically engaged Swedes had seen the developments in Germany as a momentous issue ever since the early 1930s.<sup>20</sup> But now, with Nazism no longer a horrifyingly virulent presence, the questions asked were to some extent different ones. With one voice Swedish opinion pronounced National Socialism anathema. There was virtually no one who was prepared to find any mitigating circumstances or who failed to excoriate the Nazi doctrine of violence. It did not, however, stop short at condemnation: many of the articles and books published during those years attempted to understand Nazism in a wider sense, in its offshoots in German and European history, in its spiritual and political heart, in its ability to attract the masses and spread death and destruction across the continent.

### *The Concepts and History*

It is possible to uncover the Nazi experience in this ongoing debate. By reconstructing the characteristics, perceptions and traditions that were associated with National Socialism during the early postwar years it becomes possible to pin down the frame of reference within which this experience was interpreted and made meaningful. These perceptions constituted the common conceptual elements which at one and the same time limited and made possible a particular understanding of the Nazi phenomenon. This was also to a great extent the interpretation that provided the basis for the conclusions drawn from the experience – the historical lesson of Nazism. It is necessary to define them more precisely not only to be able to analyse the experience itself but also to be able to investigate the expectations with which it was in a dynamic relationship.

One postulate in Reinhart Koselleck's theory of history is that experiences are contingent on language right from the start. The language sphere within which human socialisation takes place determines which experiences it is possible to make. Koselleck, however, is at pains not to equate history and language: language is always more and always less than lived history. Human history accommodates extra-linguistic elements, but our understanding of this external reality is dependent on linguistic categories and contexts. That is a premiss which the current study shares.<sup>21</sup>

Koselleck's ideas are manifested in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (Basic Concepts in History), the great dictionary of conceptual history he published together with the historians Otto Brunner and Werner Conze.<sup>22</sup> The presumption here is that certain *Grundbegriffe* – fundamental politico-social concepts – exist that are absolutely indispensable when it comes to orienting oneself in the modern world. In the theory and methods section of the dictionary, which bears the mark of Koselleck throughout, the idea is developed that in every historical period there is a finite number of fundamental concepts which, precisely because they are essential to the politico-social language, are also always ambiguous and become the objects of a linguistic auction. Koselleck states, in a spirit of hermeneutics, that these fundamental concepts can only be interpreted, not unambiguously defined. As a result of them being at one and the same time both central and ambiguous they are also always contentious. In an echo of Carl Schmitt, the conflict about the meaning and use of the concepts becomes an essential element in a political and social struggle.<sup>23</sup>

There can be no doubt that 'Nazism', together with 'socialism', 'communism', 'liberalism', 'conservatism', and 'fascism', must be considered one of the central ideological concepts of the twentieth century.<sup>24</sup> Like the rest of these concepts, Nazism lacked a clear and well-defined meaning. It carried with it a series of interwoven and contradictory experiences that could not be expressed as an unambiguous formula. National Socialism as a historical concept must consequently be studied in a broad linguistic and intellectual context in which the whole semantic field occupied by the concept of Nazism is laid bare. For any such study two preconditions are of particular weight: the analysis cannot simply stop at Nazism as a word but must include the wider linguistic context of meaning; the concept of Nazism must consistently be viewed against the wider historical background.<sup>25</sup>

In his programmatic introduction to *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* Reinhart Koselleck distinguishes between three types of source that form the basis of the articles on conceptual history in the dictionary: classics from the pens of philosophers, poets and prose writers, theologians and others; journals, newspapers, pamphlets, protocols, letters and diaries; dictionaries and encyclopedias. The types of source naturally vary according to the nature of the concept, the focus of the study and the breadth of the analysis, but in this limited and mainly synchronic examination of the concept of Nazism, Koselleck's subdivisions provide significant guidance.<sup>26</sup>

The meaning of the Nazi experience can be pinned down and analysed by means of a history of concepts study consisting of three strands,

with definitions, characteristics and analyses each taking its turn to be the centre of attention. Each of these is based on one of Koselleck's three types of source. The first stage is a semantic examination of definitions in dictionaries and encyclopedias. In this case my starting point is the word itself ('National Socialism', 'Nazism' and so on), but to ensure that the analysis of these meanings is fully comprehensive it has to be situated in the semantic zone it occupied. The reconstruction does, however, demand more material and a widened investigation. As a second stage, in order to delineate Nazism as a concept, I shall examine in a more discursive manner those characteristics of National Socialism that emerge from a wider range of newspaper material. In doing this I shall move away from the word itself and focus instead on the wider conceptual context it was part of. As a final stage some of the more significant intellectual and political analyses of Nazism will be examined. Certain elements in this part of the conceptual historical study are even more distant from Nazism as a word and resemble rather more closely a traditional history of ideas study. The boundaries between the three levels – definitions, characteristics and analyses – cannot and do not need to be rigidly upheld. The three levels taken together serve to recreate Nazism as a historical concept in the wake of the Second World War.<sup>27</sup>

### *Definitions of Nazism*

*National Socialism* makes its first appearance in the Swedish language as early as the 1910s but was essentially used at that stage in the sense of socialism in the service of the national community. Rudolf Kjellén was one of the people who used it in that sense. The first instance of the term and its derivatives being connected with Adolf Hitler and his *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* comes in 1923, the year of the Munich Beer Hall Putsch and the party's first big political offensive. There are many examples of its use in the second half of the 1920s and it became even more frequent after the Nazis came to power in 1933.<sup>28</sup> The first use of 'Nazism', an abbreviation that had a pejorative feel right from the start, was recorded that year. During the following decade a whole series of compounds with 'nazi' as the first element ('naziledare', 'naziregim', 'nazirike') were created, frequently with a clearly negative implication.<sup>29</sup> The word 'fascism', in a variety of forms and spelling, can be found from the early 1920s onwards but referred exclusively to the political movement in Italy.<sup>30</sup>

In *Svenska Akademiens Ordbok* (the Swedish Academy Dictionary) published in 1947 National Socialism was defined as 'a political ideology:

1. A political movement that aims to merge nationalism and socialism; usually referring to the situation in Germany and to the political movement led by Adolf Hitler'. *Svenska Akademiens ordlista* (the Swedish Academy Wordlist) (ninth edition, 1950) included the term but did not offer a definition. Artur Almhult's *Ord att förklara* (Words Explained) (1955) did offer a definition of National Socialism: 'a (German) political movement that aimed to merge nationalism and socialism'. As we can see, none of the contemporary dictionaries offered a very detailed definition of the concept.<sup>31</sup>

Encyclopedias offer more scope for substantial characterisation, conceptual contextualisation and historical exposition than dictionaries and word lists. Several major encyclopedias were published in Sweden in the years immediately after the Second World War: *Nordisk familjebok* (Nordic Family Book), *Bonniers Konversationslexikon* (Bonnier's Conversational Encyclopedia), *Bonniers Folklexikon* (Bonnier's Popular Encyclopedia), *Kunskapens bok* (The Book of Knowledge) and, most influential of all, *Svensk Uppslagsbok* (The Swedish Reference Book). All of them contained entries on 'National Socialism' and other related concepts.<sup>32</sup>

'National Socialists', the most exhaustive encyclopedic treatment of the topic, was published in *Svensk Uppslagsbok* of 1951. Exactly the same text was used two years later in *Nordisk familjebok*. That gave it an authority and spread unmatched by any other reference work in the early postwar period and there is good reason to examine this more carefully than the others.<sup>33</sup>

As the introductory section of the article in *Svensk Uppslagsbok* states, National Socialists are 'members and supporters of the German National Socialist Workers' Party [...] and of parties that have been strongly influenced by or copied the political teachings and methods of the German party'. So it was all essentially a German phenomenon. The historical presentation did admittedly reveal that the origin of the movement should be sought in the political environment in Central Europe around 1900, but it had very quickly developed into an internal German affair: its particular nature could only be understood if one traced it back to the 'defeated desperate soldiers' of the First World War. It was linked with other 'nationalistic and counter-revolutionary organisations' in the young Weimar republic. Its programme was cobbled together in an arbitrary and impassioned way, but there was no doubt that the party belonged in 'the national-radical camp'. Additionally, National Socialism was characterised as an anti-Semitic party that quickly recognised the importance of propaganda, agitation and suggestion.<sup>34</sup>

The bulk of the text consisted of a historical account of the development of the Nazi party up to its accession to power in 1933. A concluding section, however, systematised 'the so-called National Socialist ideology' and summarised the views that had formed the foundation of its teaching and practice in Nazi Germany. Gobineau, Nietzsche, Chamberlain, Haushofer, Spengler and Mussolini were numbered among the partially misunderstood and misinterpreted mentors. The only one of the party leaders to leave us with his own contribution to the ideology was Alfred Rosenberg.<sup>35</sup> National Socialism was a completely new ideology in that 'it was in opposition to traditional truths and ethical norms'. The core principles were summarised in a number of pithy sentences:

National Socialism denied all international ideals and was extremely nationalistic; furthermore, it was anti-intellectual, anti-democratic, anti-humanitarian and anti-individualist. It denied the modern ideals of freedom and truth. Action, dynamic and brutal force, were ranked above rational thinking and the norms of ethics and justice. The human being had no value as an individual, only as a member of his race and by what he did for his race; as a result of this, there was a marked element of hero worship and a heroic ideal in the ideology.<sup>36</sup>

In addition to this there was the belief in the master race. The German people were superior and would be further refined by racial policies that 'would purify the noble Nordic race and wipe out and suppress races that were categorised as inferior, particularly the Semitic races'. The ultimate expression of German supremacy was *der Führer* who, by the power vested in the leader principle, demanded unconditional obedience and loyalty. The concluding section noted that Sweden had had 'many Nazi-leaning organisations' but that none of them 'achieved any real significance'.<sup>37</sup>

This was the essence of the perception of National Socialism in *Svensk Uppslagsbok* and consequently it was also the view that was repeated a few years later in *Nordisk familjebok*. And effectively the same characterisation turned up in the other encyclopedias. In the *Bonniers Konversationslexikon* of 1944 Nazism was described as 'the official political movement in Germany'. Even though it was closely related to Italian fascism its origins were in all essentials German. The tactics of the party were distinguished by 'propaganda that was fiery and persuasive in the extreme'.<sup>38</sup> The Nazi ideology, which drew its justification from *Mein Kampf* and the views of Rosenberg, had strong elements of anti-intellectualism and vitalism. It proclaimed 'the importance of instinct and intuition' and expressed itself 'in derogatory terms about intelligence, reason and scholarship'. It stated: 'We utterly reject liberalism with its

rationalism and its belief in tolerance'. The positive side of the ideology, the core vision, consisted of 'nationalism taken to the extreme', primarily because National Socialism was considered to be the embodiment of the highest stage of German development. Racial theory provided one of the cornerstones of this: it implied partly that one should strive to strengthen the Nordic race and partly that one should combat the Jews. 'To an ever increasing extent, particularly since the outbreak of war in 1939, pure nationalism – that is, the self-assertion of Germany vis-à-vis other states and races – has become the central element in Nazi thinking', the author of the article noted, at the same time as stating that the worship of force and nothing short of the glorification of war had become strong.<sup>39</sup>

*Bonniers Folklexikon* gave a more summary description of Nazism but subscribed to similar interpretations to the above and even, in some cases, borrowed words and phrases from it. In this case, too, National Socialism was seen as an exclusively German phenomenon, its propaganda 'dominated by nationalistic and anti-Semitic views and anti-capitalist demands'. In addition to that, a notable feature of the ideology was 'its extreme anti-intellectualism', but its worship of force and glorification of war were also noted. 'In this utterly extreme version of nationalism the Germans were presented as a master race whose demands had unlimited validity', *Bonniers Folklexikon* stated, at the same time as focusing on the racial doctrines intended to strengthen the Aryans and exterminate the Jews. The philosophy of Nazism was, however, generally considered to be an 'ideology' in inverted commas, a hotchpotch of simple propagandist viewpoints that could be changed ruthlessly according to the political needs of the day.<sup>40</sup>

Given its essayistic format *Kunskapens bok* was less tied by the conventions of an encyclopedia, in spite of which the descriptions and definitions are to a great extent the same.<sup>41</sup> Nazism was described as being essentially 'the German equivalent of Italian fascism' but, taking the text as a whole, Nazism was presented as a German phenomenon through and through, intimately connected to German history. 'The so-called ideology of Nazism is characterised above all by three principles: the myths of blood, violence and the leader', is the forceful opening of the piece, which then goes on to develop those points further.<sup>42</sup> What was meant by the 'myth of blood' was the doctrine of the superiority of the German race. This doctrine, 'a crude echo from the philosophy of Hegel', was developed as a theory by, among others, Alfred Rosenberg but was put to practical use in 'the systematic mass murder of Jews and the policies of oppression and terror operated in the countries occupied



during the Second World War'. In view of their affirmation of violence the Nazis regarded war as the condition which did full justice to the abilities of mankind. Along with Carl Schmitt they believed that the relationship between neighbouring states should be one of enmity, the Second World War being the result of this doctrine. Finally, the cult of the leader led to 'absolute unlimited dictatorship, which brought terror and police brutality in its train'.<sup>43</sup>

This approach to characterising National Socialism differed in some respects from the other encyclopedias but the overall interpretation agreed. Nazism had strived 'to rebuild the nation on the basis of racial doctrine', a policy that went hand in hand with the suppression of the Jews and the combating of Marxism. Freedom was quickly dispensed with in the totalitarian state and the sole compensation introduced instead was 'a number of more apparent than real social welfare measures such as *Kraft durch Freude* (Strength through Joy)'. The article in *Kunskapens bok* was the only one to note that the majority of people in occupied Germany did whatever they could to deny their Nazi past. That was particularly the case in the Eastern Zone where many showed themselves capable of 'exchanging Nazism for communism, the ideology of which shows related characteristics because of its hostility to freedom and its totalitarian nature'.<sup>44</sup>

There was a fair degree of congruity in the concept of Nazism presented by postwar encyclopedias. The views on the historical origins of National Socialism, its central ideals and ideological principles tended to be in agreement. The introduction of adjacent and related phenomena is an important part of any conceptual historical attempt to define the nature of the semantic field more precisely, but it seems unlikely to be able to increase our understanding in this case.<sup>45</sup> In Sweden, to judge from the encyclopedias, 'fascism' was associated at this point exclusively with Italy and the Mussolini's Italian movement. 'Fascism was used as an all-embracing term for all the totalitarian ideologies that emerged in a majority of European countries during the interwar years', according to *Kunskapens bok*, but the article itself was devoted exclusively to Italian fascism. The same held true of the more comprehensive entries in *Svenska Uppslagsbok* and *Nordisk familjebok*: the text was devoted to the history of modern Italy.<sup>46</sup> When it came to the entries on Adolf Hitler, there was very little analysis of ideas or any ideological explication: they traced the life of the corporal from Braunau am Inn and in passing they might mention the 'basic psychopathic features of his character' and 'his antipathy to Marxist social democracy, his aversion to parliamentarism and his infernal hatred of the Jews'. Similarly, the articles dealing with the history of Germany consisted mainly of a

chronological account of events without any coherent characterisation of the Nazi ideology.<sup>47</sup>

### *The Characteristics of Nazism*

A history of concepts analysis cannot, however, stop short at the definitions to be found in dictionaries and encyclopedias; a more multi-faceted understanding of the Nazi experience emerges if other material is included. Newspapers provide an important type of source material, opening the way to a deeper understanding of the characteristics of National Socialism at the end of the Second World War.

An investigation based on newspaper articles involves a shift from conscious pronouncements to broader areas of discussion, from clearly delimited statements to discursive linkages. It means working with a significant body of texts and picking out those traits and leading ideals that were associated with Nazism.<sup>48</sup> The focus is on leading articles, commentaries and, to an extent, cultural material from the biggest and most influential papers – articles that in some measure attempted to influence opinion. The limits are not self-evident and clear-cut: they are actuated by my history of ideas orientation towards the political, intellectual and cultural spheres.<sup>49</sup>

Certain features emerged time after time in the multi-faceted press discussion of Nazism. National Socialism was associated with traditions, ascribed characteristics and associated with values. It is possible to pick out certain definite perceptions of Nazism in the vigorous exchange of views. The scale of the material means that a discursive approach will be a significant step in the history of concepts reconstruction of the experience, even though the term ‘National Socialism’ will by no means always be central.

The fact that Nazism was *nationalistic* was emphasised right from the start; it was something that was recognised by commentators whether they were conservative, liberal or socialist. The emphasis shifted according to the position of the commentators on the political spectrum but there were few people who questioned the nation state or the national principle as such. What was identified as the ruinous aspect of nationalism in Nazism was the extreme nature of the Greater German chauvinism, the urge to subordinate society to the ultra-nationalist principle at any price and to elevate that principle to the guiding norm.

In a major article on ‘the rise and fall of nationalism’ in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* the problem was put under the spotlight. After an introductory panorama of the misgivings that existed about

the national currents of the nineteenth century, the author could only state:

The fact that nationalism really can be a poisoned chalice for nations is something that our age has experienced to the full. What else could be expected to result from this constant whipping up of national self-esteem, this vile habit of calling egotism and arrogance virtues as long as they are wrapped in the national colours? The original idea that nations, however competitive they may be, were nevertheless equal in principle and respected each other's rights, could not hold up against such utterly overweening arrogance. This development is not visible to the same degree in all countries, but in small new states and in young great powers, particularly Germany, the idea has been taken to absurd extremes.<sup>50</sup>

National emotions in Germany, moreover, were inflamed by doctrines that promoted violence and oppression. This unfortunate coalescence proved fateful for Germany. 'Nationalism, whipped up to a frenzy', the author wrote, smashed the sense of justice and opened the way to brutality, arbitrary use of power and a loss of freedom. Nationalism soon revealed itself to be expansionist, and as a step on the road towards the vision of a Greater Germany Nazism annexed its neighbours.<sup>51</sup> Many Swedish newspapers similarly characterised National Socialism as a special form of German nationalism. Nationalism in Germany had come together with various abhorrent domestic traditions and been transformed into an aggressive and predatory monster. Those people who expressly wanted to defend national principles were at pains to emphasise the immoderate and perverted aspects of the German national movement.<sup>52</sup>

'Nationalism is at the heart of Hitler's manifesto', the newspaper *Aftontidningen* wrote in its obituary on his death. When he was still just a boy Hitler had been enthralled by ultra-national dreams of a Greater German realm, visions that grew stronger in the filthy hostels of Vienna and during the desperate humiliation of the Weimar republic. An idealised picture of the German people and the calling of the German nation were the factors that determined his actions. Similar thoughts were to be found in other articles about Hitler after his death in April 1945. In a sense his conceptual world was contradictory and elusive, but its turbid foundation lay in ordinary German nationalism. What the Austrian corporal had to offer was a perverted and extreme form of patriotism.<sup>53</sup>

Compared to its nationalism, anti-Semitism and racism were secondary components in Nazism. They were certainly referred to, sometimes as independent phenomena but more often as a consequence of Nazism's aggressive ultra-nationalism. Greater German chauvinism

left no space for races other than the Aryan. Nationalism was the superordinate principle, the guiding light that made Nazism coherent and which ultimately seemed to explain the persecution of the Jews.<sup>54</sup>

Nazism was also viewed as a manifestation of *irrationalism*. The idea that unreason had celebrated its greatest triumph when the Nazis came to power in January 1933 was a recurring one. Nazi doctrine was described as a hotchpotch of all kinds of fanatical and heretical ideas. It lacked logical coherence as a political ideology and was only capable of appealing to the lowest and darkest aspects of man. National Socialism was associated with dark and damp places, with occultism and superstition, with base instincts and urges. Generally speaking Nazism was presented as the antithesis of a well-organised, efficient and rational social order built on a foundation of knowledge, logic and progress.

People spoke surprisingly often, for instance, of the hysteria that had taken hold of their southern neighbour. Soldiers and executioners had carried out the orders of soothsayers and occultists. The Nazis had turned their hazy theories into reality with considerable success, promoting a renaissance of dark desires. Germany came to resemble 'a primitive sect in which the urges that, for want of a better word, we call 'animal' flourished'.<sup>55</sup>

The temptations of Nazism even defied contemporary interpretations. The German people seemed to have been under the sway of a powerful spell but now, at last, had been released from its curse. The explanation for Hitler's successes had to be sought in 'the irrational, in an almost inexplicable hypnotic power over people that cannot be captured by any intellectual formula', as one obituary of Hitler expressed it. Against this there were others who emphasised social and historical factors that could be objectively ascertained, but even they were often unsure of themselves, doubting whether reason could ever provide a full explanation of Nazism. Ultimately and most profoundly it remained irrational.<sup>56</sup>

The perception that National Socialism had involved a *breach of civilisation* was also widespread. It was an idea that went hand in hand with the view that Nazism was an irrational movement. Peaceful democratic development had, of course, been interrupted time after time during the nineteenth century, and then there was the First World War, but the Nazi seizure of power had above all represented a relapse into barbarism. Nazism was seen as an atavism, as a chimera emanating from an earlier stage of development. Its adherents had elevated a primitive doctrine of power into a philosophy of state; with them progress had reached its definitive end point and a grim cultural twilight had settled over the continent of Europe.

Nazism was viewed as a horrific rupture in the development of Western civilisation. World history had been knocked off course and was no longer progressing towards ever more humanity. What had been witnessed was a terrifying and previously unseen vision of cultural depravity in which the German people had entered the service of barbarism. Graphic descriptions were sometimes given of how the Nazis had actively set about destroying cultural values, but as a rule it was a case of rather more generalised statements about barbarism in contrast to civilisation. In a few rare cases there was a triumphal narrative – Nazism was finally and thoroughly defeated and the development towards greater civilisation and more culture could now continue. But the more common reaction was one of shock and pessimism.<sup>57</sup>

Commentators on the right stressed the breach of civilisation more than most. They perceived the collapse of the civil rule of law to be particularly alarming, especially when – as in Nazi Germany – it went hand in hand with a marked anti-individualism. They defended themselves vigorously against accusations that suggested that Nazism was a bourgeois phenomenon. ‘There is, of course, a marked contrast between the whole Nazi ideology and the ideas that are the foundation of a bourgeois outlook’, stated an analysis in the newspaper *Östgöta Correspondenten* just a year after the end of the war. The article continued: ‘Thus in the doctrines of the Nazis the individual is not acknowledged as having any value [...] whereas one of the central principles of the bourgeois view – whether it be liberal or conservative – is precisely to assert the value of the individual.’<sup>58</sup> As far as it is possible to judge, it would appear that in the wake of the Second World War conservatives struggled to take control of the interpretation of history, it being a matter of the utmost importance for them to present Nazism as inimical to the bourgeois order. Above all else they wanted to maintain a distinct boundary between National Socialism and conservatism, which is why they invoked Arvid Lindman and his clear rejection of the Nazi aspirations of the Young Conservative Party in 1934. Nazism may or may not have been a party of the right but established conservatism had always kept the right wing of its own house in order. So said the conclusion.<sup>59</sup>

It was repeatedly stressed that Nazism was an *ideology of violence*. The Third Reich was presented as the Sparta of its age – warlike, hard and brutal, characterised by blind discipline, militarism and aggressiveness. The Nazis’ ruthless wars of conquest demonstrated the truth of all that. The harsh and inhuman treatment of their fellow countrymen as well as of foreigners in the countries they had conquered sent out a clear message. What is more, all levels of National Socialist society was permeated by the brown-shirted ideology of violence.

In December 1945 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* felt compelled to remind its readers once again what Nazism was. It was, the paper wrote, 'violence and injustice, it was murder and torture, it was assaults on states and on people, it was the horrors of the concentration camps, terror, it was Lidice, Ourador and Maidanek and endlessly more of the same'. In its very essence it was cruel and unjust, celebrating principles that conflicted with every aspect of humanity and human value. The author of an article in *Stockholms-Tidningen* wrote of 'Hitler's belief that only violence could solve the great questions of the age, only by resorting to violence could the German nation become the ruler of Europe and the world'. Violence was not only revealed as a method for achieving his aims, but also as the ideological lynchpin in the National Socialist vision of reality. In Nazism violence was raised to its highest possible potency.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, there were also a number of perceptions of National Socialism that occurred but did not seem to gather much general support. They can be seen as subsidiary. One of them asserted that Nazism had carried through a revolution, but a revolution of a reactionary nature: this view was related to perceptions of National Socialism as an irrational movement and as a decisive breach of civilisation. The Nazis had marched forward and the upheaval they had caused had been utterly cataclysmic, but the values and ideals that bore them had been drawn from the darkness of history. In other words, the Nazi revolution was a revolution under the sign of reaction, without that terminology necessarily being used. In other contexts people spoke of Nazism as the quintessence of evil. The notion that Hitler was evil incarnate was a thought with religious overtones and occurred above all in the Christian press. The idea does not appear to have been particularly common among the wider public.<sup>61</sup> The totalitarianism theory also had its advocates though they do not seem to have been very numerous during those particular years.<sup>62</sup>

Nationalistic, irrational, barbaric, affirming violence – these were the core perceptions of Nazism in Sweden during the years following the Second World War. One further characteristic should, however, be added – a characteristic that in a sense linked many of the others and also located them culturally: that was the perception that National Socialism was a *German* phenomenon.

In the host of publications that appeared in the final phase of the war the Nazi problem was almost invariably coupled with the German problem. Nazism was a part of Germany's history, present and future. The discussion of Nazism as a wider problem might on occasion take the Swedish, European or universally human situation as its starting

point, but the direction was usually determined by what was understood to be the relationship between Nazism and Germany. When an explanation of Nazism needed to be given, eyes turned to Germany: irrespective of whether the emphasis was on nationalism or irrationalism, the breach of civilisation, the ideology of violence or something else, the reasons were to be sought in the German tradition.

A good deal of the misfortune could be ascribed to Prussian militarism, a fatal and momentous German tradition. Here lay the root of Nazi despotism and expansionism, warmongering and brutality. Hitler himself was described as a militarist for whom the brutality of war provided the elixir of life. In other words, militarism explained the National Socialist ideology of violence. Alternatively, this line of thought could be associated with Prussia, Prussia being seen as the earthly home of the ideology of violence, as the place from which militarism emerged. Whenever people discussed Prussian virtues the characteristics referred to were to a great extent the same as when people were discussing Nazism as an ideology of violence: discipline, brutality and correction. It was a kind of harsh culture of obedience, blind subservience to authority. The underlying cause of the ideology of violence was German militarism in its Prussian guise. This perception was so universal that it was without doubt the dominant view when Nazism was considered as a German phenomenon.<sup>63</sup>

It was also possible to trace the irrationality of Nazism back in German history, usually associating it with the strongly romantic trends in German culture and philosophy. Speculation and unworldly metaphysics had always been highly rated whereas the ideas of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution had never really penetrated German consciousness. That implied that National Socialism was a product of a deep-rooted Germanic irrationalism. And at the same time it had proved capable of making a ruthless appeal to the irrational traits in the German character. The guiding principle of nationalism, too, was capable of explanation in historical terms. It derived its conceptual form from Herder and Fichte and thus diverged from English and French nationalism right from the start. During the nineteenth century the forced pace of German unification under Prussian leadership fanned the growth of aggressive and militant nationalism. It was believed that it had reached its peak with the First World War, but German nationalism proved to be capable of even greater crimes.<sup>64</sup>

The result was that Nazism was seen as a particularly German form of nationalism. There is no space here for a full examination of the wider debates but a few of the more important aspects should be mentioned. One of these was the question of guilt. One view of this issue

can be summarised with the idea of 'the other Germany'. The proponents of this approach agreed that there could be no denying the guilt of the Nazis. But there was another Germany, *the country of poets and philosophers*. It was the stronghold of humanity and culture, the home of art and classical culture, the country of Luther and Kant, Goethe and Schiller. Those ideals had somehow survived Nazism and those were the ideals on which we should pin our hopes.<sup>65</sup>

It is not clear how widespread this view was in Sweden but it was held in some culturally idealistic and culturally conservative circles, primarily perhaps by older anti-Nazi Germanophiles. Just a few days after the end of the war, in May 1945, for instance, the philosopher and popular educator Alf Ahlberg took up arms for the other Germany. In a major article in *Dagens Nyheter* he argued with passion that not all Germans were 'vile sadists and servile thugs' and that there existed infinite spiritual resources to build a new country. He attacked those who hated Germany, stating that in his view they were guilty of the same primitive thought processes as anti-Semites. In conclusion, Ahlberg's article said: 'Germany is a great country [...] with enormous possibilities for both good and for evil, as its history has shown only too well. Which of those two will form the Germany of the future will depend to a great extent on the attitude of the outside world. But what is certain is that anti-Germanism of the same kind as anti-Semitism will not favour the possibility of good.'<sup>66</sup>

For Ahlberg and those who shared his views the Third Reich was a negation of the Germany of Luther, Kant and Goethe. Others, however, considered it to be a logical fulfilment. This was particularly true of those who subscribed to the theory of Vansittartism, a theory that goes back to the British diplomat Robert Gilbert Vansittart who maintained that the main cause of the Second World War was the domineering aggression in the soul of the German people. The German nation, which was profoundly anti-democratic and militaristic, must be condemned because the guilt was collective.<sup>67</sup> It would appear from earlier studies, however, that Vansittartism was a marginal phenomenon as far as Sweden was concerned. There are traces of it in social democrat, liberal and possibly even in conservative publications but they never went on to achieve any real prominence. Rather the opposite, in fact, these views usually being sneered at and condemned as, for instance, happened when Vansittart's memoirs were published in Swedish in 1943. Explicit Vansittartism was and remained rare in Sweden.<sup>68</sup>

The analysis of the newspaper material reveals that National Socialism was perceived as a nationalistic, irrational ideology of violence which clearly marked a breach in the development of civilisation.



Its origin was to be found in calamitous traditions in Germany. This part of the study does not only reinforce the fact that the perception of National Socialism was virtually homogeneous, it also defines more closely the meaning of the concept of Nazism. In spite of the fact that it dealt with sources other than dictionaries and encyclopedias, it is possible to distinguish quite clearly a common view of National Socialism. Before I gather together the strands into a general characterisation there is one further conceptual investigation that is needed – an examination of the political and intellectual analyses of Nazism.

### *Analyses of Nazism*

In this final section I shall turn to the great body of reportage, observations and essays that was published in book form in the wake of the Second World War. Many of these works, which taken as a body we might call political and intellectual analysis, were duly reviewed and gave rise to discussions that had an impact on the conceptual understanding of the time. This particular investigation involves more of a general analysis of ideas than the two foregoing.<sup>69</sup>

Numerous works about Nazism and related phenomena appeared in the years around 1945. If we widen our definition and also include books about the Second World War the number rises dramatically and runs to hundreds of titles, probably more. From all of these, however, it is possible to select forty or so weightier contributions that can form the basis of this last stage in the reconstruction of the meaning of Nazism.<sup>70</sup>

It is interesting that there was a marked change in the character and orientation of the publications during the course of the 1940s. It is possible to pick out three relatively distinct phases. During the first period (1943–1945) Nazism was still a living threat. The second period (1945–1947) was dominated by the guilt of the Germans and the historical roots of Nazism. Much of the third period (1947–1950) was taken up with the problems of the future Germany and fear of a restoration of Nazism during the early years of the Cold War. These shifts in thematic emphasis should not be overlooked and it is important to take them into account when considering Nazism as a concept. I shall therefore spend some time on two significant texts from each of the phases, analysing the first text in each case more substantially and treating the second more as a complement.

The last two years of the war and the first year of peace (1943–1945) can be seen as a distinct period. For most of this period Nazism was the state doctrine of a terrifying regime at the heart of Europe. No real discussion of the guilt of the Germans and the future of the country

had started. To judge by the literature published in Sweden people were keen to work out what was happening in Nazi Germany. Usually taking the form of reportage, several of the books attempted to describe how life was lived in the Third Reich and what the atmosphere and mood there was like. Nazism as a social system fascinated the writers, as did the character of the leading figures. And these years also saw the publication of the first histories of 'the age of the swastika' as one writer called the period. They often involved efforts to describe the origins of Nazism and the Second World War and consequently the questions raised treated Nazism as a current problem.<sup>71</sup>

In September 1943 Arvid Fredborg published his reportage book *Bakom stålvalLEN* (Behind the Rampart of Steel), subtitled 'A Swedish correspondent in Berlin 1941–43'. In 1941 the newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* had chosen this young journalist, previously best known among conservative circles in Uppsala, to be its man in Berlin and he quickly won a reputation among Swedish correspondents in Germany. On his return to Sweden he wrote *Bakom stålvalLEN*, which became one of the most noted books of the year.<sup>72</sup>

Arvid Fredborg did not hide his loathing of the system but he was careful not to demonise Germans in general. The greater part of the book was taken up with a thorough review of the political development from the outbreak of war in September 1939 to the Allied actions during the spring of 1943. At the end of the book Fredborg gave his view of Nazism and these are the parts I shall focus on. His view was that the National Socialist ideology had never really conquered Germany, that the Third Reich had never been sustained by a coherent vision, that the original outlook had been eroded step by step, and that by the end of the 1930s it was to all intents and purposes off the agenda. The society the Nazis had created was subject to police terror and to the whims of mediocre leaders. Given a state apparatus of that kind, incompetence and inefficiency were protected to an extent that would not be possible in a democracy. Servility, corruption and immorality flourished.<sup>73</sup>

Arvid Fredborg described the Third Reich as a nihilistic revolution. He admitted that there were a number of practical questions, for instance population policies, on which the National Socialists ought to have been able to win a degree of acceptance, but the moral morass into which Germany had been dragged made any such judgment impossible. The mass killings by execution squads demonstrated that brutality had become the norm. Fredborg was horrified by the extermination of the Jews but referred to it almost *en passant* as just one among many other chapters in the history of the cultural degeneration of Germany.<sup>74</sup> The Nazis brought new values, a new mentality. 'The middle class

was ground down, the church pushed into the background, society was levelled and the workers' organisations fell into the hands of the Nazis like ripe fruit', Fredborg wrote. When the Christian foundations of Germany ruptured there was nothing capable of hindering the new religion of nature, 'a gospel of blood, might and Germanism'. Fredborg did not hide his revulsion at this relapse into barbarism. A wind from *Hávamál* and the Viking Age is blowing our way, he stated.<sup>75</sup>

'Hitler's movement is not only an indirect consequence of Versailles but also has to be seen as an expression of quintessential aspects of the German character', Fredborg wrote in his attempt to find the roots of German misfortune. Many of the destructive traits in the German national character were taken to the extreme by Nazism, above all the Prussian spirit. Having said this, Fredborg stressed, one of the most important tasks for posterity will be to maintain the distinction between Germans and Nazis, even though it will take a long time for the German people to recover.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, Fredborg did hold out hope for the future. 'The other Germany', downtrodden and suppressed, stepped forward in the guise of the splintered opposition to Nazism. He put his greatest hope in the monarchists, mainly perhaps because he himself argued for a renaissance of constitutional monarchy.<sup>77</sup> On the other hand, he had very little time for the communists, tending to emphasise the similarity between them and the Nazis.<sup>78</sup>

Major review articles on *Bakom stålvalLEN* appeared in all the main newspapers during the autumn of 1943. In spite of a focus on the politics of the day it is possible to identify two broader themes that emerged – the question of the future and that of the Nazi social system. Virtually all the reviewers approached the momentous question of how Germany and the continent of Europe would look when the war was over. And hardly any of them failed to discuss Fredborg's visions of a renaissance of monarchy in postwar Europe although, except in the conservative press, these ideas did not fall on fertile ground.<sup>79</sup> Generally speaking, few people showed much enthusiasm for the old continent. 'As far as the Nordic countries are concerned', wrote *Stockholms-Tidningen* for instance, 'the main connections reach out over the great oceans. They are Atlantic, not continental European.'<sup>80</sup>

More hope was put on domestic opposition. The clear distinction between Nazis and Germans that was maintained in *Bakom stålvalLEN* was particularly welcome. Fredborg's clear stance against all thoughts of collective guilt earned him praise.<sup>81</sup> Some dissonant voices were raised, however, mainly perhaps by *Handelstidningen*, which questioned whether it was really possible to distinguish between Nazism and the German people.<sup>82</sup>

The reviewers also turned their attention to Nazism and the Nazi system of society. Some of them seemed to think that this particular vein ought to have been worked out long since, but the men in Berlin continued to exert a fascination.<sup>83</sup> Fredborg's description of the rivalry and inefficiency in Nazi Germany was thought to be very apt. The constant tension between different power groupings was evidence of an utterly corrupt system. The propaganda, the lies, the euphemisms – in short, the vast gulf between appearance and reality – was clear for all to see. Fredborg's words about the victory of brutality and the destruction of the concept of honour were quoted with approval.<sup>84</sup> It would appear that precisely those weaknesses – corruption and incompetence – that people usually, and sometimes not without reason, ascribe to parliamentary democracy, occur in far worse and more blatant forms in dictatorships', was the conclusion of *Svenska Dagbladet*, Arvid Fredborg's own paper.<sup>85</sup> It was not just the violence and the war that made them repudiate Nazi Germany, there was the additional lesson that democracy as a principle offered a far better chance than dictatorship of creating a properly functioning society.

All in all, both Fredborg and the reviewers felt that National Socialism represented a relapse into barbarism, its origins traceable back to Prussian virtues. A distinction should be made between German and Nazis and there should be no collective condemnation. One interesting aspect was the criticism of the corruption and inefficiency the Nazi system had generated.

Konrad Heiden's book *Der Führer* received a good deal of attention when it appeared in Swedish in the late autumn of 1944. The book presented the most complete biography of Hitler up to that point, as well as the most detailed description of the Nazi party's route to power. A German journalist, the author had followed Hitler at close quarters, which appealed to a public which had had to rely on second-hand accounts at best. Even though Heiden stopped short in the middle of the 1930s, he was still able to satisfy the great interest for snapshots from inside the Third Reich.<sup>86</sup>

Much space in the Swedish reviews was devoted to the figure of Hitler. He was a man filled with hatred, scorn and rage, his actions characterised by false promises and failed prophecies. With his brilliance as a propagandist he aroused and inflamed the passions of the masses. His speeches were a chaotic torrent of contradictions and paradoxes that appealed to the most primitive instincts of rootless Germans.<sup>87</sup> Nazism as an ideology was condemned in the same way as Hitler the man. 'The whole "doctrine" is nothing more than a mishmash of confusing ideas and cynically contrived speculations in mass simplicity and mass

passion', wrote *Göteborgs Morgonpost* in its review of Heiden's book. National Socialism was merely a new form of expression for much older German phenomena.<sup>88</sup>

Once again, a number of the fundamental perceptions of Nazism are repeated. In the first place it is a matter of irrationalism and unreason. National Socialism was a manifestation of emotional intoxication and uncontrolled passion. Secondly, Nazism marks a breach in the evolution of civilisation, a nihilistic revolt against the time-honoured Western cultural and legal traditions. Because of Hitler and his gang a great and cultured European nation had been ruined. Finally, the causes of Nazism were to be found in the history of Germany. Militarism, Prussianism and grandiose nationalism were lines of development that culminated in the Third Reich. They were topics that would be studied more feverishly in the coming years.

The period following the surrender in 1945 was a time of poverty, humiliation and hunger in Germany. But in spite of the material need an intense and amazingly vital debate was going on among the ruins about German guilt for Nazi crimes and about the roots of Nazism in German history. Even before the war ended, a national inquest had begun in exile, but it was not until the first years of peace that a more thorough self-inquisition really took off. References and reviews in the Swedish press bore witness to the activity and debate going on in Germany and some of the most important contributions to it appeared in Swedish translation, usually in the form of scholarly works from the pens of leading humanists and thinkers. And the question of guilt was also taken up in a more concrete sense at this time. The Nuremberg trials of leading Nazis were followed closely in Sweden and several books of reportage appeared. The debate around these issues was vigorous for a short time, but then the Cold War and the two new German states placed other questions at the centre of debate. That was true both in Germany and in Sweden.<sup>89</sup>

Among the important works on the question of German guilt to appear in Swedish translation were books by the theologian Karl Barth in 1945 and by the philosopher Karl Jaspers in 1947.<sup>90</sup> Together with Jaspers's book, the historian Friedrich Meinecke's *Die deutsche Katastrophe* (The German Catastrophe), which appeared in Swedish translation in 1947, was the most significant contribution in Germany. As a successor to Leopold von Ranke and editor of the *Historische Zeitschrift* for several decades, Meinecke was the *Altmeister* of German historical scholarship, a learned humanist who was widely read even in Sweden and who was appreciated far beyond the confines of professional historians. Meinecke's ideological development had moved

from strong admiration for Bismarck during the empire to a rational republican stance during the Weimar republic and on to resistance against Nazism during the Third Reich. The aging Meinecke who wrote *Die deutsche Katastrophe* appeared as a national liberal with a deep respect for the German humanistic tradition and for the institutions of civic society.<sup>91</sup>

Friedrich Meinecke's book put the 'German catastrophe' in a broad historical context. The introductory chapter was devoted to an explanation of the historical roots of the Third Reich. Following Jacob Burckhardt he saw the beginnings in the coming into being of the mass man and the dissolution of the old social bonds. The socialist and the national movements, the two great waves of the nineteenth century, swept up the rootless and in the twentieth century merged them into a fateful blend. This, according to Meinecke, was a development common to the whole of the Western world, but he went on to emphasise specific elements in the German tradition.<sup>92</sup> Under the fatal influence of Prussian militarism the balance between intellect and power in Germany had been disturbed, opening the road to National Socialism, 'the heir to and the transmitter of a great and fine Prussian tradition'.<sup>93</sup> Meinecke agreed with the description of Nazism as a nihilistic revolution, a victory for what he called 'mass-Machiavellianism'.<sup>94</sup> At this point, however, inner tensions begin to show up in Meinecke: at the same time as he traced the origins of Nazism back to aggressive Prussian militarism, the growth of mass society and the power hunger of the haute bourgeoisie, by the end of his book he was tending to absolve the Germans from any guilt. The Nazis were described as a group of reckless swindlers who could not be ascribed any great historical status:

However shocking and distressing it may be that a gang of criminals succeeded in forcing the German people to follow them for twelve years, convincing a large part of the nation that they were following a great 'idea', this very fact actually contains a calming and comforting element. The German nation had not fallen ill as a result of an inherently criminal mentality, but it was suffering from a severe one-off infection caused by a poison coming from outside.<sup>95</sup>

A hint of this split in Meinecke's argumentation could sometimes be seen in the appreciative Swedish reviews. In his review of the original German volume, Knut Petersson explained that Hitler was certainly a historical accident but he was an exponent of an unfortunate German power mentality and that it was necessary to purge Germany from the Hitler plague. Like the authors of a number of other articles Petersson spent most time on Meinecke's historical analysis of the roots of Nazism. He found the description of the background to National Socialism to be

very fair minded. He pointed in particular to the thesis that nationalism and socialism, the two dominant movements of the nineteenth century, had run together to form National Socialism. That introduced a new and revolutionary element into the picture, one that was utterly predisposed to using the power of the state for its own subversive purposes. Knut Petersson was not the only one convinced by the idea, and many writers considered this insight to be necessary to any understanding of how the Nazis had succeeded in taking control of a civilised country like Germany.<sup>96</sup>

In a wide-ranging review Jean Braconier put unbridled German nationalism in the dock. Quite clearly nationalism was not something exclusively German and in sensible doses it was indispensable, but in Germany it had taken extreme forms. Nazi anti-Semitism, mentioned only in passing, was to a great extent subordinate to the exaggerated affirmation of nation. Generally speaking, many people fastened on Meinecke's description of Nazism as a chauvinistic movement.<sup>97</sup>

There was general agreement that Prussian militarism was of decisive significance in any description of the history of Nazism. Prussianism and blind discipline were regrettable traits in German history. Aggressive militarism had permeated German society since the end of the nineteenth century and Nazism was both a product of and an heir to Prussia. That was a viewpoint which Meinecke himself had proposed but Swedish reviewers supported it even more strongly than he had done.<sup>98</sup>

Friedrich Meinecke painted a bright picture of nineteenth-century Germany. As a historian he had himself written about Germany's transition from *Kultur* to *Staatsnation*, and the period between the Napoleonic Wars and German unification in 1871 seemed to him to be a golden age. That view was reflected in *Die deutsche Katastrophe*. His diatribes against mass culture and technology reveal his conservative sympathies, which were not shown much mercy by the Swedes who read his work. On the other hand, they did share Meinecke's view that Hitler's accession to power had irreversibly destroyed the progress of earlier generations. In the end the Nazis had halted the evolutionary process of liberal society and dragged Germany down into a catastrophic abyss.<sup>99</sup>

So once again we meet the same perceptions of Nazism. It was a phenomenon characterised by a power mentality, chauvinism and Prussian iron discipline, a revolutionary movement with nihilistic attitudes. By exploiting the currents of the age with absolute ruthlessness, the Nazis had broken with German humanism and Western democratic values and overthrown bourgeois society. They had brought the

liberal development of the nineteenth century to a definitive end and thrown Germany back into barbarism. Meinecke had investigated the underlying causes with greater authority than anyone else. He had admittedly emphasised the merging of nationalism and socialism as a significant common factor that was not specific to Germany, and he had also talked of Hitlerism as a foreign criminal conspiracy. But the core of his argument was something else: in spite of everything, National Socialism was revealed as a movement whose origins were to be found in German tradition. It was not possible to explain Nazism without reference to militarism and the Prussian virtues. Swedish commentators shared this view.

Max Picard, the Swiss doctor and author, can stand as an example of the psychological and cultural-philosophical analyses of Nazism common at that time. He published his *Hitler in uns selbst* (Hitler in Ourselves) in 1946 and it was translated into Swedish in the same year. It did not have anything like the intellectual weight of Meinecke, Barth or Jaspers, but it is representative of the quite substantial body of popular interpretations that appeared during those years.<sup>100</sup>

In *Hitler in uns selbst* Picard saw National Socialism as the ultimate consequence of the divided soul that led modern man to fall victim to fallacious suggestions and political charlatans. Humankind had been carrying the Hitler spirit within itself long before 1933 and the germ had infected literature, art and scholarship for a whole epoch. The defeat of Nazism was no more than a temporary respite and, in all essentials, the basic problems remained.<sup>101</sup> In their reviews of *Hitler in uns selbst* the reviewers agreed with Picard on one point: the age they were living in was suffering in many respects from a lack of context and human beings felt at a loss in a time of discontinuity. On the other hand, they questioned whether his analysis of the nature of Nazism was really adding anything new. In spite of everything, being divided and lacking profound seriousness were not the same as being a Nazi.<sup>102</sup>

The reception of Max Picard's book revealed a distinct unwillingness on the part of Swedes to view National Socialism as a psychological condition common to the Western world. Nazism could not be reduced to being a representative of the modern spiritual state or of a general dissatisfaction with culture. Its origins had to be sought in something more concrete: political ideals, intellectual traditions, historical trends. This was a view that was fully in keeping with the reception of other literature on National Socialism at this time. The reviews of Meinecke's book, for instance, had reinforced the interpretation that Nazism had its roots in certain German traditions. Swedes saw the forerunners of the Third Reich in militarism, in irrationalism and in Prussian chauvinism.



Some years after the end of the war it became clear that a new Germany was beginning to emerge. The Allied zones of occupation led to the formation of two separate states in 1949 and the divided Germany became the first battleground of the Cold War. In the shadow of high international politics the homeless Germans struggled to keep body and soul together. Along with these changes the main focus of the debate shifted. Reportage and analyses of society – common genres at this time – concentrated on daily life, political processes and the growing conflict between the great powers. If the question of Nazism arose, it was above all in connection with the unfinished process of coming to terms with the past. The more abstract discussion of guilt and historical continuity was much less prominent. By the time the 1940s was turning into the 1950s the publication of books and articles about Nazism had virtually ceased. The German question continued to demand attention but the questions were now different, as were the attitudes.<sup>103</sup>

In other words, the preconditions for an analysis of the concept of Nazism changed in the latter part of the 1940s. National Socialism had disappeared from view as a concrete threat and historical problem. The memory of Nazism was nevertheless present in the world of the Cold War as a challenging reminder that it could potentially make a return. We can give two short concrete examples of the new orientation. Karl Popper's *The Open Society and its Enemies* was reviewed in *Dagens Nyheter* in August 1947, the writer of the article – 'Totalitarian Ideas through the Ages' – being Herbert Tingsten, the editor in chief. He was of the view that Popper's book was 'one of the most brilliant and important works on the history of ideas to have appeared in decades'. The starting point for Popper's book was the historical existence of a closed society in which the behaviour of the human being and the life of society are ruled completely by fixed beliefs and conventions. The contrast to this is 'the open society' which is characterised by rational belief, the independence of the individual and a conviction that the development of society is not bound by a supra-historical fate. According to Popper, there is always a danger of reverting to a closed society, partly as a result of utopias that depict a perfected order, and partly through the sort of historicism that purports to be identifying the inexorable course of development. Human beings are presented as puppets that have been deprived of all freedom and all responsibility. 'The ideologues of the closed society are the real reactionaries', Tingsten stated in his review.<sup>104</sup>

The targets for Popper's philosophical criticism were primarily Plato, Hegel and Marx. Tingsten devoted most time to the first of the three and it became clear that he considered the major benefit of Popper's work to be its elucidation of the historical origin of the totalitarian ideologies.

Logically, then, Plato was seen as a precursor of Nazism. The Greek philosopher, like the German movement, had favoured a doctrine of race, praised the leader principle and equated morality with actions in the interest of the state. This closed society represented for him the realisation of absolute ideas. As for Hegel, according to Tingsten, in line with Popper, he constructed an outlook in which the implacable laws of history inhibited human freedom and responsibility. At the heart of this teaching lay 'the veneration of power and success, of the state and of war':

In a variety of ways, therefore, Hegel's philosophy has been the prime inspiration of the totalitarian orientation and regimes of the age. Hegel, like Plato, uses fine words like freedom and justice, but he gives them a meaning that diverges totally from the normal one – indeed, they are virtually the opposite. Fascism, Nazism and communism have used the same method in order to present oppression and uniformity as freedom, tyranny as justice and dictatorship as democracy.<sup>105</sup>

As early as the interwar period Herbert Tingsten had established himself as one of Sweden's leading experts on modern ideologies. In a number of books, including *Den nationella diktaturen* (The National Dictatorship) in 1936 and *De konservativa idéerna* (The Conservative Ideas) in 1939, he had analysed National Socialism and come to the conclusion that it was an anti-intellectual, reactionary and mythic phenomenon in direct opposition to enlightenment and reason. After the outbreak of the Second World War he revised to some extent his view that Nazism was a manifestation of extreme conservatism, but he stuck to the main points of his characterisation.<sup>106</sup> During the closing years of the 1940s Tingsten championed a relaunch in Sweden of the theory of totalitarianism and he found a true soulmate in Popper, a man who convincingly elucidated the philosophical relationship of Nazism to other opponents of the open society. Tingsten rarely referred directly to the international debate about totalitarianism that got underway in the years around 1950. But it did provide him with a sort of intellectual foundation to stand on when he continued his anti-communist campaigns in the same way as he had earlier attacked Nazism and fascism. The totalitarianism theory did not, however, prevent Tingsten continuing to argue the case for Nazism being a political offshoot of German Romanticism.<sup>107</sup>

As a result of Nazism becoming a significant element of the theory of totalitarianism in the years around 1950, it continued to confound political consciousness and to stimulate ideological debate. At the same time, however, disquieting signals were coming in from the occupied zones. Nazism was certainly dead but the Germans were refusing to

acknowledge their share of responsibility. That was the conclusion reached by many Swedish travellers and reporters visiting Germany in the second half of the 1940s. They expressed substantial fears of a Nazi restoration – there were traces of brown lurking beneath a surface that was becoming more and more highly polished.<sup>108</sup>

The reactions to Hjalmar Schacht's book *Abrechnung mit Hitler* (Account Settled) when it appeared in Swedish in 1949 fitted in with this pattern. Schacht was an economist and had held several significant functions in the Third Reich, including being Minister of Economic Affairs and financially responsible for German rearmament. After becoming one of a circle of conservative resistance men, he was sent to a concentration camp following the attempt on Hitler's life in July 1944. He was acquitted at the Nuremberg trials and in his apologia in *Abrechnung mit Hitler* he swore he was free of guilt and argued that all the accusations against him were unjust.<sup>109</sup>

The reviews of Schacht's book showed a considerable level of agreement. What the book revealed was a sweeping defence of his own role, an example of monumental egocentricity and the ability to twist facts to suit the author's own ends. The opinion of the Swedish reviewers was that the book was a hash of half-lies and half-truths whose only purpose was to exculpate Schacht himself. Schacht was described as blind and self-regarding, a man who had 'experienced so much and understood so little', as Ulf Brandell concluded his review in *Dagens Nyheter*. The attacks were mainly directed at Schacht personally and at his apologetic stance. Simultaneously, however, he stood as a symbol of the failure of the postwar purge. If a man like Hjalmar Schacht, who had occupied senior positions in the Third Reich, could be acquitted and was free to make propaganda for a return to the pre-1918 order, what was the situation with the country as a whole and with the great brown masses? The Allies' denazification programme had been incomplete and re-education risked becoming a fiasco. The reviewers considered that Schacht's inability to offer even a hint of an admission of his share of the guilt sent out a very clear message.<sup>110</sup>

Any discussion of Nazism at the end of the 1940s took place in the shadow of the Cold War. The threat of global conflict steered people's thoughts into different tracks and questions that had been red hot just a few years before were now all but forgotten. The essence of Nazism, where it came from and how it should be interpreted, were no longer topics of discussion. Nor was anyone interrogating the ideological traditions of Germany – indeed, there were misgivings that Nazism had survived Allied efforts to eradicate it and that the new Germany that was taking shape was not going to be that new after all.

The views of National Socialism that existed in that period were neither particularly new nor particularly distinct; they reached back to the concepts of Nazism produced during the foregoing years. In the final section of this chapter I shall attempt a characterisation of the Nazi experience.

## **The Experience of Nazism**

The Nazi experience was clearly tangible in the years following the Second World War. It has been possible to extract the substance of that experience from the very large quantities of published work: dictionaries and encyclopedias, morning and evening newspapers, and political and intellectual analyses. It is now important to summarise the distinctive characteristics and to discuss the Swedish situation against an international background.

### *The Swedish Experiences of Nazism*

It is worth stating at the start that the analyses of the concept of Nazism showed a considerable level of agreement. The perceptions of National Socialism found during the early postwar period in Sweden, whether they were in reference works, newspaper articles or monographs, all tended to reveal the same core content. In short, there seems to have been no disagreement. The fact that the lion's share of Swedish interpretations run along the same lines means that it is possible to formulate a general characterisation of the meaning of the Nazi experience with a greater degree of certainty.<sup>111</sup>

One way of revealing the Nazi experience is to separate it into three parts: characteristics, genealogies and negations. Taken together they form a typology of Nazism and how it could be understood during the early postwar period. This can then be seen in relation to other interpretations of National Socialism both in Sweden and internationally.

Among the *characteristics* of Nazism nationalism stood out. National Socialism was a nationalist ideology taken to the extreme, a political movement and ideological outlook that placed the nation above all else. The brutal racial policies, including anti-Semitism, that characterised National Socialism, were seen as consequences of nationalism rather than as primary traits. Irrationalism, however, which was used as a collective term for a number of aspects of Nazism, was a primary trait: that was above all because of the actual credo of the ideology, its belief in the force of action and emotions rather than reason and intellect. But

it also had to do with the Nazi predilection for suggestion and instinct, for propaganda and agitation. Irrationalism could also be used to signify that National Socialism was not a coherent school of thought but a hotchpotch of impulses, whims and misinterpretations. Nazism was also seen as a breach in the development of civilisation, a ruthless revolt against the moral and cultural traditions of the West. Related to the idea that National Socialism represented a relapse into barbarism was the perception that it was a doctrine of violence, an ideology with war and terror as ends as well as means.

One characteristic was nevertheless ranked above the others and that was that National Socialism was a German phenomenon. Nazism was traced back to German traditions, it had grown in German soil, fed by German conditions and was utterly associated with Germany. There was consequently no disagreement about the *genealogy* of Nazism. Its origin was to be found in a long German tradition of militarism and Prussianism, Romanticism and anti-Enlightenment – ideals and patterns of thought that taken together led to an intoxication of power and a predisposition in favour of obscurantism and blind discipline. From an intellectual perspective the origins were sought in interpretations or misinterpretations of advocates of the superman ideal like Nietzsche, race theorists like Gobineau and Chamberlain, German nationalists like Fichte and Treitschke and metaphysicists of history like Hegel and Spengler.

In his standard work *The History of Fascism 1914–1945* Stanley G. Payne constructed a descriptive typology of the characteristics of fascism. An important element of that typology consists of what he calls ‘the fascist negations’, that is the ideological antagonisms fascism incorporated and which can be used to define the ideology indirectly.<sup>112</sup> I can similarly define the *negations* of Nazism as they were expressed in Sweden. In the important article in *Svensk Uppslagsbok* National Socialism was characterised as being ‘anti-intellectual, anti-democratic, anti-humanitarian and anti-individualistic’, repudiating ‘the modern ideals of freedom and truth’. That is a generally sound summary of the Nazi negations, but anti-rationalism and anti-intellectualism must be added. In more everyday parlance it was said that National Socialism opposed traditional norms. It is significant that Nazism was rarely seen as the distinct opposite pole to political groupings or ideological ‘isms’. In other words, anti-socialism, anti-liberalism and anti-conservatism were not essential as negative determinants.

In reconstructing the meaning of the experience, the cognitive element has taken priority. Undeniably, however, it also involved emotive dimensions. The resistance to ultra-nationalism was simultaneously

a condemnation of extreme political emotionalism, and the diatribes against the irrationalism of Nazism were expressions of support for common sense and moderation. In a similar way, the criticism of Prussian militarism took the form of a repudiation of authoritarian behaviour of all kinds.

Thus the Swedish experiences of Nazism can be summarised in a typology of characteristics, genealogies and negations. But to put the specifically Swedish features in perspective, it will be necessary to have a more wide-ranging discussion of the changing international forms of understanding.

### *Interpretations of Nazism in the Postwar Period*

The international debate about Nazism has been characterised right from the start by divergent views and the formation of different schools of thought. Individual has stood against structure, intention against function, modernity against reaction, German against foreign. Moreover, capitalism, nationalism, racism, anti-Semitism, socialism, imperialism and militarism have all been seen at various periods as essential in order to explain Nazism. And at the same time, to a greater extent than in other similar cases, the scholarly and the directly political discussions have tended to run together. In spite of differences, the historian Jane Caplan's authoritative overview has distinguished three main traditions of interpretation (primarily with reference to the first half of the twentieth century): Nazism as a form of fascism; Nazism as a specifically German phenomenon; Nazism as a totalitarian ideology.<sup>113</sup>

The idea that Nazism was a variant of fascism can be found as early as the 1920s. It appeared in two forms, one Marxist, the other non-Marxist. As far as Marxists were concerned, fascism was a consequence of the inherent logic of the capitalist system. Against a background of developments in Italy and Germany, the Comintern Congress of 1935 adopted the definition that fascism was an open terror dictatorship that consisted of the most reactionary, chauvinistic and imperialistic elements of finance capital. This had sweeping consequences and was decisive for the wider communist movement before, during and after the Second World War, but many alternatives to it were discussed among more independent Marxist intellectuals during the 1930s and 1940s.<sup>114</sup> The majority of the non-Marxist interpretations saw European fascism as a result of irrational reactions to the frantic pace of social development since the end of the nineteenth century. This historical view was most common in conservative circles but could also be found among liberals.<sup>115</sup> The view among Social Democrats was far from united. The

majority of the more theoretically oriented Social Democrats tended to see fascism as a latent element within the capitalist system, but they steered clear of the communists' monocausal explanations: capitalism was a necessary precondition for fascism, but it was not sufficient on its own.<sup>116</sup>

In spite of the fact that some people saw Nazism as a form of fascism, hardly anyone could ignore its specifically German traits. This second tradition of interpretation grew significantly during the course of the 1930s but its real breakthrough did not come until during and immediately after the Second World War. That period, as we have seen, saw the publication of a great number of books that set about tracing the roots of Nazism in German history: the limited influence of rationalism and the ideas of the enlightenment on the elite, the authoritarian state and pronounced militarism, the tendency of the masses to be attracted by aggressive nationalism and anti-Semitism, the powerful anti-modernist and culturally pessimistic currents. Although there had been similar tendencies in neighbouring countries, war and revolution and national humiliation had released all the latent extremism in Germany. Nazism was thus primarily a German problem which could not have arisen other than on German soil.<sup>117</sup>

In the third tradition of interpretation, National Socialism was understood to be a totalitarian movement. Totalitarianism theory held that there were fundamental similarities between communism, fascism and Nazism. In a more elaborated form, developed by Hannah Arendt, Carl J. Friedrich and others, the theory did not appear until the Cold War and the 1950s. But the concept had been minted during the 1920s, initially as a kind of positive description of Mussolini himself and then later to provide a name for the things that characterised the new 'total' epoch.<sup>118</sup>

Jane Caplan's three-part codification is graphic and enlightening but it is a generalisation based mainly on scholarly works. If the Swedish interpretations of Nazism are fitted into her system there is no doubt that the German line is the dominant one. Caplan's system, however, is not adequate when it comes to distinguishing the special features of the Swedish experience. In the first place there are clear national distinguishing marks that influenced how National Socialism was perceived. Direct experience of aggressive Nazism, whether in the form of domestic Nazi movements or of German occupation during the Second World War, shaped the discussion, but so did geographical location and historical relations with Germany. Secondly, Nazi ideology was rarely debated in isolation but was a part of more wide-ranging discussions and conceptual spheres. In other words, there is need of a broader

framework in which the peculiarly Swedish features are seen in relation to the way National Socialism was understood in other countries and at other points in time.

In her research into American interpretations of Nazism between 1933 and 1945 the historian Michaela Hoenicke Moore took national circumstances into account. The American protagonists were usually well aware of German circumstances, discussions were relatively sophisticated and when opinions diverged the aim was to reach a decision as to what sort of phenomenon Nazism actually was. Hoenicke Moore picks out three main strands to the debate. The first had to do with the roots of Nazism and whether they were to be located in the German historical tradition. Secondly, the Americans put a great deal of effort into discovering how widespread popular support for Nazism was and whether 'another Germany' existed. Thirdly, the lessons of the interwar years were discussed, along with discussions about American obligations in the face of the postwar period. There were at the same time powerful concrete objectives behind these efforts to understand Nazi Germany: Nazism must be defeated; Germany would be purged of the Nazi plague; American troops would never again need to come to the rescue of the old continent.<sup>119</sup>

Her study demonstrates how national traditions, historical experiences and political orientation affected perceptions of National Socialism. The American debate had considerable similarities with the Swedish, but there were also significant differences. In the American case the discussion tended towards consideration of the political means whereby Nazism could be eradicated and prevented from ever rising again. That should be understood partly against the background of the military presence and stance of the United States in Europe at that time and partly bearing in mind the historical experiences of the U.S. as a combatant in the two world wars. The American understanding of the phenomenon of Nazism had a more instrumental and activist tendency than the Swedish, a reminder that the power position and contemporary history of America was different from that of Sweden.

Interpretations of Nazism in the German language area were considerably more multi-faceted than in Sweden – indeed, the Swedish debates look notably like-minded by comparison. In their studies of the postwar discussions concerning German guilt, the Germanist Barbro Eberan, the sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick and a number of historians have picked out a whole battery of contemporary explanations of Nazism, only two of which are actually represented to any great extent in Swedish public opinion. One – and this was the dominant view – was that National Socialism was an expression of the militaristic spirit that



was typical of Germany and which had its roots in Prussia. The other was that the evils of the Third Reich were possible because German history had been characterised over a long period by traditions that diverged from those of the rest of Europe. A further explanation was sometimes added, to the effect that Nazism was a disease that the Germans had brought on themselves: in the Swedish discussion, however, this suggestion was only applied metaphorically.<sup>120</sup>

The debate about German guilt, however, spread over a significantly broader spectrum and included a variety of attitudes that were scarcely represented at all in Sweden. Vansittartism, the thesis that there were traits in the German national character that predisposed them to perpetrate acts of brutality, played a not insignificant role in Great Britain even, during the interwar period, and then re-emerged in sections of the German language press, mainly the Jewish exile press. Its acceptance in Sweden was, however, very limited. The notion that Hitler had led the German people astray and was personally responsible for the catastrophe also found very limited acceptance in Swedish public opinion. Conservative interpretations of Nazism were almost completely absent from Sweden. In a number of Christian organs in Germany, both Protestant and Catholic, the idea was voiced that National Socialism represented a moral breakdown, resulting from increasing secularisation and materialism. A more secular form of a similar idea suggested that the German catastrophe was an expression of an extreme crisis of culture. In this view, the Hitler period marked a distinct break with the true German spirit, with the aesthetic-humanistic Germany of Goethe. None of these views, which were often associated with a conservative outlook, had any profound resonance with the Swedish public, though occasional voices favoured them. There was also a notable absence of Marxist-inspired interpretations, except in purely communist publications. There were consequently very few people who viewed Nazism as a German variant of international fascism and, as such, a phenomenon that could only be countered if the capitalist order was overthrown and the social structure transformed from the bottom up. Within Germany itself there were supporters of the thesis that Nazism was a misfortune that could be explained by foreign factors: the Treaty of Versailles, the world depression, appeasement and so on.<sup>121</sup>

Ideas concerning the origins of Nazism were an important element of the Nazi experience. In comparison with the number of German explanations, those put forward in Sweden were limited to a small number of traditions. From a Swedish perspective, National Socialism was primarily seen as a phenomenon that had arisen from two clearly German traditions: Prussian militarism and idealistic romanticism.

The mixing of these two, violent aggression and titanic metaphysics, had paved the way for National Socialism. In the cases where a more coherent prehistory was offered – in the more ambitious encyclopedic articles, for instance – the origins of Nazism were frequently traced back to nationalistic currents in Central Europe in the late nineteenth century, whereas newspapers, journals and monographs were dominated by rather looser references to the Prussian and romantic aspects. It was all in contrast to the diverse historical explanations being debated in Germany during the same period. There the origin of Nazism was sometimes being traced back to barbaric German prehistory or to a tradition of Lutheran servility, and sometimes to Frederick the Great, Bismarck, Hegel or Wagner. Even though much of this was mentioned in Sweden, the German explanations were considerably more diversified.<sup>122</sup>

The special features of the Swedish experience stand out even more clearly if they are placed alongside other interpretations. The aim is not to make it seem that these other interpretations would have been cognitively available to Swedes at that point in time; it is more a matter of widening out the field of view and demonstrating what is specific in the Swedish case.

The relationship of Nazism to modernity and modernism has been discussed under a variety of rubrics ever since the interwar period. The 1930s and 1940s saw the appearance of interpretations in which National Socialism was seen as resulting from an excess of modernity, either in the sense that the rootless human being in the urbanised and bureaucratic world was a willing victim for destructive demagogues, or in the sense that Nazism was in itself a modern phenomenon, an efflux of industrialism and secularisation. Neither of these interpretations was significant in Sweden. Quite the reverse: Nazism was viewed as the radical opposite pole to the modern – irrational, regressive, emotionally overloaded, inimical to progress, atavistic. The Swedish reading espoused the *communis opinio* of the postwar period: Nazism was an aberration from the modernity that dominated the Western world. There was no question of Nazism being considered as a modern phenomenon that affirmed a certain kind of modernity. It was only in the 1980s that we saw the launch of theories that maintained that in many respects Nazism was a highly modern phenomenon and quite in line with other contemporary trends.<sup>123</sup>

During the postwar period, above all perhaps during the 1960s and 1970s, great intellectual effort was concentrated on the social and economic preconditions for Nazism. A great deal of historical and social science research, whether with a Marxist or a non-Marxist orientation,

analysed what significance the social structure of Germany and the depression of the 1930s had in paving the way for Hitler. These socio-economic explanations exerted considerable influence on popular, political and pedagogical presentations long after they had lost their sheen as far as the academic world was concerned.<sup>124</sup> In early postwar Sweden, however, this approach seems to have played a very subordinate role. It was often included as part of the general historical background but is not considered to be one of the decisive factors in any explanation of Nazism and the German catastrophe.

Few Swedish scholars viewed Nazism as a variant of a wider fascistic phenomenon. This theory of generic fascism, as it is called, has had its highs and lows in the international debate. The concept of fascism has, of course, occupied a central position in Marxist analyses since between the wars, but it may occur even in non-Marxist contexts as a collective denominator. The historian Ernst Nolte, for example, in his influential 1963 book *Der Faschismus in seiner Epoche* (Fascism in its Own Epoch) put forward an overarching interpretation of fascism that linked German Nazism, Italian fascism and the French radical right-wing *Action française*. A school of fascism research, to some extent new but within the generic area, was formed during the 1990s by historians like Stanley G. Payne, Roger Griffin and Roger Eatwell.<sup>125</sup> For my purposes, however, the most important thing to state is that during the early postwar period in Sweden Nazism was not considered to be part of a larger phenomenon. It was a German phenomenon and nothing but a German phenomenon.

