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Micael Grenholm

Enemy Love and Apocalyptic Genocide

Views on Military Violence and Pacifism Among Swedish
Pentecostals 1967–1971

Älska Jesu tillkommelse

"Om du icke håller dig vak-
ken, så skall jag komma så-
som en tjuv, och du skall
förvisso icke veta, vilken
stund jag kommer över dig"
(Upp. 3:3 b).

I den första kristna tiden hade församlingen lagt på hjärtat Herrens Jesu ord om hans snaras tillkommelse. Detta ord, som här sägs av den förhärligade Kristus, hade han även sagt förut. Han sade det, när han satt på slutningen av Oljeb-
berget och talade med sina lärjungar om sin andra tillkom-
melse. Han sade då, att om hus-
bonden hade vetat, vilken tid
tjuven skulle komma, hade han
förvisso vakat och sett till, att
tjuven ej brutit sig in i hans
hus. "Varen därför också redo",
sade han. "Ty i den stund, då I
icke väntat det, skall Männis-
kisonen komma."



Intill änden skall det vara krig, och rykten om krig. Och Jesus uppmanade sina lärjungar att alltid
vara redo.

I Jerusalem finns ett provisoriskt monument över stupade fullskärmsoldater.

About the Series

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Uppsala Studies in Church History 13

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Enemy Love and Apocalyptic Genocide:
Views on Military Violence and Pacifism Among Swedish Pentecostals
1967–1971



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Micael Grenholm, *Enemy Love and Apocalyptic Genocide: Views on Military Violence and Pacifism Among Swedish Pentecostals 1967–1971*. Uppsala Studies in Church History 13. Uppsala: Uppsala University, Department of Theology, 2022.

ISBN: 978-91-985944-3-0

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1. Introduction

“War is not the will of God, this we know.”

– Folke Thorell, *Evangelii Härold*, 1967.¹

“God will let the satanic rearmament of nuclear weapons and biological warfare strike the godless themselves in forms of plagues that will exterminate large portions of humanity.”

– Folke Thorell, *Evangelii Härold*, 1968.²

1.1 Background

In 1965, a public inquiry implemented by the Swedish government showed that most conscientious objectors between 1960 and 1964 presented religious motivations for their stance, and almost half of these were Pentecostals (see table 1).³ Similarly, a study by Axel Ljungdahl published fifteen years later revealed that Pentecostals continued to dominate the religiously motivated conscientious objectors from 1967 to 1971, being the largest group representing approximately 42 percent of the total.⁴

¹ ”Krig är inte Guds vilja, det vet vi.” EH 1967, no. 27, p. 19.

² ”Gud låter den sataniska upprustningen med kärnvapen och bacillkrigföring drabba de gudlösa själva i form av hemsökelse, som utrotar stora delar av mänskligheten.” EH 1968, no. 13, p. 9.

³ Swedish Government 1965, p. 15.

⁴ Ljungdahl 1980, appendix 9, p. 87.

As Pascal Andréasson notes, this was probably not the result of a unified ethical teaching of Pentecostal pastors. The movement's informal but authoritative leader Lewi Pethrus (1884–1974) was not a pacifist and defended the US war effort in Vietnam.⁵ While he did not condemn conscientious objection, he stressed that pacifist and arms-bearing Pentecostals should respect each other's stances. He occasionally criticized pacifist pastors like C. G. Hjelm (1903–1965) for being naive. In his study, Andréasson proposes that Swedish Pentecostalism might have been a “silent pacifist people's movement,” the origin and development of which is mostly unknown. He calls for more research, as no one had explored Swedish Pentecostal pacifism before him.⁶

Table 1. Church Affiliation for Conscientious Objectors 1960-1964⁷

Affiliation	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964
Pentecostalism	167	188	230	198	215
Baptist Union	47	77	66	84	54
Mission Covenant Church	41	45	53	72	64
Örebro Mission	1	4	28	39	40
Seventh-day Adventists	16	14	11	17	12
Holiness Union	6	8	11	17	16
Other churches	75	19	67	38	31
Jehovah's Witnesses	76	75	79	74	83
Nonreligious motivation	1	4	34	74	64
Total	430	434	579	613	579

⁵ Andréasson 2020, p. 28.

⁶ Andréasson 2020, p. 27.

⁷ Data from the Swedish Government 1965, p. 15.

Several intriguing questions can be asked here, and several periods are worth exploring. As a starting point for what hopefully can become a growing field of study, this book zooms in on 1967–1971, aiming to provide some answers to how the widespread pacifism within Swedish Pentecostalism was motivated and communicated.

It was a dynamic period during which Pethrus had recently founded the political party Kristen Demokratisk Samling (Christian Democratic Unity) and urged Pentecostals to become more involved with society and the current political debate. New media technology made Swedish people increasingly aware of the world around them. The nonviolent ideology of Martin Luther King Jr. (1929–1968) and the looming threat of the Cold War escalating into a worldwide nuclear war made issues of war and violence very relevant to the public discourse.

The book will review how Swedish Pentecostal periodicals described violence and war, specifically in the context of two conflicts that stirred much debate during this period: the Vietnam war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The latter is particularly interesting as Israel often plays an essential role in Pentecostal eschatology—theology about the end times.

1.2 Purpose and Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to review and analyze how Pentecostal periodicals in Sweden described and ethically motivated military violence and pacifism in different contexts from 1967 to 1971. There were two Pentecostal periodicals in circulation: *Evangelii Härold* and *Dagen*. By “pacifism,” I mean opposition to warfare based on the idea that armed combat is absolutely wrong.⁸ The aim is to identify potential

⁸ *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* defines pacifism as “a commitment

motivations for pacifism and or military support when many Pentecostals refused to bear arms, with a particular interest in how these motivations related to ethical evaluation on contemporary wars such as the Vietnam War and the Six-Day War.

As we will see in the theory section, Pentecostal pacifism and Pentecostal support for warfare are multi-faceted phenomena, especially when bringing the state of Israel into the picture. I am interested in exploring the ethical motivation impacted by biblical interpretation, eschatological expectation, and empathy towards other human beings. To divide the purpose into manageable parts, the study will be guided by the following research questions:

- How prevalent were pacifist texts compared to texts defending military violence, and how did motivation for these stances relate to biblical texts?
- What role did empathy and eschatological expectations play in motivating military violence and nonviolence?
- Were the people of Israel portrayed as having a unique relationship to military violence, and how did the perception of Israel relate to Pentecostal self-identity?
- Were there any changes in how the periodicals described pacifism and military violence over time, and if so, what could be some causes for these changes?

to peace and opposition to war”, Fiala, Andrew. “Pacifism”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2021 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2021/entries/pacifism/> (read Nov. 29, 2021). *Encyclopedia Britannica* defines pacifism as “the principled opposition to war and violence as a means of settling disputes. Pacifism may entail the belief that the waging of war by a state and the participation in war by an individual are absolutely wrong, under any circumstances.” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Pacifism”. 19 Nov. 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/pacifism> (read Nov. 29, 2021).

1.3 Previous Research

Researchers within peace and conflict studies have shown an increasing interest in the role of religious actors in peacemaking processes. Peter Wallensteen argues that an active civil society, including religious groups, strengthens democratization and prevents civil war.⁹ Isak Svensson and Naomi Johnstone provide empirical evidence that religious actors can play critical mediating roles, particularly in conflicts where religion is not part of the conflict.¹⁰ Svensson has also argued that religious actors may act as fruitful “insider-partial” mediators but notes that more research is needed in this area.¹¹

Meanwhile, several scholars of religion have started to recognize the strong tradition of nonviolent pacifism within the Pentecostal tradition. Jay Beaman and Brian Pipkin show that most American Pentecostal denominations were pacifist in their early history.¹² After World War II, Pentecostal pacifism diminished to the point that nonviolence is often viewed as a strange abnormality in contemporary Pentecostal churches.¹³ However, we know very little about the history and development of Pentecostal pacifism and peacemaking in other countries. Donald Miller and Tetsunao Yamamori observe that what they label as “Progressive Pentecostalism” is widespread in the Majority World. While this includes “addressing the social needs of people in their community,” peacemaking is not explicitly discussed in their analysis.¹⁴

⁹ Wallensteen 2007, p. 150–151.

¹⁰ Johnstone & Svensson 2013, p. 557–579.

¹¹ Svensson 2014, p. 126.

¹² Beaman 2009; Beaman & Pipkin 2013.

¹³ Alexander 2009; Nel 2017.

¹⁴ Miller & Yamamori 2007, p. 2.

Leigh Goodwin has written about Pentecostal conscientious objectors in the UK during World War I. Ian Gibson has researched pacifistic ethics among Pentecostals in Nepal, and Marius Nel has released a book about how South African Pentecostals related to pacifism in the twentieth century.¹⁵

The literature on religious pacifism in Sweden is very limited. Ingemar Gustafsson's dissertation from 1987 analyzes the debate about war and peace in the Mission Covenant Church 1900–1921. It shows that some, but far from all, argued that Christians should be conscientious objectors.¹⁶ In his doctoral dissertation on early Pentecostal spirituality in Sweden, Ulrik Josefsson briefly mentions conscientious objection among Pentecostals.¹⁷ Carl-Erik Sahlberg points out in his study on how Pentecostalism developed between 1907 and 1963 that “a large portion” of Pentecostal men chose to take non-combatant roles after World War II.¹⁸

Ellen Larsson describes Swedish conscientious objection more generally in her 1973 dissertation on ethical arguments for and against warfare 1957–1970.¹⁹ Axel Ljungdahl's 1980 study does not focus on religiously motivated conscientious objection but provides statistical insight. Björn Cedersjö's dissertation on evangelical ethics in twentieth-century Sweden describes conscientious objection as historically normative in certain Pentecostal and charismatic circles, without providing statistical data.²⁰

More recently, Björn Larsson and Carl Johan Erikson finished an artistic three-year project funded by the Swedish Research Council

¹⁵ Goodwin 2014; Gibson 2017; Nel 2018.

¹⁶ Gustafsson 1987.

¹⁷ Josefsson 2005, p. 245.

¹⁸ Sahlberg 2009a, p. 114.

¹⁹ Larson 1973.

²⁰ Cedersjö 2001, p. 105.

called “Vägra döda” (“Refuse to Kill”), which depicted conscientious objection in Sweden between 1966 and 1992 through text, audio, and images. They could show that many objected on religious grounds, including Pentecostals, although they could not provide any statistical insight.²¹ The only academic work focusing on Pentecostal pacifism before my study is Pascal Andréasson’s bachelor thesis “Pingströrelsen: en tyst pacifistisk folkrörelse?” (Pentecostalism: A Silent Pacifist People’s Movement?). He analyzes several scholarly works listed above to find what they said about Pentecostals and reviews what Pentecostal leaders T. B. Barratt, C. G. Hjelm, and Lewi Pethrus thought about pacifism.²²

Studies on Pentecostals promoting or tolerating military violence are surprisingly scarce. It is observed in studies covering Pentecostal political views and engagement in general, such as Stephen Hunt’s comparative analysis between American and British Pentecostals and Calvin Smith’s overview of Latin American Pentecostalism as part of the gravitation towards right-wing political ideologies that has characterized these movements.²³ Similarly, William Girard found that a politically conservative identity led Honduran Pentecostals to be largely positive towards the 2009 coup overthrowing left-leaning president Manuel Zelaya.²⁴ It is difficult to assess to what extent adherence to right-wing ideologies causes increased militarism among Pentecostals or whether the causal arrow points in the opposite direction. Alternatively, they could both be the result of some other factors. In short, there is not much earlier research to provide clarity in this matter.

²¹ Larsson, Björn and Eriksson, Carl Johan. “Vägra döda”, 2020. <https://vagradoada.se/> (read Aug. 15, 2021).

²² Andréasson 2020.

²³ Hunt 2008; Smith 2009.

²⁴ Girard 2019.

Pentecostal militarism has most extensively been studied in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where it is almost always connected to Christian Zionism driven by eschatological expectation. Examples include Elizabeth Philips' study of a Pentecostal church that prayed against the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, Stephen Spector's overview of how Christian Zionism has portrayed Israeli Jews as above criticism and Arabs as hostile enemies to God, and Stephen Sizer's work on Christian Zionists trying to bring a third world war about through supporting Jewish migration to Israel.²⁵

In a Swedish context, Kristian Steiner and Anders Lundberg have looked at how Swedish Christian Zionists view peace work and the current conflict in the Middle East.²⁶ While not exclusively researching Pentecostals, their articles provide insight into how twenty-first-century Pentecostal Zionism in Sweden tends to be militaristic and supportive of Israeli war efforts. At the same time, Muslims in general, and Palestinians in particular, are portrayed as dangerous, violent, and hateful. These views are mainly derived from eschatological scriptural interpretations that perceive Israeli military victories as an essential part of God's plans for the end times before the second coming of Jesus.

This observation fits well with the results in Göran Gunner's dissertation on Swedish eschatological interpretations of Israel and Jews during the twentieth century, *När tiden tar slut* (*When Time Ends*). Gunner identifies a trend of eschatological speculation in Swedish free churches becoming less focused on the future Millennial kingdom of God and more focused on the state of Israel after its creation in 1948.²⁷ The

²⁵ Philips 2014; Spector 2009; Sizer 2004.

²⁶ Lundberg & Steiner 2017; Lundberg & Steiner 2018.

²⁷ Gunner 1996, p. 295–296, 358. “Free church” is a term used for most Swedish denominations apart from the Church of Sweden, which used to be a state church. Pentecostals rarely identified with the term in the 1960s as they did not see themselves as belonging to a denomination.

apocalyptic predictions on the end-time role of the Jews became more and more politicized and tied into the narrative of the Cold War and Islamophobic elements.

I have not been able to find any scholarly work comparing and contrasting Pentecostal pacifism with eschatological militarism. Moreover, there does not seem to be any unified theory explaining how personal conscientious objection can be reconciled with enthusiasm for apocalyptic warfare. Consequently, the theory section will review several ideas relating to Christian pacifism and eschatology to find a combination that can provide a fruitful framework.

1.4 Theories

Obedience or Empathy

When trying to explain why pacifism virtually disappeared among American Pentecostals, Beaman and Pipkin describe a transformation of how nonviolence was motivated ethically. As American Pentecostalism sprung from the Holiness movement, it was filled with ethical commands and prohibitions. One of these, widespread in Holiness circles, was the prohibition on killing other human beings. Unlike many other ethical rules that characterized early Pentecostalism—such as the prohibitions of ties, alcohol, and dancing—it was easy to find several Bible verses supporting this notion, the most common ones being “You shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13) and “Love your enemies” (Matthew 5:44).²⁸

While this “legacy of Biblicism” was foundational of early Pentecostal pacifism, Beaman and Pipkin show that a few decades later, conscientious objection was mainly motivated by the individual

²⁸ Beaman & Pipkin 2013, p. 26–27.

conscience of the recruit. One reason for this, they argue, was that Pentecostalism was no longer primarily a working-class religious movement but dominated by the middle class from the 1950s and onwards. It was a consequence of post-war economic growth and successful evangelization through initiatives like the “Voice of Healing” campaigns.²⁹

Ethicist Roger E. Olson makes a similar observation. He argues that the increasing affluence of post-war Pentecostals led to the “absorbing of Americanism” and an abandonment of many separatist practices, including pacifism.³⁰ From being based among “the disinherited,” struggling workers that valued being distinct from “the World,” white American Pentecostalism grew closer to other white evangelicals in adopting the “American dream” and the individualism, consumerism, and militarism it is often perceived to entail.³¹

This transformation led to new interpretations of biblical texts, in which Jesus’ statements in the Sermon on the Mount were no longer perceived as universal, absolutist commands. Instead, they were dubious sayings with uncertain applications or rules for civilian lives that could be overturned by texts like Romans 13:1–4 (similar to the Lutheran two kingdoms doctrine). Still, Beaman and Pipkin point to an ethical continuation in Pentecostal thought in that both conscientious objection and doing armed service was an expression of subordination to a higher authority:

[I]f those who followed proscriptions against going to war did so as an almost automatic response to submit their group’s

²⁹ Beaman & Pipkin 2013, p. 26–27.

³⁰ Olson, Roger E. “Pentecostal Pacifism: A Lost (and Denied) Tradition.” *Patheos – Evangelical Portal*, 2015. <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/rogereolson/2015/05/pentecostal-pacifism-a-lost-and-denied-tradition/> (read Aug. 14, 2021).

³¹ “The Disinherited” is a term Olson borrows from Anderson (1979).

authority, such as preacher or Bible, the process of transferring allegiance to a governmental authority may have been done with little discussion, especially if the latter position was positively sanctioned in the larger society.³²

This line of reasoning has interesting parallels with Lisa Cahill's characterization of the two dominant motivations for Christian nonviolence throughout church history: compassionate pacifism and obediential pacifism. The former emphasizes empathy with enemies and seeing things from their perspective, whereas the latter is centered around obedience to Christ's words and sacrifice.³³ These ethical models are not mutually exclusive, but in her historical overview of Christian pacifism, Cahill observes that pacifist Catholics, Quakers, and the Social Gospel movement primarily express empathetic pacifism. In contrast, the Early Church and Anabaptists have tended to express pacifism of the obediential kind. Based on the observation by Beaman and Pipkin, American Pentecostals used to belong to the latter group.

This analysis raises an intriguing question: why have most Anabaptists remained pacifists while the Early Church and American Pentecostalism transformed their pacifism into Just War theory and Christian militarism? While Cahill does not discuss Pentecostal pacifism, she points to how the abandonment of ancient Christian pacifism corresponded with another transformation in Christian belief and practice: its eschatology.

Eschatological Violence and Nonviolence

Cahill contrasts the “[a]ppreciation of eschatological nearness” that characterized both the ancient church and early Anabaptists—a

³² Beaman & Pipkin 2013, p. 30.

³³ Cahill 1994, p. 150.

conviction that the Kingdom of God was imminent and necessitated sanctified living—with the teaching about the Heavenly Kingdom as transcendent and impossible to fully realize in this sinful age which Just War advocates like Augustine and Luther expressed.³⁴ The parallel with Pentecostalism is apparent: the belief in the imminent return of Jesus was foundational for its origin and early development in Sweden, the rest of Europe, and North America.³⁵

However, Cahill points out that apart from pacifism and Just War theory, there has been a third model of the ethics of violence in the Christian tradition: holy war. Exemplified most vividly by the crusades, the conviction that one is called to slay the ungodly is often characterized by a sensation that God's Kingdom and the end of the world is imminent. Like pacifists, holy warriors want to sanctify themselves and the world to prepare for the coming of the Lord, but by using drastically different means. Participants of holy war often emphasize how the end justifies the means, putting standard ethics on hold.

Thus, believing that the Kingdom of God is imminent does not automatically lead to pacifism—on the contrary, it can have the very opposite effect. What is the difference, then, between imminent eschatologists who refuse to bear arms and those who see arms as a means for sanctification? Cahill does not give clear answers, other than that it seems that holy warriors identify more with Old Testament Israel. In contrast, pacifists identify with the New Testament community centered around the person of Jesus.³⁶

Apart from their sociological theory on the transformation of Pentecostal ethics of violence, Beaman and Pipkin also discuss eschatological transformation. Before describing their approach, let me

³⁴ Cahill 1994, p. 234, 245.

³⁵ Josefsson 2005, p. 156.

³⁶ Cahill 1994, p. 175.

give a brief summary of the different Christian views on the so-called Millennium, the period of a thousand years described in the book of Revelation (Rev. 20:1–6) in which Satan will be chained, and those who have been beheaded for the sake of Christ will be resurrected and then reign with him for a thousand years.

Since the days of Augustine (354–430), amillennialism has been the dominant perspective in most church traditions.³⁷ It is the idea that the “thousand years” is a symbolic number referring to the current church age. In contrast, millennialism teaches that there will be a literal thousand-year period in the future which effectively will be a “golden age” for the church and the Christian gospel. Millennialism is often divided into premillennialism—the idea that Jesus will return before the Millennium—and postmillennialism—that he will return afterward. While this difference of opinion might sound minute at first, it creates a stark contrast in how Christians view the future of humanity. Since postmillennialists believe the golden church age will occur without Christ coming back to help, they tend to view human nature and societies in a favorable light. They are often eager to try to realize the Millennium in their lifetime by making the world a better place. A popular belief among nineteenth-century Puritans, it has been dubbed progressive millennialism.³⁸

On the other hand, premillennialism is highly pessimistic concerning human nature and future societies. Not only because God literally has to step down from the clouds for the world to become significantly better, but also because other texts in Revelation and the gospels suggest that the Millennium will be preceded by war, famine, and natural disasters. Premillennialists often emphasize an end-time “tribulation” where the Antichrist, often imagined as an evil dictator,

³⁷ Landes 2011, p. 6–8.

³⁸ Ashcraft 2011.

will make the world a horrible place. Eugene V. Gallagher calls it “catastrophic millennialism” and describes how its adherents communicate an urgency, sometimes desperation, to repent before everything is too late.³⁹

They are often willing to sacrifice much and take actions that can have profound social consequences, yet their motivation is not to improve the world as its condition is plummeting. The reason is to improve one’s sanctification. One of the most popular forms of premillennialism since the nineteenth century is known as dispensationalism. John Nelson Darby popularized it in Great Britain and the Scofield’s Reference Bible in the United States. It teaches that all true Christians will be taken from the earth in a cataclysmic event known as “the rapture” before the great tribulation even begins.⁴⁰

Beaman and Pipkin argue that the shift away from pacifism in American Pentecostalism was paired with postmillennialism being replaced by premillennialism in virtually all Pentecostal circles. They describe how pacifism was “replanted” from its postmillennial, holiness roots into another eschatological framework in which it eventually faded away. They write: “One might say that the ideals captured by the millennium of the imagination were displaced by reliance upon the imminent features of a literal millennium. Where postmillennialism had focused more on ethics, premillennialism was preoccupied with signs of the times.”⁴¹

Interestingly, Ulrik Josefsson paints a slightly different picture regarding the eschatological developments within Swedish Pentecostalism. Premillennialism had gained a large following through German and British influences even before Pentecostalism arrived, and Swedish Pentecostal eschatology tended to be even more uniformly dispensa-

³⁹ Gallagher 2011.

⁴⁰ Gunner 1996, p. 47–48, 59–60.

⁴¹ Beaman & Pipkin 2013, p. 31.

tionalist than the American versions.⁴² Swedish Pentecostalism was not as theologically diverse with a clear and authoritative leader in Lewi Pethrus. His first book was *Jesus kommer* (*Jesus Comes*), a dispensationalist work published in 1912 that became hugely influential for decades to come.⁴³

As previously stated, pacifism and conscientious objection remained a feature of Swedish Pentecostalism far longer than its American counterpart. Beaman's and Pipkin's idea of pacifism losing its grip as Pentecostalism becomes more premillennialist does not seem to fit with the Swedish context. Keeping in mind how Cahill argued that imminent eschatology could inform both pacifism and a theology of holy war, perhaps dispensationalism is a double-edged sword? What, then, could be determining factors of whether it hinders pacifism or not? Here, I think it is essential to look at how Pentecostals have viewed the people and state of Israel in an eschatological light.

Israel's Role in Pentecostal Eschatology

As dispensationalism traditionally affirms cessationism, the idea that spiritual gifts ceased with the apostles, and as its complexity requires thorough study to grasp what it even teaches, its marriage to Pentecostalism has been described by several scholars as "strange."⁴⁴ It has been hypothesized that Pentecostal fascination of prophecy and the scarcity of study bibles effectively making Scofield's Reference Bible "the study Bible of choice" were contributing factors.⁴⁵

However, Pentecostal attraction to dispensationalism increased when predictions of a Jewish return to Israel increasingly came true. In

⁴² Josefsson 2005, p. 158–159.

⁴³ Pethrus, 1912; Lindén 1980, p. 54.

⁴⁴ Richie 2017, p. 5; Arrington 2002, p. 585.

⁴⁵ Richie 2017, p. 3; Chetty 2014, p. 302.

Jesus kommer, Pethrus spent very few pages on the Jews, merely expressing their future salvation and lamenting their “rejection” of Jesus as the Messiah.⁴⁶ Six years later, in 1918, when the Ottoman Empire started the process of handing Palestine over to the British empire, eschatological interest in Zionism increased. It was cemented with the birth of the modern state of Israel in 1948, becoming even more popular when all of Jerusalem became controlled by Israel in 1967.⁴⁷

Dispensationalism was commonly seen as confirmed due to these events. Other eschatological systems had promoted the idea of a Jewish return to Israel as well, often with antisemitic undertones such as believing that God will bring the Jews back to Israel to violently judge them for killing Christ or that the Antichrist will be a Jew who will use the Israeli army for evil purposes.⁴⁸ These were common in Germany, but Pentecostals mainly received eschatological inspiration from English-speaking countries where Zionism tended to be philosemitic and celebratory of Jews as God’s chosen people.

Sean Durbin describes Israel as a “signifier for stability” for American Christian Zionists, a physical sign of God’s faithfulness in which evangelicals find encouragement.⁴⁹ When the state of Israel is being criticized or violently attacked, it is often viewed as validation for Western Christians who perceive themselves to be unjustly treated by their increasingly secular societies. Joseph Williams agrees. Referring to historian Robert Smith, he writes that “the fascination with biblical prophecy and developments in modern-day Palestine on the part of numerous American Christians was intimately tied to a view of the United States as a divinely chosen nation.”⁵⁰ “

⁴⁶ Pethrus 1912, p. 50–51.

⁴⁷ Josefsson 2005, p. 165; Durbin 2013, p. 507.

⁴⁸ Gunner 1996, p. 91.

⁴⁹ Durbin 2013, p. 519.

⁵⁰ Williams 2015, p. 164.

Israel became the “typological referent” for their own national and religious destiny to establish and protect a nation favored by God. It could take extreme forms in early Pentecostal circles such as John Alexander Dowie and Charles Fox Parham dressing in Palestinian robes and claiming Israelite heritage.⁵¹ While these practices quickly vanished in the movement, identification with Israel became common. According to this perspective, unwillingness to criticize Israel and its warfare might then reflect the reluctance of evangelicals to examine themselves critically.

