

STUDIA MISSIONALIA SVECANA CX

Ulf Carmesund

Refugees or Returnees

European Jews, Palestinian Arabs and the Swedish
Theological Institute in Jerusalem around 1948



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Abstract

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In this study five individuals who worked in Svenska Israelsmissionen and at the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem are focused. These are Greta Andrén, deaconess in Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1934 and matron at the Swedish Theological Institute from 1946 to 1971, Birger Pernow, director of Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1930 to 1961, Harald Sahlin director of the Swedish Theological Institute in 1947, Hans Kosmala director of the Swedish Theological Institute from 1951 to 1971, and finally H.S. Nyberg, Chair of the Swedish board of the Swedish Theological Institute from 1955 to 1974. The study uses theoretical perspectives from Hannah Arendt, Mahmood Mamdani and Rudolf Bultmann.

A common idea among Lutheran Christians in the first half of 20th century Sweden implied that Jews who left Europe for Palestine or Israel were not just seen as refugees or colonialists - but viewed as returnees, to the Promised Land. The idea of peoples' origins, and original home, is traced in European race thinking. This study is discussing how many of the studied individuals combined superstitious interpretations of history with apocalyptic interpretations of the Bible and a Romantic national ideal. Svenska Israelsmissionen and the Swedish Theological Institute participated in Svenska Israelhjälpen in 1952, which resulted in 75 Swedish houses sent to the State of Israel. These houses were built on land where until July 1948 the Palestinian Arab village Qastina was located.

The Jewish state was supported, but, the establishment of an Arab State in Palestine according to the UN decision of Nov 1947 was not essential for these Lutheran Christians in Sweden. The analysis involves an effort to translate the religious language of the studied objects into a secular language.

Keywords: Lutheran, Jerusalem, Jew, Arab, Muslim, Christian, Israel, Israeli, Apocalyptic, Superstition, Fundamentalism, Republican and Romantic nationalism, Bible, history, Poetic and power.

Ulf Carmesund, Uppsala University, Box 256, Uppsala University, SE-75105 Uppsala, Sweden

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Till Ulrika

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A personal introduction

From the 1980s the Swedish Institute for Missionary Research (SIM) at Uppsala University has offered field study courses. Via these courses five to six students travel each semester to South Africa, Central America, South East Asia, etc. and some to Jerusalem, which is what I did. During the trip which I participated in, during the spring of 1988, I spent much time with Palestinian Arab students at Bir Zeit University and with Jewish Israeli students at Hebrew University. I also came across Christians from all over the world who flock to Jerusalem for a variety of reasons. The visit coincided with the first Palestinian Intifada and one could see violence in the streets on an almost daily basis. It was the first time I had seen soldiers beating up teenagers. Christians from Palestine participated in the political struggle. But, to my astonishment, some Christians from Western countries – like Sweden, Norway and Denmark – defended the well-equipped army's violence against unidentified teenagers. And again, to my astonishment, in order to legitimate their normative positions these Western Christians did not refer to international law but to biblical arguments. They believed one should not get involved in politics oneself, because they argued it was God acting; and one should not endeavour to stop God. In a way, the present study is a late effort to make impressions from that trip intelligible. I believe the reaction among Western Christians to Israel and Palestine still, even in a broader sense, depends upon their view of biblical texts, their assessment of the Shoa (or the Nazi Genocide), and their type of nationalism. But this study covers only some decades of the early- and mid twentieth century, and I do not claim to explain contemporary political attitudes in Western countries towards the three fields of interest identified above. In 1988, during my first trip to Jerusalem, the world was caught in the Cold War between the two superpowers of the Soviet Union and the United States. In the twenty-first century the Cold War is now over. As a result, global politics have changed and so have patterns of production and distribution, as well as the distribution of income and social structures. All these processes influence ideas of who we are and how we describe ourselves in terms of groups we belong to – or do not belong to.

Having begun my academic studies with biology and chemistry, in an effort to become an environmentalist or a green biologist, I accidentally came to join a trip to Jerusalem in 1988 organised by Uppsala University and later I began travelling to Jerusalem to immerse myself in the interaction between

human beings, their groups and their respective futures and pasts. A Life & Peace Institute conference in Uppsala in 1992, entitled *End in Sight?*, formulated a hypothesis which made me interested and distressed at the same time. They had collected a broad spectrum of intellectual approaches and competencies that was intriguing. At that time we were afraid of acid rain, and in fear of a nuclear blast that would end it all I had heard of Christians who believed in time speculations anticipating a near catastrophe. I grew up in a countryside village, where I went to the local (Reformed) Mission Covenant Church and we were not taught to look for such apocalyptic visions in the Bible. Some individual members of our church openly disliked Charles Darwin, our struggle for Fair Trade in church and our efforts to stop acid rain, but they were a tiny minority. Later I have come to believe that perhaps the opposition to Charles Darwin and to Fair Trade was much wider spread. Where I grew up I felt that the Bible and Christianity had the role of encouraging human beings to be involved in society, make friends with people of other faiths, learn and reflect critically and take an active part in life. The Life & Peace conference in 1992 made me realise that the comments from Western Christians I had heard during my visit in Jerusalem 1988, and the active critique against Charles Darwin in my childhood church, were more common than I first thought and influenced how human beings decided to interact with political processes in society and in world politics too.

The present book is written as a result of many years of travelling and reading about religion and politics in Sweden, Jerusalem and its surroundings. These trips started through the field study courses mentioned above. While I am the author of this book, it could not have been written without the intellectual support and critique from many. During my first visit to Jerusalem in 1988 I met the late professor Israel Shahak. Eight students sat at his feet and he brought us through a variety of perspectives and learning, and we realised that so far our learning on Israel and Palestine had only been a brief glimpse into room after Academic rooms where Shahak moved about. Associate Professor Sigbert Axelsson of Uppsala University brought us in contact with Shahak. Axelsson is an intellectual of Shahak's school and calibre in Sweden – a school which combines piety with intellectual honesty and moral compassion. He endlessly asked all students to scrutinize one's sources and to see the issue from yet another perspective. He is a constant source of inspiration. In Jerusalem I am enriched by friends who pursue their lives in the city's constant hustle and bustle and still live and act with an everlasting generous curiosity, and in particular I think of Albert Aghazarian and Ara George Hintlian. Canon Naim Ateek and Nora Carmi at Sabeel Liberation theology may not know this, but for years they have been intellectual Jerusalemites who have played an important and stimulating role in my own intellectual Christian life.

In Sweden and the Nordic countries, colleagues at the institution for missionary research have provided useful critique and insights into the interaction of religion and politics on all six continents. I spent one academic year (2002-2003) at the Faculty of Theology at Århus University in Denmark. I am heavily indebted to my tutors Per Bilde and Viggo Mortensen, and some fellow PhD candidates, in particular Jørgen Skov Sørensen and Jacob Holm. While systematic theology in Århus is strictly Lutheran, they still foster a curious intellectual environment and a lively discussion on the role of religion in society. Their contribution to the public debate in Denmark on Media cartoons, Islam and other religions are most important for building an open-minded society based on their own particular traditions. The department for historical studies at Göteborg University offered me the opportunity to present an early version of one chapter at their seminar, and the feedback received gave me significant input that has helped me to view my results from a wider perspective. Friends and tutors at the department for Mission Studies at Uppsala University are too many to be mentioned. Recently I have come to appreciate intense discussions with Thomas Ekstrand. Beside of Professor Kajsa Ahlstrand he has been my tutor in this work. Ekstrand and I will perhaps not agree on my choice of perspectives or in my conclusions, but as the honest academic he is, he has given me much constructive criticism particularly during the last few months of this work. Colleagues and friends like Agneta Johansson, Ove Gustafsson, David Henley, Fayek Saleh, Jörgen Johansen have provided more support than any of them would realise. To some of us the Swedish Palestine Archive was a turning point in our lives. Karin Källsmyr, Per Englund, Ken Schubert, Shareef Abu Watfa and Ingvar Rydberg have been very generous with their skills in languages. Boel Källsmyr and Andreas Miller have a particular role in this process. Their flexible generosity has been critical for decades. David Karlsson and Pia Lundquist are extraordinary readers and in their presence one tends to feel intelligent. Their critique and comments are always based in their solid learning in history and in the history of ideas and ideologies.

Throughout the last few years my three daughters Hedwig, Siri and Alva have never stopped asking – and thereby inspiring me – when my book will be finished. I have always answered it was closer than ever, hoping I was right. Lastly, just one person has spent several vacations, several late nights and early mornings alone with our three – only sometimes – well-mannered daughters while I was travelling, reading or writing. She is a constant critic who lived with me in Jerusalem for three years in the 1990's, during which she stayed one winter in Maghazi refugee camp in the Gaza Strip where she honed her sense for precise facts while she did field research for her Masters degree in the History of Economics. She is my friend, the mother of our three children and a co-traveller in life, to whom this book is dedicated, my wife Ulrika Englund.

1. Introduction

When the State of Israel was established in 1948, many people in Sweden supported the Jewish state and regarded it as a place of refuge for Jews, a people who had almost been extinguished in Europe during the Second World War. An organised expression of this opinion was launched on January 4, 1951, as Svenska Israelhjälpen (Swedish Israel Aid) was founded in Stockholm.¹ In one year, Svenska Israelhjälpen collected over SEK 1 million and the money was used to build 75 Swedish wooden houses in the village Kfar Achim in the State of Israel. The campaign attracted widespread support from members of the Swedish Parliament, the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (LO), Social Democrats and Liberals alike, university professors, the Archbishop of the Church of Sweden, most leaders of other Protestant churches in Sweden, and Christian missions such as Svenska Israelsmissionen (henceforth SvIM), which had started the Swedish Theological Institute (henceforth SvTI) in Jerusalem in 1947. Birger Pernow, Director of SvIM, was present at the inaugural meeting of Svenska Israelhjälpen in 1951 and was later appointed to its Executive Committee.²

In April 2005 I met Malka Gantz in her home at Kfar Achim. She was an elderly woman who told me the story of her life and how she arrived at that particular place on earth, since she had grown up in Hungary. With many others in the autumn of 1944, she had been forced to walk towards the Bergen Belsen concentration camp in Germany. In the camp she lost weight and caught diseases, but she survived. When Bergen Belsen was liberated by British troops in May 1945, she was barely alive. Gantz was captured in a film shot by British soldiers and included in a broadcast on the 40th anniversary of the liberation of Bergen Belsen in 1995. In the film she looked empty-eyed and apathetic, a dead woman walking. Gantz was one of 15 345 people³ brought to Sweden in the white buses organised by the Red Cross under Count Folke Bernadotte. After some 18 months in the south of Sweden, Gantz had recovered and regained her strength. In 1947 she left for Palestine, where she met her husband on the boat, and they eventually settled down in Kfar Achim.

¹ Svenska Israelhjälpen, January 4 1951

² Carmesund 2005, p. 51-70. See also Emil Glück in: *Judisk Tidskrift*, nr 1, 1954.

³ Lomfors 2005, p. 138

While visiting the moshav, I talked to one of Gantz's daughters about the background of the area where Kfar Achim is located. Before Kfar Achim was built, the region was inhabited by some 900 Palestinian Arabs, living in the village of Qastina. In July 1948 they were driven away by the Givati Brigade of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF). I asked Gantz's daughter if the population of Kfar Achim reflected on the fate of the people of Qastina: "We do not talk about them," she said, and the topic was closed.

In December 2007, I went to the Arroub refugee camp, located about 40 kilometres from Kfar Achim and Kfar Malachi, just north of Hebron in the West Bank. In Arroub I met Mr. Khalil, an employee of the Palestinian National Authority and the son of Eff Salman Khalil, whose passport I was shown. The passport had been issued in Jerusalem on July 2, 1946 and indicated that Eff Salman Khalil lived in Qastina. When the passport expired on July 2, 1951, the Swedish campaign to support Kfar Achim was attracting much attention in Sweden. At that time Mr Khalil was a young boy, playing in the mud of the Arroub refugee camp, where he had been born. His mother had been pregnant when she fled from Qastina in July 1948. In Qastina/Kfar Achim two narratives converge. One aim of the present study is to find out why committed Christians participated in Svenska Israelhjälpen and why they sympathised with the narrative of Kfar Achim, while they ignored the narrative of Qastina.

SvIM was founded in Stockholm in 1875. The idea that Jews originated from Palestine and should return there was present from its inception but it was disputed and partly seen as a mere parallel to an unfolding religious process. SvIM followed political history carefully. Commenting on the Fourth Zionist congress in 1900 Pastor Lindhagen of SvIM wrote:

We are more and more convinced in this belief that the starting point of Israel's restoration is to be found in the Zionist movement, and we rejoice in our hope that this restoration by God's mercy shall be of a much higher nature than the leaders of Zionism are able to understand⁴

In SvIM one attached these expectations on Zionism and the Jews' return to their land both to the suffering among Jews and to the First World War itself. In both perspectives Jews were seen as particular signs of importance for the overall historic process. In 1915, commenting on the war staff in SvIM said:

The war on the eastern flank can offer an opening for Israel to be lifted from its dwellings and in a much larger extent than ever, and return to their native

⁴ Edvardsson 1976, p. 65 "Vi bestyrkes allt mer och mer i den tron, att begynnelsen till Israels återställelse är att finna i den sionistiska rörelsen, och fröjdade i hoppet över, att denna återställelse av Guds nåd skall bli av en mycket högre natur, än zionismens ledare ännu äro mäktiga att förstå"

country. At this moment ... we will perhaps see the resurrection mentioned in Ezekiel 37.⁵

SvIM had a special focus: as a Christian mission to the Jews they wanted the Jews to become Christians. Also many of its members thought that a Jewish state in Palestine would provide a refuge for an oppressed people, and this is an idea they found support for in biblical text. Many in SvIM regarded Palestine and Israel as the place from which the Jews originated and to which they ought to return. Hence, from the perspective of SvIM, Jews who left Europe to settle in Palestine were not seen as just emigrants, millions of whom had left Europe for the United States in the 19th and 20th Centuries. Among these and many other Christians, Jews who settled in Palestine were usually not viewed as Europeans establishing colonies in Western Asia. Instead, Jews who left Europe for Palestine or the State of Israel were assumed to be returning home to the Promised Land according to biblical history, undertaking *aliya*, or are seen returnees to their own country of old. The founders of SvTI accepted the Jewish presence in Europe, but they nurtured a suspicion that somehow Jews did not really belong in Europe. The core problem of this study is two-fold:

1. To describe and analyse the idea among some Christian missionaries that Jews who left Europe for Israel/Palestine were returning home. Also I want to discuss, how the SvTI and its founders view the right of Arabs in Palestine to live there?
2. SvIM and SvTI gathered many individuals from broad sectors of society. A second problem discussed in this work is the fact that a prominent scholar like Professor H.S. Nyberg at Uppsala University, a member of the Swedish Academy, shared certain ideas with an apocalyptic Christian like Mission Director Birger Pernow of SvIM. What did the academic and the apocalyptic Christian have in common?

Analytic tools – history, Bible and national ideology

The religion factor is often assumed to be a reason why so many people in Sweden are interested and involved in Middle Eastern politics.⁶ This study will examine how SvTI and its founders argued.⁷ Leaders of SvIM had a

⁵ Edvardsson 1976, p. 68 "Kriget på östra fronten ... kan vara genomgången till att Israel nu skall ryckas upp från sina boningsplatser och i vida större utsträckning än hittills återvända till sitt fosterland. I denna tid... stundar kanske den uppståndelse, som omtalas i Hes 37."

⁶ Bjereld 1989, p. 10

⁷ "SvTI and its founders" will be used as short form for Svenska Israelsmissionen, the five focused individuals, and other staff in the Swedish Theological Institute. I do not study the institution, but relevant individuals who are representative.

concept of history, people and religion that included the idea of where people, Jews in particular, should live. In order to come to grips with this type of thinking I will analyse the material from the following three perspectives:

- A. History. How did SvTI and its founders interpret the driving forces in historical processes? Did they refer to religious motives like the will of God to explain historical events or did they use secular arguments such as politics and economy? For analytical purposes I will distinguish between a **superstitious** and **secular** approach to history. Here Hannah Arendt's (1906-1975) analysis in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* will exemplify the secular methodology, and she also provides a functional definition of superstitious; it is introduced below. It is necessary to highlight that "secular", in this sense, expresses no distance from or disregard of religion or churches as such, but stresses the difference between what is secular – in time or worldly – and what is unbound by time or transcendent. God is presumed to be eternal and there is no way for a human being to know what is located outside time, or what God has in mind. This understanding of secularity does not limit the range of human experiences in the area called religion – but it is incompatible with superstition. "Superstition" on the other hand, the way I use the term here, is defined by Hannah Arendt, who writes:

The hatred of the racists against the Jews sprang from a superstitious apprehension that it actually might be the Jews, and not themselves,⁸ whom God had chosen, to whom success was granted by divine providence.

For to the mentality of the mob the Jewish concept of a divine mission to bring about the kingdom of God could only appear in the vulgar terms of success and failure.⁹

To Arendt a superstitious approach to history attempts to explain success for one group or another with reference to divine intervention. But to Arendt herself, differences in influence and power in society are formed in complex combinations of interests where family relations, politics and ideology, economy, religion, ethnicity, culture and friendship, etc., are intertwined. Her way of arguing will be referred to below. She undertakes a thorough secular analysis with full respect for religious sentiments that are not superstitious. Any attempt to use God as an explanation in the analysis of history tends to disregard these complexities. Having said this I must emphasise that the religious experience, for instance the sense of divine selection sometimes expressed in religion, is not in focus and is not criticised.

Furthermore, I do not intend to criticise any person who embraces these ideas. I never call a person superstitious, only ideas and arguments. I am focusing on thought structures and the way a divine or spiritual force is as-

⁸ Arendt 1968, p. 242

⁹ Arendt 1968, p. 242-243

sumed to prefer one human being to another. As soon as success or failure in society is explained by God's intervention or preferences for a certain group, superstition is present. The term superstition may appear pejorative, and even though one could perhaps think of alternative terms like "transcendent explanations" or "supernatural explanations," Arendt's definition of the term offers a precise analytic tool that has been published for decades. Other terms like "supernatural explanation" are lacking Arendt's important distinction between success and failure. Other terms also lack a reference to the idea that human beings can please the divine power and influence their fate and, by deed or belief.

Having explained my use of "superstitious" and "superstition" I want to remind the reader that over the last few centuries many Western studies on religion in Africa or Asia have been rather quick to label religions, belief systems and pious practices as superstitious in a way that was more often than not pejorative. I have used the term superstition to analyse some expressions of Swedish Lutheran thinking - in Sweden, in Austria and in the Middle East.

- B. Bible. Many biblical scholars have questioned whether or not narratives in the Bible occurred as historical facts. Rudolf Bultmann (1884-1976) argued that the "real purpose" of biblical text, or myth as he says, is not to disclose hidden historical facts or to present an objective picture of the world:

The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially.¹⁰

When religious myth, in Bultmann's terminology, is seen as an expression of the human's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives, it is used to "express the otherworldly in terms of this world, and the divine in terms of human life".¹¹ A more contemporary version of this thinking on biblical text is presented by biblical scholar Heikki Räisänen (1941-) who has suggested that biblical text ought to be read as gloomy reflections on history formulated centuries after the events in focus took place.¹² But despite these scholarly perspectives on the Bible, Christians still read biblical narratives as historical facts. In this study I find it relevant to ask who is viewing biblical text as a source of historical data and who is viewing biblical text as poetic reflections. For analytic purposes I distinguish between an

¹⁰ Bultmann 1961, p. 10

¹¹ Bultmann 1961, p. 10

¹² Räisänen 2000, p. 231

apocalyptic reading of the Bible and a **poetic** way of reading.¹³ Literally, “apocalypse” means to reveal what is hidden and the apocalyptic reader assumes that the Bible provides insights into a past and a future that is hidden to the eye of the average layman. The apocalyptic reader of the Bible is convinced that by the help of divine guidance the apocalyptic person can decipher historical events and reveal their hidden “real” significance. Often “apocalypse” also tends to connote religiously motivated expectations on a near violent end of history and my way of using of these terms is discussed below.

The term **poetic** reading is borrowed from biblical scholars Lars Hartman (1930–) and Amos N. Wilder (1896-1993). Hartman argued that the preacher of Christianity has to find semantic functions and to categorise the texts in their proper genres, but eventually he or she will simply have to return to, recycle and chew the original text over and over again, or reuse it as **expressive poetry**, as Wilder has suggested.¹⁴ When reading biblical text as poetry, one cannot use it as a book of political instruction or predictions of the future. Instead one has to pay attention to its literary genre, its original semantic use and the inner logic of its stories. A poetic way of reading biblical texts, I suggest, has several features in common with – or includes – an ethical reading of biblical text, with a term borrowed from Räsänen. He argues that anyone reading the Bible has to make his or her own ethical choices. Facing an ethical choice, Räsänen says, the reader cannot simply refer to the Bible, that is irresponsible. To Räsänen the reader of the Bible has to choose between existing traditions in the Bible and side with one tradition or the other. Sometimes, in order to stand up for love, justice and humanity, Räsänen has said, one has to take a stand against all biblical traditions.¹⁵

This attitude to biblical text points to the reader’s own responsibility for all interpretations. This ethical aspect of poetic reading is formulated in a concise way by the biblical scholar Per Block (1935–). He has argued that while biblical text may express values, a theologian or a Christian believer who endeavours to make use of the Bible to support certain values will have to answer to two qualitative criteria: (1) Do the values formulated in the Bible deserve to be supported? (2) Are these values well anchored in the biblical text?¹⁶ As soon as the reader of biblical text acknowledges his or her own responsibility, biblical narratives can no longer be referred to as authorities for choices. When putting the reader of the text in a responsible position, one has to take in to consideration the reader’s basic beliefs and traditions and how they are created and develop over time. This will be discussed briefly below.

¹³ The term “poetic” is borrowed from Amos N. Wilder and Lars Hartman, see below.