Nazism was a phenomenon of extreme nationalism. In the aftermath of the Second World War everyone was agreed on that, and that would remain the case throughout the whole of the postwar period even though a number of changes of emphasis in the scholarly debate took place from the close of the 1970s and gained in impact during the 1980s and 1990s. That certainly did not mean that the nationalism was toned down; the opposite was true in fact, and it was shown how the Nazis had used collective rituals in their efforts to breathe fresh life into the nation. At the same time, the fact that racism and anti-Semitism were utterly inescapable cornerstones of Nazi ideology was stressed; the interpretations of the 1940s and 1950s had tended to consider these features to be subsidiary elements that resulted from the superordinate nature of nationalism. But in step with the Holocaust becoming the point of departure for an understanding of both Nazism and the Second World War, anti-Semitism and racism began to occupy an increasingly important position.<sup>126</sup>

It has to be emphasised that the Holocaust was not a vital aspect of the Swedish concept of Nazism during the early postwar period. That does not mean that the Swedes were ignorant of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis. As early as October 1942 *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* published a major article by the historian Hugo Valentin on the extermination of the Jews and during the last two years of the war the issue was addressed in a number of newspapers and periodicals. When the Nazi concentration camps and death camps were liberated in 1945, they attracted an enormous amount of attention and stirred up powerful emotions of loathing and disgust among the Swedish public.<sup>127</sup> In spite of that, anti-Semitism was never a primary characteristic when it came to explaining Nazism, and the extermination of the Jews was only one aspect of the Second World War. German nationalism overshadowed both of them. One important explanation, proposed by the historian Peter Novick, was that the Holocaust did not exist as an independent idea during the first decades after the war. It was not until the last part of the twentieth century that it became a separate phenomenon with its own particular symbolic force and moral implications.<sup>128</sup>

In general, then, it is clear that the Swedish reading of National Socialism was limited to a small part of the spectrum of possible interpretation. This did not imply that it would have been possible for Swedes to adopt other ways of perceiving things: the tools available to them in their efforts to make Nazism comprehensible were determined by the historical factors, concrete experiences and cognitive traditions that were dominant in Sweden at that time. It is also worth noting that the Swedish interpretations never made a connection with the political and intellectual currents which could themselves be associated with National Socialism. As a consequence of that, valid fundamental approaches to any understanding of Nazism – conservative, metaphysical and religious approaches, for instance, or those that were critical of civilisation or dealt in terms of mass psychology – were dismissed, at least by the dominant sectors of public opinion that have been focused on here. Since the analyses that set the tone were based solely on conventional rational discussion, the interpretation of the Nazi experience was never challenged.

This chapter has foregrounded the meaning and content of the Nazi experience in Sweden during the early postwar period. The three chapters that follow will go more deeply into that dimension but, more than that, will concentrate on the lessons of Nazism and how they set their stamp on the postwar world.

## Notes

1. M. Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Les Presses Universitaires de France, 1950); P. Nora, *Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1–7 (Paris: Gallimard, 1984–1992).
2. A classic definition of ‘historical consciousness’ is formulated in K.E. Jeismann, ‘Geschichtsbewußtsein’, in K. Bergmann (ed.), *Handbuch der Geschichtsdidaktik*, vol. 1 (Dusseldorf: Pädagogischer Verlag Schwann, 1979). For a wider meaning of the concept: J. Rüsen, *Historische Orientierung: Über die Arbeit des Geschichtsbewußtseins, sich in der Zeit zurechtzufinden* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1994) and K.G. Karlsson, ‘Historiedidaktik: Begrepp, teori och analys’, in K.G. Karlsson and U. Zander (eds), *Historien är nu: En introduktion till historiedidaktiken* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2004), 44–52. ‘Historical culture’ is used as an analytic concept in, for example, P. Aronsson (ed.), *Makten över minnet: Historiekultur i förändring* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2000) and K.G. Karlsson and U. Zander (eds), *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003).
3. H.G. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke: Hermeneutik I: Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik* (Tübingen: J.C.B Mohr, 1986), 352.
4. T. Tholen, *Erfahrung und Interpretation: Der Streit zwischen Hermeneutik und Dekonstruktion* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1999), 1–3.
5. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, 352–359.
6. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, 359.
7. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, 359.
8. Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke*, 359–363.
9. G. Warnke, *Gadamer: Hermeneutics, Tradition, and Reason* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987), 44.
10. For literature on Reinhart Koselleck, see F. Schuurmans, ‘Reinhart Koselleck’, in K. Boyd (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, vol. 1 (London: Sage, 1999); H. Jordheim, *Läsningens vetenskap: Utkast till en ny filologi*, trans. S. Andersson (Gräbo: Anthropos, 2003), 154–185; U. Daniel, ‘Reinhart Koselleck’, in L. Raphael (ed.), *Klassiker der Geschichtswissenschaft*, vol. 2 (Munich: Beck, 2006); W. Steinmetz, ‘Nachruf auf Reinhart Koselleck (1923–2006)’, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (3) (2006); H. Joas and P. Vogt (eds), *Begriffene Geschichte: Beiträge zum Werk Reinhart Kosellecks* (Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2011) and N. Olsen, *History in the Plural: An Introduction to the Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). The concept of *Erfahrungswissenschaft* is used in R. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000), 20.
11. Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time*, translated by Keith Tribe (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 259. The German original is in R. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), 354.
12. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 174.
13. Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 175.

14. An important reason why Koselleck did not develop the idea of historical learning processes seems to have been that he did not believe they were possible in modern society. In his famous essay 'Historia magistra vitae' (it can be found in Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft* and Koselleck, *Futures Past*) he shows that ever since antiquity history has been perceived as a mentor in life – a mentor who has enabled humankind to repeat the successes of the past instead of falling back into the mistakes of the past. Koselleck's argument is that this image gradually began to break down during the eighteenth century. In German-speaking areas a conceptual shift took place, whereby the new term for history (*Geschichte*) came to imply a unique event or a universal complex of events instead of the older form (*Historie*) which meant an exemplary narrative. In certain respects this fundamental view of history, which is also to be found in his doctoral thesis *Kritik und Krise: Eine Studie zur Pathogenese der bürgerlichen Welt* (Freiburg: Verlag Karl Alber, 1959) and in his habilitation *Preußen zwischen Reform und Revolution: Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und soziale Bewegung von 1791 bis 1848* (Stuttgart: Klett, 1967), must be termed pessimistic: human beings are doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past since they are incapable of learning from history. In contrast to Koselleck and his distrust of history as an educative process, it is not my intention that that the concept of 'lesson' should be taken as normative.
15. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 350–354 (quotation: Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 170). Koselleck's *Erwartung* becomes 'expectation' in English translation. That is a lexically correct translation, but the English word does not encompass the same wide spectrum of meaning as the German. The philologist Helge Jordheim talks of *Erwartung* as a term for 'hopes, visions, utopias'. I share this interpretation but would also include a further group of concepts – 'perceptions of the future' – in the idea. However, for practical reasons I shall nevertheless frequently use the term 'expectation'. See Jordheim, *Läsningens vetenskap*, 140.
16. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 354–359.
17. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 354–359 (quotation: Koselleck, *Futures Past*, 173 and 174). See also A. Schinkel, 'Imagination as a Category of History: An Essay Concerning Koselleck's Concepts of *Erfahrungsraum* and *Erwartungshorizont*', *History and Theory* (1) (2005), 43–45.
18. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 369–370.
19. Schinkel, 'Imagination as a Category of History', 44–47.
20. Many important Swedish analyses and reports from Nazi Germany covering the period from the early 1930s to the end of the war are collected in L. Matthias and P.A. Fogelström (eds), *13 ödesdigra år: Klipp ur svenska och utländska tidningar* (Malmö: Beyrond, 1946) and I. Svanberg and M. Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Förintelsen: Debatt och dokument om Europas judar 1933–1945* (Stockholm: Arena, 1997).
21. Several of Koselleck's most important articles on the relation between language and history are collected in R. Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten: Studien zur Semantik und Pragmatik der politischen und sozialen Sprache* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2006), 9–102.

22. O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politischsozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1–8 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972–1997). The programmatic statement is also to be found in R. Koselleck, 'Einleitung', in O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politischsozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972). Important theoretical and historiographical discussions related to the lexicon are also to be found in M. Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 9–57; C. Dipper, 'Die "Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe": Von der Begriffsgeschichte zur Theorie der historischen Zeiten', *Historische Zeitschrift* (2) 2000; J. Hansson, 'Behovet av begreppshistoria', in E. Mansén and S. Nordin (eds), *Lärdomens bilder: Festskrift till Gunnar Broberg* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002); Jordheim, *Läsningens vetenskap*, 154–170 and M. Persson, 'Begreppshistoria och idéhistoria', in B. Lindberg (ed.), *Trygghet och äventyr: Om begreppshistoria* (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien, 2005).
23. Koselleck, 'Einleitung', in Brunner, Conze and Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, xxii–xxiii; Persson, 'Begreppshistoria och idéhistoria', 18–19; H.E. Bödeker, 'Ausprägungen der historischen Semantik in den historischen Kulturwissenschaften', in H.E. Bödeker (ed.), *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2001), 88. Even though Koselleck was inspired by Schmitt he developed the basic concepts in a more dynamic and historical direction, in which they did not appear as fixed elements in a political order.
24. However, it is worth noting that 'National Socialism', as distinct from 'Fascism' for instance, does not have an entry of its own in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*.
25. Richter, *The History of Political and Social Concepts*, 48–50; J. Hansson, *Humanismens kris: Bildningsideal och kulturkritik i Sverige 1848–1933* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag, 1999), 39; Jordheim, *Läsningens vetenskap*, 167–168. 'Semantic field' as a theoretical concept exists in a number of variations within linguistics but is never defined with complete precision in the German programme of conceptual history, even though its role is not insignificant. See E. Eldelin, 'De två kulturerna' flyttar hemifrån: C. P. Snows begrepp i svensk idédebatt 1959–2005 (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2006), 31–35.
26. Koselleck, 'Einleitung', xxiv–xxv. For criticism of the choice of sources in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* see Bödeker, 'Ausprägungen der historischen Semantik in den historischen Kulturwissenschaften', 81–85, and, more generally, R. Reichardt, 'Einleitung', in R. Reichardt and E. Schmitt (eds), *Handbuch politischsozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich 1680–1820* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg, 1985). Koselleck answers the criticism in Koselleck, *Begriffsgeschichten*, 536–540.
27. The discourse concept originates in traditions other than Koselleck's hermeneutic tradition and is usually associated with names like Michel Foucault, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Norman Fairclough or Ruth Wodak. However, Helge Jordheim argues in Jordheim, *Läsningens vetenskap*, 175–178, that the programme of conceptual history already involves a kind

of discursive impulse. The essence of the concepts is never defined except as components of a wider social and historical field, in which their significance cannot be derived from a particular authoritative and conscious assertion. It is in this sense that I shall analyse National Socialism in terms of discourse.

28. 'Nationalsocialism', *Ordbok över svenska språket*, vol. 18 (Lund: The Swedish Academy, 1949), col. 132.
29. 'Nazism', *Ordbok över svenska språket*, vol. 18 (Lund: The Swedish Academy, 1949), col. 256.
30. 'Faskism', *Ordbok över svenska språket*, vol. 8 (Lund: The Swedish Academy, 1926), col. 323–324. The original Swedish spelling is based on the phonetics of the Latin *fascēs*, but 'fascism' became the normal form as early as the 1920s.
31. 'Nationalsocialism', *Ordbok över svenska språket*, vol. 18 (Lund: The Swedish Academy, 1949), col. 132; 'Nationalsocialism', *Svenska Akademiens ordlista* (Stockholm: The Swedish Academy, 1950), 307; A. Almhult, *Ord att förklara: Svenska och främmande ord* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1955), 159.
32. The second edition of *Svensk Uppslagsbok* appeared in 1947–1955 and was the biggest and most widespread Swedish reference work of the day. *Nordisk familjebok*, the standard work of the early twentieth century, was bought up in 1942 by the company behind *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, but a fourth edition was nevertheless published 1951–1955. *Bonniers Konversationslexikon* (second edition, 1937–1950) and *Bonniers Folklexikon* (first edition, 1951–1953) were more concise. *Kunskapens bok* – an encyclopedia that contained fewer but more essayistic articles on significant entries – appeared in two editions during the early postwar period, the second edition, 1945–1946 and the third, 1949–1951. See T. Frängsmyr, 'Encyklopedi', *Nationalencyklopedin*, vol. 5 (Höganäs: Bokförlaget Bra Böcker, 1991).
33. 'Nationalsocialister', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, vol. 20 (Malmö: Svensk Uppslagsbok AB, 1951); 'Nationalsocialister', *Nordisk familjebok*, vol. 15 (Malmö: Nordens Boktryckeri, 1953). The text was written by Sture Bolin, professor of history; for his relationship with Nazism, see B. Odén, *Sture Bolin: Historiker under andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Kungliga Vitterhetsakademien, 2011). Corresponding articles in earlier editions of *Nordisk familjebok* are clearly different from the 1950 edition.
34. 'Nationalsocialister', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, col. 934–939.
35. 'Nationalsocialister', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, col. 943.
36. 'Nationalsocialister', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, col. 943–944.
37. 'Nationalsocialister', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, col. 944.
38. 'Nationalsocialism', *Bonniers Konversationslexikon*, vol. 9 (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1944), col. 1458.
39. 'Nationalsocialism', *Bonniers Konversationslexikon*, col. 1459–1461.
40. 'Nationalsocialism', *Bonniers Folklexikon*, vol. 4 (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1953), col. 43–44.
41. The articles on Nazism in the 1946 and 1952 editions differ to some extent from each other in tone and orientation. 'National Socialism' in *Kunskapens bok*, vol. 5 (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1946) mainly describes the history



of the Nazi movement and the Nazi regime, whereas 'National Socialism' in *Kunskapens bok*, vol. 5 (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1952) contains a more systematic presentation of Nazism as an ideology. The latter is therefore of greater value to my analysis.

42. 'Nationalsocialismen', *Kunskapens bok* (1952), 2455.
43. 'Nationalsocialismen', *Kunskapens bok* (1952), 2455.
44. 'Nationalsocialismen', *Kunskapens bok* (1952), 2455–56. See also 'Nationalsocialismen', *Kunskapens bok* (1946), 2422.
45. Cf. Koselleck's discussion of semasiological (many meanings in the one concept) and onomasiological (different concepts to explain the same thing) aspects in Koselleck, 'Einleitung', xxi–xxii.
46. 'Fascismen', *Kunskapens bok*, vol. 2 (1952), 972; 'Fascism', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, vol. 9 (1948); 'Fascism', *Nordisk familjebok*, vol. 7 (1952).
47. See, for example, 'Hitler, Adolf', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, vol. 13 (1949) and 'Tyskland', *Svensk Uppslagsbok*, vol. 30 (1954).
48. My investigation is primarily based on the voluminous cuttings archive held by the Sigtunastiftelse, a cultural foundation in Sigtuna, Sweden. It contains a rich body of material collected from some twenty or so newspapers, organised chronologically and in relevant categories (for example, 'The Second World War', 'National Socialism', 'Adolf Hitler'). I have worked systematically through everything that falls within the conceptual sphere of Nazism. Additionally, with the help of Matthias and Fogelström (eds), *13 ödesdigra år*, and Svanberg and Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Förintelsen*, I have been able to identify relevant articles. Finally, I have complemented this by searching various newspapers published on significant dates (the anniversary of the outbreak of war, the day the war ended, the day of Hitler's death and so on).
49. The great majority of the articles are taken from ten or so of the biggest Swedish morning and evening papers, but in a few cases I have also used smaller local papers. My analysis is primarily based on articles drawn from *Aftontidningen* (social democratic; 57,800), *Arbetet* (social democratic; 34,700), *Dagens Nyheter* (liberal; 207,300), *Expressen* (liberal; 57,500), *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* (liberal; 44,800), *Morgon-Tidningen* (social democratic; 39,500; published as *Social-Demokraten* until 1944), *Stockholms-Tidningen* (liberal; 163,900), *Svenska Dagbladet* (conservative; 82,700) and *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* (conservative; 54,100). Occasional articles have also been taken from *Aftonbladet* (not politically affiliated; 161,700), *Arbetaren* (syndicalist; 23,700), *Göteborgs Morgonpost* (conservative; 14,500), *Nya Wermlands-Tidningen* (conservative; 31,000), *Svenska Morgonbladet* (Folk Party; 25,600), *Upsala Nya Tidning* (liberal; 21,800) and *Östgöta Correspondenten* (national conservative; 36,400). The numbers refer to the net circulation on weekdays during 1945 and, like the information on the political affiliation of the papers, are taken from *TS-boken* (Stockholm: Tidningsstatistik AB, 1946). The ideological and geographical spread is a guarantee of more general conclusions. However, newspapers such as *Ny Dag* (communist; 29,700) and *Dagsposten* (national; 6,900) are not included since the aim is not to give a complete picture but to capture the views of

- those segments of society that dominated the ideological and intellectual debate. For similar reasons I have excluded purely anti-Nazi publications such as *Trots Allt!* and *Nordens Frihet*. For general information about the press scene during the period in question, see G. Lundström, P. Rydén and E. Sandlund, *Den svenska pressens historia: Det moderna Sveriges spegel (1897–1945)* (Stockholm: Ekerlids förlag, 2001) and L.Å. Engblom, S. Jonsson and K.E. Gustafsson, *Den svenska pressens historia: Bland andra massmedier (efter 1945)* (Stockholm: Ekerlids förlag, 2002).
50. M. Nilsson, 'Nationalismens uppstigande och fall', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 2 November 1945.
  51. Nilsson, 'Nationalismens uppstigande och fall'.
  52. 'Efter tio år', *Arbetet*, 30 January 1943; A. Wirtanen, 'Nietzsche och nazismen', *Dagens Nyheter*, 17 November 1943; 'Tredje rikets öde fullbordas', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 29 March 1945; 'Situationen', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 6 December 1945; 'Svensk nazism', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 9 February 1943; R. Simonsson, 'Den stora upprepningen', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 17 April 1945; 'Hegel och nazismen', *Aftontidningen*, 29 December 1947. Where the name of the author is not given, the articles are unsigned.
  53. 'Adolf Hitler död', *Aftontidningen*, 2 May 1945; E. Berggren, 'Hitler död', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 2 May 1945; 'Döden löser ej problemet', *Dagens Nyheter*, 2 May 1945; 'Myten om mannen', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 5 January 1946.
  54. 'Hegel och nazismen'; 'Adolf Hitler död'; 'Adolf Hitlers levnad', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 3 May 1945.
  55. 'Myten om mannen', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 5 January 1946. See also P. Henningsen, 'Nazism, demokrati-och kultur', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 23 April 1945; 'En epok går i graven', *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 2 May 1945; 'Tusenåriga rikets undergång', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 2 May 1945; 'Situationen'; 'Det som icke får glömmas', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 20 November 1945.
  56. Berggren, 'Hitler död'. See also 'En epok går i graven'; 'Krossade illusioner', *Expressen*, 31 March 1945.
  57. "'Krigsförbrytare finns egentligen överallt'", *Dagens Nyheter*, 20 October 1944; 'Tolv år', *Upsala Nya Tidning*, 30 January 1945; I. Oljelund, 'Studier i ett ansikte', *Nya Wermlands-Tidningen*, 15 May 1945; E. Berggren, 'Hitler död'; 'Döden löser ej problemet'; S.U. Palme, 'Hur nazismen rekryterades', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 20 November 1945.
  58. 'Vart gå nazisterna?', *Östgöta Correspondenten*, 18 March 1946.
  59. 'Svensk nazism'; G. Attorps, 'Tio författare mot nazismen', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 January 1945; 'Vad Hitler gjort', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 2 June 1945.
  60. 'Situationen'; Berggren, 'Hitler död'. See also 'Strömvirvar', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 18 April 1943; 'Fem års krig', *Arbetet*, 1 September 1944; 'Slutet på en epok', *Östgöta Correspondenten*, 3 May 1945; E. Linde, 'Nazismens gåta', *Expressen*, 7 November 1945; 'Fredens dag', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 8 May 1945.

61. L. Wahlström, 'Kristus eller Führern', *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 4 June 1943; B. Beckman, 'Ondskan och Tysklands skuld', *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 21 June 1945.
62. 'Vart gå nazisterna?'; A. Örne, 'Vad är skillnaden?', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 31 March 1943. The theory of totalitarianism is discussed later in the chapter.
63. Wahlström, 'Kristus eller Führern'; 'Situationen'; Berggren, 'Hitler död'; Simonsson, 'Den stora uppreningen'; 'En epok går i graven'; 'Efter Hitler', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 12 February 1946; 'Vad Hitler gjort'; Linde, 'Nazismens gåta'.
64. H. Larsson, 'Nazismen söker anor', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 25 September 1943; 'Situationen'; 'Hegel och nazismen'; 'Andens soldater', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 28 December 1944.
65. The concept of 'the other Germany' (*das andere Deutschland*) is discussed in J.K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman: The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943–1949* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 54–58 and 145–156. See also H. Grebing and C. Wickert (eds), *Das 'andere Deutschland' im Widerstand gegen den Nationalsozialismus: Beiträge zur politischen Überwindung der nationalsozialistischen Diktatur im Exil und im Dritten Reich* (Essen: Klartext, 1994).
66. A. Ahlberg, 'Det "andra Tyskland"', *Dagens Nyheter*, 12 May 1945. See also 'Ur nazisterrorns historia', *Arbetet*, 12 May 1945 and 'Vad finns bak den tyska fasaden?', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 28 December 1944.
67. J. Später, *Vansittart: Britische Debatten über Deutsche und Nazis 1902–1945* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2003); Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*, 44–49.
68. J. Östling, 'The Limits of the Wahlverwandtschaft', *Nordeuropaforum* (1) (2001); J. Lindner, *Den svenska Tysklandshjälpen 1945–1954* (Umeå: Acta Universitas Umensis, 1988), 39–51; A. Berge, *Det kalla kriget i Tidens spegel: En socialdemokratisk bild av hoten mot frihet och fred 1945–1962* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1990), 48–53.
69. Reviews of Swedish books (but not of translations) in the daily press and in periodicals are listed in B. Åhlén, *Svenskt författarlexikon: Biobibliografisk handbok till Sveriges moderna litteratur: 1941–1950* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1953). This is very useful, even though there are gaps, which is why I have supplemented it with articles both from the collection of articles at the Language and Literature Centre at Lund University and from the Sigtunastiftelsen cuttings archive.
70. Three criteria have been used to define the selection. First, the book should primarily deal with either National Socialism as an ideology, model of society and regime or with questions of German history, present or future, in the light of the Nazi experience. The second criterion is that the book was published as a Swedish original text or as a translation into Swedish: works that were not translated are judged not to have had any great public impact (there is one exception to this rule). Third, a criterion that related to the history of ideas orientation of this study was used: the books must contain presentations that are conscious and well-articulated. The selection

is based partly on a systematic search of *Svensk bokkatalog 1941–1950: Alfabetisk avdelning*, vol. 1–2 (Stockholm: Svenska bokförläggareföreningen, 1958–1960) and *Svensk bokkatalog 1941–1950: Systematisk avdelning* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförläggareföreningen, 1962), and partly on thorough and wide-ranging searches in the digital national library catalogue *Libris*.

71. The following are reportage, eye-witness accounts and analyses of day-to-day politics: A. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN: Som svensk korrespondent i Berlin 1941–1943* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1943); H. Rauschning, *MännEN kring Hitler tala*, trans. A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1943); G. Th:son Pihl, *Tyskland går sista rondEN* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1943); G. Ziemer, *Fostran för döden: Hur en nazist skapas* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1943); T. Fogelqvist, *Tredje rikets ansikte: Tyska iakttagelser 1934–1936* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1944) and C. Jäderlund, *Hitler stänger kyrkogårdsgrunden* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1945). A second genre consisted of works of history or of contemporary history: R. Reynolds, *När friheten försvann*, trans. A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1943); E. Ludwig, *Den evige tysken: Huvuddragen av tyska folkets historia under 2 000 år*, trans. T. Blomqvist (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1944); B. Svahnström, *Hakkorsets tidevarv* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1944), K. Heiden, *Der Führer: Hitlers väg till makten*, trans. N. Holmberg (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1944); S. Bolin, *Det ensidiga våldet: Spelet om krig och fred 1938–1939: Försök till historisk skildring* (Lund: Gleerup, 1944) and B. Enander and F. Arnheim, *Så härskade herrefolket* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1945). A number of works defied categorisation: R.G. Vansittart, *Mitt livs lärdomar*, trans. N. Holmberg (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1943); I. Holmgren, *Nazistparadiset* (Stockholm: Trots Allt, 1943); M. Johnsson, *Nietzsche och Tredje riket* (Stockholm: Kooperativa Förbundets Bokförlag, 1943); A. Knyphausen, *Tysk mot tysk: Ett bidrag till debatten om det andra Tyskland*, trans. B. Y. Gustafson-Knyphausen (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1945); E. Blomberg, *Demokratin och kriget* (Stockholm: Steinsviks förlag, 1945) and R. Carlsson, *Tredje rikets herrar och andra* (Stockholm: A. Sohlman, 1945).
72. Arvid Fredborg describes the circumstances around the book in his memoir volume *Destination: Berlin* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1985).
73. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN*, 308–338.
74. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN*, 338–352. The German author and politician Hermann Rauschning, who was a member of NSDAP until 1934, after which he devoted his energy to criticising the party, had already described Nazism as a ‘nihilistic revolution’ in his *Die Revolution des Nihilismus: Kulisse und Wirklichkeit im Dritten Reich* (Zurich: Europa-Verlag, 1938; Swedish translation 1939). The idea won some acceptance even in circles that did not share Rauschning’s conservative outlook. See J. Hensel and P. Nordblom (eds), *Hermann Rauschning: Materialien und Beiträge zu einer politischen Biographie* (Osnabrück: Fibre, 2003).
75. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN*, 343–352 (quotes 344 and 346).
76. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN*, 343–352 (quote 343).
77. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN*, 352–361 and 438–442.

78. Fredborg, *Bakom stålvalLEN*, 414–418.
79. Torvald Höjer's judgment in 'Berlin i mötgångstid', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 24 September 1943 can be compared with Eric Lindquist's in 'Bakom stålvalLEN', *Social-Demokraten*, 28 September 1943.
80. A. Roos, 'Tyskland just nu', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 24 September 1943. See also O. Jödal, 'Bakom stålvalLEN', *Aftontidningen*, 7 October 1943.
81. Höjer, 'Berlin i mötgångstid'; I. Harrie, 'Berlinkorrespondenser', *Dagens Nyheter*, 1 October 1943.
82. A.E. Jacobsson, 'Bakom den tyska fronten', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 29 October 1943.
83. 'Journalisten i Berlin', *Arbetet*, 1 October 1943.
84. Harrie, 'Berlinkorrespondenser'; 'Journalisten i Berlin'; Höjer, 'Berlin i mötgångstid'.
85. Höjer, 'Berlin i mötgångstid'.
86. Heiden, *Der Führer*. See G. Schreiber, *Hitler-Interpretationen 1923–1983: Ergebnisse, Methoden und Probleme der Forschung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1984), 23 and J. Lukacs, *The Hitler of History* (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1997), 7–8.
87. S. Berger, 'Den förstummade rösten', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 2 December 1944; G. Olsson, 'Adolf Hitler i begynnelsen', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 23 November 1944; 'Hitlermytens uppkomst', *Göteborgs Morgonpost*, 3 December 1944; I. Pauli, 'De väpnade bohemernas revolt', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 15 December 1944.
88. 'Hitlermytens uppkomst'; Berger, 'Den förstummade rösten'; A.E. Jacobsson, 'Ledarskapets förfall', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 8 December 1944; I. Bergegren, 'En nazismens historia', *Arbetaren*, 24 February 1945.
89. Among the cultural-philosophical and theological works were K. Barth, *Tyskarna och vi*, trans. S. Stolpe (Uppsala: Lindblads, 1945), M. Picard, *Hitler inom oss själva*, trans. A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1946); H. Rauschning, *Yrselns tid: Vår kulturs sammanbrott och återuppbyggnad*, trans. N. Holmberg and A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1946); F. Meinecke, *Den tyska katastrofen*, trans. T. Zetterholm (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans Diakonistyrelses Bokförlag, 1947) and K. Jaspers, *Den tyska skuldfrågan: Ett bidrag till den tyska frågan*, trans. A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1947). The most noted reports from the Nuremberg Trials were H. Lindberg, *En dag i Nürnberg: Introduktion till ett vittnesmål* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1946) and V. Vinde, *Nürnberg i blyxtljus* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1946). In addition, there was also the publication of reportage, memoirs and historical accounts such as H. Morgenthau Jr., *Problembarnet Tyskland*, trans. N. Holmberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1946); E. Jannes, *Människor därute: Ögonblicksbilder från Europa 1945/46* (Stockholm: Kooperativa Förbundets Bokförlag, 1946); V. Gollancz, *Våra västerländska värden i fara!*, trans. F. Grip (Stockholm: Hökerberg, 1946); G. Brandell, *Hitler och hans verk: En historisk skildring* (Stockholm: Svea Rike, 1947); F. Kersten, *Samtal med Himmler: Minnen från tredje riket 1939–1945* (Stockholm: Ljus, 1947) and H.R. Trevor-Roper, *Hitlers sista dagar*, trans.

- N. Holmberg (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1947). Several of these works will be addressed in more detail in Chapter V.
90. Among the most significant books never published in Swedish during these years were C.G. Jung, *Aufsätze zur Zeitgeschichte* (Zurich: Rascher, 1946); A. Weber, *Abschied von der bisherigen Geschichte: Überwindung des Nihilismus?* (Hamburg: Claaßen and Goverts, 1946); E. Kogon, *Der SS-Staat* (Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 1946; Swedish translation 1977); G. Tellenbach, *Die deutsche Not als Schuld und Schicksal* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1947); M. Horkheimer and T.W. Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* (Amsterdam: Querido Verlag, 1947; Swedish translation 1981), H. Rothfels, *The German Opposition to Hitler: An Appraisal* (Hinsdale, IL: Regnery Co., 1948; German translation 1949) and G. Ritter, *Europa und die deutsche Frage* (Munich: Munchner Verlag, 1948). See Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*, 157–233, M.T. Greven, *Politisches Denken in Deutschland nach 1945: Erfahrung und Umgang mit der Kontingenz in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit* (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Verlag, 2007), 39–102 and T. Fischer and M.N. Lorenz (eds), *Lexikon der 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' in Deutschland: Debatten- und Diskursgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus nach 1945* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2007), 30–41.
  91. N. Berg, *Der Holocaust und die westdeutschen Historiker: Erforschung und Erinnerung* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003), 64–104; G. Bock and D. Schönpflug (eds), *Friedrich Meinecke in seiner Zeit: Studien zu Leben und Werk* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2006).
  92. Meinecke, *Den tyska katastrofen*, 13–21.
  93. Meinecke, *Den tyska katastrofen*, 27 and, more generally, 61–73.
  94. Meinecke, *Den tyska katastrofen*, 54–55, 73–80 and 130.
  95. Meinecke, *Den tyska katastrofen*, 129.
  96. K. Petersson, 'En historiker om Hitler-katastrofen', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 26 March 1947; C. Jäderlund, 'Den tyska katastrofen', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 18 December 1947; G. Westin, 'Hitlerismen inför historikern', *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 29 November 1947; J. Braconier, 'Den tyska katastrofen', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 16 November 1947.
  97. Braconier, 'Den tyska katastrofen'; A. Friis, 'Meinecke om Tysklands katastrof', *Svensk Dagbladet*, 14 March 1947; Peterson, 'En historiker om Hitler-katastrofen'.
  98. Westin, 'Hitlerismen inför historikern'; Friis, 'Meinecke om Tysklands katastrof'.
  99. For instance, Petersson, 'En historiker om Hitler-katastrofen'.
  100. W. Hausenstein and B. Reifenberg (eds), *Max Picard zum siebzigsten Geburtstag* (Erlenbach-Zurich: Rentsch, 1958); Fischer and Lorenz, *Lexikon der 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' in Deutschland*, 33–34.
  101. Picard, *Hitler inom oss själva*.
  102. G. Forsström, 'Uttolkning av intigheter', *Aftontidningen*, 27 December 1946; T. Brunius, 'Nazismen i kulturpsykologisk belysning', *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 October 1946; S. Berger, 'En spekulativ schweizare', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 4 November 1946; H. Granat, 'Kulturkritik', *Aftontidningen*, 31 October 1946.

103. Postwar Germany gave rise to many works of reportage and analysis, among them L.H. Brown, *Problemet Tyskland: En rapport om läget i dag och ett förslag till rekonstruktion*, trans. E. W. Olson (Stockholm: Skoglund's, 1947); S. Dagerman, *Tysk höst* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1947); D.M. Kelley, *22 celler i Nürnberg*, trans. Å. Malmström (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1948); E. Kötting and R. Thoursie, *Kulissbygget: Tyskland mellan Molotov och Marshall* (Stockholm: Ljus, 1948); E. Kern, *Den stora hasarden*, trans. B. Larsson (Stockholm: Fahlcrantz & Gumaelius, 1949); F. Löwenthal, *Den nya andan i Potsdam* (Stockholm: Fahlcrantz & Gumaelius, 1949) and L.D. Clay, *Europas ödestimma*, trans. H. Kellgren (Stockholm: Saxon & Lindström, 1950). Works of a more historical orientation were also published, for example, H.B. Gisevius, *Det bittra slutet* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1947) and H. Schacht, *Vidräkning med Hitler*, trans. A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Saxon & Lindström, 1949). A number of these titles will be analysed in more detail in Chapter V.
104. H. Tingsten, 'Totalitära idéer genom tiderna', *Dagens Nyheter*, 21 August 1947.
105. Tingsten, 'Totalitära idéer genom tiderna'.
106. B. Skovdahl, *Tingsten, totalitarismen och ideologierna* (Stockholm and Stehag: B. Östlings bokförlag, 1992), 179 and 195–196.
107. Skovdahl, *Tingsten, totalitarismen och ideologierna*, 196, 208–209 and 227–243; A.W. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget: Antikommunism och liberalism i Dagens Nyheter 1946–1952* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1995), 140–148.
108. This theme will be developed further in Chapter V.
109. Schacht, *Vidräkning med Hitler*. See in general C. Kopper, *Hjalmar Schacht: Aufstieg und Fall von Hitlers mächtigstem Bankier* (Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser, 2006).
110. C. Jäderlund, 'Schachts försvar', *StockholmsTidningen*, 3 November 1949; G. Olsson, 'I egen sak', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 29 October 1949; U. Brandell, 'Schachts ögon', *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 November 1949; R. Lindström, 'Schacht svär sig fri', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 3 October 1949; G. Dallmann, 'Utmanande historieskrivning', *Aftontidningen*, 3 November 1949. The criticism was slightly milder from N. P. Ollén, 'Det tyska folkets "offer"', *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 8 October 1949 and S. Berger, 'Schachts försvar och anklagelse', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 8 October 1949.
111. This remarkable consensus is worthy of consideration. One explanation might be the aftermath of wartime national unity when divergent views were not tolerated. Another explanation has more to do with my methodology. In reconstructing the meaning of the Nazi experience I have not visited the outer regions where the more exaggerated uses of history can be assumed to have existed. And it is possible that in the early postwar period there was a general atmosphere that encouraged unambiguous attitudes in questions to do with the war. That was certainly the observation made by the historian Jarl Torbacke: 'The atmosphere was such that positions were radicalised and the demand for answers was absolute; one belonged to one camp or the other. One was either black or white, a patriot or a fellow traveller, angel or blackguard. There were no intermediates.' See J.

- Torbacke, *Dagens Nyheter och demokratins kris 1937–1946: Genom stormar till seger* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1972), 385.
112. S.G. Payne, *A History of Fascism* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 7. The idea that it is possible to use negations to limit a concept can also be found in Koselleck. He has introduced what he refers to as ‘counter-concepts’ (*Gegenbegriffe*) and views them as a constellation of two concepts, one of which covers the speaking subject, the other the alien object. There is an asymmetrical relationship between them whereby the alien always occupies a position of subordinate status: classic examples are Hellenes–barbarians, Christians–heathens, humans–non-humans. From my point of view Koselleck is reminding us of an important insight: concepts cannot be viewed as isolated atoms but have to be positioned in relation to other objects in the semantic field. See Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*, 211–259.
  113. J. Caplan, ‘The Historiography of National Socialism’, in M. Bentley (ed.), *Companion to Historiography* (London: Routledge, 1997), 548–555. A similar distinction is made in I. Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation* (London: Hodder Arnold Publication, 2000). See also E. Nolte (ed.), *Theorien über den Faschismus* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1967), P. Ayçoberry, *The Nazi Question: An Essay on the Interpretations of National Socialism (1922–1975)* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981) and W. Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien: Die Entwicklung der Diskussion von den Anfängen bis heute* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1997a).
  114. Caplan, ‘The Historiography of National Socialism’, 549–552; Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien*, 11–51 and 58–59; Ayçoberry, *The Nazi Question*, 33.
  115. Caplan, ‘The Historiography of National Socialism’, 552–553; Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien*, 51–57.
  116. Wippermann, *Faschismustheorien*, 28–42.
  117. Caplan, ‘The Historiography of National Socialism’, 553–554.
  118. Caplan, ‘The Historiography of National Socialism’, 554–554. Broad surveys of the theory of totalitarianism can be found in E. Jesse (ed.), *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Eine Bilanz der internationalen Forschung* (Bonn: Schriftenreihe Band, 1996) and W. Wippermann, *Totalitarismustheorien: Die Entwicklung der Diskussion von den Anfängen bis heute* (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 1997).
  119. M. Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your Enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 2–12.
  120. B. Eberan, *Luther? Friedrich ‘der Grosse’? Wagner? Nietzsche? ...? ...? Wer war an Hitler schuld?: Die Debatte um die Schuldfrage 1945–1949* (Munich: Minerva, 1983); J.K. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*.
  121. Barbro Eberan, *Vi är inte färdiga med Hitler på länge än* (Eslöv: Symposion, 2002), 329–347; Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*, 139–179. See also J. Solchany, ‘Vom Antimodernismus zum Antitotalitarismus: Konservative Interpretationen des Nationalsozialismus in Deutschland 1945–1949’, *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (3) (1996), E. Wolgast, *Die Wahrnehmung des Dritten Reiches in der unmittelbaren Nachkriegszeit (1945/46)* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2001), J. Friedmann and J. Später, ‘Britische und



- deutsche Kollektivschuld-Debatte', in U. Herbert (ed.), *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland: Belastung, Integration, Liberalisierung 1945–1980* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2003) and Greven, *Politisches Denken in Deutschland nach 1945*.
122. Eberan, *Luther? Friedrich 'der Grosse'? Wagner? Nietzsche? ...? ...? Wer war an Hitler schuld?*, 103–166; Eberan, *Vi är inte färdiga med Hitler på länge än*, 145–206; Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*, 139–179.
123. R. Bavaj, *Die Ambivalenz der Moderne im Nationalsozialismus: Eine Bilanz der Forschung* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2003), 13–56; R. Zitelmann, 'Die totalitäre Seite der Moderne', in M. Prinz and R. Zitelmann (eds), *Nationalsozialismus und Modernisierung* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994). Nazism is considered as an aspect of the modern world in, for example, J. Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989) and R. Griffin, *Modernism and Fascism: The Sense of a Beginning under Mussolini and Hitler* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).
124. Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship*, 47–68.
125. L. Berggren, 'Den svenska mellankrigsfascismen – ett ointressant marginalfenomen eller ett viktigt forskningsobjekt?', *Historisk tidskrift* (3) (2002); A. Bauerkämper, *Der Faschismus in Europa 1918–1945* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 2006), 16–19.
126. The historiographical shift can be followed, for instance, in M. Burleigh, *The Third Reich: A New History* (London: Pan Macmillan, 2001), 2–14, Berggren, 'Den svenska mellankrigsfascismen' and K. Passmore, *Fascism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 18–23. I. Karlsson and A. Ruth, *Samhället som teater: Estetik och politik i Tredje riket* (Stockholm: Liber Förlag, 1983) may be seen as an early representative of this orientation in Sweden.
127. Svanberg and Tydén, *Sverige och Förintelsen*; M. Liljefors, *Bilder av Förintelsen: Mening, minne, kompromettering* (Lund: Argos/Palmkrons förlag, 2002), 22–29; U. Zander, 'To Rescue or Be Rescued: The Liberation of Bergen-Belsen and the White Buses in British and Swedish Historical Cultures', in K.G. Karlsson and U. Zander (eds), *The Holocaust on PostWar Battlefields: Genocide as Historical Culture* (Lund: Sekel, 2006). See also Matthias and Fogelström, *13 ödesdigra år*.
128. P. Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

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### Sources

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## NAZISM AS STIGMA

The first years of peace saw Europe enter into close combat with its own past. The business of settling accounts had started even before hostilities ceased, but the ill deeds of the Second World War could not really be confronted until after the capitulation of Germany in May 1945. Even though the course of events varied from country to country, with hindsight it is possible to see that the process ran along three interconnected tracks during the early postwar period: one was political, one judicial and one cultural.<sup>1</sup>

The *political* settlement was the most immediate and the most thorough. Important guidelines were drawn up at the Great Power conferences held by the Allies in Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam. One overarching aim in both Eastern and Western Europe was first of all to dismantle what remained of the fascist regimes in order to change the political systems in the desired ideological direction. The political confrontation in the zones of occupation also included the process known as denazification, a process that involved the dissolution of Nazi organisations, a ban on Nazi parties and the purge of Nazi sympathisers in public institutions.<sup>2</sup>

The *judicial* reckoning was an important offshoot of the political processes. The emblematic images here are the Nuremberg trials of 1945 and 1946, the international trials of the surviving Nazi leadership. Many other people were also brought before major or minor tribunals in Germany and in other parts of Europe: the *retsoppgjøret* in Denmark and the *rettsoppgjøret* in Norway are just two examples among many. In addition to such legal actions, the end of the war also witnessed incidents of non-judicial lynch law against collaborators and quislings. A less confrontational aspect of judicial settlement was provided by the writing of new constitutions in several countries towards the end of the 1940s.<sup>3</sup>

During these first postwar years various types of *cultural* readjustment were also carried through. A limited but not insignificant body of people became involved in debate, criticism and self-examination, and

new dramas, new films and new journals dug deep into the experiences of the war years. The debates took the form of artistic and philosophical examinations of the Nazi inheritance. Old ideals were tested and, if found obsolete, replaced by new.<sup>4</sup>

But these debates rapidly died away as the 1940s came to a close. Having been at their most intense during the first years of peace, they were beginning to fade as early as 1947/1948. By that stage it becomes possible to see the growth of collective national interpretations of the Second World War in all the various countries of Europe. Etienne François has characterised these narratives of the war as *patriotic* narratives. What he meant was that the differing interpretations took the form of narratives defending one's own side and one's own nation in their wartime actions. Different nations claimed that the defeat of Nazism could essentially be ascribed to their particular contribution, whether that meant their particular resistance movement or their particular military input or their unique social system. The outlook was national and the argumentation drew its strength from a sense of self-rectitude; the war years had involved sacrifices and hardships, but by firmly and loyally sticking to the ideals 'we' believed in, 'we' succeeded in keeping the foreign aggressor at bay. After 1945 even the inhabitants of countries that had had strong Nazi or fascist organisations came to regard those organisations as gangs of foreign criminals which had made themselves masters of the nation. Consequently, and without wishing to play down the differences between Eastern and Western Europe, it is possible to argue that the national narratives of the Second World War were all linked by patriotism, and it was patriotism that justified the existing order and defended particular sets of social conviction.<sup>5</sup>

There has been no shortage of explanations for this change of scenario. The war had ripped apart the fabric of community in many of the countries of Europe, destroying people's faith and trust in one another. The new patriotic narratives offered a remedy for this. They acted as levelling and stabilising factors, reconciling and uniting, giving meaning to the enormous sacrifices, providing new identities for the nations that had changed and a future full of promise for the people who had survived. The necessary precondition was that everyone gave their support to a national consensus and set aside the conflicts inflamed by the war. As far as West Germany was concerned, the historian Norbert Frei was of the opinion that a sort of *Vergangenheitspolitik* (politics of the past) took over in the years around 1950: the Allied denazification programmes were halted, guilty Nazis were pardoned and accepted back into society, while extreme parties of both the left and the right were banned. The aim was to forget, to normalise and to strengthen support

behind new values such as the social market economy, an orientation towards the West and anti-totalitarianism. The Federal Republic of Germany may have been a special case but we can discern similar developments in other Western European countries. The historian Tony Judt has argued that collective amnesia was a precondition of the reconstruction of Europe after the Second World War: the Europeans succeeded in reconstructing the continent economically and politically by putting the recent past behind them at the same time as a moral and cultural revitalisation demanded that they learn the lessons of that same past.<sup>6</sup>

Sweden is scarcely mentioned in any international discussion of the processes of adjustment following the Second World War. It is as if the fact that the country was neutral and never occupied by Nazi Germany means that no confrontations or crises had arisen. That is not what happened in reality: on the whole, developments in Sweden followed the same rhythm as in Europe in general.<sup>7</sup>

### **Cleaning Up the *Folkhem***

‘Our domestic Nazis no more than an irritant’ said the headline to an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* in October 1945. The man responsible for the words was Östen Undén, the foreign minister who, in a speech to the labour movement in Örebro, had been spelling out the government’s view on the question of the remaining Swedish Nazis. Various groupings, not least the labour movement, had demanded that the authorities take action and purge Nazis for once and for all. The topic had been brought to the fore by the prosecution of the newspaper *Dagsposten*, when two notorious Swedish Nazi sympathisers (the editor in chief Teodor Telander and the foreign editor Rütger Essén) had been found not guilty of the charges of having accepted economic support from Germany. Undén’s view was that any major action against Swedish Nazis would involve a series of problems, both of practice and of principle. The biggest problem, however, was that Swedish National Socialists did not constitute a problem, merely an irritant. They had never been particularly numerous, they had never had any influence, and the collapse of the Hitler regime had been their final catastrophe. According to Undén, a Swedish purge would achieve very little.<sup>8</sup>

The foreign minister’s opinion reflected a view of Swedish Nazism that very quickly became a potent one. It went hand in hand with the particular perception of the Swedish wartime stance that took form during the first postwar years – that stance being what we might

call the *narrative of small-state realism*. The basis of this view was that Sweden, as a small state, had had no alternative but to give way to an aggressive Nazi Germany. By making a limited number of concessions Sweden had managed to stay outside the conflict between the major European powers and had thus saved the Swedes from the brutalities of occupation by the Germans. 'The small state role gave Sweden moral absolution', Alf W. Johansson wrote in a paradigmatic article on small-state realism as a self-concept: 'All the difficult questions that the policies of concession posed about the ethos of Swedish society during the war, about the will for resistance or appeasement, about keeping faith with one's own ideals and ideological principles, all of these were swept under the carpet by the triumph of small state realism.'<sup>9</sup>

In Etienne François's terms, then, small-state realism became Sweden's patriotic narrative of the Second World War. The self-justifying aspect was prominent: Sweden may have departed in minor ways from strict neutrality but Swedish policies had by and large constituted an act of resistance and been a contribution to peace. 'We have done our bit; we fought the fight in our own way', as Per Albin Hansson put it in a speech on the very last day of the war. The coalition government emerged as a safe guarantor of peace and sovereignty, its policy of neutrality having saved Sweden from war and occupation.<sup>10</sup>

One aspect of the self-justifying nature of the narrative was the conviction that Sweden had been spared from Nazism. There had admittedly been the odd quisling and fifth columnist, Nazi sympathisers whose national loyalty was dubious, but on the whole the Swedes to a man had resisted National Socialism and rejected its false doctrines. Swedish society had always – so ran the historical lesson of small-state realism – viewed Nazism as something alien. For all those people who, like the political establishment, lined up in support of this conviction, the problem of Swedish Nazis was actually a non-problem and any measures against them were consequently superfluous.<sup>11</sup>

Just as in the rest of Western Europe it did, however, take a few years for the interpretative framework of small-state realism to become fixed. The very earliest postwar phase permitted openness in the face of questions that were as yet undecided.<sup>12</sup> At this stage alternative voices could make themselves heard in Sweden more forcefully than would be the case later. There were, in particular, two counter-narratives – one moral and one communist – that challenged small-state realism. In spite of internal differences these two were united in their fundamental criticism of the Swedish policy of appeasement during the Second World War. Sweden emerged not only as a country that had been meek and resigned, but also as one that had been tainted by Nazism, one where the

strength of pro-German public opinion reflected attitudes that spread through many layers of society. Nazism had run wild among us and the need for self-examination was urgent. In this moral counter-narrative – associated with, for instance, Eyvind Johnson, Vilhelm Moberg, Ture Nerman, Amelie Posse-Brázdova and Torgny Segerstedt (though the latter had died in March 1945) – Sweden emerged as a cowardly and docile country whose leaders had bargained away the principles of democracy and human values. In the communist counter-narrative, Swedish Nazism was viewed as an upper-class phenomenon, which was what made it so urgent that the most tainted institutions in society – particularly the military and the police – should be purged. Many people on the left had long had doubts about the democratic credentials of the military and the police and at the end of the war their suspicions were given a public airing in articles and debate books that demanded anti-fascist purges.<sup>13</sup>

It was, however, not just the extreme left and a group of liberal opinion formers who were demanding a comprehensive inquiry when the coalition government handed over to a purely Social Democrat government in the summer of 1945. Suppressed discontent about aspects of wartime policy was more widespread than that and as early as 1944 Ture Nerman had published an indictment of ‘the men of 1940’ – Rickard Lindström, Allan Vougt, Harald Åkerberg and Ivar Österström. In this polemic, which took the form of a collection of compromising quotations by these notable Social Democrats, Nerman attacked the defeatism and the enthusiasm for appeasement that had characterised the years around 1940. These accusations were repeated by others during the first postwar years. Liberal newspapers accused Rickard Lindström of kowtowing to Nazi Germany and internal Social Democratic opposition worked against Allan Vougt for a time. Christian Günther, the coalition foreign minister, had to shoulder the blame for the doctrine of small-state realism he had represented during the war. When peace came and he returned to the diplomatic service, he had set his heart on becoming Swedish ambassador in Copenhagen, but the relationship between Denmark and Sweden was still frosty and the Danish king, Christian X, opposed his appointment.<sup>14</sup>

The political establishment in Sweden was aware of the criticism and recognised that action was necessary. With the intention of pouring oil on the waters and going some way to meet the critics, elements of wartime policy were opened up to public examination. The cross-party Sandler Commission, led by the former Social Democratic prime minister and foreign minister Rickard Sandler, attracted particular interest. Its starting point was the accusations levelled against a senior

civil servant, Robert Paulsson, in early 1945: it was claimed that he had passed sensitive information about refugees in Sweden to a man who was in the pay of the German intelligence agency. The Paulsson Affair attracted a great deal of attention and led the Sandler Commission to investigate and report (in three lengthy reports) on the behaviour of the Swedish security service and Swedish refugee policies during the Second World War. The criticism, though harsh at times, particularly with regard to refugee policy during the first phase of the war, did not lead to any substantial judicial or political measures.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to that, selected chapters on the foreign policies of the war years were made publicly available in a number of White Books. A committee of academics and diplomats supervised by the foreign minister Östen Undén was responsible for the publication of four major volumes of documents during 1946 and 1947. Among the particular objectives was that of resolving the difficulties with neighbouring Nordic countries, especially Norway, where there was a residue of bitterness resulting from the subservient aspects of Swedish policy during the first half of the war.<sup>16</sup> The historiography of the White Books espoused the small-state realism reading of the war: Swedish actions had been by no means heroic and there was reason to criticise some of the concessions to Germany, but the policy had on the whole been successful in that it kept Sweden out of the war. In spite of everything, the White Books were well received and generally speaking the Swedish press welcomed the fact that the cards had been laid on the table – and the favourable reactions of the press gave indirect support to the idea of small-state realism. The reception in Copenhagen and Oslo was favourable, too: in the name of Nordic unity there was a will at that stage to seek out any reconciling features of Swedish foreign policy. The effect of the White Books was thus to clear the air in Sweden and to help normalise relations with Sweden's neighbours.<sup>17</sup>

During this early period there was also some degree of public scrutiny of suspected Nazis, particularly those in the military and in public administration. In May 1946, after some hesitation, the government set up *Bedömningsnämnden* (the Appraisal Committee) whose task it was to investigate civil servants suspected of having shown 'a lack of loyalty, resulting from their Nazi outlook'. Ture Nerman, one of the most bitter critics of the policies of the coalition government, was a member of this committee, along with a number of professors and senior civil servants: Nerman's membership caused public expectations to rise. The hundred or so cases the committee looked at, however, proved to be very difficult to judge. The committee felt its remit was restricted and it was never really able to put a Nazi in a prominent position to

the test. What proved particularly problematical was coming to a decision as to what a lack of loyalty because of Nazi sympathies actually implied. The members of the committee soon requested to be released from their duties.<sup>18</sup>

A parallel internal review was being carried out within the military. Many people were of the opinion that Nazi attitudes had flourished amongst officers of all ranks. The first move was to discover which officers had Nazi or pro-German sympathies. In spite of the investigation it proved difficult to come to any clear-cut conclusions and the inquiry was shelved. During the postwar years officers were even interrogated about their attitude to Nazism before they were appointed or promoted, but no real measures were taken as a result. Helge Jung, however, who was the Commander in Chief, took firm action, thereby pre-empting any criticism for complacency. There were three notable cases and they went on for some years, each of them named after the high-ranking officer in question: the Rosenblad Affair, the Kellgren Affair and the Meyerhöffer Affair. They symbolised the new spirit. Even though it was only a very small part of the officer corps that was investigated this closely, the High Command had set an example: Nazi sympathies were not acceptable in the Swedish forces after the war.<sup>19</sup>

In other areas of Swedish society there was no more than occasional action. Leading politicians discussed the suitability of known Nazi sympathisers working as teachers and examiners in the Swedish school system, but no real measures were taken.<sup>20</sup> Certain ministers and church organisations that had had links with Nazism faced criticism at the end of the war: this so-called 'Church Nazism' was never investigated in depth. The preferred solution at the time – in the words of the church historian Anders Jarlert – was 'modernisation without legal settlements'.<sup>21</sup>

Only a very small part of the Swedish press had been openly Nazi (*Dagsposten*, *Folkets Dagblad* and a host of more short-lived papers). Much more significant were those daily papers that sympathised with developments in Germany after 1933 and often expressed considerable understanding for the actions of the Third Reich during the Second World War: *Aftonposten* was one such paper, as were also *Östgöta Correspondenten* and *Helsingborgs Dagblad*. In most cases, and with the significant exception of *Aftonposten*, they were not seriously brought to book for the pro-German standpoints they had espoused during the war. With the foundation of *Expressen* in the autumn of 1944 the Swedish press gained a fundamentally anti-Nazi organ, an evening paper with a democratic and culturally radical spirit that took up the cudgels against any remaining Nazi tendencies in Sweden.<sup>22</sup>

The public settling of accounts with Swedish Nazism ceased after a couple of years. For those who had been demanding a radical purge the results were meagre. In only a few cases were serious improprieties uncovered and in even fewer cases was any action taken. There is no doubt that the postwar investigations bolstered the notion of small-state realism. Since Sweden as a whole had not been supportive of Nazism, there could never be any real question of a more detailed examination and once a number of people with Nazi beliefs had been purged nothing more needed to be done.

The small-state realist conclusion was spelt out in a debate in the Riksdag in the spring of 1947. In connection with the winding up of the Appraisal Committee, Ture Nerman asked whether there was to be any further investigation into Nazi influence in Sweden. The prime minister's response made it clear that the matter was considered closed. The Swedish authorities had taken what measures were necessary and Nazism no longer constituted a threat. 'It is difficult to imagine how anyone in their right mind could support movements of that sort after the bankruptcy of German Nazism', Prime Minister Tage Erlander stated. He stressed, however, that the police and the democratic organisations should continue to be watchful: 'They will be fully active against any emergent fascist tendencies in order to isolate them promptly and render them harmless.' Nerman accepted the answer but was still concerned that the danger of Nazism was being taken so lightly. 'After the confusion of the collapse of the Hitler regime, it [Nazism] is undoubtedly in the process of reorganising on an international scale', he warned. The exchange between Erlander and Nerman revealed the attitude that was to be the official one: Nazism no longer constituted a danger, but there was a latent threat still lurking beneath the surface, which meant there was good reason to be on one's guard and to counteract any sign of renewal. It would, in fact, be twenty years before Nazism was discussed again in the Swedish Riksdag.<sup>23</sup>

Seen in international terms, the Swedish reckoning with Nazism was a very minor affair, understandably so given that the context of the investigations was different from that in the majority of European countries. Sweden had never been occupied, Nazi parties had had very little influence, and 1945 did not mark a constitutional turning point. There was no Quisling to put on trial, no Leopold III to attack, no Vichy regime to call to account. Circumstances such as these were a hindrance to those who were calling for more thorough investigations. Sweden had been governed by a coalition government and the whole political establishment bore collective responsibility for wartime policies. 'Any more thorough review would consequently imply holding a reckoning



with the whole of the Swedish political system', as Alf W. Johansson has pointed out. 'Such a thing was, of course, unthinkable: the name of the prime minister *after* the war was Per Albin Hansson, just as it was *during* the war.' There were few completely independent bodies with the authority to demand a thorough investigation. The moral and the communist counter-narratives referred to earlier proved unable to challenge the dominant view.<sup>24</sup>

In spite of the particular circumstances in Sweden, it is still illuminating to place the course of events there in a wider Western European context. The relative openness that was the norm during the first post-war years came to an end in most countries by the close of the 1940s and a patriotic view of the role of the country during the Second World War became entrenched. In spite of the fact that Swedish experiences of Nazism and of the Second World War were different from those of other European countries, it is possible to see many features in common. And in Sweden, too, there was a clear and stated desire to leave the past behind and to move on.<sup>25</sup>

At the same time we do need to ask ourselves whether Sweden, too, manifested the will to link arms in support of communal values and to define what was acceptable. Ideological demarcation had been an important element in the West German *Vergangenheitspolitik* analysed by Norbert Frei. There is good reason to investigate more closely whether some sort of watch was kept on ideological respectability and, if so, what form it took. The last chapter showed that the experience of Nazism exerted a powerful appeal that was not matched by the rather lukewarm public settling of accounts with Nazism during the early postwar period. A fundamental aspect of the lesson of Nazism was an unconditional repudiation of the Third Reich and an all-encompassing condemnation of Nazi ideas. There is consequently much to suggest that there was a second and more active confrontation with things connected with National Socialism taking place alongside the official scrutiny.

## **Biography of Those Branded**

The public reckoning with Nazism in Sweden was, as we have seen, limited in time, in scope and in ambition. By comparison with Western European denazification, the political and judicial measures were not significant. In a broader perspective, however, in which judicial processes and state commissions were just one aspect of a larger cultural process, a different picture emerges. Accusations of Nazi sympathies

were levelled at many types of individual during the years after the war. Certain figures in politics, in the cultural sphere, in the academic world and, indeed, in virtually all sectors of society, were held to account. Some of them were seriously damaged by the accusations and ended up being completely marginalised; others quickly shook them off and carried on to a considerable extent as if nothing had happened. Between these two extremes there were people who were damaged by association with Nazism but who were not totally ostracised.

### *Stigmatisation by Nazi Association*

Social psychologists have long been interested in the mechanisms by which the majority excludes those who deviate from it, but for a long time they have distanced themselves from a model in which particular individuals deviate from a given pattern of behaviour and, instead, they put social relationships at the centre. This line of thinking was further developed by, among others, Howard Becker. One central strand in Becker's interactional model stated that 'deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by other of rules and sanctions to an "offender". The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label'.<sup>26</sup>

We do not need to use the full apparatus of social psychology in order to find this outlook and terminology rewarding and the approach associated with the sociologist Erving Goffman is a particularly fruitful one when it comes to understanding the exclusion of people considered to have been tainted by Nazism. Goffman expounded his ideas on stigma and the role of the deviant in society in a well-received work, and while a good deal of his description and of his empirical data is tied to the social science of his day, his general discussion of the concept of stigma still remains valuable.<sup>27</sup>

In its original sense the word *stigma* can be traced back to the name the Greeks gave to the physical sign that revealed something unusual or derogatory about an individual's moral character. Goffman broadens that definition, pointing out that a stigma does not necessarily have to reveal itself in a physical sense. Closely related to symbolic interactionism, Goffman uses the term to designate an attribute that is profoundly discrediting in relationships between human beings. Some attributes only stigmatise in particular contexts; others are discrediting virtually everywhere in our society. 'An individual', Goffman writes, about the stigmatised individual, 'who in other circumstances would easily have been accepted in social interaction has a feature, an attribute that cannot

avoid attracting attention and which makes those of us who meet that individual turn away from him and ignore the claims for community that his other attributes could in themselves have motivated.' He goes on to develop his ideas as to how the stigmatised individual is excluded from the group and denied acknowledgement. The isolation and the exclusion that follows on from this makes it a political act. Goffman sums it up: 'The stigmatisation of people who have a reprehensible moral register can clearly function as a means of formal social control.'<sup>28</sup>

Erving Goffman's ideas on stigma can usefully be applied to people who, according to the views of the majority in society, were linked with National Socialism. I can deduce from the last chapter that posterity's judgment was harsh and merciless: Nazism was condemned without reservation. It is reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the people, the phenomena and traditions associated with National Socialism were all anathematised. Given that virtually everything it was associated with was discredited, the ideology was stigmatised to the very highest degree. To the outside world the stigma of Nazism would have been sufficient reason to isolate, marginalise and reject anyone tainted by it.

One way of developing this line of discussion is to introduce the concept of the *sphere of association*, by which is meant all the characteristics, behaviours, ideals and major features that are associated with a particular phenomenon. A sphere of association is, of course, defined individually, socially and culturally but it is possible to distinguish the contents and the limits of a sphere within a given historical context. My reconstruction of the content of the experience of Nazism clearly demonstrated that Nazism was universally and unconditionally associated with certain traits and phenomena: nationalism and chauvinism, irrationalism and unreason, barbarism and the decline of civilisation, violence, Prussianism and militarism. The 'Nazi sphere of association', which is the term I shall use for the sake of simplicity and which is to be understood as a metaphorical development of the concept of Nazism, thus included associations to precisely this range of characteristics and phenomena.

Postwar motorways on the other hand, which in the historical context may be viewed as continuations of Hitler's Autobahn, were not immediately associated with National Socialism and thus did not form part of the Nazi association sphere during the late 1940s and early 1950s. That was also true, for example, of the sterilisations performed for reasons of race hygiene. It was in the 1980s and 1990s that eugenics came to be increasingly associated with the Third Reich, whereas during the early postwar period eugenics did not feature in the Nazi sphere of association.<sup>29</sup>

Goffman held that stigmatisation was a question of relationships. It was not necessarily those who had professed Nazism who were stigmatised, nor was the degree of stigmatisation necessarily in proportion to Nazi conviction. What was more decisive was the opinion of those around. It was not only Nazism itself that was stigmatised but anything that fell within the Nazi sphere of association.

Having said this, it is nevertheless important to emphasise that stigmatisation by posterity did not strike indiscriminately. An individual's political outlook and actions before and during the Second World War usually played a decisive part in how that individual was judged after 1945. That does not, of course, mean that there were not some Nazi sympathisers who were able to draw a veil over their past, change course and avoid being branded. Nor is it incompatible with the fact – as the Wittenberg case will show – that a number of outspoken opponents of National Socialism could find themselves being trapped in the flames of the anti-Nazi fires.

Stigmatisation did not always take the same form and its effects were varied. It is nevertheless possible to distinguish certain recurrent patterns which can then be classified into three types.

#### *Absolute Stigmatisation*

People who had been enthusiastically involved in Nazi organisations or had actively promoted the Nazi message were regarded as full-blood Nazis and thus fell into this category. They usually continued to defend Nazism, Hitler and the Third Reich even after 1945. After the Second World War these people were stigmatised to such an extent that they were utterly discredited. Branded and outcast, their only public status was to function as examples to repel and deter others. Among those afflicted by absolute stigmatisation of this kind I would include such political figures as Birger Furugård and Sven Olov Lindholm as well as writers and intellectuals such as Per Engdahl, Rütger Essén, Einar Åberg and Annie Åkerhielm.

#### *Partial Stigmatisation*

In this group we find people who were regarded to some extent as being borderline. During the Second World War they had often shown considerable understanding of and sympathy with significant aspects of Nazism and Nazi Germany, but they had not unconditionally supported a Nazi organisation. A number of them were notable personalities in Swedish cultural and social life. As a result of their achievements in other fields they were not solely associated with

Nazism and they frequently had sufficiently significant reputations not to be completely marginalised after 1945; they were thus often able to withdraw into a non-political existence and to continue their professional activities. They suffered partial stigmatisation, which was not sufficient for them to be completely excluded, but which remained a handicap and often marred their posthumous reputations. As long as they stayed well clear of political issues they were left alone, but the moment they became involved in sensitive areas they became targets. Among the best known of these figures were Fredrik Böök, Sven Hedin and Zarah Leander, but we might also include Kurt Atterberg, Hugo Odeberg and Karl Olivecrona. They had all, so to speak, been given a conditional discharge.

#### *Secondary Stigmatisation*

A number of people were affected by indirect stigmatisation in spite of the fact that they had been active anti-Nazis: the issue here was that they were seen as being supporters of ideas and ideals that contemporary Sweden associated with Nazism. In other words, the stigmatisation was secondary but the consequences could still be serious. These cases demonstrate how difficult it was to draw a line between National Socialism and the other features that were regarded as being related to it – idealism, conservatism, romanticism and broad trends in German tradition. The fact that Nazism and the Nazi sphere of association are not identical is more clearly apparent in these cases than in the other forms of stigmatisation.

The relationship between the level of stigmatisation and its position with regard to the sphere of association can be described metaphorically. Those who suffered absolute stigmatisation are located in the centre of the sphere and are fully enclosed in it, whereas those who are partially stigmatised are only partly enclosed – there are aspects of their existence that remain outside the sphere. People afflicted by secondary stigmatisation also have elements that are within the sphere, but only when they are viewed from a particular angle.

The three main forms of stigmatisation can be biographically analysed, so to speak, by focusing on a few individual careers and observing how, why and by whom they were stigmatised. The biographical approach does not only provide concrete examples of stigmatisation, it also makes it possible to demonstrate how the branding of individuals simultaneously had the effect of discrediting whole traditions and patterns of thought. The aim here is not to rehabilitate people who were accused rightly or wrongly of having been associated with National

Socialism, but is to create understanding of the historical lessons of Nazism.<sup>30</sup>

### *Outcasts*

A few Swedes became the objects of *absolute stigmatisation*. They were mainly individuals who were perceived as having been Hitler's myrmidons, people who supported the cause of Nazism and put all their hopes in the Third Reich. In many cases they continued to defend National Socialism even after 1945. Disgraced and branded, their only public status was as deterrent examples. They became outcasts.

Absolute stigmatisation prevented them stepping into the public space. Major publishers rejected their products, the main newspapers refused their articles, influential organisations would have nothing to do with them. And the scorn was mutual. Those who stuck firmly to their old ideals after the Second World War felt increasingly alien in the Swedish *folkhem*. The dream of what might have been was kept desperately alive. They sought community in shrinking nationalist groupings that were pro-German while simultaneously believing in the notion of Great Sweden. In such groups there was great sympathy and understanding for the drive and objectives of Nazi Germany – a sympathy often underpinned by anti-communism, anti-Semitism and pro-Germanism, royalism, a patriotic love of the fatherland and dreams of a new European order. Thanks to a few devoted activists and wealthy financiers they were able to survive into the 1950s, the 1960s and 1970s, but their influence on public opinion was extremely limited. In so far as newspapers like *Fria ord* (Free Words) (the successor to *Dagsposten*) and *Nation Europa*, organisations like *Nysvenska rörelse* (the New Swedish Movement), *S:t Mikaelorden* (the Order of St Michael) and *Nordiska rikspartiet* (the Nordic Realm Party), or individuals like Carl Ernfrid Carlberg, Per Engdahl, Nora Torulf and Einar Åberg resonated at all in wider circles it was only as warning exceptions that underlined the democratic consensus.<sup>31</sup>

Two biographical examples will serve to illustrate absolute stigmatisation. Both are authors and media figures who were unambiguously positioned right in the centre of the Nazi sphere of association, not least because of their participation in compromising publications during and after the Second World War. And both were relatively well-known cultural figures who had regularly published books, written in the papers and participated in debate during the interwar years. But the consequence of absolute stigmatisation was complete and utter marginalisation.

Annie Åkerhielm (1869–1956) made her debut as a novelist in 1899 and over the following decades published thirty or so works with a conservative ethos. Her books were reviewed in both metropolitan and provincial papers and she was awarded literary honours, including by the Swedish Academy. She made a name as a conservative, patriotically minded journalist first of all in the *Gefle-Posten* and eventually in *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* from 1913 to 1936. During the 1930s she turned more and more towards the new Germany and both her journalism and her books bore witness to her enthusiasm for Nazism. Åkerhielm had a positive vision of the Third Reich as national rebirth, as salvation from the appalling consequences of democracy and the impoverishment of Western culture. As far as one can judge, both her person and her work disappeared into a silent void after the Second World War: if she was written about at all, what was written was pejorative; if any attention was paid to her, it was because of her Nazi association. It is true that Åkerhielm was relatively old by the end of the war and her active years were behind her, but the extremely limited space she was allowed bears witness to her isolation.<sup>32</sup>

We can see an even more clear-cut example of absolute stigmatisation in the case of the author and journalist Rütger Essén (1890–1972). He belonged to the political and journalistic establishment of the years between the wars. Following a short career as a diplomat after the First World War, he was a contributor to *Stockholms Dagblad* and *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* during the 1920s and 1930s. Based firmly in the conservative tradition he won a reputation as a knowledgeable and combative writer on political questions. As late as the end of the 1930s he was still publicly debating political democracy with Herbert Tingsten and in 1940 he was appointed one of the editors of the seven-volume Bonnier's contemporary history, for which he wrote the fourth volume, *Illusionernas årtionde: Den politiska världsutvecklingen 1917–1930* (The Decade of Illusions: The Political Development of the World 1917–1930). During the 1930s he had been increasingly attracted by Nazi Germany and in 1941 he was the driving force behind the foundation of the newspaper *Dagsposten*. His anti-democratic, pro-Nazi outlook led to him being called 'the cultural and intellectual figurehead of Swedish Nazism'. After 1945 he continued in his role of editor of *Dagsposten* and then its successor *Fria ord*. From having been a frequent writer in wider contexts between the wars he found himself relegated to fringe organs in the postwar period.<sup>33</sup> In 1955, when he produced *Demokratien och dess gärningar* (Democracy and its Doings), his settling of accounts with popular democracy, it was published privately and caused no public response. His panegyric biography of his friend Sven Hedin was published by

Druffel-Verlag, a West German publishing house for extreme right-wing literature.<sup>34</sup>

Absolute stigmatisation inevitably led to manifest marginalisation. Per Engdahl seems to some extent to have been an exception in that he was permitted access to the national press on a number of occasions. In an article in *Expressen* in April 1959, for instance, he attacked democracy and argued for corporatism instead. Ten years later Engdahl returned to the issue and in a major article in *Dagens Nyheter* complained that he was the victim of exclusion. The articles written in response to Engdahl by Ivar Harrie and Olof Lagercrantz respectively showed no sign of them having taken any of his ideas on board.<sup>35</sup>

The fact that those with Nazi convictions were relegated to peripheral publications and organisations after 1945 is scarcely surprising; given the impact of the Nazi experience anything else would have been amazing. The branding of those who were totally enclosed in the Nazi sphere of association does not, however, reveal the more thorough-going changes that the discrediting of Nazism produced. It is actually more enlightening to consider the other two forms of stigmatisation – the partial and the secondary.