Does this apply to the Swedish context? Göran Gunner points to a sense of alienation towards the surrounding culture, societal pessimism, and a willingness to find signs of the times, as characteristics of Swedish apocalypticism.⁵² However, church historian Joel Halldorf points out that Swedish evangelicals—Pentecostals included—have more in common with African American churches than the white evangelicals of the United States.⁵³ One of the primary reasons for this, Halldorf argues, is a strong sense of being a politically inert religious minority, dependent on the state accepting religious pluralism. As minorities, both groups are less likely to compromise their values to gain political power, and both are rarely perceiving themselves as building and preserving a “Christian nation.” On the other hand, American white evangelicals are more willing to turn to extremist populism to “save America.”

The project of shaping a Christian nation has thus been less relevant for Swedish Pentecostals compared to white American ones. However, dealing with an underdog position in a secular society has been even more relevant. If the Durbin-Williams thesis is reformulated as Israel being the typological referent for the evangelical self-understanding as

⁵¹ Williams 2015, p. 171, 174.

⁵² Gunner 1996, p. 20–21.

⁵³ Halldorf, Joel. “A Tale of Two Evangelicalisms” *Breaking Ground*, 2020. <https://breakingground.us/a-tale-of-two-evangelicalisms/> (read Aug. 13, 2021).

being chosen by God, yet enduring unjust hardships, it becomes possible to test this theory in my material. To what extent is Israel compared with Swedish Pentecostalism? Are there any explicit parallels drawn between them, and are they portrayed as having a common enemy?

This theoretical framework will be combined with Lisa Cahill's conception of obediential pacifism being less concerned with empathy and the idea of holy war superseding ordinary ethics. Suppose conscientious objection is primarily based on what one perceives as God's command to oneself. In that case, it is conceivable that such a pacifist allows others to wage war if God's command to them is perceived to be of another kind. In neither case, empathy with the victims of war will be emphasized, as one "may have fallen short of genuine concern for the welfare of the enemy," as Cahill puts it.⁵⁴

The conscientious objection will primarily be seen as a consequence of following the teachings of Jesus rather than the logical effect of having great empathy with the enemies of the state. Of course, as Cahill recognizes, the barrier between the two perspectives is not waterproof, as one of Jesus' commands is "Love your enemies." The difference between expressing empathy due to it being a driving force behind one's pacifism, and expressing it due to perceived obligation, is subtle. However, as Cahill understands it, a key characteristic of empathetic pacifism is that this empathy is universal.

In contrast, Stephen Spector observes that while "Christian Zionists' compassion for the suffering of the Jews is heartfelt and deep," they have little or no empathy with Arabs: "[G]enuine empathy so often flows in only one direction—in this case toward the Israelis or the Arabs but very rarely toward both."⁵⁵ Based on this observation, I propose the following unified theory to test against the material: both pacifism and

⁵⁴ Cahill 1994, p. 177.

⁵⁵ Spector 2009, p. 136.

support for military violence are being derived from biblical interpretation rather than empathy in a Pentecostal context, with Israel's warfare being viewed as holy war with eschatological significance and parallel to a Pentecostal self-understanding of being vulnerable and misunderstood.

Material and Source Criticism

The central source material for this study consists of every issue of *Evangelii Härold* (abbreviated as EH) between January 1967 and December 1971, and little more than half of the issues of *Dagen* during the same period.⁵⁶ As *Dagen* came out five times per week, sometimes with issues as extensive as 40 pages, it was not feasible to include them all. Instead, I have looked at six months per year. To circumvent the risk of missing out on material that might have more relevance in certain parts of the year, I changed which months were part of the study each year according to the pattern in Table 2. The reason why 1967's pattern is different from the others is that the outbreak of the Six-Day War in June of that year was expected to cause a boost in relevant material during the months that followed.

Table 2. Periodization of the Material

Year	Periodization
1967	June–Nov.
1968	Apr.–June, Oct.–Dec.
1969	Jan.–Mar., July–Sep.
1970	Apr.–June, Oct.–Dec.
1971	Jan.–Mar. July–Sep.

⁵⁶ Due to the sheer amount of references to these periodicals, they will only occur in the footnotes.

The study does include some material from *Dagen* that falls outside of this pattern, namely from issues that Carl-Erik Sahlberg wrote about in his book on *Dagen* and Pentecostal relationships with the rest of society 1964–1974. While Sahlberg was not very interested in describing how *Dagen* wrote about conscientious objectors and the eschatological dimensions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he did great at covering how *Dagen*'s various editors portrayed the Vietnam War. Sahlberg not only looked at what was written in the paper but also what occurred in private correspondence between the paper's founder Lewi Pethrus and its editor Olof Djurfeldt, putting their conflicting views on Vietnam in the broader context of the Cold War debates typical of the era and the development of Pethrus becoming more pro-US in his older years. Sahlberg's work is thus a valuable secondary source. Still, his particular lens of viewing the material focusing on ideology and the broader political debate should be considered when used for this book.

Another helpful secondary source mentioned earlier is Pascal Andréasson's thesis "Pingströrelsen: en tyst pacifistisk folkrörelse?" It analyzes previous works on conscientious objection in Sweden to find out what they said about Pentecostals and reviews what Pentecostal leaders T.B. Barratt, C.G. Hjelm, and Lewi Pethrus thought about pacifism. One of Andréasson's sources, Axel Ljungdahl's study of Swedish conscientious objectors during 1967–1976, has naturally been another valuable secondary source. Göran Gunner's dissertation *När tiden tar slut*, also provides clarifying insights.

Both EH and *Dagen* were Stockholm-based periodicals founded by Lewi Pethrus. While he no longer was an editor for either of them during this period, he still wrote several editorials for the latter and kept a close eye on what was written in both. EH came out weekly and focused on spiritual matters and Bible studies, while *Dagen* was a daily newspaper that combined spiritual reflections with news reporting and political analysis.

Dagen had a much broader scope than EH and included more debates and viewpoints that were not necessarily common within Pentecostalism. EH represented more closely the Pentecostal mainstream in most of its writings: it was more like a church sermon, while *Dagen* was like a discussion around the coffee tables after the church service. Still, *Dagen* should not be viewed as an ordinary newspaper, as its purpose envisioned by Pethrus was to fight secularization by providing Pentecostal perspectives on current political and cultural developments.⁵⁷

Dagen was biased when framing news stories and presenting viewpoints, attempting to shape the opinions of the thousands of Pentecostals who subscribed to it, which is why it should be noted whether news items were copied from news agencies or were written by *Dagen* reporters themselves. The inherent bias of the material is a problem for generalization, as Swedish Pentecostalism in actuality was much broader than the circle around Pethrus. Still, there were no other Pentecostal periodicals during this period. Hopefully, this study can provide some helpful indications on what Pentecostals typically thought without giving a definitive answer.

I have been trying to find books written by Pentecostals within these five years related to military violence and nonviolence to understand better the reasoning and ethical frameworks found in the periodicals, but this turned out to be complicated. I did find one book written by a Pentecostal in 1967: *Kommer ännu ett världskrig (Is another World War Coming?)* by D.O. Belfrage, who also wrote about future wars involving Israel in EH. I have also read two short books that were not written by Pentecostals but by preachers who featured heavily in EH and *Dagen*: Folke Thorell, who wrote almost a hundred articles on Israel and the end times during this period, and Arvid Svärd, who was a passionate

⁵⁷ Sahlberg 2009b, p. 118, 150.

pacifist. Thorell released the book *Israel vaknar (Israel Awakens)* in 1971, and Svärd wrote the Martin Luther King Jr. biography *Jag har en dröm (I Have a Dream)*, published in 1968.

These books mainly express the same ideas they shared in EH and *Dagen* during the period and complement the articles found in the papers. The same is true for three interviews that I conducted with people who had written articles for these periodicals to fill in some blanks about who they and other writers were in relationship to Pentecostalism as a whole.⁵⁸

1.6 Method

This study uses qualitative, inductive content analysis. The inductive approach has been labeled as text-driven and pattern-searching. The researcher looks for similarities and differences in the data to identify patterns that can be placed in different categories on various levels of interpretation, moving from the concrete and specific to the abstract and general.⁵⁹ As the level of abstraction rises, so does the generalizability and the risk of bias. As a result, the researcher needs to be transparent with how the material has been interpreted. As this study covers a limited time frame and as not much research has been previously conducted in this field, the analysis will not reach a very high degree of abstraction. My focus is on explicit motivation and arguments provided in the material.

Original copies of *Evangelii Härold* are available at Uppsala University Library, and *Dagen* is accessible on microfilm at the National Library of Sweden in Stockholm. Since the material consists of thousands of pages, most of which had no relevance to the aim of this

⁵⁸ These were Göran Janzon, Birger Thureson and Ivar Lundgren.

⁵⁹ Graneheim et al. 2017, p. 29–34.

book, I browsed through most pages quickly, looking for titles or images that had to do with war, violence, peace, pacifism, Vietnam, Israel, and conscience. Some titles did not mention these keywords explicitly, but related topics such as Christian societal duties, the end times, and communism were also considered. Relevant articles were photographed to be read and analyzed later.

As this book aims to review and analyze Pentecostal views expressed in periodicals, two layers of communication need to be considered: the authors' explicit communication and the editors' implicit communication. The distinction between various writers needs to be respected in the analysis so that opinions expressed by different people are not unnecessarily grouped or confused with one another, even as patterns can be found between several of them.

However, as the editors approved and organized all the material, it can also be viewed as saying something about them to a certain extent. It is difficult to identify, but it should also not be ignored as it provides normative meaning even to news articles and the placement of advertisements. The writers of the pieces are not the only ones communicating something on such pages; the editors are too. Therefore, the content analysis of this study pays attention to the actual content and its placement within the periodicals. Pictures of some key examples of this are included. This methodology is informed by how researchers within the social sciences have distilled normative messaging from text types with a neutral, objective framing.⁶⁰ However, I will not go to the lengths of coding all the texts and providing a scale of normative measuring as the non-normative material plays a minor role in this study.

Identifying Biblicist argumentation, eschatological expectation, and ethical motivation is a fairly straightforward process based on the

⁶⁰ See for example Hilton et al. (2010) and Buckton et al. (2018).

theoretical framework discussed above. But how does one identify empathy in the texts? Medical researchers often distinguish between several nuances of empathy:

- Cognitive empathy, the ability to intellectually understand the other's emotions and perspectives;
- Emotive empathy, the ability to imagine the other's emotions and perspectives;
- Behavioral empathy, the ability to convey empathetic understanding to the other;
- Moral empathy, the internal motivation to empathize.⁶¹

These are commonly identified through interviews in which expressions of the various forms of empathy are coded with keywords and specific reasoning.⁶² This methodology is not useful here, and for our purposes, the classifications need to be modified. While cognitive empathy is vital to establishing empathetic pacifism, emotive empathy is less relevant and harder to identify. However, emotional language can be an important signifier of empathy being expressed. Furthermore, we are looking for internal motivation for this empathy as far as it is expressed, and not as it is conveyed to the victims of war themselves as much as to the readers of the periodicals expected to take a stance on warfare.

Other studies that have sought to identify and categorize empathy in published publications have looked for texts that descriptively portray people as victims and share information about them in a narrative way.⁶³ They also identify emotionally charged wording, prescriptive exhortations to the readers, and framing events as tragedies

⁶¹ Stepien & Baernstein 2006, p. 524.

⁶² Stepien & Baernstein 2006; Lawrence et al. 2004.

⁶³ Baider & Constantinou 2018, p. 201; Riegert & Hovden 2019, p. 170.

or horrors.⁶⁴ The qualitative content analysis considers these aspects when identifying patterns within the material.

The broad knowledge gap in this field provides great potential in exploring various questions. We have already seen that pacifism was widespread in other Swedish church movements. Some of them, like the Örebro Mission and the Holiness Union, were very similar to Pentecostalism to the extent that they effectively were lowercase pentecostal churches with almost the same kind of spirituality.⁶⁵ In fact, some of the writers analyzed in this study belonged to the Örebro Mission. They had their outlet, *Missionsbaneret*, and a unique theological centralization with its missionary school in Örebro. Taking them into consideration would have been very interesting, but the scope would have been too broad. For the same reason, I had to abstain from doing a comparative analysis with a different church tradition or even a non-religious movement, despite the potential for interesting findings. Even though views on crime, the police force, abortion, euthanasia, and spiritual warfare all relate to views on military violence and pacifism, they had to be excluded from the scope of this study.

I briefly considered a longer timeframe, either going back to 1965 with its debates on conscientious objections brought by the establishment of a new department seeking to control it or looking at 1974 and beyond with the death of Lewi Pethrus and the changes that might have led to. Ultimately, I decided that a five-year period was extensive enough.

Another option would have been to use five evenly spread out years over a more extended period, such as 1948, 1953, 1958, 1963, and 1968. Such a scope would better measure similarities and differences over time. The responses to Israel's establishment could be included and

⁶⁴ Baider & Constantinou 2018, p. 202.

⁶⁵ Moberg 2013, p. 43.

compared with reactions to Israel's expansion twenty years later. While such a study surely would be interesting, it would have had to sacrifice the ambition of this study to get a deeper understanding of ethical motivation during a period when we know that conscientious objection was widespread within the movement.

1.7 Outline

The material is presented and analyzed in four chapters. Chapter 2 looks at how pacifism and conscientious objection were described, debated, and motivated. Chapter 3 is concerned with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, particularly the Six-Day War and its consequences, reviewing how the Pentecostal periodicals described this conflict and their motivations for valuing it ethically. Chapter 4 focuses on the Vietnam War, highlighting the description and motivation behind ethical stances. Finally, chapter 5 brings up other relevant passages in the material, such as writings about Pentecostal soldier homes, the risk of nuclear war, and other ongoing conflicts in the world. Chapter 2–4 start with brief historical backgrounds.

There are two significant subdivisions within each chapter—*Evangelii Härold* and *Dagen*. Each has additional subdivisions, starting with editors, then prominent writers, other voices, and finally news articles. When encountering authors who have written in both papers about a specific topic, their entire material on that topic will be presented and analyzed in one paper's subdivision based on which paper they wrote in the most. For example, over 90 percent of the material written by Folke Thorell was found in EH. Still, his writings in *Dagen* will also be considered when discussing the EH material. The Thorell who wrote in *Dagen* is obviously not a separate person and should not be treated as someone distinct from the Thorell in EH. Similarly,

material from books published during this period will be presented together with the outlet articles from the same authors. Each chapter ends with a brief summary.

Textual analysis will be interwoven with presenting the material within these chapters, particularly when new ideas or passages with special relevance to the theoretical framework show up.

Chapter 6 contains a concluding analysis, bringing together all the previous analyses and the theories to answer the research questions. This chapter will also give some suggestions for future research.

2. Pacifism and Conscientious Objection

2.1 Background

After introducing mandatory conscription in 1901, the Swedish parliament established a right to do arms-free service for those who had serious, religiously motivated conscientious objections to bearing arms, decided by a military council.⁶⁶ Arms-free service normally supported the military in other ways than combat (e.g., transportation or production of materials). This fact led several pacifist groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses and Free Baptists to become total objectors, refusing conscription altogether.⁶⁷ These were punished with fines and imprisonment.⁶⁸

The nature of arms-free services as indirect support for the military and its restriction to religiously motivated conscientious objectors led to a reform in 1966 which also saw the birth of a new government agency, Vapenfrimyndigheten (The Agency for Arms-Free Service) that would take all decisions regarding conscientious objectors in place of the military council.⁶⁹ Rather than supporting the military, from 1966 onwards, arms-free service was seen as a service to society. In 1970, conscripts were able to do arms-free service in churches, and in 1971

⁶⁶ Gustafsson 1987, p. 210–211.

⁶⁷ Swedish Government 1966, p. 30–31.

⁶⁸ Andréasson 2020, p. 11.

⁶⁹ Swedish Government 1965, p. 21–25.

they were able to do it abroad, including on missionary stations.⁷⁰ Between 1967 and 1971, Pentecostals were the largest religious group that applied for conscientious objection (see figure 1).

2.2 Evangelii Härold

Editors

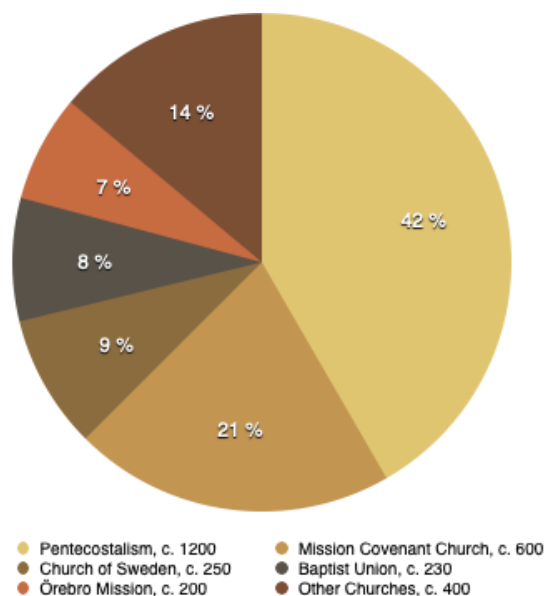
During these five years, no editorial was about pacifism or conscientious objection. These values were not mentioned in editorials about Christian ethics or principles. One 1970 op-ed titled “Neither Right Nor Left” by Arne Eklund, who usually wrote in *Dagen*, condemned violence on all sides in the Vietnam war and added:

The issue of whether a Christian ‘is allowed’ to go to war altogether, even with the purpose of defense, shall not be discussed in this context. Regardless of one’s general view in this matter, all can agree that war against defenseless people can never be justified.⁷¹

⁷⁰ *Dagen* June 27, 1970, p. 1, 8–9; Aug. 31, 1971, p. 1, 3.

⁷¹ “Frågan om en kristen överhuvudtaget ens i försvarssyfte ’får’ gå i krig skall inte diskuteras i detta sammanhang. Oavsett principiell inställning i den frågan är man dock överens om att krig mot försvarslösa människor aldrig kan försvaras.” EH 1970, no. 46, p. 2.

Figure 1. Church Affiliation for Religiously Motivated Conscientious Objectors 1967-71.⁷²



Thus, pacifism was never explicitly promoted or denounced by the editors of EH. However, editor Åke Stenström argued in a 1968 editorial that while some biblical commands are meant for all people to follow, like the Ten Commandments, others are only for those born again, such as the Sermon on the Mount, as those who have not been renewed in their hearts by salvation are unable to follow Jesus' commands.⁷³ Stenström did not explicitly mention pacifism or war in this context. Still, this could be viewed as a theological framework for having a personal pacifist ethic (assuming that is how one understands the

⁷² Data from Ljungdahl 1980, appendix 9, p. 87. Ljungdahl only provides approximate numbers.

⁷³ EH 1968, no. 43, p. 2.

Sermon on the Mount) while allowing non-Christians like Israeli Jews to wage wars.

The section “Cut and commented” once included a quote from an editorial in Swedish Christian journal *Hemmets vän*, which argued that revolution and violence are means incapable of making the third world a better place, criticizing Christians who welcome revolutionary violence. “Violence breeds violence. The theology of violence cannot bring any good results. It can only worsen things. The only thing that can save the world is the message of reconciliation, which is found in the gospel.”⁷⁴

Writers

Algot Hed

A significant example of when conscientious objection was pushed to the forefront by EH was when they published a testimony by Algot Hed describing how he refused to bear arms.⁷⁵ The article called for repentance and enduring hardships, but most of it concerned Hed’s experiences in prison after he objected to arms-bearing in 1917 during the First World War. He pointed out that this was before any laws allowed conscientious objectors to have civilian duties as part of their military service. He also stated that he was the only one at his station A8 in the north of Sweden.

When describing the motivations behind his stance, Hed wrote: “I was convinced long before I was inducted, that I could not dress in the clothes of the system and serve it since its principles are in sharpest

⁷⁴ “Våld föder våld. Våldets teologi kan inte medföra några goda resultat, det kan endast förvärra förhållandena. Det enda som kan rädda världen är det försoningens budskap, som finns i evangeliet.” EH 1970, no. 47, p. 29.

⁷⁵ EH 1967, no. 20, p. 14–15.

contrast to what the Bible and the very words of Jesus teach (Matt. 5:38–48).”⁷⁶ He went on to describe that he refused to wear the military uniform, quoting the Bible. It caused him to be imprisoned. He prayed fervently and asked for God “to help in the battle.” A few days later, as a court-martial was prepared, he could see other soldiers training bayonet fighting. He remarked: “If I before during certain moments had doubted whether I was right in refusing to do military service and whether I by doing so walked the path that God wanted me to walk, I now received a conviction and felt that I should take this path no matter the cost.”⁷⁷

Algot Hed was judged to serve almost five months in military prison, in which he was only fed a small piece of bread and boiled Swedish turnip so that he went hungry most of the time. He described in the article how he evangelized to other prisoners and encouraged the readers to visit prisons to sing spiritual songs and talk with the inmates about God.

Bengteric Jernberg

Bengteric Jernberg (1934–1991) was a Pentecostal youth pastor in Småland who was responsible for the EH section “Young Forum” together with Stanley Sjöberg.⁷⁸ In 1968, when a reader had sent in the question, “Why does one seldom hear Pentecostal pastors protest

⁷⁶ “Jag hade klart för mig långt innan jag blev inkallad, att jag inte kunde ikläda mig detta systems kläder och träda i dess tjänst, emedan dess principer är i skarpaste motsats till vad bibeln och Jesu egna ord lär (Matt. 5:38-48).” EH 1967, no. 20, p. 14.

⁷⁷ “Om jag förut under vissa stunder varit i tvivel om huruvida jag handlat rätt med att vägra militärtjänst och om jag därmed gick de vägar Gud ville jag skulle gå, så fick jag nu förvisning och kände, att jag hellre skulle gå den vägen, kosta vad det ville.” EH 1967, no. 20, p. 14.

⁷⁸ Phone interview with Birger Thureson, Dec. 3, 2021.

against the war in Vietnam?” Jernberg answered that this issue deserves addressing by pastors as much as any other moral issues, even though one should be careful not to be “too involved” in politics when preaching the Gospel. He continued:

It is obviously totally unimaginable that awakened Christians defend the war. We condemn violence in all of its forms. War is a destructive factor that only creates more aggression. I, therefore, hold that the USA should tastefully leave Vietnam. It is an insane policy to try to stop Communism through violence.⁷⁹

Jernberg wrote that Christians defending the American war effort was similar to medieval crusaders and encouraged the readers to pray that the war would end as prayer is more effective than protest.

A few weeks later, an anonymous reader wrote in and asked if EH could provide some Bible passages supporting conscientious objection. Jernberg wrote a lengthy response in *Young Forum*, describing what the process of becoming a conscientious objector looks like as well as discussing people’s motivations for entering it. He wrote:

Looking for support for one's pacifism based on the Bible is very natural for a Christian. [...] The Bible’s strong position of ‘you shall not kill’ is clearly noticeable, and anything else is against the spirit of the gospel. Defending war, violence, and aggression is unthinkable for a Christian. However, as a Swedish citizen, you are obliged to fulfill your duties towards the motherland even

⁷⁹ “Det är ju helt otänkbart att som en levande kristen försvara kriget. Vi fördömer våld i alla dess former. Krig är en destruktiv faktor som bara skapar ytterligare aggressioner. Jag anser därför att USA snarast borde lämna Vietnam,. Det är ju en vansinnig politik att försöka stoppa kommunismen med våld.” EH 1968, no. 1, p. 18. The Swedish word translated “awakened” here is “levande” which literally means living, stemming from the conviction that nominal Christians who were not part of the revival were spiritually dead.

under war conditions. The stance on these issues is highly personal and must be decided according to each person's conscience.⁸⁰

Jernberg argued that radical pacifism is not necessarily the only consequence of a Christian worldview and pointed out that even someone doing arms-free service is helping the military non-directly. He ended with: "With this answer, I have wanted to show that there are several sides to this large complex of questions, which everyone must think through and take a personal stance on."⁸¹

"You shall not kill" (Ex. 20:13) was the only explicit Bible passage given by Jernberg. He undoubtedly de-emphasized biblical motivation in favor of conscience-based decision-making. While still affirming that war is against the Christian faith, the tone is noticeably different from his response to the question about the Vietnam war. Here, he does not want to condemn joining the war effort despite previously condemning "war in all of its forms." It is hard to know what caused this change of tone and if Jernberg was solely responsible for it or if someone pressured him to tone down the pacifist message as the only legitimate Christian stance.⁸²

⁸⁰ "Att utifrån Bibeln söka stöd för sin pacifism är ju synnerligen naturligt för en kristen. [...] Bibelns klara linje om att inte 'döda' är tydligt märkbar, och något annat är emot evangeliets anda. Att försvara krig, våld och aggressioner är otänkbart för en kristen. Som svensk medborgare är man dock skyldig att fullgöra sina plikter mot fosterlandet även under krigsförhållanden. Ställningstagandet i dessa frågor är synnerligen personligt, och måste avgöras efter vars och ens samvete." EH 1968, no. 7, p. 14.

⁸¹ "Med detta svar har jag velat visa att det finns flera sidor av detta stora frågekomplex, som var och en måste tänka igenom och personligen ta ståndpunkt inför." EH 1968, no. 7, p. 14.

⁸² EH 1968, no. 7, p. 14.

Karl-Erik Svedlund

Karl-Erik Svedlund (1906–1974) was a well-known compositor active in Stockholm Filadelfia Church which EH editor Willis Säwe pastored.⁸³ He wrote sympathetically about pacifist Albert Wickman and his “peace farms,” which trained people to intervene in conflict nonviolently. He also shared an anecdote on Wickman arguing against atheism and called him “God’s warrior.”⁸⁴ In an article on “the violent politics of Napoleon,” Svedlund called war the work of demons and celebrated people who nonviolently helped victims of war like Florence Nightingale and Elsa Brändström.⁸⁵ As a respected and influential voice within Pentecostalism, Svedlund’s pacifist stance likely did not go unnoticed.

Other Voices

Stanley Sjöberg interviewed the Finnish pastor David Klemetz, who was pastoring the Filadelfia Church in Helsinki.⁸⁶ Klemetz shared that he joined the Finnish army bearing arms during World War II, but he would become a conscientious objector had he made the same choice at the time of the interview. “I have seen too much of the spirit of war at close range,” he said, mentioning how deserters were executed by their fellow squad members and how his brother was killed on the battlefield.⁸⁷ He prayed to God that he would not have to use his rifle,

⁸³ Phone interview with Birger Thureson, Dec. 3, 2021.