¹⁴ Hartman 1995, p. 31

¹⁵ Räsänen 2000, p. 242

¹⁶ Block 1997, p. 118 & 120

C. National ideology. When the studied key figures reflect on the concept of “people” and nation, what do they have in mind? Do they employ a **romantic** concept of people and nation-state, or a **republican** concept of people and nation-state? The word “people” has both cultural and political connotations and sometimes even religious ones, as in “God’s people.” The cultural meaning of ‘Swedish people’ are those who speak Swedish and belong to Swedish culture. The political implication of “people” is those who, according to the Swedish constitution, are eligible to vote. A Swedish citizen is eligible to vote and to participate in political life, even if he or she does not speak Swedish or belong to the Swedish people in the cultural sense. Hence, the collective referred to in the political “people” does not have to equate to the Swedish people in the cultural sense. In my use of the terminology, a national ideology based on the romantic concept of people accept as citizens, or prefer as citizens, humans of the same culture with the same language and with a shared historical memory. However, in the republican national ideology, humans of several cultures, languages and backgrounds can live – with equal rights and equal right to belong – in the same nation.

Mahmood Mamdani (1946–) has analysed cultural and political communities and made the following reflection, which is relevant for my study:

To sharpen the distinction between cultural and political identities, it will be useful to underline a point of contrast between cultural and political communities. More than anything else, a common cultural community signifies a common past, a common historical inheritance. In contrast a political community testifies to the existence of a common project for the future. The distinction is often blurred because the past flows into the future, as it always does, creating a significant overlap between cultural and political communities.¹⁷

Mamdani is indicating that the past, present and future are relevant categories in a discussion of how political and cultural communities overlap, interact and merge over time. The way I have decided to identify two tendencies, the romantic and the republican, does not exhaust the theme. Still I find the discussion important for my work, and in particular with respect to Mamdani’s effort “To sharpen the distinction between cultural and political identities” and to “to underline a point of contrast between cultural and political communities”. If one does not, separate between political and cultural identity, the term “people” becomes filled with religious, historical and political connotations. If so “people” becomes a crossroad or a vessel where both culture politics, values, tradition and language fuse. Hence before analysing the contents of the term, it is relevant to identify whether SvTI and its foun-

¹⁷ Mamdani 2007, p. 23

ders use the word “people” as part of a romantic or a republican national ideal.

Hannah Arendt was a contemporary of the individuals studied. She was convinced that her historic period was “witnessing the gigantic competition between race-thinking and class-thinking for dominion of the minds of modern men”.¹⁸ She viewed ethnicity and class thinking as two different approaches to explain social change. One may ask what role religion is given in relation to this “gigantic competition.” Is religion given a role as part of ethnicity, nationalism, or is religion a structure that can be combined with a class-oriented analysis of social change? As a result of my investigations via these three perspectives, two opposing tendencies will be identified in the material. On one hand I locate those who express a superstitious understanding of history, an apocalyptic way of reading biblical text and a romantic concept of people and nation, including references to ethnicity as an explanation of social processes: this understanding will be called **essentialist**. The other interpretation views history as a secular – in time – process and it is explicable by means of socio-economic and power-related and/or class-oriented factors. It reads the Bible in a poetic way and it tends to support a republican national ideal: this will be referred to as a **contextual** way of understanding or constructing driving forces in history, society, culture and the role of religion in society.

Political scientist Samantha Powell has applied Arendt’s analysis of superstition to 21st century politics. While pointing out ways that lead away from superstition, Powell has, willingly or unwillingly provided much help in understanding religions as well. When politics are able to let go of superstition, it may be possible for religious people to do so as well. Powell writes:

Hannah Arendt had what W.B. Yeats called the uncommon ability "to hold in a single thought reality and justice." In Arendt's preface to *Origins*, she noted,

”This book has been written against a background both of reckless optimism and reckless despair. It holds that Progress and Doom are two sides of the same medal; that both are articles of superstition, not of faith.”

In order to move beyond superstition, which is what we cling to today, it is politics that has to be brought to bear. We are afraid, and fear is dangerous. It can justify excesses and can lead to escapism. The gravest temptation is an overwhelmed, apolitical retreat into private life. But it is not enough to lament the burden of our time; we citizens must shape the response. It is only in the public sphere, through voting, voicing, and mobilizing, that our fates become our own. While fear is dangerous, fear can also concentrate the mind

¹⁸ Arendt 1968, p. 161

and lead citizens to take political action. The coming years where we find ourselves again suspended "between a no-longer and a not-yet"[17]—are years of danger and promise, and we can only hope, as Arendt did, that the tug toward apathy will be overcome by the lure of human improvement and self-preservation.¹⁹

The way Powell has made use of “progress and doom” as two components of superstition, she has indicated that another type of politics and another type of religious belief may pave the way beyond superstition and fear, which she identified as a key element of the 21st century political life. The dichotomy between progress and doom is a good way of sum up the secular variety of the thought structure here named God’s and God’s curse. In order to combat fear and superstition, Powell says, “It is only in the public sphere, through voting, voicing, and mobilizing, that our fates become our own”. Escapism, mentioned by Powell, may appear in many forms. One such form is to resort to superstitious interpretations of history and to apocalyptic ways of reading biblical text, while “faith”, mentioned by Arendt, may represent the opposite. Faith and superstition are irreconcilable.

Previous research

An early academic influence on me was a conference at the Life & Peace Institute in Uppsala, and its report published in February 1993: *The End in Sight? Images of the End Threats to Human Survival*, Roger Williamson (Ed). Participants in the conference report are Dorothy Rowe, Richard Falk, Johan Galtung, Charles Strozier, Lester Wikström, Göran Gunner, Bengt Gustafsson, Jürgen Moltmann, Cathrine Keller and Roger Williamson (Ed). The conference theme made perfect sense in those days and in his introduction Roger Williamson captured the mood of the time in three jokes. One joke appeared in the form of a poster spoof of “Gone with the Wind” showing cartoon versions of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan in the star roles: the caption read: “She promised to follow him to the end of the world, he promised to organize it”.²⁰ In some ways the present work is my own delayed, and rather tentatively formulated, comment on this Life & Peace conference. In my memory the conference discussed religion as one component in the ongoing public discussion on violence, politics and what is worth living for, no more and no less. This captured my interest.

Within Christianity the matter of mission has been something to live and die for. Mission to Jews has been discussed ever since the religion’s first days, that is, for more or less 2000 years. Within Judaism the discussion is just as long, but not in focus here. For almost two millennia many Christians

¹⁹ Powell 2004

²⁰ Williamson 1993, p 1

have asked themselves who is “Israeli” and what is “Israel”? And who belongs to the “new Israel”? Academic works on mission studies devote much energy to whether the Christian Church is the “new Israel” or not and St. Paul is interpreted intensively. There are many interpretations of St Paul’s letter to the Romans chapters 9-11 outlining the relationship between Jews and the emerging Christian community. Is the Church the new Israel, is it the enlarged Israel, or is it an intermediate Israel or an eschatological community of a particular kind, and so on.²¹ This study is not concerned with textual interpretations. Instead I am focusing how interpretations of biblical text may legitimate different political positions. A general assessment of how many Christian mission organisations, contemporary with SvIM, have interpreted “Israel” is formulated by A. Wind:

The Dutch missionary society began to work among Jews in 1807. In England and Germany many organisations were started in the course of the nineteenth century with the goal of mission among Jews. In 1906 there were fifty-eight such societies in Western Europe. Generally people viewed the church as having taken the place of Israel as God’s covenant partner, and there were occasional signs of anti-Semitism²²

Wind does not endeavour to settle the matter of whether the Christian church really has taken the place of Israel, and I mention him as he indicates how common these reflections have been in Christianity. The way I am analysing this particular question differs slightly from Wind’s. I consider Wind’s description as part of the background, but in order to explain the importance among many Christians of the Jews’ return to Palestine and the desired separation of Jews from other groups I think religion and theology have to be viewed in relation to national ideals.

Professor Rosemary Radford Ruether (1936 -) has described how Englishmen in the 18th and 19th centuries linked their own national history with that of Jews:

They came to believe that as part of the redemption of history, the Jews must go back to their historic homeland. This restoration of the Jews to Palestine would be a prelude to the return of Christ (and the final conversion of the Jews).²³

Ruether is tracing the Christian idea of nations from Origines, who argued that each nation had its own angel.²⁴ She is describing how in the 16th and 17th centuries notions of a universal Christian empire gradually change and instead there emerges ideas of national monarchies in Europe. And these

²¹ Bosch 2002, p 165 ff

²² Wind 1995, p 239

²³ Radford Ruether 2009, p 65

²⁴ Radford Ruether 2009, p 3

monarchies, like Spain, France and England each claim to be heirs of Israel as God's new nation elect.²⁵ Ruether then describes how the notion of an empire finds its way into the United States. Turning to the theological interpretations of history Radford Ruether then argues that the ancient Christian theme of conversion of the Jews is necessary for the culmination of history. Gradually this was linked with a new focus of the "gathering in" of Jews to Palestine. This shift coincides with both the Enlightenment in Europe and the rise of nationalism, including its many ideas on the nature of the nation. I support Radford Ruether's view of linking Christians and their support for a Jewish state to European nationalism. The ideological background is complex, and one important component mentioned by Radford Ruether is how the emancipatory promise of European nationalism proved contradictory for Jews:

While Jews were told to dissolve any corporate identity as Jews to become simply citizens of the nation in which they resided, at the same time nationalists in France, Germany and elsewhere began to think of their nation as possessing a particular spiritual essence or "nature" that Jews could not acquire.²⁶

The way Radford Ruether is stressing the idea of each nations' particular spiritual essence defines one way by which nationalists have used religion and spiritual arguments to exclude Jews from European nations.²⁷ Jews were seen as a rootless people and she argued they were perceived as foreign to the German and French peoples, "who were rooted in their particular soils". I will continue along the same line of thought and show how a certain form of nationalism – the Romantic nationalism - was compatible with certain Lutheran mission theology. Radford Ruether indicates the presence of a particular dual attitude vis-à-vis Jews that I have found too. This ambivalent attitude to Jews was noticed also by Koblik when he studied Birger Pernow and Svenska Israelsmissionen. Radford Ruether led her analysis of Christianity and social systems on to a statement on what in her view, is "crucial to authentic Christian faith". She is referring to a document issued by the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) on July 15 2006, called: An Ecumenical Faith Stance against Global Empire for a Liberated Earth Community. In her view this document expresses a much needed denunciation of American imperial Messianism, exemplified by the George W. Bush administration.²⁸ She said:

This 2006 document declares the U.S. world empire to be the primary global evil against which Christians must take a stance today.

²⁵ Radford Ruether 2009, p 4

²⁶ Radford Ruether 2009, p 66

²⁷ Radford Ruether 2009, p 66

²⁸ Radford Ruether 2009, p. 252

Resistance to such an empire is seen as crucial to authentic Christian faith, along with defence peace, social justice, and ecological integrity.²⁹

However supportive one may be of the ideological political content in Radford Ruether's writings, still she risks producing a Christian theology which is void of many of the tradition's ambiguities, to use a phrase from the Chicago project and their analysis of fundamentalisms. In this way she is exaggerating the role of Christianity also trying to stream line its normative homogeneity. She comes close to making Christianity into an ideology. She is not separating faith from ideology, and thereby she uses the religious motives in ways that resembles the more well known fundamentalists, even though she engages the text from another normative angle.

Another recent research project has mentioned the significance of the Romantic national ideal for Christian Europeans' ideas of Jews and Zionism. In 2010 Donald M. Lewis has published *The Origins of Christian Zionism*. In it he discusses ideological changes in 18th and 19th century English thinking, which he links with the social and political tumult of the time. In his view there is a decisive shift in English Evangelical Christian thinking at that time. Previously they had been influenced by Catholic Natural Law and had a more positive "post-millennia" thinking, in which the return of Christ would occur after the inauguration of the thousand year reign of Christ. The post-millennialist belief was that the world was steadily improving as a result of human efforts and God's presence, and to them Christ would come as the end of this process, to crown it. But in Lewis' understanding, the political turmoil at the time set people in a more pessimistic mood. Therefore, still according to Lewis, they resorted more and more to a pre-millennia theology, where Christ would return in a dramatic, visible and cataclysmic way that would end the misery. To the pre-millennialists Christ's Kingdom would arrive suddenly and not gradually. It would arrive in the midst of misery as a liberator, before the triumphant millennium reign could start. According to Lewis one reason for this change in mood was that according to many at that time, the world was no longer improving. Living conditions for many in Europe were deteriorating and political events like social revolutions, industrialism, and national war were seen as threats, and indications that everything was going from bad to worse. Donald M. Lewis has argued that what the prophetically minded Christians had in common was not so much the pre- or post-millennia thinking, but they shared a:

... Calvinism that resonated with the idea of divine "election" of Jews. Furthermore the emphasis on the distinctive "calling" of the Jews fit well both with High Calvinism's strong rejection of the Catholic tradition of Natural Law with its emphasis on a common human nature on the one hand, and with Romanticism's emphasis on the distinct and peculiar characteristics of "na-

²⁹ Radford Ruether 2009, p. 252

tions” on the other. Philosemitism thus accorded well with High Calvinism, Romanticism’s focus on nations and a rejection of the Roman Catholic emphasis on Natural Law.³⁰

To me Lewis is of interest not so much for his references to tensions between Calvinist reformed theology, Catholic thinking and protestant Anglican theology. That particular conflict panorama is dependent upon conditions that have to do with Britain’s particular church history. Swedish 19th century history is different. Lutherans in Sweden at the time were more influenced by German thinking theology. Lewis makes an interesting analysis of the influence of pre- and post-millennia thinking among prophetically minded Christians, and he links it with their sense of existential security in society which I think is exceptionally fruitful compared to other theological literature. I will have much help from that. But mostly I have mentioned him for his references to the role of the Romantic nation in theology. SvIM was not so much speculating in the return of Christ and therefore pre- and post-millennia thinking were not predominant. To them the idea of the “people” was more important, and here the Romantic component comes into the picture. In Lewis’ analysis the Anglican evangelicals had a staunch commitment to the principle of a Protestant state Church. And given the Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary reform of the 1820’s and 1830’s, Lewis said, “they (the Anglican evangelicals) were aware that Britain was on the brink of important changes in church and state.”³¹ In conclusion Lewis argued that:

The evangelical’s sense of Britishness was being redefined with philosemitism and Christian Zionism being added as new layers of British identity. Britain as “Protestant Israel” was to protect and defend “Israel according to the flesh” from its ancient persecuting enemy, Roman Catholicism.³²

Lewis then goes into detailed studies of the emergence of British Christian missionary work among the Jews. It is striking how these circles include very rich evangelical Christians, like the Baring brothers who worked in banking. In order to place the Baring brothers in Europe at the time it is relevant to keep in mind Duc de Richelieu’s notion from about 1810, that:

There are six great powers in Europe. England, France, Russia, Austria, Prussia and the Baring Brothers.³³

³⁰ Lewis 2010, p. 68-69

³¹ Lewis 2010, p. 70

³² Lewis 2010, p. 103

³³ Lewis 2010, p. 75-76

For many years, Sir Thomas Baring, from the mid 1810's to his death in 1848, was chair of the LJS – The London Society for Promoting Christianity Amongst the Jews. Lewis' book is a thorough overview of the social and political interaction between constitutional changes in Britain and its influences on Church life and denominational changes, including the emergence of mission to the Jews and Christian support for the Jewish state. The Swedish equivalent is still unwritten. Still, his work indicates similar results as Gustafsson showed when he displayed close connections between missions to the Jews and the upper echelons of society. Many other aspects of Lewis' work are relevant and indicate similarities between Swedish and British missions to the Jews, like his description of the effort among British Evangelicals to “seek the protection of Jews from those hostile to them”.³⁴ I find Lewis overall way of linking various social, political and economic perspectives into the discussion on mission to the Jews fruitful. Lewis shows how in Britain the Evangelicals had a more thorough programme in relation to the nation, than their Swedish counterparts. Or that is only so because of the research he has done. Also Fjellstedt, as we shall see, was considering his nationality as Swedish very important. Lewis said: “part and parcel of the Christian Zionist's campaign was the attempt to redefine British national identity so as to include Britain's unique responsibility toward “God's chosen People” as Europe's leading Protestant power.”³⁵ To the best of my knowledge, such strong nationalistic tendencies cannot be seen among Svenska Israelsmissionen in Sweden. But following Lewis research and following research done by Karin Kvist Geverts it seems urgent to do so.

Professor Paul Charles Merkley (1934-) has shown that from the 1940's Christian theologian Reinhold Niebuhr was the principal spokesperson for the American Christian Council for Palestine. Niebuhr has been described as the “most widely admired scholar of the American Protestant community”.³⁶ In those days, Merkley said, the term “Palestine” in the “American Christian Council for Palestine” stood for “Zionist” or support for a Jewish state. Merkley said that Niebuhr did not support his Zionist standpoint with reference to “prophecy”. To Niebuhr “the notion of predictive prophecy was all superstition”. In Merkley's assessment, during the years following the Second World War, Niebuhr and his organisation were able to “nudge a majority of Christians into supporting the politicians who brought about the creation of a Jewish state.” In Sweden Reinhold Niebuhr has been an important theologian in the 20th century, and his influence on the intellectual Christians' view on Israel is possibly considerable. However, he does not appear in the material I have gone through, which was more influenced from Ger-

³⁴ Lewis 2010, p. 209

³⁵ Lewis 2010, p. 210

³⁶ Merkley 2001, p. 161

man theology. The opportunity for Zionists to win the hearts of Protestants was brief, Merkley said:

The Zionists' opportunity to win the hearts of mainstream Protestants was brief, created by extraordinary and unrepeatable circumstances: the uncovering of the Holocaust; the intolerable situation Europe's surviving "displaced" Jews; and the realization that Jews not admitted to Palestine would have to be admitted in vast numbers to Western democracies.³⁷

The last notion in the quotation above is important for my study: "the realization that Jews not admitted to Palestine would have to be admitted in vast numbers to Western democracies." It indicates that Merkley found Protestant Churches hesitant to admit vast numbers of Jews to Western democracies.

After and due to the June war in 1967 Merkley said, the Church establishment shifted towards anti-Zionism. In order to characterise the period following the June war in 1967, Merkley refers to church historian Martin Marty who said: "Being anti-Israel has become part of the anti-Establishment gospel, the trademark of those who purport to identify with the masses, the downtrodden and the Third World."³⁸ A new form of pro-Zionist Christianity – different from the one held by the main stream churches - emerged in US in the 1950's and the 1960's, Merkley said. One leading figure in this new work was Dr G. Douglas Young who in 1957 established the Israel-American Institute of Biblical Studies at the Prophets Street 55 in Jerusalem, i.e. the same street as SvTI which had been located there since 1951. Young's institute was later renamed Institute of Holy Land Studies and it moved to Mount Zion and by 2001 it had again been renamed as Jerusalem University College. Its ambitions in the 1950's were not very different from those of SvTI in the 1950's. Young's institute wanted to give young Christians from abroad the opportunity to "study the Bible and the land and also have opportunity to visit Israeli institutions, industries and homes to help build bridges of better understanding where prejudices reigned by the education of the Christian world vis-à-vis Israel".³⁹ Young's institute established good contacts with Chaim Wardi with professor Zwi Werblowsky and with Benjamin Mazaar, with whom H.S. Nyberg went to kibbutz Degania in November 1952. We shall meet Wardi later, who was whom as on the board of SvTI. Those who study the work of SvTI from 1950 onwards will probably have good reason to describe the connections between international Christians and local Israeli Jewish institutions in Jerusalem at the time.

As a result of the increased criticism of Israel by the mainstream churches after the June war in 1967, as Merkley puts it, a shift occurred:

³⁷ Merkley 2001, p. 162

³⁸ Merkley 2001, p. 196

³⁹ Merkley 2001, p. 164-165

Christian Zionists then moved their efforts on behalf of Israel into the great and boundless world of parachurch, where so much that is vital in Christian life – the charismatic movement of the 1970s and 1980s, the new political activism, revivals, moral renewal movements of many kinds (like Promise keepers) has been taking place during the last generation, as it has, for that matter, throughout the history of the Church.⁴⁰

The parachurch organisations went about their work in various ways, and Merkley mentions, for instance, Bridges for Peace and the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ). By 1988 parachurch organisations were already being studied in Sweden by Fred Nilsson, *Parakyrkligt: om business och bön i Sverige*. ICEJ was studied by Lester Wikström who, in 1990, defended a pioneer work at Uppsala University, titled: *Begin och bedjarna – En studie i kristen sionism 1976–88*. May 1990 (unpublished). Wikström's study is not published but it is an interesting parallel to Merkley, as they both argue how the Likud party in the State of Israel actively laboured to establish supportive contacts with pro-Zionist Christians.

In his book *The Bible and Colonialism* the late Dr Michael Prior (1942 – 2004) sets out a moral critique of biblical scholars where he chooses to represent the perspective of the victims of conquests justified by reference to biblical text. Michael Prior is rather detailed when he exemplifies how the Bible has been used in defence of Crusades, Spanish and Portuguese colonialism, Apartheid in South Africa and political Zionism. He has a long list of biblical passages which he connects with a detailed series of political violence. Prior is of the opinion that Christians caught up in an uncritical approach to the Old Testament cannot escape responsibility by arguing that “the problem lies with the predispositions of the modern reader, rather than with the text itself.”⁴¹ And in brief, this is where I disagree with him. The reader of biblical text cannot escape that easily, Prior stresses. To him the moral problem stems from the material of the Bible itself. He argued that Deuteronomy, for instance, contains “menacing ideologies and racist, xenophobic and militaristic tendencies, and is dangerous when read without respect for its literary genre and the circumstances of its composition.”⁴² Without hesitation I agree with his moral critique of the various forms of violence found in the Bible. Most people would. Ideologies and norms found in ancient text do not become binding norms just because they are described as part of a Holy Text or as what the God or higher authority requires. I disagree with Prior because he gives a strange authority to the Biblical text, as if it was not literature but more like divine creed. Also I disagree due to the role he gives to the theologian:

⁴⁰ Merkley 2001, p. 163

⁴¹ Prior 1997, p. 292

⁴² Prior 1997, p. 292

The recognition of the suffering caused by colonialism requires one to re-examine the biblical, theological and moral dimensions of the question. I understand theology to be a discourse which promotes a moral ideal and a better future for all people, oppressed and oppressors alike.⁴³

Probably, most people who are asked about it would want a better future for all people but to Prior that is not really enough, he said:

Biblical scholars have the most serious obligation to prevent outrages being perpetrated in the name of fidelity to the biblical covenant.⁴⁴

Prior puts too high a burden on biblical scholars when he suggests they are “to prevent outrages being perpetrated in the name of fidelity to the biblical covenant”. I believe he is expecting too much from the biblical scholar. He or she cannot be a politician, law enforcer and soldier at the same time. The reason behind Prior’s position is that he “understand(s) theology to be a discourse which promotes a moral ideal”. Instead I would argue that the biblical text is composed of narratives that interpret suffering in the world, and describe encounters which one could call parameters of existence itself like death, the birth of a human being, age, love, despair, joy, etc. The role of theology hence is to interpret the narratives in the text which are formulated around these profound human experiences. This notion does not limit the responsibility of the reader of biblical text, but shifts it to another focus. Theology may, just like all art, have a normative direction which may go in all possible directions and sometimes a narrative is moral and sometime it is not. The way Prior argues comes too close to viewing the Bible as an authority in itself and that is why I cannot follow his ideas. To me the reader of the biblical text is the sole authority therefore he or she does not have to yield their curiosity to any authority, tradition, God or leader whatsoever. Therefore I can only partly agree with Prior when he said:

The fact that the particular violence of the Hebrew Scripture has inspired violence, and has served as model of, and for persecution, subjugation and extermination for millennia beyond its own reality makes investigation of these biblical traditions a critical and important task.⁴⁵

I agree that one needs to investigate biblical traditions and how they have been used. But responsibility lies with the reader.