### *Fredrik Böök – A Tainted Figure*

A not insignificant group of Swedes were *partially stigmatised*. They were never completely ostracised but were nevertheless tainted by the anti-Nazi anathema. They were often associated with Nazism because they had revealed considerable sympathy for elements of its core vision before or during the Second World War but without ever fully joining up. They might continue making notable contributions to Swedish social and cultural life after the war, but they bore the mark of Cain. As soon as they stepped outside the sphere to which they had been relegated, as soon as they re-entered the political arena, the mark of Cain flared. Their fate was to have been partially stigmatised, which was not usually sufficient reason for complete ostracisation but was nevertheless a stain on the character and one that would usually blacken their posthumous reputation. Fredrik Böök provides one of the clearest examples of partial stigmatisation.

Fredrik Böök (1883–1961) experienced the mechanisms of ostracisation more than almost anyone else. For many years he had been among the most lauded and respected figures in Swedish cultural life, a one-man institution which set the tone for much of the period between the wars. As a critic, literary historian, essayist, travel writer, journalist, author, debater and member of the Swedish Academy, Böök had been



passionately involved in the debates on the pressing questions of the age: democracy, the world wars, the national community, the temptations of ideology and the role of art and tradition in the modern world. He was a well-known figure even in circles that did not share his views. That was changed for ever by his support for the new rulers in Berlin and by the hopes he voiced for Nazism as the saviour of Germany from collapse, humiliation and Bolshevism. As the Second World War proceeded, it became more and more difficult for him to find a platform for his opinions. He withdrew in the 1940s, to quote Staffan Björck, 'into the passionless domain of research [and] away from the deluded paths of political adventure'. When he returned to politics at the start of the 1950s he was received with stolid resistance. A portal figure of the years between the wars had become a postwar pariah.<sup>36</sup>

What we are focusing on here is the way his pro-German outlook before and, even more, during the Second World War defined the image posterity came to have of him. Böök had been a contentious and combative figure from his youth onwards, from his early literary agitation about activism during the First World War to the many disputes he was involved in during the interwar period. But it was his support for Germany when Nazism utterly dominated that country that led to the stigma that was attached to him for the rest of his life.

More than any other single event his posthumous reputation was decided by a fateful speech he gave on 4 October 1940. Böök had been invited to give the traditional ceremonial address at the Tegnér Celebration in Lund. He began in the customary manner by welcoming the students to the autumn semester and he then proceeded to describe the trials and tribulations of the age in elevated tones. He spoke – in rather mystifying words – of history having now come to a crossroads, but that renewal would follow on from the destruction. In veiled phrasing, replete with allusions to Tegnér, he exhorted the students to trust in the future and to affirm the new. Böök's address at the welcoming ceremony caused a great sensation; it was printed verbatim in *Svenska Dagbladet* and stirred up a storm of reactions and responses. The speech was generally interpreted as promoting Nazism and supporting the German–Soviet Pact. The most significant response came from Herbert Tingsten. At a student meeting in Stockholm a week or so later he attacked Böök's appeasement of the Nazis. Tingsten argued, mobilising the real Tegnér against the enemies of humanism, that what Böök was preaching was that might was right, that every conqueror was a man of destiny.<sup>37</sup>

Over the following years his Tegnér speech would cast a dark shadow over Böök. It was widely believed that his known pro-German

sympathies had become pro-Nazi sympathies and in the view of many people his insidious references had denigrated the Swedish literary tradition and tarnished his own reputation as a humanist. This marked the start of his isolation, an isolation that became even more marked after Böök published the pamphlet *Tyskt väsen och svensk lösen* (German Spirit and Swedish Salute) in the late autumn of 1940; Böök saw the pamphlet as developing further the ideas of his Lund speech, but it signally failed to gain a hearing from majority public opinion in Sweden. And, taking a longer term view, he also encountered for the first time a number of powerful opponents, Herbert Tingsten in particular, who would do everything in their power to oppose him during the postwar years.<sup>38</sup>

Böök was well aware of the risks involved in taking a sympathetic view of Nazi Germany. In a moment of clarity, in a letter to his wife in December 1941 he revealed the fate he saw for himself and for Europe if Germany was defeated:

It's impossible to stop pondering the course of world events and I am anxious about the future. It really does look as if Germany was on the defensive and that the blockade was becoming a problem. Can it be overcome? Or is this war to end like the last one – in a catastrophe for Germany? For me that would mean moral isolation, and for us it would mean economic retrenchment. After all, the whole of Swedish public opinion is set on an Anglo-Saxon victory and those who, like me, have sympathised with the German side will find things very restricted. From a literary and journalistic point of view I will be a dead man without even a hint of influence, and I will have to be grateful if I am not dismissed from the paper. But no doubt there will be a crust of bread left and I will share it with you just as I've shared the good years. By focusing on Heidenstam, Stagnelius and Tegnér I can move sideways to a field where people won't be able to ignore me completely, so it should be possible to put a bit of something on the bread after all.<sup>39</sup>

During the last years of the war Böök began to feel the consequences he had foreseen. He put politics to the side and limited his journalistic work to cultural historical articles and nature columns. His main enterprise in the following years was a series of great literary biographies: Verner von Heidenstam (1945–1946), Esaias Tegnér (1946), Victoria Benedictsson (1950) and Erik Johan Stagnelius (1954). The volumes on Heidenstam and Tegnér, in particular, are ranked among the lasting literary biographies in Swedish. According to Bertil Malmberg, his enormous creativity during these years resulted from 'the productivity of ostracisation'; and in the words of Carl Fehrman, the writing of biographies became 'a refuge, a place of sanctuary'.<sup>40</sup>

Böök's re-entry into literary history proved to be a lucky throw. In many ways he was a beaten man after the war and Olle Holmberg, the

literary historian and a student of Böök's, remembers seeing his old mentor on the street in Lund at the start of the 1950s, silent, tired, leaning on a cane. Holmberg remembers thinking that here was a man who had lost two world wars. The public arena that Böök had previously been so at home in now allowed him no more than limited access. In *Svenska Dagbladet*, the paper in which he had shone as one of the stars, the editor in chief Ivar Anderson refused to let him write on political topics in spite of his repeated attempts. He had little in common with the other members of the Swedish Academy and seldom attended its meetings. But as a biographer he was, however, very successful.<sup>41</sup>

In her thesis on Swedish literary biographies the literary scholar Inger Larsson has analysed Böök's book on Heidenstam and, to some extent, the one on Tegnér. 'Let me state at the start', she writes in the opening to her section on reception, 'that the majority of reviewers of *Heidenstam* and also of *Esaias Tegnér* do not write anything that questions Böök's ideological standpoint or suggests that they considered the biographies to be justifications of self'. Having said that, however, she still had to admit that there were more or less clear political references and allusions in at least a third of the reviews of those volumes. The reading of the Heidenstam biography by critics such as Stig Ahlgren, Hugo Kamras, Ingemar Wizelius and Per-Olof Zennström was in part political, and there were those who distanced themselves in more general terms from Böök's version of the nationalist Heidenstam. But there were also those who drew parallels between the political naivety of the author and that of his subject, between Heidenstam's lofty patriotism and Böök's enthusiasm for Great Sweden and all things German. As the discussion progressed, Nazism and the very recent world war were often hinted at in interpolations but sometimes also explicitly. The memory of Böök's notorious 4 October 1940 speech was still fresh in people's minds when the Tegnér biography was published in 1946. Several reviewers questioned his suitability as biographer and set about saving Tegnér from Böök's malevolent interpretations, in particular the idea that Tegnér's admiration for Napoleon was a constant. This was an explosive issue that Böök had gone into back in 1940 and which had not become any less explosive in the intervening years, particularly in view of the fact that Tegnér's poem 'Det eviga' (The Eternal) had been imbued with such value as a humanistic symbol during the war years. Reviewers also drew a parallel between the biographer and his subject. Viveka Heyman, for instance, pointed out that Böök's relationship with Tegnér had always been an aspect of his relationship with Germany and that, as a result, contemporary events shine through in 'the chapters dealing with Tegnér's (read Böök's) attitude to Napoleon (read Hitler)'.<sup>42</sup>

Those who read Bööök's literary biographies as products of his ideological views were, however, in a minority and the books were on the whole well received by Swedish critics. But Bööök was soon to become aware that tolerance was conditional and did not imply absolution for his political sins. In December 1947 he gave a speech at the formal meeting of the Swedish Academy, in which he voiced the disquiet and anxiety felt by himself and the postwar world with its bombed-out cities and nuclear threat. He invoked Geijer, who had embraced both destruction and renewal and he affirmed the idea of 'surrendering oneself unconditionally, even to the dark depths that we cannot penetrate, whatever comforting name we might give them'. Once again he was putting all his hope in fate, but this time without alluding to the demons of the moment.<sup>43</sup>

A few days later Herbert Tingsten, Bööök's main adversary from the autumn of 1940, reacted. In an article in *Dagens Nyheter* he called the speech peculiarly repulsive in that it voiced at one and the same moment paeans to life and then to death, at one and the same moment to the king and then to the people, all in a spirit of universal servility. Tingsten wrote: 'The very thought that just a few years ago this same man was acting as a mouthpiece for the court of Hitler – who seemed to be the very embodiment of fate at that point – makes it all unbearable. Does official hypocrisy have no limits?' But it was not so much the officious and pathetic tone that really jarred, it was Bööök's attempt to justify the past and draw a veil over it. 'Hamsun's speech in his own defence, and even Quisling's defence, seem honourable when set beside this mendacious attempt at an alibi', was Tingsten's biting conclusion.<sup>44</sup>

Tingsten returned to the attack a few years later. After a period of ill health at the start of the 1950s, Bööök returned to the scene with two books of memoirs and self-examination. In 1953 he published *Rannsakan* (Soul-searching) which was partly a series of portraits of people he had known during his early years in Lund and partly fragments of autobiography that focused on Bööök's own religious and philosophical development. His spiritual and intellectual history followed a dialectical and diverse course, along which he was torn between Burckhardt, Hegel and Marx, between idealism and materialism, between literature and politics, will and contemplation. The book took the form of an act of meditation, a thoughtful examination of a long and varied life, packed with personal memories and pictures of the past. 'The press received *Rannsakan* with such devastating criticism that it is hard to explain it other than by saying that a dam of suppressed aggression against the author had burst', Svante Nordin writes in his biography of Bööök. 'The extent of Bööök's moral isolation, which had been concealed by the

favourable reception of his literary biographies, was again made clear. Yet again Böök was having to pay for the deficit in credit and credibility he had brought on himself by his stance during the war. But he also learnt how isolated he was in his view of the contemporary world situation. In Cold War Sweden he took a “third standpoint” and that did not even have the redeeming feature of being shared by a like-minded group.<sup>45</sup>

Nordin’s description of the situation is apt but does not fully capture the split that was visible in the majority of the reviews. Many of the reviewers, including some of the most hostile, praised the vitality of the style and the excellent depictions of milieux. The target of the savage criticism was Böök’s ideological argumentation, his unwillingness to really dig deep into his own biography and his tendency to place the war crimes committed by the Western powers on an equal footing with the evils of the totalitarian regimes. The harshest critic, not surprisingly, was Herbert Tingsten, who flayed Böök and his book in a lengthy review on the day of publication. *Rannsakan* was inevitably putting the case for the defence and was self-exultation flowering ‘in the fertile soil of sin’. Since Böök’s penitence was general – all human beings are sinners, him as much as the rest – there was no need for him to go into his own failings. Tingsten, however, was in no doubt as to the failings Böök had to confess. ‘We don’t need to do more than recall that ten years ago Professor Böök was proclaiming the victory of Nazism and the necessity of bowing down before the conqueror’, he wrote and, recalling the Tegnér speech, he continued: ‘In short, during the glory days of Nazism Professor Böök in Lund saw Hitler as a man sent by providence, just as Professor Hegel in Jena, on seeing Napoleon on his horse, saw “the spirit of the world”’. Böök’s only solution was to preach a relativist gospel, which made it possible for him to conclude that a totalitarian regime did not differ significantly from a democratic one. Naturally enough this aroused Tingsten’s ire, which was directed in particular at the insidious criticism of democracy that was interwoven with Böök’s confession. ‘Professor Böök did not throw away his weapons when he donned the garb of the penitent. There is still plenty of Hitler’s defender left in him’, Herbert Tingsten concluded. Böök was stigmatised, then, by allusions to Nazism, by locating him in the same context as Hitler. His political stance placed him clearly within the Nazi sphere of association.<sup>46</sup>

Ivar Harrie’s squaring of accounts in *Expressen* followed the same pattern. His whole personal ethos, what gave him an advantage over Böök right from the start, derived from the recognition that he was morally superior to his opponent. In a review that lacked nothing in sarcasm

and condescension, Harrie went to work on what he considered to be Böök's sickening attempt to present himself as mild and conciliatory. This Fredrik Böök, 'who rejoiced spontaneously when Hitler entered Vienna and Prague', was actually quite the reverse: he was a standard bearer of fanaticism and phariseism. He had been trumpeting his dark words about the interchangeability of ideologies in the autumn of 1940 and his dialectical worldview had not changed since then. Böök was a man discredited for ever and Harrie found his humanistic pleas risible. But like Tingsten he found it impossible not to be seduced by Böök's skill as a writer, although it was a case of seduction rapidly turning to disgust: 'You have to condemn his ideology, and his unctuousness makes you vomit. Nevertheless, when opposing him, you wonder whether there is an element of envy there, pure and simple envy. How can a man who is so wrong write Swedish that is so right, that is right to the nearest millimetre, that is so infinitely much better than that of those who think right?'<sup>47</sup>

*Rannsakan* encountered similar reactions elsewhere. The author's habit of glossing things over demonstrates that he has never seriously desired to do much soul-searching. On the contrary, his exculpations serve to reinforce the feeling that the same wartime sympathies still exist, that at bottom he remains what he always has been. The idea that it was all six of one and half a dozen of the other, the relativism that erased the distinction between the gas chambers in German-occupied Poland and the bombing of Hiroshima, was seen as no more than one element of his apologia.<sup>48</sup> The positive notices that did appear restricted themselves almost exclusively to the literary and biographical aspects of the book and left the ideology and outlook to one side.<sup>49</sup>

The following year, 1954, Fredrik Böök published *Betraktelse* (Reflection), another book of self-examination, this time more focused on politics. Inspired by prominent figures in the philosophy of history and in *realpolitik* – from Talleyrand and Tocqueville to Butterfield and Kennan – he attempted an unemotional survey of the postwar world, a world in which Europe was squeezed between the two Great Powers. Böök's view was an unmistakably pessimistic one.<sup>50</sup>

The reception of *Betraktelse* was at least as negative as the previous year's volume. Once again Tingsten went on the attack. Böök's book made a general call for reconciliation and understanding, but when the editor in chief of *Dagens Nyheter* scraped away the surface he revealed 'the angry polemicist against democracy, the admirer of strong men, of dictatorship and absolutism'. The same relativism that had ranked democracy and dictatorship on the same level in the previous book was still present in this one. Other papers struck a similar note, but a

certain weariness is visible, as if the reviews were merely duty-bound. Ivar Harrie exclaimed in his review that he no longer had the energy to be rude to Böök. 'To enter into an argument with the muddled world politics in his new book [...] – would be to waste one's powder on dead Bööks', he said, but still insisted on pointing out how captivating the prose was, so captivating that the reader did not notice that 'the whole thing is a plea, a speech in defence of Hitler's Reich'. There was no doubt that Böök was a man dethroned, a remnant of an age that was past. His attempts to draw a veil over his own personal shortcomings did nothing to rehabilitate his honour. There was no longer anyone who would take his views and arguments seriously. He was not merely scorned and tainted: he was also harmless and insignificant.<sup>51</sup>

The case of Böök is an unusually clear-cut example of partial stigmatisation. It was still possible for him to win respect as a literary biographer, but he was met with accusations of Nazism whenever he attempted to comment on his own age. The moment he approached anything political, his past caught up with him and he became part of the Nazi sphere of association. The crippling effect of the stigma can be seen in the press reaction to his books. The arguments against him did not have to be particularly careful, references to the Tegné speech and reminders of his pro-Germanism were usually quite sufficient. Pathos ruled over logos. Even more remarkable was the self-evident nature of the ethos of Böök's critics. They had history on their side and they spoke with the authority of the righteous. No one was left in any doubt as to who occupied the moral high ground, who represented the future and who belonged to the past.

In a letter to Ingemar Hedenius, the critic Knut Jaensson talked of Böök as 'an endless source of inspiration'. 'If it wasn't for the fact he was so well off he ought to be paid a percentage on all our polemical articles', Jaensson wrote. Throughout the 1940s and 1950s Fredrik Böök was a stigmatised figure. A group of culture-radical intellectuals with Tingsten at their head attacked him with particular brutality – they formed a sort of anti-Nazi guard on Swedish public opinion. As far as they were concerned he was a red rag, perhaps more of an irritant than a real threat. If he stuck to literary biography, they left him alone; if he returned to political issues, they struck. That was the way partial stigmatisation operated.<sup>52</sup>

### *The Wittenberg Case*

*Secondary stigmatisation* is the most elusive and difficult to pin down of the types although in many ways it is the most interesting. It shows

that in the process of branding National Socialism, other traditions, too, are rejected – patterns of thinking that were not necessarily related to National Socialism but which even years after the war were still included in its sphere of association. One example that occurred in an academic environment will serve to turn the spotlight on the mechanisms of indirect stigmatisation.

One of the most striking cases with regard to professional preferment took place in academic Sweden at the end of the 1940s. The Wittenberg Case, as it became known, set in train a tangled web of expert pronouncements, rejections and appeals. In many ways the Wittenberg Case was a personal tragedy, a painful reverse for an individual, but what is at issue in this context is the way it reflected attitudes in the world of intellectual and academic culture in the early postwar period. In the present context the Wittenberg Case really bursts into flame when it is interpreted as a form of secondary stigmatisation.<sup>53</sup>

Erich Helmut Wittenberg was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Hamburg in 1907. His father, a lawyer by profession, had been decorated during the First World War and considered himself to be German through and through. The family moved to Berlin and there Wittenberg began studying history, philosophy, political science and related subjects under a number of the leading authorities of the day. In 1933 his studies culminated with his thesis on August Bebel's educational ideas. When the Nazis came to power he was forced to interrupt his academic career and in 1935 he came to Sweden as a refugee. He settled in Lund, set about learning Swedish and wrote various articles and essays both for the daily press and for professional journals, his specialist area being the history of German philosophy and ideas, nineteenth-century idealism in particular. By the time he became a Swedish citizen in 1945 he had published a considerable number of reviews, essays and articles and made a name for himself in intellectual circles in Sweden. In May 1948 Wittenberg applied for a readership (*docentur*) in the history of political ideas at Lund University. That was the background to the Wittenberg Case.<sup>54</sup>

After some difficulty in finding external assessors of Wittenberg's application, the Humanities section of the Philosophical Faculty settled on two professors of political science: Fredrik Lagerroth, who professed the discipline in Lund, and Herbert Tingsten, who was editor in chief of *Dagens Nyheter* at that point, but who as a political scientist had specialised in particular in the history of political ideas. The expert reports of these two men pointed in diametrically opposite directions. Lagerroth testified to Wittenberg's learned and versatile record of publication, witnessed to his scholarly merits and concluded by declaring him qualified for the readership for which he had applied. Tingsten,



however, was blisteringly critical of Wittenberg's scholarly production and condemned him with the crushing judgment: 'Since I consider W's writings to be weak and in many cases positively substandard, it seems to me self-evident that he is not qualified for a readership.' Tingsten's biting words led to a response by Wittenberg, in which he countered Tingsten point by point. Meanwhile one of the staff of the Humanities section, the literary historian Olle Holmberg, voiced criticism of aspects of one of the specimen publications, an essay on Heinrich Mann's political ideas. Holmberg's intervention led to an exchange of views between him and Wittenberg. In the April of 1949, after exhaustive discussion, the section voted by eleven votes to seven to reject Wittenberg's application for a readership. But that was not the end of the matter. In a written appeal to the national chancellor of Swedish universities and copied to the Humanities section in Lund, Wittenberg argued his case with renewed force. The majority of the professors in the section did not, however, consider that any decisive new evidence had been produced and they rejected the appeal, as did the chancellor, citing the same reason. Wittenberg then appealed to the king. Any conclusion was now delayed further by the decision of the cabinet to call in an extra specialist moderator, Carl Arvid Hessler, a professor at Uppsala University. His report was to a considerable extent in agreement with Tingsten's and so once again there was a rejection. In one last appeal Wittenberg responded to Hessler's report, but to no effect: Erich Wittenberg's appeal was definitely rejected by the government.<sup>55</sup>

At that point the Wittenberg Case could just have been written off as one of a series of prolonged and fierce cases of academic preferment, even though it was rather more fierce and prolonged than usual. But there are aspects of the case that mean that it should not simply be shelved. In order to dig deeper into the case we need to characterise Wittenberg in intellectual terms and to use his biography to find out what he represented in the Swedish academic sphere during the years following the Second World War. There was, at bottom, a major clash between the ideals that were now advancing and the older traditions that were being repudiated.

Given his great admiration for German idealistic humanism Wittenberg was a *rara avis* in 1940s Sweden. There were a few theologians, humanists and artists who shared his views, but there can be no doubt that there would have been many more if he had been active a few decades earlier.<sup>56</sup> When he mobilised Fichte, Burckhardt and Meinecke against the Nazis during the war years, seeing them as the salvation from barbarism, he stood more or less alone. From an ideological point of view he could most easily be associated with the anti-Nazi German

aristocrats who, led by Claus Schenk von Stauffenberg, carried out the failed assassination attempt on Adolf Hitler on 20 July 1944.

Wittenberg had been an intellectual opponent of Nazism from a German national conservative perspective ever since the 1930s. In one publication after another he had argued that there was an essential difference between Nazism and conservatism. In the middle of his long struggle for preferment he had written an article on precisely that theme in a *festschrift* to Fredrik Lagerroth (*nota bene*). He drew up a long list of antitheses to demonstrate the distinction between Bismarck's Germany and Hitler's:

On this side a constitutional state, on that a violent state; on this a constitutional monarchy, on that a totalitarian state; on this a small German state, on that a pan-German power; on this military and dynastic leadership, on that a Führer state on racial foundations; on this the military subject to political leadership, on that the warrior as the sole ideal and purpose of politics and culture; on this a centuries old monarchical tradition as the firm foundation of the empire, on that a radical break with the German political and cultural tradition.<sup>57</sup>

That was not an outlook shared by everyone in Sweden, far from it. Wittenberg discovered that when he reviewed Herbert Tingsten's book *De konservativa idéerna* (Conservative Ideas) in 1940. In a long and very critical review Wittenberg argued against various aspects of Tingsten's interpretation of conservatism. In the exchange that followed in *Historisk tidskrift* (Historical Journal) it emerged that their differences were many, not least when it came to the relationship between conservatism and contemporary political trends.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of the fact that Wittenberg had repudiated Nazism so definitely, despite the fact that as a Jew himself he had been forced to flee Germany, he was repeatedly associated with Nazism. It was evident that Wittenberg's German national conservatism and philosophical idealism made him susceptible to being attacked for Nazi sympathies.<sup>59</sup> This interpretation of Wittenberg as the representative of a worldview is necessary to any analysis of his case. Herbert Tingsten's, Olle Holmberg's and Carl Arvid Hessler's presentations of the case all rest on arguments and strategies that witness to their view of what Wittenberg stood for. That was also true of many of the others who were involved in and expressed an opinion on the issue, but Tingsten, Holmberg and Hessler are particularly relevant since they produced written reports that weighed heavily against Wittenberg. To all intents and purposes, they were the ones who decided the outcome of the case.

In his expert report Tingsten focused in particular on Wittenberg's attempts to rescue conservatism from the clutches of Nazism. After an

introductory section in which he condemns Wittenberg's doctoral thesis as an utterly mediocre compilation of reports and obscure reflections, he characterised Wittenberg's programme as follows:

W.'s writings after his move to Sweden should be understood against the background of his political outlook. This may best be described as a version of German conservatism and nationalism with strong links to the idealistic philosophy of his homeland. Since this is the philosophy that to a considerable extent is used to legitimate Nazism (a movement W. repudiates), and since non-German authors have often pointed out that it has provided impulses to the Nazi outlook, W. has made it his main concern to place the writers in question in what he considers to be the 'right' light, i.e. to show that their outlook coincides with his own. In short, W. is competing with the Nazis for the great German masters. This attitude does not, of course, in itself preclude worthwhile research and analysis. But in the case of W. it takes the form of incorrect, unreasonable and contradictory statements, a humanising whitewash of the German models.<sup>60</sup>

Tingsten's rejection of Wittenberg as a scholar draws much of its rhetorical force from this prelude. He conceded that Wittenberg had repudiated Nazism but he nevertheless attributed to him the same view that had legitimated and stimulated the 'might is right' doctrine of the brownshirts. By presenting it as a case of self-justification, he cast suspicion on Wittenberg's efforts to show the purported ancestors of Nazism in a proper light. He suggested that Wittenberg, in order to realise his programme, had whitewashed his German models and contravened the principles of scholarship. In what followed, Tingsten reinforced his argument with examples drawn from right across Wittenberg's collected writings. Elevated thoughts about, for instance, Fichte, Hegel, Treitschke and Nietzsche were given no quarter by Tingsten, who claimed emphatically that they were the philosophers of nationalistic might and therefore the forerunners of Nazism. In Tingsten's view Fichte's *Der geschlossene Handelsstaat* (The Closed Commercial State), for instance, led one's 'thoughts directly to the communist and Nazi dictatorships of the day', and on the topic of Hegel he wrote: 'W. even manages to make Hegel an adherent of freedom of thought. Formally that is, of course, quite correct: Hitler, Mussolini and Stalin have similarly praised freedom of thought – Hegel does so in a similar way.' The essence of Tingsten's argument is that Wittenberg had misrepresented the German thinkers in order to rehabilitate them. His eager attempts to absolve them had led him to shut his eyes to the ominous larger tradition these philosophers were part of. Wittenberg was – according to a quotation Tingsten borrowed from a review by Ingemar Hedenius – 'typical of what may be expected to become the established – in the bad sense – German way of reasoning'.<sup>61</sup>

This last quotation goes to the heart of the issue: Erich Wittenberg was a stereotypical representative of the German outlook that was associated with irrationalism and idealism, with myth and the worship of power. Rhetorically speaking, Tingsten was able to brand this line of tradition by linking it with Nazism. But it is not possible to reduce his argumentation to a sort of *guilt by association* in which superficial similarities were used as a pretext for condemnation. What Tingsten was striving to do was to show that Fichte's nationalism, Hegel's doctrine of power and Nietzsche's superman all existed within the circle of thought that had bred Nazism. Tingsten's conclusion was that if we are to rid ourselves of National Socialism once and for all, we must oppose and combat this whole sphere of ideas. Wittenberg's efforts to rescue its reputation were inappropriate, valueless and doomed to failure, he meant.

Olle Holmberg's contribution concentrated on Wittenberg's essay on Heinrich Mann's political ideas. At first sight he seems to be focusing mainly on inaccurate quotations and readings, but his piece also has a clear direction. Holmberg returned time after time to Wittenberg's effort to ascribe views to Mann that the latter had never held. He argued against Wittenberg's disparaging judgments of Mann. Wherever Wittenberg downgraded Mann's contributions, Holmberg upgraded them; wherever Wittenberg saw a socialist fellow-traveller and uncultured internationalist, Holmberg saw friend of peace, an enlightened man, a scourge of Prussianism. It is reasonable to assume that what lay behind the dispute was not just the evaluation of an individual authorship but profound differences in outlook. But Holmberg never indulged in condemnation on the same scale as Tingsten.<sup>62</sup>

He did, however, remove the self-imposed gag once the case was over. In an article in *Dagens Nyheter* in July 1951 he revealed a similar view of Wittenberg to that held by Tingsten. Just as Tingsten's report had done he found Wittenberg not guilty of the accusations of Nazism, but he then followed it up with an unmistakable insinuation:

Dr W. has had a stroke of luck in his life though he perhaps does not know it: it is the fact that he is a Jew. Where would he have ended up in terms of ideology if he had been something else, one might ask oneself? As it is he has revealed opinions that seem strange to be coming from a German-Jewish refugee. There was a time during the 1930s when the university teacher Ivan Pauli, who was unaware of his origins, polemicised against him believing him to be a Nazi.<sup>63</sup>

As far as Holmberg was concerned, Wittenberg's Jewish background was not so much a mitigating circumstance as the only thing that had saved him from truly unpleasant aberrations. In spite of him being a

Jew he embraced the same kind of ideals as the Nazis; in spite of him being a Jew 'modern humanitarian democratic internationalism based on a radical affirmation of the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity was utterly alien to him'. Olle Holmberg found it incomprehensible that a Jew in Sweden after 1945 could be anything other than a straightforward man of the Enlightenment.<sup>64</sup>

It is also possible to pick out a particular tendency in Carl Arvid Hessler's report. His judgment was not as merciless as Tingsten's but he presented Wittenberg as a confused mediocrity, better at abstracting and commenting than at coming up with any real insights. More interesting, however, is the fact that he viewed the bulk of Wittenberg's writings as 'a plea in defence of idealism in German cultural life' and in 'his striving to glorify this Wittenberg can sometimes write the most peculiar sentences'. As an example, Hessler referred to Wittenberg's efforts to absolve Rudolf Kjellén of all responsibility for Nazism without even examining the connection between Kjellén's geopolitics and the Nazi doctrines of *Lebensraum*. Time after time Wittenberg's indefatigable attempts to idealise certain German thinkers led him into profound contradictions. Hessler more than any of the others emphasised the lack of farsightedness that characterised Wittenberg's work, in particular his tendency to adopt the arguments of conservative writers wholesale at the same time as attacking those who did not share his views. 'When it comes to describing Heinrich Mann's political ideas Wittenberg reveals a level of aggression only matched by the slavish admiration with which he generally follows his own conservative authorities', Hessler wrote. All in all, Hessler judged Wittenberg to be an archetypical unrepentant German idealist given to the sort of bombastic phraseology characteristic of that tendency. Dispassionate analysis and empirical broadmindedness were not to the taste of a man who refused to see where the tradition of idealism had led.<sup>65</sup>

Wittenberg's critics were essentially in agreement on major points. All of them described his scholarship as that of a mediocre epigone who was more persistent in taking the side of fellow-believers than in seeking the truth. More significant, however, was his role as representative of an antiquated and hateful tradition, and this was the fundamental reason why Tingsten, Holmberg and Hessler judged him so harshly. And that is also what is characteristic of secondary stigmatisation: by defending German conservative idealism, which was the ultimate source of Nazism, Wittenberg posed a potential threat to the anti-Nazi position.

Taken out of context the Wittenberg Case could have been any one of a string of feuds about academic preferment, but when viewed in its

historical context an underlying pattern becomes apparent. The case cannot be reduced to nothing more than a simple political campaign or ideological conflict – it involves too many other aspects that cannot be ignored. Nevertheless it does demonstrate that the purging of Nazi influence and guarding against any recurrence took a variety of forms. It was not only Nazi sympathisers who were anathematised; the flames of the fire licked around everything that was involved in a wider sphere of Nazi association.<sup>66</sup>

### *The Repertoire of Stigmatisation*

The cases of Fredrik Böök and Erich Wittenberg are virtually archetypal examples of two of the main types of stigmatisation, in one case partial and the other secondary. They are instructive, but more material is needed if we are to draw general conclusions. Although it is impossible to carry out a full survey, a number of significant examples will illustrate the wider repertoire of stigmatisation.

There are a good many examples of partial stigmatisation. Apart from Fredrik Böök, one of the most revealing cases is that of Zarah Leander (1907–1981). Leander began her career as a cabaret artist at the end of the 1920s and to further her career she soon moved to Germany and Austria, where her deep contralto voice and special stage presence brought her fame. With her many films, recordings and performances she became one of the most popular artists in Nazi Germany. When she returned to Sweden in 1943 she was not welcome on the Swedish stage and spent the following years on her farm at Lönö in Östergötland before making a comeback in 1949 with the support of her friend and well-known anti-Nazi revue artist Karl Gerhard. During the 1950s and 1960s she continued her career as a singer and film actress in Scandinavia and West Germany and was still appearing before enthusiastic audiences in her seventies. But her career in the Third Reich did, however, cast a shadow over the whole of her career.<sup>67</sup> Her return to the Swedish stage in the summer of 1949 provoked some press reaction, although it cannot be said to have sparked off any real debate. At this point two main biographical narratives formed around Leander and Nazism. In the first of them Leander was the naïve diva, the blue-eyed young artiste who had gone out into the world and made her name: she was an apolitical creature, neither interested in, nor with any understanding of, politics, a prima donna who simply wanted to please and entertain. Over against this was the other narrative, the narrative of *die Leander*, a morally questionable woman in the entertainment industry who was happy to consort with the grandees of the Third Reich and to

act in Nazi propaganda films without any moral scruples. Some people felt that the fact she was allowed to perform again meant that Sweden wanted to forgive and forget. 'The Hitler period is to be erased from the public memory, so much is obvious', Erwin Leiser wrote in a critical commentary. But for much of the postwar period the narrative of the naïve and apolitical diva would be the dominant one.<sup>68</sup>

The explorer Sven Hedin (1865–1952) is another well-known case. Ever since the end of the nineteenth century he had been one of the most notable cultural figures in Sweden, a geographer and populariser on a grand scale, but also a conservative patriot of the Great Sweden variety who was profoundly engaged in questions of defence and foreign policy, particularly at the time of the First World War. As a result of his anti-Bolshevism and pan-Germanism his support of Nazi Germany was considerably more wholehearted than that of many others who were partially stigmatised. Hedin had viewed the Third Reich as a Germanic bastion in a Europe that was surrounded and he defended the Nazi New Order until the last days of the war. He had been marginalised step by step during the war years, restricted to writing in openly Nazi organs and he had continued to deny the imminent defeat of Germany until the last minute. Even when Germany capitulated in May 1945 Hedin persisted, although with no response from the wider Swedish public. In spite of taking the side of the Third Reich, however, Hedin was only partially stigmatised. His reputation as an author and scientist seems to have been so solidly founded that he could not be totally deposed. He made a comeback in 1949 with his apologia *Utan uppdrag i Berlin (Sven Hedin's German Diary, 1935–1942)*, but Swedish critics were quick to dismiss it. Rehabilitation of a sort began with his death in 1952: the emphasis on his politics was muted and his journeys of exploration brought to the fore. Sten Selander, who succeeded Hedin to Chair no. 6 in the Swedish Academy, struck the new tone in his speech on taking up his seat in the Academy. He presented Hedin as a man of action whose adventurous life was like schoolboy dreams brought to life. The greater part of the necrologue was devoted to Hedin's journeys in Asia and only towards the end did Selander touch on his predecessor's ideological outlook. Without attempting to defend him, Selander sought an explanation in Hedin's historical romanticism and love of Germany, presenting him as an essentially nineteenth-century man out of his time, who had been so naïve that he had failed to recognise that the men in Berlin were a league of mass-murderers. His support of Hitler was seen as an example of Hedin's blindness, something he himself had had to atone for during the last years of his life: 'We Swedes often have a short memory for our great men and show

them scant gratitude. Everything Sven Hedin had achieved before 1939 was forgotten and the only things left were his political aberrations.' Postwar biographies of Hedin followed the line set by Selander and the man of the vast plains of Asia was saved from the devastating stigma of Nazism.<sup>69</sup>

The academic world contained many people who showed considerable sympathy for the Third Reich even during the Second World War, but they were nevertheless permitted to continue in their professional functions after 1945. At Lund University – which seems to have more examples to offer than other seats of learning – the following might be mentioned: Gottfrid Carlsson (historian, 1887–1964), Lizzie Carlsson (historian, 1892–1974), Herman Nilsson-Ehle (geneticist, 1873–1949), Hugo Odeberg (theologian, 1898–1973), Karl Olivecrona (jurist, 1897–1980) and Erik Rooth (Germanist, 1889–1986). They were permitted to continue as teachers and researchers without being investigated, in the case of Olivecrona actually becoming a respected dean of the Faculty of Law. But even though they held on to their academic positions they nevertheless fall into the category of partial stigmatisation. Just as Böök had withdrawn into the protected enclave of literary history, the Lund professors retreated into the world of the university. Their wartime outlook was common knowledge and so they were allowed only the most limited influence in the world of public affairs in the postwar decades.<sup>70</sup>

Kurt Atterberg (1887–1974), on the other hand, was investigated in the wake of the Second World War. Ever since the 1920s he had been one of the most influential composers, critics and organisers in Swedish musical life, frequently in opposition to those who supported modernism. In cultural terms his orientation was towards Germany, where he had been active professionally after 1933 and cultivated contacts with the musical establishment of Nazi Germany. At the end of the war, when Atterberg was accused of Nazi sympathies, he defended his involvement with the Third Reich by pointing out that he had never adopted a political stance. In order to clear his reputation he himself took the initiative in a so-called Nazi investigation in the autumn of 1945. When the results were made public in the spring of 1946 it was clear that Atterberg had been absolved. In spite of that, the ethnologist Petra Garberding, who has analysed this case in her thesis, stresses the fact that Atterberg never completely lost the Nazi taint. The discussions in the press at the time revealed critical voices which did not share the conclusions reached by the investigators. And a younger generation of composers showed no interest in him at all, a stigmatised man whose political preferences were as out of tune with the times as his aesthetic.<sup>71</sup>



One particular form of stigmatisation was the posthumous variety. It might be assumed that people who had shown Nazi sympathies at an earlier stage but died before the end of the war would have been granted 'die Gnade des frühen Todes' ('the mercy of an early death') – to adopt and adapt Helmut Kohl's words. Examples of the opposite are, however, more interesting and Verner von Heidenstam (1859–1940) offers a clear-cut case. Heidenstam changed ideological loyalties during his lifetime and various different groupings would like to claim him as their own: socialists, liberals and finally conservatives. His biographer, Per I. Gedin, stresses that he was pro-German, anti-Bolshevik, an admirer of strong men and that during the 1930s he frequented circles that were sympathetic towards Nazi Germany. On the other hand, however, he contests the suggestion that Heidenstam himself was a Nazi. The view taken by posterity is of most significance in a context of this sort and on numerous occasions during the postwar period more or less explicit accusations were made that Heidenstam had been a Nazi sympathiser. The issue has been studied by Martin Kylhammar, a historian of ideas and of literature, who dismisses the charges and considers them to be 'a biographical factoid'.<sup>72</sup>

The cases of partial stigmatisation considered here have many features in common. Initially, in the context of the end of the war and the years that followed, people were called to account, or there were attempts to do so. A number of the best known individuals – Böök, Leander, Hedin – were put in a sort of quarantine during the second half of the 1940s and barred from making any political statements. The people who survived stigmatisation best were those who refrained from all political activity and restricted themselves strictly to their professional fields – the Lund academics are an excellent example. During this period public monitoring was used in the service of the anti-Nazi cause. The pressure eased around 1950 and some were then allowed to return to their careers while others were rehabilitated – but always on condition that they did not re-enter the political arena – if they did, the stigma was reactivated. The timing of these changes in Sweden followed essentially the same pattern as in the rest of Western Europe.

What was revealed in the Wittenberg Case was a process of secondary stigmatisation. Erich Wittenberg became the victim of ostracisation irrespective of his anti-Nazism. There are few examples of the mechanisms of indirect branding as obvious as that, although there is no shortage of instances of related forms of secondary stigmatisation. In terms of their expression and their effects, they were milder, but they still throw light on the general connection between experience, historical lesson and expectation during the early postwar period.

As a critic, poet and botanist, Sten Selander (1891–1957), was one of the influential intellectuals of the interwar years. At an early stage he had condemned Nazism for its primitivism and for its disruption of civilisation; during the Second World War he was initially a ‘Finland Activist’, but after 1940 he worked primarily in defence of bourgeois humanism and national culture. In the early postwar period Selander nevertheless became a victim of accusations of Nazi sympathies. The background to this is to be found in his ambivalent attitude to the victory of artistic modernism. As a poet, Selander had been influenced by modernist tendencies, but during the 1930s and 1940s he took an increasingly critical stance to a literary aesthetic that had become more and more a sort of *l’art pour l’art*, divorced from human needs and engagement with society. The 1946 ‘incomprehensibility debate’ sparked by Selander’s critical review of Erik Lindegren’s modernist collection of poems *mannen utan väg* turned into a veritable trial of strength between him and the younger generation of writers of the 1940s. Karl Vennberg belonged to the advance guard of the modernists and in a number of articles he portrayed Selander as a critic who was reactionary in both ideological and literary terms, a worthy successor to Fredrik Böök in every respect. Vennberg dropped insidious hints that Selander was following in his predecessor’s political footprints and showing the same kind of understanding of the aims of the Nazis. The secondary stigmatisation caused by these hints cannot per se have decided the incomprehensibility debate in favour of the writers of the 1940s, but by branding one of their main opponents as being influenced by Nazism they not only sullied Selander’s reputation, but they also undermined the opposition to literary modernism.<sup>73</sup>

The composer and music journalist Moses Pergament (1893–1977) was also the object of accusations that revealed elements of secondary stigmatisation. Unlike a number of other Swedish music critics, Pergament, a man of Jewish origin but profoundly attached to the German cultural tradition, defended the appearance of the German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler at the Stockholm Concert Hall in 1943. Furtwängler, who had never been a member of the Nazi party but was nevertheless a sort of cultural prophet in the Third Reich, was conducting Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony. Pergament identified himself with what he regarded as a manifestation of the other Germany – the country of Goethe and Beethoven, in which national culture and cosmopolitan humanism ran together. In the debate that followed the concert it became clear that by no means everyone saw it as a protest against the values of Nazism. Rather the reverse: leading critics showed little understanding of the distinction Pergament wanted to make

between different German traditions, and his defence of Furtwängler's guest appearance was branded as appeasement of National Socialism. Even though the accusations still surfaced after the war – the author Moa Martinson and the music critic Curt Berg accused Pergament of having fraternised with the Nazis – his stigmatisation did not have the same far-reaching effects as in the Wittenberg Case. And in this case the accusations cannot really be regarded as a conflict between different artistic ideals.<sup>74</sup>

The biography of the author and critic Hans Ruin (1891–1980) leads to similar conclusions. German literature and philosophy pervaded his education and he identified with a defeated Germany after the First World War. From a position of bourgeois humanism, however, Ruin emphatically objected to the political developments of the 1930s. Like Wittenberg, Selander and Pergament, he was one of the opponents of Nazism who made a distinction between the Third Reich and other German traditions. In the final phases of the war he disapproved of the behaviour of the victorious powers and expressed alarm that the civilian population would have to pay a high price in terms of retribution. But recognising that taking a public stance would be misunderstood and bring harsh criticism down on his head, he chose to say nothing. In spite of that, Ruin still occasionally found himself being rebuked in the postwar period for showing too much understanding not just for the suffering of the German people but also for elements of Nazism. The literary scholar Thomas Ek finds this puzzling but suggests an answer: 'Perhaps his bourgeois Finland-Swedish background and the generally pro-German attitude found there led to people placing him in the wrong camp almost as a matter of routine; or is it simply that his unwillingness to buy cheap solutions has been held against him?'<sup>75</sup>

The case of the banker Jacob Wallenberg (1892–1980) demonstrates that it was not only politicians and cultural figures who could be affected by secondary stigmatisation. Wallenberg had had close links with leading representatives of the German business world both before and during the Second World War. His political sympathies seem to have been with bourgeois critics of the Nazi regime, such as those in the ambit of the 20 July plotters, with whom he also had close personal connections. In the aftermath of the war the Wallenberg brothers were accused by the Americans of having acted as front men for the Germans and as a consequence their assets in the U.S.A. were blocked. As the managing director of the bank, Jacob Wallenberg had to carry the can and his reputation suffered badly. The Bosch Crisis as it came to be known hastened a change of leadership in the family business

and Jacob had to hand over the reins to his younger brother, Marcus Wallenberg, earlier than planned.<sup>76</sup>

Cases of secondary stigmatisation had features in common. The victims might well be of different political persuasions, but the examples reveal that they frequently shared bourgeois traits and sometimes a tendency to some form of conservative or traditionalist outlook. A factor that was at least as important was that they shared a desire to make a distinction between Nazi Germany and the other Germany. The limits of the National Socialist sphere of association were not the same for them as for society at large. The Wittenberg Case also revealed that at the heart of it lay a major ideological confrontation between emerging ideals and weakened traditions.<sup>77</sup>

## Nazism as Stigma

The experiences of Nazism were the common ground for stigmatisation arising from the Nazi sphere of association, but the forms varied. Absolute stigmatisation is an adequate term for those who were considered to be Hitler's Swedish lackeys, those who usually continued defending National Socialism after 1945 and who were consequently completely excluded from the public arena. Those who were partially stigmatised, not infrequently people with elevated cultural or social profiles, had, in judgment of posterity, fraternised inappropriately with Nazism during the war years but could – albeit with their wings clipped – continue with their professional activities after the war. The discharge they were given was, however, a conditional one: if they became involved in politics or if they defended their actions, they were immediately anathematised. Secondary stigmatisation afflicted people who had never been supporters of Nazism but who nevertheless found themselves within its sphere of association. They found themselves associated with aspects of National Socialism in spite of the fact that they actually belonged among its opponents.

### *Nazism as a Stigma in Postwar Swedish Culture*

Stigmatisation was a part of the historical lesson of Nazism. Its prerequisite was the total discrediting of National Socialism. The shock effects that the terror and tyranny of the Third Reich had sent through Western societies ensured that Nazism became the most despised political object in the postwar world. The extent to which an accusation of Nazism could be used to stigmatise ideological opponents has been

compared to sitting with a trump card in one's hand: the player who played the Nazi card could destroy his opponent.<sup>78</sup>

The fact that Nazism could be used as a rhetorical cudgel was noted as early as the end of the 1920s. The newspaperman Torgny Segerstedt, whose democratic credentials were being questioned at that point, observed that accusations of fascism were resorted to when other arguments failed. The method remained a common one even after the Second World War: when, during the Cold War in the 1950s, the Soviet Union was likened to Nazi Germany, the polemical edge was unmistakable.<sup>79</sup>

But even though the stigma of Nazism was a powerful weapon in domestic debates, it cannot merely be reduced to little more than a rhetorical strategy. The stigma has to be seen in the light of Swedish postwar culture and it is important to bear in mind the way National Socialism was perceived at that time. In the first place, it was not felt that Nazism had been totally overcome. In spite of the fact that Tage Erlander, Östen Undén and other leading politicians had clearly stated that Swedish Nazis were no more than a minor irritant, there was still a significant undercurrent of concern during the first postwar years. The war may have been won and the Nazi regime defeated in Germany but an indeterminate Nazi threat still existed. Reports from the occupation zones in Germany indicated that the denazification process had come to a stop. A few years after the end of the war the fear of a Nazi restoration was very much alive and anti-Nazi preparedness for such an eventuality was still necessary.<sup>80</sup>

There is a second factor that goes along with this: since Nazism was still a potential threat that needed to be combated whenever it showed its head, it was necessary to strike at everything that came within the Nazi sphere of association. During the first postwar decades the dominant line of interpretation linked Nazism to continental idealism, German Romanticism and conservative nationalism. According to this tradition, Nazism was an atavistic Prussian phenomenon that conflicted with rationalist democratic modernity. The result of this was that during the first postwar years these lines of tradition were also perceived as being within the Nazi sphere of association. That did not mean that German Romanticism was condemned as unreservedly as National Socialism, but it did mean that German Romanticism could in certain circumstances be tainted by the stigma of Nazism, particularly if it was brought into a political context.

In the Wittenberg Case these two factors went hand in hand – the threat of the continuation of Nazism and the interpretation of the origins of Nazism. The currents of fear and recognition flowed together when he – as a representative of the currents that had fed Nazism – stepped

forward. Anyone who wanted to combat Nazism also had to combat idealism, romanticism and nationalism.

Stigmatisation was usually followed by marginalisation. That, of course, affected those who had been absolutely stigmatised by making it impossible for them to regain any public standing after the war. Those who were partially stigmatised were also circumscribed and directed to non-political spheres of activity. But there is good reason not to equate stigmatisation with marginalisation. Stigma could in the long run actually guarantee the individual a degree of fame, albeit heroic fame. Would any attention have been paid today to someone like Annie Åkerhielm or Rütger Essén had they not been branded as Nazis? Would Fredrik Böök or Zarah Leander have stirred the interest of posterity in the same way if they had never had the finger of suspicion pointed at them?

Stigmatisation went together with the Nazi experience and with the conclusions drawn from it. The examples also demonstrate that the lessons of Nazism had a dimension that pointed forward and was linked to expectation. The stigmatisations were thus one element in the process of breaking with the past, part of the struggle about how a broader vision of the future was to be achieved. The Wittenberg conflict provides unequivocal evidence of that.

Those who were the driving force in opposing Erich Wittenberg were representative of a direction that became significant in the years after 1945. Their support for political democracy, rationalist modernity and the Swedish welfare state was a common denominator. Herbert Tingsten, Olle Holmberg, Ingemar Hedenius and the others who were setting the tone belonged to a generation of cultural radicals who came to the forefront in the wake of the war. In spite of differences they were united in their defence of secularism, enlightenment and materialism as well as in their opposition to the restraints imposed by traditionalism, titanic ideology and idealistic rhetoric.

It is possible, then, to see the Wittenberg Case as a link in a larger confrontation between an enlightenment tradition (which many of the trendsetters saw themselves as the products of) and the idealistic-romantic tradition (which Wittenberg was seen to represent). There is nothing to suggest that the Wittenberg Case can be limited to a conflict between different viewpoints and it reveals compelling biographical and ideological aspects which cannot be ignored. The fact that Olle Holmberg was a major player in the opposition to Wittenberg is, for instance, symptomatic. He had made a name for himself during the Second World War as a fervent anti-Nazi coming from a liberal standpoint. He wrote, he took part in debates and he gave lectures. During the

last years of the war and the first of the peace, Holmberg was involved in several notable cases at Lund University, where he featured as an active anti-Nazi and worked to have academics sympathetic to Nazism excluded from the university. That was especially true in the case of German as a subject – the historian Sverker Oredsson describes the situation as follows: ‘You can say that as from 1943 there was an explosive conflict around the teaching of German and the German Department at Lund University. The protagonists in this struggle were the head of department Erik Rooth and his colleague in the humanities section Olle Holmberg, Professor of Literature. The invective they hurled at one another was so brutal that a present-day reader is amazed that they could be present in the same conference room.’ The cause of the conflict was a German anthology for which Rooth had written an enthusiastic foreword. Holmberg accused it of being openly pro-Nazi. The debate raged back and forth and no sooner had the waves begun to settle than the next storm blew up, this time about the post of German lecturer in Lund. On a number of successive occasions Rooth recommended candidates who sympathised with the Nazis. Holmberg doggedly opposed them and completed his mission by purging any remaining Nazi elements even after the war was over. He sounded the alarm whenever any ex-Nazi applied for a post and he checked the German literary histories that were used at the universities in the country.<sup>81</sup>

Olle Holmberg’s activities in the years around 1945 throw light on the way he acted in the Wittenberg Case. By the time the war ended he was already acting as a zealous agent of anti-Nazism, keen to ventilate the malodorous corners of academia and to stop all enemies of enlightenment at the gate. His intellectual profile was not a little reminiscent of that of Tingsten, Hedenius and other cultural radicals, critics and cultural commentators with whom he shared the columns of *Dagens Nyheter* for many years. Significantly, it was Holmberg who was responsible for Thomas Mann, the prime representative of the ‘other Germany’, being awarded an honorary doctorate by Lund University in 1949.<sup>82</sup>

Other cases of Nazi stigmatisation can also be seen in this context. The opposition to Sten Selander should be viewed as part of a bigger struggle about the meaning of literary modernism. Because of his criticism of the writers of the 1940s, Selander was acting as a brake on the development and institutionalisation of postwar literature. In contrast to Selander, Kurt Atterberg had actually moved among the potentates of Nazi Germany, but in the debate that revolved around him it became clear that it was not simply his personal reputation that was at stake: the stigmatisation of the composer Atterberg has to be seen against

a background of rifts in the music scene in Sweden. The National Romantic tendency that Atterberg was considered to represent was condemned – by the circle around the Monday Group, for instance – as out of tune with the times. The accusations of Nazism against Atterberg were one element in the settling of accounts with an older musical establishment. The victory of modernism was undoubtedly eased by the fact that it was perceived to be utterly and essentially distinct from National Socialism.<sup>83</sup>

Kurt Atterberg and Sten Selander belonged to a group of artists and intellectuals that was gradually forgotten in the decades following the war. The marginalisation that affected them also affected many of their contemporaries – figures such as Alf Ahlberg, Emilia Fogelklou, Torsten Fogelqvist, John Landquist, Ellen Key, Bertil Malmberg, Ludvig Nordström, Hans Ruin and Elin Wägner. All of them had been considered influential personalities in the cultural life of the interwar period. Only in a few cases and to a limited extent, however, could their rapid postwar marginalisation be seen as resulting from Nazi stigmatisation. It was more a case that they embodied ideals that were pushed aside during the first postwar decades. Their spiritual roots, idealistic standpoint and frequently national liberal views were out of tune with the currents that were dominant after 1945, all the more so as they often went hand in hand with ambivalent attitudes to the idea of progress, artistic modernism, industrial and technical rationality and some aspects of the welfare state project.<sup>84</sup>

The writer Ulrika Knutson has asked the same kind of questions about the Fogelstad Group – Emilia Fogelklou, Ada Nilsson, Elin Wägner and others – and why their ideas lost authority in the first decades after the war. She suggests a number of likely reasons: they were politically involved but they were not party members; they were active participants in the modern project but were themselves products of a nineteenth-century cultural and educational tradition; their outlook was Christian and they had a deep spiritual commitment that was little understood in a more rationalist age.<sup>85</sup>

All this helped set in motion a process of marginalisation at the end of the war. Martin Kylhammar has characterised the course of this process as follows:

If we think of the public arena as a limited space in which more people want to live and be visible than there is room for, then it is obvious that there will be competition for space. Such conflicts, whether involving direct confrontation or indirect, occur for limited periods of time and in a situation stamped by certain dominant aesthetic and political ideals. The consequences of these conflicts can, on the other hand, be enormously



resilient and mark our perception of history. And they can do so even though the dominant aesthetic and political ideals of the present time are totally different ones.<sup>86</sup>

There is a good deal of evidence that stigmatisation of the Nazi sphere of association led to the possibility of expansion for other spheres of thought. When one segment of the ideological field was compressed, another could expand; when certain ideas gained admittance, others were ejected. The shifts in power depended on the particular understanding of National Socialism during the postwar years. When the historical lessons of Nazism led to the stigmatisation of the Nazi sphere of association it was not just an ideological *reaction*, it was to a very great extent part of a larger ideological *vision*.

## Notes

1. T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Penguin Press, 2005), 13–62.
2. N. Frei (ed.), *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik: Der Umgang mit deutschen Kriegsverbrechern in Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006); I. Deák, J.T. Gross and T. Judt (eds), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe: World War II and Its Aftermath* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); N.M. Naimark, *The Russians in Germany: A History of the Soviet Zone of Occupation, 1945–1949* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).
3. Frei, *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik*. The Danish and Norwegian trials are the subjects of D. Tamm, *Retsoppgøret efter besættelsen*, vol. 1–2 (Copenhagen: Jurist- og økonomforbundets forlag, 1997) and, respectively, H.F. Dahl and Ø. Sørensen (eds), *Et rettfærdig oppgjør?: Retsoppgjøret i Norge etter 1945* (Oslo: Pax, 2004).
4. Judt, *Postwar*, 197–225.
5. E. François, 'Meistererzählungen und Damnbrüche: Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung', in M. Flacke (ed.), *Mythen der Nationen: 1945 – Arena der Erinnerungen*, vol. 1 (Berlin: DHM, 2004), 16–20. I have developed this topic in several articles, particularly in J. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget: Från patriotism till universalism under efterkrigstiden', in L.M. Andersson and M. Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Nazityskland: Skuldfrågor och moraldebatt* (Stockholm: Dialogos, 2007), J. Östling, 'Swedish Narratives of the Second World War: A European Perspective', *Contemporary European History* (2) (2008) and J. Östling, 'The Rise and Fall of Small-State Realism: Sweden and the Second World War', in H. Stenius, M. Österberg and J. Östling (eds), *Nordic Narratives of the Second World War: National Historiographies Revisited* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011).

6. François, 'Meistererzählungen und Damnbrüche'; Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik*; Judt, *Postwar*, 61–62.
7. See for instance Deák, Gross and Judt, *The Politics of Retribution in Europe* and Frei, *Transnationale Vergangenheitspolitik*.
8. 'Hemmanazisterna blott ett irritationsmoment', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 13 October 1945. With regard to *Dagsposten* see S. Bruchfeld, 'Grusade drömmar: Svenska "nationella" och det tyska nederlaget 1945', in C. Brylla, B. Almgren and F.M. Kirsch (eds), *Bilder i kontrast: Interkulturella processer Sverige/Tyskland i skuggan av nazismen 1933–1945* (Ålborg: Institut für Sprache und internationale Kulturstudien, 2005), 63–65.
9. A.W. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen: Aspekter på andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2006), 280.
10. Quoted from Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 277.
11. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget', 31–34.
12. For a Danish discussion see C. Bryld and A. Warring, *Besættelsestiden som kollektiv erindring* (Roskilde: Dansk Historisk Faellesraad, 1999), 35–38 and 75–137.
13. E. Wallberg, *Övervakningen av nazister och högerextremister: Säkerhetstjänst, nazism och högerextremism 1946–1980* (Stockholm, SOU 2002:94), 11; R. Bokholm, *Tisdagsklubben: Om glömda antinazistiska sanningssägare i svenskt 30-och 40-tal* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2001), 407–421; A.K. Carlstoft Bramell, *Vilhelm Moberg tar ställning: En studie av hans journalistik och tidsaktuella diktning* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2007), 243–267. Counter-narratives of various sorts appeared, for instance, in T. Nerman, *Sverige i beredskap* (Stockholm: Trots Allt, 1942); V. Moberg, *Segerstedtstriden* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1945); E. Boldt-Christmas, *Voro vi neutrala* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1946) and A. Sastamoinen, *Hitlers svenska förtrupper* (Stockholm: Federativs förlag, 1947).
14. T. Nerman, *1940 års män: Historiska citat av Richard Lindström, Allan Vougt, Harald Åkerberg, Ivar Österström* (Stockholm: Trots Allt, 1944); L.E. Hansen, *Rickard Lindström: Per Albins folkhemsvisionär?* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2007), 214–232; K. Björk, *En utskälld man: Allan Vougt och hans tid* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2007), 230–242; H. Arnstad, *Spelaren Christian Günther: Sverige under andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 2006), 479–480.
15. S. Oredsson, *Svensk rådska: Offentlig fruktan i Sverige under 1900-talets första hälft* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001), 265–285; Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 276–280.
16. W.M. Carlgren, *Korten på bordet?: Svenska vitböcker om krigsårens utrikespolitik* (Stockholm: Militärhistoriska förlaget, 1989), 6–7 and 39–79. The three most important White Books were published in February 1947: *Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under andra världskriget: Transiteringsfrågor och därmed sammanhängande spörsmål april–juni 1940* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1947); *Handlingar rörande Sveriges politik under andra världskriget: Transiteringsfrågan juni–december 1940* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1947); *Norges forhold til Sverige under krigen 1940–45* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1947). A first White Book – *Förbindelserna mellan chefen för Lantförsvarets kommandoexpedition och tyske militärattachén i Stockholm 1939–1945* (Stockholm: Fritzes, 1946) – had been

- published in July 1946, but it was of a different kind than the others. See Carlgren, *Korten på bordet?*, 9–39.
17. Carlgren, *Korten på bordet?*, 63–73. See also Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 278–280.
  18. Wallberg, *Övervakningen av nazister och högerextremister*, 31; Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 277–278.
  19. Wallberg, *Övervakningen av nazister och högerextremister*, 13–27. A particular form of anti-Nazi opinion was manifested in the debate about the return of the Baltic refugees in 1945/1946. Many articles, especially in labour movement newspapers, insinuated that dark forces were at work behind the very large actions expressing sympathy for the Baltic peoples threatened with expulsion. It was suggested that the interned Baltic soldiers were Nazi sympathisers and that the Swedes now supporting their case were in fact their ideological kindred. See C. Ekholm, *Balt- och tyskutlämningen 1945–1946: Omständigheter kring interneringen i läger i Sverige och utlämningen till Sovjetunionen av f d tyska krigsdeltagare: Utlämningen och efterspelet* (Uppsala: Studia historica Upsaliensia, 1984), 105–107 and 305–319.
  20. In his diaries Tage Erlander complained about the difficulties involved in getting Nazis excluded from state service, all the more so since various professional groups tended to protect their own. ‘Purge everywhere, but not within our own particular circle of acquaintances’, was the motto, according to the prime minister. See T. Erlander, *Dagböcker: 1945–1949* (Hedemora: Gidlunds förlag, 2001), 89.
  21. I. Brohed, *Sveriges kyrkohistoria: Religionsfrihetens och ekumenikens tid* (Stockholm: Verbum, 2005), 190–191; A. Jarlert, ‘Sverige: Modernisering utan rättsupp görelse’, in J.H. Schjørring (ed.), *Nordiske folkekirker i opbrud: National identitet og international nyorientering efter 1945* (Århus: Århus Universitetsforlag, 2001).
  22. G. Lundström, P. Rydén and E. Sandlund, *Den svenska pressens historia: Det moderna Sveriges spegel (1897–1945)* (Stockholm: Ekerlids förlag, 2001), 351–362 and 372–380; K. Holt, *Publicisten Ivar Harrie: Ideologi, offentlighetsdebatt och idékritik i Expressen 1944–1960* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2008), 187–189.
  23. Quoted from ‘Svenska nazistförrädare åtalas, nazismen självdör, sa Erlander’, *Aftontidningen*, 11 June 1947. See also Wallberg, *Övervakningen av nazister och högerextremister*, 114–116.
  24. Johansson, *Den nazistiska utmaningen*, 277.
  25. Cf. P. Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen: Kurt Atterberg och de svensktyska musikrelationerna* (Lund: Sekel, 2007), 222.
  26. Quoted from J.P. Hewitt, *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1976), 231.
  27. E. Goffman, *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1963).
  28. Goffman, *Stigma*, 11–16 and 144 (quotations 14 and 144).
  29. I develop this further in Chapter VI.
  30. See H. Rosengren and J. Östling (eds), *Med livet som insats: Biografen som humanistisk genre* (Lund: Sekel, 2007).

31. H. Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979: Pionjärerna, partierna, propagandan* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2004), 121–159; S. Bruchfeld, 'Grusade drömmar'.
32. B. Jonsson, *Blod och jord i trettioalet: Kvinnorna och den antimoderna strömmingen* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2008); S. Bokholm, *I otakt med tiden: Om rösträttsmotstånd, antipacifism och nazism bland svenska kvinnor* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008).
33. L. Berggren, *Nationell upplysning: Drag i den svenska antisemitismens idéhistoria* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1999), 202–205; Bruchfeld, 'Grusade drömmar: Svenska "nationella" och det tyska nederlaget 1945'. Tingsten has written about the debates with Essén during the 1930s in H. Tingsten, *Mitt liv: Mellan trettio och femtio* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1962), 263 and 301.
34. R. Essén, *Demokratien och dess gärningar* (Stockholm: publisher unknown, 1955); R. Essén, *Sven Hedin: Ein großes Leben* (Leoni am Starnberger See: Druffel, 1959).
35. P. Engdahl, 'Varför inte demokrat?', *Expressen*, 26 April 1959; I. Harrie, 'Replik', *Expressen*, 26 April 1959; P. Engdahl, 'Kättare i folkhemmet', *Dagens Nyheter*, 1 February 1970; O. Lagercrantz, 'Kommentar till Per Engdahl', *Dagens Nyheter*, 1 February 1970. See C. Mithander, "'Let Us Forget the Evil Memories": Nazism and the Second World War from the Perspective of a Swedish Fascist', in C. Mithander, J. Sundholm and M. Holmgren Troy (eds), *Collective Traumas: Memories of War and Conflict in 20thcentury Europe* (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2007).
36. My account in general relies heavily on S. Nordin, *Fredrik Böök: En levnadsteckning* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1994). Various aspects of Böök and Nazism have also been dealt with by T. Forser, *Bööks 30-tal: En studie i ideologi* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1976); T. Stenström, 'Fredrik Böök och nazismen', in J. Stenkvis (ed.), *Från Snoilsky till Sonnevi: Litteraturvetenskapliga studier tillägnade Gunnar Brandell* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1976); S. Oredsson, *Lunds universitet under andra världskriget: Motsättningar, debatter och hjälpinsatser* (Lund: Lunds universitetshistoriska sällskap, 1996); N. Shachar, 'Förord', in F. Böök, *Under stjärnorna: Ett ofullbordad porträtt* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1998); I. Larsson, *Text och tolkning i svenska författarbiografier: Elin Wägners Selma Lagerlöf, Elisabeth Tykessons Atterbom och Fredrik Bööks Verner von Heidenstam* (Hedemora: Gidlunds, 2003) and S. Björklund, 'Fredrik Böök på det sluttande planet', *Scandia* 70(1) (2004). Björck is quoted from Larsson, *Text och tolkning i svenska författarbiografier*, 224.
37. Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 321–333; Stenström, 'Fredrik Böök och nazismen', 130–139.
38. Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 316–327; Oredsson, *Lunds universitet under andra världskriget*, 88–90.
39. Quotation from Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 341–342.
40. Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 346–374. Quotation from Larsson, *Text och tolkning i svenska författarbiografier*, 226.
41. Larsson, *Text och tolkning i svenska författarbiografier*, 222–227; Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 382.
42. Larsson, *Text och tolkning i svenska författarbiografier*, 281–285.

43. Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 362–363.
44. 'Professor Bööks tal i Svenska akademien [sic!]', *Dagens Nyheter*, 22 December 1947. For Böök and Tingsten see also A.W. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget: Antikommunism och liberalism i Dagens Nyheter 1946–1952* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1995), 64–65.
45. F. Böök, *Rannsakan* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1953); Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 389.
46. H. Tingsten, 'Professor Bööks sista alibi', *Dagens Nyheter*, 21 October 1953.
47. I. Harrie, 'Drypande sirap', *Expressen*, 21 October 1953.
48. S. Rinman, 'Rannsakan med förhinder', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 3 December 1953; E.H. Linder, 'Bööks syndabekännelse', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 22 October 1953; N.I. Ivarsson, 'Gift ej bot', *Kvällsposten*, 5 November 1953.
49. C. Fehrman, 'Fredrik Böök ser tillbaka', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 21 October 1953; K.G. Hildebrand, 'Fredrik Bööks rannsakan', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 21 October 1953.
50. F. Böök, *Betraktelse* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1954); Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 391–393.
51. H. Tingsten, 'Kannstöperi och alibism', *Dagens Nyheter*, 22 May 1954; I. Harrie, 'Tre gudsmäns vittnesbörd', *Expressen*, 27 May 1954. See Nordin, *Fredrik Böök*, 394–395.
52. I. Hedenius and K. Jaensson, *En vän att tala med* (Stockholm: Bromberg, 1986), 70. Regarding Hedenius and Böök see S. Nordin, *Ingemar Hedenius: En filosof och hans tid* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2004), 105 and 113–114.
53. The section on Erich Wittenberg and secondary stigmatisation has been published in a different version as J. Östling, 'Fallet Wittenberg: Nazismen som stigma i den svenska efterkrigs-kulturen', *Personhistorisk tidskrift* (1) (2007).
54. Erich Wittenberg's life and career is the subject of the book he published in 1951, *Ett akademiskt justitiemord?: En vädjan till den svenska demokratiens samvete: Handlingar rörande docenturen i politisk idéhistoria vid Lunds universitet* (Lund: publisher unknown, 1951), which is simultaneously a collection of documents and him pleading his case. Along with an introduction, a German summary and a bibliography of his works, this also contains all the essential documents in his fight for promotion – the application documents, statements from the referees, extracts from the minutes, decisions, press reactions and more. Wittenberg is also discussed in A. Ers, *Segrarnas historia: Makten, historien och friheten studerade genom exemplet Herbert Tingsten 1939–1953* (Umeå: Text & Kultur, 2008).
55. The whole course of events may be followed in Wittenberg, *Ett akademiskt justitiemord?*.
56. S. Nordin, *Romantikens filosofi: Svensk idealism från Höijer till hegelianerna* (Lund: Doxa, 1987); M. Persson, *Förnuftskampen: Vitalis Norström och idealismens kris* (Stockholm and Stehag: Symposion, 1994); C.G. Heidegren, *Det moderna genombrottet i nordisk universitetsfilosofi 1860–1915* (Gothenburg: Daidalos, 2004).
57. E. Wittenberg, 'Utgör Bismarcks Rike en grundval för det Tredje Riket?: Ett idéhistoriskt utkast', in A.N. Thomson (ed.), *Studier tillägnade Fredrik Lagerroth* (Lund: Gleerup, 1950), 410.

