



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.¹

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.²

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*.³ 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.⁴

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.⁵

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'.⁶ 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.'⁷

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.⁸ 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.⁹

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).¹⁰

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.’¹¹

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.¹²

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.’¹³

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.¹⁴

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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶

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.¹⁷

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.¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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.²⁰ 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.²¹

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.²² 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.²³

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.²⁴ 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.²⁵

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.²⁶

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.²⁷

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 1933.²⁸ 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.²⁹ 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.³⁰

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.³¹

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.³²

'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.³³

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.³⁴

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.³⁵ 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.³⁶

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'.³⁷

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'.³⁸ 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.³⁹

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.⁴⁰

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.⁴¹ 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.⁴² 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'.⁴³

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'.⁴⁴

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.⁴⁵ 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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷

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.⁴⁸ 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.⁴⁹

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.⁵⁰

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.⁵¹ 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.⁵²

'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.⁵³

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.⁵⁴

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'.⁵⁵

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.⁵⁶

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.⁵⁷

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.’⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰

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.⁶¹ The totalitarianism theory also had its advocates though they do not seem to have been very numerous during those particular years.⁶²

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.⁶³

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.⁶⁴

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.⁶⁵

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.'⁶⁶

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.⁶⁷ 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.⁶⁸

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.⁶⁹

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.⁷⁰

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.⁷¹

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.⁷²

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.⁷³

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.⁷⁴ 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.⁷⁵

'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.⁷⁶ 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.⁷⁷ On the other hand, he had very little time for the communists, tending to emphasise the similarity between them and the Nazis.⁷⁸

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.⁷⁹ 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.'⁸⁰

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.⁸¹ 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.⁸²

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.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴ 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.⁸⁵ 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.⁸⁶

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.⁸⁷ 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.⁸⁸

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.⁸⁹

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 1947.⁹⁰ 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.⁹¹

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.⁹² 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'.⁹³ Meinecke agreed with the description of Nazism as a nihilistic revolution, a victory for what he called 'mass-Machiavellianism'.⁹⁴ 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.⁹⁵

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.⁹⁶

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.⁹⁷

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.⁹⁸

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.⁹⁹

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.¹⁰⁰

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.¹⁰¹ 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.¹⁰²

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.¹⁰³

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.¹⁰⁴

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.¹⁰⁵

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.¹⁰⁶ 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.¹⁰⁷

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.¹⁰⁸

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.¹⁰⁹

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.¹¹⁰

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.¹¹¹

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.¹¹² 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.¹¹³

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.¹¹⁴ 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.¹¹⁵ 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.¹¹⁶

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.¹¹⁷

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.¹¹⁸

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.¹¹⁹

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.¹²⁰

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.¹²¹

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.¹²²

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.¹²³

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.¹²⁴ 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.¹²⁵ 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.¹²⁶

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.¹²⁷ 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.¹²⁸

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 (Gråbo: 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 Universitatis 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 motgångstid', *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 motgångstid'; 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 motgångstid'.
85. Höjer, 'Berlin i motgångstid'.
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 blixtljus* (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*.
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