⁴³ Prior 1997, p. 14

⁴⁴ Prior 1997, p. 292

⁴⁵ Prior 1997, p. 291

A mission study on Christians in Israel

There is one rather early mission study on Christians in Israel which briefly mentioned SvTI. In 1970 Per Østerbye published “The Church in Israel”, which is a work describing Christian mission in the State of Israel from the late 1940’s until 1970. He has focused on Protestant Churches and missions. His work is informative and it offers a point of reference for my work, but Østerbye combines defending Christian missions among the Jews with suggestions as to how that work should tackle what he perceives to be contemporary obstacles to Christian mission in the State of Israel. In his study Østerbye referred to professor Zwi Werblowsky at the Hebrew University who, according to Østerbye has “distinguished between two Christian theological attitudes to Israel”.

1. He (= the Christian) may do so (= explain the Old Israel) by hailing the State as the literal fulfilment of eschatological and apocalyptic prophecies, and by assuming the necessity of physical restoration proceeding the spiritual restoration of Israel. «This opinion, says Werblowsky, is held by some Protestant and most sectarian writers».
2. »to declare that, after the instauration of the new and true Israel, the Jewish people of old enjoy no special status either for better or for worse in the divine economy«. Although Werblowsky does not say so, this attitude can be ascribed to the Orthodox and Catholic Churches, and to *some* of the members of the larger Protestant communities – viz. *some* Anglicans, Lutherans and Baptists.⁴⁶

In Østerbye’s judgement Werblowsky’s first example of attitudes to the State of Israel among Christians is valid “not for a few, but for all of the smaller communities”. And here Østerbye is referring to the Pentecostal movement and to Adventists. And to these groups, Østerbye stresses, the modern State of Israel is not only a fulfilment of prophecies. He argued that the “gathering in” of Jews and the formation of the State of Israel is perceived as evidence that Jews are still God’s chosen people, and should the Bible should be taken literally, then the second coming is imminent and Israel will soon play a decisive part in the salvation of the world.⁴⁷ Østerbye makes a rather complete survey of Protestant missionary societies, and Protestant Churches in the State of Israel at the time, and stressed that many held this or a similar view on the State of Israel and the Bible. Thanks to Østerbye and Werblowsky we are able to describe Svenska Israelsmissionen as repre-

⁴⁶ Østerbye 1970, p. 135-136

⁴⁷ Østerbye 1970, p. 136

sentative of Protestant Christians in the State of Israel at the time. He illustrated his point with the British Jewish Society, who in January 1948 said:

»Unless we have completely misunderstood the terms of God's promise, we are still of the opinion that the Land and the People are bound together in the Covenant promises of Israel's God, and that God will yet deal with His ancient people in their own land. The United Nations may attempt to divide the land between Arab and Jew, but the Lord has given it, not to 'the child of the bondwoman' but to the 'child of the free'. «

Østerbye goes into some detail when he is characterising the various Christian approaches, but his characterisations are of less importance here. Apart from the smaller communities, Østerbye referred to the Anglican Church: "The Anglicans", he said, "have few peers in the art of expressing themselves vaguely and indefinitely. The leader of the Anglican Church in Israel, Canon R. G. Allison tries to be as fair as possible, saying that the prophecies are fulfilled by Israel *and* by the Church".⁴⁸ However, according to Østerbye there was a general agreement among Protestant missions on the Church's first and foremost task in Israel. Østerbye said:

, there is a general agreement of what has to be done.

The Churches first and most important task is to create better relations with Jews and with Judaism, and to remove the Jewish mistrust of the Church and of Christians. The means of receiving this are to repent genuinely and to do penance for the offence of Christians against the Jews.⁴⁹

Below we shall see how this position is echoed by Hans Kosmala, director of SvTI. Østerbye also included SvTI into his study and we shall return to this below. In his view some Christian institutes had contributed positively to the removal of mutual ignorance between Jews and Christians. This was done via discussion groups, fraternities, and via courses in Judaism, where SvTI and the Israel-American Institute of Biblical studies (later called Holy Land Studies) have been actively involved.⁵⁰

Many people have described SvTI's significance in inter-religious dialogue in Jerusalem, but that is a discussion more relevant in the late 1950's and 1960's, which is after the years on which I focus. SvTI's dialogue work is well known among thousands of Swedish pilgrims to Palestine over the last 60 years.

In 2000 Gustaf Björck (1956–) presented a study on Svenska Jerusalem-föreningen between 1900 and 1948 entitled: *Sverige i Jerusalem och Betlehem*.⁵¹ His study is of interest as it mentions SvIM and its relations to Sven-

⁴⁸ Østerbye 1970, p. 138

⁴⁹ Østerbye 1970, p. 152

⁵⁰ Østerbye 1970, p. 152-153

⁵¹ Björck 2000

ska Jerusalemsföreningen and Israelsmissionen, which, in his assessment, gradually evolved into a respectful separation of tasks: the former focusing on Arabs and Muslims, the latter on Jews. When SvIM is mentioned, Björck is mainly referring to Lars Edvardsson. Björck has limited his presentation to a more fact-based description in which individual contributions to its work are in focus.

Research on Svenska Israelsmissionen and the Swedish Theological Institute

Apart from two monographs by Lars Edvardsson (1947–) and Per-Erik Gustafsson (1912-2001), there are few academic works on SvTI. Gustafsson has helped me locate SvIM in its contemporary socio-economic setting, and in particular the significance of SvIM's connections with the two higher estates in Sweden.⁵² Gustafsson is informative and, compared to Edvardsson, more oriented towards explaining and extracting the social role of SvIM. Thanks to his assessment of Svenska Israelsmissionen's first decades, I chose to focus on the **apocalyptic** dimensions of their thinking. Below I will comment on Fornberg, one of few academic theologians who have linked SvTI to its background in SvIM. Below I will return to Edvardsson and Gustafsson.

In 2003 Tord Fornberg (1943–) wrote a survey of SvIM and SvTI called "The Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem". It was short and its limited space did not permit a thorough analysis. Fornberg is one of a few biblical scholars who have discussed Birger Pernow's theology and thinking with regards to the Nazi authorities, and hence I find it relevant to comment on this article in some detail. In 2003 Fornberg, having relatively recently ended his assignment as director of SvTI (1999-2001), took the opportunity to make an assessment of SvTI and its history. When it comes to the theology of SvTI, its founders and their ideas of Jews and the State of Israel, Fornberg reaches similar conclusions to Anna Besserman and others who have studied SvIM. SvIM was an Evangelical Low Church mission and had, from its early days, an aim to convert Jews to Christians. After the Second World War, SvIM began to work in Jerusalem. After the establishment of the State of Israel their theology gradually changed. In the early 1950s, Fornberg points out, missions to the Jews in Israel was stopped. Fornberg analyses SvTI's reflections on the end of its missionary work among the Jews:

...the change of the agenda, i.e. to refrain from mission, was not without difficulties. Most of the sponsors were "ordinary" friends of Christian mission, and they supported the mission because they expected the "missionaries" to work for the conversion of Jews as in the past. This explains the discrepancy

⁵² Gustafsson 1984, p. 32ff

between what took place at the institute under Hans Kosmala and what was written by the Reverend Göte Hedenquist, who succeeded Birger Pernow as director of the mission organization in 1962. He gave the impression that things continued as they had been in the past, probably in order not to trouble the donors and thus jeopardize the economical basis of the institute.⁵³

In my judgment Fornberg gives a correct and necessarily brief picture of SvTI and SvIM's missionary theology. SvTI ended their missionary work in Israel and was supportive of the State of Israel. Fornberg discusses briefly and correctly Pernow's "old views on the necessity to convert Jews". Fornberg also refers to Pernow's reflections from his 1943 booklet: *Kan juda-folket räddas?*, where Pernow argued that the "days of utmost suffering were the days when God visited his people to bring them to Jesus Christ". Fornberg characterized Pernow's reflections on "utmost suffering" as "naïve"⁵⁴ and clearly disapproves of Pernow's thinking.

I would agree with Fornberg that Pernow's missionary theology was "old", in the sense that Pernow was reflecting a way of thinking that was probably more common in the 19th century. However, the term "old" does not provide sufficient explanation and apparently these views were still alive in 1943. I would also hesitate to characterise Pernow's thinking in *Kan juda-folket räddas?* as "naïve". The striking element in Pernow's thinking on the Jewish suffering under the Nazi regime was his way of justifying both activity and passivity when faced with the suffering of the Jews. Below I will continue my own analysis of Pernow. This combination of activity and passivity is central to an understanding of him.

In 1975 Lars Edvardsson published a book on the first 100 years of SvIM, which he defended as a doctoral thesis at Lund University. Although rich in details, the thesis has no clear analytic focus. I use it as a source of information, but I have found several details that ought to have been checked more thoroughly. For instance, Edvardsson argued that SvIM admired and supported the State of Israel in the 1950's. This is correct, but the information provided by Edvardsson to back it up is not. Referring to activities in 1951, Edvardsson argued that SvIM made "significant contributions" to Keren Kayemeth Le Israel – The United Israel Appeal (Förenade Israelinsamlingen).⁵⁵ After a brief check in the archives, I have found that the money was not sent to Keren Kayemeth Le Israel, but to Svenska Israelhjälpen, mentioned above. Edvardsson mixes Svenska Israelhjälpen and the United Israel Appeal. Thereby the story of the 75 Swedish houses sent to Kfar Achim in Israel was not noticed by Edvardsson. Edvardsson also presents astonishing facts about SvIM's work in Vienna at the Gestapo headquarters, which should have been analysed and commented on more carefully. Both

⁵³ Fornberg 2003, p. 421

⁵⁴ Fornberg 2003, p. 418

⁵⁵ Edvardsson 1976, p. 129

Pernow and Edvardsson mention the confidence that was established between the staff of SvIM in Vienna and the Gestapo headquarters in Vienna, run at the time by Adolf Eichmann. As Edvardsson says, SvIM had surprisingly good cooperation with the Nazi authorities.⁵⁶

In the fall of 1939 the [German Nazi] authorities announced they still had full confidence in the mission and its work. They even offered Svenska Israelsmissionen the opportunity to open a branch in Prague, where all Christian missions had recently been banned.⁵⁷

Pernow was obviously proud of the fact that SvIM was met with respect by Eichmann and other Nazi officials in Vienna. When Göte Hedenquist was leaving his post in Vienna on April 1, 1940 Pernow wrote a brief article in *Missionstidning för Israel*.

Through his wisdom and good manner he has won the confidence of both the [German Nazi] authorities and the public, and our mission in Vienna is now well known and respected.⁵⁸

In 1983 Hedenquist summarised what the mission achieved at the bureau for migration:

Through this work – under the name of “Schwedische Mission Stockholm, Missionsstationen Wien” – more than 3,000 Jews and Christians of Jewish descent were saved (and brought) to various countries; a couple of hundred were sent to Sweden.⁵⁹

On reading Edvardsson one becomes interested to learn more about the “curiously good cooperation” between SvIM and the Nazi authorities in Vienna and the achievement that Hedenquist described. Why would they want the respect of the Nazi authorities in 1940? One may ask if this was a necessity without which they could not bring people out of Vienna, and if so, could this ambition be combined with respect from and for victims of the Nazi atrocities? Or did Hedenquist and his colleagues in fact have respect for the authorities, be they Nazis or not? I do not find explanations in Edvardsson’s work. Hedenquist is a bit more explicit on this in his work titled “Undan förintelsen” published in 1983, but also vague as to the “curiously good co-

⁵⁶ Edvardsson 1976, p. 89. ”Ett par år framöver hade SIM ett förvånande gott samarbete med de nazistiska myndigheterna.” ”SIM” is short for Svenska Israelsmissionen.

⁵⁷ Edvardsson 1976, p. 89. ”På hösten 1939 gav myndigheterna tillkänna, att de fortfarande hyste fullt förtroende för missionen och dess arbete. De t o m erbjöd SIM att öppna en filial i Prag, där all annan missionsverksamhet tidigare hade blivit förbjuden.” SIM is short for Svenska Israelsmissionen

⁵⁸ Pernow, April 1940, p. 104. ”Genom stor klokhet och taktfullhet har han vunnit myndigheternas och allmänhetens förtroende, så att vår mission i Wien nu är allmänt känd och aktad.”

⁵⁹ Hedenquist 1983, p. 7

operation". Here he is describing several encounters with Eichmann and how the cooperation between the two unfolded. Certainly the situation was problematic for SvIM.⁶⁰ But, as I have chosen just to mention, but not focus on, SvIM's years in Vienna, the task of thoroughly analysing the cooperation between a Swedish mission to the Jews and Eichmann in Vienna still remains.

Among historians SvIM is mentioned in 1987 by Steven Koblik, who was investigating Sweden's attitudes toward the Third Reich. Koblik argued that SvIM was the Church of Sweden's authority on the "Jewish question."⁶¹ Koblik makes some reflections on SvIM's work and theology which are correct. He is describing Pernow's attitude to Jews as ambivalent⁶² and that ambivalence is further discussed and also explained via my analysis of Pernow's theology. Koblik also showed that there was competition and even animosity between SvIM and the Jewish organisations in Vienna. Koblik said: one struggled for the same individual's souls, even when these individuals were being systematically murdered.⁶³ According to Koblik' SvIM helped the Christian Jews while Jewish organisations helped the Jews.⁶⁴

Based on a citation from SvIM's annual report in 1939, Ingvar Svanberg (1953–) and Mattias Tydén (1963–) have argued, correctly that SvIM knew that the Jews faced a catastrophe in Nazi Europe.⁶⁵ In their book they have included several statements by SvIM. While the book is most valuable as an encyclopaedia of statements in Sweden on the Nazi genocide, it does not endeavour to assess the significance of SvIM's or any other organisation's theology on anti-Semitism or Zionism.

Alan R. Brockway and the Love of Jews

Alan R. Brockway has written about the history of the International Mission Council (IMC) Committee for Christian Approach to the Jews (IMCCCAJ). The reason for this choice is the close connection between SvIM and IMCCCAJ, demonstrated by the fact that Birger Pernow was centrally placed in IMCCCAJ for several years from the 1930's until the late 1940's. Still I find no compelling reason to use Brockway's analysis in my work.

⁶⁰ Hedenquist 1983, p. 39-40

⁶¹ Koblik 1987, p. 9 & p. 88

⁶² Koblik 1987, p. 114. "Pernow blev aldrig kvitt sin ambivalenta inställning till judarna."

⁶³ Koblik 1987, p. 117. "Att fientligheterna fortsatte var därför knappast förvånansvärt – man kämpade om samma individers själar till och med då dessa individer höll på att systematiskt mördas."

⁶⁴ Koblik 1987, p. 117

⁶⁵ Svanberg & Tydén 1997, p. 200-201

Brockway's overall ambition is to focus on the theological significance for Christians to view the Jews not only as individuals, but as a people. His study includes several discussions on Christian missionary theology, on anti-Semitism and some reflections on the State of Israel. But, alas, his discussion on the way the Christian missions perceived Jews – as individuals or as a people – is more theologically normative than analytical. Also, the way he discusses the Jewish state in relation to the Jewish people – or to Palestinian Arabs – neglects to give a background in First World War politics or in the European national ideals and its colonial expansion. When anti-Semitism and the Christians' approach to Jews in this period are studied I think the theologian will benefit by viewing the theological language from the perspective of nationalism and national ideology. In the absence of an ideological context Brockway's reflections are eager to denounce anti-Semitism, but not really able to say why.

In his overview of the Christian mission to Jews, Brockway mentions Pastor Otto von Harling, head of the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum. It was a close counterpart of SvIM's, and therefore Brockway's reference to von Harling is of some importance to my work.

In 1932 Pastor Otto von Harling, argued that "In every country there is a limit for the absorption or the digestion of Jews."⁶⁶ To von Harling one million Jewish refugees in Poland would be too much for that country to "digest". The presence of too many Jews was felt, von Harling said, especially "where they penetrate into the system of the spiritual organism with the same energy as they do in the economic and political regions of the people. This is especially the case in Germany."⁶⁷ Pastor von Harling referred to Jews in Germany as an influx of Eastern Jews who had "made themselves rich by thrift and cunning speculation", and he argued that Jews in Germany belonged largely to the "political left". Pastor von Harling acknowledged that Jews had contributed to German culture, but he said that much in Jewish life was "foreign to the spirit of the German people". Unfortunately Brockway did not analyse why Harling argued that there could be too many Jews in Poland. In order to do so he could have analysed the national ideologies present at the time. Also Brockway did not ask why Jews were seen as "foreign to the spirit of the German people" or link it with that particular idea in the Romantic national ideal. Instead, Brockway is denouncing von Harling's words as: "blatant justifications of antisemitism".⁶⁸ We may agree with Brockway, but still, in this way Brockway's analysis of the Christian mission's love for Jews becomes normative more than analytical and he does not explain but he approves or disapproves.

⁶⁶ Brockway 1992, p. 32

⁶⁷ Brockway 1992, p. 33

⁶⁸ Brockway 1992, p. 33

When Brockway argues more analytically, he compares theological expressions in the studied mission. And in the synopsis he concludes that his study on IMCCCAJ “documents the change from a theology that focused exclusively on Jews as individuals to an awareness of ‘the Jews’ as the Jewish people, who remain the Chosen People of God (though still in need of the gospel of Christ).”⁶⁹ To Brockway this shift was brought about by Conrad Hoffman, director of IMCCCAJ when he was introducing the parish approach into IMCCCAJ. I will describe the parish approach thinking below, but before doing so, Brockway’s results are an interesting comment to Anna Besserman’s (below) analysis of SvIM in Sweden. She argued that SvIM did not view Jews as individuals but as members of a group, and in doing so SvIM are in opposition to central themes in the enlightenment. Also Brockway could be seen as in opposition to Hoekendijk, see more on this below. Brockway, on the other hand argued that the missionary movement had focused too much on Jews as individuals, and neglected the theological significance of Jews as a people.

In 1945 Conrad Hoffman held a series of conferences in the United States on the parish approach theology to Jews, and to Hoffman this theology implied:

the inclusion of the Jews into the normal ministry of the local church rather than the exclusion of the Jews from such ministry or singling out of Jews for special ministry.⁷⁰

Hoffman suggested several organisational ways through which the parish approach could be brought into practice. And through his ambitions, the parish approach reaffirmed “the validity of Jewish Evangelism”, that is, Christian evangelism directed towards Jews. Following Brockway one source of influence behind the parish approach came from missionary work in India in the 1920’s. It is reported that in India:

whole families and social groups were admitted into the church together, in a way natural to the organization of Indian society, where the individual is subordinated to his caste group or family.⁷¹

In its Basle meeting in 1947 the IMCCCAJ motivated the importance of the parish approach with references to the Second World War, it said:

The Church as a whole must confess that its witness and protest were not vigorous enough to prevent the barbaric persecution of Jews in Europe. Its indifference to the moral and spiritual needs of the Jews is equally blameworthy. The best reparation it can make is to recognize the evangelization of the

⁶⁹ Brockway 1992. Synopsis

⁷⁰ Brockway 1992, p. 53

⁷¹ Brockway 1992, p. 52

Jews as the responsibility and task of the whole church, and in all its denominations it must organize and equip itself to carry out this task.⁷²

Hoffman himself had yet other motives for advocating the parish approach to Jews. He believed that existing mission organisations to the Jews were “so fundamentalist and independent of churches as to be more of a hindrance than a help to evangelism.” The mission societies he knew about could not sustain themselves without support from churches. And while missions to the Jews were of vital importance to Hoffman, it was still, according to Brockman too low on the priority scale to attract sufficient spiritual and financial support from the majority of Christians.⁷³

Brockway argued that the central reason behind this was, “tragically” that the missionary movement was influenced too much by the individual thinking of the enlightenment to be able to raise the awareness necessary “to counter racial and political anti-Semitism, with its negative emphasis on Jewish people (“race”), when the latter came into power in the Third Reich”.⁷⁴ Had the Christian missions, according to Brockway, seen the Jews as a people and not as individuals, they would have had a better awareness and they would have been better equipped to counter “racial and political anti-Semitism”. It is hard to tell if Brockway is right, but aside from that this comment exemplifies how important he thinks theology and the Christian mission were as factors in society.