58. Herbert Tingsten's book, *De konservativa idéerna* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1939), was reviewed by Erich Wittenberg in Sweden's leading historical journal. See E. Wittenberg, review of 'De konservativa idéerna', *Historisk tidskrift* (3) (1940). Tingsten and Wittenberg's exchange of views was featured in H. Tingsten, 'De konservativa idéerna: En replik', *Historisk tidskrift* (4) (1940) and E. Wittenberg, 'De konservativa idéerna: En replik', *Historisk tidskrift* (1) (1941).
59. I. Karlsson, *Historien som biologiskt öde: Om perspektivförskjutningar inom mellankrigstidens tyska historieskrivning* (Gothenburg: Akademytryck, 1989), 9–15; B. Odén, 'Gurevitjs undran', in J. Dietsch et al. (eds), *Historia mot strömmen: Kultur och konflikt i det moderna Europa* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2007).
60. Quoted from Wittenberg, *Ett akademiskt justitiemord?*, 35.
61. Quote and reference to Wittenberg, *Ett akademiskt justitiemord?*, 35–41. Ingemar Hedenius passed judgement on Wittenberg in a review of his *Historiska idéer och makter* (Stockholm: Gebers, 1944). Hedenius republished the text later as 'Tyska humanister' in *Tro och vetande* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1949). In the first piece he stated his view of the relationship between Nazism and older German traditions: 'There is without doubt a crisis of culture. It depends among other things on the decline of humanistic education in Germany, which was once one of the greatest cultural countries. German humanists have been in the vanguard of those spreading a great deal of false romanticism and empty verbiage that has freed many writers from clear and sensible reflection, logic and realism in humanistic matters. That style flourished in many areas during the Weimar Republic. But it effectively became all-dominant after 1933 when, so to speak, it was taken over by the state and put in the hands of Nazi cultural propaganda [...].' See Hedenius, *Tro och vetande*, 299.
62. Wittenberg, *Ett akademiskt justitiemord?*, 79–99.
63. O. Holmberg, 'Ett akademiskt domslut', *Dagens Nyheter*, 4 July 1951.
64. Holmberg, 'Ett akademiskt domslut'.
65. Quote and reference to Wittenberg, *Ett akademiskt justitiemord?*, 183–187.
66. In spite of the resistance Wittenberg met in academic circles he did enjoy the support of parts of the press, including the student newspaper *Lundagård*.
67. See in general J. Jacobi, *Zarah Leander: Das Leben einer Diva* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 2006).
68. E. Leiser, 'Allt går igen ...', *Judisk tidskrift* (1949:22). See also J. Östling, 'Leander och den svenska självprövningen', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 September 2007.
69. S. Hedin, *Utan uppdrag i Berlin* (Stockholm: Fahlcrantz & Gumaelius, 1949); S. Selander, *Sven Hedin: Inträdestal i Svenska Akademien* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1953), especially 20–23. See also S.K. Danielsson, *The Explorer's Roadmap to National-Socialism: Sven Hedin, Geography and the Path to Genocide* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012) and A. Odelberg, *Äventyr på riktigt: Berättelsen om upptäckaren Sven Hedin* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2008), 507–588.
70. Oredsson, *Lunds universitet under andra världskriget*, 219–221. It is worthy of note that the articles on Hugo Odeberg and Erik Rooth in *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon* never go into their ideological relationship to Nazism: see T.

- Kronholm, 'Odeberg, Hugo', *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 28 (Stockholm: Svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1992) and M. Åsdahl Holmberg, 'Rooth, Erik Gustaf Teodor', *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 30 (Stockholm: Svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 2000). This distinguishes them in a deplorable way from K.Å. Modéer, 'Olivecrona, Knut Hans Karl', *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 28 (Stockholm: Svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1992). In an article, Carl Martin Roos describes his own experiences in the law faculty at the start of the 1960s: 'Olivecrona himself had been pro-German for a part of the Second World War, but had apologised for it. Nevertheless he was – paradoxically enough – the most respected of our professors both inside and outside the faculty.' See C.M. Roos, 'Juridiska fakulteten på 1960-talet', in *Under Lundagårds kronor* (Lund: Akademiska Föreningens Förlag, 2005), 22.
71. Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen*, 220–236.
  72. P.I. Gedin, *Verner von Heidenstam: Ett liv* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2006), 579–592; M. Kylhammar, 'Biografiska faktoider: Personhistoriens försanthållna felaktigheter', in H. Rosengren and J. Östling (eds), *Med livet som insats: Biografin som humanistisk genre* (Lund: Sekel, 2007).
  73. M. Kylhammar, *Den okände Sten Selander: En borgerlig intellektuell* (Stockholm: Akademeja, 1990), especially 146–174. See also P. Luthersson, *Svensk litterär modernism: En stridsstudie* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002), 325–330.
  74. H. Rosengren, *Judarnas Wagner': Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950* (Lund: Sekel, 2007), 319–327.
  75. T. Ek, *En människas uttryck: Studier i Hans Ruins självbiografiska essäistik* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2003), 208–216 (quotation 216). In the title of his article, 'Beundra, fördöma, förlåta: En nordisk humanists syn på Tyskland under 1900-talets första hälft', published in *Nya Argus* (1) (1991), Olof Ruin captures his father's changing attitude to Germany.
  76. H. Lindgren, *Jacob Wallenberg 1892–1980* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2007), 251–323.
  77. For an interesting Danish parallel case, see P. Øhrgaard, 'Fra forsvarsven til scavenianer: Carl Roos (1884–1962), Professor i tysk', *Historisk Tidsskrift* (2) (2007).
  78. P.K. Jensen, 'Det sidste argument: Brugen af nazismen som fjendebillede i dansk politisk kultur 1945–2004, belyst gennem Europa- og utlænding-edebatterne', (Århus: unpublished *speciale* at the Institut for historie og områdestudier, Historisk afdeling, Århus University, 2004), 1–3.
  79. K. Fant, *Torgny Segerstedt: En levnadsskildring* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2007), 104; K. Salomon, *En femtiotalberättelse: Populärkulturens kalla krig i folkhemssverige* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2007), 72–77. See also L.K. Adler and T.G. Paterson, 'Red Fascism: The Merger of Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia in the American Image of Totalitarianism, 1930's-1950's', *The American Historical Review* (4) (1970).
  80. I develop this idea in Chapter V.
  81. Oredsson, *Lunds universitet under andra världskriget*, 171–176; B. Almgren, *Drömmen om Norden: Nazistisk infiltration i Sverige 1933–1945* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2005), 141–146.

82. C. Fehrman, H. Westling and G. Blomqvist, *Lärdomens Lund: Lunds universitets historia 1666–2004* (Lund: Lund University Press, 2004), 245–246.
83. Kylhammar, *Den okände Sten Selander*, 155–157; Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen*, 224–235.
84. Martin Kylhammar puts forward a similar argument in ‘Torsten Fogelqvist, *Dagens Nyheter*’s själ och den intellektuella biografins metodfråga’, *Scandia* (2) (2007), 122–123.
85. U. Knutson, *Kvinnor på gränsen till genombrott: Gruppporträtt av Tidevarvets kvinnor* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2004), 8–12. See B. Jonsson, *Blod och jord i trettiotalet*, especially 47–52.
86. Kylhammar, ‘Torsten Fogelqvist, *Dagens Nyheter*’s själ och den intellektuella biografins metodfråga’, 122.

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## THE IDEAS OF 1945

On Saturday, 13 March 1948, Ingemar Hedenius was installed as Professor of Practical Philosophy at Uppsala University. With the usual academic pomp the older professors, bedecked with orders and decorations, processed into the aula followed by the students and citizens of the town. Once the sounds of the long triumphal march from *Aida* and Beethoven's Largo had faded away, the eyes of the audience turned to the figure in tails at the lectern.<sup>1</sup>

Ingemar Hedenius's inaugural lecture took the form of a combative programmatic declaration. With a great deal of self-confidence he defined what could be considered to be scientific philosophy and what could be dismissed as unscientific. Contemporary philosophy, he declared, could be divided into a number of essentially different tendencies. Marxism and Thomism were at heart ideological projections that lacked scientific qualities and were essentially expressions of religious desires. Something not dissimilar could be said of existentialism, the quasi-scientific doctrine that was at that point sweeping victorious through the educated world.<sup>2</sup> Hedenius did not have much time for it but was optimistic about the way things were developing:

Purely intellectually there are few theories more abstruse and more baroque than existentialism, which has its ultimate origin in the religious dialectic of that unhappy genius Kierkegaard and which has acquired its present form in the impenetrable ideas of crisis-ridden and war-scarred professors of philosophy in France and Germany. But it is perhaps not too bold to predict that when this philosophy has eventually faded away and become no more than a detail in the literary history of the ravaged age of Hitler, its role will already have been taken over by a new and perhaps totally different manifestation of the desire to contemplate what we call the eternal questions.<sup>3</sup>

The division into a scientific tendency (analytic philosophy) and three unscientific tendencies (Marxism, Thomism and existentialism) was not made for rhetorical effect alone: it also reflected the direction

being followed by university philosophy in Sweden during the post-war period. But Hedenius's statement was also a contribution to the Swedish debate about existentialism that was going on in the second half of the 1940s and which contained echoes of other intellectual disagreements of the time.<sup>4</sup>

The older philosophy of existence (Kierkegaard, Jaspers, Heidegger and Barth) had fascinated a few Swedish theologians, authors and critics during the first decades of the twentieth century but there were only vague and tentative approaches towards it until the 1940s. Immediately after the war, however, Sweden was affected by powerful influences from France. As a result of plays, novels and philosophical works, existentialism – initially almost solely connected to the name of Jean-Paul Sartre – became one of the most significant trends in the field of literature and the philosophy of life of the late 1940s.<sup>5</sup>

The winter of 1947 witnessed a debate about existentialism that may be seen as one element in a bigger intellectual power struggle. It began with the philosopher Anders Wedberg launching a frontal attack on Sartre and his doctrines in a vitriolic article in *Dagens Nyheter*. From a philosophical point of view the Frenchman was a bombastic and unoriginal charlatan of merely literary interest. The fact that he had had such a great impact could simply be explained by the spiritual vacuum left in the aftermath of the war. Wedberg went on to raise a warning finger and point to the traditions from which Sartre's ideas drew sustenance:

He is most particularly a disciple of Heidegger, one of the most tragically confused German thinkers of the interwar period and the fermenting soil that allowed Nazi thought processes to take root. Ultimately he was one of the fellow travellers of Hitler. In this case the apple has fallen vertically from the tree – the fact that Sartre is an anti-Nazi would seem to be a pretty inessential distinction.<sup>6</sup>

According to Wedberg, in spite of the fact that Sartre called himself a radical socialist his outlook on life, his commitment and his doctrine of action all sprang from a Nazi mentality. This view was by no means the all-prevailing view in Sweden and those who had studied Sartre's existentialism more closely – Gunnar Aspelin, Gunnar Brandell, Olle Holmberg and Lechard Johannesson, for instance – offered a very much more complex picture. Nor did Wedberg's attack go unanswered: Karl Vennberg challenged him to produce a more accurate and fairer analysis of Sartre's philosophy and John Landquist castigated the provincialism that he believed circumscribed Swedish philosophy. Both of them stated emphatically that existentialism and its humanistic message was the diametrical opposite to Nazism.<sup>7</sup>

Andres Wedberg cannot, however, be dismissed as a lone and isolated voice. The belief that existentialism was an offshoot of the same spirit as National Socialism recurred in various forms throughout the second half of the 1940s. People as diverse as Sven Backlund, Gunnar Gunnarson, Artur Lundkvist and Victor Vinde leaned in that direction. And in his inaugural lecture Hedenius joined them.<sup>8</sup>

The assault on Sartre's existentialism is yet another example of the taint that attached to any kind of thinking that was associated with Nazism. The stigmatisation can be seen as secondary: Nazi sympathies were never attributed to Sartre but he was thought to be articulating a brownshirt mentality that had its origin in dangerous German traditions. The Swedish debate about existentialism is also of more general interest in that it reveals how experiences of National Socialism could even set their mark on debates that apparently lacked any connection with the conflicts of the Second World War. The lessons of Nazism obviously had a deeper and broader hold than might initially have been believed. As in the earlier chapters of this book, we might suspect that the struggle to interpret the Nazi experience was one part of a bigger contemporary battle, in this case a battle about which philosophy should be regarded as being stamped with the hallmark of science in postwar Sweden.

International comparisons make it clear that there were particularly Swedish factors involved in the disputes about existentialism. Sartre and the other existentialists won many followers on the continent at the end of the 1940s, a body of support that was nourished by the disillusion and existential crisis that followed the war. Existential patterns of thought were expressed in journals such as *Der Ruf* (The Call) and *Die Wandlung* (The Change) in the western zones of Germany where, in contrast to Sweden, existentialism was viewed as an individualist doctrine of freedom, an antithesis of the collective intoxication of Nazism. It was a philosophy for those who wanted to free themselves from the aberrations of ideology.<sup>9</sup>

The aim of this chapter is to broaden out the analysis of the historical lessons of Nazism. The emphasis moves from the content of the Nazi experience to the visions of the future that emerged in the wake of the Second World War. To put it another way, the chapter will deal with the relationship between the lessons of Nazism and the dominant political and intellectual order. In order to characterise the 'ideas of 1945', that is to say the currents that distinguished the early postwar ideological landscape, attention will be focused on two areas in particular: education and the law. They are not the only possible areas, but both of them represent explicitly normative areas in which the values that sustain a



modern state are manifested and where ideas meet practice. The debate about educational and legal policies always exists in a dynamic relationship with the overarching experiences and social visions of an age. It paves the way for an analysis of how the lessons of Nazism formed the young postwar world in a wider and more general sense.

## **A School for the Postwar Age**

In the history of Swedish education the 1940s is the decade of the great education commissions. The foundations on which the postwar education system rested were laid down in that decade. Both the Schools Enquiry of 1940 and the Schools Commission of 1946 had their roots in the long drawn-out debate about the comprehensive school system, an issue that had been on the agenda ever since the end of the nineteenth century. The school reforms of the interwar years had been lukewarm compromises. The vigorous debate about education policy during the 1940s, however, was about far more than school recruitment and organisational structure. The educational arguments of the time reflected ideological and attitudinal disagreements.<sup>10</sup>

The education commissions of the 1940s lend themselves to a study of how historical experiences affect discussions on the future of society. On the one hand, the committees were working during a period marked by radical experiences and changes, among which wartime crises, the capitulation of the Third Reich and postwar planning were among the most important factors. That in itself makes a good starting point for an analysis of how the experience of Nazism affected ways of perceiving the world. On the other hand, the commissions were essentially normative in that they explicitly prescribed how the people of the future should be educated. Their essential foundations – their view of humankind and educational ideals, their relationship to democracy, society and tradition – were formed by the interplay between historical experiences and expectations for the future. The information produced by the education commissions provides me with the material necessary for a discussion of the way the historical lessons of Nazism influenced the ideas of 1945.

### *A School in the Service of Society*

In November 1940 the Conservative leader Gösta Bagge set up a committee to look into the school of the future in Sweden. Bagge had been appointed minister of education in Per Albin Hansson's coalition

government just a year earlier and he had devoted his first year in office to familiarising himself with the major questions of education policy then on the agenda. His predecessor in the post, the Social Democrat Arthur Engberg, had taken the initiative at the end of the 1930s to establish a number of minor enquiries, but no real progress had been made. In spite of the turbulent political situation in Europe, Bagge decided to grapple with the future of education: he appointed a large committee and, to emphasise the importance he gave the issue, he chaired it himself.<sup>11</sup>

The remit of the 1940 Schools Enquiry was 'to carry out an enquiry into the organisation of the school system and to bring forward such proposals as emerge'. The actual committee was to a considerable extent an expert committee and the majority of the fourteen members who served with Bagge were teachers, headteachers, school inspectors or university professors. The provisions within which the committee was working soon became clear: one major element was the desire to create a more integrated school system, but not at the price of excessive uniformity.<sup>12</sup>

In the terms of reference set for the 1940 School Enquiry there was an overall statement of the goal of education. It was a kind of manifesto of educational policy, a basic vision for education:

The general principle to which the work of the enquiry should adhere is that the ultimate aim of the school is not to impart knowledge but to educate in the broadest and deepest sense. The task of the school is to promote the harmonious development of the natural abilities of young people not only intellectually but also morally and physically. Our age demands physically well-trained young people who can compete with their peers in other countries, but it also needs young people able to combine cool judgment with boldness of decision and action. Young people must be educated to love truth, to be firm of character, to have self-discipline and a sense of social responsibility, to be socially conscious and have a spirit of self-sacrifice, to be loyal to the traditions and spiritual inheritance of our nation. The teaching of Christian Knowledge offers special opportunities for moral education, as do subjects such as our mother tongue and history, as well as active communal work both inside and outside school. Every school activity, whether it be study or physical education, play or sport, should serve to form and develop character.<sup>13</sup>

This declaration set the tone. The cardinal aim of the activities of the school was to be the formation of character. If we can judge from press reaction, there were no dissenting voices on this point. Even Arthur Engberg, the previous minister of education who was critical of the Bagge committee in other respects, came out wholeheartedly in support

of the idea that education in the sense of character formation should be regarded as the prime aim of the school.<sup>14</sup>

The historian Gunnar Richardson is in no doubt when he attributes the remarkable degree of unity across the party political spectrum to the critical situation Sweden was in during the first years of the war. 'The focus on building up strength in military and supplies terms was obvious and uncontentious. That "spiritual preparedness for defence" should also be included was regarded as quite natural', was how Richardson describes the situation, giving numerous examples of the national authoritarian spirit that ruled during the early years of the war. Every organised body in Sweden, from labour organisations and popular educational associations to women's voluntary services and the churches, promoted self-discipline, spiritual mobilisation and moral education in the national spirit as desirable virtues. The traditional institutions – the royal family, the church and the armed forces – moved into greater prominence during these years, at the same time as state institutions organised Swedishness propaganda. The slogan of the age was 'A dangerous time demands communal spirit, vigilance and silence'. To borrow a phrase from the terminology of the 'Sweden during the Second World War Project', the norm of unity took precedence over the norm of party.<sup>15</sup>

When the Bagge commission produced its first report in the spring of 1944, *Skolan i samhällets tjänst* (School in the Service of Society), it bore the signs of the terms of reference set in the first years of the war. The title itself signalled the idea that the school should serve society as a whole, not the individual or any particular interest. It seemed quite natural to ask the question: 'What are we demanding of the school now if it is to work in complete harmony with the guiding spirit of our nation and best promote our material and spiritual growth?' The report began with a retrospective survey of the history of the school in Sweden and this revealed that the school had followed the same course of development as society as a whole. A strong and valued tradition linked the school with the past, which meant that sudden violent changes were to be avoided. Continuity and harmony were cardinal virtues in the eyes of the committee chaired by the Conservative leader Gösta Bagge.<sup>16</sup>

The report *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, which was more of statement of pedagogical principles than a series of concrete suggestions, consistently reflected the ideals of the commission. At its basis lay a value system, the cornerstones of which were a Christian view of the world, a national perception of society and a profound respect for the principles of the Swedish constitutional state and for the cultural heritage of the country.<sup>17</sup> 'What is now being asked with a united voice of the Swedish

school is that it will teach our growing young people what it means to be Swedish, to be citizens of a free country, fellow workers in a society governed by the people, jointly responsible for the future of their nation', the report stated. And it continued:

In various subjects, in Christianity, in the mother tongue, in history and geography, the teaching will unite to work towards the goal of making the young person aware of the national heritage and of the benefits and duties it brings. It is primarily a matter of knowledge, but this knowledge must be firmly rooted in the emotional life and must provide a direction for the life of the will. That is the only kind of education that can make young people non-receptive to the pressures of propaganda and willing to make the sacrifices that may possibly be demanded of them.<sup>18</sup>

The role of the school was to develop the character of its pupils, and that would remain its role. The ideal pupil would not only be gifted, industrious, well-behaved, truthful, full of initiative, industrious and strong-willed. The school should also promote other characteristics such as 'irreproachable conduct, courage, strong mindedness, self-control, chivalrousness, a preparedness to make sacrifices, comradeship, reliability, loyalty, leadership, organisational ability'.<sup>19</sup>

The educational vision that emerges from *Skolan i samhällets tjänst* can be characterised in a number of ways. One way of looking at it is to emphasise the prominent role played by the virtues of preparedness in the commission's thinking, the fact that the traditional virtues of school pupils rank alongside the traditional virtues of the soldier. This is the view usually taken by the more historically inclined studies of the Schools Enquiry of 1940. Gunnar Richardson, for instance, concludes as follows: 'This is educational preparedness marked by several years of external threat and by the internal mustering of strength in the shadow of the Second World War.' The spirit of earnest purposefulness and of rallying the nation that pertained to the war years had put their unmistakable stamp on Bagge's programme.<sup>20</sup>

The 1940 Schools Enquiry should, however, not simply be viewed as a product of preparedness, as a reflection of the spirit of the age. It was informed by values and traditions which, taken together, formed a coherent outlook. Viewed analytically, it is possible to distinguish an educational ideal, a human ideal and a social ideal.

The *educational ideal* that permeated the committee's work was based on God and on the motherland, to adopt Herbert Tingsten's critical characterisation of it at the end of the 1960s. As one statement – a statement laden with content – expressed it: 'The fundamental truths of Christianity, pictures from the life of the church, the works of our poets and thinkers, the great figures of history – particularly those of our own

people, all this is to be acquired not only as knowledge, as facts, it is to form conceptual life in its entirety, imbue it with the red heat of interest and fill it with the kind of emotional excitement that can unleash will and action.' Christian truths and national heritage should not just be cold historical sources of learning: they were the foundations of a living ethical education that inspired action and development.<sup>21</sup> Similar beliefs are expressed in another sentence: 'The heritage of Athens and Rome is common to all of us, as is the Christian heritage; they have been taken into the Swedish educational tradition as it has been interpreted by a Tegnér and a Rydberg'.<sup>22</sup>

Christianity as a school subject was a cornerstone of the 1940 Schools Enquiry, its purpose being to pass on a national cultural tradition and to foster the pupils' moral development. The understanding of Christianity that formed the basis of ethical education in school could be termed cultural-Protestant and was clearly demarcated in a confessional sense. Bible texts and historical Christian figures were to be chosen with a view to promoting maturity and character formation. The committee had no doubt that Christianity in its Lutheran form was the outlook that harmonised best with the interests of the nation. 'The Swedish line is the Christian line', ran one of the wartime slogans and it was a slogan that chimed well with the attitude of the Schools Enquiry.<sup>23</sup>

Taken as a whole the educational ideal revealed by *Skolan i samhällets tjänst* could be termed Neo-Humanistic. Neo-Humanism, which had its roots in the meeting between Enlightenment and Romanticism in Germany in the years around 1800, argued that man had an inner capacity for knowledge and that study could actualise this inherent potential. There were disagreements about which subjects best exercised human potentiality but the majority of Neo-Humanists were enthusiastic supporters of classical philology and national literature. As far as Sweden is concerned Esaias Tegnér is considered to be its prime advocate but it remained influential in certain political and cultural circles as late as the interwar period. In the labour movement a Neo-Humanistic educational ideal was embraced by Erik Hedén and Arthur Engberg. In this respect there was significant continuity between Engberg, the Social Democrat minister of education in the 1930s, and the Conservative Bagge, minister during the war years. Both of them stood for the character-forming ideals of Neo-Humanism. By studying the classical languages, Swedish literature, Christianity and history, pupils would be taught to serve society. Ever since the 1920s, however, the supporters of the traditional educational pattern had been vociferously challenged by a generation of younger radicals. These modernists and left-wing intellectuals turned on Neo-Humanism and recommended rationalism

and political engagement instead. Bagge's wartime proposals thus represented a return to an ideal that many people in the middle of the 1930s considered passé.

The Schools Enquiry's *human ideal* was based on a given anthropology. In accordance with Neo-Humanism, humankind was seen as educable and full of inherent potentialities that could be developed. But the human being was seen above all as a cultural and social being, strongly attached to the tradition that he or she was part of, and it was within this historical framework that the mental and spiritual capabilities could best achieve their potential. The human being had to hold in trust the heritage left by the past and pass it on.<sup>24</sup>

This conception of the human being formed the basis of the human ideal. The character traits that were prioritised were the classic virtues of conscientiousness. Pupils should be industrious, well-behaved, truthful and willing workers. They should willingly support others and subject themselves to the demands of the collective. It is notable that many of the qualities that were highly valued were the soldierly and manly virtues of the time: self-control, chivalrousness, self-sacrifice, comradeship, loyalty and leadership. The ideal was an individual controlled by will and capable of strong resistance, an individual in the service of society.

The School Enquiry's *social ideal* built on ideas of harmony, balance and community. There was no suggestion that pupils should be educated to change the fundamental structures of society. The view of society was a conservative one in the sense that it was static, organic and emphasised internal continuity.<sup>25</sup>

One aspect of the view of society was the concept of democracy. In the debates on educational policy in the early 1940s, there was a marked consensus about the overall aims of the school system, but sometimes, particularly during the heated discussion about what were known as 'national defence exercises', the question was raised as to whether schools also had a duty to lay the foundations of democratic beliefs in their pupils. Evald Fransson, Oscar Olsson and Jörgen Westerståhl were among those who took the view that the most important function of the school was to promote democracy. The methods of education in the dictatorships were warning examples of what could result if the pedagogy of preparedness was pushed to the extreme. They argued that Swedish schools should consciously concentrate on education in democracy in order to create a defence against totalitarian tendencies.<sup>26</sup>

Bagge's Schools Enquiry took no apparent notice of these viewpoints. In fact, the word 'democracy' is notable for its absence in the section of *Skolan i samhällets tjänst* that dealt with the school of the

future. The phrase 'a society ruled by the people' was, however, used at one point as part of the statement that the Swedish school should 'teach our growing young people what it means to be Swedish, citizens of a free country, members of a society ruled by the people and jointly responsible for the future of their nation'.<sup>27</sup>

The concepts 'democracy' and 'rule by the people' were not, however, synonymous at that time and there was a line of demarcation that kept the two conceptual worlds apart. The political scientist Torbjörn Aronson has noted that Gösta Bagge preferred the concept 'popular self-government/government by the people' to the concept 'democracy'. During his time as leader of the Conservatives from 1935 to 1944 he did, however, support democracy and considered it to be an effective barrier against totalitarian tendencies, but he frequently made reference to the disadvantages of democracy. He insisted that democracy as a method of reaching decisions could very easily lead to a concentration of power, to oppression by the majority and to a corrupt party system. The democratic form of decision-making could, in fact, actually undermine the Swedish tradition of self-government.<sup>28</sup>

Bagge's argumentation linked back to such forerunners in the past as Harald Hjärne and Arvid Lindman. In Swedish conservative tradition self-government by the people in Sweden did not date from the breakthrough of democracy after the First World War: it had much deeper roots. The just and fair interests of the Swedish people had been taken care of by various groups at farmers' assemblies, provincial meetings and communal councils, all of which always worked with the common good as their guiding star. In Bagge's time, the 1930s and 1940s, Swedish national government by the people was to be achieved within the framework of the democratic form of government.<sup>29</sup> The historian Torbjörn Nilsson has broadened out the discussion, calling attention to the fact that conservative thinkers justified Swedish government by the people by pointing to a historical outlook that stressed the age-old traditions of freedom, national leadership and the fruitful cooperation between the monarchy and the people. Even though the Conservative Party's objection to dictatorship was absolute, its support for democracy was not unconditional. 'One fundamental precondition was that democracy should not come into conflict with the national tradition of government', Nilsson states.<sup>30</sup>

The view of democracy revealed in the 1940 Schools Enquiry bore the stamp of this kind of outlook. As chairman and responsible minister Gösta Bagge was in a position to exert considerable influence on the report, all the more so as he was supported by Professor Erik Wellander and Bishop Tor Andræ. They all distanced themselves from

a pedagogical approach that aimed at developing the democratic individual, instead championing the idea that it would be better if young people were schooled to become 'co-workers in a society governed by the people', to take responsibility for the communal affairs of society. In this respect, then, the goal of the school was closely interlinked with the ruling educational ideal.<sup>31</sup>

In other words, the school of the future as it was sketched out in 1944 was an educational institution in the service of the state. The 1940 Schools Enquiry strove to create an institution which had the development of the pupils' character as its overarching aim. The educational idealism of Neo-Humanism, Christian cosmology and the national concept of government by the people went hand in hand. The task of the school was to hold the cultural tradition in trust and to pass it on, to promote moral and spiritual improvement and to foster virtues like discipline, patriotism and a spirit of self-sacrifice.

### *The Inner Work of the School*

The Schools Enquiry published a number of reports during the following years, all of them dealing with particular aspects of the school of the future. With *Skolans inre arbete* (The Inner Work of the School) of February 1946, however, the committee returned to the more general questions of goals and directions. This meant that the same committee had published two reports on issues of principle in the course of two years, the first of them produced during the Second World War, the second in its immediate aftermath.

When we place these two reports alongside one another the differences are so marked that there is good reason to look at them more closely. Gunnar Richardson summarises the observations he and others have made by stating: 'during the course of the 1940s the dominant understanding of the concept of education underwent a shift *from* moral and spiritual education, self-discipline and control, the spirit of self-sacrifice, patriotism and similar virtues that belonged to a conservative social and human outlook, *to* social education, democratic and anti-authoritarian, aimed at developing a critical attitude and the will to function and work together'.<sup>32</sup> That is a very apt characterisation of a significant change of direction in the education debate of the 1940s. In order to understand these changes, however, they need to be put in the context of the experiences of Nazism.

The two introductory chapters of *Skolans inre arbete* are taken up with a discussion of the principles involved in setting the aims of education. But right from the start it is obvious that a shift of emphasis has taken



place, a shift from a pedagogical approach centred on society to one centred on the individual. 'The school should look after the *individual* and develop his talents and aptitudes to the greatest degree possible', the report states, at the same time as mentioning that the school should also serve society. The relationship between the individual and society was a reciprocal one: only by providing the individual personality with the opportunity to develop could the individual become an effective member of society, and only in a society characterised by mutual responsibility could the individual receive a social education. Virtues such as strength of character, strong will and conscientiousness continued to be important, but intellectual attainments were now given greater weight than before.<sup>33</sup>

Generally speaking the committee shows signs of greater uncertainty than before, not only on the issue of character development versus acquisition of knowledge but also on the Janus face of tradition. At one point it is stated that the weakness of the school is 'that it easily becomes far too bound by tradition, that it becomes stuck in educational aims and pedagogical methods that fail to correspond with the demands of the present or the future'. This ('the futility of our education system') risked making the school unamenable to new impulses. The result of this, it warned, will be a tension between old and new, between what is old-fashioned and what is useful to the future, and this will necessitate returning time after time to the issue of the form and content of education. On the other hand, the school should always pass on the heritage of our forefathers; balancing the care of our cultural inheritance against education for the future is a delicate task. This fundamental dilemma is returned to time after time: how can an institution like the school unite its anchorage in history with the task of educating young citizens for a society in the making. This balancing act was expressed programmatically in a concluding sentence: 'We cannot renounce all claim on the national elements in the form and content of our culture, we cannot demolish what is time-honoured and established in order to make room for the new, which demands space to grow; but we can allow the old and the new to fuse together in harmony, with each of them being allowed its due.'<sup>34</sup>

The discussion drew strength from a description of the history of pedagogical reform between the wars. The school reforms launched after the First World War had been in tune with the general demands of that period for 'the right of nations to self-determination and the right of the individual to join in influencing the life of the state and of society'. Democracy had been the guiding light even for school reform. But as one international crisis followed another during the 1930s, the

enthusiasm for reform diminished. The latest world war had actualised educational questions as never before, all the more so because, being total war, it had involved a reappraisal of all existing values.<sup>35</sup>

The lessons of the historiography were unambiguous: after the second great war, within the course of a couple of decades, it was high time to resurrect democracy as both the means and the end of the school. A proposition of this kind indisputably has traits of a learning process. The historical experiences were manifested as a present past, as images from the past calling for action and enquiry. They were rarely personally experienced, more often passed on by the media or culture, and to a very great extent they were conscious and they were objects of rational revision. It is clear that experiences of contemporary European history were a point of orientation in the discussion of Swedish education policy. The authors of *Skolans inre arbete* had drawn conclusions from experiences that led them to distance themselves from some of the ideals that had permeated *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*. In other words, the lesson led to both self-examination and self-confirmation.

The spirit that imbued the 1946 report was democratic and forward-looking. A critical frame of mind was presented as being the core competency that pupils must acquire. The ability to analyse and sort with a critical eye was of benefit to democracy, not only because it was a precondition of free opinion formation but also to prevent 'a tendency to accept one-sided propaganda'.<sup>36</sup>

The emphasis on the development of the critical intellectual ability was repeatedly motivated by pointing to the experiences of the education programmes of the totalitarian states. Sometimes it was a case of hints and implicit references and at other times a matter of explicit reference to totalitarian experiences:

The school there [in a totalitarian state] has been put in the service of the only permitted political doctrine. The content of the curriculum has been adjusted to implant the social outlook that every citizen must espouse and young people have consequently been brought up from childhood to confess *one* faith, *one* conviction, *one* political view. [...] In the totalitarian state the thoughts and actions of each individual are in principle uniform with those of every other individual and they are to be in agreement with the beliefs on which the state rests.<sup>37</sup>

The report was of the view that these things should act as a reminder to the democratic states. Upbringing and education must always rest on a foundation of free research and free opinion formation. The recent past had taught that lesson.<sup>38</sup> These conclusions have to be seen in the context of the surge of interest in the education system of Nazi Germany during the closing stages of the war. Before that, little attention had

been paid to the school system, but now it was seen as an extremely significant element in the Nazi system of indoctrination. The authoritarian spirit that permeated the German institutions promoted discipline, militarism and chauvinism. Contributions to the Swedish debate by pedagogues and those interested in educational issues – figures such as David Katz, Wilhelm Sjöstrand, Melker Johnsson and Vilhelm Scharp – emphatically distanced themselves from the state pedagogy of the Third Reich.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the 1946 report provides examples of how experience is tied to expectation as a result of a historical lesson. The lessons that were drawn from the experiences of the foregoing years framed themselves into a vision for the future. Above every other consideration, the post-war school should be based on ideals that support a development away from the totalitarian state. Freedom of opinion formation, critical minds and democratic convictions would ensure that the future would not have to experience a repetition of the past. At the same time, of course, expectations for the future were inspired by existing traditions and tendencies.

Alongside education for the mind, emphasis was still being put on the school's character-building function. But unlike the 1944 report this task was no longer associated with a particular subject or particular body of knowledge: now the whole of school life should aim to foster a sense of responsibility and social awareness. The importance of pupils learning to respect 'the highest values of our culture in religion, scholarship and art' was still stressed, but not as unconditionally as before. New virtues like intellectual independence and personal responsibility were on the whole given higher priority. The insistence on authority, discipline and will in the 1944 pedagogy of preparedness has given way to ideas of cooperation and autonomy because these qualities are seen as essential in a Western democracy. The aim of building character has been moderated by assigning it a critical element.<sup>40</sup>

The subject of history provides us with an illuminating example. In 1944 the committee stressed that history should not only be acquired as knowledge but should 'shape the life of perception as a whole, instil it through and through with an intense interest and fill it with the emotional excitement that can stimulate will and action'. Two years later what was being stressed was the critical study of sources. Pupils were to learn to evaluate historical phenomena from a variety of stand-points and to make independent decisions as to their truth. The spirit of objectivity would guarantee a dispassionate sceptical disposition. History as a subject would provide a first-class education in peace and democracy.<sup>41</sup>

The postwar programme of the Schools Enquiry, *Skolans inre arbete*, did not represent a complete break with the principles of 1940, but there was no doubt that a shift had taken place, a shift from a pedagogy of preparedness to one of democratic reform. The view that school was primarily there to serve the nation had been loosened. The formation of character was not the sole important goal: school should also foster a critical disposition and an independent outlook. The concept of government by the people had almost completely disappeared from the repertoire and been replaced by the concept of democracy. The contrast with the committee's report two years earlier was apparent in the form of words that concluded the discussion of principles; it was symptomatic that it was a form of words inspired by an American educational reformer. It is not 'just for society and the state that man lives', the conclusion stated, 'but also for himself, for his own personal development, for those closest to him, for his home'.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, within the course of just a few years, there had been a notable turn of the tide. There are interpretations of this sudden change scattered here and there in the research literature, though they tend not to be more than general references to the events of the time. 'The most important reason for the Schools Enquiry's change of direction in 1944–45 is self-evident and obvious: the end of the war', Gunnar Richardson writes. What he means is that 'concrete realities' – the catastrophic end of the war, pictures from the Nazi concentration camps, insights into the nature of the totalitarian regimes – forced there to be a change of view as to the values that schools in a democracy should be promoting.<sup>43</sup>

My reading of the situation is not incompatible with these explanations but there are a number of levels on which I find them deficient. Because of their very general nature they lack the necessary precision. The changes are often associated in a very loose way with wartime experiences but without any more detailed attempt being made to describe the connection. In general, the discussion seems to proceed from an unexplained causality whereby the end of the war in itself set in process changes that are visible in the committee's reports. The notion of the historical lesson of Nazism seems to me to offer a much more satisfactory way of understanding the changes.

The experience of Nazism implies greater conceptual precision since it is the experiences of National Socialism, not the course of the war, or the general crisis, that are at the heart of the collective experience. The limitation of the focus on Nazism does not preclude the fact that other impressions and events were important, but it does mean that I attach decisive importance to the Nazi experience. The conclusions that were drawn harmonised with the predominant views of National Socialism

I reconstructed in the last chapter. The idea of Nazism as a nationalist authoritarian ideology determined to crush the free and critical spirit corresponds well with the content of the Nazi experience at this period.

The conceptual trio, experience–historical lesson–expectation is, moreover, better suited to providing an all-round understanding than the approaches to be found in other literature. This is partly because it captures the dynamic between historical experiences and ideas about the future – that is to say, the way the processing of the recent past affected discussion of the shape of the future by generating a lesson that set the tone of the debate. Partly it is because I can give more tenable answers to the question of why certain ideals were banished in the period around the end of the war whereas others spread – what could be called the link between experiences of Nazism and the ideas of 1945. The course of the debate on education policy during the second half of the 1940s shines a revealing spotlight on all these historical correlations.

### *A Democratic School*

The 1946 Schools Commission was set up a year after the end of the war. The purpose of this parliamentary commission was to work on the proposals put forward by the wartime Bagge commission, to ‘form a plan for the future organisation of the general school system and to draw up guidelines for its introduction. The 1940 Schools Enquiry had taken a good length of time and there was increasing pressure to move from words to actions. The new commission was mainly made up of politicians, its composition reflecting the situation in parliament: many of the influential names were Social Democrats, among whom were the education minister Tage Erlander (chairman of the commission until he was appointed prime minister in the autumn of 1946) and Josef Weijne (also minister of education, who took over the chair of the commission from November 1946), Alva Myrdal the political sociologist, Adolf Wallentheim the educationalist and politician and, not least, Stellan Arvidson the chief secretary to the commission.<sup>44</sup>

The 1946 Schools Commission published its fundamental ideas in a report in 1948. The significance of their work was obvious, they stated, because the decisions they reached would ‘be of fundamental importance to the continued progress of our society and will set their stamp on the life of our society for a considerable period’.<sup>45</sup> In the introductory chapter ‘The School System and the Democratic Society’ the authors of the report set out the guiding principles of their work. At the start they linked back to *Skolan i samhällets tjänst* of 1944 and permitted themselves

to interpret its goals, which were to make the school suitable for the needs of modern society. This was defined in a key passage:

What this means when more closely defined is that school reform should aim to remodel the school in accordance with the structure and life of *democratic society*. This is how the Schools Enquiry of 1940 understood its task. The 1946 Schools Commission shares this basic view of the coming school reform. In accordance with this, in what follows the commission will present proposals outlining *the general guiding principles for a democratisation of the Swedish school system*.<sup>46</sup>

Democracy was the leading idea of the new school commission. It was now high time that the school system underwent the kind of democratisation that the rest of society had experienced over the previous decades. In the view of the commissioners, it was still necessary to continue building on the Swedish traditions that the school was a product of, but if it was to be democratised it was simultaneously necessary to acknowledge that the Swedish school was a product of social forms that were not democratic. The form of words they chose united the democratic convictions of the Schools Commission with its ambition to retain the historical link with the Schools Enquiry of 1940: 'In such a situation, while holding fast to what is of value in the heritage of the Swedish school, the task will be to attempt to clear away what is burdensome and old-fashioned and replace it with elements that are in tune with the development of society and which point towards the future.'<sup>47</sup>

The democratic form of society was undoubtedly one of the things of value in Swedish heritage. It presupposed the free cooperation of all citizens, and that in its turn depended on free individuals. Thus, as one programmatic statement put it, 'The primary task of the school is to produce democratic people'. But this was soon modified: the school was not to be permitted to preach democratic doctrines because that would mean that education would become authoritarian and thus fail in its task. It should instead rest on objectively scientific foundations and aim to give factual information about the major ideological questions of contention and promote the development of the pupils' own understanding. It was only in this way that freedom and human value could replace standardisation and indoctrination.<sup>48</sup>

The passionate pleading for ideals such as independence and a critical attitude of mind was considered to be fully motivated. For far too long the school in Sweden had been based on authoritarian traditions that could hardly be considered either appropriate or modern in an age of democracy. This conviction had been further reinforced by experience of totalitarian regimes. 'In a society governed by the people it should be possible to demand a critical attitude of mind which will provide

resistance against spiritual infection', was one of the points made in the discussion of totalitarian experiences. The free and harmonious development of personality should be a buttress against tendencies inimical to democracy. It is for the school to nurture and develop whatever is special and particular to the individual pupil. The conclusion was: 'Democracy has no use for mass human beings with their lack of independence'.<sup>49</sup>

With the 1948 report the emphasis of the education question moved a further step. Even though the Schools Commission itself was at pains to stress internal continuity with its predecessor, it was obvious that it had moved away from it at some significant points. In point of fact, the Schools Commission enjoined ideals that stood in direct opposition to those that had dominated *Skolan i samhällets tjänst* in 1944. The contrast was particularly noticeable when it came to the content and educational ideals of the school. The Neo-Humanistic repertoire, still strong in 1944, with Christianity, the mother tongue, history and the classical languages as its cornerstones, had at last been forced into retreat. The trends that had already been obvious in 1946 were even more marked two years later. The new Schools Commission emphatically turned against the burdensome and old-fashioned heritage that had been to the detriment of pedagogical activity for far too long. It turned against what was perceived as a medieval element in the educational aim of the time, with its belief that young people should be brought up to obey and accept authority. It turned against the strong civil service tradition that characterised the Swedish school system: the adherence to establishment thinking, the bureaucratic rigidity and the inhibition of dynamism.<sup>50</sup>

The judgment pronounced on the formalistic education ideal was a harsh one. Humanistic subjects had traditionally concerned themselves 'with dead matter that lacked significance both to an understanding of cultural development at large and to a better understanding of the problems of our own age'. A new goal was to be set for these disciplines, one that was aimed more at the daily needs of society and the opportunities of the future. The future aim of the history curriculum would be 'to set out clearly the development that had led to the society of the present and to provide the historical background of current social questions'.<sup>51</sup>

It was no longer sufficient simply to renew the traditional core of subjects. The Schools Commission declared that the school had for too long been ignoring important elements in the education needed by the future members of society. The omission had above all affected social education, an area that was a vital part of the general education of a

citizen and of a modern democracy. To remedy this unsatisfactory state of affairs the commission proposed the introduction of an independent new school subject, social studies.<sup>52</sup>

The progressive pedagogical ideals put a great deal of trust in scientific knowledge and expertise. The democratic education advocated was one based on science and stood above political considerations – the very fact that it was scientific guaranteed that the education would not become authoritarian. The fundamentally rationalist outlook of the Schools Commission was also revealed in the considerable importance it attached to modern psychological research findings when creating the new pedagogy.<sup>53</sup>

The shifts that took place in the field of education were part of a greater series of shifts in the Sweden of the time. The discussion about the school of the future that continued through the 1940s was connected to other contemporary discussions and these debates were influenced by the dramatic course of events during the last years of the war and the first years of peace. There is good reason, therefore, to broaden out our perspective and consider the way the Nazi experience set its imprint on the schools question.

### *Nazism and Postwar Pedagogy*

Political democracy was without doubt the ideal form of society as far as Sweden was concerned at the end of the war. It was generally regarded as a matter of the utmost urgency that this principle should be re-established and confirmed. During the spring of 1945, for instance, Herbert Tingsten gave a series of public lectures which received a considerable amount of attention. His theme was ‘the conflict between modern ideologies with regard to the individual and society’, the lectures being published in book form as *Demokratiens problem* (The Problems of Democracy) later the same year. The conclusions Tingsten reached were not particularly optimistic. He stated that ‘the future [of democracy] as the leading state model cannot be assumed to be secure’ as it continued to be a historical experiment under threat. Democracy presupposed personal independence and could not be motivated by anything other than a striving to liberate and develop the personality.<sup>54</sup> The publication a couple of years later of *Varför demokrati?* (Why Democracy?) by the Danish jurist and philosopher Alf Ross was another contribution to the debate about democracy. What had led the Copenhagen professor to reflect on democracy was ‘the practical demonstration of the methods of dictatorship given by the master race in our country’. The book was written, as he stated in the preface, as his ‘modest contribution



to Denmark's struggle for freedom'. The attention his book aroused in Sweden demonstrates how topical the question was.<sup>55</sup>

The re-establishment and consolidation of democracy was regarded as being not least a matter of education. In the years around 1945 educational theorists come to the forefront. In the spring of 1945 the journal *Skola och samhälle* (School and Society) devoted a theme issue to 'the postwar pedagogical problems'. Einar Tegen, a professor of philosophy, marked out the route to be followed in his introductory article. As far as he was concerned, there was no doubt about where the decisive challenge lay. The significance of a democratic education became particularly apparent 'when we think of those forces and tendencies of our age that need to be overcome if humanity is to survive: they are, the forces of Nazism and totalitarianism'. 'They exist among all peoples and in all countries, which is why they also concern us', he stated at the same time as making it clear that democracy was the absolute antithesis of the totalitarian position.<sup>56</sup>

Tegen approached the issue by discussing the nature of the democratic human being and it is noteworthy that his inspiration was drawn not from the classics of philosophy but from contemporary psychology. He was influenced in particular by the German-American psychoanalyst Erich Fromm, who was very topical at the time as a result of the Swedish translation of his *Escape from Freedom*. Fromm held that the modern human being had been torn from the community of a pre-individualist society and become easy prey to power-hungry authoritarian leaders. In the totalitarian societies the isolated individual's flight from freedom took the form of total lack of freedom. Suffering and subjection became the price of community. Following in Fromm's footsteps Tegen argued that 'an excellent example of this situation is the Nazi hierarchy, a ranking of dominance and subjection, authority and blind obedience, from the top right to the bottom'. The ultimate consequence of the Nazi education system was the total triumph of authoritarianism over the autonomy of the individual. Over against this Tegen set the virtues of democracy: 'The goal of a democratic education must be a free, natural and independent personality, a personality that is not oppressed or bound by others, one which does not seek to rule others but which can cooperate freely with other people in love and in work.'<sup>57</sup>

Seldom had Nazi morality been placed so unambiguously face to face with democratic morality. Ideals associated with the National Socialist view of humankind were rejected. But this stance also implied passing judgment on the 1940 Schools Enquiry. The individual called for in that document had been strong, resilient, driven by will, prepared to live up to the demands of society and disposed to serve the

interests of the nation. Just a few years later there was something stale and musty about these virtues. Any view of humanity that emphasised traditional values and the principles of community was now suspect. The goal of the school was to create a free and independent personality, one that was not chained by the conventions of the collective but which cooperated with others of his own free will.

Tegen's argumentation gives us a clear example of how experience could be linked to expectation. Experience of Nazism had been reworked and transformed into a lesson that pointed in one direction only: school in the service of democracy must be mobilised against the authoritarian educational establishments of Nazism. It was a school that would foster free and upright citizens to whom blind discipline and subjection were alien. That is what the future looked like. Conscious and well-articulated references to the morality of National Socialism existed as deterrent warnings, but, in fact, it was a wider Nazi sphere of association that was being stigmatised. The Swedish wartime Schools Enquiry had not proposed unlimited authority and blind obedience. These ideals had been brought into disrepute by the experience of Nazism. That experience – the past in the present, embodying cataclysmic events and impressions – became a living lesson and a reminder for the postwar age.

The well-balanced free individual was both the aim and the means of democracy and without such an individual the preconditions for democracy would disappear, leaving no democracy worthy of its name. This was a conviction that Tegen shared with others involved with the problems of postwar education, among whom was the author and theologian Emilia Fogelklou. An article by her – also connected with Fromm's thinking – developed a critique of older forms of authority. Those forms had made individuals into isolated, lonely and powerless creatures who could all too easily be forced to submit to anonymous authorities and lose all notions of independence. 'The despair felt by human automatons about their own impotence is fertile soil for fascist ideals', was the conclusion she reached. The way out of that was a new and democratic form of education.<sup>58</sup>

Alva Myrdal joined in with an appeal in the same spirit. She argued that peace could only be lasting 'if all aspects of culture and education are stood on their heads and thus, instead of playing into the hands of new wars, make people more effectively democratic and more reliably internationalist'. The problem of the future was to a large extent a problem of education.<sup>59</sup> It was, however, not only in totalitarian countries that democratic reforms were necessary. 'The re-education of aggressive nations is not in itself sufficient: even those of us in more peaceful

nations bear the sin of nationalism within us. We are all in need of a reformed education if we are to live side by side in peaceful cooperation and democratic consultation. We are not in fact accustomed to the ways of life necessary in the modern world even though we have in a formal sense agreed to them.' In Myrdal's eyes it was obvious that the necessary reform of school was the completion of the modernisation process that had begun at the turn of the century. The aim of democratising the school and thereby bringing it closer to society was more important than anything else.<sup>60</sup>

A major conference on the theme 'The School as a Factor in the Reconstruction of the World' was organised in Stockholm in October 1945. In his opening address Anders Örne, a Social Democrat and member of the cooperative movement, gave a warning about the spiritual after-effects of the war. As a result of the destructive propaganda of the totalitarian states, the children of many year groups had been dehumanised. The work of reconstruction had to be targeted at 'repairing and purifying people's spiritual lives' and he was consequently convinced that 'now more than ever education is the alpha and omega of the life of human society'. This, in Örne's view, was a lesson we should take to heart and that the future school in Sweden must create independent and critically thinking individuals because these were precisely the qualities that peace and democracy presupposes.<sup>61</sup>

Einar Tegen, Emilia Fogelklou, Alva Myrdal and Anders Örne were not alone in the school debates of the postwar years. Similar ideas were voiced in the Swedish press during the years around 1945. They were united by common experience: virtually all the contributions to the debate about the problems of education in the postwar period made reference to totalitarian experience, above all to the experience of Nazism.<sup>62</sup>

The conclusions drawn from the Nazi experience pointed to a set of ideals. The protagonists on the educational scene, both school commissioners and participants in the wider debate, were, as we have seen, united in support of *an ideal of society* that gave highest importance to political democracy. Their argument for a democratisation of the school system often took the form of striving to move away from the authoritarian and hierarchical structure that had been dominant for so long.

It was an effort that went hand in hand with a distinct *ideal of humankind*. The vision they had in mind was of a school that would foster free personalities who both cultivated their own special talents and took responsibility for the good of the community. These democratic people would be harmonious, critical and – not least – resilient against mass suggestion and authoritarian beliefs. They rejected forcefully all forms of authority that relied on violence and physical strength – an

education based on these things was damaging to democracy in that it produced characteristics such as aggressiveness and a tendency to oppress others and to accept anti-democratic propaganda. They believed that the school should distance itself from a pedagogy reliant on duty and instead find ways of promoting the pupils' well-being. Freedom, tolerance and independence were the bywords of the 1946 School Commission.<sup>63</sup>

The social and human ideals were in harmony with an *educational ideal*. If the 1940 Schools Enquiry had been permeated by Neo-Humanism, the watchword of the postwar commission was education for *citizenship*. The ideal of education for citizenship was firmly rooted in the tradition of the Enlightenment and in Sweden it had a strong impact on the popular movements, especially the labour movement. The fundamental idea was that education would enable the individual to grow as a citizen of society; he or she would discover how the world worked and would take responsibility as a political being. Leading representatives like Hjalmar Branting and Rickard Sandler considered it important that the bourgeois educational tradition should be adopted critically. They drew inspiration from the way the radicalism of the 1880s approached the then dominant norms. The classical languages and Christianity were, in general, ranked lower than mathematics, the natural sciences and political science. Literature and history remained important subjects but ideas about which literature and which history should be studied differed from the views of Neo-Humanism.<sup>64</sup>

The classical languages were hardest hit by the anathema pronounced on the formalist educational ideal. The campaign against the dominance of Latin had been going on throughout the nineteenth century but the criticism became more acrimonious during the 1940s. Classical studies – as becomes apparent in the 1946 School Commissions – were becoming more and more associated with authority, discipline and subjection. Seen in the perspective of the history of concepts this is part of the change that the concept of humanism underwent during the interwar period, but it also has to be seen against the background of Nazi experiences. The study of Latin and Greek and the formal education and fixation on tradition they implied came to symbolise a school that was unfit for the modern age. It was symptomatic that the sadistic Caligula (a thinly disguised Heinrich Himmler) in Alf Sjöberg and Ingmar Bergman's film *Hets* (Torment) was a Latin master.<sup>65</sup>

On the other hand, subjects with a social-science orientation were seen as the quintessence of an education for citizenship, and social studies was strongly favoured after the war. The subject, which significantly enough was given the name 'civics', expanded at the expense of the

hours devoted to history, although it was not until a little into the 1950s that its breakthrough came. One of the major sources of pedagogical inspiration was the American John Dewey who, in his arguments for a democratic cosmopolitan school, was a keen advocate of social studies. Rickard Sandler and a number of other people in Sweden had been pushing similar ideas in the interwar period, and after the war more and more people joined them in support of the idea that contemporary social studies was the best way of promoting the teaching of democratic citizenship. Socially oriented education in general made strong advances during this period. In 1947, for instance, the first Swedish chair of sociology – the science of modern society – was founded.<sup>66</sup>

The enquiries and reports of the 1946 Schools Commission formed the basis of the 1950 education bill. The bill sparked off a lively debate and much time was spent on the committee stage, but the discussion was less about the fundamental principles than about how the school should be organised and how the reforms should be introduced. In all essential respects the decision taken by the Riksdag rested on the same understanding of the individual human being, society and education as that which had permeated the Schools Commission.<sup>67</sup>

Taken as a whole, the education policy debate shows that there was a breakthrough for new ideals about the individual, society and education in the aftermath of the Second World War. They were ideals that were in sharp contrast to those that had dominated the first half of the 1940s. Over against the concept of national government by the people favoured by the Schools Enquiry of 1940, the ideal society of the 1946 Schools Commission was democracy. Over against the strong willed, duty-bound and responsible pupil, the new ideal set the independent, critical and resilient pupil. Over against the Neo-Humanist educational ideal that focused on developing the pupil's inherent characteristics, there was the new ideal of citizenship, the aim of which was to foster the pupil's democratic virtues.

These remarkable changes arose out of the interplay of historical experiences and perceptions of the future. In the debates on educational policy that went on throughout the 1940s, the historical lesson of Nazism played a role by prompting reassessments and shifts of emphasis. But the nature of the lesson was not a universally valid one. It had specifically Swedish features.

### *Neo-Humanism as a German Historical Lesson*

In 1945 the German education system was faced with quite different challenges than those in Sweden. The German capitulation had

revealed the scale of wartime destruction. Very soon after the coming of peace, a vigorous and multi-faceted debate began as to what lessons could be learnt from the past and what course should be marked out for the future. An important aspect of this discussion was to concern the new school.

In spite of the considerable differences it is worthwhile comparing the Swedish and the German debates on education. In the German sphere, schools policy and pedagogy at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s was formed against the background of Nazi experiences. Viewing them against the Swedish experiences, in particular against the unambiguous historical lesson that these experiences gave rise to in Sweden, will extend the field of historical view.

The Allied denazification project was started in the summer and autumn of 1945. Leaders and party functionaries were put on trial for war crimes and the most compromised figures were purged from businesses, the administration and institutions. A bigger and more thorough process of *re-education* of the German population also took place. In the Eastern Zone this had unambiguously communist features and is thus less interesting in the current context than the development in the West.<sup>68</sup>

At the Potsdam Conference the victorious Allies had decided that the German education system must be purged of Nazi and militaristic doctrines and that democracy should be promoted. These were the guiding stars of Allied education policy. Denazification, which proceeded along different lines in each of the three Western Zones, often focused on purging individuals and getting to grips with immediate problems. School activity was restarted, teachers were suspended and Nazi content was removed from educational materials – though it has to be said that it was a selective and incomplete procedure. The attempts at democratisation by the occupation powers, however, frequently stopped at desk products and it is difficult to find evidence of the realisation of a more coherent educational policy in the American, British or French zones. The question of how a future education system should be constructed was left to the Germans themselves. Any picture of the internal debate is complicated by the big regional differences that existed in West Germany. The individual states of the Federal Republic had wide-ranging powers to create their own types of school and the landscape of educational politics was far more diverse than in Sweden. It is nevertheless possible to pick out certain trends that cast light on the dominant forms of experience and historical lessons.<sup>69</sup>

Under the heading 'Demokratisierung der Bildung' (Democratisation of Education) the German school was transformed in the decades after

the war. It was partly a matter of a major quantitative expansion of the whole school system and partly a more substantial democratisation of the form and content of school. The absolutely overriding aim was to distance themselves from Nazism, but given the spirit of despair induced by the catastrophe as well as the sense of renewal brought by liberation there were a good many proposals during the first post-war years as to what conclusions that should be drawn from the Nazi experience.<sup>70</sup>

A key question for German pedagogues and others involved in the education debate was which educational ideal and which educational traditions they should relate to. It was not just a matter of coming up with something entirely new or of letting themselves be guided by international trends. They reached back instead to two main pedagogical tendencies visible in the Weimar Republic: the Neo-Humanistic tendency and, to some degree, reform pedagogy.<sup>71</sup>

Neo-Humanism, which argued for the importance of classical culture, had its roots in Germany and was associated with names such as Winckelmann, Herder and Humboldt. As an educational ideal it had occupied a relatively strong position in German upper secondary schools and universities right up until Hitler's accession to power in 1933. This was the ideal that leading pedagogues and philosophers such as Eduard Spranger, Theodor Litt, Herman Nohl and Wilhelm Flitner promoted as a corrective to Nazism following the Second World War.<sup>72</sup>

Werner Jaeger, a classical philologist and author of the three-volume *Paideia* (1934–1947), gave expression to a significant standpoint. Jaeger had been forced to leave Germany in the middle of the 1930s after the Nazis came to power and had then worked at Harvard University. In a letter to the Tübingen professor Eduard Spranger in 1948 he outlined his view of the direction the German school should take after the fall of the Third Reich:

In Germany the new education system has to fulfil more than one task. The damage done to German education by the Nazi regime will call for more than one remedy [...]. But when we consider Germany in its current isolation among the nations of the world – which is a logical result of its conscious separation from the common cultural tradition during the Nazi period – one of the first goals of any future education system must be to get out of this fanatical and strange isolation in order to find a way back into the great family of civilised nations. In terms of interventions in education the Nazis did everything they could to cut off historical cultural roots and to limit any awareness of tradition to narrow and self-satisfied nationalism. It is impossible to make the cultural heritage that the German people shares with other western nations comprehensible

without tracing the roots of our common traditions [...]. It is not enough just to learn a little French and English because in the modern countries any real understanding can only grow from the common soil of classical and Christian traditions that all of them have sprung from.<sup>73</sup>

Werner Jaeger contended that the process of positioning pupils in the context of their historical origin in order to enable them to realise their inherent abilities had always been the ultimate aim of classical studies in school. Nazism in his opinion had not arisen from Hitler's absurd racial theories but as a result of a fusion of a technical-mechanical worldview with aggressive Prussian militarism. Thus, in Germany, it was vital to safeguard humanistic education since it provided a buttress against the cult of nationalism and the excesses of civilisation.<sup>74</sup>

It was not only university teachers and classical philologists who found the educational ideas of Neo-Humanism attractive after the Second World War. Experience from the Nazi period led to there being widespread support for an educational ideal with classical foundations. This historical lesson was manifested in many of the constitutions adopted by the states of the Federal Republic between 1946 and 1953. In the case of Bavaria, for example, we can see the basically Christian, idealistic and culturally conservative tendencies of these documents. The first point proclaimed in its *Landesverfassung* (state constitution) of 1946 is that the school should not only teach knowledge and skills but should also foster character. The second point asserts that the overarching aim was to inculcate respect for God, for religious belief and for the sanctity of humankind. Among the qualities that should be fostered were self-control, a sense of responsibility and helpfulness as well as receptiveness to what is true, good and beautiful. The third point stated that pupils should be brought up in the spirit of democracy and to love their Bavarian homeland and the German nation. Lastly it was stated that the education of girls should focus in particular on childcare and domestic science.<sup>75</sup>

The words of the legal text were grand but they certainly were not empty words. Studies of individual schools have shown that what we might call a Neo-Humanist canon set its seal on school life at the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s. Once the baggage of Nazi thinking had been cleared away, education returned to the pedagogical orientation it had had during the Weimar Republic, with Latin as the first foreign language in the upper secondary school.<sup>76</sup>

The renaissance of the classical humanistic ideal of education was encouraged by powerful currents in the young Federal Republic. The catastrophe of Nazism provoked a distrust of the immediate past that also turned into a distrust of the immediate present. Instead of affirming



current trends or international impulses, many Germans placed their hope in timeless and supra-individual values. In a number of studies the historian Axel Schildt has stressed the importance of Christian and conservative ideas in the formation of the West German ideological landscape of the 1950s.<sup>77</sup>

The Neo-Humanist educational ideal was, however, not the only ideal and there were those who drew other conclusions from the Nazi experience. The main alternative was – to use a blanket term – the ideal of reform pedagogy. From the end of the nineteenth century a reform movement had grown up which took a critical view of traditional forms of schooling and stressed learning in natural surroundings as well as education in citizenship. Many of the influential German proponents of reform pedagogy, who had tended to hold liberal or socialist views, were persecuted in the Third Reich and forced to leave Germany. This partly explains why reform pedagogy was not strongly represented in German education during the first postwar decades. There was also the fact that a leading proponent like Heinrich Deiters was active in East Berlin after 1945.<sup>78</sup>

The drive for some degree of pedagogical reorientation came rather from university educationalists like Theodor Litt and Eduard Spranger. In the course of the 1950s they revised their humanistic vision of the school to make it more suited to postwar democracy. Essentially, however, they retained a Neo-Humanist approach, with markedly conservative elements.<sup>79</sup> This does not mean that it is not possible to pick out certain reform pedagogical traits. The constitution of the Federal land of Hessen, and particularly perhaps that of Bremen, stressed quite different goals from those of Bavaria. In the case of Bremen, a northern Hanseatic city, what was stressed was the importance of independent thinking and of social and citizenship virtues such as tolerance of other people's ideas. It was not mere coincidence that these areas were ruled by Social Democrat majorities.<sup>80</sup>

Taken as a whole it is nevertheless indisputable that what was going on was a return to the educational ideals of the Weimar period. Educationalists, politicians interested in education and others involved in the schools debate reconnected with the Neo-Humanist educational ideals that had been cut short in 1933. Seen in a broader perspective this renaissance of Western humanism, frequently with conservative and Christian features, has to be seen as a sort of collective response to the experiences of the Third Reich. There are some cases in which classical studies were expressly mobilised as the means of rejecting National Socialism; in other cases we can infer the same aim more indirectly.

### *A School for the Postwar Period*

The Swedish school debate of the 1940s was strongly influenced by world events. The change from the nationalistic, Neo-Humanist ideals of the war years to the democratic citizenship ideals of the postwar period was rapid and definitive. The whole scene changed radically within very few years.

Thus the shifts in the landscape of school politics must be seen in relation to experiences of National Socialism. They involved, as I have frequently stated, a powerful appeal: keep well clear of the Nazi sphere of associations, avoid its traditions and follow a different road. The lesson of Nazism put its unmistakable stamp on discussions about school reform. The conclusions were simultaneously linked to the huge perceptions of the future held at that time, to visions of a more egalitarian, society oriented and modern school. They were, of course, ideals that had existed prior to National Socialism, but the Nazi experience radicalised the democratic orientation in Sweden and broke down any resistance to anti-authoritarian and citizenship-focused education. At the same time, however, knowledge of the development in postwar Germany demonstrates that the lesson of Nazism is not necessarily identical everywhere. West German educationalists introduced a classic form of Neo-Humanism as the corrective to the Nazi concept of the school.

The reasons for the marked differences between the German and Swedish situations must be sought in a variety of areas. In West Germany alternatives to Neo-Humanist educational ideals were poorly represented in the early postwar period. Reform pedagogues of various shades had been forced to flee the country during the Nazi period whereas many of the more classically minded educationalists had remained and gone into inner exile. The latter effectively had the field to themselves when it came to setting the post-1945 agenda. Neo-Humanist thinking had experienced a renaissance in Sweden during the first part of the Second World War, but with hindsight this proved to be its death throes. By the middle of the war there were powerful forces – particularly within the labour movement – pressing for school to be based on ideals of citizenship. The war years were a state of emergency that temporarily favoured an older educational ideal but the educational activists who came onto the Swedish scene in the wake of the war belonged to a younger age group than those who had dominated the 1940 Schools Enquiry. Unlike Germany, where the educationalists of the Bonn republic had been active back in the days of the Weimar republic, in Sweden the end of the war coincided with a generation change, a social shift that had ideological implications.

The national variations of the historical lesson of Nazism also need to be placed in the context of more general circumstances. The leading interpretations of National Socialism in West Germany were far more multi-faceted than those in Sweden and this made other conclusions available. Furthermore, a precondition for a particular kind of historical lesson becoming influential was that it was compatible with the dominant ideals of political and intellectual life. That was as true of Sweden with its education for citizenship as it was of Germany with its Neo-Humanism.

Among those involved in the West German school debate the lesson of Nazism was essentially self-examining in character. A crucial aim was to instil new life into German society by reconnecting with national traditions from the period before 1933 – that implied seeing the Third Reich as a parenthesis in the history of Germany. In Sweden the lesson could be both self-testing and self-confirming. *The Inner Work of the School*, the document setting forth principles that Gösta Bagge's Schools Enquiry published the year after the end of the war, contained self-critical reflections. It was obvious that the committee had been influenced by the experiences and had drawn conclusions. The 1946 Schools Commission completed the change of course but the tone was rather different. The guidelines for the postwar school were drawn up with self-evident confidence.

## **Nazism in the Dock**

The concept of natural law – the idea that supra-national, universal and in principle unchangeable legal principles exist – is an old one. In its Western form it can be traced back to Aristotle and then followed through the Stoics and the Scholastics of the High Middle Ages. In the seventeenth century Hugo Grotius and John Locke founded a rationalist school of natural law. In this, as in many other bodies of natural law, the basic concept was that humankind is inherently free and equal. In the spirit of natural law and inspired by the dawn of the Enlightenment and the beginnings of liberal thinking during the eighteenth century, lists of human freedoms and rights were drawn up, the two best-known examples being the American Declaration of Rights (1776) and the French *Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen* (1789). Even though statements of rights survived as important political documents during the nineteenth century, philosophers and theorists of law were increasingly critical of the underlying postulates of natural law. As positivism and naturalism became the dominant currents of thought, more

and more people proclaimed that the only valid law was positive law – the law that those in power had made and practised. The traditions of natural law did survive in large parts of Catholic Europe, but in North America and in northern Europe positive law strengthened its position during the first decades of the twentieth century. For the legal realists and legal positivists of the interwar period, the legal system was no more and no less than a compulsory system that reflected the power positions in society.<sup>81</sup>

Many later observers have therefore considered the postwar renaissance of natural law as forming a distinct break in the line of development. ‘The ideas of natural law about human freedoms and rights came to the fore again after the end of the Second World War. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 and the Council of Europe’s Convention on the same subject of 1950 came into being as a reaction to the horrors of the war’, the legal historian Göran Inger writes.<sup>82</sup> The same idea is to be found in virtually every work on the history of international law: the experiences of war, genocide and expulsion changed the legal discourse and opened the road to the reappearance of natural law. The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, in particular, has been seen as a response to Nazi crimes.<sup>83</sup>

Europe, the main theatre of the Second World War, was where the most obvious change took place. In many of the countries in which fascism and Nazism had been powerful forces during the 1930s and 1940s there were impassioned postwar debates that included the issue of natural law, and many of the new constitutions that were drawn up were influenced by these debates. Mark Mazower is one of the people who asserted the return of the concept of rights to Western European societies after 1945; in his view there was a strong tendency in political and judicial spheres ‘to reassert the primacy of the individual vis-à-vis the state’.<sup>84</sup>

It is against this background that we should view the legal discourse in Sweden during the postwar decades. What lessons did Swedish jurists and theorists of law draw from the Nazi experience? What was the Swedish attitude to the debate on natural law that was going on in the neighbouring countries? In short, what was the historical lesson that the Nazi experience provoked among Swedish jurists?