⁸⁴ EH 1968, no. 39, p. 14, 23.

⁸⁵ EH 1971, no. 28, p. 16–18.

⁸⁶ EH 1969, no. 39, p. 12–13, 26.

⁸⁷ “Jag har sett för mycket av krigets anda på nära håll.” EH 1969, no. 39, p. 12.

and when the war ended, he had mainly been doing other tasks such as carrying supplies.

An interview with Pentecostal pastor Bertel Lindstedt revealed that he was a conscientious objector along with other Pentecostals in Finland during World War II.⁸⁸ Still, he joined the frontlines as a medic. He motivated his stance by saying:

We were actually ‘conscientious objectors.’ We couldn’t shoot on a human being. There were, of course, different opinions on how to behave during the war. My confession, and the confession of many others, was: if our comrades will be on the frontline, so will we. We asked for [nonviolent] tasks which we could perform.⁸⁹

At one point, ten out of the twenty soldiers of Lindstedt’s squad were killed in a Russian ambush. Lindstedt himself was hit by a Mauser rifle in the hand and neck but survived. The bullet was removed a month later, and the physician repeatedly said it was a “miracle.”⁹⁰

Daniel Wörn wrote a Christmas chronicle called “Peace on Earth.” He stated that violence and war are the consequence of humanity’s fall into sin and that the peace that Jesus brings is not only inner peace but also peace between nations.⁹¹ However, human peace processes constantly fail because what is necessary for true peace is being reconciled with God. This is why world peace will only be available after Christ’s second coming, Wörn argued.

⁸⁸ EH 1970, no. 32, p. 12–13, 20.

⁸⁹ “Vi var egentligen ’samvetsömma’. Skjuta på en människa kunde vi inte. Det fanns givetvis olika uppfattningar om hur vi skulle uppträda i krig. Min och många andras bekännelse var: Ska våra kamrater vara ute vid fronten, så ska vi också vara där. Ge oss uppgifter, som vi kan sköta.” EH 1970, no. 32, p. 13.

⁹⁰ EH 1970, no. 32, p. 20.

⁹¹ “Frid är lika med fred”. EH 1969, no. 51, p. 6.

2.3 Dagen

Editors

Lewi Pethrus never promoted pacifism or conscientious objection on the editorial pages. On the contrary, he defended warfare on several occasions, as we will see later. In one editorial, he pointed to the “mighty accounts of war” waged by Jesus himself in the book of Revelation as an argument for Christians getting involved in politics even when such politics results in the loss of human lives.⁹²

The other editors almost always wrote anonymously. One of them, published two days after the murder of Martin Luther King Jr., stated: “Martin Luther King’s principle of non-violence was not only the only acceptable one from a Christian standpoint—it was and is the most realistic one, in the long run.”⁹³ Several editorials criticized the idea of promoting social justice through violent revolution.⁹⁴

This position was not necessarily grounded in a pacifist conviction since a 1970 editorial argued that there is a difference between revolutionary violence and “established” state violence. The latter is necessary to preserve law and order.⁹⁵ This editorial was written because of criticism directed at a Pentecostal pastor who visited the local police office and said some encouraging words about their service. The anonymous nature of these texts makes it difficult to conclude whether it was the same person praising King’s nonviolence and defending state violence.

⁹² *Dagen* May 5, 1970, p. 2.

⁹³ *Dagen* April 6, 1968, p. 2. King’s nonviolent struggle for racial equality was also celebrated in a lengthy article on p. 16 of the same issue.

⁹⁴ *Dagen* Dec. 19, 1968, p. 2, *Dagen* Oct. 20, 1970, p. 2.

⁹⁵ *Dagen* Dec. 22, 1970, p. 2.

Editorials on Christian living and ethics usually never mentioned pacifism. However, a 1967 op-ed by J. A. Landberg called “Christianity and Ethics” was clearly pacifist.⁹⁶ He argued that the construction of weapons is due to mistrust and antipathy towards others, which has gone overboard in the modern age with weapons of mass destruction. Jesus is the only cure for this, as he “had no armies and waged no war. His words were: ‘All who draw the sword will die by the sword.’”⁹⁷

Landberg argued that the early Christians were nonviolent, but that changed with the state church system of Constantine, which made Christians persecute others instead of being persecuted themselves. Christians lost the teachings of Christ, and as a result, the “spirit of hatred” got hold of Europe and led to kingdoms that brought death and destruction through war. Landberg argued that the idea that warfare is necessary is a lie from the devil and wrote:

War and Christianity are incompatible. War is something horrible, whether it is an assault or defense. Even if one should accept the defense of one’s own country, one must still think about all that war brings. The roused and hostile environment, the many acts of violence, the many women and children who have to leave their husbands and fathers on the battlefield. God has said that we should love our enemies. If we did, war would soon be just a memory.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Dagen* Sep. 22, 1967, p. 2. I have been unsuccessful in finding additional information on Landberg and even what “J. A.” stands for.

⁹⁷ “Han hade inga arméer och anbefallde ingen krigföring. Hans ord var: ‘Alla de som taga till svärd ska med svärd förgås.’” *Dagen* Sep. 22, 1967, p. 2.

⁹⁸ “Krig och kristendom är oförenliga. Krig är något ohyggligt vare sig det gäller angrepp eller försvar. Även om man skulle godta försvaret av det egna landet, måste man ändå tänka på allt det som följer i krigets spår. Den uppjagade och förråande miljön, de många våldsdåden, de många kvinnor och barn som får lämna sina män och fäder på slagfältet. Gud har sagt att vi ska älska våra ovänner. Gjorde vi det, skulle kriget snart vara ett minne blott.” *Dagen* Sep. 22,

Landberg also claimed that even if one kills to defend one's own life, the act of killing another human being will haunt one for the rest of one's life.

It should also be noted that *Dagen's* foreign policy editor Arne Eklund did write a signed culture article in 1970 on the Brazilian Catholic bishop Dom Hélder Câmara, comparing him with Martin Luther King Jr. as a champion of nonviolence. "Violence breeds more violence," Câmara was quoted as saying, convinced that people would realize the absurdity of war and that the Vietnam conflict would end. Eklund ended his article by stating that "we all" have good reason to sympathize with this nonviolent struggle for justice.⁹⁹ As this text was not published as an editorial, it is possible that Eklund felt freer to express an opinion differing from Pethrus'. We will later see how tensions grew high regarding the Vietnam War.

Writers

Arvid Svärd and Sven Ahdrian

Arvid Svärd (1888–1977) was a journalist and missionary belonging to the Baptist Union who frequently wrote for *Dagen* as well as *Aftonbladet* and *Veckoposten*.¹⁰⁰ He described becoming a pacifist in his younger years, despite his father joining the army.¹⁰¹

In 1968, Svärd was engaged in a passionate debate on nonviolence in *Dagen* with the physician and preacher Sven Ahdrian (1930–2003). Ahdrian had written an op-ed titled "Weapons stronger than 'non-

1967. p. 2.

⁹⁹ *Dagen* May 30, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁰⁰ Phone interview with Ivar Lundgren, Jan. 5, 2022; Cedersjö 2001, p. 233.

¹⁰¹ *Dagen* Oct. 29, 1968, p. 12–13.

violence,” arguing that “[n]on-violence’ as an isolated idea does not belong in the New Testament, nor in Christianity.”¹⁰² This statement was not a call to reject pacifism. On the contrary, Ahdrian argued that Christian enemy love goes far beyond King’s and Gandhi’s conception of nonviolence. If we love our enemies, we will not merely abstain from violence but actively do good towards our enemies, and we will not have weapons stored for ‘home usage’ as some Christians have, Ahdrian wrote.

Arvid Svärd’s response was published two weeks later.¹⁰³ He argued that the late Dr. King indeed was motivated by love and the Gospel. He was “filled with God’s Spirit” and believed in restoring original, apostolic Christianity. Christian pacifism is not “passivism,” Svärd argued, but actively resists evil without doing any harm. “If blood has to be shed, it must be our own and not the blood of our enemies.”¹⁰⁴

Svärd’s article was not opposed by anyone defending arms-bearing. Instead, missionary Paul Sedin criticized him, who argued that King could not have been filled with the Holy Spirit as he has expressed doubts on the virgin birth.¹⁰⁵ In the same issue, Ahdrian also had an opportunity to respond. He clarified that he is just as much against using violence as Svärd is:

I cannot find the way of violence and weapons accepted as Christian confession anywhere in the NT. [...] The weapons of a Christian are not of a fleshly kind. [...] Violence and weapons do

¹⁰² “Men ’icke-våld’ som isolerad idé hör inte hemma i N. T. och därför inte heller i kristendomen.” *Dagen* May 17, 1968 p. 2. Ahdrian is described in Djurfeldt, Olof, “Till minne – Astrid Ahdrian”, *Dagen*, January 29, 2013. <https://www.dagen.se/familj/2013/01/29/till-minne-astrid-ahdrian/> (red Nov. 17, 2021).

¹⁰³ *Dagen* May 31, 1968, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴ “Men om blod ska flyta måste det vara vårt eget, inte våra fienders.” *Dagen* May 31, 1968, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Dagen* June 11, 1968, p. 2.

not belong in the Kingdom of God [...] Can one remain in such a conviction even when one's country is in danger or under the rule of unrighteousness? The answer to this must be yes, unequivocal yes.¹⁰⁶

Still, Ahdrian continued to argue that the nonviolent movement is seldom very loving and that King was not as godly as Svärd believes. Thus, he rejected the description "non-violent" for the pacifist Christian.¹⁰⁷

In a later issue, Arvid Svärd commented that it is understandable that people in developing countries want to use violence to fight oppression and gain freedom, considering that people who are not oppressed in industrialized countries also welcome the military's efforts to secure their freedom and privileges in the future. Svärd clarified that he is a pacifist, that Jesus clearly shows us another way than violence, and assumed that most Christian leaders are also pacifists. Still, he maintained that the openness to revolutionary violence is legitimate if one is not a pacifist, but to oppose revolutionary violence that seeks social justice is hypocritical if one defends violence with non-revolutionary purposes.¹⁰⁸

In other texts published in *Dagen*, Svärd wrote about how Christians must help all victims of violence, oppression, and war.¹⁰⁹ He argued that Christianity in the United States needs to become more Christian, as the war they were involved in was profoundly unchristian. He lamented

¹⁰⁶ "Jag kan inte finna våldets och vapnens väg någonstans i NT accepteras [sic!] för en kristen bekännare. [...] En kristens vapen är ej av köttslig art. [...] Våld och vapen hör inte hemma i Guds rike [...] Kan man stå kvar vid en sådan uppfattning även när landet är i fara eller i ett orättfärdigt social system? Sva-ret på detta måste vara ja, obetingat ja." *Dagen* June 11, 1968, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ Svärd got the final say in *Dagen* June 29, 1968, p. 2, defending his view of King as a Spirit-filled Christian.

¹⁰⁸ *Dagen* May 22, 1968, p. 2.

¹⁰⁹ *Dagen* June 12, 1970, p. 4.

that the impression many Asians get of Christians are those who bomb their countries: “I wonder if Christ for countless people is a war god with bloodstained hands?”¹¹⁰ He urged *Dagen*’s readers to make Christianity more Christ-like in a “radically prophetic and pacifist spirit.”¹¹¹

Göran Janzon

Göran Janzon (b. 1945), who belonged to the Örebro Mission, briefly worked for *Dagen* before leaving Sweden for missionary work in Africa in 1970.¹¹² He mainly wrote book reviews but also some news articles, many of which dealt with pacifism and conscientious objection.

Janzon wrote a short news item about a Nordic peace camp in Habo, partly organized by the Christian organization Svenska världsfredsmissionen (The Swedish World Peace Mission). Janzon himself was a speaker there, arguing that Christianity is a peace movement. He noted that there was a lot of discussion at the camp about the future of the peace movement and what a pacifist society could look like.¹¹³

Janzon also reported from the annual meeting of the same organization, which received half a page in *Dagen*. Among other things, he pointed out a renewed interest in pacifism and peace issues in churches and that the organization challenged what they viewed as too harsh conditions for conscientious objection.¹¹⁴

Janzon reported on the International Peace Bureau’s congress in Kungälv, in south-western Sweden, and their goal of “completely abolishing military defense.”¹¹⁵ It was followed up by another article in

¹¹⁰ “Undra på, om Kristus för otaliga därute närmast blir en krigsgud med blodstänkta händer.” *Dagen* Oct. 27, 1970, p. 4.

¹¹¹ *Dagen* Oct. 27, 1970, p. 4.

¹¹² Phone interview with Göran Janzon, Nov. 23, 2021.

¹¹³ *Dagen* July 15, 1969, p. 13.

¹¹⁴ *Dagen* Aug. 20, 1969, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ *Dagen* Aug. 7, 1969, p. 7.

which Janzon stated that the most important decision is a proposition for an international law guaranteeing the right to conscientious objection. There were also discussions on what a non-military and nonviolent defense system would look like.¹¹⁶

In February 1969, Janzon reviewed *Att bygga fred* (Building Peace) by Dominique Pire. Janzon criticized him for emphasizing interfaith dialogue to the cost of the crippling mission, as well as not being “radically pacifist” and accepting violence in certain situations, “even military [violence].”¹¹⁷ Five months later, Janzon reviewed the anthology *Fredspolitik och kristen tro* (Peace Politics and Christian Faith), criticizing it for characterizing radical pacifism as “dogmatic” and expressing sympathy for violent revolution in Latin America.¹¹⁸

In April 1970, Göran Janzon reviewed a book called *Att vägra värnplikt* (Refusing Military Service) by public official Stig Marcus which was published by the pro-military organization Folk och Försvar (Society and Defence).¹¹⁹ The review filled almost an entire page. Janzon was very critical of the book, arguing that it was biased since it “shares the official view on military service.” Janzon objected to Marcus’ argument that belief in nonviolence is an insufficient reason for conscientious objection.

Janzon argued that conscientious objection should not be viewed as an exception to the norm, and he argued that the definition of “crisis of conscience” used by Marcus and the military puts far too much emphasis on emotion as opposed to intellectual reasoning, deciding who should be a conscientious objector arbitrary. Janzon refers back to a statement by the Swedish free churches in 1969 that criticized the military for forcing many Christians to do military service against their

¹¹⁶ *Dagen* Aug. 22, 1969, p. 14.

¹¹⁷ *Dagen* Feb. 20, 1969, p. 4

¹¹⁸ *Dagen* July 26, 1969, p. 4.

¹¹⁹ *Dagen* April 23, 1970, p. 4.

will after they had decided that their crisis of conscience was not deep enough.

Other Voices

Missionary Jean Malm (1914–2006), who belonged to the Örebro Mission, wrote an article in 1968 on how violence and wars are evil and how Christianity can peacefully tackle these problems, unlike communism, which wants a revolution.¹²⁰ Malm also penned a report from the 1970 Nordic Missionary Conference. There, Norwegian missionary and member of parliament Jakob Aano is quoted as saying that it is “almost impossible” for the missionary to avoid political confrontation, as the Gospel has a message of justice that calls for an end of oppression.¹²¹

Brazilian missionary Gerson A. Meyer agreed in the same article that injustices should be addressed but criticized Christians who join violent revolutionary movements in Latin America. He said that Christians help the oppressed better by not using violence, instead preaching the Word of God as “truth-tellers,” informing and educating them so that they no longer need a revolution.

The liberal politician Ture Königson, a member of parliament for Folkpartiet (The Liberal Party), argued that conscientious objectors are pressured to do armed service.¹²² He stated that while Christians “truly have the most serious reasons not to point a weapon against anyone,” they are mistrusted, and the criteria for providing evidence for one’s crisis of conscience are ambiguous and arbitrary.¹²³ Königson criticized

¹²⁰ *Dagen* Nov 12, 1968 p. 11. Phone interview with Birger Thureson, Dec. 3, 2021.

¹²¹ EH 1970 no. 39, p. 3, 31.

¹²² *Dagen* Dec. 23, 1970, p. 4.

¹²³ “Unga kristna, som verkligen har de allvarligaste skäl att inte resa vapen

Lutheran priests who thought the Bible supported warfare and tried to stop free church pacifists from becoming conscientious objectors based on their conviction that they were reading the Bible wrong.

Pastor Sven Jonasson protested against a statement from the World Council of Churches, which said that Christianity could not say no to violent revolution if there were no other solutions to bring justice to the oppressed. Jonasson argued that this is against the legacy of the recently murdered Martin Luther King Jr. and Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount.¹²⁴

Lars-Åke Bengtsson shared Jonasson's critique and wrote a lengthy piece on why the Gospel is a sufficient, nonviolent "weapon" to fight injustices with. He argued that the idea that violence is necessary is a lie spread by communists to motivate revolution. Still, he wrote that he does not condemn those who take to violence in desperate times, but he insisted that the way of Jesus is better.¹²⁵

Criticism of pacifism was rare but occasionally took place. A culture article by Rolf Johnsson on the Normandy landings of June 6, 1944, portrayed the invasion as necessary to win World War II.¹²⁶ Sune Vahlquist criticized Göran Janzon in 1970 for promoting pacifism in his book reviews. Vahlquist pointed to Israel's survival as a primary example of why a military defense force is necessary. He also argued that the idea of a nonviolent civil defense force, which Janzon had written about, is a "product of the imagination," and it would be crushed "in a thousand pieces" if it was confronted with an opposing military force.¹²⁷

mot någon [...]" *Dagen* Dec. 23, 1970, p. 4.

¹²⁴ *Dagen* May 8, 1968, p. 2.

¹²⁵ *Dagen* May 22, 1968, p. 2, 4.

¹²⁶ *Dagen* June 2, 1970, p. 4.

¹²⁷ *Dagen* Apr. 8, 1970, p. 17.

In an interview with the Swedish National Football Team captain, Orvar Bergmark, *Dagen*'s reporter questioned him primarily about his faith and the Sunday school he sent his children to and what he thought about the pacifist sentiment that was growing among the youth. He did not find it realistic but wanted a strong military to prevent a foreign attack.¹²⁸

Letters to the Editor

Dagen's editors were careful to point out that they did not take responsibility for the views expressed in the "Letters to the editor" section. Still, it gives insight into the views and debates many Pentecostals found engaging. In March of 1969, an anonymous reader presented a biblical critique of pacifism.¹²⁹ *Dagen*'s Walter Erixon had criticized militarism in one of his chronicles. The reader objected and pointed out that God will start a war according to Ezekiel 38–39, which will be "worse than napalm bombing." War is sometimes needed to defend democracy, as in the case of Israel and Vietnam, and God blesses the weapons used in that fight.

This was a rare case of someone referring to contemporary conflicts as arguments against pacifism. As we will see in the following chapters, others who defended the legitimacy of Israeli and American warfare did hardly ever explicitly use such argumentation against the pacifist principle or conscientious objection. The biblical argumentation of the anonymous reader was not based on biblical commands but on Old Testament prophecies which were perceived as implying that God will use wars for his purposes, one of those being to defend democracy.

Another reader, Maths Nilsson, wrote a passionate answer, saying that Jesus never blesses weapons to hurt others with as he said, "put

¹²⁸ *Dagen* May 21, 1970, p. 18.

¹²⁹ *Dagen* March 13, 1969, p. 21.

your sword back in its place” in Matthew 26:52. War was from the devil even when defending “so-called democracy.” If we were more filled with the love of Jesus, there would be no wars.¹³⁰ Following this exchange, reader Berth Karlén argued that all Christians should refuse to bear arms, criticizing that conscience-based approach for being arbitrary and pointing out that there are no other issues in which Pentecostals are told to follow their conscience. He also raised the implications of killing another human being: if it is a non-Christian, one has condemned a person to hell without even preaching the Gospel to them. “It cannot be the mission of a Christian to shorten people’s lives and thereby their opportunity to save their lives from the viewpoint of eternity.”¹³¹ While Nilsson used a New Testament passage to argue for pacifism, Karlén’s argumentation was more philosophical and reliant on cognitive empathy.

An anonymous letter to the editor published in 1970 was titled “KDS: Do the words of Jesus not apply to war?”¹³² The writer criticized Kristen Demokratisk Samling (KDS), the political party founded by Lewi Pethrus and other Pentecostals, for not being opposed to the military in their policy documents, stating, “KDS follows a clear Christian position in all other issues, but why does KDS deviate on this point? The Christian idea has to be that we should not have an armed defense force.”¹³³ The writer referred to “You shall not kill” in Exodus

¹³⁰ *Dagen* March 12, 1969, p. 13. Nilsson’s writing seems to directly respond to what the anonymous writer got published the day after, probably due to an editorial mistake.

¹³¹ “Det kan inte vara en kristens uppgift att förkorta människors liv och däri-genom deras möjligheter att rädda sina liv i evighetens synvinkel.” *Dagen* March. 19, 1969, p. 21.

¹³² *Dagen* Apr. 8, 1970, p. 17.

¹³³ “KDS följer ju en klar kristen linje i alla andra frågor, varför avviker då KDS på denna punkt? Den kristna tanken måste väl ändå vara att vi inte skall ha ett beväpnat försvar.” *Dagen* Apr. 8, 1970, p. 17.

20:13, “Love your enemies” in Matt. 5:44, and “Do to others as you would like them to do to you” in Matt. 7:12.

It received a response from KDS supporter H. Siklund, who pointed out that the top representatives in the party came from politically conservative movements and brought ideas about keeping a military defense from there. After pointing out that he himself was a conscientious objector, he argued that KDS is a more friendly environment for those refusing to bear arms than any other party. He hoped that the party would eventually adopt a policy of non-violent civil defense.¹³⁴

News Articles

Göran Janzon was far from the only journalist who reported on conscientious objection and pacifism for *Dagen*. A story on how conscientious objectors were able to do their arms-free service in churches was featured on the front page of *Dagen* in 1968.¹³⁵ Bengt Haglund, a student from Uppsala, explained that he was initially offered a place within the civil defense. Still, he explained that “even that feels, for me personally, wrong” because he believed that war’s true causes were better dealt with through missions.

The following year, *Dagen* published a center spread on conscientious objection and how a group of Christians could work with preserving ancient monuments as an alternative to armed service. The article emphasized how these Christians had many opportunities to share the Gospel with their non-believing peers and how peaceful their situation was compared to boot camp.¹³⁶

¹³⁴ *Dagen* May 5, 1970, p. 13.

¹³⁵ *Dagen* Oct. 25, 1968, p. 1, 7.

¹³⁶ *Dagen* July 26, 1969, p. 10–11.

In 1970, *Dagen* featured an article on the front page about conscientious objectors for the first time becoming youth leaders in Baptist churches. One of the twenty men trained at the Betel Seminary in Bromma said, “This is the best alternative for Christian conscientious objectors.” Another argued that he would have been a total objector if the opportunity to do arms-free service in churches had not existed. The article continued on the center spread and overall portrayed conscientious objection through church work as very positive.¹³⁷

Several articles were written about how church denominations and other civil society organizations lobbied for conscientious objectors to be able to do their service in developing countries, supporting development projects.¹³⁸ In August 1971, that law became a reality and made it to the front page of *Dagen*.¹³⁹

An article in May 1970 highlighted a campaign by Värnpliktvägrarnas centralorgsanisation (the Central Organization for Conscientious Objectors), which informed people about the situation for total objectors, who refused to do even arms-free civil service as part of military conscription.¹⁴⁰ The same year, *Dagen* reported that the parliament questioned the defense minister on why more people were not granted arms-free service.¹⁴¹

Conscientious objection was a topic *Dagen* often returned to. No news article portrayed it as a societal problem or a threat to national security. At the most, it was ignored in an article by Stanley Sjöberg about how officer Sune Borg became a Christian, calling him “The major who stopped cursing.” The article made it clear that Borg did not

¹³⁷ *Dagen* June 27, 1970, p. 1, 8–9.

¹³⁸ *Dagen* Dec 12, 1968 p. 3; June 4, 1970, p. 1; Dec. 17, 1970, p. 3.

¹³⁹ *Dagen* Aug. 31, 1971, p. 1, 3.

¹⁴⁰ *Dagen* May 14, 1970, p. 19.

¹⁴¹ *Dagen* Oct. 21, 1970, p. 6.

leave his service in the military after his salvation experience, but it did not discuss whether or not this was a problem.¹⁴²

2.4 Summary

Both EH and *Dagen* included several texts arguing for pacifism or portraying it and or conscientious objection in a positive light, but very rarely on the editorial pages. Editorials on Christian ethics only once highlighted pacifism as a Christian ideal. Still, pacifist ideas were actively promoted by a small number of regular writers but also widely shared among many occasional contributors and readers.

While there was some debate on the practical implications of pacifism and how Christians should relate to the term nonviolence, pacifism itself was rarely questioned or criticized. Its primary motivation was that the Bible, particularly New Testament texts found in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, commanded it. Empathy towards victims of war was occasionally cited but was not as common as a motivation. Eschatology was rarely used to motivate pacifism. The only discernible change over time was Bengteric Jernberg toning down his pacifism after being very explicit about it in early 1968, which might have resulted from editorial pressure, although this is unknown.

¹⁴² EH 1969, no. 34, p. 12–13.

3. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

3.1 Background

The Six-Day War was the first major conflict between Israel and its neighboring Arab states since Israel's declaration of independence in 1948. On May 11, 1967, an intelligence officer at the Soviet embassy in Tel Aviv passed information to Egypt and Syria, claiming that Israel was preparing a strike against Syria to topple its regime. This was false information. Whether the Soviets falsified it or whether they mistakenly believed unreliable sources is debated among scholars.¹⁴³

The Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser ordered troop movement on the Sinai peninsula on May 14 as several of Cairo's top newspapers stressed the importance of coming to Syria's defense.¹⁴⁴ Five days later, Nasser expelled the United Nations Emergency Force stationed in Sinai since the Suez crisis in 1956. On May 22, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran, which was very provocative to the Israeli government and interpreted as an act of war.