Brockway went on in his critique of the ecumenical churches and missions, and he identified again, the individualist – enlightenment - thinking as one reason why churches were not able to theologically oppose anti-Semitism:

Though Christian opposition to antisemitism could only be of benefit to the welfare of Jews, it provided a way for the Church to sweep the theological significance of the Jewish people under the carpet.⁷⁵

To Brockway Christian opposition to anti-Semitism, and Christian criticism of anti-Semitism as a violation of human rights and anti-Semitism as a barrier to conversion, was laudable, but to him it was done on the wrong preconditions. To Brockway this critique neglected the true core of the matter. To Brockway, this critique of anti-Semitism based on human rights was “a substitute for wrestling with the critical issue of the theological significance of the Jewish people for Christian self-understanding”.⁷⁶ In order to

⁷² Brockway 1992, p. 54

⁷³ Brockway 1992, p. 56

⁷⁴ Brockway 1992, p. 71

⁷⁵ Brockway 1992, p. 71

⁷⁶ Brockway 1992, p. 71

strengthen his argument Brockway made use of motives behind medieval persecution of Jews, and he argued:

Misguided as it was, medieval persecution of Jews because the Jewish people had “killed God” nevertheless took the Jewish people with theological seriousness, as the missionary movement, by and large, did not.⁷⁷

Brockway recognised that missionaries acknowledged the debt Christians owed to Jews, and he appreciated that Judaism was recognised as a “good religion”, but to him it was a great loss that Christian missions to the Jews were not based on the same theological grounds as had been the case in earlier periods of church history. That is to say he was lacking an emphasis on the theological significance of the Jews as a people. To Brockway earlier periods of persecution of Jews was a bad thing, but still, contemporary missionary societies should learn from those Christians who argued that the Jews’ collective neglect of Jesus as Messiah has to be taken into consideration. I cannot fully follow Brockway’s logic on this point. I realise it is important to him, but his arguments are too vague on this crucial matter. Brockway argued that Christian missions should include into their theology a critical self-reflection based on the fact that after 2000 years, the Jewish people still exist and there are Jews who have not accepted Jesus as Messiah. He said:

The existence of the Jewish people as testimony that Jesus could not possibly have been the messiah, for instance, did not enter into their discussion.⁷⁸

Here Brockway is arguing rather similarly to Birger Pernow and others in SvIM who focus Jews as a people. We shall see how this is of great theological significance for Pernow. And to Brockway it is a great loss for the Church that it does not acknowledge what Brockway vaguely calls the theological significance of viewing the Jews as a people. To him Hoffman brought “a new dimension to the missionary enterprise when he insisted on the parish approach”. To Brockway, the parish approach has implications for the Christian mission organisations’ theology, self reflection, and for their relationship with Churches and with Jews. And to him, writing in 1992, these perspectives did not come to fruition until well after the Second World War, “and even in the 1990’s has not reached maturity”.⁷⁹ In my interpretation, Brockway is defending and reiterating central themes in the type of Christian mission theology exemplified in this study by Birger Pernow.

⁷⁷ Brockway 1992, p. 71

⁷⁸ Brockway 1992, p. 71-72

⁷⁹ Brockway 1992, p. 72

While choosing from the vast spread of literature I would like to mention another three authors who have proved useful in my effort to analyse SvTI and its founders: Anna Besserman, Herbert Tingsten and Werner Ustorf.

Anna Besserman, Herbert Tingsten and Werner Ustorf

Historian Anna Besserman (1950-1997) has described SvIM in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Besserman argued that many people in SvIM regarded suffering among Jews as a judgement of God.⁸⁰ Besserman has shown that SvIM regarded the Jews as a special people and not a collective made up of individuals. She said that SvIM believed that immanent promises were given to Jews by God, and that these promises were going to be fulfilled at the end of all time.⁸¹ She noticed that in SvIM's view of history God's will was a driving force whereas economic and political interests were not.⁸² SvIM expressed a normative emphasis on "Christian" moral virtues. In her material Besserman found that SvIM saw itself as "both a theological necessity and a civilising blessing for orthodox Jews."⁸³ SvIM's emphasis on Jews as a people – and not individuals – made Besserman characterise SvIM as being in opposition to crucial ideas emanating from the Enlightenment.⁸⁴

Political scientist and newspaper publisher Herbert Tingsten (1896-1973) argued that European nationalism sought universal harmony in a world of free, distinct peoples. When the French crossed the Rhine during the revolutionary war, they did so to liberate all peoples, he said. When Fichte raised the German banner against the conquerors he found, Tingsten said, that which is truly German is also universally human. Tingsten continued:

This (the French and German) vocational nationalism (kallelse nationalism), influenced by Judaism, inspired Zionism in due time.⁸⁵

To Tingsten European nations owed part of their content to Judaism. After having been nurtured by the triumph of Western liberal democracy in the 19th century, this idea was re-emerging among the Jews in the shape of Zionism. As Jews had their own traditions and their own religion, could they not

⁸⁰ Besserman 1991, p. 53

⁸¹ Besserman 1991, p. 72

⁸² Besserman 1991, p. 62

⁸³ Besserman 1991, p. 70

⁸⁴ Besserman 1991, p. 72

⁸⁵ Tingsten 1957, p. 13. "då fransmännen gick över Rhen under revolutionskriget var det i mänsklighetens tjänst, för att frigöra alla folk, och då Fichte reste tyskhetens baner mot erövrarna, såg han på samma sätt det sant tyska i det allmänmänskliga. Denna kallelse nationalism, påverkad av judendomen, inspirerade i sin tur sionismen."

be considered a (national) people too, in spite of their loss of a common language, Tingsten asked? And he asked, were the Jews not a particular people from which the dominant ideas of a national vocation could be traced, also in its modern sense? Tingsten had reached a conclusion that indicated there was something irreconcilable in the type of nationalism he was discussing:

Was not the antagonism inevitable between peoples of the European states and the Jewish people in their midst, just as it had been between Christians and Jews? ⁸⁶

I am intrigued by Tingsten's notion that the antagonism between the different peoples of Europe and Jews was as inevitable as the antagonism between Christians and Jews, or between Christendom and Judaism. If there is something to it, we will need to consider how religions and nations are interrelated in Europe. Tingsten comes close to the "billiard ball state" that Samuel P. Huntington found in the Peace Treaty of Westphalia 1648. ⁸⁷ In this view (European) billiard ball nation states, are internally homogeneous entities where religion, language, culture and land possession make them more or less predestined to separation.

Professor of Mission Studies Werner Ustorf (1945-) has highlighted the significance of the romantic concept of people or **Volk** as one key component in understanding German mission theology. This hint at German theology comments on the fact that SvIM was established with significant intellectual influence from German Lutheran theology. Referring to research conducted by Johannes Christian Hoekendijk and published in 1948, Ustorf argued that:

The so-called German approach to missionary work, with its specific emphasis on ethnic ideas (*Volk* and *Volkskirche*) and its attempt to erode the distinction between Church and *Volk* did not help in preparing resistance (against the Nazis); rather it expressed an affinity with fundamental elements in the Third Reich's ideology. Hoekendijk had diagnosed in German missiology an endeavour to preserve a pre-modern way of life and to legitimize it by means of a normative theology of creation based not on the Bible but on something else. ⁸⁸

In Lutheran Church history, at least two names in the 20th century are proponents of a missionary zeal for whom culture was central: Christian Keysser and Bruno Gutmann. In Hoekendijk's analysis they were representatives of this 19th century paradigm **Volkschristianisierung**, which implied conver-

⁸⁶ Tingsten 1957, p. 15. "Och var inte motsättningar mellan Europas statsfolk och det judiska folket i deras krets ofrånkomlig, likaväl som tidigare mellan kristna och judar?"

⁸⁷ Huntington 1997, p. 35

⁸⁸ Ustorf 2000, p. 18

sion of the entire population, though individual conversion was not excluded. In their mission theology **Volk** had two connotations: “(1) a spatial interpretation of universal salvation, or the claim to fill the total atmosphere of (every) nation’s life with Christian air; and (2) a part of nature itself or of a God-created order and therefore to be perfected rather than confronted by the Gospel. Hoekendijk called this high esteem of the concept of Volk and of Volkstum a “romantic ethnopathos.”⁸⁹ The romantic idea of people and nation is one recurring component of this theology. The idea of “people” in mission was also important in Sweden in the late 19th century, as we shall see below.

Sources

In this study I have chosen to make use of a few unpublished sources such as letters together with a good number of published sources, because I find it important to observe material that is publicly accessible. The majority of the articles are published in Swedish magazines and daily papers, first of all in *Missionstidning för Israel* – “Swedish Mission Journal for Israel”. It was the monthly magazine of a 19th Century Swedish missionary society, Svenska Israelsmissionen, the Swedish Israel Mission. From 1874 to 1942 this publication was called *Missionstidning för Israel*. From 1943 until 1966 the name of the periodical was *Svenska Israelsmissionen: missionstidning för Israel*, that is “The Swedish Israel Mission: Mission Journal for Israel”. From 1966 to 1970 the name was *Tidskriften Svenska Israelsmissionen*, “The Swedish Israel Mission Journal”. The name changes of the mission agency itself and its journal would be an interesting topic for analysis, but I refrain from doing so. Throughout my work the journal will simply be called Mission Journal for Israel, i.e. *Missionstidning för Israel*.

Some of my source material consists of radio programs, produced by the official, public agency, Sveriges Radio och Television, SR or SVT. All this source material can be found at the National Library of Sweden, now the Audiovisual Media Department, until recently Statens ljud och bildarkiv – The Swedish National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images.

Some of my source material is not published but has been available for my research. The Harald Sahlin family archives are most important for the study of the early years of the SvIM around the few crucial years before and after the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel, in May 1948 a sovereign state, after the First World War part of the British Mandate Palestine. Members of the Sahlin family have been most helpful. They have dug deep in the archive material and have been able to provide me with both

⁸⁹ Ustorf 2000, p. 20

detailed insights and wide perspectives that have proved fruitful for historical analysis.

As a secular parallel to the Christian Svenska Israelsmissionen, the secular Svenska Israelhjälpen (The Swedish help to Israel) can be studied. It was organised after World War II. Between the two Swedish Israel-directed organisations both similarities and differences can be observed. These two organisations are linked to each other via some leading individual members. The archive of Svenska Israelhjälpen can be found at Bohusläns Föreningssarkiv, Uddevalla, Sweden. The most prominent leader of Svenska Israelhjälpen with broad contacts in the Swedish society was Waldemar Svensson. He donated his private archive to the public Bohusläns Föreningssarkiv. The staff at this archive in Uddevalla has helped me to trace and find valuable and relevant manuscripts of various types, for which I am very grateful.

Unpublished correspondence of Professor H.S. Nyberg and of Archbishop Yngve Brilioth are at Uppsala university library.

The main archive of the Church of Sweden is located in Uppsala. This is where one can find the archives of Svenska Israelsmissionen. There is a lot of material emanating from the Svenska Israelsmissionen itself, but there is little about the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem, the main concern of this study. Stefan Kardell was the archivist in charge in the winter and early spring of 2004. He made a visit to Jerusalem, during which he organised the local SvTI archives. He advised me to go to Jerusalem, because the archive at SvTI was rather substantial in relation to the approach of my research.

In April 2004 I went to Jerusalem to see the archive of SvTI but when I arrived I was informed by SvTI's director Tina Hettner Blomquist that the archive had recently been transferred to Uppsala. While in Jerusalem I had to contact the Uppsala archive in order to find out what had happened. The archivist told me that some relevant archive material for my research purposes was reportedly left at a specified place at SvTI, which the director eventually remembered. I was allowed to see some files, from which I learned some important things. However it was not as much as I had expected, since I do not know how much of the total archive was shown to me.

The focus of my research is not the day-to-day activities of the Swedish Theological Institute itself. My question is how theological and political or ideological issues were discussed. Therefore, for the time being, I have not tried to dig deeper into the entire archives of the Swedish Theological Institute.

An overview of the book

The initial chapter of this book describes the problem to be dealt with, which in brief relates to a common idea among Christians in Sweden; that Jews living in Europe belong in Palestine and Israel. Strangely enough, you may think, the right of Palestinian Arabs to belong in Palestine is almost totally neglected among SvTI and its founders. Another side of the problem is that while Jews, according to many Christians in Sweden, belong in Palestine or in Israel, the concept of Jewish belonging or Jews' right to belong in Europe is not at all stressed. Tentatively one could assume that to SvTI and its founders, the fact that Jews belong in Europe was so self-evident that it needed no emphasis. But the frequent use of "return" to Palestine as a description of the desired action among Jews indicates a lost ideal place or home.

In order to analyse these ideas, three analytical perspectives have been formulated:

- A. History. How did SvTI and its founders interpret the driving forces in historical processes? A distinction will be made between a **superstitious** and a **secular** approach to history.
- B. Biblical text. Are biblical narratives read **apocalyptically** or **poetically**?
- C. National ideology. When the studied Swedish Christians think about "people" – what do they imply? Do they employ a **romantic** concept of a people and the nation-state close to the German Volkstum - or do they think of a **republican** concept of a people and the nation-state?

Once this analytical model has been introduced, I will describe some previous research in the field, observing its source material, remembering the sources I have at my disposal.

In the second chapter I present more of my theoretical approaches to religion, nation and people, three crucial concepts in this work. The term "fundamentalism" is much used on the international scene, in religious as well as in political science. By and large but not totally I agree, e.g., with the conclusions and theoretical presumptions of the international Chicago research project: *Fundamentalisms Observed*. Still I have chosen "apocalyptic" as my analytical term for characterising a certain type of Christianity that I have identified. In order to be able to pursue my analysis I have decided to take as a point of departure the idea that religion can be regarded as long-lived responses to human suffering with an aesthetic quality, rather than a piece of information, hard facts or a series of distinct values. I take as a starting point the position which is my own variety of a historic-materialistic approach, as opposed to an idealistic one. Hence, I argue that values may be present in traditions but each generation and each social context will change and shape these values. Regarding value changes I tend to agree with Welzel &

Deutsch below. But, as Benedict Anderson has said, religions are long-lived, and in this way they are exceptions. The main theoretical influence in this work is Hannah Arendt's analysis of the origins of anti-Semitism in European history. I rely on her for my use of "superstitious" as an analytic term. Her analysis is applicable as an analytical tool, when I analyse origins of support for the Jewish state within SvTI and its founders.

Chapter three is a brief history of SvIM and its mission work in relation to Jews. It started in 1875 when Christian missions from Europe expanded or swarmed all over the world. Europe expanded in many ways, militarily, economically, ideologically and theologically. The small European replicas erected in the countryside of Africa, Asia and elsewhere were innumerable. Members of pious churches, driven by a seemingly infinite fervour, risked their own lives to preach the Gospel abroad. Their contribution to local cultural and religious life, economy and ideology, military expansion and intelligence work organised by cunning foreign officers is complex. In some apologetic works they are supposed to have brought respect for human rights and mostly good things, while in other works they are part and parcel of the "Scramble for Africa" on the entire continent in all its violent aspects. This work is only a small contribution to that larger discussion of interaction between religion, mission and politics.

In chapter four I introduce the SvTI and its founders, and I present a brief introduction to the Swedish political scene around 1950, with regard to Swedish policy on the State of Israel. SvIM was rather active in Svenska Israelhjälpen, a broad Swedish aid to the Jewish state that resulted in 75 Swedish houses from Aneby in Småland, being sent to Israel. The chapter indicates that there are complex interconnections between Sweden and the fate of Palestinian Arabs previously living in Qastina, the name of the Arab village where the Swedish houses were built, later (and still now) called Kfar Achim. Sweden is also connected to the Jews who previously lived in Europe, those who were incarcerated in Bergen-Belsen and later brought to Sweden on the White Buses and after some time moved to Kfar Achim, the village where the Swedish houses were built on the land of Qastina.

The fifth chapter contains a presentation on Greta Andrén, Birger Pernow, Harald Sahlin, Hans Kosmala and H.S. Nyberg. The presentations are only sketches of these personalities. I do not focus on the individuals personally but on them as public actors and on the significance of their professional background or platform, respectively, and, their theological conceptions. To give all of them full justice as characters, intensive studies would have to be done and that is outwitting the scope of this book.

In chapters six to ten I describe and analyse some of the main traits of the thought processes and actions of those five individuals, primarily their thinking in relation to the significance of the Nazi genocide, the character of the State of Israel, and also the fate of the Palestinian refugees.

Greta Andrén was a leading lady in the work. She was an organiser of good will with specific goals to achieve. She seems to have dominated parts of the scene when SvTI took shape.

Birger Pernow was a knowledgeable and respected apocalyptic Christian who scrutinises his period of time and its social context, looking for signs that would help him interpret history. Time and circumstances do change and influence ones thinking, values and even ones ideas of what is factual. But Pernow's commentary is rather persistent.

Harald Sahlin is what I call an almost poetic, intellectual theologian. He is the only one in the source material to stress the relevance of giving the Arabs a voice. Also Sahlin is the only one to support the idea that Jews may belong in Europe. I have merely indicated how to determine his theology vis-à-vis Jews and Judaism in his own intellectual Lutheran milieu. Others can go deeper. Sahlin worked less than one year in Jerusalem, and he had no time to develop a theology of his own concerning the Christian question of the roles of the Jews in the salvation history. Comparisons remain an open problem.

Hans Kosmala appears as a European intellectual, firmly convinced of the superiority of Christianity. In this he finds comrades in SvIM and in SvTI. He also wants Christians to atone for the atrocities committed by Christians against Jews over time. In this way he risks cementing old social constellations and makes their survival the necessary preconditions for future moral and ideological change. It is a difficult equation.

H.S. Nyberg is the intellectual giant who is was chair of SvTI from 1955 to 1971, and who cooperating smoothly with Pernow and the other apocalyptic Christians. His cooperation with SvIM gave SvTI, at least in public, an intellectual legitimacy, a respected position in the intellectual life of Sweden and Israel. In his own time he was almost never questioned thanks to his vast knowledge.

In the eleventh chapter I have concluded the study.

The results of this study indicate that among SvTI and its founder's Christian theology is produced in close conjunction with ideology and politics. This conclusion becomes compelling, even unavoidable, when the use of the word "people" among the studied key figures is observed. As mentioned above, there are two main connotations attached to "people" or "folk" in Swedish, "Volk" in German; one is cultural and the other is political. The cultural one is sometimes connected with the nation-state in the romantic national ideal. In the studied material, almost without exception, when the word "people" is read in biblical text it is interpreted with a romantic national ideal as an explicit or implicit normative framework. Also, there are

indications that theology interpreting “people” in conjunction with the romantic concept of a nation does not see Jews – or Palestinian Arabs for that matter – as individuals with individual traits and individual rights but rather as a people, a collective composition. It seems collective traits – both appreciative and less desirable traits - are cemented in the way they use “people”.

In order to be able to identify how the romantic national ideal includes culture and religion, one must first accept that religion and culture are separate entities and that religion alone does not provide norms or ideology of society. I have argued that religion and theology are not the sole, or not even the main, sources of norms, values and rituals in society, because norms and values are the result of complex social processes where religion plays a role, but is not the prime motivation of values.

Research results

SvTI and its founders tend to consider Jews to have a common tribal origin in Palestine. Sometimes it is assumed that God has a plan in which the return of the Jews to Palestine/Israel is paramount. According to Hannah Arendt, this idea shares several common traits with race-thinking in Germany after the 1814 war. In that period race-thinking insisted on a common tribal origin as an essential aspect of nationhood, the second was the romantic idea of innate personality and natural nobility.⁹⁰ The normative idea that the Jews should leave Europe and return to a place where they are said to have their tribal origin, is rather similar to aspects of early 19th century European anti-Semitism. In order to identify ideological components in religion one is helped by making an analytic distinction between religion and values, and to focus on the interaction between religion and society at large instead of making religion the sole source of values. This is a theoretical approach which I believe ought to be more widely employed. In Western academia there are presently strong currents trying to create differences between “Christian” values and values presumably emanating from other religions. But if values are changed in conjunction with a country’s level of technology, the claim that Western society is somehow Christian in its values has to be re-addressed. Sweden, in 1950(the post Second World War period), was on its way out of a traditional agrarian society and heading towards a period of rapid industrial and technical progress and unprecedented economic growth. The ruins of post-war Europe were rebuilt with Swedish tools, steel, timber etc. It was a period during which respect for individual human rights became more and more accepted, at least in principle. The Christian theology that I have studied, the apocalyptic and pro-Israeli one, in particular, as indicated by Anna Besserman, provides a reservoir of normative ideals that are in opposition to central ideas in the Enlightenment. I will suggest it also provide a

⁹⁰ Arendt 1968, p. 170

reservoir for pre-democratic ideals. In this work I merely indicate that (1) a separation between religion and values, and (2) an analysis of connotations attached to “people” can be one way ahead to a more thorough study of the complex interaction between values, economic development, politics, rituals, religion and theology.

Terminology - Jew, Arab, Palestinian, Israel/Israeli, Christian, Muslim and anti-Semitism

In this work we discuss how terms like “Jew,” “Arab,” “Christian,” “Muslim,” “anti-Semitism,” “Palestine” and “Israel” are constructed. Within the religions themselves the origins of these terms have been widely discussed. According to Halakha a Jew is a person who is born to a Jewish mother or has converted to Judaism. The Jewish Orthodox Rabbinic authorities claim that only they may decide on Halakhik issues, and the internal Jewish debate on who is a Jew is rather lively.⁹¹ The discussion of who is a Jew has implication on several levels, not just religious ones. In 1958 the Prime Minister of Israel at the time, David Ben-Gurion (1886-1973), wrote a letter which was sent to “Jewish scholars in Israel and abroad.” The issue at the heart of the letter was the control of immigration to the State of Israel, in particular: Who has a right to immigrate to the state? Ben-Gurion referred to the State of Israel’s contemporary political situation, which he called the “special situation” when he wrote:

A non-Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel must receive permission to do so, and the state is empowered to withhold such permission. If he settles in the country he may become a citizen of Israel only by naturalization, which he can request after two years residence. A Jew however, is entitled to settle in Israel according to the Law of Return by virtue of the fact that he is a Jew (if he is not an habitual criminal who is liable to endanger the public welfare suffering from a disease liable to endanger the public health), and as soon as he settles in it he becomes, automatically, an Israeli citizen.⁹²

In the quotation David Ben-Gurion interpreted the implications of the Law of Return, adopted by the Knesset in Israel on 5 July 1950⁹³. The significance of “Who is a Jew?” is explicitly related to the issue of “infiltrators,” “hostile neighbouring countries,” or whether Arab refugees – for instance from Qastina – should have a right to return to their villages. This right is not granted but the state of Israel grants all Jews the right to immigrate to it as a “centre for the ingathering of the exiles.” The primary aim of this work is not

⁹¹ *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life and Thought*. Carta Jerusalem. 1996. p 220

⁹² Ben-Gurion 1970, p. 12

⁹³ Rolef 1993, p. 193

to investigate the Jewish discussions on who is a Jew, but rather how certain individuals from Sweden and Europe interpreted Europe's history, the role of Jews in history, the State of Israel and Palestinian Arab refugees.