### *Sweden and Nazi Law*

Swedish jurists had followed the events unfolding in Germany after 1933 from a safe distance. *Svensk Juristtidning* (Swedish Jurists’ Journal), the proud flagship and absolutely dominant professional

journal of the Swedish legal profession, provided factual reports of legal changes in the Third Reich year by year. In the field of employment law it was noted in 1934 that one should no longer refer to 'employer and employee' but to 'leader and his following'. The following year the Swedish jurists' organ described, without further comment, the Nuremberg Laws which, along with much else, forbade marriage between Jews and German citizens. The same approach was obvious during the years that followed – the legal historian Kjell Å. Modér has characterised the Swedish attitude to Nazi law as 'apolitical' and 'notably objective'. In so far as there was any criticism at all it was veiled and extremely oblique.<sup>85</sup>

Swedish jurists remained remarkably neutral to German legal developments even during the war. The process of Aryanisation and anti-Jewish legislation were reported unemotionally.<sup>86</sup> The new German code of civil law was described in a 1942 article, for instance, as being a step in the renewal of German law and a way for the National Socialist revolution 'to realise its ideological programme by legislative means'. And what the author of the article, Knut Rodhe, found most worthy of criticism was the linguistic formulation of the law. As far as Swedish legal commentators were concerned, Nazi law appeared – at most – to be peculiar, a somewhat eccentric element in their neighbour's jurisprudence but without any consequences at all for the Swedish legal discourse.<sup>87</sup>

It was not until the final phase of the Second World War that Swedish jurists voiced more open criticism of the law in Nazi Germany. In an article in 1944 Ivar Strahl discussed the Nazi concept of law. 'The new order is harsh', he stated, reminding them of how the new practice affected Germans and the citizens of the occupied countries. Strahl also thought there was a question mark over the subordination of law to the primacy of the Führer principle and of the race principle – both core elements of Nazi law, but the objections he voiced remained relatively moderate.<sup>88</sup>

So there was no unconditional condemnation of the law of the Third Reich until peace returned and only then did the condemnation become more open. During the first postwar years *Svensk Juristtidning* contained several reports on the German legal situation, though they were far from comprehensive. The tone was now a rather different one, the criticism more unreserved and the distance from what had gone on in Nazi Germany more marked. It now seemed quite obvious that Nazi society had rested on principles that offended the law. In a review of a book about Nazi law, for instance, the author utterly rejected 'the fog of the world of Nazi law' and concluded: 'The National

Socialist concept of law embodies in every respect the complete opposite to the principles which buttress the rule of law according to traditional teaching.<sup>89</sup>

Thus it was not only the heinous actions that were being condemned: Swedish jurists were also pronouncing judgment on Nazi law per se. German law had been tarnished by Nazism and it was high time to scrape away the foul accretions. Ivar Strahl gave a straightforward account of how the laws adopted between 1933 and 1945 were now being cleared out and replaced by others. He also reported that Carl Schmitt, the famous professor of constitutional law, had been removed from his post. He was described as a man who exercised considerable influence on the interpretation of law and on legislation during the early part of the Third Reich. The ideas for which he had been the spokesman ran directly contrary to the principle of the rule of law, affirming instead the National Socialist doctrine of might. It was clear that a Swedish jurist contemplating what happened in Germany saw himself as the absolute opposite of Schmitt.<sup>90</sup>

This kind of thinking is also to be found in the reports of the major postwar trials in Norway and in Germany. In the view of Swedish observers, the guilt of Quisling, Goering and the others accused was beyond any doubt. The criticism that the international tribunal was engaging in retroactive legislation was muffled by the fact that 'the illegality of the actions' on trial was 'beyond question'.<sup>91</sup> Thus, in spite of some objections in terms of principle, Torgny T. Segerstedt characterised the war trials as 'triumphs for the Western concept of law' and as proof of 'strong resistance to the contagion of Nazism and thus one of the greatest causes for joy in an age that is otherwise dark'.<sup>92</sup>

Swedish jurists in general perceived the trials to be just and necessary.<sup>93</sup> In his review of the Danish book *Dommen i Nürnberg* (Judgment in Nuremberg) one of them went so far as to suggest that it seemed arrogant to quibble about the judgments. 'Should a reader in a neutral country do anything other than carefully study the document, say thank you and accept it?' he asked. This reveals a significant split: on the one hand, Sweden's position as an outsider, as a country that had essentially remained untouched, was being stressed; on the other hand, the recognition of being an outsider had the effect of implying that it would be arrogant even to comment on the great events that were putting their stamp on the Europe of the day.<sup>94</sup>

Relatively soon after the end of the war, as early as 1947–1948, interest in both the postwar trials and in the legal developments in the occupation zones of Germany waned. A few reports appeared about the restitution of property, reorganisation of the system of law courts and

compensation to the victims of Nazism, but no thorough posthumous examination of the Nazi legal system was ever carried out.<sup>95</sup>

One of the rare exceptions who did look back was Sture Petré. He remembered that many Swedish observers had been amazed 'that the legal culture that seemed to be so firmly rooted in Germany allowed itself to be eradicated by Nazi tyranny apparently without resistance'. Petré described how the German legal system had surrendered step by step to the barbarism of the Nazis. Stirred by Gustaf Radbruch, professor of criminal law and minister of justice before 1933, who survived the Third Reich with his reputation as a jurist intact, Petré insisted that there were lessons to be learnt for the future:

Don't assume that simply referring to what is factual and legal is sufficient to handle the really difficult legal questions! Factuality and legality are only sufficient as long as the power in the state rests in respectable hands. But, to agree with St Augustine, should the state itself become a band of thieves, then the only thing that can help is a belief in higher values, then the hot flame of the sense of justice must burn through all considerations and all fears. It is bad if the flame burns out and goes cool while attending to secondary values like factuality and legality which are in the service of a positivism that has forgotten the highest of all commandments: thou shalt obey God rather than men.<sup>96</sup>

Sture Petré's line of reasoning did not, however, follow the same line as the main Swedish legal debate. He contended that the Nazi experience had implications for the legal discourse in general – including in Sweden. Therefore the lessons that could be drawn from Nazism did not stop at a general condemnation of anything that contravened the rule of law: they also offered insights into the relationship between law and morality. What he was suggesting by that was that positivism – the idea that the law that is currently in force is the only valid law – had reached its apogee in the Third Reich and been used by the Nazis to trample fundamental legal concepts underfoot. In arguing that the law should rest on higher values he was thus linking up with the postwar Western European renaissance of ideas about natural law and this was made particularly clear by the fact that he invoked Gustaf Radbruch, one of the leading proponents of natural law in postwar Germany.<sup>97</sup>

Petré seems to have diverged from the main tendencies in Sweden in all this. As has been seen, the overall understanding had been that the conclusions that could be drawn from the Nazi experience were limited as far as Sweden was concerned. Swedish jurists could certainly join in affirming international efforts to hold war criminals responsible and thereby be part of international collegiality. On the other hand, however, the Nazi experience did not lead to any sort of fundamental

self-examination. Rather the reverse, in fact, and the primary effect of Nazism seems to have been self-affirmation: the Nazi state order, based as it was on force and violence, appeared to be the absolute antithesis of the Swedish rule of law.<sup>98</sup>

The Nazi experience thus seems only to have induced a self-confirming historical lesson among Swedish jurists. But it is worth broadening the discussion. An interesting perspective opens up if we link up with the general discussion about rights that was going on in Sweden and in neighbouring countries in the wake of the Second World War.

### *Swedish Rights*

In the summer of 1953 three Swedish professors of law, Per Olof Ekelöf, Henrik Munktel and Folke Schmidt, travelled to a divided Berlin where they joined a hundred or so other jurists from all over the world for an international congress. It was organised by a group of East German lawyers who had sought sanctuary in West Berlin and who wanted to inform the outside world about the legal situation in communist East Germany.

Per Olof Ekelöf gave a detailed account of his appalling experiences in an article in *Svensk Juristtidning* and his report took the form of a sharp indictment of the young East German state. The draconian punishments, propagandist show trials and the politicised legal system as a whole disgusted him. 'It seems to me one of the ironies of fate that the German speakers underlined the resemblances between the present situation in the Eastern zone and the earlier situation under the Nazis', he summed up.<sup>99</sup> The congress came as something of a shock to Ekelöf and he confessed: 'For anyone who lives in a country as sheltered as Sweden, it is easy for terror and hardship even in geographically close countries to lose some of its reality.'<sup>100</sup>

In addition to the quite staggering impressions he had gained of the East German legal system, he had formed other impressions that were both noteworthy and important to pass on to his Swedish readers. The legal situation in the Eastern zone had been criticised because it was thought to conflict with natural law and Ekelöf noted, not without some surprise, that many of the contributions had borne the stamp of a natural law approach; people in Sweden had no idea about 'the renaissance that natural law thinking is currently having on the continent'. He reminded them that natural law had been particularly vehemently opposed in Germany ever since the days of the historical school, but it was precisely in Germany that it was currently most in vogue: "'Der Traum des Naturrechts ist ausgeträumt [The dream of natural law is at



an end]” the German jurist Bernhard Windscheid had declared emphatically in the middle of the last century. His prophecy has not proved true.<sup>101</sup>

Ekelöf exemplified this by referring to a conversation he had had with a member of the highest court in West Germany. This man had told Ekelöf that he considered it his duty as a judge to rule in contradiction to an existing law if that law was incompatible with natural law and, in fact, he thought this to be a proper application of the law and the only acceptable thing in that sort of situation. The Swede replied that he could imagine circumstances in which this was necessary but he would never agree that it could be called a proper application. It was more a kind of ‘passive resistance’ or ‘revolutionary action’ and, moreover, there was a risk of it opening ‘the road for chaos and arbitrariness in the administration of justice’.<sup>102</sup> His German colleague’s understanding of it was, however, a different one:

As motivation for his view the German judge stated that laws and statutes had been enacted during the Nazi period which had been passed with due process and which were irreproachable from a technical judicial viewpoint, but their content had been utterly shocking. German judges had considered themselves bound to operate these laws. At university they had been educated in the spirit of positivism and learnt that it is not the function of a judge to criticise the laws of the state but to use them. That kind of thing should never be allowed to happen again. Which is why the courts should consider themselves duty bound to apply natural law as the very highest judicial norm.<sup>103</sup>

Ekelöf recognised that the renaissance of natural law went hand in hand with the political convulsions of the age. He also recognised that he as a Swede stood outside the experiences that the jurists in neighbouring countries had been through. This became very obvious in discussion with a Norwegian colleague. ‘Look’, the Norwegian said, ‘I suppose all of us are more or less believers in natural law – all of us who were there.’ ‘That shot certainly found its target’, Ekelöf admitted.<sup>104</sup>

Ekelöf’s account bears substantial witness to the Swedish situation. His description of his meeting with the rebirth of natural law in Western Europe turns the spotlight on the shifting shapes of the Nazi experience. It was obvious to the West German and Norwegian jurists that the experiences of Nazism carried a clear-cut historical lesson. In the Third Reich, and in the occupied countries of Europe, law had been put in the service of ideology and the law that was in force legitimated acts of violence. The consequent conclusion during the first postwar years was that laws and statutes could not be motivated by the dictates of politics but must rest on a much more enduring legal basis, that is, on

the basis of natural law. This conclusion was, however, alien to Ekelöf. In his view, natural law had always served as an ideological projection of political values. 'This might have its propaganda value', he admitted, 'but as a way of looking at things it can blind us to what the actual political objective is.'<sup>105</sup>

Per Olof Ekelöf's attitude reflected the views that were dominant in the jurist community in Sweden during the postwar years. That became apparent in an exchange of learned views on the status and meaning of rights in which he was involved for a decade after 1945. In addition to Ekelöf this drawn-out debate brought together many of the jurists and theorists of law who were to put their stamp on legal discourse over the coming decades – men such as Ivar Strahl, Anders Wedberg and Alf Ross.

The start of the debate was a long article by Per Olof Ekelöf in *Tidsskrift for Rettsvitenskap* (The Journal of Jurisprudence) in 1945. Long sections of his article – like the other contributions to the discussion – took the form of a learned examination of concepts, an investigation characterised by the analytical-philosophical ideals of the day and demands for uncompromising logic. The debate was carried on without any reference to the newly awakened international interest in rights. None of the great international events – the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, the European Convention or the rebirth of natural law thinking on the continent – was mentioned during the decade-long exchange of opinions. Instead, the Swedish discussion remained utterly technical in character.<sup>106</sup>

On occasions, however, they did connect with a more general discussion of the concept of rights. With the support of Axel Hägerström, Ekelöf insisted that the complicated nature of the concept of rights had to do with 'its original sense of supernatural power', that in the beginning it had designated magical, superhuman powers. Over time this primitive power perception had been rationalised and a right had come to designate 'something "ideal", something belonging to "the world of law", which has its basis in a legal fact and which itself forms the basis for a legal consequence'.<sup>107</sup> On the few occasions the doctrine of natural law was mentioned the tense was shifted to the past tense. Ivar Strahl, for instance, in a brief backward glance at history, reminded his readers that people in past times had asserted the freedom of citizens by identifying and consolidating natural rights, but jurisprudence today was faced with a different task. For the jurists of Strahl's time it was self-evident that they should concentrate on current laws and consequently the idea of natural rights appeared to be a relic of a past age.<sup>108</sup>

Alf Ross, a powerful voice in legal discourse in Scandinavia at that time, aligned himself with this line of reasoning when he commented on the debate in Sweden. In his view the concept of rights had its origin in an ancient magic conceptual world which only existed nowadays among primitive peoples. Ross warned that the use of the concept of rights could 'lead to aberrations and dogmatic postulates'. Fortunately, modern Western jurists – for good reason – had distanced themselves from this position. When the concept was used in contemporary law it was only as a 'terminological aid' that in principle could be replaced by the phrase 'old cheese'.<sup>109</sup>

None of the Swedes expressed themselves as drastically as Ross but they did essentially share his view. They all used a functional concept of rights in conjunction with valid law. They all kept well away from what Ross called 'the metaphysical problem of the traditional concept of rights', that is to say, the way rights were rooted in a supra-worldly spiritual reality, an invisible moral force that could not be traced deductively. To the extent that it was possible to draw a line between the sides in the Swedish debate, it ran between those who asserted that the concept of rights could benefit the legal discussion and those who maintained it should be removed from the legal vocabulary.<sup>110</sup>

### *Value Nihilism and Legal Realism*

The postwar discussion on rights fits in well with the bigger picture of the history of ideas. Axel Hägerström's philosophy was an important theoretical precondition. As professor of practical philosophy in Uppsala from 1911 to 1933, Hägerström did not only put his stamp on contemporary Swedish philosophy but also on the wider debate about society and about ideas. He turned his face against theory of knowledge subjectivism and rejected all forms of metaphysical idealism. His discussion of the meaning of value premises is particularly important. In the value theory that he developed – which came to be called 'value nihilism' – the possibility of moral knowledge and the existence of objective values were denied. Value statements were thus neither true nor false and merely gave expression to personal attitudes.<sup>111</sup>

As a result of his theory of values Hägerström emphatically rejected the idea that there was such a thing as an objective right. In the great two-volume work *Der römische Obligationsbegriff* (The Roman Concept of Obligation) (1927–1941) he argued his case. He considered the idea that there were objective rights to be a projection of hopes and interests, the roots of which were to be found in magic and superstition far back in history.<sup>112</sup>

Hägerström's ideas were actively absorbed by Swedish jurists and legal theorists. His most enthusiastic disciple was Vilhelm Lundstedt, Professor of Jurisprudence in Uppsala from 1914 to 1948, a Social Democrat member of the Riksdag for several decades and one of the best-known jurists of his time. Lundstedt was a wholehearted supporter of his master's fundamental view of law and morality. He could go so far as to admit that the idea of human rights had played a progressive role in history but asserted that the time was now ripe to give up completely all concepts of rights.<sup>113</sup>

Hägerström and Lundstedt were portal figures in the school of legal theory that is usually termed 'Scandinavian legal realism'. Even though the foundations had been laid between the wars, the first post-war decades must be seen as its real heyday. The second generation of legal realists – Karl Olivecrona, Tore Strömberg, Per Olof Ekelöf, Per Olof Bolding and others – had received their legal education before the Second World War but came to dominate legal discussion during the third quarter of the twentieth century. They were all united as Hägerströmians when they maintained that law was the law that was in force and had nothing to do with metaphysics.<sup>114</sup>

Ivar Strahl, another of the leading jurists of the immediate post-war decade, and a professor of Criminal Law, can serve as an illustrative example. In 1941 Strahl had published an article in *Svensk Juristtidning* with the title 'Idealism and Realism in Jurisprudence'. The article, which received a considerable amount of attention, took two newly published works as its starting point: the Oslo professor Frede Castberg's *Rettsfilosofiske grunnspørsmål* (Fundamental Questions of the Philosophy of Law) and the Lund jurist Karl Olivecrona's *Law as Fact*. The article explored the differences between Castberg's idealism inspired by natural law and Olivecrona's legal realism. Strahl himself had certain objections to the value nihilism of the Uppsala School but he had also taken on board much of its criticism of idealistic doctrines. As far as he could understand, Castberg's outlook was one of those that the Uppsala School – justifiably – opposed. Thus Strahl tended to be on the side of realism, possibly mainly because it was more compatible with a practical legal life.<sup>115</sup>

Fourteen years later, in 1955, Ivar Strahl returned with yet another widely read article. It linked back to some extent with the discussion about rights of the first postwar decade. The starting point was once again a recently published book, Alf Ross's *Om ret og retfærdighet* (On Law and Justice). In his younger days the Copenhagen professor had been profoundly influenced by Hägerström and throughout his working life he had carried on a vocal polemic against all metaphysical

elements in the theory of law. In his very positive review Strahl stressed the author's fundamentally anti-metaphysical stance, which was revealed by the sharp terms in which he objected to notions of natural law.<sup>116</sup> Strahl and Ross were in complete agreement on this point, but in the eyes of the reviewer one problem still remained:

We are used to natural law being rebutted. Strangely, however, it seems to have to be rebutted time after time. It is apparently killed off by one author after another but manages to survive with just enough life left for the next author to consider it necessary to kill it off again. Ross's rebuttal will probably go the same way as that of other authors: the execution is successful but the delinquent does not die. In spite of all the criticism that Ross and other authors have directed at natural law people will simply not give up the idea that there must surely be certain principles that positive law should follow.<sup>117</sup>

Evidence for Strahl's statement was to be found in the United Nations Declaration of Rights, which pronounced that 'rights exist independent of positive law'. Above all, however, the value of the criticism of the doctrine of natural law was theoretical and, from a practical point of view, it was frequently possible to unite certain basic principles of natural law with principles of positive law even though inviolable rights had proved difficult to live up to in the real world. On the other hand, the tradition of natural law had – according to Strahl – retained its influence over people's minds in a different and unfortunate respect. The extent to which jurists had liberated themselves from issues of natural law was far too limited and they had focused too little on issues that promoted the goals that law was supposed to promote. Strahl's programmatic summing up was as follows: 'The natural law way of looking at issues inevitably ascribes a value to the rule itself, whereas according to a modern outlook what should be more relevant is the outcome of the rule.'<sup>118</sup>

The criticism of legal idealism in general and natural law in particular that Strahl had voiced at the start of the 1940s was in full flow by the middle of the 1950s. There was no trace left of the respect he had shown for Frede Castberg's thinking as late as 1941, and the anti-metaphysical legal realism of Hägerström, Lundstedt and Ross now reigned supreme.<sup>119</sup> Strahl's thinking provides a good example of the outlook that was dominant in Sweden: we may find rights acceptable, but not natural law, not for any money. During the postwar decades rights were seen as cultural conventions and not as metaphysical assumptions.<sup>120</sup> In 1955 even Gustaf Petrén agreed that the concepts of natural law were hardly embraced by anyone any longer, which did not prevent him being one of the foremost promoters of rights in postwar Sweden.<sup>121</sup>

If necessary, rights could still be of benefit to a case, but they were rarely called upon with any great enthusiasm. The attitude dominant in Sweden became apparent at the time of ratifying the European Convention on Human Rights in the early 1950s. Östen Undén, the foreign minister, was sceptical and thought there was reason to tread carefully, all the more so as the convention might have an impact on areas that traditionally belonged to the domestic legislation of states. Swedish law was quite sufficient to cover the needs of Sweden, was the foreign minister's view.<sup>122</sup>

Thus the criticism of natural law from the point of view of legal realism was not only an issue for academic seminars in philosophy. Hägerström and Lundstedt had already exercised significant influence on intellectual public opinion in Sweden and now, during the first postwar decades, a host of scholars, jurists and politicians worked to ensure that the basic principles of legal realism were given their due in legislation, opinion formation and practical politics.

Since the 1980s Hägerström's heritage has not only been seen as a special feature of the modern culture of Scandinavian law: it has also been highlighted as the structural precondition for a series of abuses against the individual under the auspices of the welfare state, whether we are talking about sterilisation policy or about the impact of the Nuremberg laws on the application of law in Sweden.<sup>123</sup> During the first postwar decade, however, there was no opinion in Sweden that associated the legal practice of the Third Reich with an opposition in principle to ideas of natural law. Rather the reverse, the historical lesson of Nazism sustained and confirmed a tradition of legal realism. That, however, was not the only conclusion jurists drew from the Nazi experience.

### *The Renaissance of Natural Law in West Germany*

The legal discourse in Sweden has been seen against the background of the rebirth of natural law in Western Europe after the Second World War. In order to put the Swedish historical lesson into perspective it will, however, be necessary to describe the international development in more detail.

The renaissance of natural law in West Germany is of particular interest in this context, not only because the philosophy-based criticism of the first decades of the twentieth century had been at its most acerbic there, but even more because the legal principles of the Third Reich had been totally against any concept of universal human rights. To a great extent Nazi law was the absolute antithesis of natural law.<sup>124</sup>

That, anyway, was the conclusion drawn in the years after 1945. Many of the most important figures between the wars had argued in favour of legal positivism and expressly against natural law, but the Nazi experience had led to a process of self-examination and a shift of stance. Gustav Radbruch, the Social Democrat minister of justice in the early Weimar Republic and later philosopher of law, is a telling example. During the second half of the 1940s he argued that legal positivism had ‘made both jurists and people powerless against laws that were utterly arbitrary, utterly brutal and utterly criminal’. He demanded that elements of morality should be included in the concept of law in order to prevent the return of the criminal state.<sup>125</sup>

Radbruch was far from being alone in this. During the early post-war years a number of prominent jurists and legal experts argued that law should be based on a foundation of inalienable human rights. In the legal debate of the time – which also drew in theologians, philosophers and historians – there was talk of ‘das Wiedererstehung des Naturrechts’ (the resurrection of natural law) (Hans Thieme) or ‘die Erweckung des Naturrechts’ (the awakening of natural law) (Franz Wieacker) – in short, a rebirth of natural law.<sup>126</sup>

The professor of Roman law at Frankfurt am Main, Helmut Coing, a man with strong philosophy of law interests, chose to talk of ‘die Neugründung des Naturrechts’ (the refounding of natural law). In 1947 he published what is perhaps the most intellectually ambitious attempt to pour new life into the tradition of natural law, *Die obersten Grundsätze des Rechts* (The Highest Principles of Law). He took as his starting point the perversion of law he had witnessed during the Nazi dictatorship. Time and again he had asked himself whether the law should not be based on certain ethical principles rather than on the power play of a state based on violence. Even while the war was still going on, and inspired by Albert Schweitzer and others, he began working on the creation of a more just basis for the law.<sup>127</sup>

In the introduction to *Die obersten Grundsätze des Rechts* Coing explained the reasoning behind his treatise on the philosophy of law. The self-evident purpose of the volume, he stressed, was to ‘liberate jurisprudence from positivism’ and to reunite it with the tradition of natural law since ‘that is the only thing that appears to be capable of protecting the law against the claims of political power and brute force’. In other words, the turn towards natural law was a moral necessity, but Coing was also well aware that it would simultaneously actualise a string of scientific problems. His aim was to solve them by presenting – as the book’s subtitle stated – ‘an attempt to re-establish natural law’.<sup>128</sup>

The linkage between the experiences of the Third Reich and the blossoming of interest in natural law during the postwar years recurs in reviews and in bibliographical surveys. As early as 1943 the theologian Emil Brunner noted that the ideas of natural law had been stirred into life by the conflict with the totalitarian state and its positive law. Heinrich Lehmann, a professor of civil law, came to the same conclusion a couple of years later: 'and thus the collapse of the rule of terror by violent Nazi thugs who had nothing but scorn for the human value of private individuals led to a renaissance of natural law'. In 1951, in a survey of the recent past, Adolf Julius Merkl, an Austrian observer, contended that the Nazi intoxication with power and subsequent collapse had opened the road for the return of natural law into contemporary German jurisprudence. Similar claims were made by jurists like Heinrich Rommen, Franz Wieacker and Arthur Kaufmann: the Nazi discrediting of legal positivism paved the way for an order based on the principles of natural law. That was the lesson that was dominant in Western Germany in the years after 1945.<sup>129</sup>

In an analysis of the West German discussion of natural law the legal historian Heinz Mohnhaupt opens out the debate. He points out that notions of natural law have surfaced several times in the course of the twentieth century, often in reaction to crises and catastrophes. In early postwar Germany, however, these ideas had a special resonance that contributed to the force of the renaissance. Natural law appeared as a radical alternative to the legal order of the Third Reich, but it also harmonised with the surge of interest in idealistic, Christian and often conservative traditions that characterised that period. Moreover, the political and cultural climate of the Cold War favoured its growth in West Germany not least because natural law appeared to be a corrective to the principles dictated by the Soviets in the East.<sup>130</sup>

These historical circumstances were taken as justification for the criticism that was levelled against proponents of natural law from the middle of the 1950s. They tended to be dismissed as naïve idealists and unrealistic dreamers who had allowed themselves to be too easily swayed by the postwar chaos and who had not taken into account the conditions that ruled in everyday legal practice. These critics rarely proposed a return to unvarnished legal positivism of the old school, but they recommended instead a more flexible and concrete legal order.<sup>131</sup>

Even though the concept of natural law gradually came to be questioned, the lesson that can be derived from the Nazi experience made an enduring impression on the Federal Republic of Germany. The ideas were visible in the West German constitution of 1949, a document that has been described as 'a creation oriented towards history'. Long



sections of it read like a list of answers to the challenges of Nazism. To a much greater extent than the Weimar constitution of 1919 it reaches back to the natural law of the Enlightenment. The very first article of the Bonn constitution affirms the sanctity of man and the inalienable nature of rights.<sup>132</sup>

It was not only in West Germany that the Nazi experience led to a sort of renaissance for natural law. With *rettsoppgjøret* (the legal settlement) Norway, too, experienced a return to the ideas of natural law. The professor of law Frede Castberg was one of the leading proponents of natural law in Norway and, indeed, in the rest of Western Europe during the early postwar years – though his actual influence is a matter of dispute. He was, however, not alone in asserting that legal positivism had served the Nazis all too well during the war years and that the law thereafter must rest firmly on inalienable rights. In *Staten og mennesket* (The State and the Individual) (1945) the prominent Oslo bishop Eivind Berggrav reflected on what he called the Machiavellian power state and came to the conclusion that the rehabilitation of natural law was necessary. During the latter part of the 1940s the lessons of Nazism and the law were also discussed in similar terms in other forums.<sup>133</sup>

### *Nazism Before the Court*

Nazism hardly surfaced at all in the Swedish legal discourse of the 1940s and early 1950s. The leading professional journal in Sweden reported the radical transformation of German law in a factual and neutral manner. Not until the war was over was any very substantial and unconditional criticism aimed at the legal order of Nazi Germany. The conclusion reached was one of self-confirmation: the Swedish legal tradition, founded on democracy and legal security, was fundamentally different from Nazi law. The best way of distancing oneself from Nazism was to affirm its opposite – the rational, modern and positive law taught by faculties of law in Sweden and practised in the Swedish legal system.

Unlike countries like West Germany and to some extent Norway there was, however, no renaissance of natural law thinking in Sweden. Positive law in these neighbouring countries had been used in the service of Nazi ideology and after the war there were many who thought that law should be based on firmer ground.<sup>134</sup>

In Sweden, on the other hand, there was no need for reassessment and re-examination. Apart from a number of minor infringements of press freedom – and according to many people they had been addressed by the new freedom of the press law of 1949 – the Swedish legal system

had passed the test with flying colours during the era of totalitarianism and world war. Swedish postwar society, in which the strong current of legal realism achieved virtual hegemony, was hardly receptive at all to ideas of natural law. In many Western European countries the renaissance of natural law provided an answer to the question of how to pass laws that are above the ruling power's ability to change, whereas in the legally realistic context of the Swedish debate any talk of inherent natural rights was considered to belong to the field of metaphysics.

The criticism aimed at the Swedish value nihilistic view of law in the 1940s came from the fringes. A telling example is that of Helmut Rüdiger, a German syndicalist who was an early refugee from Nazi Germany and who was active as a journalist in the Swedish press during the war. In 1943, in the newspaper *Arbetaren* (The Worker), he mounted a violent attack on Hägerström's doctrines, which in his view lacked humanity and could be used to legitimate the abuses committed by a totalitarian state. His view was that value nihilism could only lead to one of two extremes: 'Either a sort of neo-Marxism, as is cultivated in those intellectual circles that flirt with Bolshevism, or to Nazism which, of course, is also value nihilist.' The German refugee argued instead for an order based on human rights.<sup>135</sup>

The case of Rüdiger demonstrates that the debate about natural law versus positive law was not a simple matter of left or right. In spite of that, however, the discussion both between the wars and after the war needs to be viewed against the general political background. Staffan Källström, a historian of ideas who has produced several important studies charting the impact of the Uppsala school of philosophy on Swedish social norms, has advanced the thesis that legal realism was in tune with the growth of the Social Democratic welfare state and with the process of social engineering. Leading proponents of legal realism considered natural law a doctrine of conservation, one that put barriers in the way of political and economic reforms and looked after the interests of the establishment at the same time as preventing an expansion of democracy. The historian of ideas Sverre Blandhol has put forward the related argument that legal realism became a new juridical ideology during the first half of the twentieth century and could ultimately legitimate a greater political and social project – the Scandinavian welfare state.<sup>136</sup>

The international comparison demonstrates how the Nazi experience could lead to various kinds of historical lesson. In Sweden it was primarily self-confirmatory in that it stressed the importance of uniting in support of the core values of the modern Swedish legal tradition. This conclusion was reinforced by the fact that Nazism was widely

interpreted as an idealistic and metaphysical phenomenon with its roots in the world of ideas of German Romanticism. The interpretations of Nazism in a country like West Germany were diverse and were not associated as unambiguously as they were in Sweden with conservative metaphysical tendencies. The Nazi experience in West Germany gave rise to a different juridical lesson, one that opened the road to a rebirth of natural law.

## The Ideas of 1945

How are we to arrive at a collective characterisation of the ideals and perceptions that emerged in the Swedish debates on education and on natural law? Were they part of a larger ideological pattern that was consolidated at the end of the war? What did the relationship look like between these perceptions of the future and the historical lessons of Nazism?

The notion of ‘the ideas of 1945’ is a valuable one here. It has been used, sometimes analytically, sometimes polemically, in a variety of contexts.<sup>137</sup> The man who has identified and isolated it in the most interesting way is Svante Nordin who believes that a community of opinion came into being in the immediate postwar period. In spite of their differences, men such as Herbert Tingsten, Gunnar Myrdal and Torsten Gårdlund – all of them influential in the years following 1945 – had significant things in common:

They were rationalists and modernists, represented the social sciences that were becoming prominent, were strongly oriented towards the U.S.A. in a way that had been rare among older generations of Swedish academics. Culturally they were radical, but they rejected totalitarian ideologies. Their view of politics was pragmatic, they all accepted the construction of the welfare state, though with varying degrees of enthusiasm. They saw themselves as unsentimental realists, opponents of idealistic phraseology, utterly secularised in their view of society.<sup>138</sup>

These men, ‘the advance guard of postwar ideas’ – Social Democratic politicians, culture radical intellectuals, social liberal reformers – were the victors in the ideational trial of strength that had taken place over the preceding decades. In this context Nordin talks of the emergence of what might be called ‘the ideas of 1945’. This current, in the broad sense humanistic, might lean a little to the conservative side or a little to the socialist side, but was essentially liberal at heart. It united Enlightenment passion with a defence of human rights and democracy. ‘The thinking that was represented within this “humanistic” camp would effectively

form the basis of the kind of democratic “super-ideology” which became dominant in Sweden after the war’, Nordin writes.<sup>139</sup>

The concept of ‘the ideas of 1945’ allows us to describe the dominant ideals in the political and intellectual life of the postwar years: what I identify – inspired by Koselleck – as that epoch’s perceptions of the future. That, however, is not in itself sufficient. The connections between the experiences of Nazism and the emergence of this dominant ideological order remain unclear unless they are viewed in conjunction with the lesson that was generated in the dynamic between experience and expectation. The international comparisons in this chapter have also clearly shown that the experiences of Nazism did not give rise to one unequivocal and universal historical lesson. They tended instead to be coloured by national circumstances, cultural traditions and power politics. Those changes that did occur resulted from an interplay between reorientation and the adoption of already existing ideals. Nothing arises from nothing.

#### *A Cultural-Radical Value Tradition*

The concept of value tradition is helpful when trying to define more precisely how the historical lessons of Nazism set a stamp on the postwar ideological landscape. It is to be understood as a tradition which consists of both a content component and a social component. The latter can be divided into a human factor (the bearers of the content of the tradition), a communication factor (bearers of the tradition must be in contact with one another) and a time factor (the content of the tradition must have some degree of durability and extend over a reasonably lengthy period). The philosopher Bo Petersson writes: ‘The content of the value tradition consists of a collection of normative theses and their motivations (their prerequisites) and of theses about value and about the argumentation in normative questions which is used to motivate a certain attitudinal stance to values and questions of value’. This means that there is a core of essential assumptions, but that it is not a completely static core and that consequently there remains a tension between the internal constancy of the tradition and its capacity for renewal. And secondly, the value tradition does not only contain a certain range of norms but also an apprehension of what is a valid normative argument.<sup>140</sup>

The theologian Ola Sigurdson used Petersson’s terminology in a study in order to investigate value nihilism, which was an influential value tradition in twentieth-century Sweden. He considers it to be a feature that brings together names like Axel Hägerström, Herbert

Tingsten, Ingemar Hedenius, Alva Myrdal and Gunnar Myrdal. In all essentials the public discourse of the middle decades of the century was carried on within the frame of this value tradition. It dictated the terms of what constituted valid arguments.<sup>141</sup>

There are many points of agreement between Sigurdson's reasoning and mine, but I would argue that the kernel of the ideas of 1945 was in fact a culture-radical value tradition. That is a more apt term for the system of norms that was articulated in the wake of the Second World War. In terms of the history of ideas, the origins of cultural radicalism are to be found in the 1880s but it had gone through many changes since then. It is nevertheless possible to see a family resemblance linking the various forms. The anthropology went back to a notion that man was inherently free and in harmony, not entangled in the duties of the collective or weighed down by the curses of custom. It can be seen in particular in the accommodation with what was regarded as convention and traditionalism, especially Christian dogma and the ceremonies of the establishment class hierarchy. The cultural radicals embraced instead a universalist norm of what was natural and sensible, an approach that went hand in hand with criticism of traditional authorities and ideas. In political terms the norm was socialist or liberal, rejecting a society based on privilege and arguing for social commitment and political democracy. On the question of education they tended to reject formal education and advocate instead a practical education in citizenship. The historian Martin Wiklund has pointed out that cultural radicalism ultimately rests on a value nihilist or value relativist base to the extent that value judgments are seen as subjective. This did not, however, prevent the cultural radicals from joining together in support of certain values (genuineness, social usefulness, liberation, equality, democracy and so on), but these were often reformulated as arguments in favour of what was scientific, rational or natural. Ultimately the cultural radicals drew their strength from the fact that they considered themselves to represent progress, enlightenment and modernity itself.<sup>142</sup>

During the formative period of cultural radicalism, around 1900, it was associated with names such as August Strindberg, Knut Wicksell, Karl Staaff, Bengt Lidforss, Hjalmar Branting and Ellen Key. 'The Strindberg Feud' (1910–1912) was a significant controversy that ended favourably for the cultural radicals. In spite of the differences between them they handed on an inheritance of rationalism, materialism, cosmopolitanism, anti-clericalism and intellectualism to posterity. The cultural radicals of the interwar years saw themselves as guardians of the heritage passed down to them by these keen turn-of-the-century supporters of Enlightenment. During the 1920s they represented the

combined left even though they were seldom tied to any particular party. They spanned a wide range of political standpoints, from socialists to liberals, from Marxists to the aristocracy of intelligence, from *Clarté* to *Dagens Nyheter*, from Elise Ottesen-Jensen and Marika Stiernstedt to Axel Hägerström and Per Meurling. It was a heterogeneous and vocal grouping that kept diverse parts of the inheritance of cultural radicalism alive but was nevertheless united in holding certain values in common. From the middle of the 1930s their resistance to Nazism became an ever more important common concern, though the nature of their protests varied in both form and intensity.<sup>143</sup>

The value tradition that gained the upper hand after the Second World War is described, using Martin Wiklund's terminology, as a rationalist, Enlightenment-oriented form of cultural radicalism. It saw itself as an offshoot of the outlook of the 1880s; it was materialistic and utilitarian, it argued for the ideals of the natural and social sciences and it asserted the principles of the rule of law and liberal democracy against totalitarian systems. At the same time, given its rationalist profile, it was distinct from other adjacent currents which, during the 1920s and even during the 1930s, had existed alongside cultural radicalism of the Enlightenment variety, but after 1945 they found it more and more problematic to hold their own, in the political and intellectual spheres at any rate. That was particularly true of what Wiklund terms romantic cultural radicalism, which may be divided into a pastoral orientation and an aesthetic one. In the case of the former it was all about striving in the spirit of Rousseau for a life in accord with nature, a condition of natural wholeness and harmony that was accompanied by criticism of an urbanised industrial way of life. Typical representatives were Karl-Erik Forsslund, Per Jönson Rösiö and Johan Lindström Saxon. Aesthetic cultural radicalism, for its part, was more focused on what was elegant, refined and amoral; it found its inspiration in Charles Baudelaire, Oscar Wilde or Friedrich Nietzsche. The two forms of romantic cultural radicalism were united in rejecting traditional Christianity and bourgeois culture as well as the materialism and utilitarian morality of Enlightenment-oriented radicalism. In the interwar period in Sweden, however, cultural idealism had been more significant for the formation and orientation of ideological opinion. The cultural idealists, who included such influential figures as Arthur Engberg, Hans Larsson, Torsten Fogelqvist, Torgny Segerstedt, Elin Wägner and Alf Ahlberg, resembled the rationalistic cultural radicals in putting their faith in reason, education and human free will, but they distanced themselves from value nihilism, materialism and scientism. The left as a whole had shown strong tendencies towards cultural idealism in the decades after

the First World War, but after 1945 these tendencies faded to the point of disappearing. The rationalistic cultural radicalism that spread in the wake of the Second World War had undoubtedly been fairly strong in Sweden even during the 1930s, but it had been no more than one limited element among the political and cultural currents between the wars. By the late 1940s the discourse concerning education and natural law had no room for anything but cultural radical standpoints that rested on rationalist foundations.<sup>144</sup>

The resistance to National Socialism had required Enlightenment-oriented cultural radicalism. Given its defence of reason, science and democracy it stood as an ideology of resistance that possessed the tools to combat dark and obscure doctrines of power. Axel Hägerström's value nihilism and Lauritz Weibull's historical critical method could demolish the castles in the air of idealism and blow away the stuffy air of metaphysics. Discussing the mystique surrounding Hägerström at the time of his retirement in 1933 the historian of ideas Nils Runeby pointed out that cultural radicalism achieved the status of intellectual opposition to National Socialism at an early date and became a kind of antithesis of Nazism. 'The frail and shy figure of Hägerström stands as the epitome of freedom, humanity and reason over against Hitler, Stalin and the irrationality of primitive emotions', Runeby writes. He goes on to summarise cultural radicalism as an anti-Nazi programme: 'Scepticism and criticism did not, however, need to lead to passivity and despair. Quite the reverse – they became weapons.'<sup>145</sup>

It was thus no accident that the historical lesson of Nazism bore the stamp of cultural radicalism in the aftermath of the war. Cultural radicalism had been strong even between the wars and was viewed as the absolute antithesis of National Socialism. The political and intellectual leaders of the first postwar decade were Enlightenment-minded cultural radicals. That was particularly true in the fields of education and law.

The historical lesson did not solely consist of a content component. The two empirical fields, that of educational policy and that of the law, can also serve as examples of the two main cases of the lesson, the one confirmatory, the other questioning. The debate about the school of the future accommodated both, but reassessment and a change of course were the most conspicuous. On the other hand, the discussion about rights remained stuck in a spirit of self-confirmation right through the 1940s and 1950s. This was a case in which the Nazi experience gave rise to a lesson that confirmed the legal realism that existed already. Thus, in spite of shifts in the nature of the lesson, the direction remained the same. It fenced off the ideological landscape and prepared the way for rationalistic cultural radicalism.

The conclusions pointed in a geographical direction which at one and the same time was ideological and cultural. The intellectual influences on the 1946 Schools Commission came in all essentials from the West. Alva Myrdal, an influential educational ideologue during the early postwar period, introduced American progressivism into Swedish educational policies, John Dewey being the portal figure. She had confessed to her part in it as early as *Kontakt med Amerika* (Contact with America) (1941), the book she published together with her husband Gunnar: 'Just as Sweden has been a laboratory for advances in social policy, America has been a pedagogical laboratory.'<sup>146</sup> As far as legal affairs were concerned it is clear that continental law was quite the opposite to modern Swedish law: it was idealistic, metaphysical and still affected by layers of religious thinking. During the postwar period impulses would be sought either at home or out to the West. Thus the ideas of 1945 are closely connected with a cultural change of course – the reorientation away from the German sphere.<sup>147</sup>

## Notes

1. I. Hedenius, *Om människans moraliska villkor* (Gothenburg: Författarförlaget, 1972), 7–9. See also S. Nordin, *Ingemar Hedenius: En filosof och hans tid* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2004), 129.
2. Hedenius, *Om människans moraliska villkor*, 17–20. An identical division occurred in two surveys of contemporary philosophy, K. Marc-Wogau, 'Metafysik – logisk analys – semantik', in C.E. Sjöstedt (ed.), *Ny kunskap: Översikt över vetenskapens senaste forskningsresultat* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1952) and G.H. von Wright, *Logik, filosofi och språk: Strömningar och gestalter i modern filosofi* (Helsinki: Söderström, 1957).
3. Hedenius, *Om människans moraliska villkor*, 19.
4. See in general S. Nordin, *Från Hägerström till Hedenius: Den moderna svenska filosofin* (Bodafors: Doxa, 1984) and S. Nygård and J. Strang (eds), *Mellan idealism och analytisk filosofi: Den moderna filosofin i Finland och Sverige 1880–1950* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland, 2006).
5. T. Stenström, *Existentialismen i Sverige: Mottagande och inflytande 1900–1950* (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 1984).
6. A. Wedberg, 'Sartre och existentialismen', *Dagens Nyheter*, 12 January 1947.
7. Stenström, *Existentialismen i Sverige*, 177–218.
8. Stenström, *Existentialismen i Sverige*, 121–122 and 171–174.
9. M. Rahner, 'Tout est neuf ici, tout est à recommencer ...': *Die Rezeption des französischen Existentialismus im kulturellen Feld Westdeutschlands (1945–1949)* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1993).
10. B. Lindensjö and U.P. Lundgren, *Utbildningsreformer och politisk styrning* (Stockholm: HLS Förlag, 2000); G. Richardson, *Svensk utbildningshistoria: Skola och samhälle förr och nu* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2004).



11. G. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945: Idéer och realiteter i pedagogisk debatt och politiskt handlande* (Stockholm: Liber, 1978), 34 and 54–63. The most concise account of the 1940 Schools Commission is Richardson's book, but also see C.E. Olivestam, *Idé och politik: De politiska partierna – skolan och kristendomen: En studie i svensk skolpolitik under 1940-talet* (Uppsala: Svenska Kyrkohistoriska Föreningen, 1977), S. Marklund, *Skolsverige 1950–1975: 1950 års reformbeslut* (Stockholm: Liber, 1980), Å. Isling, *Kampen för och mot en demokratisk skola: Samhällsstruktur och skolorganisation* (Stockholm: Sober, 1980), T. Englund, *Samhällsorientering och medborgarfostran i svensk skola under 1900-talet* (Uppsala: Pedagogiska Institutionen, 1986) and J. Qvarsebo, *Skolbarnets fostran: Enhetsskolan, agan och politiken om barnet 1946–1962* (Linköping: Linköping University Electronic Press, 2006).
12. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 54; 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst: Frågeställningar och problem-läge* (Stockholm: SOU 1944:20), 5.
13. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 28; Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 56–57.
14. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 56–57.
15. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 28–34 and 73–98 (quotation 74).
16. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 45
17. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 117.
18. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 49. See also Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 114–120.
19. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 49–51 (quotation 50).
20. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 117.
21. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 54. The title of Herbert Tingsten's study, *Gud och fosterlandet: Studier i hundra års skolpropaganda* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1969), reveals his main thesis.
22. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 48
23. Olivestam, *Idé och politik*, 42–45 and 259–263; K.G. Algotsson, *Från katekestvång till religionsfrihet: Debatten om religionsundervisningen i skolan under 1900-talet* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1975).
24. B. Lindberg, *Humanism och vetenskap: Den klassiska filologien i Sverige från 1800-talets början till andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1987), 27–37 and 99–113; B. Gustavsson, *Bildningens väg: Tre bildningsideal i svensk arbetarrörelse 1880–1930* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1991), 49–55 and 189–232; J. Hansson, *Humanismens kris: Bildningsideal och kulturkritik i Sverige 1848–1933* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag, 1999), 159–205. In general see also L.H. Niléhn, *Nyhumanism och medborgarfostran: Åsikter om läroverkets målsättning 1820–1880* (Lund: Nordensreng, 1975) and P. Sundgren, *Kulturen och arbetarrörelsen: Kulturpolitiska strävanden från August Palm till Tage Erlander* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2007).
25. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 117–120.

26. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 98–104; G. Richardson, *Hitler-Jugend i svensk skol- och ungdomspolitik: Beredskapspedagogik och demokrati-fostran i Sverige under andra världskriget* (Uppsala: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2003), 183–192; Lindensjö and Lundgren, *Utbildningsreformer och politisk styrning*, 46.
27. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolan i samhällets tjänst*, 49; Richardson, *Hitler-Jugend i svensk skol- och ungdomspolitik*, 160.
28. T. Aronson, *Gösta Bagges politiska tänkande: En studie i 1900-talets svenska konservatism* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1993), 160–167. See also Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 160–162 and P.G. Andreen, *Gösta Bagge som samhällsbyggare: Kommunalpolitiker, socialpolitiker, ecklesiastikminister* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1999).
29. Aronson, *Gösta Bagges politiska tänkande*, 164–167.
30. T. Nilsson, *Mellan arv och utopi: Moderata vägval under 100 år, 1904–2004* (Stockholm: Santérus, 2004), 79–84 (quotation 84).
31. Olivestam, *Idé och politik*, 41–43.
32. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 120.
33. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete: Synpunkter på fostran och undervisning* (Stockholm: SOU 1946:31), 7–21 (quotation 8).
34. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 12–13.
35. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 14–18 (quotation 14).
36. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 18.
37. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 17.
38. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 17–18.
39. Richardson, *Hitler-Jugend i svensk skol- och ungdomspolitik*, 98–107.
40. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 19–20 and 85–92.
41. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 88. For the position of history as a school subject at this time: U. Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider: Bruk av och debatter om svensk historia från sekelskifte till sekelskifte* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001), 328–334; Englund, *Samhällsorientering och medborgarfostran i svensk skola under 1900-talet*, 316–318 and 343–353; T. Lundquist, 'Från Gud och fosterlandet till arbetet, freden och välståndet', *Kronos* (1) (1988), 35–68. See also Chapter VI.
42. 1940 års skolutrednings betänkanden och utredningar: *Skolans inre arbete*, 21; Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 130–133.
43. Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 129; G. Richardson, *Drömmen om en ny skola: Idéer och realiteter i svensk skolpolitik 1945–1950* (Stockholm: Liber, 1983), 13–14 and 81; Olivestam, *Idé och politik*, 261–263.
44. Richardson, *Drömmen om en ny skola*, 41–51.
45. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, (Stockholm: SOU 1948:27), X.
46. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 1.
47. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 2.

48. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 2–4.
49. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 4.
50. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 1–6.
51. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 29–30 and 36.
52. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 6 and 30.
53. 1946 års skolkommissions betänkande med förslag till riktlinjer för det svenska skolväsendets utveckling, 6. See also Qvarsebo, *Skolbarnets fostran*, 58.
54. H. Tingsten, *Demokratiens problem* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1945), 263–264.
55. A. Ross, *Varför demokrati?* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag, 1948), 7.
56. E. Tegen, 'Den demokratiska uppfostrans mål', *Skola och samhälle* (3–4) (1945), 65.
57. Tegen, 'Den demokratiska uppfostrans mål', 66–75. Erich Fromm's book appeared in Swedish in 1945: E. Fromm, *Flykten från friheten*, trans. T. Ekman and A. Ahlberg (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1945).
58. E. Fogelklou-Norlind, 'Kan man fostra till fred', *Skola och samhälle* (3–4) (1945), 85–88.
59. A. Myrdal, 'Kulturell återuppbyggnad', *Skola och samhälle* (3–4) (1945), 76–77. See also Y. Hirdman, *Det tänkande hjärtat: Boken om Alva Myrdal* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2006), 315.
60. Myrdal, 'Kulturell återuppbyggnad', 77–79.
61. A. Örne, 'Skolan som faktor i världens återuppbyggnad', *Skola och samhälle* (8) (1945), 257–262.
62. For a general overview see Richardson, *Svensk skolpolitik 1940–1945*, 76–86, which gives a number of examples.
63. Richardson, *Drömmen om en ny skola*, 102–143.
64. Gustavsson, *Bildningens väg*, 15–18 and 67–84. In general, see Sundgren, *Kulturen och arbetar rörelsen*.
65. Lindberg, *Humanism och vetenskap*, 318–331; Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider*, 328. In general, see also O. Wennås, *Striden om latinväddet: Idéer och intressen i svensk skolpolitik under 1800-talet* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1966).
66. Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider*, 330–331; A. Larsson, *Det moderna samhällets vetenskap: Om etableringen av sociologi i Sverige 1930–1955* (Umeå: Institutionen för historiska studier, 2001).
67. Richardson, *Drömmen om en ny skola*, 201–229.
68. K.H. Füssl, *Die Umerziehung der Deutschen: Jugend und Schule unter den Siegermächten des Zweiten Weltkriegs 1945–1955* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1994); C. Führ and C.L. Furck (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Deutsche Demokratische Republik und neue Bundesländer* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998).
69. C. Führ, *Deutsches Bildungswesen seit 1945: Grundzüge und Probleme* (Bonn: Inter Nationes, 1996), 2–15; C. Führ, 'Zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte seit

- 1945', in Führ and Furck (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Deutsche Demokratische Republik und neue Bundesländer* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998); M. Kraul, *Das deutsche Gymnasium 1780–1980* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1984), 185–188; B. Rosenzweig, *Erziehung zur Demokratie?: Amerikanische Besatzungs- und Schulreformpolitik in Deutschland und Japan* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1998).
70. Führ, *Deutsches Bildungswesen seit 1945*, 2–6.
  71. Führ, 'Zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte seit 1945', 6–8. The education debate of the Weimar years is treated in D. Langewiesche and H.E. Tenorth (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: 1918–1945: Die Weimarer Republik und die nationalsozialistische Diktatur* (Munich: Beck, 1989).
  72. Führ, *Deutsches Bildungswesen seit 1945*, 7–8; J. Oelkers, 'Pädagogische Reform und Wandel der Erziehungswissenschaft', in Führ and Furck (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Deutsche Demokratische Republik und neue Bundesländer* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998), 220–223.
  73. Quoted from M. Overesch, 'Die gesamtdeutsche Konferenz der Erziehungsminister in Stuttgart am 19./20. Februar 1948', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (2) (1980), 252.
  74. Overesch, 'Die gesamtdeutsche Konferenz der Erziehungsminister in Stuttgart am 19./20. Februar 1948', 253.
  75. L.R. Reuter, 'II. Rechtliche Grundlagen und Rahmenbedingungen', in Führ and Furck (eds), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte: 1945 bis zur Gegenwart: Deutsche Demokratische Republik und neue Bundesländer* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1998), 39–40.
  76. Kraul, *Das deutsche Gymnasium 1780–1980*, 193–194.
  77. A. Schildt, *Zwischen Abendland und Amerika: Studien zur westdeutschen Ideenlandschaft der 50er Jahre* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1999); A. Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und 'Zeitgeist' in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg: Christians, 1995); Kraul, *Das deutsche Gymnasium 1780–1980*, 193.
  78. Führ, 'Zur deutschen Bildungsgeschichte seit 1945', 7; Oelkers, 'Pädagogische Reform und Wandel der Erziehungswissenschaft', 217–223.
  79. Oelkers, 'Pädagogische Reform und Wandel der Erziehungswissenschaft', 221–222.
  80. Reuter, 'II. Rechtliche Grundlagen und Rahmenbedingungen', 40.
  81. E. Anners, *Den europeiska rättens historia: Några huvudlinjer*, vol. 1–2 (Stockholm: AWE/Geber, 1975–1980); S. Strömholm, *A Short History of Legal Thinking in the West* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1985); G. Hartung, *Die Naturrechtsdebatte: Geschichte der obligatio vom 17. bis 20. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg: Alber, 1998).
  82. G. Inger, 'Naturrecht', *Nationalencyklopedin*, vol. 14 (Höganäs: Bra Böcker, 1994).
  83. See, for example, P.G. Lauren, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003) and M.R. Ishay, *The History of Human Rights: From Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Criticism of this view

- can be found in M. Mazower, 'The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, 1933–1950', *The Historical Journal* (2) (2004) and in many books that follow his lead.
84. M. Mazower, *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century* (London: Allen Lane 1998), 194.
  85. K.Å. Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!': Om svenska juristers omvärldssyn 1935–1955', in T. Andersson and B. Lindell (eds), *Festskrift till Per Henrik Lindblom* (Uppsala: Iustus förlag, 2004), 443–452.
  86. See, for example, T. Grönwall, "'Kommissarisk förvaltning" och därmed besläktade förvaltningsformer enligt tysk rätt', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1941). See also Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!'", 450–453.
  87. K. Rodhe, 'Arbetet på en ny tysk civillagbok', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1942), 480–482; I. Strahl, 'Reform av tyska rättsväsendet', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1942), 739–741; S. Ljungman, 'Utkast till första delen av en ny tysk civillagbok', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1943), 846–847.
  88. I. Strahl, 'Tysk rättsuppfattning', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1944), 607–609.
  89. J. Fischler, 'Skadestånd till nazismens offer', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1949), 131.
  90. I. Strahl, 'Tysk rätt efter nazistregimens fall', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1947).
  91. I. Strahl, 'Internationell militärdomstol för krigsförbrytelser', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1945), 816; I. Strahl, 'Från dagens diskussion', *Svensk Juristtidning*, (1946), 365–366; K. Schlyter, 'Om Nürnbergprocessen: Ett radioföredrag', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1946), 694–698. See also Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!'", 455.
  92. T.T. Segerstedt, 'Om Nürnbergprocessen: Ett brevsvår', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1946), 692.
  93. However, cf. Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!'", 459–461 and K. Holt, *Publicisten Ivar Harrie: Ideologi, offentlighetsdebatt och idékritik i Expressen 1944–1960* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2008), 145–148.
  94. B. Lassen, *Svensk Juristtidning* (1947), 376.
  95. L.J. Wallmark, 'Restitution av egendom, som i Tyskland fråntagits ägarna under nazistregimens tid', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1948), 469–472; G. Simson, 'En högsta domstol i Västtyskland', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1948), 472–473; Fischler, 'Skadestånd till nazismens offer', (1949), 143–144; G. Simson, 'Västtysklands högsta domstol', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1951), 153; H. Dix, 'Ny processlagstiftning i Västtyskland', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1951), 709–710.
  96. S. Petré, 'Slutet på ett justitiedepartement', *Svensk Juristtidning*, 1949, 636–637.
  97. S. Rudholm, *Sture Petré: Inträdestal i Svenska Akademien* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1977); K.Å. Modéer, 'Petré, Bror Arvid Sture', *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 29 (Stockholm: Svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1997).
  98. Kjell Å. Modéer has claimed that the new law code introduced at the end of the 1940s was not only a compromise between tradition and modernity but also 'in a way a substitute for rights settlements of the time'. See K.Å. Modéer, 'Den stora reformen: Rättegångsbalkens förebilder och förverkligande', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1999), 427.
  99. P.O. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1953), 73. See also Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!'", 461–463.

100. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', 72.
101. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', 74–75.
102. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', 75.
103. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', 75.
104. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', 75.
105. Ekelöf, 'Juristkongress i Berlin', 76.
106. P.O. Ekelöf, 'Juridisk slutledning och terminologi', *Tidsskrift for Rettsvitenskap* (1945); I. Strahl, 'Till frågan om rättighetsbegreppet', *Tidsskrift for Rettsvitenskap* (1946); P.O. Ekelöf, 'Till frågan om rättighetsbegreppet', *Tidsskrift for Rettsvitenskap* (1946); I. Strahl, 'Till frågan om rättighetsbegreppet', *Tidsskrift for Rettsvitenskap* (1947); P.O. Ekelöf, 'Om begagnandet av termen rättighet inom juridiken', in *Festskrift tillägnad Hans Excellens Riksmarskalken Juris Doktor Birger Ekeberg den 10 augusti 1950* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1950); A. Ross, 'Tü-tü', in O.A. Borum and K. Illum (eds), *Festskrift til professor, dr. juris Henry Ussing 5. maj 1951* (Copenhagen: Nyt nordisk forlag, 1951); A. Wedberg, 'Logical Analysis of Legal Science', *Theoria* (1951); P.O. Ekelöf, 'Är termen rättighet ett syntaktiskt hjälpmedel utan mening?', in *Skrifter tillägnade Vilhelm Lundstedt* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1952); A. Ross, 'Status i rättighetsdiskussionen', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1953).
107. Ekelöf, 'Juridisk slutledning och terminologi', 247–251; Ekelöf, 'Till frågan om rättighetsbegreppet', 313; Ekelöf, 'Är termen rättighet ett syntaktiskt hjälpmedel utan mening?', 555.
108. Strahl, 'Tysk rätt efter nazistregimens fall', 505–507.
109. Ross, 'Tü-tü', 482–483. For Ross's philosophy of law in general see S. Blandhol, *Juridisk ideologi: Alf Ross' kritikk av naturretten* (Copenhagen: Jurist- og økonomiforbundets Forlag, 1999).
110. Cf. the discussion in Ross, 'Status i rättighetsdiskussionen', 532 and 540.
111. S. Källström, *Värdenihilism och vetenskap: Uppsalafilosofin i forskning och samhällsdebatt under 1920- och 30-talen* (Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1984); Nordin, *Från Hägerström till Hedenius*; S. Källström, *Den gode nihilisten: Axel Hägerström och striderna kring uppsalafilosofin* (Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren, 1986).
112. Källström, *Den gode nihilisten*, 26–40.
113. Källström, *Den gode nihilisten*, 32–73.
114. Källström, *Den gode nihilisten*, 205. For Scandinavian legal realism in general, see J. Bjarup, *Skandinavischer Realismus: Hägerström, Lundstedt, Olivecrona, Ross* (Freiburg: Alber, 1978) and Nordin, *Från Hägerström till Hedenius*, 118–128.
115. I. Strahl, 'Idealism och realism i rättsvetenskapen', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1941). See also Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!'", 447–450.
116. I. Strahl, 'En allmän rättslära', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1955).
117. Strahl, 'En allmän rättslära', 312.
118. Strahl, 'En allmän rättslära', 312–314.
119. See also I. Strahl, *Makt och rätt: Rättsidéns gång genom historien från Babylonien till FN: En överblick* (Stockholm: Iustus förlag, 1957).

120. Cf. Strahl, *Makt och rätt*, 113–115. The relatively weak standing of individual rights and natural law in Sweden after 1945 has been touched on, sometimes polemically, sometimes analytically, in many works, from J.W.F. Sundberg, *Fr. Eddan t. Ekelöf: Repetitorium om rättskällor i Norden* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1978) and S. Strömholm, 'Demokrati och juridik', in T.T. Segerstedt (ed.), *Rättssäkerhet och demokrati* (Stockholm: Ratio, 1985) to L. Trägårdh, *Bemäktiga individerna: Om domstolarna, lagen och de individuella rättigheterna i Sverige* (Stockholm: SOU 1998:103, 1999) and Modéer, "'Den kulan visste var den tog!'"
121. G. Petrén, 'Administrativa rättssäkerhetsproblem', *Svensk Juristtidning* (1955), 619.
122. L. Kellberg, 'Den svenska inställningen till Europadomstolen för mänskliga rättigheter', in J. Ramberg, O. Bring and S. Mahmoudi (eds), *Festskrift till Lars Hjern: Studies in International Law* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1990), 299–309; H. Corell, 'The European Convention on Human Rights: Swedish Experiences: Thoughts for the Future', in J. Ramberg, O. Bring and S. Mahmoudi (eds), *Festskrift till Lars Hjern: Studies in International Law* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1990), 103–105. For contemporary observations see S. Ramel, *Pojken i dörren: Minnen* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1994), 117 and L. Petri, *Sverige i stora världen: Minnen och reflexioner från 40 års diplomattjänst* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1996), 241–242.
123. See, for example, M. Zaremba, *De rena och de andra: Om tvångsteriliseringar, rashygien och arvsynd* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget DN, 1999), 215–240 and A. Jarlert, *Judisk 'ras' som äktenskapshinder i Sverige: Effekten av Nürnberglagarna i Svenska kyrkans statliga funktion som lysningsförrättare 1935–1945* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006), 42–45.
124. For Nazi law in general see L. Gruchmann, *Justiz im Dritten Reich: Anpassung und Unterwerfung in der Ära Gürtner* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1990) and M. Stolleis, *Recht im Unrecht: Studien zur Rechtsgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1994).
125. K. Kühl, 'Rückblick auf die Renaissance des Naturrechts nach dem 2. Weltkrieg', in G. Köbler, M. Heinze and J. Schapp (eds), *Geschichtliche Rechtswissenschaft: Ars tradendo innovandoque aequitatem sectandi: Freundesgabe für Alfred Söllner zum 60. Geburtstag am 5.2.1990* (Gießen: Bruhlscher Verlag, 1990). Radbruch is quoted from R. Alexy, *Rätten och rättvisan* (Gothenburg: Daidalos, 2005), 64.
126. H. Mohnhaupt, 'Zur "Neugründung" des Naturrechts nach 1945: Helmut Coings "Die obersten Grundsätze des Rechts" (1947)', in H. Schröder and D. Simon (eds), *Rechtsgeschichtswissenschaft in Deutschland 1945 bis 1952* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 2001), 105. The breadth and intensity of the early postwar debate on natural law is revealed in W. Maihofer (ed.), *Naturrecht oder Rechtspositivismus?* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962).
127. H. Coing, *Die obersten Grundsätze des Rechts: Ein Versuch zur Neugründung des Naturrechts* (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1947); Mohnhaupt, 'Zur "Neugründung" des Naturrechts nach 1945', 98–102.
128. Coing, *Die obersten Grundsätze des Rechts*, 7; Mohnhaupt, 'Zur "Neugründung" des Naturrechts nach 1945', 100–101 and 115–122.

129. Mohnhaupt, 'Zur "Neugründung" des Naturrechts nach 1945', 107–109 (quotation 107).
130. Mohnhaupt, 'Zur "Neugründung" des Naturrechts nach 1945', 102–109.
131. Mohnhaupt, 'Zur "Neugründung" des Naturrechts nach 1945', 109–115; W. Maihofer, 'Einleitung', in Werner Maihofer (ed.), *Naturrecht oder Rechtspositivismus?* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1962), X.
132. D. Willoweit, *Deutsche Verfassungsgeschichte: Vom Frankenreich bis zur Wiedervereinigung Deutschlands* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 425–428.
133. In general, see H. Hattenhauer, *Europäische Rechtsgeschichte* (Heidelberg: Muller, 2004), 862–864 and J. Øyrehagen Sunde, *Speculum legale: Rettspegelen: Ein introduksjon til den norske rettskulturen si historie i eit europeisk perspektiv* (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2005), 272–275. See also H.F. Dahl, *Norsk idéhistorie: De store ideologienes tid: 1914–1955* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2001), 321–338; R. Slagstad, *Rettsens ironi* (Oslo: Pax, 2001), 53–57 and 272–274.
134. Legal positivism nevertheless came to occupy a strong position in Norway during the 1950s and 1960s, whereas natural law attitudes survived longer in West Germany. See Slagstad, *Rettsens ironi*, 272–274.
135. S. Källström, 'Nihilism och människovärde', in S. Källström and E. Sellberg (eds), *Motströms: Kritiken av det moderna* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1991), 23–37 (quotation 35). Resistance to legal realism was also found in other circles, but rarely among lawyers. For theological criticism see Jarlert, *Judisk 'ras' som äktenskapshinder i Sverige*, 45–51.
136. Källström, *Den gode nihilisten*, 123–131 and 192–201; Blandhol, *Juridisk ideologi*, 147–149. However, it is worth remembering that Hjalmar Branting and his generation rated a certain kind of natural law higher than later Social Democrats did. See T. Norman, 'Hjalmar Branting, Nationernas Förbund och naturrätten', in B. Huld and K. Misgeld (eds), *Socialdemokratin och svensk utrikespolitik: Från Branting till Palme* (Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska institutet, 1990).
137. Cf. L. Berntson, G. Hålfdanarson and H. Jensen, *Tusen år i Europa: 1800–2000* (Lund: Historia Media, 2004), 377 and J.O. Bengtsson's introduction to E. Voegelin's *Vetenskap, politik och gnosticism* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2001), 8.
138. S. Nordin, 'Torsten Gårdlund: De efterkrigstida idéernas förridare (1911–2003)', *Dagens forskning* (7) (2003).
139. S. Nordin, 'Literature on Sweden and Nazi Germany', in S. Ekman and K. Åmark (eds), *Sweden's Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust: A Survey of Research*, trans. D. Kendall (Stockholm: Swedish Research Council, 2003), 254–256.
140. B. Petersson, 'Vad är en värde tradition?: En begreppsanalytisk skiss', in G. Bexell and H. Stenius (eds), *Värde traditioner i nordiskt perspektiv: Rapport från ett symposium i Helsingfors* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1997), 21.
141. O. Sigurdson, *Den lyckliga filosofin: Etik och politik hos Hägerström, Tingsten, makarna Myrdal och Hedenius* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag, 2000).
142. N. Runeby, *Dygd och vetande: Ur de bildades historia* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 1995); B. Nolin (ed.), *Kulturradikalismen: Det moderna genombrottets andra fas* (Stockholm and Stehag: B. Östlings bokförlag, 1993); M. Wiklund, *I det*



- modernas landskap: Historisk orientering och kritiska berättelser om det moderna Sverige mellan 1960 och 1990* (Eslöv: B. Östlings förlag, 2006), 149–157.
143. Runeby, *Dygd och vetande*, 167–255.
144. Wiklund, *I det modernas landskap*, 150–153; Runeby, *Dygd och vetande*, 195–214.
145. Runeby, *Dygd och vetande*, 242–245.
146. A. Myrdal and G. Myrdal, *Kontakt med Amerika* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1941), 96. See also Qvarsebo, *Skolbarnets fostran*, 54–61.
147. K.Å. Modéer, 'Politik i stället för religion: Avkristandet av den moderna svenska rättskulturen 1950–2000: Några huvudlinjer', in A. Jarlert (ed.), *Arkiv, fakultet, kyrka: Festskrift till Ingmar Brohed* (Lund: Lund University Press, 2004), 370–381. That Swedish welfare policies, not least through the agency of Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, could simultaneously win the acclaim of some American Democrats is pointed out in K.Å. Modéer, 'Finalisten som katalysator: En jurist i Franklin D Roosevelts New Deal: Lloyd K Garrison från New York', in L. Heuman (ed.), *Festskrift till Per Olof Bolding* (Stockholm: Juristförlaget, 1992), 326.

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## GERMAN AUTUMN

Fifteen years after the end of the Second World War the novelist Lars Gyllensten published 'Dawn in the West', a brief essay looking back on his 1930s. Given that he was a man born in 1921 it took the form of a retrospective look at the years of his youth and secondary schooling. Gyllensten described how he began to sense the road he would follow. For his generation that road almost invariably led to Germany: German was the first foreign language in school, German literature was read studiously, and for those who – like Gyllensten – were inclined towards philosophy, going south seemed the natural thing to do. But as the 1930s progressed, his distaste for things German became more and more marked. 'I began to be nauseated by all that bombast and geniality, that sentimentality and pomposity, and I began seeking new contacts and stimuli', he wrote, recalling that these were experiences he shared with many of his generation:

We turned away from the German language and culture and from the things we associated with 'Germanness' – the pretentiousness, the sentimentality, the pathos, the rhetoric that led nowhere and promised nothing, the sweeping abstraction, the 'baa baa' flock mentality. For many of us it involved turning to the West – to what was English and to what we believed pertained to the English character and tradition: critical thinking, calm consideration, empiricism.<sup>1</sup>

Memoirs and autobiographies demonstrate that Lars Gyllensten was far from alone. For the generation born between the First World War and the Nazis coming to power, the trial of strength of the Second World War was an ideological and intellectual experience of enduring impact. The rejection of Nazism led in many cases to an aversion of Germany and the traditions associated with things German. The cultural journalist Sigrid Kahle (1928–2013) is one of the people who has admitted that in the first five years after the war she embraced Anglo-Saxon and French culture as unthinkingly as she rejected German culture. She believes that knowledge of the concentration camps

effectively vaccinated her against everything to do with Nazism and anti-Semitism. 'Unfortunately this vaccine was also effective against everything that was German', Kahle explained at the beginning of the 1950s when she was about to marry a West German diplomat and re-examine her attitude. The literature professor Thure Stenström (born in 1927) too, has given examples of how a loathing for Nazism generated strong animosity against everything German. In his younger days, 'for indeterminate cultural reasons', he had been a friend of Germany, but the revelations of the final phase of the war came as a monstrous disappointment. 'Precisely because I had admired Germany so much, my disappointment was all the more profound', he wrote in his memoirs. 'After the reports from Belsen, Ravensbrück and Auschwitz I swore I would never set foot on German soil again.'<sup>2</sup>

Memoirs have to be taken for what they are in terms of reworkings of the self, but in this case they do provide evidence of a tendency that is confirmed in various other sources: the years following the Second World War involved a general reorientation away from things German. We have been talking here about a group of Swedish academics and writers born in the 1920s and bearing the marks of the catastrophic years of their youth – what Stenström called 'my war-scorched generation' – but we might well suspect that it was not limited to them.<sup>3</sup> One important conclusion of my reconstruction of the Nazi experience was its German dimension. National Socialism had grown in Germany, its origins lay in German tradition and it had been nurtured by the German mentality. When the judgment was pronounced on Nazism we can assume that much that was in the German storehouse was cleared out. With hindsight we can see a whole cultural historical epoch coming to an end.