The situation escalated on multiple fronts: Jordan and Egypt signed a defense pact on May 30, which was joined by Iraq shortly after, Israel's government widened its cabinet and prepared for war, and on June 5, the Israeli Air Force destroyed approximately 80 percent of the

¹⁴³ Goldstein 2018, p. 768.

¹⁴⁴ Goldstein 2018, p. 768.

grounded warplanes in Egypt, Syria, and Jordan through several surprise attacks.¹⁴⁵

Only six days later, on June 10, the war officially ended. Israel had successfully been fighting on two fronts and had managed to occupy Gaza, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula. The Israeli Defense Force was technologically superior to the armies of its neighboring countries.¹⁴⁶

While Israel had suffered 700 casualties, Egypt had lost 11,000, Jordan 6,000, and Syria 1,000.¹⁴⁷ The war was particularly disastrous for Jordan, as the West Bank provided 40 percent of the country's GDP and included the third most holy site in the Islamic world: the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem.¹⁴⁸

More than one million Palestinians suddenly found themselves under Israeli rule, and hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring countries.¹⁴⁹ Tension in the region continued to be high the following years, with Egypt, Israel, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization fighting sparingly the next years in what has been called the "War of Attrition," which ended with a ceasefire in August 1970.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Kurtulus 2007, p. 220.

¹⁴⁶ Kimche & Bawly 1968, p. 121.

¹⁴⁷ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Six-Day War", May 20, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War> (read Nov. 19, 2021).

¹⁴⁸ Wolf 2015, p. 163.

¹⁴⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, "Six-Day War", May 20, 2020. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Six-Day-War> (read Nov. 19, 2021).

¹⁵⁰ Blanga 2012, p. 183.

3.2 Evangelii Härold

Editors

Willis Säwe (1907–1978), editor-in-chief of EH who replaced Lewi Pethrus as the lead pastor of the Filadelfia Church in Stockholm, wrote an editorial in the immediate issue after the outbreak of the Six-Day War, simply titled “The War.”¹⁵¹ In it, he described how “the brave people of little Israel once again fight for their lives,” being surrounded by Arab enemies while they were “abandoned” by their Western allies.¹⁵²

From a human point of view, Säwe wrote, Israel was doomed. But he argues that the birth of Israel in 1948 was one of the strangest miracles in world history, as the Jews have survived millennia of persecution and are now establishing a modern state with a blossoming economy. “But even this modest piece of land they must defend with their blood, as the fanatic Mohammedan Arabs attacked.”¹⁵³ Säwe described the latter as “filled with hate,” and he hoped that the war would “liberate” Jerusalem from “the reign of the Mohammedans” as this would be the fulfillment of the biblical prophecy that the age of the Gentiles shall be over. He encouraged his readers to stop paying attention to “secondary matters and rubbish” and instead focus on the Arab-Israeli war as the second coming of Jesus was near.

On the twentieth anniversary of Israel proclaiming its independence, Säwe wrote an editorial calling Israel a “strange sign of the times.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Phone interview with Birger Thureson, Dec. 3 2021; EH 1967, no. 24, p. 2.

¹⁵² “Nu kämpar det lilla Israels tappra folk på nytt för sina liv.” EH 1967, no. 24, p. 2.

¹⁵³ “Men även denna blygsamma jordbit måste de försvara med sitt blod, när de fanatiska mohammedanska araberna slog till.” EH 1967, no. 24, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴ EH 1968, no. 9, p. 2.

He celebrated the Israeli military victories, making it possible for Jews to be back in their ancient homeland, speaking Hebrew again. He called Jerusalem a free city and deemed it one of the strangest miracles in world history that it once again belonged to Jews. He described the Arabs as driven away in fear, while the Jews were fearless men and women who fulfill one biblical prophecy after the other. "It is impossible to deny that Jerusalem is now cleansed from Gentiles."¹⁵⁵ All this shows that Jesus soon will return, Säwe argued.

In January of 1968, Säwe wrote an editorial together with editors Axel Blomqvist and Åke Stenström on the dramatic events of 1967. They stated that what Jesus prophesied in John 24 (most likely referring to Matthew 24) has been fulfilled, especially when considering the war in Israel "and the freed Jerusalem." They excitedly welcomed the year 1968 as they expected Jesus' return to be near.¹⁵⁶

However, Säwe also wrote an editorial in 1970 in which he seems to indicate that Israeli warfare towards the Arab people had been "evil." Reflecting upon the 60 years that Stockholm Filadelfia Church had existed, he wrote the following concerning the decades that had transpired:

In many regards, the ministry and churches of the contemporary Pentecostal revival grew from the six, seven decades that could be said to have been the most dramatic, tragic, and dynamic in all of human history. The two horrendous world wars have completely changed our existence, which caused so much human suffering. The terror balance, the rearmaments, the atomic weapons, the Vietnam-tragedy, Israel's war against the Arabs, and all kinds of remarkable technical innovations with supersonic planes and moon travels, the introduction of TV in the homes, the

¹⁵⁵ "Det är omöjligt att förneka, att Jerusalem nu är rensat från hedningar." EH 1968, no. 9, p. 2.

¹⁵⁶ EH 1968, no. 1, p. 2.

youth revolt, and many other modern phenomena show clearly that we live in another world in 1970—a hard, ruthless, cold and evil world—than the pink and peaceful idyll which the 1910s could show us.¹⁵⁷

This passage is difficult to interpret. As Pentecostals themselves used several modern technologies, including those allowing for nationwide distribution of this very paper, Säwe is probably not arguing that all changes he named are ruthless and evil but that the world in general has gone in that direction. Still, Israel's warfare being mentioned right after nuclear weapons and the "Vietnam tragedy" undoubtedly paints it in a negative light in a way that is uncommon in the material.

In November 1967, EH extensively quoted the Lutheran magazine *Vår kyrka* (Our Church). A priest had argued that Jesus never talked about a future state of Israel and that the war between Israel and Arabs in principle needs to be viewed as all other wars. The EH editors commented that the return of Israel (meaning the Jewish people) to their fathers' land can hardly be regarded as any other political event by "every awakened Bible reader."¹⁵⁸

The editors also communicated a pro-Israel stance in the conflict, with the paper repeatedly advertising a book by Erling Ström on Israel

¹⁵⁷ "I många hänseenden har den nuvarande pingstväckelsens verksamhet och församlingar vuxit fram under de sex, sju decennier, som kan sägas ha varit de mest dramatiska, tragiska och dynamiska i mänsklighetens historia. De två farsansfulla världskrigen, som haft så mycket mänskligt elände i följe, har helt förvandlat vår tillvaro. Terrorbalansen, upprustningarna, atombomberna, Vietnam-tragedin, Israels krig mot araberna, och hela raden av häpnadsväckande tekniska uppfinningar med överljudsplan och månfärder, TVs intrång i hemmen, ungdomsrevolten och en mängd andra moderna företeelser visar klart, att vi lever i en annan värld år 1970, en hård, hänsynslös, kallhamrad och ond värld, än den rosiga och fredliga idyll, som 1910 års tid kunde uppvisa." EH 1970, no. 36, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ EH 1967, no. 45, p. 7.

and the end of the Age of the Gentiles, calling it timely.¹⁵⁹ EH also published a translation of an interview that the *Jerusalem Post* did with Israel's first prime minister David Ben-Gurion. He argued that the Arabs are solely to blame for the conflict and that Israel eventually will bring peace to all nations as they are destined to do in passages like Isaiah 2:4.¹⁶⁰

Writers

Folke Thorell

Folke Thorell (1909–1993) was a pastor within the Örebro Mission who authored over ten books on topics like eschatology, politics, and apologetics.¹⁶¹ Neither EH nor *Dagen* had published any article by him before the Six-Day War. Still, after the war, he was invited by the editors of EH to write weekly pieces themed “Israel in the Focal Point.”

Thorell then went on to write articles in the same paper during all of the years this study covers, exploring topics like the history of Israel, the modern conflict with the Palestinians, and eschatological predictions. He occasionally wrote for *Dagen* and got an opportunity to write a series of articles there using material from what would become his book *Israel vaknar* (Israel Awakens), published in 1971. However, he was much more prominent in EH and, without question, the most dominant voice in shaping how the paper's Pentecostal readers viewed Israel's role in the end times and its relationship to military violence.

¹⁵⁹ EH 1967, no. 28, p. 19; no. 45, p. 17. It was also advertised on *Dagen*, July 8, 1967, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ EH 1970, no. 47, p. 29.

¹⁶¹ Phone interview with Göran Janzon, Nov. 23, 2021.

Thorell's first published comment on the Six-Day War was printed in *Dagen* on June 8: "What happens now is something altogether amazing."¹⁶² He referred to the prophecy of Judah waging war on Egypt in Isaiah 19 and claimed that it is foreplay to the final battle at Armageddon. He also hoped that the war would lead to Israel claiming territory from the Nile to the Euphrates.¹⁶³

He was then invited to write articles for EH in the series called "Israel in the Focal Point." In the first article, Thorell argued that the Six-Day War was the result of dozens of Arab countries having put all their internal tribal conflicts aside for a single uniting and great mission: "to *crush Israel*."¹⁶⁴ The war was caused by the Arabs wanting to exterminate the Jews and wage holy war, Thorell continued. This "unbridled aggression against the Lord's chosen people" was foreseen by biblical prophecy, as was the war itself.¹⁶⁵

Thorell often emphasized how the Arab states were the strong, well-equipped side of the conflict while Israel's army was weak and "primitive."¹⁶⁶ This unequal balance of power had historically always been the state of things—an endless cycle of Israel as the small boy David fighting the much stronger giant of Goliath.¹⁶⁷ The Arab states were described as "warmongers" while Israel simply executed self-defense.¹⁶⁸ If the Arabs had won the Six-Day War, they would have massacred all Jews to exterminate them, Thorell argued.¹⁶⁹ This

¹⁶² "Det som händer nu är någonting alldeles fantastiskt." *Dagen*, June 8, 1967, p. 1.

¹⁶³ *Dagen* June 8, 1967, p. 1, 12.

¹⁶⁴ EH 1967 no. 25 p. 21, italics in the original.

¹⁶⁵ "Denna otyglade aggression mot Herrens egendomsfolk". EH 1967, no. 27, p. 11.

¹⁶⁶ EH 1967, no. 26, p. 25.

¹⁶⁷ EH 1967, no. 28, p. 10, see also no. 41 p. 22.

¹⁶⁸ EH 1967, no. 27, p. 19.

¹⁶⁹ EH 1968, no. 22, p. 3, *Dagen* June 30, 1967, p. 2.

inherent Arab violence was prophesied in Gen. 16:11–12, where Ishmael, the father of all Arabs, was said to live in hostility with his brothers.¹⁷⁰ Thorell thought that the medieval crusades were justified as the Muslim Seljuks were too “dangerous” for Christian pilgrims.¹⁷¹

From this perspective, the Six-Day War was something extremely negative to Thorell—an attempted genocide by antisemitic warmongers. At the same time, Thorell often highlighted the positive consequences of the war from his eschatological viewpoint, such as Israel regaining control over all of Jerusalem. He wrote that thanks to “the astounding victories of the Jewish people,” Jerusalem was brought to the “rightful hands” of Israel, a vital step in a “battle not yet settled” concerning the reconstruction of a third Jewish temple on the Temple mount.¹⁷²

Thorell indicated at several points that God had helped Israel win wars. He argued that their successes during the brief Six-Day War were “inexplicable” and drew parallels with God helping the ancient Israelites in battle during Old Testament times.¹⁷³ He described this kind of supernatural warfare as God’s “mighty deeds,” helping restore Israel.¹⁷⁴ He believed that warriors during the Maccabean rebellion in the second century BC were “freedom fighters” with “halos of glory” who act as role models for modern Israelis as Jewish military units to free themselves from foreign intervention once again.¹⁷⁵ He shared anecdotes of “supernatural intervention” during the war of Israeli independence in 1948 and commented that it is also “likely that

¹⁷⁰ *Dagen* June 30, 1967, p. 2, EH 1969 no. 40, p. 17.

¹⁷¹ EH 1970, no. 49, p. 17.

¹⁷² EH 1967, no. 26, p. 9.

¹⁷³ EH 1967, no. 27, p. 19.

¹⁷⁴ EH 1967, no. 28, p. 18.

¹⁷⁵ EH 1970, no. 9 p. 8-9; EH 1970, no. 10, p. 16. Thorell similarly portrayed the soldiers of the Bar Kokhba revolt as holy warriors in EH 1970, no. 42, p. 17.

something similarly supernatural occurred during the Israeli victories in the latest confrontations.”¹⁷⁶

In the same article, Thorell pointed out: “War is not the will of God, this we know. But the prophetic Word has foreseen that it would come and that the borders of Israel would be expanded through such a means.”¹⁷⁷ These two sentences encapsulate Thorell’s pragmatic ethics of war which, in my estimation, is implicitly underlying most of his descriptions of wars involving Israel. The violence might be destructive, but it leads to something good and is inevitable as it has been foretold in the Scriptures. Thorell is never defending Israeli warfare by pointing to biblical imperatives or commands. Instead, he views it as a pre-determined necessity with ends that justify the means.

There are several other passages where Thorell expressed a similar attitude towards wars involving Israel. He used both the verbs “fear” and “expect” when describing a new war based on prophecies in the book of Ezekiel.¹⁷⁸ This war would be initiated by Russia, which for Thorell was the biblical Gog ruled by the Antichrist.¹⁷⁹ Thorell argued that a coming nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union would lead to a war so devastating that the First and Second World Wars would seem minuscule in comparison.¹⁸⁰

This Third World War would be “humanity’s greatest extinction project” and have the Middle East as its primary arena. While it would bring enormous suffering, Thorell encouraged his readers to rejoice

¹⁷⁶ “Det är troligt att något liknande övernaturligt skett i samband med de israeliska segrarna i de senaste drabbningarna.” EH 1967, no. 27, p. 19.

¹⁷⁷ “Krig är inte Guds vilja, det vet vi. Men det profetiska Ordet har förutsett, att det skulle komma, och att Israels gränser utvidgas genom ett sådant medel.” EH 1967, no. 27, p. 19.

¹⁷⁸ EH 1967, no. 38, p. 16-17; EH 1967, no. 41, p. 24.

¹⁷⁹ EH 1967, no. 38, p. 24

¹⁸⁰ EH 1969, no. 1, p. 3.

when the war started as it would mean that Jesus soon will return.¹⁸¹ He also argued that the war primarily would kill non-Christians: “God will let the satanic rearmament of nuclear weapons and biological warfare strike the godless themselves in forms of plagues that will exterminate large portions of humanity.”¹⁸² To both express that war is not the will of God and that God will exterminate large portions of humanity through warfare seems contradictory. Since Thorell followed the former statement with the conjunctive “[b]ut” it might best be understood as something Thorell wrote to please his audience rather than expressing a deeply held opinion.

Thorell had a series of articles called “Israel and the Messiah” published in *Dagen* in April 1970. He argued that the Jewish author Chaim Shvili had foreseen both the creation of the modern state of Israel and the “crushing” of the foreign (Jordanian) influence over East Jerusalem, accurately foretelling the exact years when this would occur.¹⁸³ Shvili’s predictions also featured heavily in Thorell’s book *Israel vaknar*, which was released the following year.¹⁸⁴ Due to Shvili’s prior accuracy, Thorell put a lot of faith in his predictions that Russia would invade Israel as a start of a third world war only to be crushed by the Israeli Defense Forces in accordance with Ezekiel 39:11.¹⁸⁵

The Third World War will go on, however, Thorell argued, and while Christians will be raptured, the Jews will experience massive suffering. “The tragedy of the Jews is that they do not believe the New Testament writings,” Thorell wrote.¹⁸⁶ Shvili expected the Messiah to arrive “at

¹⁸¹ EH 1969, no. 1, p. 4.

¹⁸² “Gud låter den sataniska upprustningen med kärnvapen och bacillkrigföring drabba de gudlösa själva i form av hemsökelse, som utrotar stora delar av mänskligheten.” EH 1968 no. 13 p. 9.

¹⁸³ *Dagen* Apr. 2nd, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁸⁴ Thorell 1971, particularly p. 8-56

¹⁸⁵ *Dagen* Apr. 2nd, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁸⁶ “Det blir judarnas olycka, att de inte tror de nytestamentliga Skrifterna.”

any moment” and that his spirit was hovering over the state of Israel. “See how the fig tree is budding!” Thorell exclaimed and called it a sign of the times, referring to Matthew 24:32–34, in which Jesus said that his followers would see the signs of the times before the end comes just like one can see the twigs of a fig tree budding.¹⁸⁷

Thorell also wrote about mistakes in Shvili’s prophecies due to him not being a Christian, such as his belief that the Messiah will appear for the first time. Thorell wrote that the Jews would be deceived by the Antichrist, who would claim to be their Messiah and their God.¹⁸⁸ In *Israel vaknar*, he speculated that the Antichrist might be a Jew himself.¹⁸⁹ If they had believed in Jesus, they would be spared the horrifying tribulation that would come.¹⁹⁰ The Jews erroneously believe that the prophecy about the king, who is “a master of intrigue,” according to Daniel 8:23, was fulfilled in the second century AD when it actually speaks about a future Antichrist. He described it as tragic that they do not realize this as it will lead to the destruction of their nation in the coming tribulation, and he hoped that many Jews would be saved.¹⁹¹

Thorell thought that Palestinians and other Arabs did not have a right to remain in the Holy Land since God had given it to the Jewish people. In his first article after the Six-Day War, he wrote that the Jews are the “legitimate inheritors” of the land and that the occupied areas have received their legitimate owners.¹⁹² The war signified that God

Dagen Apr. 3rd, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁸⁷ *Dagen* Apr. 4, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁸⁸ *Dagen* Apr. 8, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁸⁹ Thorell 1971, p. 42.

¹⁹⁰ *Dagen* Apr. 8, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁹¹ *Dagen* Apr. 9, 1970, p. 4.

¹⁹² EH 1967, no. 25, p. 25.

“fulfills his old promises that Israel at some point will regain the land of their fathers to the full extent.”¹⁹³

Thorell frequently expressed the view that the Jewish people have a divine right to control land far beyond the borders of the Old Testament kingdom. Based on Genesis 15:18, Thorell thought that Jews had been given the whole area between the Nile and the Euphrates, rejecting the historically dominant idea that descendants of Abraham would include Arabs. Thus, he envisioned Israel conquering and controlling “Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, parts of Egypt, parts of Saudi-Arabia and half of Iraq.”¹⁹⁴ Since the Old Testament kingdom never managed to control such a large area, Thorell viewed the modern state of Israel as destined to rule these lands.

Thorell claimed that Jews are not like any other people as “God has put them in a special category,” providing them with divine revelation along with brilliant scientists, a strong culture, and plentiful natural resources.¹⁹⁵ The very existence of the Jewish people today, as well as their regaining of a sovereign state in 1948, was described by Thorell as a “marvelous wonder” that proves the truth of the Bible and that Jesus soon will return.¹⁹⁶

Still, Thorell thought that the unique status of the Jewish people does not exclude them from the responsibilities of following God’s commands and moral law.¹⁹⁷ He also criticized Jews for focusing on “gigantically enlarged trivialities” such as discussions on interracial

¹⁹³ EH 1967, no. 26, p. 8.

¹⁹⁴ EH 1967, no. 25, p. 25; see also EH 1967, no. 26, p. 9; and EH 1967, no. 32, p. 15.

¹⁹⁵ EH 1967, no. 31, p. 16–17. Thorell devoted an entire article to the natural resources of Israel in no. 48 of the same year.

¹⁹⁶ EH 1969, no. 24-25, p. 9.

¹⁹⁷ EH 1967, no. 31, p. 17,

marriages and the legitimacy of civil marriage when counting the children of such marriages as Jews.¹⁹⁸

Thorell was convinced that a third temple would soon be built in Jerusalem.¹⁹⁹ Based on Bible passages like 2 Thessalonians 2:4 and Matthew 24:15, he was persuaded that the Jews would rebuild their temple only for the Antichrist to desecrate it and introduce the worship of idols there.²⁰⁰ He also quoted Israelis who had expressed willingness to rebuild the temple once the Al-Aqsa Mosque was gone.²⁰¹ However, Thorell recognized that a rebuilt Jewish temple would bring a severe theological challenge to Christians. How should they view the animal sacrifices that presumably will occur in such a temple, given that Christ's sacrifice is all one needs to atone for one's sins? Thorell offered two solutions.²⁰²

First, the temple might simply lack sacrifices, and any biblical prophecy that seems to suggest otherwise (such as Ezekiel 40–44, which Thorell brings up) is actually referring to spiritual sacrifice. Second, if animal sacrifices nonetheless are reinstituted in the third temple. In that case, they can be seen as pointing to Christ's sacrifice on the cross, just as Christians commonly view animal sacrifices in the Old Testament. The only difference would be that the Old Testament sacrifices pointed *forward* in time, whereas these will point *backward*.

Thorell also raised the question of how the Al-Aqsa Mosque, as well as the Mosque of Omar, shall be removed to make room for the third temple, which Thorell thought would be "enormous," according to Ezekiel.²⁰³ Would such demolition come as a result of warfare? Thorell

¹⁹⁸ EH 1969, no. 3, p. 9.

¹⁹⁹ EH 1970, no. 33, p. 29.

²⁰⁰ EH 1970, no. 37, p. 17.

²⁰¹ EH 1970, no. 37, p. 19, 29.

²⁰² EH 1970, no. 38, p. 16-17.

²⁰³ EH 1970, no. 38, p. 16. In EH 1970 no. 40 p. 16, he argued that it will be

chose not to speculate but suggested that this should with confidence be handed over to God as he can solve seemingly unsolvable problems.²⁰⁴ Thus, Thorell seems to have preferred a scenario in which violence was not being used. He did not comment here on whether the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which is the traditional site of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus that lies next to the Mosque of Omar, also needs to be demolished. However, in his book *Israel vaknar*, he pointed out that the church also will have to be destroyed.²⁰⁵

Interestingly, while Thorell attributed the removal of the mosques to God, he claimed that the Antichrist would support the construction of the third temple after the Jews had entered their covenant with him.²⁰⁶ Unbeknownst to them, the Antichrist will only do so to take over the temple and claim to be God. After three and a half years, the Antichrist will be defeated, and the temple will be consecrated to worship God during the Millennium.²⁰⁷

Thorell's view on the modern state of Israel and contemporary Judaism was clearly shaped by classical dispensationalism in its Pentecostal form. Thorell taught that Jesus' return would take place in "two acts." The first would include Jesus meeting his raptured church in the heavens to secure them from the "Antichristian tribulation of seven years."²⁰⁸ The second would take place after the tribulation to initiate the Millennium. The Jewish people would have central roles to

12,500 meters times 5,000 meters based on Ez. 45:6.

²⁰⁴ EH 1970, no. 38, p. 17.

²⁰⁵ Thorell 1971, p. 23. It is noticeable that Thorell seldom discussed the Dome of the Rock when describing the future of the temple grounds. In an article discussing the origin of the dome, he stated that it often is "wrongly called the Mosque of Omar", and yet he went on to call the dome the Mosque of Omar that "was built on the temple grounds" EH 1970, no. 47, p. 17, 23.

²⁰⁶ EH 1970, no. 38, p. 17.

²⁰⁷ EH 1970, no. 39, p. 16-17, 28-29.

²⁰⁸ EH 1968, no. 7 p. 9.

play in all of this. As they are not saved, they will not join the church in the rapture but ally with the Antichrist.²⁰⁹ They create this alliance in good faith, as the Antichrist will help them rebuild their holy temple in Jerusalem so they can sacrifice animals there again. But the Antichrist will break this alliance after three and a half years, abolish the Jewish sacrifices and start a war which would lead to “two-thirds of Israel’s people being exterminated,” according to Thorell.²¹⁰

Exactly 144,000 Jews will be exempt from this genocide as God will immortalize them to spread the Gospel. Still, Thorell speculated that even they eventually would die as martyrs.²¹¹ When the Millennium starts, all Jews who have survived will become Christians, and Christ will rule Israel as king. During this Millennium, there will be no wars, and the human lifespan will increase.²¹²

Thorell typically wrote these predictions as statements of fact with little or no emotional lamentation or expression of empathy. On the contrary, he could sometimes portray the coming genocide of the Jewish people as a blessing in disguise. He argued that Jewish suffering throughout history had brought good things with it. Their slavery in Egypt led to the establishment of Israel as a nation, the Babylonian captivity led to a new temple, the Nazi Holocaust led to the modern state of Israel, and their wars with Arab nations have led to the expansion of this modern state.²¹³

It should be noted that Thorell’s portrayal of the Holocaust as a blessing in disguise was not being protested by anyone else writing in EH or *Dagen* at the time. For Thorell, even the Holocaust was minu-

²⁰⁹ EH 1969, no. 19 p. 4.

²¹⁰ He bases this prediction on Zech. 13:8-9. EH 1968 no. 13, p. 9; see also EH 1968, no. 19, p. 4.

²¹¹ EH 1969, no. 19 p. 4.

²¹² EH 1968, no. 13 p. 8; EH 1968, no. 19 p. 4.

²¹³ EH 1968, no. 13 p. 23.

scule compared to the antisemitic genocide that the Soviet Union and Antichrist would initiate, a “bloodbath” that would kill millions but which eventually would lead to Israel being a glorious nation from which Christ himself would reign—which is why Thorell calls the coming genocide “birth pains.”²¹⁴ Thorell expected the future world wars and genocides to arrive soon. In *Israel vaknar*, he argued that when the European Economic Community had expanded from six to ten member states, it would be overtaken by the Antichrist who would turn it into a modern Roman Empire.²¹⁵

Thorell thought that the division between West and East Germany was foretold in the book of Ezekiel. The latter was called Gomer and would ally with the Russian Gog, according to Ez. 38:6.²¹⁶ Nowhere in the material does Thorell ever exhort his readers to save the lives of those who will become victims of the future genocides or even warn them about it. Instead, his regular prompt was to await the rapture and Jesus’ second coming eagerly.

Thorell argued that the reason why Jews have gone through so many catastrophes is that they are God’s chosen people, and with such a great calling comes great responsibility: “to meet God’s expectations.”²¹⁷ When the Jewish people fail to do this, God punishes them harshly. In one of the articles within his long “Battle of the Temple Grounds” series, he extensively quoted Jewish historian Josephus to prove this point.²¹⁸ Thorell also used Josephus to answer the question “Could Jerusalem have been spared?” in the negative.²¹⁹ Josephus described how God’s

²¹⁴ EH 1969, no. 19 p. 4.