An Arab is a person whose mother tongue is Arabic.⁹⁴ An Arab may believe in Islam, Christianity or Judaism. Hence, in relation to religion the term "Arab" includes people of all religious affiliations. According to this definition of Arab it is possible to be a Jew and speak Arabic or to be an Arab and a Christian at the same time. A Christian is a person who is born into a life of Christian tradition or has chosen to enter into it. The way that individuals formulate their faith differs widely. The word "Muslim" implies people who follow Islam, and Islam is the teachings that are given in the Koran and in the Sunna – the traditions.⁹⁵ "Israel" is clearly central in this work and as such we must define the term "Israel". According to *Nationalencyklopedin*, a widely available encyclopaedia in Sweden, the word "Israel", as used in the Old Testament, has four meanings: (1) the Patriarch Jacob whose name was changed to Israel, and he is assumed to be the people's progenitor, (2) the people of Israel, comprising twelve tribes, which is the term's most common meaning in the Old Testament, (3) the kingdom in Palestine under Saul, David and Salomon, (4) the northern kingdom in Palestine which was the result of the split from Judah and Benjamin.⁹⁶ The *Nationalencyklopedin* also gives the definition as the state called Israel – Medinat Yisra'el, established in 1948.⁹⁷ In Jewish sources Israel is sometimes given three separate meanings: (1) Jacob the patriarch who changed his name to Israel, (2) the land of the patriarch and his descendants – the land of Israel, (3) the third and the lowest grouping of the Jewish people: the first being the Cohanim, the second being the Levites, and the third being Israel.⁹⁸ Occasionally Christians call themselves the New Israel, which has a wide range of connotations, some of which are mentioned in this work, among them, the significance of "Israel" in the name of "Svenska Israelsmissionen." As to my terminology, "Israel" before the establishment of the Jewish State of Israel on May 15, 1948, signified the Jewish people. After that date "Israel" represents either the Jewish people or the State of Israel. In day to day language people use "Israel" to talk about the Jewish state and the whole Jewish people, so at the risk of sounding too formal I avoid this confusion by using the term "State of Israel" when I refer to the Jewish state called Israel. I find it important to differentiate between the State of Israel and the Jewish people. An Israeli is a person who is citizen in the State of Israel. She or he could be Jew, Arab, Christian or Muslim.

⁹⁴ *Nationalencyklopedin* 1993, Första bandet. p. 471. "Det gemensamma är i första hand det arabiska modersmålet och i andra hand den islamiska religionen".

⁹⁵ Hjärpe 1990, p. 56

⁹⁶ *Nationalencyklopedin* 1993, Nionde bandet. p. 620

⁹⁷ *Nationalencyklopedin* 1993, Nionde bandet. p. 622

⁹⁸ *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Life and Thought*. Carta Jerusalem. 1996. p. 210

“Christian Zionism” is a term commonly used when relations between Christians and the Jewish state are discussed, however, I will not use it in this work. It is used for instance by Lester Wikström, Rosemary Radford Ruether and Donald M. Lewis. The main reason for not using it here is my conviction that Zionism is a Jewish national ideology created by Jews for Jews. Therefore “Christian Zionism” is a contradiction in terms. Others have used Christian pro-Zionism to denote Christian support for Israel. This terminology could be justified, but the thinking of SvTI and Svenska Israelsmissionen still cannot be termed Christian pro-Zionism. The term is too narrow to encompass the complex mix of methods used, in the material, to interpret the history, nationalism and religious text involved when Christians develop a particular interest in Jews and Jewish nationalism. Also the term is assuming that an ideology may have a religious basis, which I question. As mentioned I believe one should separate values and religion. Zionism and Judaism on the other hand are not studied here. Zionism is a multifaceted set of ideologies which has been formulated in various national contexts, and which displays a wide variety of ideologies, ranging from the socialist Ben-Gurion via the spiritual Asher Zvi Ginzberg (who took the name Ahad Ha’am), to a right wing poet and violent politician like Zvi Jabotinsky. For a good overview in Swedish I recommend *Det förlorade landet* by Göran Rosenberg.⁹⁹

“Anti-Semitism ” is a word which occurs frequently in this work and is defined by Helen Fein, as described in *Återkomsten* by Henrik Bachner:

I propose to define anti-Semitism as a persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs toward Jews as a collective manifested in individuals as attitudes, and in culture as myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery, and in actions – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews.¹⁰⁰

Fein’s academic work on anti-Semitism is frequently used in Sweden, for instance by Bachner and Karin Kvist Geverts, who also has described anti-Semitism as a “latent structure.”¹⁰¹ By and large I agree with the definition suggested by Fein, but I also have some criticisms of it. I agree that anti-Semitism is a phenomenon that expresses itself in “hostile beliefs toward Jews as a collective manifested in individuals as attitudes, and in culture as myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery, and in actions – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or de-

⁹⁹ Rosenberg 1996, p. 25ff

¹⁰⁰ Fein 1987, p. 67. The quotation is used in Swedish translation in Bachner, Henrik: *Återkomsten, Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945*. Natur och Kultur, Stockholm 1999. p. 28

¹⁰¹ Kvist 2008, p. 259

stroy Jews as Jews.” However, admittedly influenced by Hannah Arendt, I do not support the idea that anti-Semitism is a “persisting” or “latent” structure in society. As Arendt has shown, it is a social phenomenon which is diverse and dependent upon context. Having said this, I deplore the fact that anti-Semitism is a long lived phenomenon, and in order to explain its durability we need to look at a combination of interpretations of history, biblical text and national ideology, which is what I am attempting to do with this work. I would like to suggest that we view anti-Semitism as a social phenomenon that is ideologically motivated, sometimes theologically justified and it could be, as Arendt suggests, part of national politics where groups are continuously constructed and deconstructed, as well as included or excluded in wider structures. Politics is the distribution of tangible and intangible values, and as such it is an ongoing struggle for influence, power, wealth, etc., among social groups and individuals. My interest is not to state the existence of something latent, such as eternity, but to explain the phenomenon in relation to tangible parameters. Locating a social phenomenon in the eternal realm, outside of time, runs the risk of making no one responsible, and we cannot do away with eternal structures, even if we want to.

A contribution to the discussion on anti-Semitism in Christian theology

In *Återkomsten* Henrik Bachner gives a good description of the type of Christianity that I have termed superstitious and apocalyptic Christianity, here formulated by among others Birger Pernow, director of Svenska Israelsmissionen. In Bachner’s interpretation of Christianity all Jews should have become Christians at the arrival of Christianity, Judaism ought to have ceased to exist with the arrival of Christianity. In Bachner’s opinion Christianity assumed that the Old Covenant was chronologically replaced by a New Covenant as a connection between God and the Christian “New Israel.” The Jews’ rejection of Jesus as Messiah was a problem to Christians as the existence of Jews delegitimized the validity of Christian faith according to Bachner. In this theology Jews were made into something alien and demonised.¹⁰² The claim by Christians that Christians have replaced Jews as God’s people Bachner calls a “replacement theology” (*ersättningsteologi*).¹⁰³ By and large, Bachner correctly describes prominent trends in apocalyptic Christianity, and in this regard I share his concern but Bachner exaggerates the normative homogeneity within Christianity: All Christianity is not replacement theology. When Bachner analyses the Christian critique of Zionism and the State of Israel he concludes that the “fundamental problem for

¹⁰² Bachner 1999, p. 22

¹⁰³ Bachner 1999, p. 318

Christian anti-Zionists was the threat constituted by the Jewish state against the truth claims formulated by replacement theology. The remaining historical role for Jews was to become Christians, not to re-establish a state in the land of Israel.”¹⁰⁴

Bachner’s analysis of Christianity does not see that there is Christian theology which has separated the biblical narratives from ideology and from historicity too, and Bachner does not see a Christian theology that reads biblical text as literature. There exists Christian theology that does not claim Christianity has replaced Judaism in history, but argues that Jews in the Bible – seen as both a collective people and individuals – are representatives of mankind. To these Christians Jews may certainly live like any other people and formulate their own political and religious agendas, and they may, both as individuals and collective, certainly be supported and criticised like all other peoples and nations. This Christian theology is sometimes called “ställföreträdande teologi” or vicarious theology. “Ställföreträdande” theology involves the assumption that biblical narratives, like other literature, may provide the readers with a point of identification and a proxy or vicarious life.¹⁰⁵ In this theology Jews are not mentioned in order to be demonised or to exemplify what should have ceased to exist. In this theology the Jew, as an individual, as a group or as a people, is seen as representing the human race and exemplifying human life. Admittedly such theology is rare in this work, but it does exist. In vicarious theology Christ was sentenced and punished by human beings, who happened to be Jews and Roman soldiers. Gösta Sandberg, a Swedish Free Church minister expresses that theology thus:

On the day of the Cross everything discloses its true nature, not with protective disguise. Human beings are what they are. Then what are they like?

One realises that even the utmost representatives of human culture are compromised. In the Jewish Council their best equipped professionals were situated. The most clear-sighted of men were judges in the wicked trial of all times.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ Bachner 1999, p. 317. ”Dock, det grundläggande problemet för de kristna antisionisterna var det hot den judiska staten utgjorde mot ersättningsteologins sanningsanspråk. Judarnas kvarvarande historiska uppgift var att bli kristna, inte att återupprätta en stat i landet Israel.”

¹⁰⁵ Axelson, Sigbert: Tro&Liv, nr 6, 2007. p. 4 ”Ånej inte var det judarna som ...” ”Vad som gått i dagen i nämnda exempel är en alldeles vanlig litterär eller filosofisk grundtanke om universell representation. Litterära eller mytiska karaktärer i poesi, romankonst eller helig skrift får representera något utöver sig själva, vem som helst eller var och en av oss. I dem ser vi oss själva. Alla var de din och min ställföreträdare i ett ständigt pågående drama, den farisé som ledde talkören i Jerusalem, Pontius Pilatus som avkunnade dödsdomen, den romerske soldat som verkställde den, Nikodemus som upplät gravplats, Marta och Maria som berättade att graven var tom. De lånade ögon, öron och röster åt dig och mig runt Jesus av Nasaret.”

¹⁰⁶ Sandberg 1964, p. 176. ”På korsets dag framträder allt i sin egentliga gestalt utan skyddande förklädnad. Människan är vad hon är. Hurudan är hon då? ... Man ser, att den mänskliga kulturens yppersta företrädare är komprometterade. I judarnas stora råd har deras bäst utrustade fackmän plats. De mest klarsynta av män har varit domare i tidsåldrarna skummaste dom.”

When humans approach the biblical text in the vicarious theology, each reader of the text may identify with different characters in the drama, just as a reader may identify with Raskolnikov, Espen Arnakke, Kafka's Joseph K, Elisabeth Bennet, the secret agent Modesty Blaise or Bella Swan in *Twilight*, etc. The text interpreted in this way is interpreted poetically, and thus transcends ideas of ethnic or tribal limitations, but is still open for identification with the individual reader. It all depends on the interaction between the reader's and the writer's intellect and mind. As human beings are vessels way larger and more beautiful on the inside, then we are on the outside, that particular interaction cannot be controlled and should not. The existence of poetic qualities, or poetic truth, is the reason that literature is read and will continue being read. We are talking about the intense urge to turn the pages of the book you are reading, or to keep watching the movie, or to read the next line in poetry etc. A theology of this poetic kind may conclude for instance, that different human beings can share common experiences, or more personally, you and I may identify with the guilt of those that sentenced and punished Socrates, Gulliver and Jesus. The point of the narrative is not that the Greeks, or the citizens of Lilliput or the Roman soldiers or the Jews are perpetrators of a crime; no, literature makes it possible for you and me to see ourselves in yet new ways. It is like watching Steven Spielberg's *ET*. Do we not all sometimes feel like fragile entities in an alien solar system? In terms of normative ideals brought from the text, it is the reader who is responsible for what he may find. I think that a poetic reading is compatible with universal human rights and placing the individual in the primary position of concern, as opposed to any particular people or political control of land above respect for human life formulated in religion. The way Rudolf Bultmann expressed it:

The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially.¹⁰⁷

In order to exemplify, I suggest that a Christian theology which supports the idea of universal human rights was produced by the Norwegian bishops in 1942 that criticised the Nazi authorities for deporting Jews. The Bishops argued that the Bible taught them "from cover to cover" that "all peoples are of the same blood."¹⁰⁸

When reading biblical text readers may deepen their understanding of life and human beings. However, as no literary text is produced without context and as no human being lives without a context where language, habits and socioeconomic factors are intertwined, a literary product cannot be "cut and

¹⁰⁷ Bultmann 1961, p. 10

¹⁰⁸ Pernow January, 1943. p. 25. "alla folk äro av samma blod".

pasted” into another historical situation. All reading of texts involves the active interplay of readers and their own normative assessments of the text. This approach to text and literature is not Christian, Muslim or Jewish or even religious *per se*, and it cannot be monopolised by any religion; it is human, and it can be found among non-religious people too.

2. Religion, nation and people - perspectives on some terminology

Religions are long-lived structures with a striking ability to outlive changing political, social and economic circumstances. Benedict Anderson (1936 -) captured the perseverance of this social phenomenon in one observation:

The extraordinary survival over thousands of years of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam in dozens of different social formations attests to their imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering – disease, mutilation, grief, age, death.¹⁰⁹

To Anderson the survival of religions – “in dozens of different social formations” - depends upon their ability to give “imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering.” In this work I use religion as an “imaginative response” to human experiences, and this includes social formations such as rites and text. Following my understanding of religion, religious text is literature, and religion is a broad expression of responses to human life. Certainly religion, as a human field of activity produces experiences and it may build traditions and foster knowledge about human experiences referred to as God or a transcendental reality. Of course human beings can have experiences that we call religious, but such experiences do not impart reliable knowledge about a transcendental reality. Also, following my interpretation of Anderson’s definition of religion, religion may, like all literature, art and social structures, produce and reproduce values or norms, but religion is just one among many structures in society that produces values and norms. Therefore, those who argue that religion is relevant just because it provides values, which in a society dominated by Christianity is sometimes termed Christian values, will have to specify exactly which values they talk about. It may well be that these “Christian” values are sometimes, and rightly so, called by other names. I will treat religion as an aesthetic genre, a variety of music, theatre, and poetry. Religion is as expansive and personal as literature, music and theatre. It is not only a private experience, e.g. funeral rites. The way these responses to the burden of suffering are shaped and changed can be understood in the way culture and narratives are shaped and changed over time. Aesthetic themes in poetry, other literature, music,

¹⁰⁹ Anderson 2006, p. 10

rites and dances have thrived in a human setting since time immemorial and moved with migrant hunters, along trade routes, with migrant workers and passed through periods of both refinement and oblivion.

Fundamentalism as term – good but still not used

In the late 1980's and 1990's it was common to discuss the interaction between religion and politics in terms of fundamentalism in religions. The social structures one tried to analyse was often political Islam in Iran or in Algeria, or Hamas in the Gaza Strip, political Hinduism like BJP, Bharatiya Janata Party, in India or rightwing Christianity in the United States. In newspapers, and among the average public, the term “fundamentalism” was often used to denote extremist religion and extremist behaviour, and in this way “fundamentalist” defined what was imbalanced or irrational, in contrast to what was balanced and rational.¹¹⁰ “Fundamentalism” has been studied academically in a broad research project at the University of Chicago, concluding that:

In the effort to reclaim the efficacy of religious life, fundamentalists have more in common than not with other religious revivalists of past centuries. But fundamentalism intends neither an artificial imposition of archaic practices and life styles nor a simple return to a golden era, a sacred past, a by-gone time of origins – although nostalgia for such an era is a hallmark of fundamentalist rhetoric. Instead *religious identity thus renewed becomes the exclusive and absolute basis for a recreated political and social order that is oriented to the future*, rather than to the past. By selecting elements of tradition and modernity fundamentalists seek to remake the world in the service of dual commitment to the unfolding eschatological drama (by returning all things in submission to the divine) and to self preservation (by neutralising the threatening “Other”).¹¹¹ (Italics mine)

In this understanding of religion, among fundamentalists, “religious identity” was given the role of an “exclusive and absolute basis for a recreated political and social order.” The Chicago project is sympathetically self-critical of its own results. It admitted that its effort to define “pure fundamentalism” was a mere “hypothetical aggregate.” The “pure” version of the social phenomenon to be studied could not be found. Additional traits of “fundamentalism,” the Chicago project argued, were “envy of the modern; the tendency to foster a sense of crisis and urgency; the flair for the dramatic and sym-

¹¹⁰ Löfgren 1995, The preface said: “Många associerar ordet fundamentalism med inskränkt-het, fanatism, intolerans, anti-intellektualism, (eller åtminstone icke-intellektualism). För andra handlar fundamentalism istället om trohet mot ideal, ett seriöst försök att i ord och handling ta sina ideal på allvar.”

¹¹¹ Appleby & Marty 1991, p. 835

bolic act.”¹¹² In order to explain the nature of fundamentalism, the Chicago project indicated the necessity of relating religion to modernity and the Enlightenment project:

...although fundamentalisms have a religious basis – and in fact claim to represent the pristine and most authentic religious impulses of the tradition – the authors of this volume consistently question that authenticity. Even while giving movements their due for compassionate and effective responses to social needs, they point out that fundamentalists narrow and rationalise the rich historical tradition at their disposal, often robbing it of its mysteries, mysticism, magical qualities, complexities, ambiguities, and situational character. For example the richly symbolic and connotative scriptural descriptions of the Final Age are often reduced by fundamentalists to denotative blueprints of the order to come, demystified in the service of detailing the concrete plan of action required for socio-political ends. In this and other examples of the “objectification” of revelation there is a curious and perhaps awkward imitation of the perceived empiricism of the enemy (secular rationality).¹¹³

“Fundamentalism” according to the Chicago project is a phenomenon that reduces “richly symbolic and connotative scriptural descriptions of the Final Age” into “denotative blueprints of the order to come.” This understanding of the phenomenon could have justified the use of “fundamentalism” as a key word in my analysis. Many of the individuals I have studied are doing just what the Chicago project said above: “For example the richly symbolic and connotative scriptural descriptions of the Final Age are often reduced by fundamentalists to denotative blueprints of the order to come, demystified in the service of detailing the concrete plan of action required for socio-political ends.” But the main reason for me to avoid the term “fundamentalism” as key terminology is the term’s own specific history. Fundamentalism was a social phenomenon in early 20th century United States when Protestants opposed scientific studies which were critical of biblical text. In 1910-1915 these Christians published twelve pamphlets called *The Fundamentals*, in which they expressed their idea of authentic Christianity. The name of this social structure stems from their pamphlet. The fundamentals of Christianity, according to them, were (1) the infallibility of biblical text, in each detail; (2) Christ was God; (3) objective salvation theology; (4) Christ’s bodily resurrection from the dead; and (5) Christ’s second return in his flesh.¹¹⁴ I agree with Westerlund and I suggest we shall limit the use of the term to its original setting, and therefore we have to look for new terminology that will describe this phenomenon in a way that is more relevant today. The emergence of U.S. fundamentalists was a historical process determined by unique conditions at the time, opposing the scientific critique of biblical text, and op-

¹¹² Appleby & Marty 1991, p. 832

¹¹³ Appleby & Marty 1991, p. 836-837

¹¹⁴ Westerlund 1992, p. 12

posing evolutionary theory and Charles Darwin's conclusions. "Fundamentalism" was a self-definition used by those who believed in the fundamentals. But the way "fundamentalists" interpret the bible they had, according to the conclusions of the Chicago project, been "robbing it (religion) of its mysteries, mysticism, magical qualities, complexities, ambiguities":

Another way of robbing religion of its "mysteries, mysticism, magical qualities, complexities, ambiguities" is to argue that each religion give rise to a particular set of ethical rules. After 9/11 2001 it has become increasingly common to talk about so called Christian vs. Muslim values, both among Christians and among Muslims. Later in this material Hans Kosmala will exemplify the idea that each religion creates particular values. That opinion can hardly be combined with an analysis of value changes presented in recent research, like Welzel & Deutsch below. Instead I stick to Benedict Anderson's understanding above. According to him religions provide imaginative responses to suffering, I stick to the notion that norms and values are produced in complex interaction among all social structures levels of industrialisation, urbanisation, science etc. – and not only in religions. The family structure is of crucial importance for the production of values irrespective of whether it is atheist or very religious, the trade unions create norms and values of high significance in any society, as well as industrialists and capitalists, football clubs, schools, etc. From this perspective, changes of values in society depend not so much upon religion but upon interaction with other social structures, the level of industrialisation and economic parameters:

Societies tend to change their prevailing value orientation from more traditional (rigid) values to more secular-rational (permissive) when the rise of industrial technology increases human control over basic life risks and thus nurtures a basic sense of existential security, making traditional moral obligations superfluous.¹¹⁵

Research in Sweden on value changes over the last 30 years has collaborated closely with the EVSSG - European Value Systems Study Group - and the connected worldwide value surveys. This research has shown that values change slowly, as if they were shielded from external influences. Thorleif Pettersson has argued that each generation grows in specific social situations, which results in specific values for each.¹¹⁶

The discussion on religion, social values and secular factors is vast. At this point I am satisfied that there are just reasons to separate religion and values in such a way that does not reduce the inherent ambiguity of religions and their complex relationships with the societies in which they exist.

¹¹⁵ Welzel & Deutsch 2007, p. 243

¹¹⁶ Pettersson 1992, p. 33-34

To analyse non-secular views on Bible and history

Svenska Israelsmissionen's early theology has been described and examined by Per-Erik Gustafsson. Gustafsson used the term "apocalyptic" to characterise their theology. The way he used the term it includes predictions related to a Messianic Age and, what is important to me, a theology that claims it can extract knowledge about the past, present and future, from biblical text.¹¹⁷ Such claims make them avoid secular sources to knowledge. This apocalyptic way of reading biblical text includes also a broad variety of superstitious components with regard to driving forces in history. But, I will suggest, to the apocalyptic thinker the "historicising of myth" is central.¹¹⁸ And, the "historicising of myth" is very common in the studied material. Apocalyptic thinkers do not want to see text as narratives that are myth and poetically true, but tries hard to see the text as true in an instrumental way. They read the bible to decode God's plan with history. In doing so they try to find "signs" in everyday politics and history that prove the historicity of biblical text. In our ordinary use of the term "apocalyptic" it refers both to violent end time speculations, but also it includes how the apocalyptic use biblical text as revelation of hidden secrets. In this latter way apocalypticism is historicist – and in it salvation is tied to history and therefore must be largely of this world and collective. That is, to them salvation unfolds through secular history. Apocalypticism is also decidedly dualistic. Absolute good and evil contend through history and there is no room for moral ambiguity – no shades of grey. In the studied material normative ambiguity in the Bible is suppressed and when interpreting history, usually one decides to side with those in power. Apocalyptic narratives view historical "events as part of a cosmic pattern" which human beings cannot influence.¹¹⁹ To the apocalyptic thinker the Bible offers a tool to decode this cosmic pattern. And Pernow is perhaps the most apparent exponent of this idea when he reflects on what he called: God's blessing and God's curse.