The changes in elective affinities in the wake of the Second World War are what form the basis of this chapter. The focus is not so much on the cultural reorientation in itself, as on how the historical lessons of Nazism called forth an accommodation with and a reworking of those ideals, phenomena and traditions that were associated with Germany. In the interfaces between the Swedish and the German it is possible to trace the presence of the Nazi experience.

## Changes in Elective Affinities

The Swedish relationship with the German sphere during the early postwar period has to be understood in the light of Swedish–German relations going back at least as far as the second half of the nineteenth



century. It is only when we take a reasonably lengthy chronological perspective on the German orientation of Sweden that the force and significance of the breach during the 1930s and 1940s become clear.

### *Sweden and the German Sphere*

Ever since the Middle Ages the history of Sweden has been intertwined with developments in the German areas – spiritually and linguistically, ideologically and culturally, militarily and commercially. Its geographic location has made Germany a recurrent point of orientation for Sweden. Enduring commercial and political links were forged as early as the Hanseatic period and they were strengthened both culturally and confessionally by the Lutheran Reformation and, during the seventeenth century, by Swedish ambitions to be a great power. Even during periods when Sweden sought other models – France, for instance, during the eighteenth century – exchange and cooperation with Germany within science, art and theology continued to run parallel.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of centuries of mutual influence we can agree with the Germanist Gustav Korlén in naming the nineteenth century ‘the German century’ in Swedish history. In the same way as the eighteenth had been the French century and the twentieth would be the Anglo-Saxon century, the nineteenth century was the period when Sweden took its really definitive impulses from its expansive neighbour to the south. Neo-Humanism, Classicism and Romanticism were appealing to the educated classes as early as 1800 and German influences gradually reached into other social milieux, inspiring revivalist movements of a Herrenhutist tinge, the birth-pangs of early socialism and new bourgeois ideals. The influence became particularly dominant during the period from the unification of the German Empire in 1871 to the First World War, during which time almost every cultural and social sphere in Sweden was shaped by German conditions. There are those who would go so far as to describe Sweden as a German cultural province during that period, whereas others have stressed that the exchanges were a two-way process and pointed to the importance that figures such as Ola Hansson, Sven Hedin, Ellen Key, Carl Larsson, Selma Lagerlöf and August Strindberg had in Germany. Scholarly literature is agreed that German culture in the broadest sense was the most important international source of inspiration in Sweden in the decades before the First World War.<sup>5</sup>

It is essential to recognise the depth and breadth of this Swedish orientation towards Germany if we are to understand the nature of the change of direction in the decades that followed. After the foundation

of the German Empire in 1871, admiration for imperial Germany grew rapidly and to the image of a militaristic Prussian Germany was added the perception that Sweden's southern neighbour was the leading country par excellence. The enormous German influence was facilitated by the fact that German was the first foreign language in school, but the influence was by no means restricted to cultural spheres alone. Germany was also the land of scientists, engineers and big business, and during the process of Swedish industrialisation Germany emerged as a dynamic trading partner with many lessons to teach. For men of the church, Germany was the home of Lutheran theology; for jurists, German civil law was a model; for the officer corps, the military might of Germany was impressive. Even the radical social rebels of the age – socialists, Christian evangelists, Nietzscheans – drew strength from the debates in Germany; and the modern political parties that were taking form in Sweden at that time often had their mother organisations in Germany – this is particularly the case with the strong Social Democratic movement. And, moreover, German ideals and concepts were being spread ever more widely through society by a steady stream of translations of works of popular science, works of entertainment and edifying literature.<sup>6</sup>

The First World War ended this phase of Swedish history. The Great War polarised opinion into those who favoured Britain and France and the block that favoured the Germans; the left as a whole, liberals and socialists, tended to favour the Western Allies whereas conservatives supported the Central Powers. The war ignited an at times heated ideological debate in Sweden, which was a significant factor in the cultural orientation of the country during the 1920s. During the years of the war, Germany had come to be associated with nationalism and militarism with the result that between the wars Swedish attitudes to things German tended to be ambivalent. Because of the Treaty of Versailles, which many Swedes of different shades of opinion considered to be an unjust diktat, Germany regained some of the sympathy it had lost. In the years from 1919 to 1933, politicians of both the left and the right worked on behalf of the democratic, demilitarised but diplomatically cold-shouldered Weimar Republic. During the 1920s the great cities of Germany became arenas for Swedes attracted by artistic modernism and political radicalism. But Berlin, Hamburg and Munich were no longer the self-evident places of pilgrimage; the future could also be sought in Paris or London, New York or Moscow.<sup>7</sup>

The coming to power of the Nazis changed the scene. Generally speaking there was a weakening of the bonds of friendship between Germany and Sweden after 1933. The goodwill with which the new

Germany was initially greeted in some parts of the traditionally pro-German bourgeoisie was replaced by a growing aversion. Among a wide range of people, even in the latter part of the 1930s, the long history of orientation towards Germany gave rise to a feeling of ambivalence rather than an attitude of outspoken criticism about the southern neighbour. It is difficult to be certain when the decisive breaking point occurred – Kristallnacht in 1938, or the invasion of Norway and Denmark in 1940, perhaps – but during the war itself there was only a very small group that openly sided with the Third Reich. Fredrik Böök, Sven Hedin and Annie Åkerhielm were among them, but their views were controversial during the war years.<sup>8</sup>

The Swedish musical world can serve as an illustrative example. Its dependence on Germany was equalled by few other sectors of cultural life. During the first decades of the twentieth century, Germany was still seen as the great land of music, an obvious destination for study, concerts and musical inspiration. When the National Socialists came to power a new age began even in this respect. While research has revealed that many Swedish musicians and composers kept up their contacts with musical life in Germany by means of travel and guest appearances even after 1933, it is nevertheless apparent in this as in other fields that rejection grew stronger with the passing of time. When the composer Kurt Atterberg, who did not object to working in the Third Reich and consorting with its cultural establishment, wanted official Sweden to become involved musically with Nazi Germany in 1935, the government gave him a chilly reception. It was considered inappropriate to support music festivals that sanctioned quite so obviously the Nazi enthusiasm for things Nordic. A leading article in the journal of the musicians' union in 1938 summed up the attitude that had gradually become the dominant one in Swedish musical life: the arrival of the Nazis meant that Germany had lost its leading position in the international musical world. The growing interest in jazz during the war years showed where future inspiration would be sought.<sup>9</sup>

The situation was different in the world that emerged after the Second World War. America was the great land of the future for the postwar generation, and not only culturally. The strong and close links across the Atlantic became even stronger and closer during the 1950s.<sup>10</sup> Meanwhile Germany had lost all the spiritual and political status that had made it a power house in the Europe of the previous century. The German question remained an important point of reference during the Cold War, but the engagement of Swedish foreign policy during the postwar decades was not in Europe.<sup>11</sup> Economic links with the zones of Germany, on the other hand, were re-established almost immediately,

first of all in the form of emergency aid and then gradually in the form of straightforward trade relations with both of the rapidly industrialising German states.<sup>12</sup>

The reorientation that took place in Sweden also occurred in other Western European countries. As a result of Nazism and military defeat Germany had lost much of its cultural and intellectual attraction. A number of foreign observers who had earlier been inspired by German debate and discussion reported on the spiritual impoverishment they met during their visits to the young Federal Republic. The French philosopher Raymond Aron had studied in the Weimar Republic and been profoundly influenced by the intellectual tradition of the country, but following the Second World War he asked himself whether the Germans had anything to bring to European intellectual discourse. There were German thinkers and authors with the potential to reach beyond the borders but they remained of little interest to the larger body of Europeans because they were almost exclusively concerned with the internal problems of their country.<sup>13</sup>

### *Foreign Languages in School*

English replaced German as the first foreign language in Swedish schools in 1946. In the eyes of posterity this change of language has become the symbol of the cultural reorientation that took place in the aftermath of the Second World War. The debate that followed revealed a whole series of viewpoints that reflected the more profound change of course that occurred in the postwar era.

German had been the first foreign language in Sweden ever since 1859 and when it was introduced it had marked a definitive break with the French dominance of Swedish culture and education. It was seen as the dawn of a new age and that perception was undoubtedly reinforced by the result of the Franco-Prussian War and the unification of Germany at the beginning of the 1870s. During the decades that followed, the position of German as the first and dominant language in schools in Sweden was uncontested. This situation continued well into the twentieth century, but the First World War saw the beginnings of a debate on the language question that then continued throughout the whole interwar period. As a reaction to the war and to German nationalism there were demands in some circles for an expansion of English and French at the expense of German – these circles tended to be representative of those elements in Swedish opinion that favoured Britain and France. The report of the 1922 Schools Commission proposed a new model in which English would be the initial language and

German the second foreign language, the reasoning being that it was advantageous to leave the complicated grammar of German until a later stage. The argument was thus largely a pedagogical one, although the commission also stated that English was the language of the future and that the change of language would benefit Swedish links with the wider world. This view was questioned by legislative scrutinising committees and by parliament and, instead, English was to be made the subject of more wide-ranging trials. The question came up again on a number of occasions during the following years and the education ministry appointed a new commission in 1937. This commission, like its predecessor, proposed English as the first language and by now opinion had changed among language teachers and among politicians. The pedagogical reasons given for choosing English were more forceful than earlier and, at the same time, the practical and cultural arguments were all pointing in the direction of the Anglo-Saxon world. This was the thinking that underlay the parliamentary decision to make English the first foreign language in Swedish schools.<sup>14</sup>

The change from German to English in 1946 was thus not a decision made on the spur of the moment. The issue had been the subject of thorough discussion throughout the whole of the period between the wars and there had been pedagogical trials. This does not mean that the catastrophic history of Germany in the 1930s and 1940s lacked significance. The experiences of the war, of Nazism and of the subsequent shift in the European power dynamic were at the forefront of people's minds whenever the 'first foreign language' issue was commented on in public.

The language issue was the subject of lively debate in pedagogical journals during the years immediately before and after the end of the war.<sup>15</sup> The change from German to English also sparked off a run of articles in the press. A minority – shrinking to the point of disappearing – declared that the outcome of the war was of no relevance at all to the language issue; they argued that the discussion should be based on pedagogical arguments and only pedagogical arguments. But the dominant view was that the upheavals of recent years had led to a complete change of circumstances and that there was no question that English was now the prime language of the future. A typical expression of this view was given in *Aftontidningen* in April 1945: 'The way the world will look after the war, as far as it is possible to judge, means that we shall probably have very limited use for a knowledge of German and almost certainly a much greater use for English and possibly also for Russian.' The conclusion was that English should replace German as the main language in schools without delay.<sup>16</sup>

Most other comments were similar to this in being based on a combination of political, pedagogical and all-round cultural considerations. The majority of commentators did not leap to reject the German language and everything to do with it out of hand, but they did note in a practical way that world events had changed the situation. One newspaper, for instance, writing as early as 1943, stated: 'The result of the world war is bound to be decisive in the question of the order of modern languages in the curriculum.' And the longer the war lasted, the more obvious it became that time was not on the side of German.<sup>17</sup> 'It would seem to be very unlikely that we shall be drawing our main cultural influences from Germany within the foreseeable future' was how one writer in *Stockholms-Tidningen* put it a month after Germany had capitulated in 1945.<sup>18</sup>

To the majority of people it was thus quite clear that the Swedes were faced with a *fait accompli* at the end of the war and that a change of language was the natural thing to do. But there was also another position. It did not have as many representatives as the majority view but it appeared in organs that enjoyed considerable respect and exerted significant influence at the time – *Dagens Nyheter*, *Expressen* and *Handelstidningen*. They, like many others, had come to the conclusion that German must give way to English as the starter language, but their judgment was based on a broader analysis. The change in the first language as far as they were concerned was much more than an issue of schools policy: it was a question with a much more far-reaching ideological compass.

*Dagens Nyheter* published a significant contribution in the summer of 1945. Strictly speaking the choice between English and German was no longer a choice. The newspaper argued that those who were clinging to German were to a great extent also adherents of old-fashioned language teaching, but it was not pedagogical reasons that the paper was stressing:

No one can dispute the fact that there is greater joy to be had from a knowledge of English than of any other language. During the last half-century practically all of the popular movements with lasting appeal have come from the Anglo-Saxon world: the cooperative movement, the temperance movement, the Salvation Army and sport, as well as popular phenomena like film, jazz and reading for pleasure. From Germany during the same period we have received various kinds of police ideals and, at an early stage, socialistic influences. Knowledge of English offers contact with the democratic world in a way that German never can.<sup>19</sup>

That last sentence captured the essence of it: the shift away from German and everything it stood for also meant an orientation towards

democratic values and traditions. To choose English rather than German was to be on the side of rule by the people, of freedom and of peace; it was to turn one's back on the wars and catastrophes that had afflicted Europe during the past decades. The change of language could therefore also be seen as a 'belated expression of the process of democratisation that had basically transformed Swedish society during the last fifty years'.<sup>20</sup> Stirred by the same spirit, *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* put in a plea for English immediately after the war. A short historical sketch demonstrated that German had been losing its relevance to Swedes during the years between the wars. There had been little left of German scientific and cultural status by the outbreak of war in 1939 and even in Sweden, 'one of the last German cultural bastions, it had become clear that English was the world language, German merely a European dialect'. And it was therefore appropriate for young people 'to acquire familiarity with the leading cultural language of the day at an early stage'.<sup>21</sup>

Reactions to the language issue provide us with a spectrum of attitudes to Germany. Most people felt it was self-evident that English should be the first foreign language in schools. Only a few were vehemently opposed to German in principle; the overwhelming majority simply agreed that it was not the language of the future. Sweden proceeded to leave the German sphere with considerable speed. And during this period of changes in elective affinities there was a simultaneous process of evaluating the experiences of Nazism.

## **Travelling Among the Ruins**

The genre of reportage enjoyed something of a golden age after the Second World War. Hans Magnus Enzensberger has contended that it was eye-witness descriptions and analytical travel narratives rather than memoirs or fictional depictions that corresponded to the contemporary need to process and reflect reality. A number of the most outstanding testimonies of the time were written by writers – both men and women – who accompanied the victorious armies of the Western Allies into defeated Germany – authors such as Edmund Wilson and Norman Lewis, journalists such as Janet Flanner, Martha Gellhorn and Osmar White. Like other significant figures who described immediate postwar Europe (Max Frisch from Switzerland, for instance) they came from countries that had been spared the devastation of war. The contrast served to sharpen their eyes.<sup>22</sup>

It comes as no surprise, then, that a number of Swedes set out to discover the world of postwar Europe. Despite Sweden being a small country the latter part of the 1940s saw the publication of several books of reportage from the war-torn continent. All the major newspapers with any degree of self-respect sent a reporter to defeated and devastated Germany. Many of the most prominent journalists went south to report on our ravaged neighbour and a surprising number of these series of reports were collected and published in book form.<sup>23</sup>

One of the very first to go after the capitulation was the Swedish journalist and author Elly Jannes. She set off on her European odyssey as early as the summer of 1945 and she reported back in a long series of articles for the magazine *Vi*. Like many other immediate postwar travellers she then collected her eye-witness accounts into a book, *Människor därute* (People Out There).<sup>24</sup>

Jannes had travelled through the occupied zones of Germany on her way south, but her real interest lay in the countries of southern and central Europe. In general, it was not until 1946/1947 that Swedish readers were given more comprehensive coverage from Germany. That was when the major Swedish newspapers began publishing long and expert articles on everyday life and society in the zones of occupation. The reports were written, for the most part, by well-known names who had spent quite significant periods of time on location, and when the reports almost immediately came out in book form they were usually received by an eager audience.<sup>25</sup>

Travel narratives deal with encounters between the traveller and the country being described. Inherent to the genre are the overlaps between the familiar and the alien, the expected and the unexpected.<sup>26</sup> The reports from the postwar German landscape dealt with the points of intersection between what was Swedish and what was German. Swedish travellers, bearers of their own particular form of Nazi experiences, were attempting to find their way in a post-Nazi world, reading the past, the present and the future with one eye fixed on their homeland and the other on Germany.

### *Reportage from Germany*

Victor Vinde's *Nürnberg i blytljus* (Spotlight on Nuremberg) (1946) was an important prelude to the reports from Germany that appeared during the following years. It achieved the widest distribution of all the Swedish accounts of the Allied war crimes tribunal. During the Second World War, Vinde had been the Paris correspondent of *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* and he reported the trials for a month as



the representative of the same paper. His book bears witness to how harrowing it was to witness the trials: 'What has been revealed in Nuremberg so far confirms our worst fears before and during the war, but it also exceeds anything even our wildest imaginings believed the Germans capable of. Our imagination has proved inadequate.' After his stay in Germany it was quite clear to him how thoroughly the idea of Nazism had permeated the country. He wrote of 'the German disease' that had infected the nation and from which it had to be cured. The Nuremberg trials 'do not only condemn a system and its men, they also condemn an era and a nation', was how Vinde summed up the situation.<sup>27</sup>

*Nürnberg i blytljus* was welcomed not least for its living descriptions of the atmosphere of postwar Germany. A vital aspect of that was the inability or the unwillingness of the Germans to take responsibility or to accept guilt. Several newspapers remarked on the absence of any consciousness of guilt among the Germans. The reviewer in *Svenska Dagbladet* commented: 'They complain of the miseries of the present, but a gentle suggestion that the occupied countries had and still have a hard time is met with amazement or complete indifference. They blame Hitler as a matter of course whenever there is a mention of Germany's guilt.' The utter indifference, the ordinary German's astounding avoidance of self-examination, horrified Swedish observers. And along with that there was what Vinde had called 'the German disease', which seemed in a disturbing way to have survived the war and still to be afflicting Germany. 'Vinde has not found any signs of the recovery that is necessary if Germany's neighbours are to acknowledge it as a neighbour. Germany is groping around to find a new leader, a new Hitler, but a somewhat more pleasant Hitler, one who will look after the affairs of state for them and tell lies, in moderation at least.' That was Johannes Wickman's grim conclusion in *Dagens Nyheter*.<sup>28</sup>

Vinde was the forerunner of the Swedes who were to publish travel narratives and reportage from the occupied zones of Germany over the coming years. In a concentrated form his report from Nuremberg touched on many of the problem areas that others would take up later. That was true, for instance, in the case of the journalist Barbro Alving (Bang), who wrote one of the earliest, more comprehensive series of articles on Germany for Swedish readers. In the summer of 1946 she undertook a journey through the zones of Germany for *Dagens Nyheter* and wrote ten substantial articles. Her reports on poverty and hunger, ruin and reconstruction covered everything from daily life to grand politics. Bang's series of articles crystallised a number of themes that linked up with Vinde's reports but which also pointed forward to later

reportage. German self-pity, ominous political tendencies and fear of a Nazi restoration were topics that she and others returned to time after time. When these issues arose it was clear that they could not be discussed except in relation to Swedish experiences of Nazism.<sup>29</sup>

Along with the overwhelming majority of Swedes, Barbro Alving dismissed the idea of collective German guilt. In her view that concept was 'philosophically and psychologically absurd' and utterly unrelated to the problems of ordinary Germans. In this respect she was like most of the other Swedish travellers, since the notion of collective guilt – a subject of intense debate among Germans during the first postwar years – aroused no more than fleeting interest among Swedish observers. German self-pity, however, stirred her emotions all the more. There were, she asserted emphatically right at the start of the series of articles, far too many Germans who were incapable of accepting any guilt at all. They blamed others. Alving called this 'the German egocentric line', a sickening combination of self-pity, attacks on the policies of the occupying powers and an inability to recognise the suffering that the countries around them had endured.<sup>30</sup>

It did not, however, stop at self-pity and misdirected empathy. In the course of her travels Alving found traces of a political tendency that was, in itself, far more disturbing. Right there, in the midst of the ruins of war, there was a widespread resurgence of nationalism. Rumours of an imminent Nazi coup were undoubtedly exaggerated, but what could not be underestimated was the number of Nazi sleepers who had managed to conceal themselves in other guises. Instead of being removed once and for all, old Nazis were able to remain active in commerce and industry, in the cultural sphere and in the administration. Not even the political sphere stayed clean. CDU, the big Christian Democratic Party, for example, was 'the party favoured by Nazi infiltrators'; it was an organisation with a powerful reactionary tendency 'into whose ranks many a Nazi and Nazi sympathiser disappeared'. That was a view that Alving returned to time after time.<sup>31</sup> Self-pity and incomplete denazification hardly formed a good basis for beneficial political developments. And there was also the fact that the Germans appeared to distrust democracy as such. Foreign occupation had induced a state of political paralysis that could only lead to defeatism. The electoral procedures set up by the Allies produced at best the appearance of democracy, but there were many Germans who rejected the political teachings of the occupying powers. Bang's final conclusion was that this was a country and a people still not mature enough for democracy.<sup>32</sup>

Barbro Alving's pessimistic conclusions can be seen in other works of the same period. The writer Erik Ask Lund, commissioned by the

weekly magazine *Folket i Bild* (Illustrated Nation), travelled through Europe by car in the autumn and winter of 1946–1947. On his return home his articles were published in book form as *Människor under jorden* (People Underground).<sup>33</sup> An important premiss of Asklund's narrative was that Sweden had not taken part in the Second World War. The obvious traces of the war that Asklund was constantly being confronted with on the continent were placed in contrast – to great effect – to his untouched homeland.<sup>34</sup> Much of his journey through the landscape of Germany consists of descriptions of misery, devastation and the slow work of reconstruction, but every so often Asklund stops and gathers his thoughts for a brief analysis. Germany is an invalid, Asklund thought as he left the occupied zones.<sup>35</sup>

During his visit to Berlin, Asklund felt that those in charge of denazification were doing a less than rigorous job. Many former Nazis remained in posts in the administration, and demilitarisation was hardly 100 percent. Most disquieting of all was the lack of comprehension shown by the Germans for the suffering they had caused other nations. It was as if they had never completely freed themselves from the curse of ideology, as if they did not recognise that they themselves bore the guilt for what they were now suffering: 'Germany is a country in quarantine; the contagion of Nazism is still present and is spreading in various forms through invisible channels from its old centres. Berlin is a kind of epicentre of the plague, where rumours and exaggerations about Russian behaviour are mixed with self-pity and flattery of the senior personnel of the other Allies.'<sup>36</sup>

Asklund returned to what he considered to be the postwar German inability to perceive things clearly. There still remained, he thought, reflexes of the old Nazi ideology. The old fear of the Russians, for instance, stirred up sympathy for Hitler and his war against the enemy in the East. Asklund recounted a number of depressing meetings with Germans who had never really learnt the lessons of history. He was afraid that this, along with an increasing irritation with the policies of the occupying powers, could lead to a growing desire for a return to strong leadership. This was particularly true of German youth, who were still attracted by many of the ideas of Nazism. Far too few of them had truly understood that 'the core of Nazism had consisted of bestiality, terror and a lust for power that overrode everything else'. Asklund's observations led him to take a gloomily pessimistic view: he had no faith in the ability of the Germans to move in a genuinely new political direction.<sup>37</sup>

With some variation, depending on temperament and approach, the Swedes reporting on Germany constantly returned to topics of this

kind. Victor Vinde, Barbro Alving and Erik Asklund were united in their pessimism. They remained suspicious of German intentions and doubted their will for democratic renewal. Time after time they raised the question of the repulsive combination of unconcealed self-pity and the absence of self-insight. Swedish reporters saw a link between these sins of omission and an ominous political undercurrent noticeable in the zones of occupation. There was much to suggest that the process of denazification was coming to a halt at a halfway stage and that a political restoration of a reactionary nature was imminent. Observers from other nations made the same observations as the Swedes: once shock at the scale of the destruction was over, what lodged in people's minds was German self-pity.<sup>38</sup>

### *A Dark Germany*

The narratives written by Vinde, Alving and Asklund provide us with a test card of Swedish impressions of postwar Germany. But among the steady stream of books of reportage and travel descriptions, there were two that stood out: Stig Dagerman's *Tysk höst* (German Autumn) and *Kulissbygget* (Building a Mock-Up) by Egon Kötting and Ragnar Thoursie. These were the two most noticed and ambitious analyses of postwar German society. Their scale offered scope for detailed argumentation and for a critical inquiry that reflected Swedish experiences of Nazism.<sup>39</sup>

During the war years the young Stig Dagerman had been active as a journalist with syndicalist leanings before making his literary debut with *Ormen* (The Snake) (1945), an anguish-filled novel of wartime preparedness that received considerable attention. In the late autumn of 1946 he was sent by the newspaper *Expressen* to report on events in a postwar Germany that was still utterly devastated. He arrived in Hamburg and then crisscrossed the British and American zones in a journey that took him to Berlin, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt and Munich, as well as many other places. Once back in Sweden he wrote twelve articles that were published in *Expressen* between December 1946 and April 1947. The articles aroused interest when they appeared in the paper, but their great success came when they were brought out in book form as *Tysk höst* (German Autumn) in May 1947.<sup>40</sup>

Stig Dagerman's persona in the book is that of literary author disguised as a journalist. His method was that of the journalist, but it was the author's ability to create moods and impressions that lifted the text far above hack reporting. And there were other ways in which Dagerman's narrative sets itself apart from contemporary reportage.

In her thesis on Dagerman as a journalist, the literary scholar Karin Palmkvist likens the book to a drama and she picks out the scene, the characters and the action. The scene is the most bomb-damaged of the German cities rather than Germany as a whole and the scenography consists of an accurately depicted landscape of ruins. The characters emerge as individuals, collective concepts such as 'the German people' being carefully avoided. The opposite pole to these vulnerable individuals is provided by 'the Allies', a collective term that contains an element of criticism and marks out a distance. The action often proceeds from common assumptions about Germany or the Germans. Using concrete examples and frequently taking a single individual or a single episode as his starting point, Dagerman shows how inadequate all blanket judgments are. In his texts, which are full of the echoes of hopelessness and suffering, he demonstrates how misguided one-sided accusations are.<sup>41</sup>

Dagerman used both composition and language to achieve his purpose, which was to depict life in Germany in the autumn of 1946 without siding with the occupying powers or producing a charge sheet against the German people. In this way he painted a portrait that in many ways ran counter to much of the reporting on Germany at that time. Above all, his account was notably different from the polemical and at times aggressive leader writers in *Expressen*, whose articles would give their readers to understand that the Germans were a warlike race and should be punished accordingly. And in a certain respect Dagerman's book also distanced itself from other reportage and travel narratives. Because of his impartial tone and the quality of his literary creativity Dagerman succeeded in avoiding clichés, though he did, nevertheless, address the same sort of themes as other Swedish travellers.<sup>42</sup>

*Tysk höst* was widely reviewed and many people appreciated its pregnant observations and insightful and sensitive descriptions. In his positive review Herbert Tingsten wrote, for instance, that it was 'a brilliant book in many respects'. Where the book was criticised it was usually because the reviewer was judging it from a particular political position. Tingsten, for example, questioned both the author's anarchistic outlook and his tendency to avoid taking the firm stance demanded by the time. The Social Democrat Kaj Björk, too, mistrusted Dagerman's political judgment and insinuated that he had communist sympathies.<sup>43</sup>

The basic pattern of the Cold War, which became so clear some years later during the debate about the third way, was already apparent here. It was most obvious when the question of Germany was brought up. Dagerman's unwillingness to become involved in big power politics tended to be interpreted as a manifestation of postwar pessimism of the

kind that typified the group of writers of the 1940s he was thought to represent. But when he did adopt a position – as in his critical portrait of the Social Democrat leader Kurt Schumacher – some people accused him of being unjust and indulging in ‘the technique of literary suggestion’. The majority of reviewers, however, refrained from political polemic and restricted themselves to other questions.<sup>44</sup>

German guilt – whether the Germans as a race could be blamed for Nazism – was a topic of heated discussion in the years immediately after the war. As far as the atrocities of the past were concerned, perpetrated by the Germans both inside and outside Germany, there could, of course, only be one view, and Dagerman had no doubts about it. His individualistic credo, however, made it impossible for him to accept a collective German guilt – ‘the fact is that German hardship is collective whereas in spite of everything German brutality was not’.<sup>45</sup> He also expressed it more in terms of principle:

The principle of guilt and retribution in itself might at least have some appearance of justification if those sitting in judgment were themselves attached to a principle absolutely contrary to the one that led to the majority of Germans having to live through this autumn in a wet and cold hell of ruins. But that is not the case: what the collective accusation against the German people actually refers to is obedience *in absurdum*, obedience even in situations where disobedience would have been the only humanly justifiable thing to do.<sup>46</sup>

Stig Dagerman’s thoughts on the question of guilt gave rise to comments and to reflection. On the whole, people sympathised with his fundamental position, albeit with some reservations. Knut Jaensson, for instance, wrote: ‘But without going along with any collective accusation against the German people one might nevertheless say that the Germans have shown even more of a predisposition to that kind of obedience than a number of other nations.’ But he added: ‘to draw the conclusion that the Germans should therefore be condemned to an existence unworthy of human beings would undoubtedly be absurd, pharisaical and inhuman’. Although the question of guilt was brought up in many contexts there were few people who were really committed to it. Some suggested that the question was overplayed, that people in both Germany and Sweden should put it behind them and concentrate instead on the problems of today and tomorrow. That was an attitude that would have been difficult to advocate a year or so earlier.<sup>47</sup>

The most disturbing aspect was without doubt the fact that there were still smouldering elements of Nazism present. Almost all the commentators drew attention to that fact. Dagerman himself was careful not to indulge in the kind of biased denigration that characterised much

reporting. In his book he caricatured the foreign journalists who sought out a bombed-out cellar in Hamburg, interviewed the local population about their view of democracy and then drove off in their American jeeps to the press hotel to write up an indignant article on the topic 'Nazism is Still Alive in Germany'. He pointed out that statements hinting that people mistrusted the goodwill of victorious democracy were not made in a vacuum but in an absolutely real cellar in Hamburg.<sup>48</sup> Without playing down the continued existence of Nazism in postwar Germany he was at pains to see it in context:

There is in fact in Germany a large group of honest anti-fascists who are more disappointed, homeless and defeated than any of the fellow-travellers of Nazism. They are disappointed because liberation was not as radical as they had imagined it would be, homeless because they don't wish to show solidarity either with German dissatisfaction, among whose ingredients they feel there is far too much concealed Nazism, or with the policies of the Allies, whose complacency with regard to former Nazis they view with dismay; and, lastly, they are defeated because they doubt whether they, as Germans, can hold any shares at all in the final victory of the Allies and yet simultaneously they are not so convinced that they as anti-Nazis do not have some share in the German defeat.<sup>49</sup>

In his own wartime articles in the newspaper *Arbetaren* Dagerman had emerged as an anti-fascist opinion former. When he now turned the spotlight on the anti-fascists, they became representatives of the viewpoint he himself stood for. His starting point was that liberation from Nazism was incomplete and that there was a risk of it remaining that way. But the group that had been actively involved in the struggle against the Hitler regime, the anti-fascists, could neither join in with the lamentations of the great majority nor reconcile themselves to the half-hearted denazification programme of the Allies. Because they were German they suffered from the measures introduced by the occupying powers and simultaneously, because they were Germans, they could not be given any acknowledgement for their anti-Nazi resistance.

In the articles written about Dagerman's book his carefully nuanced observations often disappeared. Many people seemed to see Nazism as some kind of enduring pattern of thought, a spirit that still lay over Germany and controlled the minds of many Germans. Erwin Leiser, for instance, writing in *Aftontidningen* (The Evening News), said that what is particularly interesting 'is the excellent examples of an unconscious Nazi mentality that are brought out into the open in Dagerman's book'. After reading *Tysk höst* he was certain that the struggle against the poison of Nazism would be long and drawn out. It was true that

the Allies were using provisional courts and re-education measures to combat what remained of Nazism, but there was a widespread perception that denazification had been a lame and unsuccessful procedure. In so far as any Nazis were caught in the net, they were only the small fish, whereas the big fish swam free.<sup>50</sup>

There was a divergence of views as to who should bear the blame. There were those who thought there were good reasons to criticise the abortive methods of the occupying powers – using militarism to banish militarism. Others insisted that accusations of that sort failed to recognise the scale and difficulty of the task. Where commentators from different parts of the political spectrum were all agreed, however, was in their conviction as to the inadequate nature of denazification. The Allies might occasionally manage to capture a major figure or two, but beneath the surface, sometimes right in the middle of the devastated German landscape, Nazism was still flourishing.

Overall, then, we can see how the perception of surviving but latent Nazism took form, an idea that in the longer term became part of a larger narrative about a Nazi restoration in postwar Germany. National Socialism was not considered to have been consigned to history: it presented a challenge to the present and to the future and was an indefinable threat constantly looming over everything.

In terms of range and rigour, the only book that could match Stig Dagerman's *Tysk höst* was Egon Kötting and Ragnar Thoursie's *Kullisbygget* (1948). The two authors aimed to give a composed and balanced analysis of the new Germany, a country torn – as the subtitle states – 'between Molotov and Marshall'. Kötting was a German journalist with social democratic leanings and he had spent the war in exile in Sweden; Thoursie had made a promising debut as a poet in 1945 and had professed his belief in democratic socialism in a variety of contexts.<sup>51</sup> On the basis of substantial reading as well as the impressions gained on a fairly lengthy journey in the occupied zones in 1947, they reported on important aspects of postwar German society – industry, the supplies crisis, refugees, cultural life and the new political movements. 'We have attempted to present fundamental German problems and difficulties in the context of the developments in international politics since the war', Kötting and Thoursie stated in their foreword. They rejected all forms of demonisation of the Germans, insisting that the time was now ripe 'for moving from an irrational approach to the German question to a rational and dispassionate one'. Part of this involved a heavy dose of scepticism about the political polarisation in both east and west that had begun to set its mark on the German question by the end of the 1940s.<sup>52</sup>



The picture they produced of the divided Germany was a bleak one. Poverty and confusion were still the norm in many respects, material circumstances were utterly appalling and the foundations of society were notably fragile. The occupying powers, both in the East and in the West, had hindered any genuine democratisation. 'In all areas – political, economic and cultural – we have found stagnation, chaos and decay being reinforced by the conflict between the great powers', was how Kötting and Thoursie summed it up. 'We have sought in vain for the presence of genuine democracy and real reconstruction and we believe we can summarise our impressions under the title "building a mock-up".'<sup>53</sup>

In spite of the way the authors spotlighted changing aspects of post-war society, all duly supported with figures and details, the shadow of pessimism hangs over their work as a whole. The failure of denazification was not dealt with as a topic in its own right, but the authors return to it time after time. By means of hints and ironies they gave the reader to understand that there were Nazis living in desirable and affluent hibernation. Many of them had been able to pick up their former professional activities – journalism, for instance – without any great fuss. Although it was mainly a case of vague hints rather than direct evidence, the underlying message was unambiguous: denazification was a fiasco and there would be long-term consequences.<sup>54</sup>

For Kötting and Thoursie the unfinished process of settling accounts with old Nazis was associated with disturbing political tendencies in postwar Germany. Social need and the failed policies of the occupying powers were fuelling German nationalism and that, in its turn, was providing fertile soil for dangerous forces. There were already signs that suggested that a political restoration was on the cards and, as the opposition between the East and the West grew more marked, the process of democratisation faded into the background. New groups began to test the air instead, groups that were primarily anti-socialist and anti-Soviet. The two observers, the Swede and the German, concluded: 'Under the cover of an expressly anti-Russian mentality there is no doubt that there are good openings for a new fascist ideology.'<sup>55</sup>

The broad panorama painted by Kötting and Thoursie also included sections on German history. Their interpretation of the recent past of the country may be said to be a variant of the *Sonderweg* (special path) hypothesis whereby German authoritarianism diverges from the normal democratic path of other comparable countries. The German unification of 1871 had, in the view of the authors, been limited in democratic terms and freedom in the Western European sense had been absent. Instead the German Empire had been developed on the Prussian model

with 'militarism, feudalism and *Junker*-conservative imperialism' as its normal currency. Nor had the Weimar Republic been a fully fledged democracy, but a federation in which the small states had a 'compact reactionary atmosphere [that] created nothing short of a hotbed for nationalists and Nazis who, together with the all-encompassing bureaucracy, erected effective barricades against efforts to achieve democratic unity'. From the unsuccessful revolution of 1848 onwards, and then through the whole of the process of modernisation, Germany, in contrast to the great democracies of Western Europe, lacked a liberal, democratically minded bourgeoisie. Significantly enough this stratum of society had allied itself with the national liberals. After the First World War they were never able to put up any resistance against those who wanted to destroy the fragile Weimar government. Indeed, many of the national liberals actually supported the critics of democracy. In other words, the origin of the German catastrophe could be explained in terms of a specifically German development: 'To summarise, it can be said that the German bourgeoisie, in spite of repeated efforts in the other direction, had been decisively right-wing in its attitudes ever since Bismarck – and in this context that means reactionary. The nationalistic, militaristic and anti-Semitic elements that would eventually form Hitler's party were recruited from the ranks of the bourgeoisie.'<sup>56</sup>

They also addressed the continuing debate about guilt, and Karl Jasper's four-part typology of guilt was discussed at length. Kötting and Thoursie agreed with those critics who argued that the Heidelberg existentialist had a tendency to change 'political, economic and social questions into metaphysical, moral and individual ones'. Jasper's concept of metaphysical guilt most resembled theological argumentation, and every thought about German collective guilt threatened to turn any talk of responsibility into hypocrisy. It was consequently condemned and rejected as meaningless and counter-productive.<sup>57</sup>

The shadow that dominated everything else, however, was the imminent Cold War. Kötting and Thoursie liked to think of themselves as non-political authors so their condemnations were aimed at the West as well as at the East. The conflict between the Great Powers threatened to make permanent the state of chaos and stagnation in Germany and thus smother any efforts to create genuine democracy. The Allies were blamed for their failure to settle the issues of recent history.<sup>58</sup>

*Kulissbygget* was reviewed in the major Swedish newspapers but the reviews were not very substantial. The book was rarely examined in any great depth, which was possibly a reflection of the fact that interest in Germany was beginning to wane and the Cold War starting to oust the German question. The reviewers frequently homed in on the

criticism of the Allies – a portent of the antagonisms that would arise a few years later in the debate about the Third Way. The social democratic press on the whole approved of the criticism directed at the western powers whose occupation policies ran the risk of fanning the embers of neo-fascism. The bourgeois press, on the other hand, took the view that the authors treated internal German resistance far too lightly. ‘Criticism of the occupying powers ought to be joined with criticism of the mind-set in Germany, which also plays its part in making the reconstruction process a mock-up’, was the view of the liberal newspaper *Aftonbladet*.<sup>59</sup>

There was, however, agreement on one thing: the situation in Germany was alarming, reconstruction risked becoming a half-measure and Nazism had not really been confronted. The genesis of National Socialism was no longer a topic of debate, nor was the question of guilt being discussed with any passion. On the other hand, there were fears that a reawakening of nationalism would pave the way for a political restoration under the sign of militarism and reaction. That conclusion was supported by experience of the history of modern Germany.

### *Journeys Among the Ruins*

The images communicated by Swedish travellers to Germany during the first years after the war were remarkably consistent. There was an amazing level of agreement between the reports they gave of their journeys among the ruins. There may have been differences of tone, but what is more noteworthy is the fact that the majority of Swedish observers returned time after time to common themes.<sup>60</sup>

Swedish reporting taken as a whole offered a collective narrative of postwar Germany. The Germans, so ran the thinking, were a race which had turned self-pity into an art form and showed no inclination to interrogate their own past. The fact that they were complaining about their conditions in the shambles of the postwar world was one thing, but they ought to be capable of taking a wider and deeper view than they did. They showed no comprehension at all of the misery inflicted on neighbouring countries as a result of Nazism, complaining instead about the unjust, harsh policies imposed on them by the occupying powers. There were in fact good reasons to question the measures the Allies were taking and many Swedes concurred with that, but a more fundamental problem was the incomplete settlement with Nazism. Denazification had failed and old Nazis were occupying positions in new structures.

The conclusion reached by the Swedish observers was that Nazism remained a latent threat. Many of the old patterns of thought had

survived beneath the surface and the reactionaries were returning under new names. These perceptions were reinforced by the trend towards political restoration that many observers bore witness to. In the new political parties, above all among the Christian Democrats, nationalism and conservatism were flourishing. Old Nazis, in new and deceptive guises, found a place for themselves there.

German self-pity, incomplete denazification and the risk of political restoration went hand in hand in the Swedish travel narratives. The historical lesson was a pessimistic one and emerged as a profoundly sceptical attitude to developments in the occupied zones of Germany. If the postwar reportage is considered in a wider context, its overall conclusion tended to underline the general historical lesson of Nazism. One important aspect was the existence of a firm aversion to all things German in the widest sense; there was a sort of distrust of the ideals, thinking and emotional patterns associated with German tradition. The real encounters the Swedish travellers had in the occupied zones of Germany thus underpinned their preconceptions and reinforced the political dimension of the lesson. Fear of an ideological restoration in the centre of Europe was an important part of this collective reading of the situation. In their reports and travel narratives the Swedes reported back that Nazism had not been completely defeated – in fact, Nazism had survived and was now beginning to grow again.

The historical lesson was consolidated even though Nazism in any real sense was rarely dealt with in the reportage literature. The pessimism induced by developments in Germany reinforced the general impression, as did the fact that nothing that was reported in the travel narratives challenged the content of the Nazi experience. German self-centredness, currents inimical to democracy, and the failure to settle scores with the past, destined Germany to continue to diverge from the common European highway. There were sound reasons for occupying a position of suspicious watchfulness and to stay a safe distance from things German. That was the lesson.

## **Farewell to Faust**

Another encounter between Swedes and Germans took place in the literary arena. German literature, like all the other cultural phenomena from the neighbour to the south, had exerted a very powerful influence on Sweden for a very long time. Between the time of the creation of the German Empire in 1871 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 over two thousand literary works were translated from German

to Swedish. Even though this peaked during and immediately after the First World War a score or more works were still coming out every year even at the end of the 1930s, everything from popular literature and uplifting works to editions of classics and modernistic prose. In the world of literature in the 1940s, as in other spheres of culture, it is possible to register a notably rapid move away from German literature. By the first postwar decade what had once been an abundant flow had been reduced to a mere trickle.<sup>61</sup>

The following section will concentrate on the implications of this cultural reorientation rather than its process or the statistics involved, and the focus of the inquiry will be on discussions of literature that evaluated the place of National Socialism in German tradition. These aspects of the Swedish treatment of the Nazi experience will be analysed at the moments of exposure when German literature was being placed in relation to Nazism.

The field of literature offers huge possibilities. During the 1940s it enjoyed high status and was not merely a matter for a small circle of specialists. Many critics, authors and opinion formers were involved in issues related to German literature. Thus articles about German literature were part of the wider conceptual debate about German tradition and mission in the shadow of Nazism that was going on at the time. In order to examine contemporary perceptions it will, for a start, be necessary to provide a general characterisation of the situation of German literature in Sweden. That will be followed by the central issue: an analysis of the discourse that ensued in early postwar Sweden on German patterns of thought.<sup>62</sup>

### *Sweden and German Postwar Literature*

Cultural life burgeoned in the midst of the devastation of postwar Germany. In the first post-1945 years many Germans devoted themselves to debate, criticism and performance. New plays were put on in cold cellar spaces, new films shown in rotting tents and new newspapers were produced in temporary editorial offices. For literature, too, the years that followed the end of the war were a vital phase of rebirth. Literary magazines saw the light of day, publishing houses were founded and book production took off. The kind of literature dominant at the start was what came to be known as ‘rubble literature’ or *Kahlschlagsliteratur* (clear-felling literature), which often consisted of neo-realistic depictions of homecoming, loss and sorrow. But the spectrum soon widened. Group 47, with Hans Werner Richter as its leading light, was formed just two years after the return of peace; it was a loose

grouping of authors that would set its mark on the literary life of West Germany during the coming decades.<sup>63</sup>

This lively cultural activity was in marked contrast to the limited coverage in the Swedish press. Having analysed Swedish coverage of German literature in six big daily papers during 1946, the Germanist Cecilia Hansson concluded that the interest was singularly slight, particularly when it came to contemporary literature. Virtually all the attention was directed at a group of eleven authors, among whom Thomas Mann was the dominant figure by far. His name occurred very frequently and was an orientation point even in articles that did not deal with him. Hermann Hesse (Nobel Prize winner in 1946), Heinrich Mann, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Bertholt Brecht and Friedrich Nietzsche figured among the others. It is noteworthy that all eleven authors had the lion's share of their literary production behind them and several of them were long dead.<sup>64</sup>

Hansson's conclusions are confirmed by studies carried out by another Germanist, Helmut Müssener. As far as Swedish translations of German belles-lettres during the twentieth century were concerned, the years 1945–1949 were absolutely rock-bottom. The wider field of popular and entertainment literature associated with names like Hedwig Courths-Mahler, Vicki Baum and Hermann Hoster had been translated in significant quantities right up until the second half of the 1930s. This group was effectively decimated in the years following the war. The translations that reached the Swedish reader consisted, to a great extent, of established and well-regarded literature. Twentieth-century writers such as Hesse, Kafka and Thomas Mann were the dominant figures, but Goethe, Lichtenberg and Lessing were also published.<sup>65</sup>

A small number of critics – prime among them Johannes Edfelt, Erwin Leiser, Ragnar Thoursie, Peter Weiss and Anders Österling – continued to review German literature in the Swedish press during the years after the war, but the usually short notices discussed the wretched conditions endured by the German authors as much as the literature itself.<sup>66</sup> With noticeable frequency they turned their attention to the emigrant German writers and not to what was happening on German soil.<sup>67</sup> And when they rallied round to produce an overall evaluation of postwar German culture they came up with gloomy forecasts. Was it really the case, Österling asked in the summer of 1946, that even the best authors suffer 'a weakening of their feel for language and a disorientation of their creative powers when they have become emigrants and torn from their roots for some years'?<sup>68</sup>

The first postwar anthology of contemporary German prose was published in 1951 but it was not until around 1960 that a more

comprehensive introduction began. In 1971, when Thomas von Vegesack looked back on a quarter of a century of postwar German literature, he came up with several reasons for the limited interest within Sweden, but the more general explanation he offered was 'the distaste for everything German that became widespread in Sweden after the war'.<sup>69</sup>

That, however, is a truth that needs significant modification. It is true to the extent that German culture lost much of its authority, dynamism and brilliance after the Second World War. It is also correct that Swedish literary circles paid scant attention to new German writing. That is not the same thing as stating that all German literature was neglected during the second half of the 1940s. The picture becomes a different one if we take into account Goethe, Hesse and, above all, Thomas Mann. Their works were highly praised in articles which simultaneously formed the basis for a thorough Swedish examination of the relationship between German culture and Nazism.

Rather than talking of a period of complete lack of interest we should instead be stressing split and ambivalence. On the one hand, there existed a widespread distrust of core aspects of the German heritage; on the other hand, the German literature that did actually get discussed in print generated considerably more comprehensive discussions about Germany's disastrous past. This was particularly true of Thomas Mann, who was the literary fixed star of his age, an authoritative celebrity with a special aura. Mann's works invited the reader to reflect on German conventions in the light of the Nazi experience – in fact, they became the scene of Swedish confrontation with the roots of National Socialism and of a review of the German cultural tradition.

### *A Dionysian with a Stiff Collar*

At the end of the war Thomas Mann (1875–1955) was considered to be perhaps the greatest living European writer. The son of a Lübeck merchant, Mann had won an international reputation right from his first novel *Buddenbrooks* (1901). In the following years he consolidated his reputation with a series of novellas that developed the realistic narrative tradition in the direction of symbolism. During the First World War Mann was passionate in his support of Germany and in a number of works he voiced the call of the nation, but he became a supporter of the Weimar Republic during the 1920s. *Der Zauberberg* (The Magic Mountain) (1924), a reflection with Nietzschean overtones on the post-war European intellectual crisis, was the next milestone in a literary career that brought him the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1929. By this

time Mann had already started the great tetralogy of novels *Joseph und seine Brüder* (Joseph and his Brothers), which he completed in American exile, having fled Nazi Germany with his family in 1933 and settled in the United States in 1938. He spent the war years firing off one anti-Nazi appeal after another at his countrymen. His last great novel was *Doktor Faustus* (1947) which purports to be the biography of a composer and interrogates the spiritual and political traditions of German up to the end of the catastrophe in 1945. He refused to return to Germany after the Second World War and lived in Switzerland until his death.<sup>70</sup>

Thomas Mann had been given an enthusiastic reception in Sweden from the start. His work had been introduced by the leading critics of the day and translated by several of the best-known translators. The publication of *Der Zauberberg* in Swedish in 1929, Mann's Nobel Prize year, helped to make him one of the portal figures in the 1930s' debate about humanism, modernism and philosophy of life. In his works the conflicts of the age clash: the artist with the bourgeois, demonism with responsibility, Naptha with Settembrini, spirit against life. He was, to use the philosopher Rüdiger Safranski's phrase, a Dionysian with a stiff collar.<sup>71</sup>

During the first postwar years Thomas Mann was without doubt the German-language author who attracted most interest within Sweden. He was an untainted force who had resisted National Socialism over the course of many years. Now, post-1945, he could step forward as the representative of 'the other Germany', a beacon of humanism in a dark age. Mann published many significant works in these years after the war and they were reviewed at length in Sweden. *Lotte in Weimar* appeared in Swedish in 1946 and parts of the Joseph series came out in a new edition, but the greatest stir was undoubtedly created by Nils Holmber's translation of *Doktor Faustus* in 1948. What added to the interest was that Mann visited Sweden a number of times during the early postwar years including, for instance, in order to receive an honorary doctorate from Lund University in 1949.<sup>72</sup>

The reactions to Mann's life and work provide a basis for an analysis of the attitudes to things German among the Swedish public during these years. Thomas Mann's accomplishments were so interwoven with the traditions of his homeland that bigger questions always arose. What value did German culture have after the Second World War? Would the after-effects of the Hitler regime continue to afflict postwar Germany? What was the relationship between Nazism and the German tradition?<sup>73</sup>

Many of the reviews published in the Swedish press addressed these questions. Mann became a sort of medium through which a Swedish



working of the Nazi experience took place. When Swedish critics, writers and intellectuals were dealing with him, they were not simply stating their position with regard to the work of a great contemporary author: the instant they broadened the discussion to include a general survey of the merits and shortcomings of German culture, they began to reveal how these things were perceived in Sweden.

## A Magnificent Farewell Performance

Reviews, essays and survey articles beyond number were devoted to Thomas Mann during the decade following the end of the war in 1945. They were written by the men and women who dominated Swedish literary criticism during the 1940s and 1950s: Karl Ragnar Gierow in *Svenska Dagbladet*, Käte Hamburger in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, Olle Holmberg in *Dagens Nyheter* and Anders Österling in *Stockholms-Tidningen* all wrote extensively and familiarised the Swedish public with the German author. Articles by Gunnar Brandell, Carl Fehrman, Sten Selander, Ragnar Thoursie, Karl Vennberg, Bengt Holmqvist and Artur Lundkvist also contributed to this. In spite of differences in temperament and artistic outlook they all shared an appreciation of Thomas Mann.<sup>74</sup>

The great majority of the articles on Mann expressed profound admiration, many of them emphasising his exceptional artistic gifts and humanistic passion. He was described as 'almost superhuman' and was thought to belong to 'that rare and indispensable group, humanity's truly great'.<sup>75</sup> Sten Selander's conclusion when reviewing the final part of the Joseph-series in 1945 was shared by many people: 'if a writer can be awarded the Nobel Prize twice, Thomas Mann ought to be given it again'.<sup>76</sup>

The universal respect for Thomas Mann did not exclude critical reservations, sometimes expressed in political terms. A number of critics with socialist leanings saw him as a monument to the age of the bourgeoisie. Ragnar Thoursie, inspired by a Thomas Mann study by the Marxist Georg Lukács, undertook a critical reading of the German author and wondered whether he was a figure of the past. Karl Vennberg, too, was voicing similar thoughts when he contended that Mann represented a narrow and essentially problematic bourgeoisie. But they still appreciated Mann the artist. That was not the case, however, with the few commentators, often of a liberal bent, who objected to more fundamental aspects of Mann's style, mentality and themes. They mounted fierce attacks on Mann's 'Germanness': he was infected with the same kind

of 'German disease' as so many others down there – verbosity, political passion, gratuitous 'heart on the sleeve' emotionalism. So, according to the view that could sometimes be heard in *Dagens Nyheter* and *Expressen*, Mann had no remedy to offer to an infected people.<sup>77</sup>

But attitudes of this sort were the exception. From the aesthetic viewpoint, Mann's greatness was uncontested among Swedish critics during the first decade after the war. The tributes were reinforced by the recognition that he was the spokesman of ideals that did not belong to the future. Time after time one could hear it said that Thomas Mann was the last representative of a mighty but rapidly fading tradition. A major article in *Svenska Dagbladet* on Mann's seventieth birthday, in 1945, expressed this in phrases typical of the time:

He is – and it is almost banal to repeat it – the incomparably greatest of living novelists, the last of the great classics, and he has the same kind of universality as Goethe. He can do everything that a realist author should be able to do and he possesses what the great philosophers have possessed. One can learn more about humanity from him than from anyone else in the present age.<sup>78</sup>

It was as a spokesman for a passing era that Mann was praised to the skies. That he marked the end of an era was self-evident, but what was not so evident was which cultural epoch or which historical period he was the representative of. Karl Vennberg and Ragnar Thoursie had considered him to be the death throes of the bourgeoisie, and other people too had stressed that he was a product of the European bourgeoisie of the nineteenth century.<sup>79</sup> An obvious problem, however, was that there was no easy way of ascribing him to a particular generation or school. It was more a case of his life having overlapped many different periods, one following another, from the Wilhelmine empire right up to the time after the Second World War.<sup>80</sup>

Most of the characterisations of Thomas Mann nevertheless ended up as being variations on a common theme. He was the standard bearer of classical German humanism at a time when it was constantly under threat. This earned him epithets such as 'the Goethe of the twentieth century', 'the representative of the true European spirit'.<sup>81</sup> Mann had never been transformed into a mere relict of a past age mainly because he had never become a passive steward of the classical German heritage. His sources of inspiration remained the German and common European traditions – poetry, music, philosophy, science, in his case all interlinked. When 'The Age of Thomas Mann' (the title of an article full of praise on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1955) came to an end it was very much more than the life of a great author coming to its close; it marked the final end of an epoch in European history that had started with Kant,

Schiller and Goethe. It had, in fact, come to a close much earlier but Mann became a medium that linked an older humanistic culture with the twentieth century.<sup>82</sup>

This was never more obvious than in the numerous comparisons that were made between Mann and Goethe during the first postwar decade. There was no German writer who could talk about Goethe with the same degree of intimacy and justice as Thomas Mann, it was claimed. It was, however, not primarily as an authoritative interpreter that Mann deserved to be called what the writer Artur Lundkvist called 'the modern equivalent of Goethe'. It was more a case of him being the only German author in world literature to occupy a similar position to the privy councillor from Weimar, a *Gesamtkunstler* with universal ambitions who engaged with the German problems more profoundly than anyone else. Someone stated that Mann built bridges over to a new Weimar; others compared his life's work as a whole with that of his great predecessor. When Mann was awarded an honorary doctorate at Lund University in 1949, Carl Fehrman went straight to the point when he said that he was 'the foremost inheritor of the tradition of Goethe in German cultural life'.<sup>83</sup>

To be compared with Goethe was the ultimate honour in a culture that took the classical European authors as its yardstick. It was symptomatic that in praising Mann he was not only placed in the same exclusive group as Goethe, but they were even found to have common traits in their careers, dispositions and oeuvres. But a note of loss could be heard in the midst of the pretentious rhetoric of the occasion. It was as if the recognition that Thomas Mann was the last representative of a dying tradition led to feelings of emptiness even before he had gone.

The tributes to Thomas Mann became a grand farewell. As with other similar occasions it followed a ritual pattern. The people who had followed the hero from the start of the twentieth century – and there were many Swedish critics who had done that – stepped forward to recap and attest their respect. They frequently padded out their speeches with personal memories of earlier encounters with Mann, both actual and literary. And as at all farewell ceremonies his life's achievements were repeated time after time. The milestones in Mann's biography were repeated in essays, survey articles and necrologies. All this happened on his seventieth birthday in 1945, on his eightieth in 1955 and on his death that same year, but the reviews of the Joseph novels, of *Lotte in Weimar* and *Doktor Faustus* frequently also contained summaries of the whole of his works. A sense of loss was palpable in all this. What was being borne witness to was a grand farewell and one of the premises of the staging was that there was only one direction in which

the development could now go. This was all the more obvious in that Mann stood out as the representative of a dying tradition. His going marked the disappearance of a living link with the classical German culture which had been revitalising the cultural life of Europe right up until the years between the wars. The marks of honour and distinction were accompanied by lamentations.<sup>84</sup>

'German culture has perished for the present, but its obsequies have been pronounced by the greatest novelist of the age, who is a German', was John Landquist's succinct summing up in an article about Mann with the title 'Funeral Address to German Culture'. That would have been an appropriate heading for the whole farewell performance. Landquist wrote his article in the autumn of 1948 at a time when no one was talking of the rebirth of Germany, least of all in the cultural sphere. Anyone observing Germany from a Swedish perspective would have been in no doubt that Nazism and the Second World War had swept away any German culture worthy of the name. There was little to be expected from that quarter for the foreseeable future.<sup>85</sup>

### *German Demonism*

The Nazi experience does not at first seem to have been central in any discussion of Thomas Mann. It would almost seem that he could be cited as an exponent of German humanism without there being any need to go into Nazism in any detail. And that is true to the extent that references to National Socialism did not by any means always enter the picture. In actual fact, however, his life and work were intricately entwined with the fateful history of modern Germany and were consequently always treated against some sort of Nazi backdrop. In some cases that backdrop slipped so far into the background that it lost significance; in other cases it moved so far into the foreground that it became completely dominant. It is time now to consider the points at which discussions of Thomas Mann intersected with discussions of Nazism.

The experience of the destructive power and anti-culture of Nazism was the origin of *Doktor Faustus*, Thomas Mann's last great novel. During the Second World War, alongside attacking the Hitler regime, Mann was working on this, his contribution to the cultural processing of Nazism.<sup>86</sup> It became clear by the Swedish reception of Mann's postwar novel that he was far from simply being interesting as a representative of a dying culture – on the contrary, the book demonstrated his ability to tackle the spiritual-political history of Germany and to continue to captivate his readers in Sweden.

*Doktor Faustus* tells the story of the fictional German composer, Adrian Leverkühn, whose life is being narrated by his childhood friend Serenus Zeitblom. Against the background of the final phases of the Second World War (Zeitblom is stated to be writing between 1943 and 1945) Zeitblom recounts Leverkühn's human and artistic career from his birth in 1885 to his death in 1940. One of the main themes of the narrative takes the form of a parallel with Nietzsche. As a young man Leverkühn intentionally contracts syphilis from a prostitute and he accepts the slow destruction of his physical capacity because it is simultaneously providing him with a powerful and euphoric creativity. After a long phase of musical inspiration the day of reckoning arrives and Leverkühn, having made his pact with darkness, is afflicted with madness throughout the whole of the 1930s. To commit oneself to evil in exchange for great artistic productivity – that ominous combination in the German tradition of driven activity and a pact with the devil – thus provides the overarching theme of this complex Faustian novel. The parallels between the life of Leverkühn and the modern history of Germany are shown by Zeitblom constantly working in the major events of the age. According to Thomas Mann himself, the novel aims 'to portray the idea of intoxication and anti-reason and, in doing so, the tragic fate of Germany'.<sup>87</sup>

As far as Swedish critics in 1947 and 1948 were concerned, the life of Adrian Leverkühn was clearly symbolic of the unhappy history of Germany. None of them reduced Mann's novel to a simplistic allegory of his homeland and none of them denied that it could certainly also be read as a multi-layered reflection on the cult of the genius and the nature of the artist. Nor, however, did any of them fail to draw parallels between Mann's protagonist and the fate of Germany under Nazism.<sup>88</sup>

In his review of *Doktor Faustus* Olle Holmberg pointed out that Mann 'drew a parallel between the fate of Adrian Leverkühn and that of Germany from start to finish' and that the choice of 1940 as the year of the composer's death was anything but random: '1940 was the year when it became obvious to clear-sighted people that a sentence of death had been pronounced on Germany, that Germany would die, die physically just as it had already died morally, died in madness and in dishonour'.<sup>89</sup> Käte Hamburger went farther than that, stating that Mann's Faustian book dealt with "'Germanness", with the "'blessed unblessed" essence and fate of the German soul'. Ever since *Buddenbrooks*, of course, Mann had focused on German people and circumstances, but the events of recent decades had caused him to approach the topic with new intensity. 'The 1930s and the 1940s saw the dehumanisation of Western life. It was no longer possible to shut your eyes to this phenomenon, to

shut your eyes to the dreadful fact that, cynically and terrifyingly, it was the nation of Goethe that had made a historical reality out of this dehumanisation.' In Hamburger's view Mann's solution had been to choose the biographical format because it revealed the German problem in a double sense: partly by describing how the Faust figure of Leverkühn fell for demonic temptations and partly by having Zeitblom's biographical narrative run parallel to contemporary German history:

The final catastrophe, political and cultural, of the great power Germany thus becomes the viewpoint from which the chronicler looks back on past life. The madness into which the history of the German people, at once spiritually and artistically so elevated and yet so captivated and possessed by demonic forces, finally descends corresponds symbolically with the catastrophe of Leverkühn.<sup>90</sup>

Other Swedish critics agreed. Karl Ragnar Gierow considered it all quite clear-cut: Leverkühn's double function in the novel was as bearer of the Faust motif and as symbol for the downfall of Germany. 'The parallel is carried through quite consistently', he stated, pointing out that Zeitblom's description of the career of his brilliant friend was 'associated chapter by chapter with the story of Germany's path from empire to the collapse of the Nazi regime'. Artur Lundkvist stressed that Mann had not only seen the drama of an individual soul in the medieval fable of Faust 'but a symbol of the tragedy of the whole of Germany, a schemata for the catastrophes of the German rise to power'. Mann thus became 'an elucidator of the tragic drama of Germany'.<sup>91</sup>

It was quite clear that *Doktor Faustus* was to be read as a parallel narrative of an artist who has sold his soul to the devil and a country that has pledged itself to the same evil power. The novel was, however, open to more sophisticated interpretations than that. Thomas Mann's work was said to be at least as much an inquisition into German tradition as a fictitious biography of a composer. Swedish critics devoted a great deal of space to discussing the traits peculiar to German developments.

Demonism was a basic theme in these considerations. It was not for nothing that Mann had chosen the Faust motif to link the life story of Leverkühn with the history of modern Germany. The Swedish interpreters of Mann's work were agreed that a meaningful way of looking at things was to seek the origins of the madness of National Socialism in the predilection that German culture showed for demonism. What was meant by demonism, however, was not so much that Germany had sold its soul to the devil in exchange for honour and success – as was the case with the Faust figure Leverkühn – but that the German tradition was fatally drawn towards what was dark and demonic. The parallels between the biography of the composer and the fate of the nation were

not pushed any further, but it was quite sufficient to reveal how the spiritual composition of Germany was permeated by blackness.

Olle Holmberg wrote that the music of Adrian Leverkühn reflected these deeper tendencies and he went on to stress: 'For Thomas Mann this demonism is German, it dwelt in Luther's belief in the devil, in the nature philosophy of romanticism, here and there in German music. Vulgarised and detached from reason and humanity it existed in German politics – until German politics suddenly came to a stop a few years ago'.<sup>92</sup> Anders Österling came to the same kind of judgment in his review. Mann had had good reason to make Leverkühn 'an arrogant denier of the humanistic value system', a man whose music was essentially 'a triumph of the inhuman'. The permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy saw diabolic temptation as a common theme in the life of the composer and the history of his homeland:

The musician, with gifts of the highest order but tempted and possessed by the devil, his soul pledged to demonic-romantic powers, embodies for Thomas Mann something central in the spiritual constitution of the German people, something which is nothing less than that spellbound fixation with greatness that defines its history. The German spirit, he has said, is home to a fatal attraction to the irrational and the diseased, to self-glorification, catastrophe and death. In reality even the most positive traits lead to a negative outcome.<sup>93</sup>

In this passage Österling stood out as the eloquent mouthpiece of the whole corps of Swedish critics. This was not just a restatement of the notion that Leverkühn was a personification of the German spirit. A significant feature of its history seemed to result from its 'spellbound fixation with greatness' and its 'fatal attraction to the irrational' that inexorably caused destruction and devastation. Swedish observers were united in their agreement that Mann's greatness was to be found in particular in his revelation of these traits of German culture even though he himself was a product of the same traditions. That was why people would return to this novel in the future, in order 'to seek documentation and information about what had happened in Germany', as Österling stated in conclusion.<sup>94</sup>

The origin of German misfortune was to be found in 'demonic-romantic forces'. These had provided reservoirs of energy for German creativity and they had constantly been passed onwards, pouring new life into European art and thought. Swedish commentators were prepared to concede that much. But they were also keen to emphasise the significant degree of ambivalence in the demonic-romantic temperament. Nowhere was that more obvious than in the case of Friedrich Nietzsche. The German philosopher was occasionally referred to in the

postwar years, sometimes in connection with Mann's effort to take up arms against the German heritage. It would be an exaggeration to claim that Nietzsche was consistently seen as a proto-Nazi in philosophical guise, but many people did point out that his ideas on the superman and his critique of morality were adopted by Nazism. If nothing else, the example of Nietzsche demonstrated that demonic attraction was at its most dangerous when it was brought into the political sphere.<sup>95</sup>

Mann had experienced that more than many other people. During the First World War this author, who up to that point had scarcely shown any social commitment, had become profoundly engaged in politics. In texts such as *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* (Observations of a Non-political Person) (1918) he had made a polemical case for the unique nature of German culture in contrast to the superficiality of Western civilisation. In spite of the fact that Mann emphatically distanced himself from this position during the 1920s and emerged as one of the sharpest critics of German nationalism, the views he had espoused during the First World War belong quite unambiguously to his biography. When this chapter in the story of his life was addressed in Sweden it was, however, often turned to his advantage. What was stressed was that his defence of freedom and reason was the result of his own bitter experience and of a profound conversion. It was described as if Mann had tasted an excess of German nationalism during the First World War and was consequently immune to it. Gunnar Brandell wrote, for instance: 'As early as 1922 he was ready to turn against fascism even in its German form ("this romantic barbarianism") and he has consistently held that position.'<sup>96</sup>

This line of thinking was made even more clear-cut in an article in *Morgon-Tidningen* in which a number of the elements associated with Mann were gathered in a concise sentence: 'In his aesthetic youth he was close to that demonic and Machiavellian romanticism which has deep roots in the German spirit and which burst into its lushest and most poisonous flower with National Socialism.' The wider logic of this is unambiguous. Nazism was perceived as a product of German demonism, irrationalism and ultra-nationalism. During his more markedly artistic phase, up to the end of the First World War, Mann had been close to those forces that just a few years later would develop into National Socialism. He had seen at an early stage where they might lead and resolutely worked against the political forms in which they revealed themselves between the wars. But he had continued to be fascinated by the demonic attraction to be found in the spiritual and political traditions of Germany, in what Käte Hamburger called 'omnious Germanness'.<sup>97</sup>



The demonism was manifested as a fundamental imbalance in German culture. It could be described as the contest between spirit and might, reason and magic, internal fervour and external forcefulness. Anders Österling was but one of many who drew attention to this peculiarity. Erik Forssman, whose review gave a detailed account of the musical aspects of the novel, argued that even the music became symbolic of the Germanness because dissonances were particularly important to the German composer Leverkühn. They were the contradictions and undesired elements that prevented the beautiful details uniting in a harmonious whole. Forssman concluded: 'And consequently the whole of Leverkühn's brilliant career and tragic decline, built as they are on both genius and disease, should be seen as symbolic of the greatness and final decline of the German people.'<sup>98</sup>

We can see here a glimpse of a view of Germany that recurred in many situations in the years after 1945. It was the idea that the body of German society was afflicted by a dangerous contagion. According to Forssman, Mann had been quicker than most to notice the growth of this disease and to see the approach of ruin. During the years between the wars he had already recognised that what he was witnessing was 'the final phase in the progress of the disease and soon the underlying decay would be visible'.<sup>99</sup>

Nazism as a disease, either as an infectious bacterium or as the symptom of a sick culture, seems to have been a common view. The metaphor recurred in one form or another in countless statements during the immediate postwar period and it was by no means only anti-German writers who voiced it. It was more a case that commentators were linking up with a well-established Western perception: in a classic study the social anthropologist Mary Douglas had shown how dirt, infestation and disease were associated with a structure in the process of collapse, whereas health was an expression of harmonious and controlled conditions. Appalling misfortunes afflict those who contract unclean diseases, and Nazism was one of the worst.<sup>100</sup>

So Swedish critics dwelt upon the demonism in Thomas Mann's novel: it was one of the central themes of the book and it was also a way of approaching the diabolic in German culture. The precise diagnosis might vary but there was general agreement that the root of the evil was a specific German predisposition to the romantic and the irrational. What was meant by romantic in this case was not so much an aesthetic-individualistic attitude to life or a reference to an epoch in German literary history: it was more a matter of a mental state in which the rush of Dionysian expression – intoxication, desire, ecstasy – permeated all aspects of existence.<sup>101</sup> In recent times, since the latter part of the

nineteenth century anyway, German demonism had been nourished by and had fuelled a level of nationalism that had grown into chauvinism. The phenomenon might variously be described as arrogance, affliction or infection but, whatever the specific judgment might be, it was clear that this inclination was life-threatening when it came into contact with politics. The First World War had been an eruption of a devastating order, but things only became truly catastrophic when the Nazis seized power and pushed German megalomania to truly terrifying heights.