²¹⁵ Thorell 1971, p. 136.

²¹⁶ Thorell 1971, p. 136-7.

²¹⁷ EH 1970, no. 27–28, p. 8.

²¹⁸ EH 1970, no. 33, p. 9.

²¹⁹ EH 1970, no. 36, p. 16–17, 30–31.

judgment in 70 AD was inevitable, something Thorell agreed with.²²⁰ Unlike Josephus, Thorell thought that the primary sin God punished Israel for was rejecting Jesus as the Messiah.²²¹

Still, at one point, Thorell argued that the Holocaust would have been avoided if European Jews had listened to Theodor Herzl and joined his Zionist movement, something that contemporary Jews should keep in mind when refusing to move to Israel.²²² The comparison is perplexing as, in Thorell's view, Jews who move to Israel will likely be killed in the tribulation.

In summary, Thorell viewed war as a necessary evil that God uses for his purposes both historically and in Thorell's day to elevate and or punish his people, the Jews of Israel. In his view, God has been actively involved in bringing the modern state of Israel about and helping the Israeli army supernaturally fight Arab nations to expand the nation's borders so that it eventually will fight Soviet and the European armies of the Antichrist. Billions of people would die in this World War Three, including two-thirds of all Jews, and those who survive will become Christians and excitedly welcome Christ as he returns at the end of the tribulation.

What Thorell eagerly awaited, to the degree that he called the Six-Day War "altogether amazing," was essentially a maximized repeat of World War II and the Holocaust, with multiple nuclear bombings and even more Jews being killed. In contrast to World War II, however, Christians would not be present but rather observe these events from afar when they had been raptured. Despite claiming that wars are against the will of God, Thorell ultimately had an optimistic and fatalistic view on warfare, motivating it by biblical argumentation for its inevitability and that it will bring Christ's Millennium to a reality.

²²⁰ EH 1970, no. 36, p. 31.

²²¹ EH 1970, no. 23, p. 11.

²²² EH 1969, no. 29-30, p. 4-5.

Thorell's thoughts on Jewish suffering and death being a blessing, the Antichrist being a Jew, and all surviving Jews becoming Christians after two-thirds have been exterminated might be remnants of antisemitic Christian Zionism popular during the 1930s. However, it is intertwined with a fascination for Jewish culture and history. It seems to me that Thorell is not as interested in the wellbeing of Jews as he is interested in the meaning of both their prospering and suffering. Their symbolic meaning is more significant than their humanity. Thorell's texts are highly devoid of empathy for Jews, Arabs, and other victims of war, and he did not project Christian identity on Israel or draw explicit parallels between Israel and the church. Instead, Israel was an instrument in the hands of God that both brought and was subject to brutal violence whenever necessary.

D. O. Belfrage

Daniel Oskar Belfrage (1893–1984), who publicly called himself “D. O.” was a pastor within the Örebro Mission who wrote several books and pamphlets on eschatology and was published in EH several times.²²³ He had an article on the third temple published on the middle spread of EH in December of 1968 with a picture of the Dome of the Rock covering half the page space. He argued that the third temple will not be built in the Old City of Jerusalem but outside of it and that Jesus himself will be involved in its construction after he returns. The sacrifices carried forth in the new temple will be “wonderful memories” of Christ's sacrifice on the cross thousands of years prior.

Belfrage added that Jews are good businessmen and have no interest in destroying the mosque and dome on the temple grounds as this brings a lot of tourism. He went on addressing which temple the Antichrist will

²²³ Alvarsson 2014, p. 45. Phone interview with Ivar Lundgren, Jan. 5, 2022.

reign in if the third temple is a result of Christ's coming and answered that it would be the Great Synagogue which finished its construction in 1958, as it was modeled after the Herodian temple and had been called the new temple by several prominent Jews.²²⁴

Belfrage wrote an article in 1969 called "Israel According to the Prophetic Word," where he stated that the Six-Day War was all about who should control the land. The answer to that had already been given in the Bible: the seed of Abraham as stated in Genesis 15:18.²²⁵ Both Arabs and Jews have Abraham as an ancestor, but the Arabs rejected the covenant with God, and thus the promised land is only for the Jews. He applied Ez. 35:5 to Arabs, which in his Swedish translation reads something to the effect of: "Because you harbored an eternal enmity and delivered the Israelites over to the sword [...] I will turn you into blood, and blood will pursue you."²²⁶

Belfrage added that Edom means red and that Arabs are descendants from Edom in the Bible. He argued that the division of Palestine was prophesied in the third chapter of Joel and that Adolf Hitler was one of the "hunters" who were prophesied in Jeremiah 16 to deport the Jews so they could return to their homeland.

Belfrage argued in an article called "The Great Distress of Israel" that the Third World War, which will kill millions of Jews, would take place so that the Jews will be "pressured" to the feet of the cross where they will confess "the great sin of crucifying the Lord of Glory."²²⁷ Israel would eventually stand victorious when the war is over, not due to their

²²⁴ EH 1968, no. 49–50, p. 20–21, 28.

²²⁵ EH 1969, no. 11, p. 4–5, 27.

²²⁶ EH 1969, no. 11, p. 5. The Swedish reads "Emedan du har evig fiendskap och gav Israels barn åt svärdet i våld [...] skall jag förvandla dig till blod, och blod skall förfölja dig."

²²⁷ "[...] den stora synden att korsfästa härlighetens Herre." EH 1969 no. 12, p. 22.

effort but because God will intervene and make the flesh and eyes of Israel's enemies suddenly rot as they are standing, similar to what a nuclear weapon does to those who happen to be in its epicenter.²²⁸ In his book from 1967, Belfrage similarly argued that Israel would be the battlefield for the coming World War Three, a war so devastating that most humans would be exterminated through nuclear bombs.²²⁹

We see here how Belfrage gave purpose and meaning to Jewish death by proposing that those who survived will become Christians, whereas others who die in these apocalyptic wars are enemies to Israel and thus get what they deserve. He seems to have simultaneously leaned on an antisemitic idea of torturing the Jews into submission while also describing this act as horrible so that those who perform it will be divinely punished for it in gruesome ways. Military violence towards Jews was viewed both as a crime and a means to salvation.

In 1970, Belfrage wrote an article called "Israel According to Prophecy."²³⁰ It began by refuting the idea that the "Age of the Gentiles" mentioned in Luke 21:24 would have ended with Israel gaining control over all of Jerusalem during the Six-Day War. He stated that the times of the Gentiles could not possibly be over as long as "there are two Mohammedan Mosques there," representing Gentiles in the holy city.²³¹

Belfrage explained that the times of the Gentiles would only end after Jesus returns, which he will do when all Gentile nations have gathered for war in Jerusalem to plunder the city and rape the women, following Zechariah 14:1. He differed from Thorell in that he believed that the expansion of Israel's borders (so that the country includes Jordan, Lebanon, and parts of Syria, Egypt, and Iraq) could only occur

²²⁸ EH 1969, no. 12, p. 7, 22–23.

²²⁹ Belfrage 1967, p. 39, 43–44.

²³⁰ EH 1970, no. 41 p. 9, 20–21.

²³¹ EH 1970, no. 41 p. 9.

after Jesus' return. In fact, he accused the Israeli government of falsely believing that this prophecy can be fulfilled through means of war, trusting their own power instead of the Lord and not taking into consideration Zechariah 4:6: "'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the Lord Almighty."²³²

Belfrage did agree with Thorell in several other aspects; he wrote about how the Jews would "receive" the Antichrist and make a covenant with him for seven years, during which he would put an end to sacrifice and offering in the temple in accordance with Daniel 9:27. The Antichrist would gather Jews from all over the world to Palestine, and after three and a half years, he would start the great persecution, resulting in two-thirds of all Jews in the land being killed, in an act that would exceed the Holocaust in cruelty and horror.²³³ These events will "humiliate" Israel, Belfrage wrote, so that they will receive Jesus as their Messiah, and only then will the times of the Gentiles end and the age of the "Kingdom of Peace," the Millennium, will begin.²³⁴ Belfrage ended with, "Let us pray for Israel."

While Thorell wrote extensively about the dynamics of the current conflict as well as historical chronicles on the Jewish people, Belfrage focused exclusively on the future and tended to be even more graphic in his depictions of apocalyptic violence. Empathy was not at all expressed in his writings, nor did he make any clear identification or projection of Christian identity upon Israel. Rather, Israel served a unique purpose of waging war and suffering genocide to fulfill biblical prophecies.

²³² Belfrage added that "might" should be understood as "armies". EH 1970, no. 41 p. 20.

²³³ EH 1970, no. 41, p. 21.

²³⁴ EH 1970, no. 41, p. 21.

Alvar Blomgren

Alvar Blomgren, a Pentecostal pastor, based in Örebro, had the opportunity to write a series of articles on Revelation in EH. He argued that the Antichrist would be a political and religious leader from Syria, who would institute a nation similar to the Roman Empire, including Jerusalem, from which he would rule.²³⁵ When expanding on the dispensationalist teaching of the 70 yearly weeks of Daniel, he argued that the 2,000-year pause between week 69 and 70 was due to God ceasing to use Israel as a nation after Jesus' crucifixion.²³⁶

As Israel regains control over Jerusalem, the 70th week will take place in which Israel will have a covenant with the Antichrist, only to be betrayed so that the Antichrist can try to crush Israel and throw the Jews into the sea, something Revelation 10 alludes to. "The purpose of the tribulation," Blomgren wrote, "is to purify and cleanse Israel and reconcile them with their covenant to God by making them believe in Jesus as their Messiah and Savior when He reveals Himself in glory."²³⁷

Like Belfrage, Blomgren thus gave purpose to the horrific events that the future would bring by stressing Jewish salvation through suffering. However, it does not seem like Blomgren imagined two-thirds of all Jews being killed. Rather, he emphasized that God would protect his people and help many flee.²³⁸ According to Blomgren, the 144,000 mentioned in Revelation 7:1–8 are Jews who have survived the tribulation and come to faith in Christ.²³⁹ He further argued that the Age of the Gentiles did not end in 1967 since Gentiles will trample

²³⁵ EH 1971, no. 9, p. 6-7; EH 1971 no. 15 p. 8.

²³⁶ EH 1971 no. 4, p. 8–9.

²³⁷ "Avsikten med verdmödan är att rena och luttra Israel och att återföra dem i förbundet med Gud genom att få dem att tro på Jesus som deras Messias och Frälsare, när Han uppenbarar sig i härlighet." EH 1971 no. 4, p. 9.

²³⁸ EH 1971, no. 13, p. 7–8.

²³⁹ EH 1971 no. 8, p. 6.

Jerusalem during the reign of the Antichrist according to Revelation 11:2. Their age will end when Christ comes in glory, crushes the Antichrist and his reign, and “purifies the holy city from all Gentile impurity.”²⁴⁰ Jesus and his angels will take part in a physical battle with Israel’s enemies and slay them at the battle of Armageddon.²⁴¹

Even though some details are different, it is evident that Blomberg shared Thorell’s and Belfrage’s optimistic view of war when it related to Israel, including viewing Jesus as a coming warring party. While Blomberg expressed God’s care for the Jewish people, he also viewed them and their suffering as instrumental for the eschatological schedule to play out as it was supposed to. He portrayed both Jews and Arabs as pawns in a cosmic game.

Other Voices

Anton Nilsson had an article published in 1967 called “A Correct View on Israel,” where he was upset that somebody in his church had visited the Holy Land only to return with views that, according to Nilsson, were “Arab propaganda.”²⁴² These views were that “Jews can do what they want down there” and that “they should be ‘squeezed’ by the United Nations.”²⁴³ In response to this, Nilsson argued that if one were interested in God’s “plan for the ages,” one realizes what important role the people of Israel play and that they are the key to God’s freedom to choose whoever he wants and reject whoever he wants. Nilsson then spent several paragraphs arguing from biblical texts (particularly Romans 9–11) that the Jews remain God’s chosen people even in New

²⁴⁰ EH 1971, no. 12, p. 8–9.

²⁴¹ EH 1971, no. 16 p. 6–7.

²⁴² EH 1967 no. 34, p. 22.

²⁴³ “[...] judarna huserade fritt därefter och att de borde ’klämmas åt’ av FN.” EH 1967 no. 34, p. 22.

Testament times and that he plans to gather them in “their land” as a blessing for all other people groups. He called for teaching young Christians “how God has elected, nurtured, saved, disciplined, punished and treated his Israel.”²⁴⁴

It is noticeable that Nilsson did not even attempt to deal with any political argumentation, explaining why Israel does not deserve retributions from the UN based on interpretations of international law or alternative news sources. Rather, he was arguing that because Jews are God’s chosen people and God has decided that they should inhabit Israel in the last days, any criticism of the state of Israel is illegitimate, especially when it comes from Christians.

Pastor Arne Waldenvi wrote an article titled “Mighty impressions from contemporary Israel” in the EH Christmas edition of 1967.²⁴⁵ He characterized it as a miracle that Israel was spared so well while observing that the occupied areas had more evident traces of war. He also included a photo of an Arabic family of ten who had to flee to Soufat. Waldenvi argued that both the Jews and Arabs he talked with wanted peace, but Jews especially insisted that the land was theirs. As Israel puts up Hebrew signs next to Arabic, Jerusalem was described as a “unified” city. One of the most significant effects of the war, according to Waldenvi, was that Jews gained access to the Western Wall and could pray there.

In 1968, Anna Strandberg wrote an eschatological article based on the twelfth chapter of Revelation.²⁴⁶ She argued that the woman depicted there is Israel, and her son is Jesus. The dragon is Satan, who tries to kill Israel repeatedly, and whom God wages war against through Israel and the church. “The woman, Israel, and her seed, the church,

²⁴⁴ [...] hur Gud har utvalt, fostrat, frälsat, tuktat, straffat och behandlat sitt Israel.” EH 1967 no. 34, p. 22.

²⁴⁵ EH 1967, no. 51–52, p. 16–17, 22.

²⁴⁶ EH 1968, no. 38, p. 11, 22.

exist on earth today. The dragon and his seed also exist, and the battle goes on in its final form nationally, politically, and spiritually.”²⁴⁷

The dragon was both represented by the Arab states that hate Israel and try to destroy it and by various forces that oppose the church. As the last day approached, warfare against Israel and persecution of the church would increase, with much bloodshed as a result. But those who persevered would see God finally defeating Satan, and Israel and the church would be united in the Millennial Kingdom in which Christ will rule from Jerusalem. All Jewish suffering in world history would lead to this, Strandberg argued. This explicit parallelism between Israel and the church seems to depend on Strandberg not teaching the rapture: Christians would go through the pain of the tribulation as much as Jews would.

Fritz Melin had an extensive article published called “The Second Coming of Jesus and the Age of Gentiles,” arguing that Jesus would have returned only seven years after his resurrection if all Jews had received him as their Messiah.²⁴⁸ Instead, their rejection started the Age of the Gentiles during which other people would rule Israel, and the 70th week of Daniel was put on hold. However, the age of the Gentiles did not end with Israel’s victory in 1967 as it would continue until Jesus returns since the Gentiles will rule Jerusalem during the tribulation when the Antichrist controls the city. “What happened in the summer of 1967 had to occur so that Israel will be able to build the temple, where the Antichrist in the middle of the tribulation period will take his place and pretend to be God.”²⁴⁹

²⁴⁷ ”Kvinnan Israel och hennes säd, församlingen, finns på jorden idag. Draken och hans säd finns också, och striden pågår i dess slutfas både nationellt, politiskt och andligt.” EH 1968, no. 38, p. 22.

²⁴⁸ EH 1968 no. 25, p. 20–21, 24.

²⁴⁹ “Vad som inträffade sommaren 1967 måste till för att Israel skall få möjlighet att bygga templet, där Antikrist mitt i vedermödan skall ta sin plats och

Ingemar Ingerstam wrote an extensive article cryptically titled “Soviet–The Middle East–Armageddon.” He argued that Russia is the Gog mentioned in Ezekiel 38–39 and will go to war with Israel supported by China and Arab states.²⁵⁰ A great battle prophesied by Revelation 16 will take place on the Har Megiddo (“Armageddon”) hill in northern Israel. He argued that this battle could not refer to any of the wars Israel has already been involved in since their battlefields were outside Israel’s territory, not within it. Ingerstam was convinced that Ezekiel predicted the Soviet-Israeli war in detail, including aerial attacks (“you will be like a cloud covering the land,” Ez. 38:9). When that happens, God will intervene and destroy the Soviet Union with a massive natural disaster following Ez. 38:20–22. Ingerstam also added that if the UN knew how deeply God cares about Israel, their resolutions would not be as condemning.

Apart from Thorell’s and Belfrage’s articles, not much was written about Israel in 1970. Missionary Elmer Newman pointed to the Six-Day War as the fulfillment of biblical prophecies, and EH’s editors had chosen to illustrate the article with a picture of an Arab protest.²⁵¹ Arne Eklund described Lebanon’s good relationships with Israel and how Lebanon has managed to stay out of the “blood-stained” conflicts of the region.²⁵²

In 1971, EH interviewed two scholars and a pastor, all based in Uppsala, about whether they thought the Jewish return to Palestine fulfilled prophecies, particularly Isaiah 41:18–20 and Genesis 15:18.²⁵³ The latter is the promise to Abraham that his descendants will live in an area from the Nile to the Euphrates. The two scholars, Professor

föregiva sig vara Gud.” EH 1968 no. 25, p. 24.

²⁵⁰ EH 1969, no. 8, p. 3, 23–24, 29–30.

²⁵¹ EH 1970 no. 35 p. 4, 29.

²⁵² EH 1970 no. 24–25, p. 17.

²⁵³ EH 1971, no. 20, p. 14–15.

Harald Riesenfeld and Th.D. David Hedegård, both expressed caution in applying Old Testament prophecies to contemporary events. Riesenfeld even argued that everything in the Old Testament was fulfilled in Christ, while Hedegård did not want to comment on how Isaiah 41 and Genesis 15 should be understood.

The pastor, Edvin Österberg, argued that the Jewish return and the wars it led to had been foreseen in the Scriptures and that the destiny of the Jews was to rule Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and parts of Egypt. EH's editors added an image showcasing what this Greater Israel would look like (see appendix A). They added that this destiny might be perceived as a threat from an Arab perspective, but Arab states do not necessarily have to give up their independence for Israel to control their land.²⁵⁴ John Lundmark later responded to Riesenfeld's claims and argued that Jewish interpretations of their prophecies point to events beyond Christ into the contemporary realm.²⁵⁵

Various writers had texts published in 1971 about eschatology and Israel. W. A. Criswell argued that the only reasonable explanation to the Bible accurately predicting what would happen to the Jews 2,000 years later is that it is the Word of God.²⁵⁶ Pastor Eric Lindblom argued that there were 2,000 years between Adam and Noah, 2,000 years between Noah to Christ, and 2,000 years between Christ and the Millennium. He wrote that a Russian invasion of Palestine would precede this in accordance with Ezekiel 38-39, but through supernatural intervention, Israel will prevail. Lindblom speculated that God would kill Israel's enemies through a sudden volcanic eruption.²⁵⁷

Owe Fredin wrote that when Israel was weak in biblical times, God revealed himself as Yahweh Shebaot, the Lord of Hosts, as he led them

²⁵⁴ EH 1971, no. 20, p. 14.

²⁵⁵ EH 1971 no. 35, p. 15.

²⁵⁶ EH 1971, no. 16, p. 4.

²⁵⁷ EH 1971, no. 29, p. 7–8.

in war. God's new Israel, the church, experiences this spiritually when God helps them.²⁵⁸ Herbert Grenhed argued that just like Jesus' life was prophesied in detail, we see prophecies being fulfilled with Israel in detail these days.²⁵⁹ And Carl Håkansson argued that Israel's existence is a miracle of God, and he will secure peace for them for a short time. Yet, the time would soon be here when Soviet attacks and a brutal war will occur, after which Israeli Jews will become Christians.²⁶⁰

All this goes to show that Thorell, Belfrage, and Blomgren were not alone in many of the views they promoted. Convictions of Israel's warfare being supported by God and future wars awaited which would both expand and crush Israel were common opinions among Pentecostals during this period. Apart from Säwe's labeling of Israeli warfare as something evil in 1970, the Israeli military and its activities were never directly criticized in EH. On the contrary, eschatological violence was glorified and celebrated as remarkable signs of the times.

News Articles

EH did not report on the conflict outside of the eschatological lens but occasionally covered tourism in Israel and published advertisements for Christian travel agencies arranging trips there.²⁶¹ An article by Elon Svanell about tourism in Israel argued that the armed conflict is hardly noticeable, that the occupation is "very mild," and that there is no "real hate between Arabs and Jews," only an artificial one.²⁶² Göran Strömbeck wrote a similar article based on a recent visit to Israel and the West Bank, sharing how fascinated he was to visit biblical places

²⁵⁸ EH 1971, no. 30-31, p. 7.

²⁵⁹ EH 1971 no. 33, p. 7.

²⁶⁰ EH 1971, no. 46, p. 14-15, 24.

²⁶¹ E.g., EH 1969, no. 1, p. 8-9, 20; EH 1970, no. 33 p. 28.

²⁶² EH 1970 no. 26, p. 12-13, 30.

and arguing that there is much peace work of reconciliation between Israelis and Arabs performed in the dark without gaining much attention from the press.²⁶³

Folke Thorell reviewed and recommended a book by Erik Beijer about the Holy Land in the time of Jesus as well as Robert Murray's book about Swedish pilgrims to Jerusalem, which Thorell argues gives valuable background knowledge to "the enormous interest of today" in Jerusalem.²⁶⁴ Another article on tourism in Israel was written by Arne Eklund, which quickly developed into an analysis of the conflict.²⁶⁵ Eklund described how the Arabs destroyed a lot of farms during the 1948 war, which Israelis later rebuilt. Many Israelis were grateful for the occupation since it placed armies hostile towards Israel on a much safer distance. Still, he questioned whether the occupation really makes Israel safe long-term, as it "creates new problems" and deepens hostility. He pointed out the tragedy of Palestinian refugee camps and people not being able to return to their homes. He concluded his analysis by stating that even Solomon the Wise would probably be unable to solve the complex conflict.

3.2 Dagen

Editors

Lewi Pethrus' initial editorials on the Six-Day War had an eschatological nature, which was uncommon for *Dagen* editorials. He expressed worry and sorrow that the biblical land once again was

²⁶³ EH 1968 no. 51, p. 16–17, 26–27.

²⁶⁴ EH 1970 no. 11, p. 20–21.

²⁶⁵ EH 1970 no. 34, p. 9, 20–21. Eklund wrote another article on tourism in Jerusalem during Easter that lacked political analysis. EH 1971 no. 15, p. 3–4.

involved in a deadly conflict and stated that a Bible reader should expect Jews to be engaged in war after they had returned to Israel. He speculated that this might be the war that gives Israel control over all of Jerusalem or even the war that escalates into a world war ending at Armageddon, referring to Revelation 16.²⁶⁶

In another editorial, Pethrus wrote that it was a wondrous experience to read the news about the war, only to turn to the prophecy of Jesus in Matthew 24 about armies surrounding Jerusalem and its destruction being near. The reunification of Jerusalem to Israel meant that the Age of the Gentiles was over, which would result in major spiritual events for the church. It meant that Jesus soon would return and that the church's missionary activity was about to reach its end.²⁶⁷

Two weeks later, Pethrus argued that the Israeli–Palestinian conflict was an extension of the broader conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, which he, in turn, described as an incarnation of the “century-long fight” between democracy and dictatorship.²⁶⁸ Arab nations were but board game pieces of Soviet used to prepare a “communist world revolution” and must therefore be fought as biblical prophets as Zechariah had foretold.

A summary of a sermon Lewi Pethrus held at the yearly Pentecostal gathering, Nyhemsveckan, in 1967 was titled “Israel's Victory Over Jerusalem and the Age of the Gentiles.” He argued that Israel lost its calling to be God's messenger after Jesus' resurrection. Still, after 1948 it is successively regaining that position as it fulfills many prophecies and will be the battleground for the last great war.²⁶⁹

No more writings by Pethrus commenting on the war could be found in the material. In April 1970, he wrote an eschatological article called

²⁶⁶ *Dagen* June 7, 1967, p. 2.

²⁶⁷ *Dagen* June 10, 1967, p. 2.

²⁶⁸ *Dagen* June 27, 1967, p. 2.

²⁶⁹ *Dagen* June 20, 1967, p. 3.

“Love the Coming of Jesus,” which did not mention Israel. However, it was still illustrated with a monument in Jerusalem for fallen Israeli paratroopers (appendix B).²⁷⁰

Anonymous editorials on wars involving Israel outnumbered Pethrus’s articles tenfold and focused on political analysis, with minimal eschatological speculation. *Dagen*’s first editorial on the Six-Day War was anonymous and argued that while both Israel and Egypt are to blame for the escalation, the war was mainly the result of the superpowers meddling in the region out of self-interest. It also stated that there is a high risk of either the democratic state of Israel collapsing or millions of Arabs finding themselves in deeper poverty due to the war. It further argued that while Israel is needed to provide security for Jews in an antisemitic age, the Arabs perceived themselves as fighting for a just cause since the Jewish state was founded on their land.²⁷¹

This empathy for Palestinians and their cause occasionally returned in future editorials. One from 1967 described the problematic situation Palestinian refugees on the West Bank as neither Israel nor Jordan would welcome them.²⁷² On the first anniversary of the war, an anonymous editorial stated that while the Jewish state needs support to be a safe haven for Jews, this must not “tempt us to forget that Arabs are also people for which Christ died on the cross. Even they are fellow human beings and have a right to be viewed as our neighbor.”²⁷³ One editorial highlighted the hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees

²⁷⁰ *Dagen* Apr. 11, 1970, p. 11.

²⁷¹ *Dagen* June 6, 1967, p. 2.

²⁷² *Dagen* June 10, 1967, p. 2.