In his work, *När tiden tar slut*, 1996, Göran Gunner has focused on "apocalyptic" theology as key terminology. To Gunner apocalyptic thinking was used as a concept which expressed the expectation of what would be observed when the concealed was unveiled. This revelation of secrets, in Gunner's use of the term, included God's imminent action via catastrophic events, which would result in a new golden era.¹²⁰ Svenska Israelsmissionen was arguing both ways. They did not emphasise any future chaos or cataclysmic end to world history. The end could happen anytime. So, the key to

¹¹⁷ Gustafsson 1984, p. 20-21

¹¹⁸ Grabbe 2003, p. 113-114

¹¹⁹ Robbin & Palmer 1997, p. 4-8

¹²⁰ Gunner 1996, p. 22. "I denna undersökning används apokalyptik som ett samlingsbegrepp för en förväntan på att det fördolda skall avslöjas. Avslöjandet innefattar Guds snara ingripande genom en katastrofal klimax för världens slut, vilken leder till en ny gyllene tillvaro".

understanding their way of interpreting theology and God's plan in history is not to analyse their speculations in time, or as Gunner put it, the way history was to be divided into dispensations. In my view his stress on time speculations without including an ideological analysis is confusing, and that perspective on religion is not possible if you use Benedict Anderson. There is a limit to what religion may explain. This limit has to be recognised by the academic. If one discussed attitudes to historic processes without reflecting on ideology you will have to discuss why ideology was avoided by the studied agents. Svenska Israelsmissionen was concerned with the life of Jews because via the fate of Jews they believed they could detect "signs" that mattered also for the Christians' own security. It mattered for the Christian's own success in history and in society. To Svenska Israelsmissionen there is a link between Jews and Christians via God's blessing and curse. Therefore, I have found Hannah Arendt's term "superstition" relevant in defining this particular attitude to driving forces in history, which includes "a model" for how tangible and intangible values are distributed in society. Arendt said:

The hatred of the racists against the Jews sprang from a superstitious apprehension that it actually might be the Jews, and not themselves, whom God had chosen, to whom success was granted by divine providence.¹²¹

The apprehension Arendt talked about was not apocalyptic in the term's usual sense – anticipating a violent end of time. Also the apprehension is not just fundamentalist, as it is not concerned with the literary fulfilment of prophecies, which was central to the American protestant fundamentalists in 1915. Therefore "superstition" as term is well designated to describe significant components in the particularities of Svenska Israelsmissionen's thinking on history. It is more precise. It is also focusing on success and failure and explaining why Svenska Israelsmissionen did not pursue a secular or an ideological analysis of history.

The way Gunner has focussed on the end of time "När tiden tar slut," and grouped Protestant theologians from the 19th until the first seven decades of the 20th century is missing the core elements of thinking in the groups I have studied, but perhaps it is relevant for his studied objects.

In my understanding Gunner is too inclined to use the terminology of his studied objects without trying to decode it. And at the end of his introduction he offers to the reader an explanation. Gunner has deliberately chosen to avoid comparisons with (other) ideologies for instance democratic humanism.¹²² That is a great loss and via that approach the ideological component in the theology studied is not seen.

¹²¹ Arendt 1968, p. 242

¹²² Gunner 1996, p. 33

Ken Schubert has made a well argued assessment of Gunner's research. Schubert pointed out, and rightly so, how Nazi Germany was interpreted by the Christians studied by Gunner.

Very few of the thinkers Gunner takes up managed to extricate themselves from the concept that Jews had caused their own suffering, that their economic and political position in post-emancipation Europe was a sign that they were about to enter their next stage (a return to Palestine, more suffering, and ultimate conversion), and that persecution was part of God's plan.¹²³

In his analysis of Gunner Schubert suggested that "He often portrays apocalyptic thinkers as cold-blooded and amoral instead of victims of an irreconcilable system of beliefs."¹²⁴ I would say that Schubert has put the finger on a crucial theme. And in order to describe the "amorality" Gunner could have described the ideology which was legitimated by the theology produced.

Arendt's term superstitious opens new perspectives on how we may pursue future studies on how 20th century Protestant Christianity have developed theologies of success and of failure, and how it has contributed to the construction of peoples and nations too. Without Arendt ability to speak clearly of superstition in Protestant thinking, I am afraid we will be blind for an unpleasant aspect of theology that contributed to making Lutheran Christians view the Kristallnacht as part of God's plan.

Because of these considerations, I have decided to use the term "apocalyptic" to denote certain attitudes to biblical text. However, "apocalyptic" as term does not connote the "superstitious" dimensions in the way the studied individuals interpret history. Therefore I confine "apocalyptic" as term to denote ambitions to extract historic knowledge from the Bible, and I will use "superstitious" as term to denote the way the studied individuals interpret driving forces in history. Other terminology may be developed, but for the time being these are my suggestions. I view them as contributions to the work done by others who are trying to find secular ways to understand religious phenomena, for instance by the Fundamentalist project in Chicago.

Poetic theology - a secular approach to biblical text

According to New Testament scholar Lars Hartman (1930 -) at Uppsala University, eschatological text in the Bible often contains "so called apocalyptic features that have caused problems" for interpreters of the New Testament. Even trained theologians, Hartman said, are not good at analysing these texts. In the history of interpretations of the New and the Old Testa-

¹²³ Schubert 1997, p. 69

¹²⁴ Schubert 1997, p. 70

ments these apocalyptic texts, Hartman continues, have often been regarded as fanatic and/or fantastic speculations about the end of time. From the perspective of mainstream theologians, those who engaged in interpretations of apocalyptic texts were not really considered serious but rather regarded as “gormandizing in descriptions of world disasters, of heaven and of hell.”¹²⁵

In these texts, Hartman argued, issues such as the goal and meaning of history were dealt with: how could God, who was supposed to lead history and the peoples, allow the Syrians and the Romans, etc. to act as they did against God’s own? In addition Hartman points out; questions were raised from within their own ranks: how had they achieved such success and why were they blessed with prosperity and honour, as if they had been Abraham and Joseph? The answer often given pointed to a time when the accounts would be settled. The message was:

Be not surprised, misery will come, but persist, be faithful.¹²⁶

When the message in these texts is interpreted historically, Hartman said, one should pay attention to its exhortative and consoling functions. In order to maintain a respect for the original linguistic structure, these semantic functions ought to be maintained, Hartman states. That also applies, he continued, when the text is being interpreted by a reader in the 21st century who is reading them as part of his own piety, or what Hartman has called a “bring-to-life interpretation.” In this endeavour, Hartman says, one should not just keep in mind the exhortative and consoling functions, but one should return to them and reuse them.¹²⁷

Hartman asks: how should one read eschatological and apocalyptic texts and still remain faithful to their original communicative function? Readers of these texts encounter both heaven and hell and the themes are far from realistic: Angels blow their trumpets, the dead come to life, awoken from their graves, and living human beings are lifted up to encounter God. For instance, Hartman asked, how should one interpret the following text: I tell you the truth, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened” (St Mark 13:30). Answering this question Hartman did not refer directly to Bultmann, but to Amos Wilder, a Harvard biblical scholar. Wilder has argued that eschatological-apocalyptic texts should be regarded as *expressive poetry*. Wilder argued, according to Hartman, that the texts have to be demythologised but, at each and every occasion it “must be recognised that every such a formulation is a poor surrogate and must always appeal back to the original.” For comparison Hartman mentioned when a student asked T.S. Elliot about a sentence in one of his poems.

¹²⁵ Hartman 1995, p. 26

¹²⁶ Hartman 1995, p. 27 ”förvånas inte, elände må komma, men håll ut, var trogna.”

¹²⁷ Hartman 1995, p. 33

- What do you mean when you write “Lady, three white leopards sat under the juniper tree?” Eliot answered concisely: (I meant)
- “Lady, three white leopards sat under the juniper tree.”

Hartman argued that the theologian has to find semantic functions and categorise the texts in their proper genres, but eventually he simply has to return to, recycle and chew over the original text again and again, or reuse it as expressive poetry, as Wilder has suggested.¹²⁸ Wilder reminds us of the urgency in the reading experience, an urgency which forces the reader to reconsider all text and the story it is telling. And still Wilder would probably say that a story or a narrative is not just a story.

One view is that a story is “just a story”, meaning that it has no special relation to life except as a diversion. Another common opinion is that a story is an imitation of life. But this only means that certain particulars in it correspond to our experience in the real world. If we ask a prestigious body of modern critics about the relation of story-world to real world they will reply it is a false question. For one thing the story goes its own way and takes us with it; the storyteller is inventing not copying. He weaves his own web of happening and the meaning of every part and detail is determined by the whole sequence. We lose our place in the story if we stop to ask what this feature means or refers to outside it.¹²⁹

The poetic way of reading biblical text, does of course not contradict faith in God as the world’s creator and the living power that enables trees to grow and children to play. A poetic approach to biblical text, however, could not be combined with an apocalyptic certainty that biblical text reveals hidden truths or that biblical text may predict or explain events like the rise and fall of nations, or God being responsible for freak accidents. Rather Wilder’s proposal of reading biblical text as poetry brings into all reading – biblical and other alike - the same urgency a one feels when “the story goes its own way and takes us with it”.

Anti-Semitism is a political thing – Hannah Arendt

Hannah Arendt’s argument offers an overall structure to this study’s methodology chapter. One part of my ambition is to reveal superstition among SvTI and its founders, but more importantly, to show why superstition is believed at all.

¹²⁸ Hartman 1995, p. 31

¹²⁹ Wilder 1991, p. 143

When a blatant forgery like the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* is believed by so many, the task of the historian, Arendt argued, is changed. The task is no longer to discover the forgery itself, because the existence of the forgery is obvious. Instead, the task for the historian is to show why the forgery was believed in the first place.¹³⁰ The parallel to my work is the fact that most members in Svenska Israelsmissionen embraced the superstitious idea that it was actually either the Jews, or themselves, whom God had chosen, and to whom success was granted by divine providence.¹³¹

In the material I have studied Pernow, for instance, is seriously preoccupied with the physical suffering and the physical safety of Jews and its significance for the distribution of God's blessing (or curse) and the consequences for other peoples in history. This superstition is so widespread in the material – in particular throughout the writings of the director of Svenska Israelsmissionen – that it cannot be ignored, but why was it believed? One component of anti-Semitism is the existence of certain stereotypes of the Jews, and due to widespread references to these stereotypes, as Arendt has said, there is a risk that one does not realise the seriousness of anti-Semitism. She gives two examples of how anti-Semitism is not taken seriously and how stereotypes play a role. The first example is the scapegoat theory and the other is the theory of eternal anti-Semitism. Both are relevant in this work so first I will refer the scapegoat theory. According to this theory the Jew is used as a scapegoat for other problems, and hence the Jew is:

...objectively and absolutely innocent because nothing he did or omitted to do matters or has any connections with his fate.¹³²

By describing Jews as absolutely innocent, the scapegoat theory in effect excluded Jews from the human community: the one with most power has more responsibility, but no human being is innocent. The doctrine of "eternal anti-Semitism" was equally widespread, Arendt said. In it hatred of Jews was seen as a normal reaction, to which history gave few options. Hence outbursts of anti-Semitism needed no particular explanation, Arendt said, as they were seen as a natural consequence of an eternal problem. "That this doctrine was adopted by professional anti-Semites is a matter of course; it gives the best possible alibi for all possible horrors." But more important, Arendt continued, is the fact that the idea of "eternal anti-Semitism" "has been adopted by a great many unbiased historians and by an even greater number of Jews."¹³³

In Arendt's own explanation of modern anti-Semitism the process is complex, and no one in society is completely innocent, or totally guilty. All

¹³⁰ Arendt 1968, p. 7

¹³¹ Arendt 1968, p. 242

¹³² Arendt 1968, p. 6

¹³³ Arendt 1968, p. 7

live in society and there are no islands of isolated human beings disconnected from all social life. Instead, Arendt argued, the historical process of anti-Semitism in Europe is accompanied by and is interconnected also with “Jewish assimilation, the secularization and withering away of the old religious and spiritual values of Judaism.” Jews, who were threatened by physical extinction from external forces, Arendt said, were at the same time threatened by dissolution from within. In a “curious misinterpretation,” Arendt said, Jews hit upon the idea that anti-Semitism could be an excellent means of keeping the people together:

So that the assumption of eternal antisemitism would even imply an eternal guarantee of Jewish existence”¹³⁴

The idea of an eternal guarantee of Jewish existence Arendt called “superstition.” To Arendt this concept was a secularised travesty of the idea of eternity inherent in a faith in chosenness and Messianic hope. When people argue this way, outbursts of anti-Semitism need no explanation, Arendt said, because they are natural consequences of an eternal problem.¹³⁵ In view of the final catastrophe which brought the Jews so near to complete annihilation, she said, the thesis of eternal anti-Semitism has become more dangerous than ever.¹³⁶ Given the existence of an idea that created an “eternal anti-Semitism” the development of modern anti-Semitism, Arendt argued, must be seen in the framework of the development of the modern nation-state. At the same time, she continued, its source must be found in certain aspects of Jewish history and specifically Jewish functions during the last centuries.¹³⁷ When the nation-states developed in Europe, Arendt argued, the nation-states could under no circumstance “afford to see the Jews wholly assimilated into the rest of the population, which refused to credit the state, was reluctant to enter and to develop business owned by the state, and followed the routine patterns of private capitalist enterprise.”¹³⁸ At the same time, she continued, there is no doubt that the nation-state’s interest in preserving the Jews as a special group and preventing Jews’ assimilation into class society coincided with some Jews’ interests in self-preservation and group survival.¹³⁹ Jews entered into state business and lent money to the state before the state had its own resources, she said. The Jews, Arendt argued, never allied themselves with any specific government, “but rather with governments, with authority as such.”¹⁴⁰ For more than one hundred years anti-Semitism

¹³⁴ Arendt 1968, p. 7

¹³⁵ Arendt 1968, p. 7

¹³⁶ Arendt 1968, p. 8

¹³⁷ Arendt 1968, p. 9

¹³⁸ Arendt 1968, p. 11-12

¹³⁹ Arendt 1968, p. 13

¹⁴⁰ Arendt 1968, p. 25

had slowly and gradually made its way into all social strata in Europe. Throughout this process, for complex reasons, Jews had identified with authority, Arendt said.

Each class of society which came into a conflict with the state as such became antisemitic, because the only social group which seemed to represent the state were the Jews.¹⁴¹

In Arendt's analysis anti-Semitism can be explained as a combination of the state's efforts to use Jews for banking purposes, not to let Jews assimilate into the nation, and a consequence of how some Jews decided to withdraw to preserve their own people and at the same time identify with "authority as such." A background to this situation, Arendt said, was the situation in political life in Prussia, where a "perfect harmony of interests" was established between the powerful Jews and the state. Arendt argued that rich Jews wanted control over their less fortunate fellow Jews, and also a deliberate segregation from the non-Jewish society. In her analysis, the state could combine a policy of benevolence toward rich Jews with legal discrimination against the Jewish intelligentsia and the furtherance of social segregation, as expressed in the conservative theory of the Christian essence of the state.¹⁴² But to Arendt, religion played a minor role. Wealthy Jews, Arendt argued,

...knew better than anybody else how much their power depended upon their position and prestige within the Jewish communities. So they could hardly adopt any other policy but to "endeavour to get more influence for themselves and keep their fellow Jews in their national isolation, pretending that this separation is part of their religion. Why? ... Because the others should depend upon them even more, so that they, as *unsere Leute*, could be used exclusively of those in power."¹⁴³

Arendt is locating Jews in a political and economic context where the nation-state, internal competition among the aristocracy, the bourgeoisie, the workers, intellectuals and the state are factors affecting all social groups. To Arendt modern anti-Semitism, as we know it from Central and Western European countries, had political rather than economic or religious causes. Political anti-Semitism developed because Jews were a separate body. While the psychology of individual Jews did not differ greatly from the psychology of their environment, Arendt has argued, there are certainly differences between people.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴¹ Arendt 1968, p. 25

¹⁴² Arendt 1968, p. 33

¹⁴³ Arendt 1968, p. 33

¹⁴⁴ Arendt 1968, p. 21

And the more equal conditions are, the less explanation there is for the differences that actually exist between people; and thus all the more unequal do individuals and groups become.¹⁴⁵

Political anti-Semitism, Arendt said, first flared up in Prussia immediately after the defeat by Napoleon in 1807, when the political structure was changed, the nobility lost its privileges and the middle class won their freedom to develop.¹⁴⁶ The aristocrats openly opposed the egalitarian nation-state. In their attack on society the only social group that was identified with the state was – as we have seen – the Jews. In the nobility's attack on the state, Jews were identified with the government. In this way the aristocrats in Prussia in the early 19th century started the long line of anti-Semitic political arguments.¹⁴⁷

Race-thinking as background

Race-thinking in Germany was intellectually prepared by some intertwined tendencies in German thinking after the 1814 war, Arendt said. One of these she identified as an insistence on a common tribal origin as an essential aspect of nationhood, and the second was the romantic idea of innate personality and natural nobility.¹⁴⁸ Hatred of Jews as a political weapon was prepared, Arendt argued, by the idea of "innate personality." In the conflict between the nobilities and the rising middle class, "personality worship" was developed by German intellectuals, Arendt argued. The governing class had a traditional contempt for business and a dislike for association with merchants, "in spite of the latter's growing wealth and importance." In order to enter competition with rights and qualities of birth, Arendt said, German intellectuals formulated the concept of "innate personality," and it emerged as the only way of "gaining some social emancipation." Like the title of heir to an old family, she said, the concept of "innate personality" was given by birth, and not acquired by merit.

Just as the lack of common history for the formation of the nation had been artificially overcome by the naturalistic concept of organic development, so, in the social sphere, nature itself was supposed to supply a title when political reality had refused it.¹⁴⁹

Arendt admitted, the German intellectuals who formulated the idea of an "innate personality" were rather successful, but, the other side of the coin was a discriminatory point, which was immediately affirmed.

¹⁴⁵ Arendt 1968, p. 54

¹⁴⁶ Arendt 1968, p. 29

¹⁴⁷ Arendt 1968, p. 32

¹⁴⁸ Arendt 1968, p. 170

¹⁴⁹ Arendt 1968, p. 169

During the long period of mere social antisemitism, which introduced and prepared the discovery of Jew-hating as a political weapon, it was the lack of “innate personality,” the innate lack of tact, the innate lack of productivity, the innate disposition for trading, etc., which separated the behaviour of his Jewish colleague from that of the average businessmen.¹⁵⁰

The bourgeoisie, Arendt argued, from the very beginning “wanted to look down not so much on other lower classes of their own, but simply on other *peoples*.”¹⁵¹ A “people” at that time was not seen as a social construct, or as a mere word which could label a group of human beings. The “people” had connotations of an ancient tribal historical past and a “people” was a useful object that could be given new content when needed. It was a “romanticized object that could be changed at a moment’s notice into a state.”¹⁵² When the idea of “common tribal origin as an essential of nationhood,” and the “romantic idea of innate personality” were combined, a foundation was laid for discrimination.

J.G. Herder, who despite being an outspoken friend of the Jews, was attributed to the first use of, the later misquoted characterising phrase, where Jews were seen as a “strange people of Asia driven into our regions.”¹⁵³ At the time, Arendt argued, Herder wanted to show the origins of the Jewish people as more alien, and hence more exotic, than they actually were, so that the demonstration of humanity as a universal principle might be more effective.¹⁵⁴ Indeed Jews and other peoples have lived in Palestine and throughout the Mediterranean basin for centuries or longer. When Herder located their origin in Asia he wanted to make their origin exotic. Others have assumed that Jews’ belonging in Israel and Palestine is explained by a biblical motif sometimes called the Mosaic ethnology.¹⁵⁵ In one well known biblical narrative God told Noah to build an ark and subsequently Noah survived a flood that covered the Earth. Noah had three sons – Sem, Japhet and Ham – and they are supposed to be ancestors of peoples in three different geographic areas, Sem lived in the Middle East, Japhet lived in Europe and Ham lived in Africa. This, in brief, is why, according to this motif Jews and Semites are supposed to belong in that particular region of the world. Other biblical narratives too are used for that purpose. Still to Arendt anti-Semitism in Europe was political and not religious. It has, she said:

¹⁵⁰ Arendt 1968, p. 169

¹⁵¹ Arendt 1968, p. 169

¹⁵² Arendt 1968, p. 168

¹⁵³ Arendt 1968, p. 57

¹⁵⁴ Arendt 1968, p. 57

¹⁵⁵ Arvidsson 2000, p. 28

been one of the most unfortunate facts in the history of the Jewish people that only its enemies, and almost never its friends, understood that the Jewish question was a political one.¹⁵⁶

One motivation to the emergence of anti-Semitism in Europe, Arendt argued, was the idea of “tribal origin as an essential of nationhood” but, she said, this romantic national ideal was not racist itself, because “the central pillar of genuine nationhood, (was) the equality of all peoples”.¹⁵⁷ However, the nationalists at the time could not maintain the conviction that all peoples are equal. Arendt has shown that the romantic intellectuals in Berlin after 1809 became anti-Semites and how the combination of motives like the “innate personality” played a role. This did not imply that either the aristocrats or the romantic intellectuals abandoned their Jewish friends, but the innocence and splendour were gone.¹⁵⁸ Arendt said the formation of a Jewish type was due both to special discrimination and special favour.¹⁵⁹ The type created was not an equal being.

In the writings of Birger Pernow and others in Svenska Israelsmissionen descriptions of the Jew “in general” are abundant. Among staff at SvTI it is less frequent, but it appears in new varieties, which will be pointed out. From Arendt we learn that the Jew in Europe was often feared and described in words like: “inhumanity, greed, insolence, cringing servility, and determination to push ahead”. At the same time the general Jew could be described as the “heir of the prophets and the eternal promoter of justice on earth”.¹⁶⁰ We may have to conclude, along with Arendt, that society in Europe did not accept Jews as having multifaceted personalities, like anyone else:

Assimilation in the sense of acceptance by non-Jewish society, was granted them (Jews) only as long as they were clearly distinguished exceptions from the Jewish masses even though they still shared the same restricted and humiliating political conditions¹⁶¹

SvTI, and its founders, as we shall see, held many of the stereotypes of Jews described by Arendt.