The biography of Thomas Mann followed the developmental curve that the history of Germany should have followed. Like so many others he had been inspired by the romantic, the dreaming, the emotional aspects of his national culture; he had drunk from the sources that had animated such feats of national spiritual energy. But in sharp contrast to many of his countrymen he had soon settled accounts with his political aberrations of the First World War. At the crossroads in history where Mann chose the road of democracy and reason, Germany chose the romantic demonism that reached its apogee in National Socialism.<sup>102</sup> This was a conclusion shared by many people in the years after the Second World War, Herbert Tingsten, the editor in chief of *Dagens Nyheter* among them. In three wide-ranging articles in the autumn of 1947 Tingsten drew a complex composite portrait of Mann as politician, conservative nationalist and radical democrat. He analysed the special qualities of his thinking and stylistics as well as stressing his dialectical method and the changes in his political views. In a manner that was more nuanced than the usual one he traced Mann's political development and made the effort to understand his views during the 1910s against the background of the Europe of that time. 'With the rise and victory of National Socialism Thomas Mann embarks on a new stage of political thinking', Tingsten stated firmly. He described how Mann more and more accepted democracy as a way of life and simultaneously distanced himself from his earlier nationalism: 'The things that he feared and disliked in democracy and in socialism existed to a much greater extent in Nazism.'<sup>103</sup>

The discussion about Thomas Mann and German demonism carried an inherent historical lesson: avoid this conceptual world, resist the force of attraction and stay well away from this tradition. Mann's examination of German patterns of thinking, especially the attraction to the romantic and the irrational, thus served to confirm in Sweden a general lesson of Nazism. His description of the diabolic tendency in German culture was completely in accord with the early postwar understanding of Nazism and its historical origins. The same perceptions recurred in the reactions to the Faust novel between 1947 and 1948. It did not stop

with Mann probing the fateful history of his country and revealing the aspects that had led to Hitler. The whole of Mann's biography took the form of a mighty act of emancipation, an exemplary course of action that very few were capable of. He had freed himself from the nightmare of the demon and struck a course that Germany had never followed. He could now look back – and assess and contemplate.

It was not only in Sweden that *Doktor Faustus* was the subject of animated debate at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s. It is interesting to note, however, that the direction taken by the discussions differed from country to country. In the Anglo-Saxon world the discussion centred mainly on the style and structure of the book – literary criticism in the narrower sense. The more profound political and intellectual lesson that Swedish critics found in the Faust novel does not seem to have been anything like as evident to American and British readers.<sup>104</sup>

In Germany itself the book's literary qualities and artistic thematics tended to be overshadowed by its ideological and historio-philosophical theses. As in Sweden, the parallels between the fate of Germany and Leverkühn's life gave cause for reflection on the recent past. The book found a self-evident place in the multi-faceted debate about guilt that was current in the immediate postwar period; the relationship between Nazism and German Romanticism was an important line in that debate.<sup>105</sup>

The Swedish reception of Mann's postwar novel was thus similar to the German reception. The book could never be treated in Sweden as if it were a novel by André Gide or a volume of poetry by T.S. Eliot; without excluding other dimensions the reviews took the form of examinations of the German cultural tradition. The discussions about *Doktor Faustus* are witness to how deeply involved in German culture Swedish literary culture was, even as late as the 1940s. Thomas Mann gave Swedish critics a great farewell performance, an opportunity to work through something that also belonged to their own history.

### *A Classic Epilogue*

Along with Thomas Mann the two most frequently discussed German authors in the early postwar period were Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Hermann Hesse. Like Mann they emerged as proud representatives of a culture that belonged to yesterday. They were treated politely, almost respectfully, by Swedish critics, but there was no sign of the intensity with which Mann's work was approached. Attention was paid to Goethe primarily in connection with 1949 bicentenary of his birth.

It was an event that did not pass unremarked in Sweden and there were many articles that offered appreciative resumés of his oeuvre. But, unlike the articles about Mann, it was only in exceptional cases that they took the form of discussions about the relationship between Nazism and German culture. It was more a case of learned disquisitions on Goethe as a writer, artist and scientist rather any profound drilling down into German tradition.<sup>106</sup>

A few writers did, however, locate Goethe in the context of greater movements in time. For Anders Österling, Goethe had foreseen the imbalance between spirit and power, culture and German national politics, that conjured up the most destructive forces of the twentieth century. In Österling's view, the celebration of his memory in 1949 could be compared to an act of penance, but he did wonder how deep the emotional commitment actually went among the Germans, who had manifestly proved the antithesis to the Goethe ideal and disinherited themselves in a cultural sense. 'Seen as a highpoint of bourgeois culture Goethe is irredeemably a figure of the past', Österling stated, and others agreed with him. Compared with Thomas Mann, Goethe seemed to postwar Swedes to belong to antiquity and all that remained to be done was to raise a monument to an epoch that was past.<sup>107</sup>

Hermann Hesse spoke more directly to the age. Two particularly significant events drew attention to him and to his art during the early postwar period: the publication of his novel *Das Glasperlenspiel* (The Glass Bead Game) (1943, Swedish translation 1952) and the award of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1946. From a Swedish perspective Hesse was described as one of the anchors of German literature, an author who still spoke 'the language of the old education'. To some degree, then, he was a soulmate of Thomas Mann but, unlike Mann, Hesse never became a 'political accuser'. Rather the opposite, in fact, it was claimed that his commitment was focused on the development of the lone individual. Lisa Mathias, writing in a characteristic article in 1945, stated: 'He is not interested in any campaigning front, in Prussianism or supermen; he worships loneliness or, more accurately, seclusion, but there doesn't seem to be anything resigned or forgotten about him.'<sup>108</sup>

It was exceptional for anyone to associate Hesse with the Nazi catastrophe. The reactions to him being awarded the Nobel Prize emphasised that ever since the First World War he had definitively turned against the nationalism and mentality of violence that had raged in his homeland. He, along with Thomas Mann, had been living proof that there really were other cultural ideals in Germany. 'The award of the Nobel Prize to Hesse should perhaps also be regarded as both

a reminder of and an encouragement to that tradition', was how *Handelstidningen* put it, in a way that was typical.<sup>109</sup>

Compared with the treatment of Mann, Goethe and Hesse were given limited coverage in the Swedish public media during the first years after the war. Space seldom permitted a more detailed discussion of Nazism and the German tradition. When, despite everything, these two figures were seen in the context of National Socialism it was as a corrective and a relief – they reminded Swedish critics that there was more than one strand to the German tradition. The tradition that they themselves represented – classical German-language humanism with its roots in the late eighteenth century – had undoubtedly come to the end of the road. As far as Swedish observers were concerned, Nazism had totally undermined the foundations on which German culture had traditionally rested. The elders like Mann and Hesse were writing the epilogue to their own tradition.

## German Autumn

The introduction to Stig Dagerman's *Tysk höst* had set the tone. The young Swedish traveller undertook his journey during 'a miserable autumn of rain and cold'. The ragged, hungry and unwelcome refugees from the East who were pouring across into the Western zones set 'a stamp of dark bitterness on this German autumn', and they 'gave nourishment to suspicions, that people were willing to have, to distrust, that people were willing to feel, to despair, that people were willing to be possessed by'. And Dagerman asked himself: 'Can anyone who experienced this German autumn for himself actually claim that this distrust was unjustified or that this despair was unmotivated?'<sup>110</sup>

The Germany that Dagerman was visiting was in a season of falling leaves in every possible sense. A raw wind, a wind of bitterness, was blowing across the rainy postwar autumnal landscape. Reports from the occupation zones made no mention of budding, flowering, confidence; instead they described decay, rotting and disintegration. Instead of the revitalisation of German society, Swedish travellers met lethargy, self-pity and depression; instead of a full-scale showdown with the remaining Nazis, the travellers witnessed the return of the old panjandrum in new guises and nationalism being allowed to flourish. The Germany that Dagerman and other Swedes described was an autumnal land.

The future of German culture lay in the past; its flowering had been back in the nineteenth century. Not only had it withered: it had proved

to be in league with the most destructive doctrines. Significantly, the few people who had succeeded in overcoming the German heritage, Thomas Mann prime among them, were themselves in the autumn of their days and would soon be leaving the scene.

### *Sweden and the German Sphere*

Swedish experiences of Nazism were what essentially set their mark on Swedish encounters with things German during this autumn period. Suspicion of Germany's political and spiritual traditions was unshakable. Swedish reporters and travel writers were profoundly perturbed by the trend towards political restoration and the absence of any sign of self-examination. The ambivalence was even more obvious for critics and students of literature: they were united in their praise of Thomas Mann but, viewed more profoundly, he was an anomaly, an example that German demonism did not necessarily have to lead to shipwreck.

The Nazi experience thus contained a historical lesson that was actualised in encounters with German phenomena: be on your guard, be suspicious and keep your distance. It bred widespread scepticism of core aspects of German culture and society and, in particular, of significant elements of the ideological and intellectual heritage of Germany.

The overwhelming majority of people saw no reason not to distance themselves from the German sphere. So much misery had arisen from it and much that was ominous still existed. But the process of distancing was not always enthusiastic: it can equally be compared to a kind of acceptance of a fait accompli. On the other hand, in the postwar treatment of German literature it is possible to trace a degree of vacillation which is most manifest in what might be characterised as a farewell performance for Thomas Mann. Thus the Nazi experience seems not to have excluded an element of disappointment, indeed, perhaps even an element of sorrow.

Was this a question of separate generations? For a younger group, those born during the 1910s and 1920s, it came as a relief to distance themselves from things German. For a slightly older generation, those born around the turn of the century, it involved emotional ambivalence. They had grown up with German culture, been inspired by it and could not turn so unreservedly away from it: to do so would have been to make a radical break with the traditions that had formed their personalities. They rejected the excesses, but it is still possible to perceive some degree of anxiety about the separation. This, in turn, can shed light on why members of this generation – Olle Holmberg, Herbert Tingsten, Ingemar Hedenius and Carl Arvid Hessler – reacted so vehemently

when a representative of an undesired Germany put in an appearance in the way I have analysed in the Wittenberg Case. Not only did he remind them of Nazism, but he was also a reminder of the fact that because of Nazism they had been forced to abandon the German culture they held in such high respect, the culture of which Thomas Mann was the foremost representative. And this insight, in its turn, gave new force to the condemnation of Nazism.

The Germanist Per Øhrgaard has written a thought-provoking essay on the position of German culture in Denmark after 1945. There are several interesting similarities with the Swedish situation. Since the end of the nineteenth century the German language and German culture had to a great extent occupied the same dominant position in Denmark as it did in Sweden. That this situation changed radically during the second half of the twentieth century is clearly connected with the Third Reich but, according to Øhrgaard, it had less to do with the German occupation of Denmark and more to do with the overall worldwide devaluation of German culture that occurred after the Second World War. Although there were strong forces in favour of cutting all links with their big southern neighbour immediately after the war, the consequences did not in fact become fully visible until the 1960s and 1970s. During the first postwar decade many Danes still had a good knowledge of German and contact with the German sphere was retained, although, it has to be said, with time the links came more and more to resemble museum exhibits. The new political and intellectual culture that crystallised at the end of the 1960s coincided with a younger, more Americanised generation taking its place in the public arena. Any remaining German elements were cleared out in the course of this process and it was not until 1989 that Germany once again became interesting from the point of view of Danish culture.<sup>111</sup>

Per Øhrgaard's thesis can be transferred to the history of the changes of elective affinities I have been describing in this chapter. In Sweden the intense involvement with Germany during the first postwar years was followed by a growing lack of interest. But there is good reason to think that, just as in Denmark, it took some time for the cultural change of course to have full effect. And it is possible that the Swedish break with its German connection was more radical than Denmark's because Swedish relations with Germany had been less problematical than those of Denmark: there had not been an 1864, a 1920 or a 1940 in Swedish history. This, perhaps, offers an explanation of why the Swedish break contained feelings of loss as well as of disgust and dismay.<sup>112</sup>

The historical lesson of Nazism in this chapter has to some extent been of a different kind than the one that led to the stigmatisation of

the Nazi sphere of association, or which cleared the path for the ideas of 1945. The common ground in all three cases was provided by the experiences of National Socialism. But the character of the lesson, its structure and its temporal orientation, has varied. In the stigmatisation of people thought to have connections with Nazism, the lesson tended to be of a self-confirming sort: it confirmed an already fixed value system. The attitude was an aggressive one, a combination of triumphalism and self-assertion. In temporal terms it focused on the then and now, whereas ideas of the future remained unclear. In Chapter IV (The Ideas of 1945), on the other hand, we encountered a lesson that was unambiguously focused on the future. In that case it was visions of the new postwar society that were in the foreground.

The repertoire was a wider one when it came to the German sphere. Many of the travel narratives from the occupied zones of Germany manifested something of the same confirmatory, even self-righteous, historical lesson that could be seen in the incidents of stigmatisation. The encounters with the ruins of postwar Germany stressed the importance of watchfulness and underlined the convictions that the majority of people already held. The Swedish discussions on German literature, on the other hand, have revealed a different aspect. It was not just the fatal demonism that was condemned in this case. The lesson also included evaluating a whole cultural epoch, a kind of self-judgment in the face of the inevitable parting from the German sphere, but one that contained a degree of ambivalence. After Nazism, relations could never again return to where they had once been.<sup>113</sup>

## Notes

1. L. Gyllensten, 'Gryning mot väster', in B. Christofferson and T. von Vegesack (eds), *Perspektiv på 30talet* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1961), 78.
2. Stenström, *I alma maters tjänst*, 60.
3. S. Kahle, 'Mitt liv med Tyskland', in A. Björnsson and P. Lutheresson (eds), *Vändpunkter: Europa och dess omvärld efter 1989* (Stockholm: Svenska Dagbladets förlag, 1995), 107–108; S. Kahle, *Jag valde mitt liv* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2003), 75–86; T. Stenström, *I alma maters tjänst: En Uppsala-professor ser tillbaka* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2004), 59–60.
4. H. Müssener, *Das Bild Deutschlands in Schweden* (Stockholm: Tyska institutionen, Stockholms universitet, 1978); B. Henningsen et al. (eds), *Skandinavien och Tyskland: 1800–1914: Möten och vänskapsband* (Stockholm and Berlin: Nationalmuseum, 1997); J. Black (ed.), *Schweden und*



*Deutschland: Begegnungen und Impulse. Tyskland och Sverige: Möten och impulser* (Stockholm: Svenska institutet, 1999).

5. G. Korlén, "'Svenska är plattyska i tolv dialekter': Om det tyska inflytandet på svenska språket", in Black (ed.), *Schweden und Deutschland: Begegnungen und Impulse. Tyskland och Sverige: Möten och impulser* (Stockholm: Svenska institutet, 1999), 23; N. Runeby, "'Tyskarnas stora flit och berömmelse": Akademiskt och vetenskapligt utbyte", in Black (ed.), *Schweden und Deutschland: Begegnungen und Impulse. Tyskland och Sverige: Möten och impulser* (Stockholm: Svenska institutet, 1999); B. Henningsen, 'Från "valfrändskap" till "stamfrändskap": Det svensk-tyska kulturutbytet under 1800-talet', in J. Black (ed.), *Schweden und Deutschland. Several of the contributions to Henningsen et al. (eds), Skandinavien och Tyskland*, for instance, B. Henningsen, 'Bildn av Norden'; H. Müssener, 'Evangelisk själaspis för hemmet'; N. Runeby, 'Tyskland som teknisk förebild'; A. Heitmann, 'Skandinaviska författarinnor i Tyskland' and F. Paul, 'Tyskland – Skandinavien port till världslitteraturen' deal with important aspects, as does E. Gullberg, *Tyskland i svensk opinion 1856–1871* (Lund: Gleerup, 1952); B. Steckzén, *Svenskt och brittiskt: Sex essayer* (Uppsala: Geber, 1959), 45–56 and S. Nordin, 'Tyska utsikter 1871–1995', in A. Björnsson and P. Lutheresson (eds), *Vändpunkter: Europa och dess omvärld efter 1989* (Stockholm: Svenska Dagbladets förlag, 1995).
6. Outlined in Henningsen et al. (eds), *Skandinavien och Tyskland*; H.H. Brummer and C. Lengefeld (eds), *En glömd relation: Norden och Tyskland vid sekelskiftet* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 1998); Runeby, "'Tyskarnas stora flit och berömmelse'"; B. Henningsen, 'Från "valfrändskap" till "stamfrändskap"'. H. Müssener (ed.), *Nicht nur Strindberg: Kulturelle und literarische Beziehungen zwischen Schweden und Deutschland 1870–1933* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979) contains many informative essays, particularly G. Wingren, 'Deutscher Einfluss auf Kirche und Theologie in Schweden 1870–1933'; H. Müssener and G. Frandsen, 'Fast nur Nataly von Eschstruth & Co' and A. Fritz, 'Deutschsprachige Dramatik auf dem schwedischen Theater 1870–1933'. See also H. Müssener, *Deutschsprachige Belletristik in schwedischer Übersetzung 1870–1979: Bibliographie und Kommentar* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1985); J.O. Sundell, *Tysk påverkan på svensk civilrättsdoktrin 1870–1914* (Stockholm: Institutet för rätthistorisk forskning, 1987) and Y.M. Werner, *Svensk-tyska förbindelser kring sekelskiftet 1900: Politik och ekonomi vid tillkomsten av 1906 års svensk-tyska handels- och sjöfartstraktat* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1989).
7. Müssener (ed.), *Nicht nur Strindberg*; E. Bergman, *Diktens värld och politikens: Bertil Malmberg och Tyskland 1908–1928* (Lund: Natur & Kultur, 1967); Nordin, 'Tyska utsikter 1871–1995'; J. Östling, 'Frisinnets krig: Den kulturradikala svenska opinionen under första världskriget', DIXI: Arbetsrapporter (Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2002); M. Alm, *Americanitis: Amerika som sjukdom eller läkemedel: Svenska berättelser om USA åren 1900–1939* (Lund: Studia Historica Lundensia, 2002).
8. S. Oredsson, *Svensk rädsla: Offentlig fruktan i Sverige under 1900talets första hälft* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001); A.W. Johansson, *Den*

- nazistiska utmaningen: Aspekter på andra världskriget (Stockholm: Prisma, 2006), 217–236.
9. See the various contributions in G. Andersson and U. Geisler (eds), *Fruktan, fascination och frändskap: Det svenska musiklivet och nazismen* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006), in particular G. Andersson, 'Nazismen och musiken', 44; G. Andersson, 'Receptionen av svensk musik i Nazityskland', 81–82 and B. Lindberg, 'Exportera den där Hitlermusik till Tyskland'.
  10. A. Lagerkvist, *Amerikafantasier: Kön, medier och visualitet i svenska reseskildringar från USA 1945–63* (Stockholm: JMK, Stockholm University, 2005), 12–16.
  11. M.F. Scholz, 'Östen Undén und die schwedische Deutschlandpolitik in den fünfziger Jahren', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* (3) (1993); A. Muschik, *Die beiden deutschen Staaten und das neutrale Schweden: Eine Dreiecksbeziehung im Schatten der offenen Deutschlandfrage 1949–1972* (Münster: Lit-Verlag, 2005).
  12. J. Lindner, *Den svenska Tysklands-hjälpen 1945–1954* (Umeå: Acta Universitatis Umensis, 1988); *Neuanfang: Beziehungen zwischen Schweden und Deutschland: 1945–1954: Sieben Beiträge* (Stockholm: Militärhistoriska förlaget, 1990).
  13. T. Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Penguin Press, 2005), 203–209.
  14. S.O. Henriksson, 'Tyskundervisningen i Sverige: Historisk studie med särskild hänsyn till metodiska synpunkter på undervisningen i främmande språk' (Stockholm: unpublished licentiate dissertation at the German Department, Stockholm University, 1960); H. Johansson, 'När engelskan tog kommandot i skolan', *Tvårsnitt* (1) (2004); Almgren, *Drömmen om Norden*, 366–367.
  15. Henriksson, 'Tyskundervisningen i Sverige', 224–226; Johansson, 'När engelskan tog kommandot i skolan'.
  16. 'Tyska eller engelska?', *Aftontidningen*, 9 April 1945; 'Engelskan', *Morgontidningen*, 15 June 1945; 'Det första språket', *Aftonbladet*, 17 July 1945.
  17. 'Latin och engelska', *Nya Dagligt Allehanda*, 27 June 1943.
  18. M. Palmaer, 'Tyskan som skolspråk och världsspråk', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 4 June 1945; 'Reducerad tyska i läroverken', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 9 April 1945; 'Skolöverstyrelsen och lärarna skyller tyskpluggen på varann', *Aftontidningen*, 11 April 1945.
  19. 'Engelska eller tyska', *Dagens Nyheter*, 9 July 1945.
  20. 'Engelska eller tyska'.
  21. 'Världsspråket engelskan', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 9 June 1945.
  22. H. M. Enzensberger, *Europa in Ruinen: Augenzeugenberichte aus den Jahren 1944–1948* (Frankfurt am Main: Eichborn, 1990), 5–23. See also S. Hansén and C. Thor (eds), *Århundradets reportage* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2000), 14–15.
  23. The selection of travel narratives and reportage is based on systematic searches in Libris and in the catalogue of Lund University Library (the so-called Katalog –1957) under the headings 'Resor Tyskland' and 'Resor Europa' for the years in question. An important overview is also given in

- K. Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten: Journalisten Stig Dagerman* (Stockholm: Federativs förlag, 1989), 158–169 and N.O. Franzén, *Sven Jerring: Ett stycke radiohistoria* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1988), 320–323.
24. E. Jannes, *Människor därute: Ögonblicksbilder från Europa 1945/46* (Stockholm: Kooperativa Förbundets Bokförlag, 1946).
  25. Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten*, 162–163.
  26. A. Melberg, *Resa och skriva: En guide till den moderna reselitteraturen* (Gothenburg: Daidalos, 2005), 31–33.
  27. V. Vinde, *Nürnberg i blyxtljus* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1946), 51–59. Of course, a variety of other people also reported from Nuremberg, including Willy Brandt. During the early postwar period the future chancellor wrote a great deal about the German situation for Scandinavian newspapers. He also published the volume *Norden i Nürnberg* in 1946. See P. Merseburger, *Willy Brandt 1913–1992: Visionär und Realist* (Munich: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2002), 172–269.
  28. J. Wickman, 'Vinde i Nürnberg', *Dagens Nyheter*, 20 May 1946; G. Olsson, 'Tyska fakta och stämningar', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 4 July 1946; C. Jäderlund, 'Nürnbergreportage', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 11 June 1946; S. Berger, 'Snabbskisser från Nürnberg', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 25 May 1946; B. Enander, 'Utrikespolitik mer eller mindre', *Expressen*, 18 June 1946.
  29. Barbro Alving published her articles in *Dagens Nyheter* 30 June, 1 July, 3 July, 5 July, 7 July, 9 July, 12 July, 14 July, 17 July and 19 July 1946.
  30. B. Alving, 'Självömkan och omoral gror i ruiner', *Dagens Nyheter*, 30 June 1946; B. Alving, 'Var är Hitlers Frauenführerin?', *Dagens Nyheter*, 1 July 1946; '1 miljon nazister döms i Bayern på 1 år', *Dagens Nyheter*, 3 July 1946; 'Oberammergau övar till 1950', *Dagens Nyheter*, 5 July 1946; 'Ungdom om konst: Skjut målarn!', *Dagens Nyheter*, 7 July 1946; 'Hemvänd fånge hatar kommunism', *Dagens Nyheter*, 12 July 1946.
  31. B. Alving, 'Låt de unga emigrera och Tyskland dör', *Dagens Nyheter*, 9 July 1946.
  32. E. Asklund, *Människor under jorden: Europa runt i bil* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1947), 5.
  33. Asklund, *Människor under jorden: Europa runt i bil*, 11 and 167.
  34. Asklund, *Människor under jorden: Europa runt i bil*, 54.
  35. Asklund, *Människor under jorden: Europa runt i bil*, 44–45.
  36. Asklund, *Människor under jorden: Europa runt i bil*, 185.
  37. Asklund, *Människor under jorden: Europa runt i bil*, 185–192.
  38. Enzensberger, *Europa in Ruinen*, 10.
  39. S. Dagerman, *Tysk höst* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1947); E. Kötting and R. Thoursie, *Kulissbygget: Tyskland mellan Molotov och Marshall* (Stockholm: Ljus, 1948).
  40. Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten*, 91–94; R. Schröder, *Stig Dagerman – littérature engagée in Schweden der Nachkriegszeit* (Berlin: Logos-Verlag, 2001), 32–33.
  41. Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten*, 119–129.
  42. Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten*, 160–162.

43. Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten*, 153–156. H. Tingsten, 'En diktare om Tyskland', *Dagens Nyheter*, 14 May 1947; K. Björk, 'Diktarsyn på Tyskland', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 28 October 1947; K. Juste, 'Orsak och verkan', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 9 June 1947. As a contrast, it is worth noting the communist newspaper *Ny Dag* (9 December 1947) accused Dagerman of supporting reactionaries because of his vague and apologetic anarchism.
44. Ragnar Thoursie and Kaj Björk attacked Dagerman on this point after the publication of his article in *Expressen*. Dagerman expanded his discussion of Schumacher in the published book, to which Björk did not take kindly. On the other hand, several of the right-wing papers found his analysis of German social democracy to be very apposite. See Palmkvist, *Diktaren i verkligheten*, 120–121.
45. Dagerman, *Tysk höst*, 17.
46. Dagerman, *Tysk höst*, 18.
47. K. Jaensson, 'En diktare i verklighetens land', *Bonniers Litterära Magasin* (1947), 514; K. Juste, 'Orsak och verkan', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 9 June 1947; G. Olsson, 'Tyskland på drift', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 19 May 1947.
48. Dagerman, *Tysk höst*, 13–15.
49. Dagerman, *Tysk höst*, 35–36.
50. E. Leiser, 'Likgiltighetens land', *Aftontidningen*, 1 November 1947; V. Heyman, 'Två ockupationer', *Arbetaren*, 29 May 1947.
51. Egon Kötting was just one of many German exiles during the 1940s to act as knowledgeable intermediaries for a Swedish readership. See H. Müssener, *Exil in Schweden: Politische und kulturelle Emigration nach 1933* (Munich: Hanser, 1974), 300–354.
52. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*, 5–6.
53. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*, 286.
54. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*, 16, 26 and 30.
55. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*, 12–14 and 29.
56. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*, 39–41 and 266–267.
57. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*, 182–190
58. Kötting and Thoursie, *Kulissbygget*
59. *Aftonbladet*, 6 June 1948; D. Viklund, 'Tyska sommarstudier', *Dagens Nyheter*, 14 September 1948; K. Björk, 'Tyskland och den tredje kraften', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 4 October 1948; T. Höjer, 'Efter Ragnarök', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 31 May 1948; S. Berger, 'Patientmedicin för tyska sjukan', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 3 June 1948
60. Stig Dagerman's reportage was the most obvious deviation. His biographical background is not without significance in this respect. See O. Lagercrantz, *Stig Dagerman* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1958), 92–94.
61. Müssener, *Deutschsprachige Belletristik in schwedischer Übersetzung 1870–1979*, 6–53.
62. The collections in the cuttings archive at the Sigtunastiftelsen reveal that during the early postwar period, at least in the morning and evening newspapers, interest in German literature was much greater than in German film, music and art.

63. W. Schivelbusch, *Vor dem Vorhang: Das geistige Berlin 1945–1948* (Munich: Hanser, 1995); W. Barner (ed.), *Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von den Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart: Geschichte der deutschen Literatur von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: Beck, 1994).
64. C. Hansson, 'Die Gruppe 46: Anmerkungen zu einigen Feuilletonartikeln in der schwedischen Tagespresse des Jahres 1946', in H. Müssener (ed.), *Aspekte des Kulturaustausches zwischen Schweden und dem deutschsprachigen Mitteleuropa nach 1945* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1981), 141–149.
65. Müssener, *Deutschsprachige Belletristik in schwedischer Übersetzung 1870–1979*, 52–53 and 203–208.
66. There were exceptions, for example, P. Weiss, 'Mörkrets litteratur', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 30 August 1947.
67. See, for example, A. Österling, 'Tyska romaner från exilen', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 4 August 1946; E. Leiser, 'Tyska diktare i landsflykt', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 3 April 1947 and T. Nerman, 'Emigrantdikten', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 5 June 1947.
68. Österling, 'Tyska romaner från exilen'. See also T. von Vegesack, *Inte bara Grass ...: De tyska litteraturerna efter kriget* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1970), 205–207.
69. von Vegesack, *Inte bara Grass ...*, 208–209 and 231 (quotation 209); F. Benzinger, *Die Tagung der 'Gruppe 47' in Schweden 1964 und ihre Folgen: Ein Kapitel deutsch-schwedischer Kultur- und Literaturbeziehungen* (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1983), 16–27; Müssener, *Deutschsprachige Belletristik in schwedischer Übersetzung 1870–1979*, 203–208.
70. The biographical and critical work on Thomas Mann is enormous. See H. Koopmann (ed.), *Thomas-Mann-Handbuch* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2005).
71. E. Selberg, 'Der Zauberberg: Die Rezeption in Schweden während der Jahre 1924–33', in H. Müssener (ed.), *Nicht nur Strindberg: Kulturelle und literarische Beziehungen zwischen Schweden und Deutschland 1870–1933* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979); J. Hansson, *Humanismens kris: Bildningsideal och kulturkritik i Sverige 1848–1933* (Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförlag, 1999), 183–184; L. Hallberg, 'Tio år efter Nobelpriset: Thomas Mann, hans förläggare och Sverige 1939–1940', in K. Abukhanfusa (ed.), *Av kärlek till arkiv: Festskrift till Erik Norberg* (Stockholm: Riksarkivet, 2002). Safranski is quoted from U. Greiner, 'Die Verzauberung der Welt', *Die Zeit* (37) (2007).
72. Hansson, 'Die Gruppe 46', 142–145; C. Fehrman, 'Det hände i Lund', in G. Blomquist (ed.), *Under Lundagårds kronor: Minnen upptecknade av gamla studenter*, vol. 1 (Lund: Lund University Press, 1991), 269–271.
73. Parts of the following have been published as J. Östling, 'Med Mann tog Sverige ett tyskt farväl', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 May 2008.
74. T. Segerstedt, 'En religionsstiftare', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 1 February 1945; S. Selander, 'Thomas Mann Josefsroman', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 21 February 1945; 'Thomas Mann 70 år', *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning*, 6 June 1945; G. Jönsson, 'Josef och hans bröder', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 27 June 1947; H. Tingsten, 'Thomas Mann som politiker', *Dagens Nyheter*, 28 September 1947; H. Tingsten, 'Thomas Mann som konservativ nationalist',

- Dagens Nyheter*, 30 September 1947; H. Tingsten, 'Thomas Mann som radikal demokrat', *Dagens Nyheter*, 4 October 1947; C. Fehrman, 'Thomas Mann och arvet från Goethe', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 30 May 1949; K.R. Gierow, 'Epoken Thomas Mann', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 6 June 1955; H. Levander, 'Thomas Mann – mittens rike', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 6 June 1955; 'Mann var den siste humanisten', *Dagens Nyheter*, 13 August 1955; 'Thomas Mann död', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 13 August 1955; C. Fehrman, 'Tjugonde seklets Goethe', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 14 August 1955; S. Stolpe, 'Thomas Mann död', *Aftonbladet*, 13 August 1955.
75. Gierow, 'Epoken Thomas Mann'; 'Thomas Mann 70 år'.
  76. S. Selander, 'Thomas Mann Josefsroman'. See also: 'Thomas Mann kan få ett andra nobelpris', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 22 February 1945; Jönsson, 'Josef och hans bröder'; Fehrman, 'Thomas Mann och arvet från Goethe'; Gierow, 'Epoken Thomas Mann'; 'Mann var den siste humanisten'; Levander, 'Thomas Mann – mittens rike'; 'Thomas Mann död'.
  77. R. Thoursie, 'Lukacs i Weimar', *Aftontidningen*, 4 December 1946; E.H. Linder, 'Thomas Mann och "gudstänkandet"', *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 10 February 1945; K. Vennberg, 'Thomas Mann och vi', *Aftontidningen*, 5 June 1945; 'Andens adelsman 1945', *Expressen*, 6 June 1945; P.H. Törngren, 'En ledare', *Dagens Nyheter*, 17 February 1946.
  78. G. Attorps, 'Thomas Mann 70 år', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 4 June 1945.
  79. E. Forssman, 'Thomas Mann nya roman', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 30 November 1947; Gierow, 'Epoken Thomas Mann'.
  80. 'Mann var den siste humanisten'.
  81. Fehrman, 'Tjugonde seklets Goethe'; 'Mann var den siste humanisten'; F.S. Grosshut, 'Levande humanism', *Aftontidningen*, 26 May 1949.
  82. Selander, 'Thomas Manns Josefsroman'; Attorps, 'Thomas Mann 70 år'; 'Thomas Mann sjuttio år', *Svenska Morgonbladet*, 6 June 1945; H. Dhejne, 'Geniet i Weimar', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 12 October 1946; K. Hamburger, 'Thomas Mann och Goethe', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning*, 21 May 1949; Grosshut, 'Levande humanism'; Fehrman, 'Thomas Mann och arvet från Goethe'; Ö. Sjöstrand, 'Thomas Mann och djävulen', *Aftonbladet*, 16 May 1950; E. Leiser, 'Goethes arvtagare på besök', *Aftontidningen*, 4 May 1950; 'Mann var den siste humanisten'; Fehrman, 'Tjugonde seklets Goethe'.
  83. I. Pauli, 'Thomas Mann 70 år', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 6 June 1945; Hamburger, 'Thomas Mann och Goethe'; Grosshut, 'Levande humanism'; Fehrman, 'Thomas Mann och arvet från Goethe'; Leiser, 'Goethes arvtagare på besök'; Fehrman, 'Tjugonde seklets Goethe'; Artur Lundkvist, 'Pakten med djävulen', *Bonniers Litterära Magasin* (10) (1948), 84.
  84. Forssman, 'Thomas Mann nya roman'; J. Landquist, 'Ett gravtal över tysk kultur', *Aftonbladet*, 26 November 1948; C. Fehrman, 'Thomas Manns Faustsaga', *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten*, 4 January 1949; K.R. Gierow, 'Thomas Mann och Nietzsche', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 11 March 1949; Gierow, 'Epoken Thomas Mann'; Levander, 'Thomas Mann – mittens rike'; 'Thomas Mann död', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 13 August 1955.
  85. Landquist, 'Ett gravtal över tysk kultur'.

86. See in general G. Bergsten, *Thomas Manns Doktor Faustus: Untersuchungen zu den Quellen und zur Struktur des Romans* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1974) and J.H. Petersen, *Faustus lesen: Eine Streitschrift über Thomas Manns späten Roman* (Würzburg: Kösinghausen & Neumann, 2007). Thomas Mann described the genesis of the novel in his autobiographical *Die Entstehung des 'Doktor Faustus': Roman eines Romans* (1949), which was translated into Swedish in the same year as T. Mann, *Roman om en roman: Hur 'Doktor Faustus' kom till*, trans. N. Holmberg (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1949).
87. T. Mann, *Doktor Faustus: Den tyske tonsättaren Adrian Leverkühns liv skildrat av en vän*, trans. N. Holmberg (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1948). See also Koopmann (ed.), *Thomas-Mann-Handbuch* and Bergsten, *Thomas Manns Doktor Faustus*.
88. Rüdiger Safranski points out in *Romantik: Eine deutsche Affäre* (Munich: Hanser, 2007), 370–373, that the Leverkühn–Germany parallel cannot be considered to have been completely carried through in the novel because the composer distances himself from the Dionysiac sphere and remains a kind of Apollonian. For Swedish critics, however – as for Mann himself – the analogy was a fact.
89. O. Holmberg, 'Faust och djävulen', *Dagens Nyheter*, 10 November 1947.
90. K. Hamburger, 'Thomas Manns Faustroman', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 27 November 1947.
91. Gierow, 'Thomas Mann och Nietzsche'; F.H. Törnblom, 'Thomas Manns nya bok'; Fehrman, 'Thomas Manns Faustsaga'; A. Österling, 'Thomas Manns nya roman', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 12 January 1948.
92. Holmberg, 'Faust och djävulen'.
93. Österling, 'Thomas Manns nya roman'.
94. Österling, 'Thomas Manns nya roman'.
95. O. Holmberg, 'Uppgörelse med Nietzsche', *Dagens Nyheter*, 6 September 1948; Gierow, 'Thomas Mann och Nietzsche'. See Melker Johansson's critical and exacting study of Nietzsche's thought, *Nietzsche och Tredje riket* (Stockholm: Kooperativa Förbundets Bokförlag 1943) and the more general Swedish reception of Nietzsche in D. Brolin, 'Efterkrigs-Nietzsche: Om den svenska Nietzsche-forskningens myter', *Häften för kritiska studier* (3–4) (2005).
96. G. Brandell, 'Kring Thomas Mann', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 19 November 1945.
97. Pauli, 'Thomas Mann 70 år'; Hamburger, 'Thomas Manns Faustroman'.
98. Forssman, 'Thomas Mann nya roman'.
99. Forssman, 'Thomas Mann nya roman'.
100. M. Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge, 1966).
101. This reading of the relationship between Nazism and Romanticism was normal during the early postwar period. See Safranski, *Romantik*, 356–357.
102. Apart from those already mentioned, this view was also advanced in W.A. Berendsohn, 'Thomas Mann och Tredje riket', in K. Lervik (ed.), *Åndsmenneskets ansvar: Nordiske akademikers festskrift til Thomas Mann på 80 årsdagen 6. juni 1955* (Oslo: Norske studentersamfund, 1955), 13–15.

103. Tingsten, 'Thomas Mann som politiker', *Dagens Nyheter*, 28 September 1947; H. Tingsten, 'Thomas Mann som konservativ nationalist', *Dagens Nyheter*, 30 September 1947; H. Tingsten, 'Thomas Mann som radikal demokrat', *Dagens Nyheter*, 4 October 1947.
104. J.F. Fetzer, *Changing Perceptions of Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus: Criticism 1947–1992* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1996), 2–9.
105. T. Goll, *Die Deutschen und Thomas Mann: Die Rezeption des Dichters in Abhängigkeit von der politischen Kultur Deutschlands 1898–1955* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2000), 294–316; B. Eberan, *Luther? Friedrich 'der Grosse'? Wagner? Nietzsche? ...? ...? Wer war an Hitler schuld?: Die Debatte um die Schuldfrage 1945–1949* (Munich: Minerva, 1983), 88–91; Safranski, *Romantik*, 348–352 and 370–380.
106. A. Larsson, 'Diktarfursten Goethe', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 27 August 1949; A. Mohlin, 'Goethes Über allen Gipfeln', *Arbetet*, 8 August 1949. With reference to Goethe in postwar Germany: W. Lepenies, *The Seduction of Culture in German History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), 159–164; and in much more detail K.R. Mandelkow, *Goethe in Deutschland: Rezeptionsgeschichte eines Klassikers: 1919–1982* (Munich: Beck, 1989).
107. A. Österling, 'Goethebilden', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 22 August 1949; I. Pauli, 'Goethe, olympiern', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 27 August 1949; A. Werin, 'Goethe – medicina mentis', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 7 August 1949.
108. L. Matthias, 'Besök hos Hermann Hesse', *Expressen*, 12 December 1945; S. Selander, 'Hermann Hesse', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 15 November 1946; E. Lindegren, 'Hesse och hans lyrik', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 20 December 1946. The reasons given by the Swedish Academy ('for his inspiring authorship which, as it develops towards boldness and depth, represents both classical humanistic ideals and high stylistic values') did not make any allusion to 'the other Germany'. Meanwhile, however, Anders Österling argued in a special statement that Hesse should be awarded the prize because 'he and Thomas Mann are at present the only significant authors who uphold the German literary cultural heritage with status and style'. There were also, the permanent secretary of the Swedish Academy was convinced, other reasons: 'An award to the 69-year-old author would also be justified in that the whole of his production reveals a good, struggling human being who has followed his calling with rare honesty and propriety and who has preserved the true emblem of humanism in a tragic period.' See B. Svensén (ed.), *Nobelpriset i litteratur: Nomineringar och utlåtanden 1901–1950:1921–1950* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2001), 365.
109. H. Söderhjelm, 'Hermann Hesse', *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning*, 15 November 1946; A. Österling, 'Årets litterära nobelpristagare', *Stockholms-Tidningen*, 15 November 1946; H. Åkerhielm, 'Hermann Hesse – äntligen!', *Morgon-Tidningen*, 15 November 1946; Selander, 'Hermann Hesse'.
110. Dagerman, *Tysk höst*, 7–8.
111. P. Øhrgaard, 'Abkehr und Wiederentdeckung: Die deutsche Kultur (vor allem die Literatur) in Dänemark nach 1945', in *Deutsche Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung: Jahrbuch 2006* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007), 57–65.



112. For the historical tensions in German–Danish relations: K. Salomon, *Konflikt i grænseland: Sociale og nationale modsætninger i Sønderjylland 1920–33* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1980), 11–17 and K.C. Lammers, 'Hvad skal vi gøre ved tyskerne bagefter?': *Det dansk-tyske forhold efter 1945* (Copenhagen: Schonberg, 2005), 12–24.
113. In an essay, the essayist Kay Glans, born in 1955, reflects on what the abrupt break with the German cultural sphere meant for Swedes born after the war: 'Germany has been the dark continent for my generation, frightening, something that one prefers to avoid having anything to do with, at the same time as one is darkly conscious of its great significance.' See K. Glans, 'Bekænelser av ett efterkrigsbarn', in A. Björnsson and P. Luthersson (eds), *Vändpunkter: Europa och dess omvärld efter 1989* (Stockholm: Svenska Dagbladets förlag, 1995), 157.

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## THE LESSONS OF NAZISM

When Olof Palme boarded a liner for America, in the harbour in Gothenburg in 1947, it marked a break with family tradition. The twenty-five year old from Östermalm had grown up in an upper middle-class environment, he had attended exclusive schools, become a reserve officer in the cavalry and studied law. His family had long and wide links across the whole Baltic region, including strong connections in the Finnish and Baltic German aristocracy. His mother, Elisabeth, born von Knieriem, had fled Lithuania during the First World War and spoke German to her son right from the start. Up until the Second World War it would have been natural for a talented young man from the Swedish haute bourgeoisie to travel to Germany to study. Now, however, two years after the war, the young Palme chose to go west, to a New World and a new future.<sup>1</sup>

Olof Palme spent the academic year 1947–1948 at Kenyon College in Ohio. He studied social science, debated the great questions of the day and wrote a critical examination piece on Friedrich von Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom*. More than that, however, he imbibed *the American way of life*. He also spent two months travelling far and wide across the American continent. He met jazz musicians, war veterans and political activists at cafés, on night buses and at petrol stations.<sup>2</sup>

Once back in Sweden, the future prime minister summarised his American experiences in an article in *Svenska Dagbladet*. It began as a review of Norman Mailer's recently published *The Naked and the Dead* but quickly moved on to reflect on the presence of the war in postwar American society. Palme asked himself whether it was possible to find there the same anxiety and death wish that Wolfgang Borchert had depicted in his play *Draussen vor der Tür* (Outside, at the door) (1947). His answer was no. Whereas German young men had returned to 'a civilisation in ruin, to material and moral decay on an appalling scale', Mailer and his contemporaries had returned to 'a flourishing America

and Americanism, to a bubbling vitality, with its mixture of life-affirming materialism and naïve idealism'.<sup>3</sup>

The young Swede was conscious of the clichés about Americans that that were still flourishing at the end of the 1940s, perceptions of spiritual superficiality and blue-eyed carefreeness. But Palme found something deeply attractive in the American appetite for life and optimism. It was a social ethos utterly different from the postwar lethargy of Europe and it would take America forward and out of the trauma of the Second World War:

It is [...] striking proof of the vitality and healing ability of the American nation, it is a fact that has to be accepted and built on, for it is this American wartime generation, the millions of farmers, workers and students, who by dint of their own vitality will for the foreseeable future dominate and function as norm-givers for the strata of people in Western Europe who have traditionally been the bearers of culture.<sup>4</sup>

Olof Palme belonged to a generation the whole of whose adult lives would be lived out in the postwar world. In the aftermath of the war they were not the ones who had the right to interpret the official historical lesson of the Nazi experience: they were too young for that. But they were the ones who would live with it; they were the ones who would implement the ideas of 1945 and complete the break with the German cultural tradition.

The foregoing chapters have seen the beginnings of the new postwar territory formed by the interplay between historical experiences and emergent visions in the years around 1945. To provide a more rounded picture, however, entails filling it out with further material, and that process is central to the present chapter. The social dimensions of the experiences, who embraced them, and in which milieux they were anchored, have so far only been sketched. The same is true of their scope: how long can an experience be valid before being replaced by another? In order to address these problems more closely and to reflect on the whole compass of the historical lesson of Nazism, this last chapter will be permitted to range more widely geographically, thematically and historically.

## **Nazism and the Territory of the Postwar Age**

The Nazi experience was a living experience. In the wake of the war it contributed to pruning the ideological map, fostering the advance of cultural radicalism and confirming cultural reorientation. In order for



the postwar landscape to emerge in its entirety, with all its boundaries and its nuances, we need a detailed panorama.

### *The Political Field*

At first it might seem as though the lesson of Nazism caused nothing more than party political change in Sweden in that the Nazi and fascist groupings disappeared. Admittedly some of them, the circle around Sven Olov Lindholm for instance, did not cease their activity until around 1950, but their influence was already completely marginal even by the end of the war. Although minor National Socialist parties were established during the 1950s and 1960s, it would take several decades before they achieved any sort of public breakthrough. With the end of the Second World War authoritarian nationalism had exhausted all its ideological strength in Sweden as in the rest of Europe.<sup>5</sup>

But its political significance did not stop there. If we broaden our enquiry we find that the experiences of Nazism were particularly noticeable immediately after the war. Alf W. Johansson has argued that anti-fascism together with anti-communism became the two consensus dystopian ideologies of the postwar years. They were 'counter-ideologies that expressed anti-utopias, something that people should strive to avoid; they constituted negative patterns of thought that made certain sectors of the ideological field taboo'.<sup>6</sup> Even though anti-fascism was the more fundamental, towards the end of the 1940s it was pushed into the background as a result of the burgeoning Cold War. Between 1943 and 1946 anti-fascism had shown a marked tendency towards equality and was quite compatible with communist convictions. One sign of this is that the Swedish Communist Party received its all-time highest number of votes (11.2%) in the local elections of 1946. Just a couple of years later, however, anti-fascism was outflanked by anti-communism as a factor in political mobilisation. In the election of 1948 the communists lost a great deal of support whereas the anti-communist parties of the centre – the Social Democrats and the Liberals – triumphed. The Prague coup and the Sovietisation of Eastern Europe made anti-totalitarianism a decisive signpost even in Swedish domestic politics. Consequently, Johansson argues, the two dystopian lines of thinking effectively cut the ideological field: anti-fascism contributed to the discrediting of the right-wing concepts of the conservatives and to moving them in a liberal direction, whereas anti-communism reinforced the liberal elements in social democracy and prevented it moving in the direction of socialism.<sup>7</sup>

Seen from this point of view the experiences of National Socialism were a part of postwar life, and the strength of Alf W. Johansson's argument lies in its general characterisation of the ideological field. As far as changes in political geography are concerned, my conclusions do not differ seriously from his, but I stress *the Nazi experience* as a decisive factor. When Johansson talks of a 'dystopian ideology', a negative form of thought that made parts of the political landscape taboo, it is an idea that defines the more conscious formation of attitudes. To me it seems to be a historical experience of such dignity that it influenced far more fields than just the political. The concept of ideology is, therefore, too constricted, and nor does it offer a form of interpretation that connects experiences of the past with conceptions of the present and of the future.

Alf W. Johansson does, however, expressly underline the fact that resistance to Nazism had consequences that went far beyond party politics. He summarised the profound significance of anti-fascism as follows:

With the elimination of fascism as a power political threat, the prime function of anti-fascism became the upholding of a philosophical consensus that prevented the occurrence of fascist tendencies: every variety of thought or ideological element that could possibly act as a seedbed for fascism must be resisted and made taboo. This was particularly true, of course, for all forms of racist thinking, but anti-fascism implied significantly more than anti-racism. It also stood for anti-dictatorship, anti-nationalism, anti-hierarchy, anti-symbolism, anti-ritualism, pro-modernism [...].<sup>8</sup>

One way of problematising and developing this characterisation is to look at the fields of politics in the light of postwar rational cultural radicalism. Its view of society, man and culture was revealed in the Schools Commission of 1946 and manifested in the debates about natural law. The Swedish interpretations of Nazism took shape in this cultural-radical space, where idealist, metaphysical and nationalist approaches were banned. Enlightenment rationalism, so dominant in Sweden during the first quarter of a century after the war, thereby shaped the understanding of the Nazi experience.<sup>9</sup>

Rationalist cultural radicalism might lean in a somewhat socialist direction or in a somewhat liberal direction, but it was not a movement of the right. Many of the things it condemned were cardinal points of conservatism: tradition, Christianity, hierarchies, the immutable nature of values. Alf W. Johansson has therefore argued that the world of conservative ideas collapsed after 1945 and that the heritage of German Romanticism appeared to bear the taint of Nazism after the

Second World War. Torbjörn Nilsson has picked up on this suggestion but linked it with a debate within political science about the tension between conservatism and liberalism in the development of right-wing ideas during the twentieth century. And Nilsson is more restrained in his judgment. With regard to the first postwar years it seems more reasonable to talk of the national organisation of the Conservative Party receiving new and progressive impetus. Social conservatism underwent a recovery in the second half of the 1940s and the Conservatives stressed an active social policy much more than they had done earlier, even though between 1950 and 1961, during Jarl Hjalmarson's time as leader, they returned to a more classic form of economic liberalism. Nilsson's conclusion is that the Conservative Party had not abandoned conservatism but, during the first postwar decade, still found itself in the zone of tension between conservatism and liberalism.<sup>10</sup>

Torbjörn Nilsson brings significant nuances to the discussion but he does not actually address the question of which parts of conservative tradition became unusable as a result of National Socialism. Social and economic policies lie at the centre of his argument and those were areas in which experiences of Nazism did not call for general reorientation. There was a small group of liberals who, in line with Friedrich von Hayek, considered that a planned economy would pave the way for totalitarianism and who consequently argued for capitalism with fewer regulations.<sup>11</sup> But in Sweden, as in large parts of Europe, state interventionism enjoyed its heyday in the years after the Second World War. The conclusions drawn from the Depression of the 1930s provide the explanation to that; so the historical lesson was generated more by a background historical factor in Hitler's accession to power than by Nazism itself.

My study reveals, however, that several traditional conservative ideals were weakened in the aftermath of the Second World War, particularly within the cultural and intellectual fields. The best example is the schools question. The cultural-radical tradition of values that emerged with full force at the end of the war was made manifest in the Schools Commission of 1946 with its upgrading of political democracy, its education in citizenship focusing on the issues of the day, and with an educational approach based on the social sciences. It implied a complete break with the idealism of Neo-Humanism and the nationalism of popular rule. There were nevertheless those among the conservatives who were prepared to resist what they saw as secularisation and the removal of tradition; they emphasised, for instance, the importance of Christian concepts in matters of morality and upbringing. At the end of the 1940s a culturally conservative counter-offensive was initiated

against the dominance of cultural radicalism, but it is difficult to find any areas in which it genuinely succeeded in turning things around. In fact, seen in a longer historical perspective, it must be described as the death throes of cultural conservatism. Even within the Conservative Party the process of secularisation advanced by leaps and bounds in the second half of the 1950s and committed Christians found it more and more difficult to gain a hearing for their views.<sup>12</sup>

The key question is not whether it is possible to discover conservative tendencies in Swedish politics after 1945; the central issue is, rather, to locate the parts of the traditional conservative system of ideas that were stigmatised by the Nazi experience. Three main forms of conservative tradition developed in the first half of the nineteenth century in the aftermath of the French Revolution: legitimist conservatism, which upheld the concept of reaction and emphatically turned its back on the ideals of the Enlightenment; romantic conservatism, which was primarily a home for aesthetes – Schlegel, Novalis, Chateaubriand – and which longed for a return to a spiritual, pre-revolutionary *Alteuropa*; and liberal conservatism, which counted Edmund Burke as its progenitor and argued for successive limited reforms rather than revolutionary eruptions against tradition. It was only the last of these three that retained its viability for the whole of the century but, from the middle of the nineteenth century, social conservatism emerged as a new current alongside it: its criticisms focused on the negative sides of industrialisation and, in a spirit of patriarchalism it called for reform. The period after the First World War saw a more radical and active conservatism in Europe, known in Germany as ‘the conservative revolution’. Its supporters (Arthur Moeller van den Bruck, Oswald Spengler, Ernst Jünger and so on) broke with the Christian ethics of the nineteenth century and evoked a heroic aristocratic order instead.<sup>13</sup>

It was only the liberal conservative and social conservative strands that ran on into postwar Europe. The older forms were long since played out and the activist mobilisation of the interwar years stood far too close to Nazism to be able to muster any credibility. Consequently it was those conservative groupings that drew their nourishment from reactionary, romantic and ultra-nationalistic thinking which were dragged down with the collapse of the Third Reich. These were the conservatives who had never come to terms with the era of liberal democracy and who were fighting for something radically different, whether that involved a return to an older order or support for a revolution of the right. They coincide closely with what Stanley G. Payne has called authoritarian nationalism.<sup>14</sup> The conservative parties that re-emerged in Western Europe after 1945 espoused parliamentarism and the welfare

state and took moderation and *common sense* as all-round virtues. In the guise of Christian democratic parties they exerted significant influence in countries such as France, Italy, West Germany and Austria during the first postwar decades.<sup>15</sup>

During the years between the two world wars conservatism had been a more marginal force in Sweden than on the continent – this was particularly true of the anti-democratic, Greater Sweden movement connected with Rudolf Kjellén and Adrian Molin. It had lost much of its attraction after the dissolution of the union with Norway in 1905 and the setbacks suffered by the activists during the First World War. Social and economic conservatism was also considerably weaker in Sweden than in other Western European country after the Second World War. The groups in West Germany, for instance, that were arguing for Neo-Humanism and natural law as a response to the Nazi experience had very few equivalents in Sweden, where the power to draw conclusions lay in other hands. Thus the development of ideas among the Swedish right during the early postwar period reveals the more general connection between experience, historical lessons and perception of the future. The experiences of Nazism prompted a lesson that to some extent stigmatised certain aspects of the conservative tradition and to some extent cleared the road for a cultural-radical advance.<sup>16</sup>

Whether the lesson of Nazism also weakened the utopian left is an interesting question. As has already been mentioned, communism experienced a short-lived period of popularity around the end of the war, but it was quickly replaced by a growing sense of aversion. Although it is difficult to provide proof, there are signs that suggest that the Cold War and totalitarianism are not the only explanations for postwar anti-communism. One possibility is that the historical lesson of Nazism helped undermine all eschatological, titanic ideas in the political sphere. The postwar weariness with ideology was an expression of this anti-utopianism.<sup>17</sup>

But there are also other examples. It was not only the Prague coup that led three youngish Social Democrats to break away from the Clarté League in 1948. The letter they wrote to give their reasons for leaving refers to the experiences of Nazism:

Communism is a totalitarian ideology with roots in German metaphysics; in terms of economic theory it rests on a rigid doctrine of nationalisation, on the cultural plane it tacks in accordance with winds from Russia. Both ideologically and culturally modern social democracy build on impulses from the Anglo-Saxon tradition, on rationalism of the Bertrand Russell sort and, in terms of economic policy, on the technology of planned

economy that has been developed in Scandinavia, Great Britain and America during the last decades.<sup>18</sup>

This passage is enlightening. An attack on German metaphysics was combined with an attack on Russian influences, both being seen as evils. Over against them was modern social democracy, not attached to continental roots but springing from a progressive Anglo-Saxon tradition of rationalism and social planning. Similar voices could be heard from other sectors of the far left. Of course, not all of the changes in the Swedish communist party in the wake of the war can be reduced to a reaction to the Nazi experience, but the development from a full-blooded revolutionary communism to a more broadly based workers' party that started during these years fitted in well with the larger post-war pattern.<sup>19</sup>

If we look beyond the political sphere, the breakthrough of rationalist cultural radicalism is even more marked. 'The ideas of 1945', a manifestation of this tradition of values in very many respects, has been shown to be visible in education policies and in postwar legal discussions, but the lessons of Nazism put their mark on far more spheres than that. The antipathy to nationalistic outpourings, idealistic phraseology and grandiloquent metaphysics was visible everywhere.

The discipline of philosophy provides an illuminating example. During the first half of the twentieth century leading practitioners like Axel Hägerström and Adolf Phalén cleared away the remnants of idealism one by one. The gulf between the analytical camp and the continental camp became an abyss when Ingemar Hedenius, Konrad Marc-Wogau and Anders Wedberg occupied the three prestigious chairs of philosophy during the years immediately following the Second World War. The philosopher Johan Strang has looked at this process within a larger context and his views offer support to my propositions about the Nazi experience. He is of the view that the dominant position of analytical philosophy was linked with the process whereby the cultural centre of the Western world shifted from the German to the Anglo-Saxon sphere. To the eyes of the analytical philosophers, during the years between the wars continental philosophy had appeared as an expression of the conservative, German national tendencies of the age, and because of 'the perception that there was a connection between totalitarianism and "the other philosophers"', it took a long time for many parts of the Anglo-Saxon cultural sphere to consider it politically acceptable to be interested in continental philosophy'. That was certainly true in postwar Sweden, where the very fact that there were roots that linked the two orientations was denied.<sup>20</sup>

The experiences of Nazism in themselves did not, of course, shape the postwar conceptual world, but they undermined attempts to challenge cultural-radical rationalism. The 'faith and knowledge' debate (*tro- och vetandedebatten*), the great philosophical debate that took off around 1950, may be seen in this perspective. The profound repercussions that this trial of strength had on the intellectual culture of Sweden cannot be explained exclusively by Hedenius's combative debating technique. It was as if the resistance put up by the theologians was pointless, as if there was no room for anything other than analytical argumentation and a rationalistic outlook on the world.<sup>21</sup>

Anti-metaphysics, anti-idealism and anti-nationalism accorded with the more profound conclusions drawn from the Nazi experience. That was particularly true for the discipline of philosophy, but similar thinking occurred in almost all fields of knowledge. In 1949 Erik Lönnroth, the most influential Swedish postwar historian, published *En annan uppfattning* (A Different Point of View). In 'Epic and History', the introductory essay, he took up arms against the deviant forms of the epic, 'one of the very best resources for mendacious political propaganda' that constitutes a threat to 'the guarantee of reality that is provided by history working with the scientific method'. European disasters of recent decades – the allusion to Nazism was unambiguous – were spurred on to damnation by heroic legends, simplistic ideals of personality and 'the longing for a mighty world of epic rather than everyday life'. The work of the historian must be a constant struggle against 'the suggestible values of atmospherics', his aim 'the truth and nothing but the truth'. As far as Lönnroth was concerned, the discipline of history was all about a process of spiritual cleansing in the service of democracy, a struggle against idealistic ballast, empty convention and the false simplification of reality. He was thus working within and carrying on the inheritance from Lauritz Weibull who, with his inaugural lecture in 1919 immediately after the first great European war, had attempted to liberate the discipline from 'the militaristic and nationalistic philosophy of history of Treitschke'.<sup>22</sup>

The intellectual adjustment following 1945 was linked with a geographical reorientation. The examples from the disciplines of history and philosophy have demonstrated this, but it was also reflected in the social sciences. That was particularly the case with sociology, a discipline with a strong empirical orientation, inspired by Anglo-Saxon ideals and closely allied to architects of the welfare state.<sup>23</sup> Looking back on the first years after the Second World War, Bo Anderson, who like his teacher Torgny T. Segerstedt had moved from philosophy to sociology, recalled how the intellectual shaping of the new discipline went hand in hand with a process of cultural distancing:

After an uncertain start sociology had become a natural science, and since we believed that these philosophical authors are describing how natural sciences actually work, we sociologists diligently read theoretical works by Hempel, Braithwaite and Popper, partly to calm our occasional and at that time uncomfortable suspicion that sociology was not actually a natural science 'properly speaking'. Philosophical authors who were not reckoned to be founders of scientific theory were dismissed as 'metaphysicists' (if it was possible to state that a line of thought was *German* metaphysics then we considered we had said something *utterly* decisive).<sup>24</sup>

The aversion to things German that became entrenched in the wake of 1945 has been an important thread throughout my study. The movement towards the Anglo-Saxon world thus went hand in hand with an acceptance of new ideals and values. This reorientation to the west was so comprehensive that it has only been possible to suggest all its implications. Viewed from a more profound perspective it formed a definitive break in a very long historical process. Ever since the Middle Ages the most decisive impulses to reach Sweden had come from the south. Now, however, broad sections of the population regarded continental Europe – and Germany in particular – as highly suspect. As far as the working-class movement was concerned, the historian Klaus Misgeld has talked of a Swedish *Berührungsangst* (reluctance to come in contact) in respect of the continent with 'its unruly, even disquieting, diversity and its different cultural traditions'.<sup>25</sup> It is a description that helps us to understand the political and cultural gulf that opened up between Sweden and Western Europe in the postwar period. To find its causes we need to give some thought to the 1940s and ascribe central importance to the experiences of Nazism. The affairs of the continent, above all those of Germany, were omnipresent in public consciousness in Sweden during the first period after the war: 'the German catastrophe', in all its breadth and horror, was, as we have seen, thoroughly discussed. The conclusions that people drew reinforced a perception that already existed in many cases and hastened a shift away from the main European line that had already started.

Swedish attitudes to Catholicism will serve to illustrate this process. Anti-Catholic attitudes had been widespread in Sweden ever since the Reformation. Leading Swedish politicians and cultural figures could mount attacks on papist conservatism as late as the 1930s and 1940s. So it cannot be argued that the historical lesson of Nazism paved the way for anything very new in this area, but it did undoubtedly contribute to an already existing mistrust of Catholicism. It happened by two mutually reinforcing processes. On the one hand, the Catholic



Church played an important role in the integration of Western Europe that took off during the first years after the Second World War. To a considerable extent the initiative in this case lay in the hands of the Christian Democrat leaders at the heart of Catholic Europe and many people in Sweden considered it to be an undertaking that was biased in a confessional sense. On the other hand, many Swedes thought that Catholicism had similar characteristics to Nazism: irrationalism, mysticism and anti-modernism.<sup>26</sup> Even though Catholicism was not compared to Nazism, the two movements could be seen as having sprung from the same source. It is once again obvious that the lessons of Nazism were connected with how the development during the years around 1945 was interpreted, but it is also important not to fall prey to historical reductionism. It is not possible to evince any uncomplicated causal connections between the Nazi experiences and the new postwar order. The animosity against Catholicism reveals, like so much else in this study, that it was a matter of the interaction between recently won experiences, existing traditions, emerging perceptions – and who had succeeded in appropriating the right to interpret the historical lesson that followed from all of these.

If it is difficult to determine simple causal connections between the experiences of National Socialism and the cultural orientation of the postwar years, it is even more so in the case of the changed Swedish relationship with what we might call ‘the national’. Since Swedes had viewed Nazism as an ultra-nationalist phenomenon it is reasonable to assume that the Nazi experience led to reassessment and validation in this area too. To give a detailed picture would demand a more empirically based analysis than I have been able to provide here and my arguments must consequently remain tentative.

A number of observers have noted how the national discourse changed character between the interwar years and the postwar years. The 1930s had been characterised by a general stirring of national feeling in Sweden just as in other parts of Europe. The interests of the nation became paramount and national political consciousness took shape. The process of closing ranks behind the national flag crossed party lines, but the approval and support of Social Democrats were particularly important. During the course of the 1930s the dominant party of labour succeeded in clothing its vision of the *folkhem* in national costume, in a way that stressed the healthy and responsible love the Social Democrats had for their homeland, as compared to the jingoistic patriotism of the Conservatives. National consensus reached its height with the spirit of ‘preparedness’ of the Second World War.<sup>27</sup>

The process of retreat from such national sentiments has been shown in this study, and not only in the analyses of the school reforms in the middle of the 1940s. In actual fact, all significant discourse about the Nazi experience resulted in a resolute and unconditional rejection of nationalism. That is not, however, the same thing as saying that all forms of nationalism or nation-state ideology were spent after 1945. The nation was and remained a leading principle, although it was now, of course, associated with different concepts and symbols than it had been earlier. During the postwar period the home for the people, neutrality and modernity became the objects of national identification around which the consensus formed.<sup>28</sup>

What really suffered absolute reversal and decline with the end of the Second World War was the use of grandiose jingoistic language. What little remained of the rhetoric of 'Greater Sweden' faded away quite rapidly with the return of peace. Annual torchlit processions in memory of Karl XII were held until 1950, but the 30 November ceremonies disappeared out to the fringes after that. Gustavus Adolphus Day was still celebrated in Gothenburg at the beginning of the 1960s, but it is not clear whether what was being celebrated was the memory of him as hero king or as founder of the city. A more significant change can be perceived in social democratic historiography during the early postwar period. The historian Åsa Linderborg summarises it as follows: 'There was much less of an effort now to draw parallels between their own greatness and the Great Swedish past and much more effort to stress their own historical achievements. Out went the romance of ancestral burial mounds and in came paeans to the home for the people.'<sup>29</sup>

We might also reflect in the same spirit about the way the Nazi experience affected the postwar perception of humankind. Alf W. Johansson argued that anti-fascism anathematised all ideological elements that might be a seedbed for fascism, 'above all, of course, all forms of racist thinking'. That is a truth that needs nuancing. Racism was not, as my study has shown, central to the reading of Nazism current at that time. It was not until towards the end of the twentieth century that racial beliefs came to be seen as something that belonged to the essence of Nazism. As racial biology – which is one part of a larger complex of race ideology – was given official approval in the Third Reich, more and more people were challenging it. American and British geneticists had already begun criticising its basic concepts during the 1920s, but it was only in the 1930s that opposition solidified and by the end of that decade race biology had few adherents outside Germany. Race ideology was effectively played out as a part of political and scientific discourse after the Second World War, in Western Europe anyway. The historical

lesson of Nazism thus carried both a confirmatory and a self-examining impulse and these worked together to discredit perceptions of race.<sup>30</sup>

The situation in Sweden seems in general terms to have followed the same curve. When the National Institute for Race Biology was set up in Uppsala in the 1920s following a unanimous decision in parliament, eugenics was highly thought of. By the time Herman Lundborg, the first superintendent of the institute, openly came out in favour of Nazism in the early 1930s, race biology had already lost much of the respect which it had been afforded by the Swedish establishment. Gunnar Myrdal, Herbert Tingsten and others used their influence to have Gunnar Dahlberg appointed Lundborg's successor in 1936: Dahlberg was a researcher with social democratic leanings who broke with Lundborg's ideas and proceeded to replace ideas of race with reform eugenics.<sup>31</sup> In spite of the undermining of the scientific status of race biology in the course of the 1930s, sterilisations motivated by race hygiene continued on a relatively large scale even after 1945. The reasons for such operations were mental deficiency, mental illness and social circumstances and it was not until around 1950 that indications based on hereditary hygiene were replaced by medical and social policy indications. Mattias Tydén studied sterilisation in a comparative Scandinavian context and he pointed out that the use of repressive eugenic sterilisation peaked immediately after the Second World War. The conclusion reached by his study suggests that 'The collapse of Nazism and the revelations concerning Nazi racial policy do not seem to have had any immediate impact on the practice of sterilisation whether in Denmark or in Norway or in Sweden'. Tydén asks why the experiences of the Nazis' compulsory sterilisations had such a limited effect on the practice. His answer was that it probably depended on the fact 'that those applying the sterilisation laws did not see – or were not prepared to acknowledge – that there were parallels between the Nazi German and the Swedish sterilisation policy'. This supports my conclusion that race biology and race hygiene were not recognised as being central components of National Socialism.<sup>32</sup>

Anti-Semitic statements and stereotypes became taboo in Western European countries after the Second World War. That change is incontrovertible as far as the first two decades following 1945 are concerned. It has seemed natural – without going into the connection more closely – to ascribe this to the extermination of the Jews during the war years. The negative attitudes to Jews that continued to exist in the early postwar period were not voiced in the public arena – indeed, there has even been reference to the public philo-Semitism of that period as, for instance, revealed by strong support for the state of Israel.<sup>33</sup> In his study

of Swedish anti-Semitism after 1945 Henrik Bachner suggests that very much the same sort of development could be seen in Sweden. The murder of Folke Bernadotte in 1948 led to angry reactions, but only in exceptional cases were there signs of anti-Semitism. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s anti-Semitism was virtually unanimously condemned in Sweden and only later did anti-Semitic stereotypes and accusations surface again in debate, usually in connection with the conflicts in the Middle East.<sup>34</sup>

The postwar condemnation of nationalism, racism and anti-Semitism cannot be seen as a simple and self-evident reaction to Nazism. It is rather an example of the way experiences are interpreted and converted into a historical lesson that wins widespread acceptance. For Enlightenment-minded cultural radicals a condemnation of expressions of racism and Nazism was absolutely in line with the value tradition they subscribed to and worked to promote. The historical lesson of Nazism contained a defence of democracy and human values, but it equally involved an attack on unscientific and superstitious doctrines. This was the basis on which influential postwar intellectuals like Gunnar Myrdal and Herbert Tingsten combated racism and nationalism.<sup>35</sup> But the case of the race hygiene sterilisations demonstrates how important it is to distinguish between the perceptions of Nazism in the 1940s and the perceptions of Nazism in the 2000s. Since eugenics was not unquestioningly associated with Nazism in the years after the war, it avoided being radically discredited.