²⁷³ “[...] får inte förleda oss att glömma detta enkla faktum: också araberna är människor, för vilka Kristus dog på korset. Även de är medmänniskor och har rätt att bli betraktade som vår nästa.” *Dagen* June, 1968, p. 2.

that fled due to “Israeli victory.”²⁷⁴ Another pointed to Arab Christians, who both Israelis and Muslim Palestinians often vilify.²⁷⁵

An anonymous editorial from May 1970 warned of the emergence of a Third World War if the Israeli–Palestinian conflict is not resolved. It discussed the fear many Palestinians had of losing their property in the occupied territories just as many Palestinians did twenty years earlier. Many Israelis feared that their Arab neighbors wanted to exterminate them. The editor—possibly Arne Eklund—quoted several Arabs that he spoke with on a recent journey to Lebanon, Israel, and Egypt to show that many of them were favorable toward the idea of a Palestinian war of liberation. Some envision a Palestinian state, where Jews and Arabs live side by side, replacing Israel. He also quoted an Israeli student who said that Israel received more compassion from the UN and foreign nations before the Six-Day War. When it became apparent that their military was strong and they could become an occupational force, that compassion has turned toward the Palestinians instead.²⁷⁶

However, there were also several descriptions of Arabs as dangerous and extremist, particularly their political leaders. In 1969, an editorial warned against Arab terrorists “whose only goal is to crush the Jewish state” and recruit people in Palestinian refugee camps.²⁷⁷ Another warned against Fatah as a great danger to the security of Israel, and the Swedish politician Per Gahrton was criticized for portraying the Arab states as peace-loving and mistreated.²⁷⁸

An apparent change over time was that the editorials became less likely to criticize Israeli policies. In March 1969, *Dagen* criticized “the

²⁷⁴ *Dagen* May 11, 1968, p. 2.

²⁷⁵ *Dagen* May 14, 1970, p. 2.

²⁷⁶ *Dagen* May 29, 1970, p. 3.

²⁷⁷ “[...] vars enda mål är att krossa den judiska staten.” *Dagen* Jan. 2, 1969, p. 2.

²⁷⁸ *Dagen* Feb. 19, 1969, p. 2; Apr. 21, 1970, p. 2.

‘colonization’ of the occupied Arabic areas”—meaning settlements—and hoped that the newly elected prime minister Golda Meir would put an end to it.²⁷⁹ In June 1970, an editorial lamented that the occupation had become more and more permanent while expressing an understanding that East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights, in particular, had strategic value for the Israeli Defense Forces. It argued that Israel should hand these over.²⁸⁰ However, in September 1971, an editorial argued that Israel should resist any push from the UN to give up East Jerusalem.²⁸¹

Two anonymous editorials had an eschatological dimension. One of them did not focus on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict but the church’s future, arguing that a Christian revival was coming as Israel regaining its land signified that the end times had arrived.²⁸² Another, called “Israel and the Prophecies,” argued against the idea that the Old Testament prophecies have nothing to do with our time as they were fulfilled before Jesus’ days. Paul’s letter to the Romans shows us this is not the case. The editorial stated: God still had a plan for Israel. This does not mean that one should uncritically accept the politics of the Israeli government, but we should pray for the people of the Middle East and those “playing the political game” in this part of the world. Israel is no ordinary people but God’s chosen people from whom salvation comes.²⁸³

It should also be noted that after a reader questioned what Swedish Pentecostalism taught about the end times, *Dagen*’s editors affirmed that “basically all” Pentecostal preachers, Bible schools, and writings were teaching pre-tribulational premillennialism, with the church being raptured before an apocalyptic war involving Israel takes place.²⁸⁴

²⁷⁹ *Dagen* Mar. 18, 1969, p. 2.

²⁸⁰ *Dagen* June 4, 1970, p. 2.

²⁸¹ *Dagen* Sep. 15, 1971, p. 2.

²⁸² *Dagen* Feb. 4, 1969, p. 2.

²⁸³ *Dagen* July 24, 1971, p. 2.

²⁸⁴ *Dagen* Oct. 14, 1970, p. 13.

In 1967, *Dagen* published several op-eds that commented on the Six-Day War. Anders Wigholm, a Salvation Army officer, wrote that the war was predicted in the Bible, with the Arab League being prophesied in Psalm 83. He foresaw that God would make Israel victorious.²⁸⁵ In another op-ed, Wigholm argued that it had become much clearer why Russia would invade the small country of Israel following Ezekiel 38. He described how at least a quarter of the world's population would soon die, but the church would be raptured before that.²⁸⁶

These eschatological texts were published under the “Aktuell reflex” section, generally reserved for political analysis. Such op-eds were also published, and they tended to be more sympathetic to Arabs. Olle Högstrand wrote that Israel's unexpected and astonishing victory resulted from air superiority. He argued that Israel needed to use its victory to acquire faithful promises of peace from its Arab neighbors, or else an even more destructive conflict would come.²⁸⁷

Ivar Lundgren (b. 1931) argued in an op-ed: “‘All are our brothers’, including the Arabs.”²⁸⁸ He complained that many Christians had taken a stance in the conflict all too quickly. He emphasized that he supports Israel's right to exist and feels sentimental to it as a Christian. Still, he was horrified to see many Christians publicly express joy and excitement as the Israeli army destroyed homes and forced thousands to flee. He also argued that this worsens Christian opportunities for mission. Lundgren's piece stands out within the material as the strongest condemnation of the eschatological enthusiasm for Israeli warfare that was heavily featured in both periodicals.

²⁸⁵ *Dagen* June 7, 1967, p. 2.

²⁸⁶ *Dagen* July 14, 1967, p. 2.

²⁸⁷ *Dagen* June 10, 1967, p. 2.

²⁸⁸ “‘Alla äro våra bröder’ – också araberna”. *Dagen* July 20, 1967, p. 2. The first four words were a quote from the popular spiritual song “Tung och kvalfull vilar hela”.

Writers

Gösta Lindahl

Gösta Lindahl (1906–1997) was a Pentecostal pastor who often preached about eschatology.²⁸⁹ His response to the Six-Day War was highly apocalyptic: similar to D. O. Belfrage, he argued that the Arabs would be turned into blood according to Ezekiel 35:5, and the Soviet Union would soon initiate the Third World War.²⁹⁰ In an eschatological article, he argued that the Six-Day War fulfilled prophecies in Luke 21:24, Isaiah 11:12–15, and Zechariah 12:2–6. The world was surprised that Israel could win so quickly, but this too was prophesied. Soon Russia would attack, and Christians should prepare for Christ's second coming.²⁹¹

In a review of a book about Israel published at the Christian publishing house Libris, *Belägrat Israel* by the Danish priest Paul Borchsenius, Gösta Lindahl criticized the author for not applying biblical prophecies to contemporary political events. Commenting on the book's description of malnutrition in Egypt, Lindahl stated, "The awakened Bible reader knows that this is predicted to affect Egypt in the end times (Isaiah 19)."²⁹² Despite its shortcomings, Lindahl recommended the book since knowledge about Israel and the Middle East prepares people for the imminent coming of Christ.²⁹³ In 1971,

²⁸⁹ Phone interview with Birger Thureson, Dec. 3, 2021. Gäreskog 2015, p. 238, 258.

²⁹⁰ *Dagen* June 8, 1967, p. 1.

²⁹¹ *Dagen* June 27, 1967, p. 2.

²⁹² "Den vakne bibelläsaren vet att också detta är förutsagt skall hända med Egypten i ändens tid. (Jes. 19)." *Dagen* Nov. 7, 1970, p. 20.

²⁹³ *Dagen* Nov. 7, 1970, p. 20. Borchsenius was interviewed by *Dagen* two weeks later and called the Jews evidence for God and affirmed that the prophecies are fulfilled through the events in the Middle East. He warned, however, against

Lindahl had an article published in EH, where he argued that God himself is responsible for bringing Jews back to Palestine.²⁹⁴

For Lindahl, the conflict had to be understood in an eschatological light, and all its developments were written beforehand. Like the eschatological writers in EH, his arguments lacked any emotive or empathetic language.

Eric Wärenstam

Dr. Eric Wärenstam (1905–1973) was a historian and Pentecostal preacher who wrote several books on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and frequently wrote in *Dagen*.²⁹⁵ He analyzed the war in the June 17, 1967 issue, arguing that Israel could not afford more warfare but must focus on peace solutions and welcome back Palestinian refugees for stability in the region. He was critical of Israel taking control over all of Jerusalem and rejected the popular saying of Jerusalem being “liberated,” as the UN had decided in 1947 that Jerusalem should be an international territory.²⁹⁶ The following week, he argued that Israel needed to give Palestinian refugees land or economic compensation while the superpowers had to provide aid and guidance more than weapon deliveries.²⁹⁷

In 1969, Wärenstam wrote a culture article on the “unsolved problem of the Near East,” stating that Sweden and all other nations should strongly condemn military actions from all sides, as they often

focusing on details that seem to fit with contemporary events without seeing the whole picture. He also warned against the growth of antisemitism in Europe. *Dagen* Nov. 20, 1970, p. 20.

²⁹⁴ EH 1971, no. 30–31, p. 19–20.

²⁹⁵ Phone interview with Ivar Lundgren, Jan. 5, 2022.

²⁹⁶ *Dagen* June 17, 1967, p. 2.

²⁹⁷ *Dagen* June 28, 1967, p. 3. Later in 1967, he wrote a series on antisemitism, not mentioning the conflict.

hurt innocent people, and they do not ease the tensions in the region.²⁹⁸ He wrote that the idea that some Arabs have to remove Israel entirely was unrealistic, that the prolonging of Israeli occupation also was unrealistic and counterproductive, and that both parties should listen to the UN and submit to its charter. The article was accompanied by a map emphasizing which regions Israel had occupied, and the caption written by an editor pointed out that Wärenstam gave his personal view in the article (see appendix C).

Wärenstam's neutral stance and vocal criticism of those who glorified the Israeli victory stood in sharp contrast with most opinion pieces published about the conflict. Wärenstam had no biblical or eschatological argumentation but analyzed the conflict based on international agreements and a principle of conflict de-escalation.

Sigurd Sedin

Pentecostal pastor Sigurd Sedin wrote a series on Israel's future in *Dagen*. He believed that Jesus' prophecy in Luke 21 was fulfilled when all of Jerusalem was controlled by Israel again. The temple will be built again after the "Omar Mosque" is torn down. Jewish devotion to God pleases him, but all Jewish atheists will be killed when Jesus comes back.²⁹⁹

Sedin also argued that Israel would become an ally to Antichrist only to be driven out by him to Jordan.³⁰⁰ The Antichrist will try to exterminate all Jews and will succeed in organizing "a massive bloodbath." But before he manages to exterminate all Jews, Jesus and a heavenly army will arrive and kill everyone who aligned themselves with the Antichrist, and all surviving Jews will become Christians. In EH, Sigurd

²⁹⁸ *Dagen* Sept. 23, 1969, p. 4.

²⁹⁹ *Dagen* Aug. 16, 1967, p. 2.

³⁰⁰ *Dagen* Aug. 18, 1967, p. 2.

Sedin wrote in 1971 that God miraculously will bring every Jew to the state of Israel in the end times, after which they will undergo the greatest suffering the world has ever seen in the Great Tribulation.³⁰¹

Sedin's articles were not met with any opposition in upcoming issues of *Dagen* or EH, which indicates that many Pentecostals agreed with Sedin on the future killings of Israeli Jews. This is the only instance within the material that recognizes that far from all Jews believe in God. The fate of those who did not was apparently death, with Jesus Christ personally executing them for their unbelief.

Arvid Svärd

Missionary and journalist Arvid Svärd, a firm believer in pacifism, as we saw earlier, wrote a few articles regarding Israel in *Dagen*. He wrote a culture article in April 1970 titled “Christian Arab and Believing Jew in Dialogue on Israel,” where he shared translated extracts from an article in *Christian Century*. The Jew, anonymized in the article, argued that the destiny of the Jewish people was fulfilled with the establishment of Israel in 1948; and lamented that the Arab minority in Israel has not received the amount of justice that the Jewish majority “should have given it.”

The Christian, also anonymized, affirmed that Israel was given to the Jews by God to bless other races and criticized the “racial politics” of the Israeli government that, for example, treated Jewish and Arabs schools differently, which made non-Jews feel like second-class citizens. They both agreed that Christians and Jews need each other to promote peace and prosperity in Israel. Svärd added that he was delighted to find this spirit of respect and reconciliation and quoted Isaiah 19:22–25,

³⁰¹ EH 1971, no. 38, p. 30–31.

which describes a future in which God says that Israel, Egypt, and Assyria are all the peoples of his covenant.³⁰²

Svärd wrote another culture article a few weeks later called “Israel’s Historical Role and Its Current Destiny.” After describing and condemning European antisemitism, he portrayed Israel as a refuge for Jews with the mission to bless all people on earth. What happens in Israel has enormous ripple effects on the rest of the world, which is why we all follow what happens there, wondering “where the dice will roll and how the pieces will move on that chess board.”³⁰³

Svärd argued that most Jews supported the civil rights movement and opposed the war in Vietnam due to the Jewish conviction of Israel’s God as the father of all who wants everybody to be treated equally. For this reason, Svärd wrote, Israel needs to do more to help the Palestinians. The fragile situation might lead to a devastating war, and Palestinians need justice for their own sake. Their land was taken from them against their will and given to Jews by the British colonial power: the oppressed Jews who sought a safe haven after the horrors of the Holocaust were given a safe place due to the Palestinians becoming oppressed instead.

Svärd admitted that he did not have a clear solution to all of this, but he once again quoted Isaiah 19, hoping that God will bring peace to the Middle East in a manner in which Arabs and Jews will be included in his chosen people.³⁰⁴ Svärd’s usage of biblical prophecies to promote ideas of de-escalation and conflict resolution in the Middle East makes an interesting example of eschatological argumentation being used for the pacifist cause. It was very uncommon in the rest of the material, yet there is no example of someone responding to him critically.

³⁰² *Dagen* Apr. 25, 1970, p. 4.

³⁰³ “Mänsklighetens öde kan bero av hur och var tärningarna rullar och pjäserna flyttas på det schackbrädet.” *Dagen* May 21, 1970, p. 4.

³⁰⁴ *Dagen* May 21, 1970, p. 4.

Other Voices

On June 14, 1967, representatives from eight free churches signed a statement in *Dagen* urging Christians to help the victims of the Six-Day War. They wrote:

The Christian does not in these moments ask for friend or foe. But obviously, the thoughts of the Swedish free church people go first and foremost to Israel, and it is natural that the one who can send a gift specifically helps this people. But the Middle East in general with its large number of refugees need support and help.³⁰⁵

Three days later, the chairman for the Swedish Jerusalem Association argued *Dagen's* readers to support "the need in the land of the Savior."³⁰⁶

Several foreign policy analyses were published in the coming years. Mogens Kjelgaard pointed out that Israel did not want Palestinians to return to their home villages, and the Arab states did not want to welcome them as refugees. Israel would face another war shortly if this is not resolved, Kjelgaard commented.³⁰⁷ Pastor Hasse Andersson wrote a political analysis in 1968 describing how Israel is helping the Palestinians in its occupied territories while the Arab nations have abandoned them, possibly stirring more hate towards Israel to recruit new Palestinian soldiers. He wrote: "With a knife resting on its neck,

³⁰⁵ "Den kristna människan frågar inte i sådana ögonblick efter vän eller fiende. Men självfallet går det Svenska frikyrkofolkets tankar i första hand till Israel och det är naturligt, att den som kan vill sända sin gåva till hjälp åt detta folk. Men också Mellan-Östern i övrigt med dess stora flyktingskaror behöver nu stöd och hjälp, och i den mån det är möjligt bör vi som kristna bistå också dessa." *Dagen* June 14, 1967, p. 12.

³⁰⁶ *Dagen* June 17, 1967, p. 3.

³⁰⁷ *Dagen* June 21, 1967, p. 3.

Israel had to choose between being driven down into the ocean or winning a victory against an incomparably much stronger enemy.”³⁰⁸

An analysis by Christopher John described it as “unsettling” that a new war in the Middle East likely would see the involvement of both superpowers. The analysis was complemented by a large map of the extension of the Soviet fleet in the Mediterranean.³⁰⁹ Other foreign policy analyses similarly stated that peace negotiations must be reached without the intervention of superpowers.³¹⁰

Author Ingrid Ydén-Sandgren wrote a chronicle in 1971 on the possibility of reconciliation in Jerusalem. She shared some interviews she had had with Jerusalem citizens, primarily Israelis. One of them complained about the prejudice and suspicions that characterized both camps in that Israelis believed that the Arabs wanted to throw them into the sea, and the Arabs believed that Israel wanted to conquer all land to the Euphrates.³¹¹ As we have seen, the latter idea was actively promoted in EH during this time. Still, Ydén-Sandgren was either unaware of this or decided not to directly criticize the Christian vision of “Greater Israel” directly. In either case, her chronicle subtly indicated a problem with reconciling popular eschatological ideas with strengthening the peace process.

These analytical texts were critical to warfare from all sides and offered constructive ideas on how peace might be reached. Their tone was significantly different from the eschatological texts commenting on the war that *Dagen* also published during this period. Missionary Elmer Newman claimed that Israel is one of the strongest proofs for the

³⁰⁸ “Med kniven mot strupen hade Israel att välja mellan att köras i Medelhavet eller att vinna seger över en ojämförligt mycket starkare fiende.” *Dagen* June 29, 1968, p. 2.

³⁰⁹ *Dagen* Oct. 16, 1968, p. 4.

³¹⁰ *Dagen* July 16, 1969, p. 4; Aug. 2, 1969, p. 3; Jan. 12, 1971, p. 3.

³¹¹ *Dagen* Feb. 4, 1971, p. 9.

truthfulness of the Bible and argued that it is hard to notice the ongoing conflict when one is there.³¹² Gotthard Dahlberg argued that current events tell us about the end times, where the Antichrist soon will rise. He would be a proponent of peace, according to Revelation 6:2, and enter into a covenant with Israel, but he is lying and will break it after three and a half years, after which he will sit in God's temple and call himself God.³¹³

Arvid Bergstam, a pastor in the Mission Covenant Church, wrote a long piece in *Dagen* titled "Tensions in the Middle East," which started as an analysis of Israeli prime minister Golda Meir's visit to Paris and the worsening relationship between Israel and France after the Six-Day War, with France not providing fighter jets that Israel had asked for. The article suddenly transformed into an exegetical text arguing that the Bible has foretold all other people hating Israel after they regained their land at the end of time. Bergstam asserted that it is "tempting" for Israel's enemies to attack and "test their powers in a fight with God." But they will lose such a fight, as God has said in Zechariah 12:9: "I will set out to destroy all the nations that attack Jerusalem." Bergstam quoted and referred to many prophecies in the Old Testament and one New Testament passage—Romans 11:25—when arguing that all Jews will become Christians after the coming battles with other nations. Bergstam ended by praising God and asking the reader which side they would choose.³¹⁴

Thus, eschatological texts tended to be much more positive towards Israeli warfare, to the extent that Bergstam called it "hate" not to provide the nation with fighter jets. The primary motivation for this was that Israeli warfare fulfilled Old Testament prophecies and secured

³¹² *Dagen* Dec. 17, 1968, p. 3.

³¹³ *Dagen* Jan. 9, 1969, p. 2, 15.

³¹⁴ *Dagen* July 22, 1969, p. 4. Bergstam had previously written a dispensationalist book on Israel: Bergstam 1960.

the survival of the Jewish state, which in turn proved that the Bible is true.

Letters to the Editors

The association *Judiska Vänner i Sverige* (“Friends of Jews in Sweden”) and its sister organizations in Denmark and Finland had a letter to the editor published in which they described how Israel is struggling for its existence after the “genocidal blow” which was the Six-Day War. They characterized the two million Israelis as survivors of gas chambers, crammed on a small piece of land faced against all odds with 50 million hostile Arabs who wanted to destroy them due to hate propaganda. Because of this, they argued, Israel needs people’s “sympathy and trust.”³¹⁵ While other texts on Israel tended to reach similar conclusions, they often emphasized Israel’s strength and victory after the war, rather than portraying the country in dire need. The latter approach was more expressive of empathy, even though it restricted that to Israelis.

Reader Villhelm Irgens Pettersson wrote a letter to the editor titled “Israel, hear the word of the Lord through the prophet Ezekiel!” He referred to Ezekiel 47:13-20, which states that the borders for the people of Israel include an area from the great sea in the west to the River Jordan in the east. He applied this to the modern state of Israel and also argued that there shall be peace between Israel and the neighboring countries. There should be no segregation between Jews and Arabs. All should have equal opportunities and be counted as native-born following Ezekiel 47:22. Pettersson was essentially arguing for a one-state solution, convinced that God would make it work, but he also warned that this needs to be done quickly “before it is too late.”³¹⁶ It

³¹⁵ *Dagen* July 3, 1969, p. 13.

³¹⁶ *Dagen* Sept. 24, 1969, p. 17.

seems like this view was not very common, as apart from Pettersson only Arvid Svärd gave support to it within the material.

A reader called Gustav Jonsson criticized the chairman of the Youth Association of the Social Democratic Party for expressing support for North Vietnam and Cuba while stating that it was unfortunate that Israel became an independent state. Jonsson argued that the Bible foretold that the Jews would be united and take back their land, so what politicians say does not matter. For the same reason, one should not insist that Israel gives back the territories it gained during the Six-Day War, as one should respect the biblical prophecies.³¹⁷

This was a rare expression of a sentiment that might have been implicit in many eschatological texts of the period: the ends justifying the means. If Israel fulfills biblical prophecy through its warfare, such military violence cannot be viewed the same as other military violence in the world as it serves a special, divine purpose.

News Articles

There were hundreds of news articles on the Six-Day War and the following tensions in the region. Many heavily featured on the front page with large images of soldiers, military vehicles, or politicians involved in the conflict.³¹⁸ Some articles were bought from news agencies like Reuters and the Swedish TT, but *Dagen* reporters wrote most of them. The latter hardly ever contained criticism of Israeli policy and warfare, whereas the former did. For example, one article by TT was titled “Israel Responsible for Latest Battles,” another reported on UN Resolution 2672, which emphasized the need to respect

³¹⁷ *Dagen* Apr. 22, 1970, p. 16.

³¹⁸ A significant example of this is when *Dagen* celebrated the 20th anniversary of the state of Israel by featuring large pictures from an Israeli military parade. *Dagen* May 3, 1968, p. 1.

Palestinians' right to self-determination and their right to return to their homes in areas controlled by Israel.³¹⁹

Dagen themselves included a report from the Tel Aviv airport describing the strong military presence as necessary to secure Israel's survival. The soldiers reportedly searched all vehicles entering and leaving the area to find "enemies—that is, Arabs."³²⁰ This procedure was described as necessary to secure the survival of Israel. A news article on female soldiers in the Israeli Defense Forces was featured on the first page as well as on the middle spread. *Dagen's* photographer Bengt Järneskog had taken pictures of the soldiers laughing and marching, describing them as hard-working (see appendix D).³²¹

Dagen also reported from Christian "Israel conferences," where preachers gave eschatological sermons and delegates were encouraged to pray for Israel.³²² They also published a report from the 1969 Zionist General Council in Jerusalem, where speakers argued that the Israeli victory in the Six-Day War has united Jews worldwide and that the conflict with the Arabs did not concern water supply or infrastructure, but the fundamental question of whether Israel should exist or not. The reporter, Nils E. Folke, was excited to see many young people present from various countries. He also noted that Israeli colonies had started to appear in occupied areas.³²³ In 1968, a military parade celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the formation of the state of Israel was highlighted with a big picture on the front page of *Dagen*.³²⁴ After the

³¹⁹ *Dagen* Mar. 20, 1969 p. 13; Dec. 10, 1970, p. 3.

³²⁰ *Dagen* June 4, 1970, p. 13.

³²¹ *Dagen* Nov. 4, 1970, p. 1, 10–11.

³²² E.g., *Dagen* July 11, 1967 p. 6.

³²³ *Dagen* Sept. 9, 1969 p. 4.

³²⁴ *Dagen* May 3, 1968, p. 1.

murder of Senator Robert Kennedy, *Dagen* wrote in a big headline on the front page stating that he was a devoted supporter of Israel.³²⁵

Dozens of news articles concerned tourism to Israel. On June 6, 1967, *Dagen* reported that the war was a massive backlash for tourism.³²⁶ At the end of the month, they gladly reported on the front page that tourists were flocking to the holy land and that the tensions between Israelis and Palestinians were not a hindrance.³²⁷ This became a recurring theme in several articles.³²⁸ Some articles actively encouraged the reader to visit Israel, with titles like “Relax with a trip: disturbances at Israel’s borders have no impact on tourist travel” and “Cheaper to go to Israel? *Dagen* asks travel agencies.”³²⁹ Most articles on this were accompanied by several advertisements from Christian travel agencies arranging trips to Israel.

In some cases, the advertisements took up as much page space as the news article (see appendix E).³³⁰ One piece called tourism to Israel a “pilgrim’s journey” and featured an interview with a representative of one of the traveling agencies advertised on the same page. This representative said that he would like to see people from all nations and religions gather in Israel to understand each other and establish world peace.³³¹

The editorial intent of grouping advertisements for Christian travel agencies with articles encouraging tourism is apparent: *Dagen* wanted its readers to make these trips. This put a new spin on the question of ethical motivation for promoting the peace process in the region or

³²⁵ *Dagen* June 7, 1968, p. 1.

³²⁶ *Dagen* June 6, 1967, p. 10.

³²⁷ *Dagen* June 27, 1967, p. 1.

³²⁸ *Dagen* Jan. 25, 1969, p. 19; June 23, 1970, p. 3; EH 1971 no. 15, p. 3–4.

³²⁹ *Dagen* Jan. 25, 1969, p. 19; July 29, 1970, p. 8–9.

³³⁰ *Dagen* Jan. 25, 1969, p. 19; Mar. 29, 1969, p. 20; Aug. 29, 1969, p. 14.

³³¹ *Dagen* Mar. 29, 1969, p. 20.

encouraging Israeli military violence and continued occupation. *Dagen* wanted to actively assure its readers that it was safe to travel to Israel mere weeks after the country had been involved in active warfare, likely due to a willingness to support Christian travel agencies which had “pilgrim’s journeys” to Israel as the main selling point.