¹⁵⁶ Arendt 1968, p. 56

¹⁵⁷ Arendt 1968, p. 166

¹⁵⁸ Arendt 1968, p. 60

¹⁵⁹ Arendt 1968, p. 55

¹⁶⁰ Arendt 1968, p. 66

¹⁶¹ Arendt 1968, p. 56

To separate culture from politics – Mahmood Mamdani

Mahmood Mamdani is a scholar who analysed the genocide in Rwanda which occurred in 1994. In his analysis he included images of nations, culture and use of the Bible, in ways that help me formulate my approach to SvTI and its founders. In order to analyse nations and cultures, Mamdani suggested one needs to contextualise what is perceived as the truth, and he has suggested five ways to do so. Mamdani is also relevant as he included the role of missions and Christian biblical interpretation as one source of constructions of nationality and ideas of ancient tribal origins, in ways that support Arendt with examples from another continent. At first Mamdani argued that one needs to differentiate between *cultural* and *political* identities, which, as he has expressed it, exist “in their own right.”¹⁶²

To sharpen the distinction between cultural and political identities, it will be useful to underline a point of contrast between cultural and political communities. More than anything else, a common cultural community signifies a common past, a common historical inheritance. In contrast a political community testifies to the existence of a common project for the future. The distinction is often blurred because the past flows into the future, as it always does, creating a significant overlap between cultural and political communities.¹⁶³

Linking Mamdani to the two nationalisms mentioned above, his approach questions a Romantic national ideal which is offering space for only one culture in each nation state. Mamdani is concerned with conditions for reconciliation, which I am not primarily, and hence we are formulating different questions, and looking for different answers. His approach involves notions that one needs to (1) view the violence in Rwanda as political violence and an outcome of local Tutsi and Hutu elites, (2) the genocide has to be understood within the development of regional dynamics, and (3) the question of power has to be viewed in a historical context.¹⁶⁴ He has argued a fourth point that contextualising the truth requires reflections on the imperial project in Rwanda and the historical writings about it.

In racializing Rwandan society and polity, the imperial project also racialised the parameters within which most historians pursued knowledge most of the time. If the colonial state underscored racial origin as a key attribute of citizenship and rights, historians became preoccupied with *the search for origin*.¹⁶⁵ (italics in original)

¹⁶² Mamdani 2007, p. 22

¹⁶³ Mamdani 2007, p. 23

¹⁶⁴ Mamdani 2007, p. 268

¹⁶⁵ Mamdani 2007, p. 269 italics in original

A search for an origin is a feature that the historical writings of Rwanda have in common with the predominant approach to the history of Jews and Arabs in the reflections within Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI. Historians, Mamdani continued, often make an “unproblematized link between ancestral Hutu and Tutsi and those contemporarily so identified.”¹⁶⁶ What is so strange about this link, one may ask? Mamdani explains:

Historians preoccupied with the search for origins read cultural differences from facts of migration and translated cultural into political differences.¹⁶⁷

Mamdani points out that migration changes the culture and differences between groups studied cannot be explained by references to qualities (or innate personalities) in the groups – like Hutu or Tutsi – but are consequences of contextual factors like migration. Therefore in my understanding of Mamdani, it is not possible to assume a problem free link between ancestral Tutsi, Jew or Arab and “those contemporarily so identified.” If this were to apply to Jews and Hutu equally, a central assumption among many Bible readers in Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI is questioned. When the Bible does not provide historically accurate accounts, it is also not possible to assume an unproblematic link between Jews mentioned in historic accounts and Jews now living in USA or in the state of Israel. Mamdani’s solution is to contextualise the truth and the content of each term. And this will question all claims on return, simply because, who shall have the right to return if the group itself changed, even if the name remained? And of course, as time goes by this applies for all refugees like the ones in Africa, Palestinian Arabs and all Second World War refugees alike.

A fifth consequence of contextualising the truth, according to Mamdani, was to problematize the country’s 20th century history, in particular the revolution in 1959, and the ensuing Hutu power born out of it. One feature of the Tutsi rationale for Tutsi power was what Mamdani termed the “Hamitic hypothesis,” which uses the biblical narrative as a basis for 20th century sociology. The Hutu have questioned this ideology and produced their own subaltern ideology in response, “similar to black power in the United States, black consciousness in South Africa, or Dalit power in India,” Mamdani said. The Hamitic hypothesis, Mamdani explains, has undergone a series of transformations since the period of the slave trade but, as Cheikh Anta Diop said:

No specialist has been able to pinpoint the birth-place of the Hamites (scientifically speaking), the language they spoke, the migratory route they fol-

¹⁶⁶ Mamdani 2007, p. 269

¹⁶⁷ Mamdani 2007, p. 269

lowed, the countries they settled, or the form of civilization they may have left.¹⁶⁸

In Mamdani's analysis the churches and Christian missions were the original ethnographer of the Hamitic hypothesis.¹⁶⁹ Apparently the biblical narratives of Ham, Sem and Jafet were used when the population in black Africa was organised into categories comprehensible to the European missionaries.¹⁷⁰ When Mamdani is compared to the perspectives formulated by Montgomery and Heckscher an interesting similarity appeared. They all claim it is possible to distinguish between religious and ideological identities, as well as between cultural and political identities.

Romantic or Republican concepts of nation and people

Nations are debated entities. Benedict Anderson's phrase "imagined communities" is a well formulated, over all approach to this phenomenon which has dominated European political life for the last few centuries. No one has seen an entire nation, as Anderson has said. But we still talk about them and use them. Hobsbawm has expressed the relevance of studying nations after 1780 and said:

The last two centuries of the human history of planet Earth are incomprehensible without some understanding of the term 'nation' and the vocabulary derived from it.¹⁷¹

In my own understanding of a nation and of nationalism I agree with Hobsbawm who has said that he does "not regard the 'nation' as a primary nor as an unchanging social entity". Nations may change and shift in time, even in the course of short periods.¹⁷² While nations, to Hobsbawm, are dual phenomena, constructed essentially from above, they cannot be understood unless they are analysed from below, as he put it, "in terms of the assumptions, hopes, needs, longings and interests of ordinary people, which are not necessarily national and still less nationalist."¹⁷³ Hobsbawm is sympathetically uncertain in his definition of the nation. He views it both from the top and from below, and also from the internal perspective which is compared to the perspective assumed by those excluded from the nation or by those who are victims of a nation's establishment. Referring to Gellner, Hobsbawm has described the sometimes violent interaction between nations and cultures:

¹⁶⁸ Mamdani 2007, p. 85

¹⁶⁹ Mamdani 2007, p. 232

¹⁷⁰ Mamdani 2007, p. 80

¹⁷¹ Hobsbawm 2003, p. 1

¹⁷² Hobsbawm 2003, p. 9

¹⁷³ Hobsbawm 2003, p. 10

‘Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men, as an inherent ... political destiny, are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them, and often obliterates pre-existing cultures, that is a reality.’¹⁷⁴

As mentioned in this quotation the interaction of nations and cultures is potentially violent. To describe in detail just how cultures and nations clash is not in focus in the present study. I merely want to draw attention to the existence of studies that are separating nation from culture, and indicating ways of assessing their interaction as both potentially violent and potentially compatible. And if one nation state is built with just one culture as a legitimate one, the outcome for all other cultures under the control of that nation state is potentially fatal.

In the romantic tradition German thinker J.G. Herder, portrayed by Benedict Anderson as “the great” Johann Gottfried Herder,¹⁷⁵ culture is central. To Herder culture and nation are closely linked. He viewed the culture as the essence of a people, and each group of people had its own specific setting in time and geography, which determined its features. Herder introduced and/or popularised concepts like *Volkscharakter* (national character), *Volksseele* (national soul) and *Volkslied* (folk song)¹⁷⁶ and each people was determined by its own specific *Volksgeist* – or its national spirit. Each culture was at the same time determined by its specific conditions and was involved in a process leading towards fulfilment of its own “humanity.”¹⁷⁷ Isaiah Berlin (1909-1997) argued that in Herder’s view *nature* had separated man from man. Nature had done so “by language, customs, and character” and Herder thought it was wrong to let “man artificially join together by chemistry.”¹⁷⁸ In Herder’s view, the Roman Empire had tried to let “man artificially join together,” and it had therefore developed into an “unnatural monster.” He thought the Empire was “an absurd clamping together of disparate cultures – a lion’s head with a dragon’s tail, an eagle’s wing, a bear’s paw (glued together) in one unpatriotic symbol of a state”¹⁷⁹ According to Isaiah Berlin, Herder was fascinated by the Jewish people, and the way he thought their society and nation had been organised:

Herder was fascinated by the survival of the Jews; he looked upon them as a “most excellent example” of a Volk with its own distinct character. “Moses bound the heart of this people to their native soil.” Land, common language, tradition, sense of kinship, common tradition, common law as freely accepted

¹⁷⁴ Hobsbawm 2003, p. 10

¹⁷⁵ Anderson 2006, p. 67-68

¹⁷⁶ Ustorf 2004, p. 389

¹⁷⁷ Lübcke 1988, p. 226

¹⁷⁸ Berlin 1976, p. 159

¹⁷⁹ Berlin 1976, p. 159

“covenant” – all these interwoven factors, together with the bond created by their sacred literature, enabled the Jews to retain their identity in dispersion – but especially the fact that their eyes remained focused upon their original geographical home – historical continuity, not race, is what counts.¹⁸⁰

Church historian Adrian Hastings also argued that Israel or the Jews, as described in the Bible, mirrors “what every other nation too might be”.

The Bible, moreover, presented in Israel itself a developed model of what it means to be a nation – a unity of people, language, religion, territory and government. Perhaps it was an almost terrifyingly monolithic ideal; productive ever after of all sorts of dangerous fantasies, but it was there, an all too obvious exemplar for Bible readers of what every other nation too might be, a mirror for nation self-imagination.¹⁸¹

According to Hastings, “the Bible presented in Israel itself a developed model of what it means to be a nation – a unity of people, language, religion, territory and government “. To me the national ideal described by Hastings, with references from the Bible, is strikingly similar to Herder’s Romantic national ideal.

In this work I will not try to resolve the different interpretations of nations exemplified by Hobsbawm, Herder, Hastings, Anderson and by Liedman and Mamdani. Their differences are mentioned to illustrate the necessity to deal with the way politics, religion, culture and religion are assumed to interact.

As an alternative to the Romantic national ideal, that Herder formulated, a Republican national ideal is also well established. It describes the nation as composed of those who live in a territory controlled by the state, and the “people” in a Republican nation – or *le peuple* – was not one single cultural entity but a group of human beings that that were lacking power. The French or Republican model of a nation was political and the nation was created from the state, whereas the German or Romantic model was ethno-cultural, drawing heavily on specific perceived qualities embodied in the particular people/*Volk* which were then expressed in the state.¹⁸² During the more radical phase of the French Revolution one became a French citizen after having spent a mere year in French territory. The legal implication of the French citizenship was *Ius solis*, the right in itself, which emanated from where the individual was born and lived. On the other hand, citizenship and the legal implications according to the German national ideal were granted to individuals based on their blood relations, kinship and it was called *Ius sanguinis*.¹⁸³ In the *Ius Solis* model the central political issue is the distribution

¹⁸⁰ Berlin 1976, p. 159. Note number 6.

¹⁸¹ Hastings 1997, p. 18

¹⁸² Brubaker 1992, p. 4ff

¹⁸³ Liedman 1997, p. 157-158

of power. This model has identified power struggles between the upper elite and the rest of the people. Hence, in this model the “people” is a separate entity, as compared to the “people” in the *Ius Sanguinis* model. While the German model is based on culture and sometimes on the idea of an original tribal origin, as Arendt has pointed out, the French model was based on class thinking and differences in power. One may observe sharp differences between the introduced German/Romantic and French/Republican models, but still one needs to remember that they are models and that they should be used with some caution, as they may invite simplifications.

To characterize French and German traditions of citizenship and nationhood in terms of such ready-made conceptual pairs as universalism and particularism, cosmopolitanism and ethnocentrism, Enlightenment rationalism and Romantic irrationalism, is to pass from characterization to caricature.¹⁸⁴

Sven-Erik Liedman (1939 -) and Sten Dahlstedt (1947 -) have presented striking examples of the multiple variations of the French and German national ideals in France and Germany. This complex web becomes apparent in the process of false accusations for high treason against the French officer Alfred Dreyfuss.¹⁸⁵

An overall intellectual frame for the interpretation of political structures, like nations, is suggested by Hobsbawm who has indicated how the context in which nations are constructed also matters:

Nations exist not only as functions of a particular kind of territorial state or the aspiration to establish one – broadly speaking the citizen state of the French Revolution – but also in the context of a particular stage of technological and economic development.¹⁸⁶

In this work, the context of nations is not focussed upon, only alluded to in the historic overview of Svenska Israelsmissionen’s emergence in close relation to the higher estates in Swedish 19th century society, and in relation to an emerging democracy in Sweden.

“People” in 19th century missionary thinking – an example

The emphasis which Svenska Israelsmissionen laid upon mission to a specific “people” was not an isolated trend in the 19th century but was found in other missions within Sweden and in the Church of Sweden. In the late 19th century Henry William Tottie’s book *Evangelistik* (1892) was read by many missionaries in Sweden. In 1883 Tottie was appointed the first secretary for

¹⁸⁴ Brubaker 1992, p. 2

¹⁸⁵ Dahlstedt & Liedman 1996, p. 81ff

¹⁸⁶ Hobsbawm 2003, p. 10

mission in the Church of Sweden. Later he assumed position as Bishop of Kalmar. In *Evangelistik* Tottie argued that after Pentecost, New Testament Christianity embraced the idea that religious significance between different peoples was abolished. Nevertheless, Tottie argued, one should not resort to what he called “abstract cosmopolitanism.” According to Tottie Christianity involved universal tendencies, but still, he argued:

Christianity is too historical in approach to join the abstract cosmopolitanism and neglect that historically humanity lives in *peoples*. (Italics in original) ¹⁸⁷

We do not know the exact definition of a “people” in Tottie’s mind but in referring to the German theologian, Albert Ritschl, Tottie argued that humanity shall be Christianised people-wise. Tottie’s argument reflects J.G. Herder’s ideas of the significance of peoples and religions in close relation. He dismissed cosmopolitanism, or ideas emanating from the French revolutions and the Enlightenment as abstract or unrealistic. If Tottie’s theology focused on peoples and how peoples should be saved, other Christian theology has focused on the salvation of each individual. I have not seen any reference from Svenska Israelsmissionen to Tottie. I assume this particular Romantic idea of a “people” was part of both Swedish nationalism and Swedish Lutheran theology at the time and so integrated into the thinking that it did not have to be mentioned.

¹⁸⁷ Tottie 1892, p. 150. “är dock kristendomen alltför historiskt anlagd för att med den abstrakta kosmopolitismen förbise, att menskligheten historiskt lefver i *folken*.”

3. From Christian mission to a theological institute – 1875 to 1950

Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1875 and onward

In January 1874 the first issue of *Missionstidning för Israel* was published¹⁸⁸ and a year later Svenska Israelsmissionen started under the name “Missionsförening för Israel.”¹⁸⁹ The main ambition of Missionsförening för Israel was to make the Jews convert to Christianity. It was started on the impulse of pious Lutherans in Norway. Missions to the Jews were in fashion, and the theme was announced in several missionary societies in Europe, as exemplified by Franz Delitzsch below. In its first year (1875) *Missionstidning för Israel* had already reached a readership of 6,000.¹⁹⁰ In the 1950's *Missionstidning för Israel's* circulation had increased to approximately 10,000. By comparison *Vår lösen*, another monthly Lutheran magazine in Sweden, had a circulation of 2,200 in 1952.¹⁹¹ These two publications had different readers, but still the difference in numbers is striking. Gradually the work of Svenska Israelsmissionen grew and local branches were established in 38 towns throughout Sweden. Often they were dominated by women and sewing circles (syförening/sykreter) were common in their meeting places.¹⁹² In 1950, when Svenska Israelsmissionen celebrated its 75th anniversary they published a map displaying all the places in the world where they had been active over these years. (See Appendix 1, p 260)

Missionstidning för Israel used a lot of material translated from German, English, French and Norwegian mission magazines.¹⁹³ By and large the influences behind Svenska Israelsmissionen came from pietistic, often German forms of Christianity. In the 19th century Sweden's theology was much influenced by German theologians and before the First World War, it has been argued, Germany was virtually the only country which influenced Sweden

¹⁸⁸ Edvardsson 1976, p. 18

¹⁸⁹ The magazine and the organization changed names over time. For the sake of simplicity the organization is consequently called “Svenska Israelsmissionen” while the magazine is called “Missionstidning för Israel”.

¹⁹⁰ Edvardsson 1976, p. 18

¹⁹¹ TS-boken 1952

¹⁹² Nolberger 1950, p. 153ff

¹⁹³ Edvardsson 1976, p. 33

theologically.¹⁹⁴ According to Sten Hidal the most widely read and quoted German exegetic scholar in the 19th century Sweden was Franz Delitzsch (1813-1890). He was characterised as pious and conservative. In 1870, at a conference of Protestant Societies of Missionaries to the Jews, the Leipzig resident and Old Testament scholar Franz Delitzsch had called for the creation of a teaching position for Jewish history and literature and for the establishment of seminaries for missionaries to the Jews. His motivation was to counter the widespread ignorance of Judaism that he observed among most Christian theologians of his time. Such an Institute for Judaism was subsequently founded in Leipzig in 1886, by Delitzsch, named Institutum Judaicum¹⁹⁵ and it developed a close relationship with Svenska Israelsmissionen. After Delitzsch's death the name changed to Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum. At its 75th anniversary Göte Hedenquist wrote:

The Swedish Theological Institute, our own institute in Jerusalem, could to some extent be regarded as a daughter institute to Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum. But it is not a matter of competition. Both institutes complement each other and constitute firm positions in our time, as far as studies in Judaism and the positive Christian relationship between Judaism and Christianity.¹⁹⁶

According to Sten Hidal, Swedish interest in Delitzsch at the time was not unmotivated. Delitzsch is described as a leading Old Testament scholar. Hidal stressed, Delitzsch ought to be remembered for one thing above all: that he thought it very important for a Christian interpretation of the Bible to ask:

What does it imply today, that Israel is God's elected people?¹⁹⁷

Delitzsch argued that the Church should be involved in dialogue with Judaism and he was actively working against anti-Semitism in Germany at the time. Hidal has described Delitzsch as a scholar who worked in between the pre-scientific Bible science and historical critical biblical research. Initially Delitzsch had been negative to Wellhausen and the methods he developed, but gradually, following Hidal, Delitzsch became more and more supportive of Wellhausen regarding his method of determining how biblical text had been written and edited over time. On the other hand, Hidal said, Delitzsch

¹⁹⁴ Hammar 1972, p. 71

¹⁹⁵ Kosmala, Benno, www.christenundjuden.org/en/?id=301

¹⁹⁶ Hedenquist 1962, "Vårt eget Svenska Teologiska Institut i Jerusalem kan viss mån betraktas som ett dotterinstitut till Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum. Om någon konkurrens är här icke fråga. Men båda instituten kompletterar varandra och utgör i vår tid fasta punkter, då det gäller studiet av judendomen och det positivt kristna förhållandet mellan judendomen och kristendomen."

¹⁹⁷ Hidal 1979, p. 33-34

was never accepted by Wellhausen. Delitzsch wanted to show how exegetics could be used for pastoral purposes. Wellhausen is reported to have laughed scornfully while commenting on Delitzsch's exegetic work.¹⁹⁸

When SvTI started in 1947 it was not part of the Church of Sweden. It was established by an independent Lutheran Mission to Jews, but with close informal ties to the Church of Sweden. In order to look at the background of SvTI and at their thinking we need to dig into 19th and 20th century Western political and missionary history. In order to find the reasons behind the seemingly odd cooperation among apocalyptic Christians, academic intellectuals in Sweden and the Swedish Embassy in Tel Aviv, we need to also look into the mission theology of Svenska Israelsmissionen and at the individuals involved in SvTI.

The 19th century in Europe was a period when ideologies – liberalism, socialism and nationalism – were shaped. In the 1860's and 1870's Italy and Germany were united as nation-states. National tensions in late 19th century Europe paved the way for the First World War. The 19th century has also been called the *Great Century of Mission* and this label stems from the rapid increase in Western Protestant mission organisations in that period of time. From the end of the 18th century hundreds or thousands of new missionary societies were formed in Europe and the United States as part of the “*Evangelical Awakening*.” These spread out and expanded all over the world – in a missionary parallel to other European expansions at that time: the scramble for Africa, the Berlin Conference in mid 1880s, massive emigration to the Americas, trade and politics, warfare and colonisation. The culmination of this surge in missionary fervour was the first International Conference on Mission in Edinburgh, Scotland, 1910. In mission circles, in the Victorian Era, many were convinced of their duty to bring to “barbarians” and “pagans” the blessings of “a superior and orderly Western Christian Civilization.” This “white man's burden,” as Kipling had put it, was “clearly present as a motive at the 1910 Edinburgh mission conference.”¹⁹⁹ In that conference – and for many missionaries – the world was divided into “the civilized Christian West and the non-Christian rest.” Many embraced the medieval idea of Corpus Christianum, with its close links between Christianity and culture, as an ideal model for the ideal society which should be built with Western Christian churches at the centre.²⁰⁰ Dutch theologian Hoekendijk has commented upon the missionary fervour of Western Christians:

To put it bluntly; the call to evangelism is often little else than a call to restore ‘Christendom,’ the Corpus Christianum, as a solid, well-integrated cultural complex, directed and dominated by the Church. And the sense of urgency is often nothing but a nervous feeling of insecurity, with the estab-

¹⁹⁸ Hidal 1979, p. 34

¹⁹⁹ Wind 1995, p. 240

²⁰⁰ Wind 1995, p. 244-245

lished Church endangered; a flurried activity to save the remnants of a time now irrevocably past.²⁰¹

Corpus Christianum was a longstanding idea of an ideal society where all citizens belonged to one faith, which was assumed to provide a common solid – normative – basis for society.

To some extent missionaries in the 19th century were sent by churches, but the dominant pattern of organisation was the independent mission society. On the European continent the *Evangelical Awakening* took off from one central mission society in Basel, the Deutsche Christenthum Gesellschaft, which had one important offshoot, the Basler Mission, where Lutherans and Calvinists worked together. Many Christian missions in the 19th century started in Germany.²⁰² In the 19th century missionary societies in Sweden, like Svenska Israelsmissionen, were influenced both by England and in their case particularly by Germany Protestant missions from these countries.