Posterity also reacted against the Nazi creed of traditionally masculine and military virtues. The capitulation of Germany meant that 'the myth of the experience of war' (George L. Mosse) finally lost its powerful attraction. Hitler had been promising to re-establish German honour as late as his last radio speech in January 1945: the concept of honour, however, now underwent a drastic shift of meaning, moving in the direction of civil and democratic virtues.<sup>36</sup> There are signs in Sweden that the Nazi cult of the body led to the ideals of Lingian gymnastics becoming suspect: it had already been in decline during the interwar period – like many other features that had their origin in the early nineteenth century – but the real coup de grâce came during the 1940s. The sports historian Jan Lindroth has suggested several explanations, one of which was that the Ling tradition was very different from the Anglo-Saxon cultural tradition. 'Certain aspects of Lingian gymnastics – the mass performance to military-style commands, for instance – seem likely to have been associated more with Germany and, perhaps, other countries on the losing side in the war', he writes with reference to its definitive demise after the Second World War.<sup>37</sup>

On a more profound level we need to ask whether the Nazi experience did not drag a whole emotional register into disrepute. After 1945 was it still possible to argue for unconditional discipline, sacred earnestness or heroic dedication? Anecdotal evidence from Henrik Munktell, a Conservative and a legal historian, suggests that certain kinds of emotional commitment were treated with suspicion, in the political sphere anyway. He attended a Social Democrat meeting in 1948 and was frightened by the enthusiasm of the participants. Munktell was of the opinion that had it not been for the absence of boots and brown shirts he might well have been at a Nazi meeting.<sup>38</sup>

### *Nazism and the Postwar Territory*

Rationalist cultural radicalism thus set its stamp on the postwar ideological terrain. The experiences of Nazism generated a lesson that to a very considerable extent was oriented towards the future. The ideas of 1945 did, of course, have historical origins in earlier periods, but there was no need to return to ideals whose time had passed. Sweden differed from Germany in this respect: in West Germany there was a strong desire to link back with something that had not been destroyed, something that existed before the great catastrophe – like Neo-Humanism and natural law. In Sweden it was all about sweeping away any remaining remnants and looking to the future.

The differences between the two countries offer a fruitful contrast. Their background has to be sought in fundamental historical conditions: which traditions remained strong at the end of the war; which interpretations of Nazism were present; which groups had the power to form opinion. And there is no doubt that among such things is what might be called – in a rather nebulous way – the significance of concrete experience. In 1945, in a Germany that was demoralised and ravaged by war, people were faced with problems of a totally different order from those faced in Sweden. The experience of Nazism, both as an ideology and as a power system, had been so much more pervasive in Germany and that shaped the processing and the historical lesson.

An example will serve to underline the different preconditions. Very shortly after the war West German architects set about freeing themselves from the monumentalist architectural ideals of the Nazis. Their common purpose was to rehabilitate *die Neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity), the form of Weimar modernism represented above all by the group around the Bauhaus school. During the Third Reich it had been categorised as a hotbed of cultural decadence and many of its practitioners driven into exile. When German architects, industrial designers and

town planners took up their Bauhaus inheritance again at the end of the 1940s, they did so quite specifically in order to distance themselves from Nazism, particularly from the 'aestheticisation of politics' that, according to Walter Benjamin, was one of its characteristics. Much of the debate and the practical work during these years involved the rediscovery of simple, respectable ideals, untarnished by Nazism.<sup>39</sup> Swedish architecture of the same period, on the other hand, saw no need to settle accounts with the recent past. Wartime shortages had certainly meant that the onward march of 1930s modernism had come to a halt, but after 1945 the heritage of functionalism could be developed further without any discussion of its foundations. In so far as the issue of Nazism arose at all, it was as a weapon for opponents to use against one another. As far as Swedish town planners and architects were concerned, the experience of Nazism never led to a general review of national traditions: if anything, it reinforced tradition and encouraged continuity.<sup>40</sup>

The debate about architecture provides a good example of the significance of the concrete experience. In the case of Germany it was a matter of finding as quickly as possible an architectonic ideal that could form the basis for the rebuilding of the devastated townscape. As with educational policy, but unlike the situation in the legal sphere, it was done by distancing themselves from the ideals that had pertained in Nazi Germany and reconnecting with what had been a strong trend in the Weimar republic. Sweden had no totalitarian architecture to settle accounts with and there was no desire to break with the preceding decade. In spite of different preconditions, the German and the Swedish historical lessons led to support for related ideals.

The larger postwar territory, too, had its architects, planners and developers and they were the ones who decoded and administered the historical lesson; they were the ones who interpreted the experiences and drew the conclusions that provided the basis for the new ideological landscape. Theirs were the plans that would hold good for the first two postwar decades anyway; thereafter – bit by bit – they would be revised and overturned.

## **The Historical Lesson: Locus and Change**

Up to this point the historical lesson of Nazism has appeared as something of a free-floating entity. It has been articulated by individuals and it has been possible to trace it in significant documents, but it has never been anchored in a social collective. The scope of the lesson has, moreover, been limited to the early postwar period whereas, in fact,

the Nazi experience survived longer than that. To follow change in the lesson, in the zone of tension between old and new experiences, offers a perspective on our own time.

### *The Privilege of Formulating the Historical Lesson*

Historical processes are shaped in the dynamism between change and continuity. That is also true of the processes which are in the foreground here. Two examples, one German and one French, will be instructive in helping us to understand how the lesson of Nazism could set its mark on the postwar period.

Historians have long been involved in a debate about the place of the Third Reich in the history of Germany. During the years immediately after the Second World War the dominant understanding was that the Nazis were an alien element in German history and that, consequently, the years from 1933 to 1945 were a parenthesis. In contrast to this the 1960s and 1970s came up with an interpretation which explained Nazi Germany as the culmination of the authoritarian and militaristic tendencies in German history. This variant, which was associated in particular with Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Jürgen Kocka and their *Sonderweg* (special path) thesis, emphatically stressed the continuity between Bismarck's empire and Hitler's. Thomas Nipperdey objected that such an interpretation was far too one-sided. He saw German history as consisting of several continuities. The Kaiser's empire could not only be seen as a predecessor to 1933 but was also a part of the prehistory of the Weimar republic and the Federal Republic. It was self-evident that the roots of Nazism should be sought in Germany's past, but so too should those of postwar democracy.<sup>41</sup>

Nipperdey's view can be transferred to Sweden: just as there is more than *one* form of continuity in German history, there is more than *one* form in Sweden. The order that took shape after the war was not inscribed on a tabula rasa. The men and women of 1945 connected with existing traditions at the same time as the experiences of Nazism were weakening other lines of thinking or causing them to be discarded. Rationalist cultural radicalism had had its proponents long before the Second World War, but as late as the 1930s it was still being challenged by other tendencies and lacked the self-evident dominance that it enjoyed later.

How can a political and intellectual trial of strength change the direction of social development? In a study of France during the First World War, the historian Martha Hanna put forward a thought-provoking view. The struggle in France was essentially between two ideological

camps: on one side was the secular, scientific and cosmopolitan left, on the other the conservative, Catholic and royalist right. The war involved a nationalist revival which the intellectuals of the right were best placed to utilise. Their reading of the war was adopted and paved the way for the advance of conservatism in the 1920s. In a climate permeated by anti-intellectual, anti-Semitic and anti-German attitudes, many disillusioned intellectuals on the left deserted politics. Hanna sees the broad support for the right during the interwar period as a result of the truce between the political parties that was agreed during the First World War, a *union sacrée* that welded the nation together and led it to accept values that were essentially conservative. The prewar polarisation was thus exchanged for a consensus which bore the imprint of Maurice Barrès, Charles Maurras and Maurice Pujo.<sup>42</sup>

What could be witnessed in France during the First World War might be described as *the privilege of formulating the historical lesson*. The war in itself did not cause an ideological fault line. It was the interpretation of its meaning that prepared the way for the advance of political ideas in the postwar years. The French right succeeded in gaining mastery of the collective experience and assuming the right to interpret its meaning. In short, they usurped the privilege of formulating the lesson.<sup>43</sup>

The idea can be transferred to the Swedish situation. As we have seen, in the wake of the Second World War a multifarious reworking of the events of the foregoing years took place. Unlike the situation in France it is not possible to distinguish two distinct factions fighting for the privilege of formulating the lesson: what characterised the Swedish situation, in fact, was the significant level of unanimity. As in France, however, the conclusions that were drawn had far-reaching consequences. The interpretation of the Nazi experience was reserved for a certain – albeit large and vocal – segment of the Swedish public. For that segment, ‘the generation of 1945’, the historical lesson prompted rethinking at the same time as reinforcing previously held convictions.

### *The Generation of 1945*

The early postwar period certainly did not lack its controversial issues but the interpretation of Nazism was not one of them. The fact that the Swedish public arena was relatively homogeneous is an important factor. It was an arena dominated by well-educated men, often the products of one of the country’s few seats of learning. In many respects the public space had been gradually opened up since the end of the nineteenth century but, as far as public discourse was concerned, the newspapers in the major cities remained the most important forum of



opinion. Those who set the tone of this discourse belonged to a great extent to the same classes as those that dominated political and cultural life.<sup>44</sup>

It is possible to argue that circumstances like these limit the scope of this study. In a certain sense that is so. Reinhart Koselleck has, however, pointed to something central in this context. There is a multiplicity of factors – social, cultural, political – that overlies historical experiences and acts like a sort of filter, defining the extent to which experiences can be made by being both a limitation *and* a precondition of collective experiences.<sup>45</sup> Koselleck distinguishes a number of social and cognitive premises that circumscribe but also enable superindividual experiences, for instance linguistic community (shared communication and interaction), shared conceptions (religious, ideological, outlook on the world) and social stratifications (gender, class and other categories). The concept of generation is of particular importance for the sort of historical experience represented by the Nazi experience in that it makes it possible to anchor the tradition of culture-radical values in a social and intellectual collective, a group of decision makers, opinion formers and thinkers who transformed practical experience to historical experience and historical experience to historical lesson.<sup>46</sup>

Any scholarly discussion about generations has to relate to the interwar sociologist Karl Mannheim. His general terminology is still useful even though his theory of generations bears a strong imprint of German experiences in the wake of the First World War. The concept of generations for him did not refer to birth cohorts and was not primarily defined in temporal terms. What constituted a generation was above all shared experiences.<sup>47</sup>

The overarching concept for Mannheim is the ‘generational stratum’ (*Generationslagerung*); this defines the collective that is born at approximately the same point in time and in the same historical-social space. This basic affiliation to a historical community forms the precondition for what he calls ‘generational context’ (*Generationszusammenhang*), a grouping that does not only exist in terms of existence during a given period but which also demands engagement in the currents and crises of the age. In other words, membership of a particular birth cohort is not sufficient in itself to be counted as a shared generational context: it is necessary to be an integral part of the action of the problems of the age. In a generational context there are, in turn, a number of generational factions (*Generationseinheiten*) each of which reacts to and processes the key events of its age in its own way. A generational faction is united partly as a network in which ideas are exchanged and questions debated and partly in its support of the same basic intentions

and principles. A form of socialisation takes place within each faction, which means that members view questions from the point of view of the group. Mannheim distinguished three different types of generational faction: the leading (*führende*) faction, the redirected (*umgelenkte*) and the suppressed (*unterdrückte*). Ideological and cultural changes are reflected in the shifting of power between these three groups.<sup>48</sup>

Karl Mannheim's overall theory may be transferred to what I have chosen to call 'the generation of 1945'. It is a designation for the leading generational faction of Enlightenment-minded, rationalist cultural radicals who had the privilege of formulating the lesson in the early postwar period. They were a segment of the larger generation made up of Swedes born between 1890 and 1910. The generational context, the collective that formulated and addressed collective problems, consisted of the intellectual, political and artistic groupings which had involved themselves in the ideological eternal triangle of the interwar years. They had been profoundly influenced by the divisions in political ideas in Europe in the aftermath of the First World War, and during the 1930s they had closed ranks against Nazism. In contrast to a younger generation, however – the generation whose childhood and youth coincided with the 1920s and 1930s – they often retained an ambivalent attitude to German culture.

Herbert Tingsten (1896–1973) and Ingemar Hedenius (1908–1982) were typical of the generation of 1945. They were representatives of their generational faction not least because of their polemical contributions and ideological purification work in *Dagens Nyheter*, the most influential press organ of the time in terms of opinion formation. But they were not alone. At the end of the 1940s and the start of the 1950s numerous influential writers and academics of the same stamp emerged: the economist Torsten Gårdlund (1911–2003), the journalist Ivar Harrie (1899–1973), the literary historian Olle Holmberg (1893–1974), the critic Knut Jaensson (1893–1958), the author Artur Lundkvist (1906–1991), the historian Erik Lönnroth (1910–2002), the sociologist Torgny T. Segerstedt (1908–1999), the author Karl Vennberg (1910–1995) and the philosopher Anders Wedberg (1913–1978). Among those with more direct party-political affiliations there were Social Democrats like Tage Erlander (1901–1985), Alva Myrdal (1902–1986), Gunnar Myrdal (1898–1987), Ulla Lindström (1909–1999) and Ernst Wigforss (1881–1977); and there were also Liberals such as Bertil Ohlin (1899–1979), Thorwald Bergquist (1899–1972) and Hardy Göransson (1894–1969).<sup>49</sup>

Belonging to the same generational faction there was a large group of people who were active in more specific areas in which rationalist cultural radicalism had an influence in the early postwar years: public

health representatives like Axel Höjer (1890–1974), Signe Höjer (1896–1988) and Gustav Jonsson (1907–1994); Social Democrat education politicians like Stellan Arvidson (1902–1997), Ragnar Edenman (1914–1998) and Nils Gustav Rosén (1907–1993); journalists and publishers like Manne Ståhl (1901–1976), Anders Yngve Pers (1902–1985) and Carl Björkman (1901–1961); writers and academics like Leif Kihlberg (1895–1973), Per Nyström (1903–1993) and Henrik Sandblad (1912–1991); authors like Stina Aronsson (1892–1956), Eyvind Johnson (1900–1976) and Vilhelm Moberg (1898–1973); scholars with an orientation towards social science and jurisprudence like Torsten Husén (1916–2009), Per Olof Ekelöf (1906–1990) and Jörgen Westerståhl (1916–2006).<sup>50</sup>

There is little need to point out that this generation of 1945 covers a very wide range. I have put Cold Warriors like Ture Nerman and Herbert Tingsten alongside representatives of the Third Way like Artur Lundkvist and Karl Vennberg, academic liberals like Erik Lönnroth and Torgny T. Segerstedt alongside Social Democratic politicians like Alva Myrdal and Stellan Arvidson.<sup>51</sup> If the concept is not to lose all its meaning we need to place this leading generation in contrast with something else, with the redirected and the suppressed generations for example.

The generation of 1945 did not include any purely conservative advocates: they were excluded for ideological reasons as we have seen in my discussion of the nature of the political field during the early postwar period. Gösta Bagge (1882–1951), Erik Wellander (1884–1977) and Tor Andrae (1885–1947) were typical representatives of that tendency, all of them important figures in the 1940 Schools Commission but perhaps rather too old to really be counted within the same generational context. In the Conservative Party, in the conservative morning papers, and in many church circles, there were, however, a number of people in the 1950s who could not come to terms with the ideas of 1945: they included authors such as Harry Blomberg (1893–1950) and Sven Stolpe (1905–1996), representatives of the church such as Märta Boman (1902–1986) and Bo Giertz (1905–1998) and of the Riksdag such as Ebon Andersson (1896–1969) and Axel Fredrik Mannerskantz (1897–1975). Nor did the dominant generational faction include out-and-out communists, many of whom – including Hilding Hagberg (1899–1993), Sven Linderot (1889–1956) and Set Persson (1897–1960) – actually shared the rationalism and enthusiasm for the enlightenment of cultural radicalism, but given their stance in the world of the Cold War and their attacks on political democracy they could never be part of the influential mainstream. Both these groups constituted suppressed generational factions and lacked the power to influence broad opinion or to shape the order of the postwar years.<sup>52</sup>

Mannheim's discussion of the redirected generational type is somewhat unclear. He seems to mean that these people were predisposed to both the victorious ideal of the time and to the defeated ideal. It was circumstances that led them to move in the direction of the former.<sup>53</sup> Expressed in different terms, this can imply both greater ideological shifts within a given generational faction as well as rethinking by individuals. The change that can be seen in the schools debate between 1944 and 1946 – that is, the move from a Neo-Humanist and national attitude to one of democratic citizenship – provides an example of that kind of ideological shift. Between the wars there must have been quite a number of younger Swedes who sympathised with some form of authoritarian nationalism (without, however, going as far as Nazism) but who changed their position during the 1940s. During the 1930s the historian Sven Ulric Palme (1912–1977) was involved in the Heimdal movement and the national conservative debate, although always keeping well away from Nazism. After the Second World War Palme distanced himself from the ideals of his youth and appeared as an orthodox Weibullian. In 1953 Palme, marked by the Nazi experience, published a book about hero worship in history. It had an expressly political purpose: 'to serve as a remedy for the hero worship and the worship of power, success and physical force that traditionalist historiography and certain modern heresies have spread even in our country'.<sup>54</sup>

The leading faction, the men and women of 1945, can to some extent be seen as a political generation, a generational context characterised by prewar and wartime conflicts.<sup>55</sup> But the lesson of Nazism never shaded the ideological landscape along straightforward party political lines. Chapter III dealt with the marginalisation of certain groups – often those of a Christian or idealistic worldview – that did not fit in with these limits. Alf Ahlberg (1892–1959), author, philosopher and popular educator, is a case in point. Ahlberg was active in the labour movement throughout his life, including as rector of the Brunnsvik Folk High School from 1932 to 1959. During the 1930s and 1940s he was an energetic defender of democracy and translated a great deal of anti-Nazi literature. So Ahlberg undoubtedly belonged to the same generational context as Tingsten, Hedenius and others in the generation of 1945, but not to the leading faction. For many years he regularly wrote cultural articles for *Dagens Nyheter*, but after the war the leading newspaper in Sweden no longer wanted him. In spite of the fact that his party political sympathies were in accord with the age, his Christian humanism and idealistic standpoint were regarded as outdated goods by the influential cultural radicals.<sup>56</sup>

Mannheim's generation theory is valuable in that it underlines the importance of historical experiences. It also provides a terminology for delimiting and categorising collectives. In order to understand the dynamics of history, why certain ideas triumph and others are abandoned, generational shifts must be taken into account. This is particularly so for the Swedish 1940s.<sup>57</sup>

By the end of the Second World War those born during the 1870s and 1880s were finally stepping down from their cultural and political platforms. It was not only Fredrik Böök and Sven Hedin: the whole of their generational context, so marked by its enthusiasm for things imperially German, turn-of-the-century nationalism and the rifts of the First World War, was replaced by a new context. They were replaced by the generation of 1945, a faction of rationalistic cultural radicals born around 1900, and it was the experience of Nazism of this latter group that paved the way for the postwar ideological orientation. The contrast with the Federal Republic of Germany is striking: when Tage Erlander became Swedish prime minister in 1946 he was forty-five years old; when Konrad Adenauer became the first chancellor of the Federal Republic a few years later, he was seventy-three. The Christian Democrat from Cologne demonstrates that public life in Germany was dominated by older men. The generational faction that set the tone during the 1950s had its own experiences of the Wilhelmine age and the Weimar Republic and was keen to see a return to the central ideals of these periods. Younger groups seldom had anything to say.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of the generational change, a form of continuity in Sweden must be highlighted. In a very rewarding essay the historian Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner has revealed a chain of generations that are linked together by a common fundamental purpose (*Grundaufgabe*). Three consecutive generations, from the early period of empire up to the First World War, shared the goal of creating a special German form of modernity – heroic modernity. They influenced each other and were part of an intertextual union, but there were particular features that distinguished one generation from another. Kittsteiner's argument offers a way of reconciling break and continuity in our view of historical generational changes – and it can quite easily be transferred to the Swedish situation.<sup>59</sup> The generation of 1945 goes together with that of the 1880s and with the cultural radicals of the interwar period: their common mission was to work in a rationalistic, democratic, Enlightenment spirit founded on materialism and secularism. At the same time, however, the cultural radicals of the postwar period were distinct from their late-nineteenth-century predecessors: they lacked, for instance, much of the unconditional belief in development and

the confidence in the future that were so characteristic of the 1880s generation.<sup>60</sup>

The generational change in the middle of the twentieth century offers a social explanation for the cultural radicals' ownership of the privilege of formulating the historical lesson. That explanation can be complemented by a more psychological one. Inspired by Tocqueville, the media scientist Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann has developed a theory of the spiral of silence. The basic idea is a simple one: people who rightly or wrongly believe themselves to be deviating from the dominant opinion tend to suppress their desire to express their views, whereas those who believe their opinion to be in accord with the dominant one are reinforced in their view. According to Noelle-Neumann, the fear of isolation is more important to the great majority of people than expressing what they really believe. Since individuals are aware of swings of opinion and have a tendency to adapt to the winning side, divergent attitudes are marginalised one by one and a spiral of silence arises.<sup>61</sup> The theory thus provides a social psychological perspective. One obvious weakness is that it does not provide a satisfactory explanation as to why a particular opinion gains the upper hand in the first place. Nor does it take account of other reasons for individuals avoiding expressing their opinions: knowledge, interest, relevance, confidence and so on. On the other hand, it does give us a degree of understanding as to how a set of values and ideals – the ideas of 1945 – could establish itself so quickly as the hegemonic body of views. Given the enormous pressure exerted by the Nazi experience many people with anachronistic attitudes remained silent.

Viewed historically the cultural radicalism of the postwar period cannot be distinguished from the general radicalism that characterised the time: each fuelled the other in many respects. Immediately after the war the Social Democratic government launched a whole series of legal, economic and social reforms, of which the programme for a planned economy was among the more controversial. A greater degree of party political agreement was achieved in other questions and a whole series of significant decisions was taken in the first postwar years: decision on the old-age pension in 1946, universal child benefit in 1947, the code of judicial procedure in 1948, freedom of the press law in 1949, the comprehensive school in 1950 and the religious freedom law in 1951. An all-round spirit of reform added wind to the sails of the rationalistic cultural radicals as they set course for the future.

The members of generation of 1945 thus became bearers of the historical lesson of Nazism. Statistically speaking they were no more than a small proportion of the population and to a great extent they

were representative of the ideological and intellectual top stratum. The proportion of women, for instance, was small in these circles during the 1940s and 1950s, even though there were relatively many in other areas – in education in particular.<sup>62</sup> In spite of the class and gender limitations it has to be emphasised that the rationalist cultural radicals had real power when it came to shaping the postwar order. In the beginning, right at the end of the war, they were a radical avant-garde and it took some time for everyone to be convinced.<sup>63</sup> As resistance weakened during the 1950s they were able – as the trend-setting elite – to exert a noticeable influence on the age in which they lived. But nothing lasts for ever.

### *The Changing Historical Lesson*

A central element in Hans-Georg Gadamer's thinking was that an experience remained valid for as long as it was not refuted by a new experience. The historical process contains continual confirmations of experiences – as well as challenges to them. That leads to even the most profound experiences eventually being reassessed and ascribed a new meaning. For Reinhart Koselleck experience had the character of the present past, whether it was a case of a rational reworking of historical experiences or of a more unconscious attitude. Like Gadamer he thought that the meaning of an experience changes with time. Experiences overlay and permeate one another, and new hopes and new disappointments have a retrospective effect on them.

The lesson itself changes over time. When the meaning of the experience changes, the conclusions that were once drawn from it are challenged. At the same time, the transformation of the historical lesson is closely linked to new perceptions of the future taking shape. When a formerly unknown horizon of expectation emerges, the experiential space appears to some extent in a new light. But not all experiences are reassessed at the same time, and it is necessary to separate out different levels. Koselleck distinguishes between three layers of experience in this instance.

The first, utterly primary, experience is the one acquired by actually taking part in it, by actually being present. It is unique, cannot be repeated and is usually limited to one individual or to a smallish group. A different form of experience is provided by those experiences that have a really long-term effect, those profound historical currents that are not usually immediately obvious and only become apparent through systematic historical reflection. Koselleck suggested the decline of the Roman Empire as an example, arguing that long-term experiences

transcend the specific experiences of generations, of groups, or of the formation of nations.<sup>64</sup> Between those two forms lies another layer of experience: this form involves accumulated experiences, those that are re-narrated and passed on. In contrast to primary experiences these are more lasting and self-confirming in that they are transmitted in larger collective circumstances. Consequently they are also strongly dependent on social and cultural demarcation and, in particular, they are generation specific. It is possible to fix and institutionalise experiences in many ways – in the family and group, in a party or organisation, or in social and ideological milieu. ‘Thus experiences are unique – in that they happen, and at the same time they are repeatable – in that they are collected’, Koselleck concluded.<sup>65</sup>

The Nazi experience is a typical example of this intermediate layer. National Socialism was experienced and confronted in a specific generational context. The cultural-radical faction that assumed the right after the war to interpret the meaning of the experience could do so with lasting effect. It is unlikely that the lesson of Nazism was changed in any fundamental way once the generation of 1945 departed from the scene, because much of the experience had been institutionalised by then, sometimes so successfully that it had been transformed into the third and most long-lasting type, what Koselleck called *Fremderfahrung*, the transmitted or narrated form of experience. That does not prevent new experiences and perceptions of the future having an impact on the conclusions that were eventually reached and leading to a partially new historical lesson.<sup>66</sup>

Taking the central layer of experience as our starting point we can sketch the transformation of the lesson of Nazism during the postwar period. Although it is a process that can only be touched upon in the present context it is important to see it in connection with the changes in the collective memories of National Socialism. A central question is how the change in memories also changed the historical lesson of Nazism.<sup>67</sup>

A number of international works have treated the first post-1945 years as a specific epoch, complete in itself. The early postwar period was a time characterised on one hand by coming to terms with the disasters of the foregoing decade, and on the other hand by wide-ranging planning for the future. In Sweden as in the rest of Europe the after-effects of National Socialism were very evident during the first years of peace.<sup>68</sup>

With the end of the 1940s, however, Nazism rapidly disappeared from the public space in Sweden. National Socialism had set its mark on debate for almost two decades, but it was definitively pushed into



the background during the 1950s. There was a flurry of debate around 1960 and the occasional new book sparked off some interest, but taken as a whole it really was a mild flurry compared with the storm of interest in National Socialism during the 1940s. To all intents and purposes Nazism was absent from public debate in Sweden.<sup>69</sup>

The Swedish pattern matches the bigger Western European picture. The memory of Nazism faded and lost its charge during the 1950s. National Socialism was incorporated into the patriotic narratives about the Second World War that were growing in strength during that period. They took the form of special pleading in defence of the wartime actions of one's own particular country. In this context Nazism was presented not only as essentially different from postwar democratic systems but, in a more profound sense, as an anomaly in the political traditions of the nations, as an alien element lacking any domestic provenance. Even in countries like Italy, West Germany and Austria guilt was toned down and ascribed to a thin stratum of evil, manipulative leaders. The historical lesson of Nazism served effectively for purposes of self-confirmation during the early postwar decades.<sup>70</sup>

The fact that the manifestations of memory were weak does not imply the same thing as saying that the experience had lost its meaning. The lesson laid down by the generation of 1945 stood up well for two decades and, in many respects, for longer than that. Representatives of this faction occupied the leading offices in cultural life and society up until the end of the 1960s. The two decades that followed the end of the war stand out as a well-defined era, sometimes referred to as 'the long 1950s'. In cultural terms American influence was strong and there existed an ideological scepticism about totalitarian claims and grand projects. In the shadow of the Cold War and with an expanding welfare state the public sphere was dominated by experts in social reform and intellectuals attached in some way to the state, rather than free thinkers or members of bourgeois culture. This was the high period of cultural-radical rationalism. No decisive experiences emerged during this time to undermine the historical lesson of Nazism and perceptions of the future remained largely intact.<sup>71</sup>

By the middle of the 1970s it was possible to register the first signs of a thoroughgoing transformation of the landscape of collective memory. In West Germany Nazism had been dragged back to the centre of events as early as the 1960s as a result of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961 and the Auschwitz trials in Frankfurt from 1963 to 1965. For Marxists of the 1968 movement fascism lay latent in all capitalist systems, particularly in states that had never confronted their past and were now considered to be ruled by Nazi sleepers. When revolutionary

commitment eased back a little in the early 1970s there were fears that the retreat from left-wing radicalism would be followed by a reaction from the right.<sup>72</sup> Around 1980, Nazi crimes were given renewed prominence and brought to a wider audience: *Holocaust*, the American television series, was shown all over the Western world in between 1978 and 1979 and contributed to fixing the images of the Final Solution in the minds of millions. During the 1980s a wave of self-examination swept over Western Europe and brought old issues to the surface. The past of president Kurt Waldheim was discussed in Austria; West Germany had nothing short of a *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispute); and debates about collaboration and resistance raged in France and in Belgium. The culture of memory was in the process of change and a new lesson – more critical, more self-searching – was emerging.<sup>73</sup>

It took some time before these changes could be discerned in Sweden. Admittedly the fascist structure of society was a target for the movement of 1968 in Sweden too, but settling accounts with the events of the Second World War was never – unlike the situation on the continent – a main concern of radical left-wingers in Sweden. The small-state realist interpretation remained dominant both among scholars and with the public for a long time; it was a patriotic narrative that not only defended the wartime policies of the coalition government but also viewed Nazism as something alien to the life of Swedish society.<sup>74</sup>

During the latter part of the 1980s, however, it was possible to hear the opening notes of the process of self-examination that would characterise the following decade. One significant example was the animated debate that broke out about Zarah Leander. Ever since her return to the stage in Sweden at the end of the 1940s the dominant narrative had been that of the naïve and apolitical diva. The Swedish primadonna made herself an eloquent proponent of this view. In her autobiographical volume *Vill ni se en diva?* (Do you want to see a diva?) (1958) Leander admitted she had been ill-informed about the way events were developing in Nazi Germany, but she stressed that she had gone there in order to earn money, not because she had any sympathy with the regime. Swedish reviewers of the book accepted her account of the situation and passed it on. The story of the naïve diva recurred in *Zarah* (1972), her volume of memoirs, which dismissed her career in the Third Reich as of no consequence. At the end of the 1980s, however, a compromised narrative of Leander emerged as the result of a musical about her. Ingrid Segerstedt Wiberg, a well-known liberal anti-Nazi, went on the attack against the accolades being showered on a Nazi fellow traveller, and there was no shortage of supporting fire. A steady stream of articles by well-known writers set about revising the image

of Leander the innocent primadonna. She was presented instead as a willing servant of the regime in Germany, someone whose presence on the German stage was a cog in the Nazi war machine. Leander's creation of an innocent blue-eyed self was no longer given much credence – 'anyone who wanted to know knew', as the journalist Anders Ehnmark put it. The apolitical diva had to move over and make space for the immoral diva.<sup>75</sup>

The critical new narrative fitted in well with the in-depth reassessment of the Swedish relationship with Nazism that began in earnest around that time. In 1987, the same year as the Leander musical opened, Ingmar Bergman published his *Laterna Magica* (The Magic Lantern). The autobiography attracted much attention, not least because Bergman openly admitted that he had been fascinated by Nazism in his youth. A year or so later a book about the prominent Swedish financial dynasty, the Wallenberg family, and its links with Nazi Germany also led to public controversy.<sup>76</sup>

There were some people who were inclined to see a bigger picture behind the Leander controversy. The cultural journalist Ingmar Björkstén, for example, took the view that Swedish intellectuals had avoided really dealing with the mentality of the Second World War. In his view neither the arts nor scholarship had shown themselves capable of truly getting to grips with the problems. He saw the tribute devoted to *die Leander* as profoundly symptomatic:

That this is happening in Sweden is not surprising. Quite the opposite: it confirms the function that has been placed on Zarah Leander by her 'forgetful' countrymen in her homeland. By forgiving and glossing over the fact that she actually served German interests up to the fateful year 1942/1943 just as zealously as Swedish foreign and trade policy did, *the conscience of Sweden is forgiving itself*.<sup>77</sup>

Björkstén's plea that the Swedes should set about examining their own actions was mirrored elsewhere. A couple of years later, in 1991, Maria-Pia Boëthius published *Heder och samvete* (Honour and Conscience), her assessment of Swedish small-state realism – a book based on the same propositions as Björkstén. During the 1990s and early 2000s a whole series of critical articles and works of popular history appeared on the subject of Sweden's relationship with Nazism and the Third Reich.<sup>78</sup> That development was accompanied by a change of focus in Swedish historical research and considerable numbers of studies of anti-Semitism, race biology and Swedish relations with Nazi Germany were published. The new narrative was given an official blessing in 1997 when the prime minister, Göran Persson, took the initiative to set up the Living History Project, the aim of which was to disseminate

information and promote the work of democracy, tolerance and human rights, taking the Holocaust as its point of departure.<sup>79</sup> A series of public revelations also attracted a great deal of attention. The biographies of notable figures in the cultural and commercial worlds – figures such as Ingvar Kamprad, Karl Vennberg and Per Olof Sundman – had to be adjusted when their political engagement during the 1930s and 1940s was revealed. At the end of the war they and many others had managed to paper over the brown chapters in their lives and thus avoid being branded. These cases reminded people of the presence of Nazism in Swedish history and gradually encouraged the emergence of a different view of the past.<sup>80</sup>

The transformation of Swedish cultural memory has to be seen against a broad background. The end of the Cold War was a basic precondition: many points of postwar orientation became obsolete with the collapse of communism. Another important factor was the shift away from a patriotic narrative of the Second World War to a moral narrative in the years around 1990. In many parts of Europe at the end of the twentieth century self-righteous attitudes were being replaced by attitudes of self-reproach, with national sovereignty being set against national narrow-mindedness and security set against humanity. The historical lesson of the narrative was more than ever a moral one when the Holocaust was both its beginning and its end.<sup>81</sup> There is a good deal of evidence to suggest that Swedish opinion was influenced by international developments – Ingmar Björkstén, for instance, pointed to the West German historians' dispute as a precedent. The intensity of the West German debate was given fairly comprehensive coverage in Sweden and may well have added fuel to the Swedish process of self-examination.<sup>82</sup> An additional factor was provided by the wave of neo-Nazi actions and chauvinistic attitudes that surfaced in many European countries in the last two decades of the century. National Socialism, after almost half a century's absence from political life, suddenly became a reality again.<sup>83</sup>

There can be no disputing the fact that the Swedish cultural memory underwent a radical change during the 1980s and 1990s. At one and the same time it is possible to see how the content of the concept of Nazism moved and how a partially new form of historical lesson took shape. It is also clear that the transformations of experiences were connected to profound ideological undercurrents. As Kay Glans has pointed out in an essay, new political climates often define themselves through or in conjunction with reinterpretations of the Nazi period. His observations were made on the basis of changes in Germany since the 1980s, but they are equally valid for Sweden.<sup>84</sup>

The meaning of the Nazi experience had changed in a number of important respects between the 1940s and the 1990s. By the end of the century the German dimension of Nazism seems to have become less dominant. The derivation of National Socialism was still to be sought in German history but many of the issues being debated had more to do with Swedish Nazism and Sweden's relations with the Third Reich than with special traits in German history. German nationalism, an overarching characteristic of the understanding of Nazism in the immediate postwar period, had been sidelined by racism and anti-Semitism as explanatory factors. During the late twentieth century then, Nazism was condemned on the basis of a universal norm, with the Holocaust as the central point. This implied a kind of de-Germanisation of National Socialism – the phenomenon that in the early postwar period had seemed to be an exclusively German problem had become much more of a universal human problem by the end of the century. The internal development of Germany contributed to this. At the start of the Cold War, when memories of the war years were still at the forefront of people's minds, Germany was still perceived as a potential power-political threat; the new, reunited and democratic Federal Republic, however, did not seem like that at all. Thus, at the end of the century, there was nothing in the Nazi lesson that would lead Swedes to turn away from Germany. Rather the reverse, in fact: the drive towards Europeanisation during the 1990s led in some cases to the re-establishment of contacts with the continent. In order to be truly accepted into a European community of values, which in the years around the turn of the century was cultivating a culture of guilt and penance, it was essential that the history of Sweden and Nazism took the form of a morality.<sup>85</sup>

In the aftermath of the Second World War, Nazism was condemned as an atavism, a reaction against the very idea of modernity. That was an interpretation that did not hold water fifty years later. A number of significant studies during the 1980s and 1990s problematised the ideological character of the Third Reich and dismissed the rigid polarisation between Nazism and modernity. There is no doubt that the criticism levelled against the whole of the modern project during the last quarter of the twentieth century was part of the bigger picture, with the lethal philosophical arrows launched by postmodernism combining with a vague but growing distrust of rationality, progress and enlightenment. All this taken together rocked the foundations on which postwar society was built.<sup>86</sup>

The modified historical lesson was voiced in a number of Swedish controversies in the years around 2000. The Swedish *folkhem* itself became the subject of debate in a series of conspicuous clashes on instrumental

rationality, race hygiene sterilisations and lack of respect for the individual. The ferocity of the public discourse on these issues has to be seen in the light of the change in the lesson of Nazism. Phenomena such as eugenics and social engineering had not been associated with the Third Reich during the 1940s and 1950s. Half a century later, however, the sphere of association had shifted and as a consequence other areas found themselves the target of harsh condemnation – a constant in the case of anything to do with Nazism. In the new ideological climate of the closing years of the twentieth century when many of the accepted truths of the postwar years were being reassessed and found to be false, there was a shift in the meaning of the Nazi experience.<sup>87</sup>

How could the historical lesson undergo transformations of this kind? One answer was that the experience was so intimately connected to membership of a generation. As far as Germany is concerned, Norbert Frei has distinguished a number of phases in the postwar processing of the Third Reich and associated them with different *Erfahrungsgenerationen* (experience generations). Even though there are decisive differences between Sweden and West Germany, Frei's typology is still valuable. It was necessary in both countries for the early postwar elites to leave the public arena before a new cultural memory could take shape. In the case of the Federal Republic a profound and thorough revision of the history of the war years began as early as the middle of the 1960s whereas in Sweden it was to be another quarter of a century before anything similar got under way.<sup>88</sup>

Another answer is that the lesson of Nazism coincided and was in accord with a greater degree of self-knowledge on the part of the Swedes: as one changed, the other changed, and vice versa. The main narrative of modern Sweden took shape during the 1930s and social democracy was its most prominent interpreter over the decades that followed. It stressed a view of Sweden as a neutral, democratic and prosperous country where everyone worked for the common good, where people preferred to resolve conflicts peacefully and where the overarching aim was to develop the welfare state. It goes without saying that pathological Nazism had no right of residence in a society of that kind. The Nazi experience – and the small-state realist interpretation of the Second World War with which it lived in a state of symbiosis – could exist in a friction-free relationship with the main narrative of modern Sweden. Even when it was being challenged from the 1960s onwards (by 1960s leftists, by the new women's movement, by the alternative movement and new liberal currents), the lesson of Nazism was not undermined. It was only when the postwar order collapsed that the change really took off.<sup>89</sup>

## The Historical Lesson of Nazism

If people who have had the same upbringing as me, talk the same language as me and love the same books, the same music, the same paintings as me – if these people cannot be certain that they won't be transformed into monsters who will do things that we could not imagine that people in our days – apart from a few pathological exceptions – were capable of, what is there then to say that I can live in certainty?<sup>90</sup>

The Swiss author Max Frisch was interrogating himself. He had been a border guard during the war years and ensured that the neutral Alpine republic remained closed to fleeing Jews. When he surveyed the devastated continent from *le balcon sur l'Europe* in 1946 he was convinced that the causes of the great catastrophe also lay within himself. The Nazi regime had not been a barbaric memory, a temporary return into the abyss of history. Anyone seeking its origins had to wrestle with their own shortcomings and take the risk of looking inwards.

Not everyone was prepared to follow Max Frisch's example. There were many among his Swiss countrymen who wanted to draw a veil over the political compromises and lucrative trade of the war years. The investigations that did take place were – as in other European countries – selective and partial. Ordinary Swiss wanted to carry on as before. Nevertheless – and this is what united an apparently divergent Switzerland with the rest of Europe – the first years after the war were a constitutive period, a time for striking camp and moving on.<sup>91</sup>

In Sweden, too, the experiences of Nazism provided continuity as well as reassessment. In the larger context, however, it was without doubt self-confirmation that ruled. One way of putting it is to say that the Swedes had to relate to two competing experiential spaces at the end of the war: on one side was the deep national space that was long-lasting and drew its nourishment from Swedish value traditions; on the other was the wider international space, limited in terms of time and containing European experiences of Nazism. The generation of 1945 entered the first space and shut the door on the second.

There have been attempts to seek a background to the ownership by the cultural radicals of the privilege of formulating the historical lesson. Those institutions that could have opened the door to the second, more international, experiential space had also undergone change: the church had lost much of its authority as a result of secularisation and during the early postwar years many theologians and clerics withdrew from the public arena in which they had still figured at the beginning of the 1940s; in the course of the 1930s the labour movement had moved in under the banner of Swedishness and become national.

The consequences were that Swedish society became distanced from the European experiential space. And when a gap appeared it was to the west, towards the sphere of Anglo-Saxon culture.<sup>92</sup>

Having said that, we need to ask the question whether a radical defeat is necessary before there can be any profound self-examination. The historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch has put that argument forward. He believes that the consciousness of being defeated offers inexhaustible scope for self-reflection in a way that is not open to the victors. The Fronde suffered major defeat in its rebellion against absolutism in France in the seventeenth century, but Schivelbusch argues that it was only a temporary defeat and actually led to a fruitful phase of rethinking. After going through a process of profound self-criticism they could re-emerge and pave the way for the ideas of the Enlightenment.<sup>93</sup>

But victories, too, demand their tributes. The inconvenient diversity of history is an early victim. In order to achieve a desirable consensus, in order to close ranks, historical memory frequently needs to be re-touched: anything that diverges is far too difficult to fit into the victors' image of their own origins. The next stage involves demonising the enemy, dispossessing the enemy of all good qualities. In this process of adjustment and exclusion forgetfulness takes shape: to borrow the terminology of the philosopher Paul Ricœur, it involves a combination of active and passive forgetfulness, of far too short a memory and far too great a reluctance to look at the dark side of the past.<sup>94</sup>

The origin and the consolidation of the ideas of 1945 followed this pattern. The significance of Nazism to Sweden was watered down: Swedish Nazis had been on the periphery, their influence was meagre and National Socialism as a philosophy lacked any relevance to the direction taken by Sweden. It was an absolute picture and it was confirmed by the historical research of the postwar period. The upheavals of the years around 1990, however, caused a historiographical landslide that opened up new perspectives on the history of Sweden in the 1930s and 1940s. The quintessential character of the Nazi experience became clear.

Bidding farewell to the German sphere was a cause of regret to an older generation, but it entailed no loss for younger generations. There was nothing constructive to be gained from the German tradition, no positive lessons to be learnt. When the leading newspaper in the country summarised in 1945 what Sweden had taken from Germany over the course of history, it came up with no more than militaristic policing and early socialist impulses. Towards the end of the twentieth century when the historical lesson had changed, there were people who bemoaned the loss of memories and cultural links. What had seemed



to be a self-evident and unproblematic reorientation in the wake of the war had actually proved to have a price.<sup>95</sup>

In this study I have tried to reveal the Swedish experiences of Nazism. Rather than just an analysis of a change of epoch in modern history, I have shown how people and societies live with historical experiences. It could have been the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Thirty Years War or the collapse of the Soviet Union, but it has centred on the downfall of the Third Reich and the death of National Socialism as an ideological programme. All of these cases involved historical upheavals that lived on as experiences. They gave rise to historical lessons that pointed in specific directions and influenced the general direction of society.

In the wake of the Second World War, the historical lesson of Nazism helped to characterise the ideological order, pave the way for rationalistic cultural radicalism and hasten cultural reorientation. The world of postwar Sweden emerged from the interplay between the dark experiences of history and the bright dreams of the future.

## Notes

1. K. Östberg, *I takt med tiden: Olof Palme 1927–1969* (Stockholm: Leopard, 2008), 15–46; H. Berggren, *Underbara dagar framför oss: En biografi över Olof Palme* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2010), 111–141.
2. Östberg, *I takt med tiden*, 61–68; Berggren, *Underbara dagar framför oss*, 111–141.
3. O. Palme, 'Den amerikanska krigsgenerationen', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 21 February 1949.
4. Palme, 'Den amerikanska krigsgenerationen'.
5. H. Lööv, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979: Pionjärerna, partierna, propagandan* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2004), 121–159. See in general S. Ugelvik Larsen & B. Hagtvet (eds), *Modern Europe after Fascism, 1943–1980s*, vol. 1–2 (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1998).
6. A.W. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget: Antikommunism och liberalism i Dagens Nyheter 1946–1952* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1995), 224–233 (quotation 226). Johansson uses the concept 'anti-fascism' whereas I prefer 'anti-Nazism'.
7. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget*, 224–233; T. Nilsson, 'Den gåtfulla parentesen – högeropinion mellan världskrig och kallt krig', in R. Björk and A.W. Johansson (eds), *Samtidshistoria och politik: Vänbok till Karl Molin* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2004).
8. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget*, 226.
9. N. Runeby, 'Klerkernas ansvar och frihetens organisation: Kring de intellektuellas mobilisering i 1950-talets Sverige', in W. Butt and B. Glienke (eds), *Der nahe Norden: Otto Oberholzer zum 65. Geburtstag: Eine Festschrift*

- (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985); M. Wiklund, *I det modernas landskap: Historisk orientering och kritiska berättelser om det moderna Sverige mellan 1960 och 1990* (Eslöv: B. Östlings förlag, 2006), 153–157.
10. A.W. Johansson, 'Inledning: Svensk nationalism och identitet efter andra världskriget', in A.W. Johansson (ed.), *Vad är Sverige?: Röster om svensk nationell identitet* (Stockholm: Prisma, 2001), 10; T. Nilsson, *Mellan arv och utopi: Moderata vägval under 100 år, 1904–2004* (Stockholm: Santérus, 2004), 84–89; J. Hylén, *Fosterlandet främst?: Konservatism och liberalism inom högerpartiet 1904–1985* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1991); S.B. Ljunggren, *Folkhemskapitalismen: Högerens programutveckling under efterkrigstiden* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1992).
  11. Friedrich von Hayek's best-known work was published in Swedish in 1944. For its reception see L. Lewin, *Planhushållningsdebatten* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1967), 267–348 and Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget*, 53 and 246–258.
  12. Nilsson, *Mellan arv och utopi*, 205–213.
  13. R. Vierhaus, 'Konservativ, Konservatismus', in O. Brunner, W. Conze and R. Koselleck (eds), *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politischsozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1982); H. Grebing, *Konservative gegen die Demokratie: Konservative Kritik an der Demokratie in der Bundesrepublik nach 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1971), 16–48.
  14. S.G. Payne, *A History of Fascism: 1914–1945* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995). Exceptions were the authoritarian regimes of Franco and Salazar in Spain and Portugal, respectively.
  15. T. Buchanan and M. Conway (eds), *Political Catholicism in Europe: 1918–1965* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); H. Grebing, *Konservative gegen die Demokratie: Konservative Kritik an der Demokratie in der Bundesrepublik nach 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1971); J.W. Müller, 'Introduction: Putting German Political Thought in Context', in J.W. Müller (ed.), *German Ideologies since 1945: Studies in the Political Thought and Culture of the Bonn Republic* (New York: Palgrave, 2003).
  16. N. Elvander, *Harald Hjärne och konservatismen: Konservativ idédebatt i Sverige 1865–1922* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1961), 446–479; Nilsson, *Mellan arv och utopi*, 129–175.
  17. Criticism of all-encompassing thought systems was typical in influential periodicals like *40-tal* and *Prisma* immediately after the war. See C.G. Holmberg, *Upprorets tradition: Den unglitterära tidskriften i Sverige* (Stockholm: Symposion, 1987), 72–74. The aversion to the utopian programmes of the interwar years was a portent of the discussion in the 1950s and early 1960s about 'the death of the ideologies' associated with names like Raymond Aron, Daniel Bell, Seymour Lipset and, in Sweden, Herbert Tingsten. See J. Lundborg, *Ideologiernas och religionens död: En analys av Herbert Tingstens ideologi och religionskritik* (Nora: Nya Doxa, 1991), 105–119.
  18. Quoted from D. Königsmann, 'En idéhistorisk studie i studentpolitik: Clartés politiska linje, dess mål och medel, 1944–1957', *Idéhistoriska uppsatser*, (6) (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 1983), 29.

19. Y. Hirdman, *Sveriges Kommunistiska Parti 1939–1945* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlaget, 1974), 182–183.
20. J. Strang, 'Arvet efter Kaila och Hägerström: Den analytiska filosofin i Finland och Sverige', in S. Nygård and J. Strang (eds), *Mellan idealism och analytisk filosofi: Den moderna filosofin i Finland och Sverige 1880–1950* (Helsinki: Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland/Atlantis, 2006), 237–244 and 259–264 (quotation 242).
21. R. Carls, *Om tro och vetande: Ingemar Hedenius kristendomskritik i ett halvsekelsperspektiv* (Lund: Arcus, 2001); S. Nordin, *Ingemar Hedenius: En filosof och hans tid* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 2004), 135–183.
22. E. Lönnroth, *En annan uppfattning* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1949), 11–13. Weibull is quoted from A.W. Johansson, 'Biografin och den svenska historievetenskapen', in H. Rosengren and J. Östling (eds), *Med livet som insats: Biografin som humanistisk genre* (Lund: Sekel, 2007), 21.
23. S. Nordin, *Från Hägerström till Hedenius: Den moderna svenska filosofin* (Bodafors: Doxa, 1984), 193–195. See A. Larsson, *Det moderna samhällets vetenskap: Om etableringen av sociologi i Sverige 1930–1955* (Umeå: Institutionen för historiska studier, 2001).
24. Quotation from Nordin, *Från Hägerström till Hedenius*, 194–195. See also J. Asplund, *Avhandlingens språkdräkt* (Gothenburg: Korpen, 2002), 52.
25. K. Misgeld, 'Den svenska socialdemokratin och Europa – från slutet av 1920-talet till början av 1970-talet', in B. Hultdt and K. Misgeld (eds), *Socialdemokratin och svensk utrikespolitik: Från Branting till Palme* (Stockholm: Utrikespolitiska institutet and MH Publishing, 1990), 205. See also B. Stråth, *Folkhemmet mot Europa: Ett historiskt perspektiv på 90-talet* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1993), 194–227.
26. Stråth, *Folkhemmet mot Europa*, 205–217; Y.M. Werner, *Nordisk katolicism: Katolsk mission och konversion i Danmark i ett nordiskt perspektiv* (Gothenburg: Makadam, 2005), 309–323; Y.M. Werner, 'Schwedentum, Katholizismus und europäische Integration: Die katholische Kirche in Schweden nach 1945', *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte/Contemporary Church History* (1) (2006), 81–84 and 101–106; D. Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar: Socialdemokratisk kyrkopolitik under perioden 1944–1973* (Gothenburg: Församlingsförlaget, 2006), 29–36 and 202–208.
27. See, for example: J. Larsson, *Hemmet vi är vde: Om folkhemmet, identiteten och den gemensamma framtiden* (Stockholm: Bokförlaget Arena, 1994), 138; Å. Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia: historieskrivning som ideologisk maktresurs 1892–2000* (Stockholm: Atlas, 2001) 250–253 and 456–462; H. Berggren and L. Trägårdh, *Är svensken människa?: Gemenskap och oberoende i det moderna Sverige* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 2006), 195–198.
28. Stråth, *Folkhemmet mot Europa*; Johansson, 'Inledning: Svensk nationalism och identitet efter andra världskriget'; A.W. Johansson, 'Vill du se ett monument? Se dig omkring!: Några reflektioner kring nationell identitet och kollektivt minne i Sverige efter andra världskriget', in K. Almqvist and K. Glans (eds), *Den svenska framgångssagan* (Stockholm: Fischer & Co., 2001); R. Johansson, 'Konstruktionen av svenskheten', in K. Almqvist and K. Glans (eds), *Den svenska framgångssagan?* (Stockholm: Fischer & Co, 2001).

29. S. Oredsson, *Gustav Adolf, Sverige och Trettiåriga kriget: Historieskrivning och kult* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1992), 226; H. Lööv, 'Karl XII:s dödsdag 30/11 – en lång kravalltradition', *Nord Nytt* (73) (1998), 23; Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 461. For an interesting Danish parallel see A. Warring, *Historie, magt og identitet: Grundlovsfejringer gennem 150 år* (Århus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag, 2004), 129–158.
30. E. Barkan, *The Retreat of Scientific Racism: Changing Concepts of Race in Britain and the United States Between the World Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), particularly 341–346; A. Tunlid, *Ärftlighetsforskningens gränser: Individer och institutioner i framväxten av den svenska genetiken* (Lund: Lund University, 2004), 224–225.
31. G. Broberg, *Statlig rasforskning: En historik över Rasbiologiska institutet* (Lund: Uggla, 1995), 66–82; Tunlid, *Ärftlighetsforskningens gränser*, 225–231. During the Second World War, Gunnar Dahlberg published a critical study of race biology, *Arv och ras* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1940), which was then translated into a number of languages. He also became a member of the group which, on behalf of UNESCO, produced the important document *Statement on Race* (1950), a severely critical account of the conceptual world of racism. In 1948 when leading researchers in genetics met for the first major international postwar congress in Stockholm, the importance of free research was stressed, particularly against the backdrop of experiences of totalitarianism. 'The much more sensitive question of the extent to which geneticists themselves had contributed, especially to the crimes of Nazism, was however not discussed', Anna Tunlid, a historian of science, writes. See Tunlid, *Ärftlighetsforskningens gränser*, 251. For a conceptual discussion see G. Broberg, 'Förtänta och förbjudna ord: Anteckningar om ras och rasism', in B. Lindberg (ed.), *Trygghet och äventyr: Om begreppshistoria* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2005).
32. M. Tydén, *Från politik till praktik: De svenska steriliseringslagarna 1935–1975* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 2002), particularly 520–525 and 573–578 (quotations 525 and 577, respectively). A conclusion suggested in L. Olsson, *Kulturkunskap i förändring: Kultursynen i svenska geografiläroböcker 1870–1985* (Malmö: Liber, 1986), 112–121, was that racist elements remained common in Swedish schoolbooks into the 1950s, but racism was toned down after the Second World War, partly because of the experiences of Nazism.
33. B. Wasserstein, *Vanishing Diaspora: The Jews in Europe Since 1945* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1996), 58–84; H. Bachner, *Återkomsten: Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1999), 15–16, 30–32 and 89–90.
34. Bachner, *Återkomsten*, particularly 89–90 and 148–150.
35. Gunnar Myrdal's critical analysis of American race relations in *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944) and Herbert Tingsten's attack on the apartheid regime in *Problemet Sydafrika* (1954) are two examples.
36. G.L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Collier Books, 1990), 201–225; D. Burkhart, *Eine Geschichte der Ehre* (Darmstadt: WBG, 2006), 112–119.

37. J. Lindroth, *Ling – från storhet till upplösning: Studier i svensk gymnastikhistoria 1800–1950* (Eslöv: Symposion, 2004), 291.
38. Johansson, *Herbert Tingsten och det kalla kriget*, 353.
39. P. Betts, 'The Politics of Post-Fascist Aesthetics: 1950s West and East German Industrial Design', in R. Bessel and D. Schumann (eds), *Life After Death: Approaches to a Cultural and Social History During the 1940s and 1950s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
40. Nazism figured occasionally in the debates in the periodical *Byggmästaren* 1946–1948. See C. Caldenby, 'Arkitekturen', in *Signums svenska konsthistoria: Konsten 1950–1975* (Lund: Signum, 2005), 452–453. The limited Swedish discussion stands in contrast to the settling of accounts with totalitarian monumentalism initiated by leading international architects (Sigfried Giedion, Walter Gropius, Lucio Costa and others) during the second half of the 1940s. See W. Schivelbusch, *Entfernte Verwandtschaft: Faschismus, Nationalsozialismus, New Deal 1933–1939* (Vienna: Hanser, 2005) 7–12.
41. C. Lorenz, *Konstruktion der Vergangenheit: Eine Einführung in die Geschichtstheorie*, trans. A. Böttner (Cologne, Weimar and Vienna: Böhlau Verlag, 1997), 277–284; T. Nipperdey, '1933 und die Kontinuität der deutschen Geschichte', *Historische Zeitschrift* (227) (1978).
42. M. Hanna, *The Mobilization of Intellect: French Scholars and Writers During the Great War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 1–27 and 209–242.
43. The concept is formed on analogy with 'the privilege of formulating the problem'. See L. Gustafsson, *Problemformuleringsprivilegiet: Samhällsfilosofiska studier* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1989).
44. E. Österberg and C. Carlsson Wetterberg (eds), *Rummet vidgas: Kvinnor på väg ut i offentligheten 1880–1940* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2002).
45. R. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2000), 265–272.
46. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 267–270.
47. K. Mannheim, 'Das Problem der Generationen', in *Wissenssoziologie: Auswahl aus dem Werk* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1964). See also U. Jureit, *Generationenforschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006), 20–25.
48. Mannheim, 'Das Problem der Generationen', particularly 541–553 and 559–562. I prefer 'generation faction' for *Generationseinheit*, since, by definition, there was always competition between the groupings.
49. Runeby, 'Klerkernas ansvar och frihetens organisation', 290–291. See also E. Österberg, *Vänskap: En lång historia* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2007), 225–229.
50. Cf. Runeby, 'Klerkernas ansvar och frihetens organisation', 290–291.
51. The divisions within the generation of 1945 were not always political. For an example, see K. Holt, *Publicisten Ivar Harrie: Ideologi, offentlighetsdebatt och idékritik i Expressen 1944–1960* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2008).
52. Nilsson, *Mellan arv och utopi*, 208–211.
53. Mannheim, 'Das Problem der Generationen', 559–561.
54. S.U. Palme, *Vår tids hjältar* (Stockholm: Landbruksförbundets Tidskriftsaktiebolag, 1953), 273; A.W. Johansson, 'Palme, Sven Ulric Adalvard', *Svenskt Biografiskt Lexikon*, vol. 28 (Stockholm: Svenskt biografiskt lexikon, 1994).

55. The concept 'political generation' is used in influential works like D. Peukert, *Die Weimarer Republik: Krisenjahre der klassischen Moderne* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1987), U. Herbert, *Best: Biographische Studien über Radikalismus, Weltanschauung und Vernunft, 1903–1989* (Bonn: Verlag J.H.W. Dietz, 1996) and M. Wildt, *Generation des Unbedingten: Das Führungskorps des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes* (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2002).
56. K. Krantz, *Alf Ahlberg (1892–1979): En biografi* (Ludvika: Dualis, 1998), 528–529, 558–563 and 599–615.
57. See the general discussion in A. Schulz and G. Grebner, 'Generation und Geschichte', in A. Schulz and G. Grebner (eds), *Generationswechsel und historischer Wandel* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003).
58. M. Görtemaker, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Von der Gründung bis zur Gegenwart* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1999), 83–94 and 188–189.
59. H.D. Kittsteiner, 'Die Generationen der "Heroischen Moderne": Zur kollektiven Verständigung über eine Grundaufgabe', in U. Jureit and M. Wildt (eds), *Generationen: Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs* (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2005).
60. G. Aspelin, 'Tidsidéer och tidsideal', in J. Cornell (ed.), *De 50 åren: Sverige 1900–1950*, vol. 3 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1950), 53.
61. E. Noelle-Neumann, *Die Schweigespirale: Öffentliche Meinung – unsere soziale Haut* (Munich: Piper, 1980), 13–22.
62. C. Benninghaus, 'Das Geschlecht der Generation: Zum Zusammenhang von Generationalität und Männlichkeit um 1930', in U. Jureit and M. Wildt (eds), *Generationen: Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs* (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2005); M.R. Lepsius, 'Kritische Anmerkungen zur Generationsforschung', in U. Jureit and M. Wildt (eds), *Generationen: Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs* (Hamburg: HIS Verlag, 2005).
63. See G. Richardson, *Drömmen om en ny skola: Idéer och realiteter i svensk skolpolitik 1945–1950* (Stockholm: Liber, 1983), 317, about Gunnar Helén (1918–2002), radio journalist and future leader of the Liberal People's Party, who ideologically belonged in the same camp as the generation of 1945, but felt uneasy about the certainty of faith that characterised the debate.
64. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 34 and 38–41.
65. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 35–38 (quotation 37).
66. Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 39.
67. Koselleck does not analyse the relationship between the concepts 'memory' and 'experience' very closely. Experience is the central issue for him and is said to be 'the present past, the events of which have been incorporated and can be retrieved from the memory', something that 'clings deeper than memory'. In this connection I see experience as something that contains an aspect of memory but which is more firmly anchored in the consciousness of an individual or group than memory is. At the same time, new historical events tend to challenge old experiences and that distinguishes them from memories. Experience is furthermore conclusive in the sense that a historical lesson can be drawn from it. Cf. R. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft: Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1979), 350–354.
68. See Chapters I and III.

69. A sign of the absence of Nazism from Swedish public life in the 1950s is that there are so few articles in the Sigtunastiftelsen cuttings archive for that period. The occasional work, such as Alan Bullock's biography of Hitler (original 1952; translation 1960) and William L. Shirers book about the Third Reich (original 1959; translation 1961), did, however, attract attention. During the 1960s Nazism could become the object of debate in the press, for example, the dispute in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* in 1965 which involved Sven-Eric Liedman, Eskil Block and Gunne Bengtson, among others. See also Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979*, 45–61
70. See Chapter III. The following is based J. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget: Från patriotism till universalism under efterkrigstiden', in L.M. Andersson and M. Tydén (eds), *Sverige och Nazityskland: Skuldfrågor och moraldebatt* (Stockholm: Dialogos, 2007).
71. For the concept 'the long 1950s' see M. Cronqvist, *Mannen i mitten: Ett spiondrama i svensk kallakrigskultur* (Stockholm: Carlsson bokförlag, 2004), 14. It is maintained, though indirectly, in many scholarly works on the period that there was a turning point in Swedish postwar history sometime at the end of the 1960s or the beginning of the 1970s. However, there are divided opinions as to what it actually involved. Cf. Nordin, *Från Hägerström till Hedenius*; K. Salomon, *Rebeller i takt med tiden: FNL-rörelsen och 60-talets politiska ritualer* (Stockholm: Rabén Prisma, 1996); F. Sejersted, *Socialdemokratins tidsålder: Sverige och Norge under 1900-talet*, trans. L. Andersson and P.L. Månsson (Nora: Nya Doxa, 2005); M. Cronqvist, L. Sturfelt and M. Wiklund (eds), *1973: En träff med tidsandan* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2008).
72. S. Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death* (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); J. Östling, 'Kampen mot kontinuiteten: Historiepolitik i den västtyska sextioåttarörelsen', *Aktuellt om historia* (3) (2006); P. Gassert and A.E. Steinweis (eds), *Coping with the Nazi Past: West German Debates on Nazism and Generational Conflict, 1955–1975* (New York: Berghahn, 2006); J. Östling, 'Massor av män: Fascismen som fantasi i 1970-talets politiska kultur', in M. Cronqvist, L. Sturfelt and M. Wiklund (eds), *1973: En träff med tidsandan* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2008).
73. P. Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 207–238; U. Zander, 'Holocaust at the Limits: Historical Culture and the Nazi Genocide in the Television Era', in K.G. Karlsson and U. Zander (eds), *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 256–257; Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget', 30–31.
74. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget', 31–34; also J. Östling, 'Leander och den svenska självprovningen', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 25 September 2007. See also Chapter I.
75. Z. Leander, *Vill ni se en diva?* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1958); Z. Leander, *Zarah: Zarah Leanders minnen* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1972). I. Segerstedt Wiberg, 'Nazisternas diva får nu beundran', *Göteborgs-Posten*, 3 January 1988; U. Myggan Ericson, 'Divan teg om politiken', *Göteborgs-Posten*, 10 January 1988; L. Svanberg, 'Zarah med vidöppna ögon – för att rädda gods och guld', *Expressen*, 16 January 1988; L. Persson, 'Var

- finns motgiftet?', *Expressen*, 24 January 1988; A. Ehnmark, 'Påminner om Koestler', *Expressen*, 27 January 1988; S. Örnberg, 'Moralen – en fråga om lönsamhet?', *Göteborgs-Posten*, 30 January 1988. Less accusatory were, for instance, E. Moberg, 'Att förstå är inte att försvara', *Expressen*, 17 January 1988 and Y. Stenius, 'Att förstå Zarah', *Aftonbladet*, 18 January 1988.
76. I. Bergman, *Laterna Magica* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1987); G. Aalders and C. Wiebes, *Affärer till varje pris: Wallenbergs hemliga stöd till nazisterna*, trans. S. Karlsson (Stockholm: B. Wahlström, 1989).
  77. I. Björkstén, 'Vi vill se en stjärna – inte sanningen', *Svenska Dagbladet*, 15 January 1988.
  78. General information about the debate can be found in U. Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider: Bruk av och debatter om svensk historia från sekelskifte till sekelskifte* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001), 445–455, Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget', 38–40 and Chapter I. See, for example, M.P. Boëthius, *Heder och samvete: Sverige och andra världskriget* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1991); M. Wechseltmann, *De bruna förbindelserna* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 1995); L. Einhorn, *Handelsresande i liv: Om vilja och vankelmod i krigets skugga* (Stockholm: Prisma, 1999); B. Schön, *Svenskarna som stred för Hitler: Ett historiskt reportage* (Stockholm: DN förlaget, 1999); N. Sennerteg, *Tyskland talar: Hitlers svenska radiostation* (Lund: Historiska Media, 2006) and O. Larsmo, *Djävulssonaten: Ur det svenska hatets historia* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 2007).
  79. D. Ludvigsson, "'Levande historia" – inte bara levande historia', in C.T. Nielsen, D.G. Simonsen and L. Wul (eds), *Rapporter til Det 24. Nordiske Historikermøde, Århus 9.–13. august 2001: Mod nye historier* (Århus: Jysk Selskab for Historie, 2001); K.G. Karlsson, 'Förintelsen som politik och historiebruk: Exemplet Levande historia', in K. Almqvist and K. Glans (eds), *Den svenska framgångssagan?* (Stockholm: Fischer & Co, 2001).
  80. See, for instance, P. Svensson, *Frostviken: Ett reportage om Per Olof Sundman, nazismen och tigandet* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1998); B. Torekull, *Historien om IKEA: Ingvar Kamprad berättar för Bertil Torekull* (Stockholm: Wahlström & Widstrand, 1998); Larsmo, *Djävulssonaten*; T. Hübinette, *Den svenska nationalsocialismen: Medlemmar och sympatisörer 1931–45* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2002); J. Svenbro, *Försokratikern Sappo och andra studier i antikt tänkande: Med ett bihang om Martin P:s Nilsson och den genetiska determinismen* (Gothenburg: Glänta, 2007).
  81. Östling, 'Svenska berättelser om andra världskriget', 40–42.
  82. A Swedish discussion of the West German *Historikerstreit* was aired in *Sydsvenska Dagbladet Snällposten* January–February 1988, and Kay Glans wrote no fewer than seven long articles on the topic for *Svenska Dagbladet* the summer of the same year, but it also attracted attention in other contexts. See L.A. Norborg, "'Att hantera historien" – om den tyska historikerstriden', *Historielärarnas förenings årsskrift* (1988/1989) and T. Nybom, 'Den tyska "Historikerstriden": En svensk reflexion i anledning av ett tidsläge', *Historisk tidskrift* (1) (1989).
  83. H. Lööv, *Nazismen i Sverige 1980–1999: Den rasistiska undergroundrörelsen: Musiken, myterna, riterna* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2000).



84. K. Glans, 'Förflutet som förflyttar sig: Historikerstriden i Tyskland', in L. Bertson and S. Nordin (eds), *I historiens skruvstäd: Berättelser om Europas 1900-tal* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2008).
85. Karlsson, 'Förintelsen som politik och historiebruk', 279–280.
86. See Chapter II and Glans, 'Förflutet som förflyttar sig'.
87. For the debates of the 1990s: Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider*, 402–459; Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 419–423; G. Rosenberg, 'The Crisis of Consensus in Postwar Sweden', in N. Witoszek and L. Trägårdh (eds), *Culture and Crisis: The Case of Germany and Sweden* (New York: Berghahn, 2002).
88. Jureit, *Generationenforschung*, 114–123; N. Frei, *1945 und wir: Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2005), 23–40.
89. Wiklund, *I det modernas landskap*, 109–161.
90. Quoted from H. Welzer, *Täter: Wie aus ganz normalen Menschen Massenmörder werden* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2005), 141.
91. A. Ruth, 'Postwar Europe: The Capriciousness of Universal Values', *Dædalus* (126) (1997) and M. König and B. Zeugin (eds), *Die Schweiz, der Nationalsozialismus und der Zweite Weltkrieg: Schlussbericht* (Zurich: Verlag Pendo, 2002).
92. Krantz, *Alf Ahlberg (1892–1979)*, 561.
93. W. Schivelbusch, *Die Kultur der Niederlage: Der amerikanische Süden 1865, Frankreich 1871, Deutschland 1918* (Berlin: Alexander Fest Verlag, 2001). See also Koselleck, *Zeitschichten*, 67–77.
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