While these economic incentives were not the origin of Pentecostal Zionism—Pethrus and others started developing it when tourism to Palestine was restricted under Ottoman rule—it likely strengthened the commitment of downplaying the conflict and portraying the situation as normal.³³² Of course, the eschatological speculations on imminent nuclear wars and genocide in the Holy Land naturally did the opposite, even though those scenarios were expected to occur after all Christians were safe and sound in the rapture. Still, it is understandable why the editors wanted their tourism advertisements to share space with encouraging articles rather than the doom and gloom found elsewhere in the paper.

3.4 Summary

Most writers in both *EH* and *Dagen* who commented on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were favorable toward Israeli warfare and antagonistic toward Arab warfare. The most common motivation for supporting and defending Israeli military violence was that it would ultimately lead to the second coming of Christ and the golden age of the Millennium, based on biblical argumentation primarily from the Old Testament and the book of Revelation. This argumentation was heavily

³³² On a sidenote, it was interesting to see *Dagen* initially condemn Israeli settlements and describing the occupation for what it was, as Pentecostal Zionists today will often deny that Israel is an occupying power and argue that the West Bank settlements are on legitimate Israeli territory. See Lindgren, 2013 and Toledano Åsbrink, 2019.

influenced by dispensationalist eschatology unconcerned with finding biblical commands defending warfare, but rather prophetic predictions on end-time events that would include military violence. Several writers expressed that the conflict in the Middle East would escalate into a World War Three with massive genocides as a result, something Christians themselves would avoid through the rapture.

Some argued God himself had engaged or will engage in warfare against Israel's enemies. Empathy towards Arabs and Jews was rarely expressed, and it was uncommon to do parallels between Israel and the church. Rather, the uniqueness of Jews as a people whose violence and suffering serve a special purpose in God's eschatological plan was often emphasized, to the extent that some viewed the Holocaust and or future apocalyptic extermination of most of the world's Jews as having a divine purpose. The most apparent change over time was *Dagen* editorials becoming less likely to criticize the state of Israel for its occupational policies. While eschatological texts about Israel were booming in the direct aftermath of the Six-Day War, it continued to be a popular topic later.

4. The Vietnam War

4.1 Background

In contrast to the Six-Day War, the Vietnam War had been going on for over a decade before the time period of this study. The outbreak in 1955 was in large parts a result of the fragile peace accords ending the First Indochina War (1946–1954), a conflict primarily fought between the French colonialist forces, based in the south, and the communist Viet Minh rebels based in the north. The Geneva Peace Conference decided that Vietnam would temporarily be divided into a North and South state, seeking unification in 1956.³³³ Instead, war broke out as the South Vietnam leader Ngo Dinh Diem led a persecution campaign against communists and North Vietnam leader Ho Chi Minh claimed sovereignty over all of Vietnam.

The war went on for twenty years and is generally recognized by researchers as a proxy war. North Vietnam and its Viet Cong allies in the south were supplied with weapons and resources from the Soviet Union. At the same time, South Vietnam was heavily supported by countries like the United States, Australia, and South Korea.³³⁴ The US involvement in the conflict increased massively after 1964 when a US destroyer was attacked by North Vietnamese torpedo boats. President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered the deployment of over 180,000 US soldiers

³³³ Moyar 2006, p. 30–33.

³³⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Vietnam War.”, July 6, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War> (read Dec. 15, 2021).

in Vietnam and extensive bombing.³³⁵ The US Air Force dropped over six million tons of bombs and other explosives over Indochina between 1964 and 1975, almost three times as much as the United States used in World War II.³³⁶

With television becoming more popular and influential papers sending photographers to the war zone, the devastation of the war was brought to people's living rooms in a new way. From 1967 onwards, more and more debaters and civil society leaders in the US and Europe spoke out against the war, and massive protests filled the streets.³³⁷ American forces entering Cambodia in 1970 to defeat communist troops there on the orders of Richard Nixon spawned massive demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of protesters.³³⁸

In January of 1973, a peace agreement was reached in Paris, and the last US military unit left Vietnam in March of the same year. Hostilities continued, however, and in March of 1975, North Vietnam launched an offensive which led to the collapse of the South Vietnamese government and a definitive end to the war, with the country being forcefully unified as the Socialist Republic of Vietnam.³³⁹

4.2 Evangelii Härold

Almost nothing was written about the Vietnam War in EH during this period. It was neither viewed as a conflict with eschatological or spiritual significance like the Six-Day War nor was it commonly seen as something that needed to be discussed in regard to Christian ethics.

³³⁵ Moyer 2006, p. 310–312.

³³⁶ Nadiu 1985, p. 60.

³³⁷ Hall 2006, p. 1–2; Thomas 2008, p. 335–337.

³³⁸ Kirby 2015, p. 38.

³³⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “Vietnam War.”, July 6, 2021. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Vietnam-War> (read Dec. 15, 2021).

However, there are two instances when the war is mentioned and condemned, both of which I have already referred to in chapter 2.

Arne Eklund's editorial "Neither Right Nor Left" argued that atrocities and violence against civilians should be condemned regardless of whether the perpetrators are communists or capitalists. He pointed to the Vietnam War as an example of this, writing:

Right now, there is still a horrible war in South-East Asia. Monstrous barbarism occurs on both sides. In the wake of the war, there is also a dissolution of public morals, which is displayed in an awful way. [...] But from time to time, it seems that even some Christians all too easily let themselves be impacted by all the talk of political indoctrination so that one does not dare to follow one's conscience as one is at risk of being branded as 'capitalist' or 'communist'. The latter is perhaps mostly true of certain American Christian leaders today, who thereby bring a great responsibility for the future upon themselves. I am of course, referring to their silence regarding the massacres in Vietnam and the racial thinking, which can be discerned as one of the causes behind the horrors that occur over there.³⁴⁰

Eklund went on to encourage the readers to pray for leaders who go forth "with biblical authority without squinting to either the right or the left" so they can prevent war, fear, and hunger in the world.

³⁴⁰ "Just nu fortsätter i Sydostasien ett fruktansvärt krig. Ohyggliga råheter bedrivs på båda sidor. I krigets spår följer också en upplösning av den allmänna moralen, som tar sig skrämmande uttryck. [...] Men stundom verkar det som att även en del kristna alltför lätt låter sig påverkas av allt prat om politisk indoktrinering, så att man inte vågar följa sitt samvete av risk att stämplas som 'kapitalist' eller 'kommunist'. Det senare gäller idag kanske framförallt vissa amerikanska kristna ledare, som därmed tar på sig ett stort ansvar för framtiden. Jag syftar givetvis på deras tystnad inför massakrerna i Vietnam och det rastänkande, som kan skönjas som en av orsakerna bakom det ohyggliga, som sker därborta." EH 1970 no. 46 p. 2.

Apart from this editorial, the Vietnam War was condemned, and its supporters labeled crusaders, in an article on the “Young Forum” section by Bengt Jerneberg.³⁴¹ Unlike Eklund, Jerneberg argued that all kinds of warfare are unacceptable for a Christian to condone. However, he did not expand on what motivated him to take such a stance.

4.2 Dagen

Editors

When Lewi Pethrus wrote about the Vietnam War, he tended to criticize North Vietnam, the Việt Cộng, and China almost exclusively.³⁴² Other editors at *Dagen* frequently criticized the United States, often pointing out that this did not make them sympathetic to communism. For example, *Dagen*’s foreign policy editor Arne Eklund wrote:

Hence, no matter how great our sympathies are for the suffering people of Vietnam and our disgust of the American warfare when it comes to napalm bombing and other things, this cannot lead to us to without question accept everything that the opposing side stands for.³⁴³

³⁴¹ EH 1968, no. 1, p. 18.

³⁴² *Dagen* July 22, 1967, p. 2; Feb. 17, 1968, p. 2; Oct. 30, 1970, p. 2. Sahlberg (2009a) makes the same observation on p. 88.

³⁴³ “Ty hur stora våra sympatier är för Vietnams lidande folk och vår avsky för den amerikanska krigföringen i form av napalmbombning och annat, så får detta inte innebära, att vi utan förbehåll accepterar allt vad motsidan för i skölden.” *Dagen* March 12, 1968, p. 2.

This approach was disliked by Pethrus, as he wrote in a letter to the paper's editor-in-chief Olof Djurfeldt a few days later:

Dagen's news coverage is biased and to the benefit of communism and its henchmen [...] When reviewing how the paper is edited in the news reporting and the foreign policy op-eds, one absolutely reaches the conclusion that we consciously run the errands of communism.³⁴⁴

By the time of this letter, Pethrus and Djurfeldt had already been debating how *Dagen* should characterize the Vietnam war in an active correspondence which Carl-Erik Sahlberg has documented in his dissertation. The intense debate started after Pethrus had been interviewed in one of Sweden's most significant weekly periodicals *Året runt*, in which he said that the Vietnam war was a fight against the "ungodly" culture of the Chinese and that he believed in "American victory so that our culture survives; America's status is crucial for Christianity."³⁴⁵

Djurfeldt wrote to Pethrus the next day: "I do think that we should keep a certain distance from the USA. That is far from the same as us being communists, even though some are accusing us of this."³⁴⁶ Pethrus was harsh in his response, claiming that he has refrained from arguing

³⁴⁴ "*Dagens* nyhetsförmedling är partisk och till kommunismens och deras hantlangares förmån... Då man bedömer det sätt på vilket tidningen redigeras nyhetsmässigt och i utrikesledarna får man absolut den uppfattningen att vi medvetet går kommunismens ärenden." Letter from Lewi Pethrus to Olof Djurfeldt, March 16, 1968. Quoted in Sahlberg, 2009a, p. 89.

³⁴⁵ "Jag tror på amerikansk seger så att vår kultur överlever, Amerikas ställning är avgörande för kristendomen." Quoted in Sahlberg, 2009a, p. 88.p

³⁴⁶ "Jag tycker nog, att vi bör behålla en viss distans mot USA. Det är ju långt ifrån detsamma som att vi blir kommunister, även om en del anklagar oss för det." Letter from Olof Djurfeldt to Lewi Pethrus January 2nd, 1968. Quoted in Sahlberg 2009a, p. 89.

how the Vietnam war should be conducted and that he laments that he has chosen to take a side in the conflict, only to end with: “By falling into communist propaganda, the Pentecostal revival is making the same mistake as the Pentecostal revival in Germany did during Hitler. They fell for it, and when the wind turned, they were out of the game.”³⁴⁷

Sahlberg remarks that Arne Eklund threatened to leave the paper due to the conflict with Pethrus but eventually chose to stay.³⁴⁸ This created a situation of *Dagen* essentially having two different views on the Vietnam conflict, both being expressed on the editorial pages.³⁴⁹ Lewi Pethrus was free to defend the US invasion in his signed editorials, which he increasingly did towards the end of the period. While he included American warfare in Vietnam as an example of national violence together with liberal gun laws and the southern states’ racial discrimination in June 1968, he argued that there is nothing “unrighteous” in calling for the help of a democratic ally to fight the “rebels and invaders” who wanted to steal one’s land and home” in October 1970.³⁵⁰

³⁴⁷ ”Pingstväckelsen gör genom att falla in i kommunist-propagandan samma misstag som pingstväckelsen i Tyskland gjorde under Hitler. De föll undan och när vinden vände var den rörelsen ur spelet.” Letter from Lewi Pethrus to Olof Djurfeldt, February 20, 1968.

³⁴⁸ Sahlberg 2009a, p. 90.

³⁴⁹ Sahlberg points out that this division went on beyond the scope of this study, with Lewi Pethrus falsely claiming in 1973 that *Dagen*’s editors were united in appreciating Nixon’s Christmas bombings of civilians in Hanoi to force the Viet Cong into negotiations. Pethrus dubbed Nixon “the man who according to us has done the most for world peace in this century”—only to be contradicted in an anonymous editorial two days later which clarified that the editorial board has not reached a consensus regarding the Vietnam War. Sahlberg 2009a, p. 157–158. Sahlberg also notes that a year later, Pethrus would tell the secular paper *Dagens Nyheter*: “I think it was courageous of Nixon to bomb Hanoi in the midst of Christmas season. I barely think I would have dared to do that.”

³⁵⁰ *Dagen* June 7, 1968, p. 2; Oct. 30, 1970, p. 2.

Pethrus also criticized several protests against the US involvement in Vietnam, condemning the way they were conducted with flag burnings and insults and the ideological motivations of many of the protesters: socialism and communism.³⁵¹

Meanwhile, anonymous editorials on the war were far more numerous and much more critical towards the American operation, calling it at times “the horrible warfare with napalm”³⁵² and a “moral failure.”³⁵³ In 1969, the paper published an image of poor Vietnamese children collecting scraps from abandoned US military camps under the headline “Nixon and the War,” stating that “These were the things Nixon did not get to see during his five-hour-long visit to South Vietnam,” (see appendix F).³⁵⁴

In 1970, the United States was accused of engaging in “direct mass murders” of civilians, with the editorial claiming that the lead word for American troops was “kill, kill, kill.”³⁵⁵ During the whole period, several editorials labeled the war as meaningless and counterproductive, arguing that it just strengthened communism and that violence only breeds more violence.³⁵⁶ One editorial argued that forceful economic interests want the military to keep the machinery rolling. Another complained that American Christians seem to pay more attention to Richard Nixon’s fight against pornography than his failures in ending the war.³⁵⁷

³⁵¹ *Dagen* Jan. 8, 1969, p. 2.

³⁵² *Dagen* April 2, 1968, p. 2.

³⁵³ *Dagen* May 5, 1970, p. 2.

³⁵⁴ “Det här var sådant Nixon inte fick se under sitt fem timmar långa besök i Sydvietnam”. *Dagen* Aug. 7, 1969, p. 3.

³⁵⁵ *Dagen* Oct. 27, 1970, p. 2.

³⁵⁶ *Dagen* July 13, 1967, p. 2; July 27, 1967, p. 2; Jan. 21, 1969 p. 2; Jan 29 1971, p. 2; Feb. 4, 1971, p. 2.

³⁵⁷ *Dagen* Aug. 27, 1969, p. 2; Nov. 3, 1970, p. 2.

Still, the anonymous editorials were careful to point out that the Communist forces needed to be criticized as well, mainly as they engaged in terrorism and massacres of civilians.³⁵⁸ Leftist debaters were criticized for not condemning communist violence and the militarism of the Soviet Union.³⁵⁹ At several points, the paper tried to establish the expression “americofobi” (americophobia) to describe groundless and hypocritical criticism of the United States.³⁶⁰ Even as *Dagen* welcomed the Swedish recognition of North Vietnam in January 1969, arguing that it was helpful to strengthen the peace process, the anonymous editorial pointed out that willingness to recognize the government of North Vietnam does not mean that one accepts Hanoi’s political system.³⁶¹

In sum, the anonymous editorials of *Dagen* were consistently critical towards the warfare of all parties involved in the war. At the same time, Pethrus defended American warfare for its efforts to stop communism. Neither camp referred to Bible passages. While empathy with either the victims of war or communism could be viewed as implicit in both argumentations, it was rarely explicit. It is also clear that no editor argued that the conflict had anything to do with eschatology.

Additionally, two op-eds could be found in the material about the Vietnam War. Birger Ekstedt, appointed as the party leader of Kristen demokratisk samling at its founding in 1964, wrote an op-ed for *Dagen* in 1968 calling for peace in Vietnam. He celebrated President Johnson’s decision to cease with the bombings and lamented that the Republicans were interested in nominating Richard Nixon as a presidential candidate despite him wanting to continue the war.³⁶²

³⁵⁸ *Dagen* July 22, 1967, p. 2; May 24, 1968, p. 2.

³⁵⁹ *Dagen* Apr. 22, 1970, p. 2; Oct. 27, 1970, p. 2; Nov. 4, 1970, p. 2.

³⁶⁰ *Dagen* May 27, 1970, p. 2; Oct. 27, 1970, p. 2.

³⁶¹ *Dagen* Jan. 11, 1969, p. 2.

³⁶² *Dagen*, April 5, 1968, p. 2.

Eric Wärenstam wrote an op-ed the same year titled “China’s role in the Vietnam War.” He warned against Chinese communism and its positive view on war. Wärenstam argued that developing countries like Vietnam should not be the battlegrounds for superpowers and that Vietnam needs peace and a “long time of recovery,” urging China to choose peaceful co-existence.³⁶³

Writers

Surprisingly little was written about the Vietnam War outside of the editorial pages and news section. Only three letters to the editors could be found within the material. Bertil Carlsson urged the free churches to condemn the Vietnam War by joining the Swedish Vietnam Committee, an association founded by the Christian socialists of Broderskapsrörelsen (The Brotherhood Movement).³⁶⁴

Harry Lundmark wrote that while he does not defend warfare, his conviction was that Nixon’s duty is to stop the spread of communism in his own country and the rest of the world. He also argued that it was the communists that started the war in Vietnam.³⁶⁵ In the same issue, a letter by R. Weimerbo stated that Nixon’s pandering to the Christian electorate means little when he has caused inhuman suffering in Vietnam and has done little against racism in the US.³⁶⁶

Like in *Evangelii Häreld*, the Vietnam War was not perceived as a conflict with eschatological significance, which is likely a key reason why it was not discussed as much as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict outside of the political analyses of the editorial pages. Pethrus’ efforts to portray the American operation as a necessary evil to stop

³⁶³ *Dagen* May 2, 1968, p. 2.

³⁶⁴ *Dagen* March 27, 1971, p. 24.

³⁶⁵ *Dagen* Feb 15, 1971, p. 12.

³⁶⁶ *Dagen* Feb 15, 1971, p. 12.

communism from ruining the lives of millions seem to have had little effect—the one reader that could be found arguing something similar still thought the war was wrong even though its intentions were understandable.

News Articles

Like most other newspapers at the time, *Dagen* closely followed the development of the war and the diplomatic peace process, with hundreds of news articles published during the period—many featured on the front page. Unlike the coverage of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, very few of these articles were written by *Dagen* reporters themselves. Instead, they were bought from news agencies, primarily TT and Reuters. One noteworthy front-page story which *Dagen* authored themselves was about Christian “martyrs” in Vietnam, who endured torture and death from Communists after “the meeting with Christ and his Word gave them a new alternative that made violence an impossibility for them.”³⁶⁷

While the formulation makes it sound like the anonymous writer imagines violence, in general, being an impossibility for them after they became Christians, it could be the case that it was violence in this particular context against South Vietnam and the USA that was deemed impossible.

4.3 Summary

There was a stark contrast between the periodicals in that EH hardly ever wrote about the Vietnam War, whereas *Dagen* not only featured

³⁶⁷ “[...] mötet med Kristus och hans Ord ställde dem inför ett nytt alternativ som gjorde våldet till en omöjlighet för dem.” *Dagen* June 20 1968, p. 1.

hundreds of news articles about it but frequently covered it in editorials. This was likely due to the conflict not being viewed as an eschatological event, without much relevance to a periodical focusing on spiritual guidance. It also shows that even though the pacifism promoted within these pages was often expressed in general terms as all wars being incompatible with Christianity, war being horrible, etc., it was mainly concerned with conscientious objection in Sweden and rarely resulted in specific criticism of the American war effort.

When *Dagen*'s anonymous editorials did engage in such criticism, it was not primarily on pacifist grounds but based on the particular types of violence conducted by the American military being viewed as inhumane, as well as deeming the war effort counterproductive and ineffective. Similarly, Communist forces were mainly criticized for massacres and attacks on civilians rather than the fundamental act of waging wars.

Lewi Pethrus stood out as the only regular writer defending the American war effort, suggesting that this was not a popular opinion within his movement. His motivation was not based on eschatology or biblical texts but on fear of the growth of communism and the suffering it would bring along with hardships for the Christian worldview. This was, in part, an appeal to cognitive empathy and the promotion of a vision of the future with less hardships that stood in contrast with Pethrus' usual eschatology that he applied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict during the same period. After Pethrus had criticized *Dagen*'s editors for not being anti-communist enough in early 1968, criticism of Communist warfare increased.

5. Other Relevant Passages

5.1 Other Wars

Evangelii Härold

Evangelii Härold wrote much more about the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo than they did about Vietnam, likely due to the Pentecostal missionary presence in the country. Missionary Per-Olof Jacobsson wrote in December of 1967 about his dramatic escape from Bukavu, Congo, during an uprising against Moïse Tshombe's government.³⁶⁸ Jacobsson described how peace returned when Tshombe's forces crushed the rebellion. Still, Bukavu suddenly became a dangerous place for whites to be in, as Tshombe's soldiers targeted them and their property to avenge the victims of colonialism. Thanks to a military chaplain with the rank of major, Jacobsson and other Swedish missionaries could flee to Sweden. Jacobsson also wrote about how Congolese soldiers had plundered churches and homes in Bukavu.³⁶⁹

Willis Säwe wrote in 1970 on the tenth anniversary of the independence of Belgian Congo that the dream of a free, prosperous nation was “quenched in blood,” with a war that affected Pentecostal

³⁶⁸ EH 1967, no. 51–52, p. 7, 27.

³⁶⁹ EH 1968, no. 5, p. 10.

mission negatively. Säwe appreciated that President Mobutu had ended the war while also expressing concern towards his autocratic rule.³⁷⁰

A few weeks later, an extensive and emotionally charged article by missionary Petrus Hammarberg described how he and his wife got involved in the Congo crisis in 1961.³⁷¹ The war was described as disastrous, claiming many lives, disrupting missions, and damaging people's health. Hammarberg described how he asked the military leader of the Kivu province to escort the Swedish and Norwegian missionaries in Lamera, of which there were 18, to Bukavu where they could evacuate the country. The unnamed military officer ordered two soldiers to escort them, and Hammarberg described how he urged them to bring "a good deal of ammunition" and two automatic rifles.³⁷²

EH articles tended to use very emotional language when describing wars that did not involve Israel. Missionary Astrid E. Nilsson wrote about Hungarian refugees in France who had fled the Soviet occupation during the end of World War Two. The article described the fear and despair experienced by the refugees as they fled and the loss they felt for relatives lost to war.³⁷³ An anonymous article claimed that God protected missionaries in East Pakistan from the horrible "bloodstained war" that killed thousands so that they could provide help and comfort to the victims.³⁷⁴

The contrast with how these wars were described is stark compared with what EH wrote about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Eschatological language was replaced with emotional, with more of a grassroots perspective on how the wars affect ordinary people, rather

³⁷⁰ EH 1970, no. 16, p. 2.

³⁷¹ EH 1970, no. 24–25, p. 4, 22–24.

³⁷² EH 1970, no. 24–25, p. 24.

³⁷³ EH 1968 no.1 p. 16–17, 24.

³⁷⁴ EH 1971 no. 25, p. 4.

than the grand geopolitical scale that characterized portrayals of the Six-Day War and future apocalyptic wars.

Dagen

Dagen published several anonymous editorials in 1967 describing the horrors of the Congo conflict and how disruptive it was to missionary work.³⁷⁵ In 1970, Missionary Halvard Nilsson reported that the war in Congo had brought tremendous suffering, with many dead, and much church property being stolen.³⁷⁶ Another conflict the paper frequently highlighted was the Biafran War in Nigeria, particularly in anonymous editorials.³⁷⁷

One anonymous editorial labeled it “The Forgotten War” and lamented that the media hardly covered it.³⁷⁸ The editorial called for solidarity with the people of Biafra, pointing out that most of its inhabitants were Christians that had suffered massacres by Nigerian troops. The article was not an explicit defense of Biafran warfare but rather a call for aid and prayers for Biafran civilians. Another anonymous editorial claimed that the value of human life meant little to either of the warring parties.³⁷⁹

Dagen’s anonymous editorials also covered the war in Sudan, the activities of the military junta in Brazil, and the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia.³⁸⁰ A few articles were also published on the military

³⁷⁵ *Dagen* July 8, 1967, p. 2; Aug 19, 1967, p. 2; Aug. 22, 1967, p. 2; Aug. 29, 1967 p. 2.

³⁷⁶ *Dagen* Oct. 16, 1970, p. 8.

³⁷⁷ E.g., *Dagen* Aug. 3, 1967, p. 2, Oct. 18, 1967, p. 2, 26 Oct 1968 p. 2, July 3, 1969 p. 2.

³⁷⁸ *Dagen*, April 17, 1968, p. 2. A similar idea was brought up in another editorial on May 28, 1970, p. 2.

³⁷⁹ *Dagen* Nov. 17, 1968, p. 2.

³⁸⁰ *Dagen* July 6, 1967, p. 2; Sept. 3, 1969 p. 2; Aug. 30, 1969, p. 2.

aggressiveness of China.³⁸¹ The paper consistently argued for de-escalation, peace negotiations, and disarmament in all these contexts, and none were portrayed as eschatologically significant.

5.2 The Risk of Nuclear War

Evangelii Härold

Evangelii Härold occasionally covered the risk of nuclear war. Sven Ahdrian, the physician who we saw taking a stance for enemy love in chapter 2, called the invention of atomic bombs the creation of hell and contrasted those bombs with the work of Christ on the cross, which gives life instead of taking it.³⁸² “The atom bomb is violence to prevent violence. Calvary is God’s merciful hand, given to the world of violence.”³⁸³ *Dagen’s* foreign policy editor Anders Eklund translated some chapters from a book by nuclear physicist Bernhard Philberth on how the world might be on the brink of a nuclear disaster that will kill billions and had it published in EH.³⁸⁴

The article was featured on the center spread with a large image of a nuclear missile being fired from a submarine (see Appendix G). Eklund argued that this fits right into the prophecies from Revelation that Alvar Blomgren and others had pointed to as evidence that the twentieth century truly is the end times. Still, Eklund warned against Christians locking themselves into bunkers but argued that the book of Revelation warns that we can stop if we intervene and work for nuclear

³⁸¹ *Dagen* Oct.10, 1968 p. 2; Aug. 21, 1969, p. 3; Aug. 24, 1971, p. 2.

³⁸² EH 1968 no. 6 p. 6, 28.

³⁸³ “Atombomben är våld för att förhindra våld. Golgata är Guds barmhärtiga hand, utsträckt i våldets värld.” EH 1968 no. 6 p. 28.

³⁸⁴ EH 1971, no. 18 p. 16–17, 20–22.

disarmament. This was in sharp contrast to the fatalism expressed by most eschatological writers during the period. It is an example of an anti-war sentiment being motivated by eschatological speculation.

Dagen

Dagen's anonymous editorials regularly brought up the dangers of a potential nuclear holocaust,³⁸⁵ claiming that “the suicide of humanity” was near.³⁸⁶ One editorial stated that the paper was against nuclear weapons as they were threatening humanity’s survival and a massive waste of resources in a world where millions were suffering from extreme poverty.³⁸⁷ News articles on warnings from experts and campaigns for disarmament were often published. However, one piece by conservative author and journalist Christopher Jolin contrasts all this. He argued that NATO needed to strengthen its military presence in Western Europe to stand up against the influence of the Soviet Union and that the US should provide fighter jets with nuclear weapons to Europe to stabilize the power balance.³⁸⁸ Jolin’s article was published next to the editorial page and is the only time within the material where there is a call for rearmament and an increased nuclear arsenal.

5.3 Apocalyptic Events Not Involving Israel

Evangelii Härold

While Israel and its armies played a central role in the eschatological thought of EH writers, they also imagined other wars taking place in

³⁸⁵ *Dagen* Jan. 2, 1969, p. 3; Dec. 4, 1970, p. 2; March 3, 1971, p. 2.

³⁸⁶ *Dagen* Mar. 22, 1969, p. 2.

³⁸⁷ *Dagen* Oct. 23, 1970, p. 2.

³⁸⁸ *Dagen* Aug. 7, 1969, p. 3.

the last days that the Antichrist initiated. Börje Holm argued that the Antichrist would manage to conquer the entire world with his armies and control the global economic system, referring to Revelation 13:17.³⁸⁹

Missionary Jean Malm wrote an article about the Antichrist and stated that he would bring about the cruelest dictatorship in the world with unthinkable military authority, resulting in a “flood of blood.”³⁹⁰ Alvar Blomgren wrote in his series on Revelation that Revelation 6:7–8 refers to biological warfare, which will be able to kill large portions of humanity in the end times.³⁹¹ The Millennial Kingdom of peace will be preceded by horrible nuclear, chemical and biological war.³⁹²

A translated article by American evangelist Billy Graham argued that the signs of the end times are very present in the modern age.³⁹³ Interestingly, according to Graham, both wars and peace conferences are signs of the end being near. The constant talking about peace in the midst of worldwide conflict was, according to him, a sign that Jesus would return soon. Graham mentioned other signs of the end times like famine, the rise of the Antichrist, and worldwide evangelism, and concluded by presenting a list of things that Christians need to do knowing all this: wait for Christ, pray, work, and be prepared to be raptured suddenly.³⁹⁴ Graham did not specify whether the “work” he mentioned included working against war and famine.

³⁸⁹ EH 1969, no. 7, p. 18–19, 30–31.

³⁹⁰ EH 1969 no. 15, p. 12–13.

³⁹¹ EH 1971, no. 7, p. 6–7.

³⁹² EH 1971 no. 20, p. 7.

³⁹³ EH 1970 no. 33 p. 5, 25.

³⁹⁴ EH 1970 no. 33 p. 25.

Dagen

Lewi Pethrus wrote an editorial titled “Jesus and Politics,” arguing that Jesus was not engaged in politics during his lifetime due to Israel being occupied by the Romans. “The time had not come when he with power would break the reign of the worldly kingdoms.”³⁹⁵ Those who do not think that Jesus deals with politics “obviously” do not believe in the future of the Kingdom of God, Pethrus continued, as the book of Revelation describes with “mighty accounts of war” that his kingdom will interfere with global politics. Jesus was thus portrayed as a literal future warrior.

A similar sentiment can be seen in a culture article by Professor Gillis Gerleman, who wrote about the meaning of the Hebrew word *shalom*. He argued that it does not solely mean peace but can also be translated as revenge. The Prince of Peace in Isaiah 9:6 was also a Prince of Vengeance.³⁹⁶

Willis Säwe was quoted in *Dagen* saying that the global growth of Pentecostalism and the deadly cyclone that struck Pakistan were “signs of the times.” He pointed out that one needs to use big numbers to describe both events: “We handle millions, similar to astronomers.”³⁹⁷

An article by Folke Thorell was published in *Dagen* in September of 1971, in which he criticized the Jehovah’s Witnesses on several theological and ethical grounds. He claimed that they refuse to bear arms not primarily due to ethical norms but due to a conviction that the state is an evil organization. He argued that according to a 1940 issue of the *Watch Tower*, Jehovah’s Witnesses think that violence is

³⁹⁵ “Tiden var inte kommen då han med makt skulle bryta världsrikenas välde.” *Dagen* May 5, 1970, p. 2.

³⁹⁶ *Dagen* Sep. 14, 1971, p. 4.

³⁹⁷ *Dagen* Nov. 25, 1970, p. 4. The cyclone killed at least 300,000 people, see Biswas & Daly 2021, p. 1383.

justified when it is done in self-defense in the last days. He claimed that they “revel in blood-dripping depictions” of what will happen at Armageddon, where Christians will be chopped to pieces.³⁹⁸ Neither Thorell nor anyone else reflected on the fact that he had expressed similar things concerning Jews in his depictions of the end times.

5.4 Soldier Homes

Pentecostal “soldier homes,” which provided coffee, rest, and Christian literature to conscripts, were highlighted in both periodicals. Some issues of EH included a flyer encouraging the churches to support the “soldier mission” at the soldier home Oscar-Fredriksborg, as this provided the soldiers with “spiritual and bodily recreation.”³⁹⁹ Several articles were published, describing it as a blessed ministry with 20,000 visits per year.⁴⁰⁰

Dagen also repeatedly covered the ministry at the soldier homes.⁴⁰¹ A full-page article called them “more important than ever” and stressed the opportunities it gave to share the Gospel to soldiers.⁴⁰² While the reports lacked any sort of criticism or even reflection on armed service, it seems like the positivity surrounding their activities was mainly due to the evangelistic opportunities it brought. As many Pentecostals refused to bear arms and Pentecostal pastors rarely were field chaplains, the soldier homes provided Pentecostals with an unusual chance to share their message to conscripts.

³⁹⁸ *Dagen* Sep. 4, 1971, p. 4.

³⁹⁹ E.g., included with EH 1967, no. 15.

⁴⁰⁰ EH 1969, no. 13, p. 18–19; EH 1970 no. 11, p. 12.

⁴⁰¹ *Dagen* Oct. 16, 1970, p. 8; Nov. 17, 1970, p. 13.

⁴⁰² *Dagen* Oct. 21, 1970, p. 6–7.

5.5 Summary

Both periodicals were highly critical of military violence in contexts outside Israel-Palestine and Vietnam, particularly in countries where Swedish Pentecostal missionaries were present. Even though Petrus Hammarberg's description of how soldiers escorted him and other missionaries from the war-struck Belgian Congo portrayed the latter positively, most other accounts of wars leaned towards a pacifist stance. Both periodicals also warned against the risk of nuclear war, with *Dagen* editorials calling for nuclear disarmament. However, nuclear war also played an essential role in eschatological texts. The Antichrist or God would use atom bombs or similar means to kill billions after all Christians had been raptured away from the earth.

While several writers viewed this apocalyptic future as inevitable, Anders Eklund suggested that the book of Revelation depicts what *could* happen if nuclear weapons were not abolished and called for nuclear disarmament. Both periodicals also wrote positively about Pentecostal soldier homes, providing recreation and the Christian message to conscripts, without criticizing these soldiers for making the wrong decision.

6. Concluding Analysis

As we bring this study to its conclusion, I will try to summarize relevant analyses from the main chapters and provide additional analysis, keeping in mind the research questions formulated in chapter 1.2.

While far from the most popular or frequent subjects in EH or *Dagen*, many writers highlighted pacifism, disarmament, and conscientious objection as praiseworthy and respectable ideals. In fact, whenever conscientious objection was mentioned, it was almost always portrayed in a positive light. Several writers described it as a self-evidently biblical command, while others stressed it as an acceptable and understandable stance based on individual conscience. The occasional writer would point out that pacifism was incompatible with Israel defending itself militarily, and the one pacifist idea that received the most criticism in the material was the vision of a nonviolent, civil defense system. Even so, this idea was promoted more than it was argued against.

However, pacifist ideas were rarely promoted by the editors of the periodicals but by other writers. Lewi Pethrus occasionally argued against it, and while others like Anders Eklund promoted it, they did so sparingly. When Pethrus, Säwe, Eklund, and other editors listed Christian values and ethical stances that contrast with society at large, pacifism was never mentioned, that only occurred with an op-ed by J. A. Landberg.

What changes were there over time? No discernible trend regarding pacifism can be found apart from EH hardly bringing it up after Bengt Eric Jernberg's pacifist writings in 1968. *Dagen* naturally wrote more about conscientious objection when highlighted in the news, and Göran Janzon's personal interest in the subject helped promote it primarily through book reviews in 1969 and 1970. However, based on this material, it is not possible to say whether Pentecostal support for pacifism increased or decreased during this period. Similarly, support for warfare abroad was consistent during the period. Warfare was hardly ever condemned when organized by Israel, mostly condemned when organized by the USA in Vietnam and always condemned in other contexts.

However, criticism of the occupational policies of the state of Israel became less frequent over time, and *Dagen*'s anonymous editorials made sure to criticize the Communist forces involved in Vietnam more often after Lewi Pethrus had accused the paper of promoting communism. Eschatological texts on the role of Israel seem to have dealt more with warfare when the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was reignited, even though the topic did not fade away completely.

Wars involving Israel were commonly seen as serving an eschatological purpose and being necessary to preserve the existence of the Jewish state and secure the second coming of Christ. Some writers portrayed the situation differently, particularly Arvid Svärd (who incidentally did not belong to a Pentecostal church). But the vast majority of writers who commented on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict welcomed and defended military violence in that specific context. This is not all that surprising, given what we already knew about Pentecostal Zionism.

What is perplexing is the extent of eschatological violence attributed to God in the end times by many of these authors, violence that would kill billions of people—including most Jews. The same periodicals that

promoted and defended pacifism, conscientious objection, and the nonviolent ideals of Martin Luther King Jr. also envisioned God allowing or even organizing apocalyptic genocides. These genocides were often portrayed as unstoppable, and their temporal proximity was used to encourage readers to remain faithful to Jesus and excitedly welcome his return.

As expected, the pacifism of Swedish Pentecostals during this period fits very well with Lisa Cahill's concept of obediential pacifism, with biblical texts frequently cited as support. These were almost exclusively ethical commands from the New Testament, particularly the Sermon on the Mount, but occasionally "You shall not kill" from Exodus was also quoted. This stands in stark contrast to the Bible passages that other writers used to defend the legitimacy of Israeli warfare, as those passages were mainly from the Old Testament and were not prescriptive commands but descriptive prophecies.

The few New Testament passages used—verses from Matthew 24, Romans 11, and most significantly the Book of Revelation—were also understood as predictions about the future. Thus, military violence was not defended or promoted based on biblical imperatives; rather, it was understood as an implicit consequence of God predicting violent acts as means to fulfill his eschatological plan or even participating in warfare himself. Instead, the only example of a predictive prophecy being used to promote de-escalation was how Arvid Svärd and a reader argued that Isaiah 19 and Ezekiel 47 teach that Israel should cease waging war against Arabs.

While Svärd presented a pacifist alternative to how Christians should perceive the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he and most other pacifists did not directly argue against the violence-affirming eschatology that was the dominant perspective. In fact, within the material, Ivar Lundgren was essentially the only one openly objecting to how Israeli-Palestinian violence was glorified in Pentecostal

eschatological rhetoric. For the most part, prolific pacifist writers like Bengt Jerne and Göran Janzon did not criticize Zionist promotion of warfare, and prolific Zionist writers like Folke Thorell and D. O. Belfrage did not criticize pacifism. Nor were these views contrasted or described as incompatible in any editorials or letters to the editor. This suggests that many Pentecostals viewed these stances as compatible with one another.

The editors, in particular, almost certainly held this belief. As Pentecostal pacifism seems to have been obediential and based on significantly different biblical texts than the eschatological promotion of warfare, it is plausible to suggest that both stances were perceived as simply following the Bible. A Christian should not kill other people, and a Christian should support the state of Israel, including its warfare. Åke Stenström's argumentation in an EH editorial that the Sermon on the Mount is not meant for non-Christians to follow can easily be applied to this framework.

However, there is no argumentation of that sort elsewhere within the material. Eschatological warfare could also have been viewed as a state of emergency, a cataclysmic event for which ordinary ethics do not apply. Thorell's comments on war being against the will of God and yet fulfilling an essential purpose in the end times, along with the common sentiment that Israel is not like other nations and should not be criticized when doing things following biblical prophecy, suggest that Israel was perceived as playing by a different rulebook. This makes sense of the fact that when similar acts of war occurred in the Middle East as well as in other contexts (such as military invasion), they were defended when Israel performed them but condemned when Congo, the United States, or other actors performed them.

Thus, the material supports the theory that wars involving Israel were seen as holy wars, serving a unique role in God's eschatological plan. As this plan is of cosmic importance, it was commonly viewed as

superseding whatever ethical framework generally applied to wars. Wars involving Israel were often portrayed as a fight between good and evil, something no other conflicts were framed as. Similar to crusaders believing God to give them strength in their battles, many Pentecostals imagined God helping the Israeli Defense Forces in the Six-Day War, something he would continue to do in the future, escalating in Jesus personally coming from heaven followed by a mighty angelic army that would literally kill human beings. The apocalyptic violence attributed to God could be quite brutal, with both volcanic eruptions and nuclear explosions that melt people's eyes mentioned in the material.

Apocalyptic wars were imagined to be centered around Israel. Even though they would involve other battlefields, no other conflicts than those involving Israel were framed as leading up to apocalyptic, holy wars. The Vietnam War was never portrayed as a conflict with eschatological relevance, despite the involvement of the Soviet Union, which was commonly identified as the biblically foreseen geopolitical actor Gog, along with China which was sometimes identified as Magog.

When Pethrus defended the American invasion, he did not use biblical or eschatological argumentation. Instead, he stressed the importance of stopping the spread of communism and securing democracy in South-East Asia. Pethrus wanted to avoid a global communist revolution, which is interesting since such a potential scenario could easily be seen as yet another reason to suspect the advent of the Third World War from a dispensationalist perspective. Pethrus referred to cognitive empathy when describing how communism was godless and would bring more suffering into the world.

Pethrus did use eschatological logic when describing the Six-Day War. Still, it is clear that this conflict did not interest him as much as the Vietnam War, which could be explained by his having an unusual opinion on Vietnam within Pentecostalism. In contrast, most Pentecostals had a similar view on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Pethrus seems unsuccessful in convincing his readers that the Vietnam War was legitimate, at least during this period. As long as Pentecostals did not view a war as holy and eschatologically significant, they tended to be against it. Pethrus was quite alone arguing for the legitimacy of a war that was not a holy war. Lisa Cahill's theory of imminent eschatology providing fruitful ground for both obediential pacifism and conceptions of holy war seems to fit well in the context of Swedish Pentecostal periodicals.

While the material supports Cahill's theories, it is hard to substantiate the theoretical claim by Sean Durbin and Joseph Williams that Israel is used by Christian Zionists as a projection of their self-understanding. Both Israel and Pentecostalism are described as misunderstood, weak underdogs in a hostile world. And occasionally, they would be compared or portrayed in a parallel framework, such as when both were described as signs of the times. But a more commonly expressed motif is the *uniqueness* of the Jewish people, both in terms of their historical connection to the land and their role in the end times.

Specifically, several authors portrayed Jewish suffering and death as God's chosen method to bring about his plans. This was how the theories of an upcoming Jewish genocide were often framed. Rather than being a projection of Pentecostal self-understanding, it might have been a remnant of the type of Christian Zionism popular in the 1930s, which tended to be more antisemitic than philosemitic. It could also be some kind of coping mechanism to deal with the trauma of discovering the Holocaust. Ascribing divine meaning to such incomprehensible suffering could be a way to deal with regret for not taking action. The same could be true for the fatalism that writers like Thorell and Belfrage expressed when describing upcoming wars and genocides: horrors are easier to deal with if they are perceived as inescapable.

Not much empathy was expressed towards Jews as they were commonly characterized as suffering servants in the hands of God. This

was even more true for Palestinian and other Arabs, but while they were portrayed as violent, brutal, and inhuman, Jews and Israelis were rather conceived as game pieces or characters in a cosmic theatre. They played a very symbolic part in these texts—and it is difficult to have empathy with a symbol.

Empathy was sometimes used to motivate pacifist ideas but did not play as big a role as obedience to biblical commands did. Emotive language was quite rare when describing wars. It mainly showed up when describing conflicts that affected Pentecostal missionaries, such as in the Congo. The empathy directed at Vietnamese civilians and other victims of war (including, in rare instances, Palestinians), primarily expressed in *Dagen* editorials, was more of the cognitive sort and used to motivate donations to aid relief. Readers were occasionally encouraged to remember that Arabs were fellow human beings so that empathy could be awakened due to intellectual activity, regardless of emotive state.

While this likely was impacted by the genre of editorials not lending itself to emotive rhetoric, my impression is that these periodicals found it easier to communicate emotive empathy towards Swedish Pentecostals. Missionaries were neither pawns in a cosmic game, nor were they nameless, suffering people toward whom one would primarily be abstractly compassionate towards—these were people whom some readers, and possibly editors, personally knew. It seems as if pacifist ideas were closer at hand on a personal level, when one imagined oneself or fellow Pentecostals on the battlefield. In contrast, support for war was discussed within a societal, if not cosmic, framework. This could explain why the personal choice of conscientious objection was seen as compatible with supporting Israeli warfare.

What, then, is my conclusion? Pentecostals who chose to be conscientious objectors between 1967 and 1971 were surely able to find inspiration and motivation to such a stance in *Evangelii Härold* and

Dagen as several articles described it as honorable and a clear New Testament principle. Those who chose to bear arms found hardly any inspiration to do so in these periodicals. However, both EH and *Dagen* supported military action by the state of Israel extensively. Many articles claimed that wars involving Israel were foretold in the Bible and blessed by God. Both pacifism and support for Israeli warfare were motivated by biblical obedience, and neither stance was primarily rooted in empathy. Israel's wars were seen as holy wars leading up to enormous worldwide conflicts that would lead to the birth of Christ's Millennial Kingdom.

In contrast, other contemporary wars in Vietnam or Congo were typically seen as horrors that should be stopped. The reasons for viewing Israel and its Jewish population as objects of a distinct, eschatological war ethics were varied and complex. Some possible explanations could be the extensive applications of Old Testament prophecies to twentieth-century political events, attempts at dealing with the lack of Swedish action against the Holocaust, as well as the inheritance of antisemitic premillennialism from early-twentieth-century Europe with its emphasis on Jewish suffering and death as part of God's plan.

Much more research is needed to fully understand the processes behind the coexistence of a Pentecostal ethic of pacifism and Pentecostal visions of apocalyptic wars and genocide. It would be very fruitful for future research to explore the development of these ideas over a longer time frame and look at other Pentecostal and charismatic church traditions. In a Swedish context, the pacifism and subsequent Christian Zionism of the Örebro Mission and Free Baptists, in particular, would be very interesting to study. Still, much ground can be covered regarding most denominations' relationship to pacifism.

More attention should be given to how antisemitic forms of Christian Zionism influenced the philosemitic Christian Zionism dominant within Pentecostalism. This study has suggested that the barrier between the

two was not necessarily very thick. It has also shown that Lisa Cahill's theory on obediential pacifism is applicable in a Pentecostal context. Its contrast with empathetic pacifism can hopefully serve as a helpful theoretical framework for more studies. It could possibly be combined with feminist analysis to explore to what degree male-dominant eschatology relates to conceptions of masculinity as non-empathic. On a broader level, the role of empathy within Pentecostal eschatology could likely produce fruitful results in understanding the dynamic developments of this fascinating movement.

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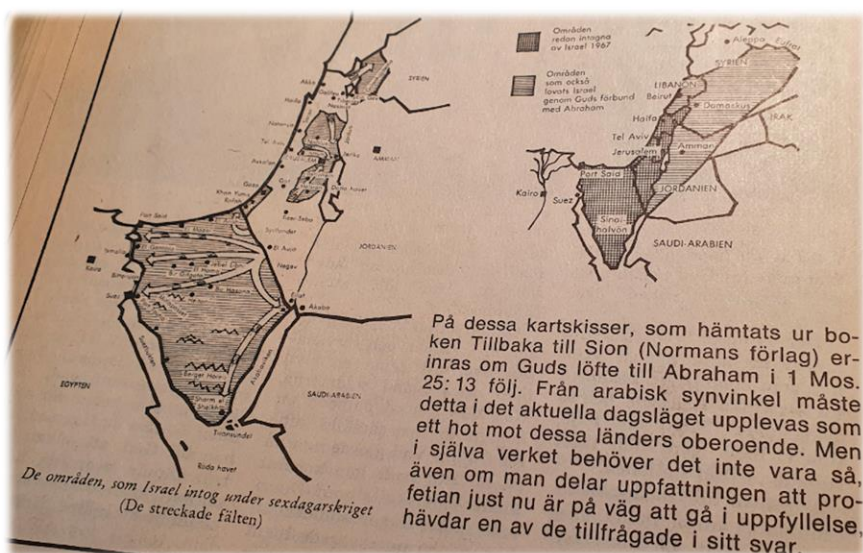
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Appendices

A. Maps of the Six-Day War and the future Greater Israel. EH 1971, no. 20, p. 14.



B. War Illustration to an Eschatological Article. *Dagen* Apr. 11, 1970,
p. 11.

Älska Jesu tillkommelse

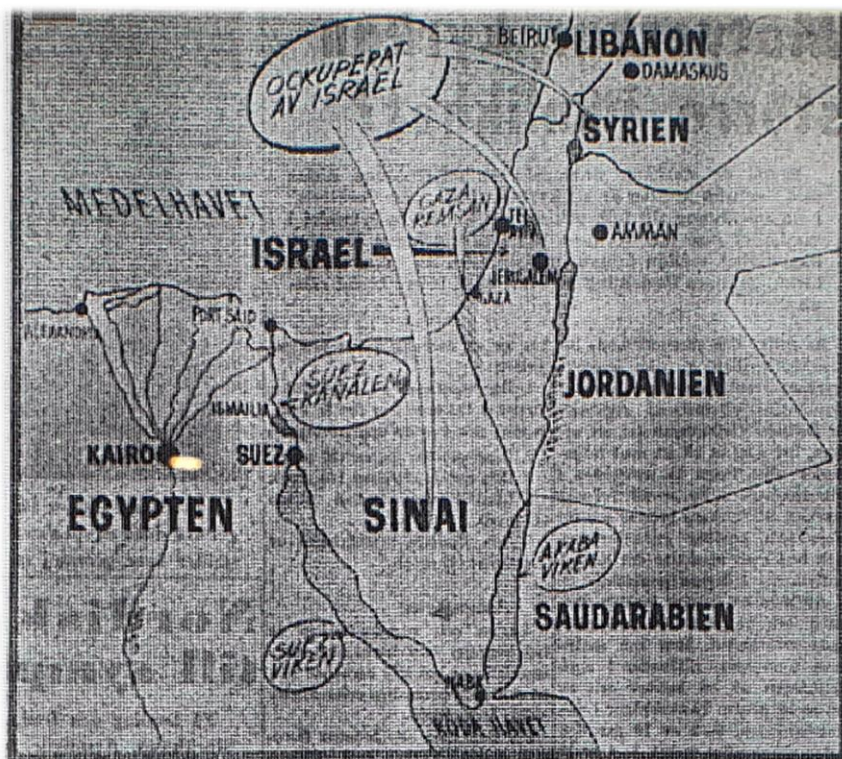
"Om du icke håller dig vä-
ken, så skall jag komma så-
som en tjuv, och du skall
förvisso icke veta, vilken
stund jag kommer över dig"
(Upp. 3:3 b).

I den första kristna tiden hade
församlingen lagt på hjärtat
Herrens Jesu ord om hans snu-
ra tillkommelse. Detta ord, som
här, säges av den förhärögade
Kristus, hade han även sagt
förut. Han sade det, när han
satt på sluttningen av Oljebär-
get och talade med sina lär-
jungar om sin andra tillkom-
melse. Han sade då, att om hus-
bonden hade vetat, vilken tid
tjuven skulle komma, hade han
förvisso vakat och sett till, att
tjuven ej brutit sig in i hans
hus. "Varen därför också i redo",
sade han. "ty i den stund då I
icke väntat det, skall Männis-
kornas komma"



Intill änden skall det vara krig, och rykten om krig. Och Jesus uppmanade sina lärjungar att alltid
vara redo.
I Jerusalem finns ett provisoriskt monument över stupade fullskärmsoldater.

C. Middle East Map. *Dagen*, Sept. 23, 1969, p. 4.



Fil. dr. Eric Wärenstam ger här sin personliga syn på Israel-problemet. Repressalieaktionerna har inte löst konflikten — i stället har de bara förvärrat den.

D. Joyful Israeli Soldiers, *Dagen* Nov., 1970, Front Page.



I Israel åter döns flickorna in i lumpen efter skolan. I över två år trimmas de militärt. Bilden är från ett militärt utbildningsläger.

Flicksoldater slåss för kämpande Israel

F. War Criticism Featuring Vietnamese Children. *Dagen* Aug. 7, 1969,
p. 3.

NIXON OCH KRIGET



Samtidigt som den amerikanske presidenten anlände hem till USA efter sin PR-resa runt jorden, kom den här bilden från Vietnam:

Ett amerikanskt förband som bryter upp efter nattens blyack. Så snart de vänt ryggen åt den gamla lägerplatsen är vietnamesiska barfotagrahbar framme för att plocka upp allt av värde som amerikanerna kan tänkas ha lämnat efter sig, tomma konservburkar, klädrasor . . .

Det här var sådant Nixon inte fick se under sitt fem timmar långa besök i Sydvietnam, bilderna växlar snabbt . . .

G. Bible Study Illustrated by Nuclear Missile. EH 1971, no. 18, p. 16–17.



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