One underlying reason for the growth in missionary enthusiasm all over the North Atlantic region in this period was widespread resistance to Enlightenment rationalism and to modernism.²⁰³ This resistance appeared for instance against Darwin's evolutionary theory that was seen as questioning the biblical myth of creation. The Evangelical Awakening, in its own words, emphasised "personal conversion, a devout regenerate life, a new enthusiasm for witness to God's saving love in Christ, and social concern." In the 19th century this formulation meant something that could unite hundreds of thousands of people.

One important Swedish conveyer of theological influences from the European continent at the time was Peter Fjellstedt (1802-1881). Fjellstedt was a missionary who operated in many fields. Born in Värmland, South Western Sweden, he was brought up in rather poor economic circumstances. He was an intellectually talented boy and came to study at Lund then in Basel at the Basler Mission, mentioned above. He worked as a missionary in India, Turkey, and in Sweden as a missionary to Jews. Fjellstedt was instrumental in promoting southern German piety and its apocalyptic sentiments, in Sweden.²⁰⁴ Fjellstedt argued that Christian mission could be combined with the national interest of Sweden. He argued from both personal psychological perspectives and church political considerations and combined his theological reflections with a nationalist fervour. Fjellstedt wrote: "I feel in the innermost parts of my soul that I am Swedish." When arguing for the

²⁰¹ Hoekendijk 1950, p. 163

²⁰² Wind 1995, p. 238

²⁰³ Wind 1995, p. 237

²⁰⁴ Gustafsson 1984, p. 26-27

establishment of Lunds Missionssällskap in 1844 he argued that mission had to be a national cause:²⁰⁵

The role of Swedish national sentiments in Christian missions at the time and in mission to the Jews is not a key focus here, but given the Romantic national idea the interconnection between culture, religion and nation is crucial. Fjellstedt influenced Swedish missionary circles at large. He was a forerunner to the large Swedish neo-evangelical revivalist trend that would spread throughout Sweden in the late 19th century. He operated in a period when preachers in Sweden still could not organise meetings freely since organisers of religious meetings had to be ordained in the Church of Sweden as part of national legislation, until 1858 when “konventikelplakatet,” was cancelled. Fjellstedt became a priest of the Church of Sweden in order to move freely in the country and preach where he liked, as long as he was on the territory of the Church of Sweden whose religious authorisation he enjoyed.²⁰⁶

Since its beginning Svenska Israelsmissionen and its founder F.A. Lindström had a significant network of contacts, both in terms of family and among colleagues, belonging to the higher positions in society. Many of the early Swedish missionaries to the Jews like Peter Fjellstedt and J.C. Moritz were supported in their mission work by aristocratic families and by their own colleagues as priests. While travelling and preaching through Sweden these missionaries were invited to stay in large aristocratic homes. This economic basis for Swedish mission to the Jews was mentioned by Edvardsson and Gustafsson. Both indicate the significance of Svenska Israelsmissionen’s connections with the two higher estates in Sweden.²⁰⁷

In 19th century Sweden the population grew steadily. In 1800 Sweden had 2.3 million inhabitants, while in 1900 the population had grown to about 5.1 million, despite the fact that over one million had emigrated to the United States.²⁰⁸ When society and its demography went through these major changes, the Four Estate Parliament was no longer able to represent the population at large. In 1855 the three upper estates – aristocracy, priests and bourgeoisie/merchants – represented no more than 188,000 individuals, while the farmers’ estate represented 2,378,000 individuals. Outside of the four estates approximately 1,071,000 individuals were not represented in the Parliament at all. The three upper estates in the Parliament represented no more than 200,000 citizens or less than 10% of Sweden’s population which at the time was about 3.6 million.²⁰⁹ Many were dissatisfied, and inevitably, this political discrepancy caused tensions which led to major changes in Swedish political life.

²⁰⁵ Sundkler 1937, p. 180 f. See also note 9 p. 181.

²⁰⁶ Gustafsson 1984, p. 27

²⁰⁷ Gustafsson 1984, p. 32 ff.

²⁰⁸ Heckscher 1946, p. 18

²⁰⁹ Montgomery 1947, p. 20 f

Given this social situation it is significant that Svenska Israelsmissionen had strong support in the two higher estates, among the aristocracy and priests. At the time aristocratic mansions in Sweden had a prominent role as nodes for newly arrived ideas and products to Sweden. In the salons of the aristocracy news on politics, trade, culture, science, etc., were disseminated and discussed. Participants in these salons established important “networks.” Travelling priests who preached to and talked with many ordinary workers and farmers could also provide important information to the aristocracy, industrialists and landowners in the salons. The organisers of these saloons were sometimes politically conservatives and sometimes liberals. Due to merchant trade these salons had friends and family all over Europe and in foreign lands too. Much missionary theology expressed a negative attitude to social change and a negative attitude to political work for equality in society; for instance see below Fjellstedt’s comments on social unrest in France in 1848. Like the rest of Europe, in the evangelical circles, one could detect a degree of resistance to Enlightenment rationalism and to modernity, which Besserman has indicated. There is a large body of research which has shown how missionaries and industrialists, as well as slave traders, had interests in common.²¹⁰ One pattern that emerges, when mission organisations speak to representatives of the power structures in society is simply subordination. This is well described by mission historian Stiv Jakobsson (1922–2006), who studied Methodist missionaries and their assessment of slavery. These Methodists said:

With the politics of the country we never interfere, with the civil conditions of the slaves we have nothing to do; our only object, Sir, is to render them industrious and obedient, by enforcing upon them the principles of Christianity. Loyalty and subordination have ever been conspicuous characteristics of the Christian body to which we are attached.²¹¹

To these missionaries loyalty and subordination to authority was their understanding of not interfering. These missionaries and the Christian group they belonged to were loyal to the king and to those in power.

As part of the theology developed by missionaries in Sweden, Peter Fjellstedt represented a common trend, with regard to his assessment of social change. In his view, human beings should be involved in charity, but not work for social change. God alone was able to change society. According to Gustafsson, this was one important trend in the early reflections on society within Svenska Israelsmissionen. Peter Fjellstedt interpreted the French revolutions in 1789 and 1848 as important, dangerous and anti-Christian “signs.” Göran Gunner has discovered similar speculations in Fjellstedt’s work stressing the significance of the conversion of Jews as such a

²¹⁰ See for instance: Jakobsson 1972

²¹¹ Jakobsson 1972, p. 383

“signs”.²¹² The 1848 revolution in France made Fjellstedt turn his theology more towards the apocalyptic. He began preaching more about the end of history and about the imminent return of Christ. This also made Fjellstedt modify his ideas of the Christian’s task in the world. Fjellstedt argued more and more that it was a responsibility for the church to care for forgotten and humiliated human beings, but he said that each attempt to reconstruct society as a whole by human means was pointless and utopian. Instead, he argued, God would take care of that. The political turbulence of 19th century Europe led him to conclude that human existence was under an evil influence and only the Almighty could create a new world in a new era. And this hope in God, Fjellstedt argued, was no utopia.²¹³

Christianity and the Lutheran Church of Sweden in particular, had a solid and legally protected role in the Swedish society. Unity in religion – Lutheran Christianity – was proclaimed, in the constitution of 1634, to be the cornerstone of Sweden’s prosperity. In the church law from 1686 it was stated that a Swedish citizen had to be member in of the Church of Sweden. The parliament was reformed in 1866 and at that time the Church of Sweden and its clergymen lost some of their privileges. Formal freedom of religion was not a fact until 1951.²¹⁴ Bishops in the 19th century argued against the liberal view of the state and they formulated theologically motivated arguments which said that human efforts to change society were futile. Jacob Evertsson argued that many clergymen of the Church of Sweden in the 19th century were supporters of the state’s ambition to uphold the Four Estate Parliament. To claim equality between human beings, as in some Enlightenment ideas, was a mistake, said the Bishops, because the idea is only a false illusion. In his dissertation “En damm mot tidens ström” (A barrage against the current of time) Evertsson argued that in the mid-19th century many members of the Priest’s estate in the Swedish Parliament actively argued against social change.²¹⁵ The most important argument formulated in support of the Four Estate Parliament, according to Evertsson, was the Romantic idea that emphasised society as an organic unit.²¹⁶ According to this idea every human being had a given place and a role to play in the society, as all parts of the human body have their given functions.

The idea of religiously motivated nationalism as protection against social change has been described in other research works. Stefan Arvidsson (1968-) identified this *neo-traditional religious idea* in Europe in the late 19th century. He argued that the European upper classes and the bourgeoisie were terrified by the Paris revolt in 1871. It made these groups realise that the prevailing bourgeoisie society may not be an eternal structure. The unifica-

²¹² Gunner 1996, p. 43

²¹³ Gustafsson 1984, p. 35-36

²¹⁴ Sander 1988, p. 34

²¹⁵ Evertsson 2002, p. 24

²¹⁶ Evertsson 2002, p. 233

tion of Germany in 1871 sent signals: nationalism was the best defence against radical ideas. In the *neo-traditional religious idea*, Arvidsson argued, religion became something that united human beings into a people and expressed their common worldview.²¹⁷ In German Christianity, Hoekendijk argued, the terms *Volk* and *Volkskirche* were used to invoke a secularised 19th century version of God's people, and the people – *Volk* – were given a special charge of *God's people*. In Germany the term *Volkskirche* conjured up thoughts of the church, the ancient regime and the people, and as such it was used, in 1848, to defend the ancient regime against social changes shaking society after the French Revolution.²¹⁸

Throughout the 19th century Sweden saw waves of Romantic nationalism emerge and the catalyst to one such wave was the loss of Finland to Russia early in the century. In Maja Hagerman's (1960 -) description of Romantic nationalism at the time, Jews had a significant but somewhat alien role. They were seen as Semites who belonged in the Middle East, while Europeans were of Japheth's descent and belonged in Europe. Jews were also seen as biologically different. In those days Swedish poets like Esajas Tegnér and Erik Gustaf Geijer actively participated in nationalistic societies and wrote poems that glorified the Swedish Romantic nation. Romantic nationalist sentiments were introduced to school curriculum and spread particularly among the upper estates.²¹⁹ Karin Kvist Geverts has argued that the end of the 19th century brought nationalistic ideas which emphasised: "one language, one people, and one nation."

The nationalist spirit pinpointed groups of "unwanted elements" that the Swedish State wanted to get rid of. Among these were the Eastern European Jews. To stop these categories from immigrating a law was created in 1914 that gave Swedish authorities the right to refuse "unwanted foreigners" at the border.²²⁰

Svenska Israelsmissionen was a child of society in 19th century Sweden and its social changes. In this period we observe increases in the population, emigration to the United States, new social structures such as popular movements, new forms of religious organisations, trade unions but also the influx of nationalism of various kinds. Christian missions participated in this, in various ways. In Church of Sweden sermons the Bible was read and commented upon, history was interpreted and national ideals were formed. This was also observed in the low-church societies of the time. Leaders of Svenska Israelsmissionen had well-developed connections and support from the higher estates in Swedish society and due to these family connections,

²¹⁷ Arvidsson 2000, p. 323

²¹⁸ Ustorf 2000, p. 23

²¹⁹ Hagerman 2006, p. 124 ff

²²⁰ Kvist 2008, p. 285.

friendships within the higher estates, ideological preferences, connections to German missionary societies and monetary contributions from aristocratic families Svenska Israelsmissionen took off as it did.²²¹ For decades the royal family was held in high respect. The 90th birthday of Prince Oskar Bernadotte was commemorated in *Missionstidning för Israel* in 1949.²²² There is no evidence in the material that Svenska Israelsmissionen advocated social justice or democracy. On the contrary, they side only with social ideals that resembles Fjellstedt's and the Swedish bishops' support for the pre-democratic social order in Sweden. Still, these social ideals are not discussed as expressions of ideology, but as expressions of Christian virtue. There is a clear tendency to exaggerate the role of Christianity and to reduce the role of ideology.

Svenska Israelsmissionen's own motives

In its infancy Svenska Israelsmissionen described its own motives behind the mission to the Jews and the following four themes appeared: (1) the biblical command to make all peoples Christians applied to *all peoples*. (2) In each given period of history a small number of Jews were open to the truth. While working for the salvation of individual Jews Svenska Israelsmissionen did so in order to bring about the salvation of the entire Jewish people. (3) Christians are indebted to the Jews for (a) the prophets and the apostles were Jews, and (b) the Jews had kept the Bible. (4) Christian mission to Jews, or Israel, was considered a method to hasten the end of time.²²³

In 1922 Gertrud Aulén (1881 – 19??) published a mission history, issued by the Church of Sweden Mission. Its title was *Kristendomens väg till folken* – Christianity's Way to the Peoples. It is a global comprehensive study of Christian mission. Regarding her description of Christian missions to the Jews, her basic logic does not differ much from that of Svenska Israelsmissionen. Aulén refers to Franz Delitzsch. Writing in the wake of the First World War, she described how the war had destroyed synagogues and torn apart ancient Jewish culture. At the same time, she said, hopefully:

More and more the young (Jews) escape the bone hard Talmudic bond, rigid lawful Judaism is losing its grip.

Jews are not punished without reason, like the Jewish author Zangwill has said.

This people, despite persecution and dispersion, are able to play such a great role in history – what could it not signify as a Christian people.²²⁴

²²¹ Gustafsson 1984, p. 33

²²² Pernow November 1949, p. 265

²²³ Edvardsson 1976, p. 33-34

²²⁴ Aulén 1922, p. 306-307. "allt mer börja de unga lösgöra sig fråntalmuds hårda band, den stränga lagjudendomen släpper sitt tag. "Judarna äro ej straffade för intet, de ha förkastat sin

Later in this work we will see similar reflections produced by Birger Pernow. Edvardsson has shown that from its first few years Svenska Israelsmissionen viewed the Jewish colonisation of Palestine as a sign of particular apocalyptic importance. In 1876 the editor or their magazine quoted a speech he had listened to in an English missionary society:

This (Jewish colonisation of Palestine) is the beginning of the events which shall immediately precede the return of Christ and the revelation of his glory in the land of Israel and among the people of Israel, according to the reliable words of the prophecy.²²⁵

Jewish colonisation of Palestine was seen as a sign, which they tried to interpret via studies in the Bible. The return of Christ-theme was there all the time, but still it was never emphasised by leading personalities in Svenska Israelsmissionen. Other motives were higher, as we shall see, on the agenda formulated by Pernow.

Even though the circulation of Svenska Israelsmissionen's magazine was rather large and interest in its mission seems to have been considerable Svenska Israelsmissionen never baptised a large number of Jewish converts. To Svenska Israelsmissionen the number of converts mattered but in Christian missions in general there were different trends. Some mission theology would argue that the main theological trend in some mission was to "glorify God," and the emphasis was not to convert large numbers. These missionaries argued that God did not ask the Christian to convert the world but to preach the Gospel to the world. Associate professor Sigbert Axelsson (1932 -) at Uppsala University argued that there was no direct conflict between the two motives – to convert and to glorify God – but there is a difference in focus.²²⁶ Svenska Israelsmissionen, however, was very much concerned about the numbers converted. They kept detailed statistics on baptisms, and later on they kept detailed statistics on Jews all over the world. From 1875 to 1930 the annual number of baptised Jews did not exceed 11 individuals at any of the mission stations (Sweden, Budapest, Vilnius, Jassy, Odessa/Simferopol and Vienna). In Vienna, from the 1930s onwards, Edvardsson argued that the number of baptised Jews corresponded with the growing intensity of Nazi persecution of Jews. The numbers for each year are as follows: 1934 saw 88 converts, 1935, 51 converts, 1936, 8 converts, 1937, 55 converts, 1938, 12 converts and 1941 saw 25 individuals bap-

störste son," säger den judiske författaren Zangwill." "Detta folk, som trots förföljelse och förskingring kan spela en så stor roll i historien – vad skulle det icke kunna betyda som ett kristet folk!"

²²⁵ Edvardsson 1976, p. 35. "Detta är inledningen till de händelser, vilka skola omedelbart föregå Kristi återkomst och uppenbarandet av hans herrlighet i Israels land och bland Israels folk enligt profetians säkra ord."

²²⁶ Axelsson 1971, p. 161

tised.²²⁷ As we have seen, Svenska Israelsmissionen stated that in each period of time only a few Jews were ready to see the truth. Below we shall see how their work in Vienna grew after the arrival of the Nazi troops in March 1938.

Mission and social work in Nazi-controlled Vienna

Birger Pernow led Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1930 to 1961 and from 1932 he was also centrally located in international ecumenical structures for Christian mission to Jews. He was a board member of the International Missionary Council Committee for the Approach to the Jews (IMCCAJ) and from 1947 he was chair of IMCCAJ.²²⁸ Pernow's years as Director of Svenska Israelsmissionen (1930-1961) coincided with a violent period in European history. During the years of war many other Christian missions to Jews in Europe had to stop working, and Svenska Israelsmissionen too had to stop its work in Bratislava, Casablanca, Vienna and France. Svenska Israelsmissionen however was able to build a large refugee and aid effort in Europe and it cooperated with the State of Sweden, with the Church of Sweden and in European Ecumenical refugee work. Koblik, as we have seen, argued that Svenska Israelsmissionen was the Church of Sweden's experts on the "Jewish question."²²⁹ (See also Appendix 2, p 261)

Svenska Israelsmissionen frequently participated in Ecumenical conferences on refugees during and after the Second World War. For instance in 1947 Pernow participated in The Meeting of the Ecumenical Refugee Commission, at Christiansborg, Copenhagen March 26-29. At the meeting he presented a paper titled: "The refugee question in Sweden", which, starting from 1933, explored the number of immigrants to Sweden until March 1947. In his description he stated that Sweden had been able to employ 67 000 adult immigrants. To Pernow that constituted the large part of immigrants, apart from "old people, invalids and especially children". He described also how Svenska Israelsmissionen had undertaken special measures at two occasions. In 1943 they were helping Christians of Jewish descent out of Denmark and in 1945; they helped Christians of Jewish descent from Hungary, Romania, and Germany who had been saved by Count Bernadotte.²³⁰ For a thorough survey of Swedish immigration policy in that period see *Ett främmande element i nationen* by Karin Kvist Geverts. Read as a piece of academic work in history Kvist's work is thoroughly researched and docu-

²²⁷ Edvardsson 1976, p. 167-168

²²⁸ Brockway 1992

²²⁹ Koblik 1987, p. 9 & p. 88

²³⁰ Pernow 1947

mented, but, as demonstrated above I have some objections to her use of Helen Fein's definition of "anti-Semitism".²³¹

After the First World War, Edvardsson reports, Svenska Israelsmissionen was rather disorganised, with no mission work in foreign countries. In 1919 it received a proposal from Arnold Shailin, a Swedish-speaking Finnish pastor and missionary to the Jews. Shailin suggested that Svenska Israelsmissionen should start work in Vienna and this suggestion was warmly received. After some investigation they decided to work in Vienna, mainly due to its large Jewish population and the fact that no other Christian Protestant work among Jews was active in the city.²³² Svenska Israelsmissionen's first missionary station outside of Sweden was established in Vienna in 1920. On a small scale they began with Bible classes, some services, a few baptisms, etc. In Pernow's description it did not result in large interest among Jews until the Nazis arrived in 1938 and the Second World War began.

In the 1940's Svenska Israelsmissionen collected a lot of money, and the amount grew throughout the war. The amount of money collected during the Second World War almost doubled compared to the preceding decade. (See Appendix 3, p 262.) Thanks to the large amount of money collected via donations in Sweden, Svenska Israelsmissionen after the war was in a position to take new initiatives, such as SvTI in Jerusalem. Svenska Israelsmissionen had been able to balance the political situation during the war, motivate supporters to donate money and at the same time maintain contacts with many of the Mission's newly converted members, who had been deported by the Nazis to concentration camps. Svenska Israelsmissionen had also participated in IMCCAJ. This implied that they had an overview of international missionary trends and activities. They were part of international ecumenical endeavours which were considerable during this period of time.

At the turn of the century Vienna had been a vibrant intellectual milieu, which had brought forward scientific and cultural personalities as Sigmund Freud, Karl Popper, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Theodor Herzl, Elias Canetti, Karl Kraus and many others. The overall cultural and intellectual climate in Vienna is rarely reflected in articles by Svenska Israelsmissionen, only referred to when Jews are described as prominent, wealthy and well-established in the city as lawyers, doctors, professors, etc. Håkon Harket has described Vienna as the ideological background to Herzl's contribution to political Zionism. Austria was a fallen empire, once a multinational state, therefore national minorities were less of a problem than in Germany, and several types of Jewish nationalisms emerged here.²³³

In March 1938 the Nazi troops occupied Austria and entered Vienna. On the following Saturday of Hitler's first speech in the Austrian capital, Her-

²³¹ Kvist 2008

²³² Edvardsson 1976, p. 84-85

²³³ Harket 2008

man Göring gave a speech. He told all Austrians that within four years Austria would be "free from Jews", as if Jews had been a problem. Commenting on this statement, Pernow said that "the verdict on the Austrian Jews was delivered,"²³⁴ Jews who decided to leave Austria at the time were met with innumerable difficulties. According to information from Svenska Israelsmissionen a Jew who wanted to escape Nazi-controlled Vienna had to see no less than 16 different officials to obtain permission to leave. Not only the Gestapo made it difficult for Jews to leave, each signature required came at a price.

Western countries, such as the United States, had a quota for each group of immigrants therefore the United States was unable to let more than 27,000 German Jews enter each year. When the immigration quotas were shared out among each consulate, Vienna received only 8,000 places.²³⁵ The Jewish population in Vienna at the time was approximately 200,000. In order to help Jews to leave Vienna, Svenska Israelsmissionen set up a bureau for migration in 1938. At one time it was located in the Gestapo's office in the city. The relations between Svenska Israelsmissionen and Eichmann at the Gestapo were very tense at times, at others it was calm.²³⁶ Svenska Israelsmissionen proved itself to be capable of organising efficient emigration. They were allowed by the Gestapo to continue their work and so at its peak Svenska Israelsmissionen's office for migration employed 30 people. The Jewish contingency in Vienna had a bureau for emigration of its own but it was not located in the Gestapo office. There is no evidence for cooperation between the Jewish office and Svenska Israelsmissionen. On the contrary, as we have seen, Koblik has reported animosity between the two. Göte Hedenquist was working for Svenska Israelsmissionen in Vienna until 1940 and he summarised what the mission achieved at the bureau for migration:

Through this work – under the name of "Schwedische Mission Stockholm, Missionsstationen Wien" – more than 3,000 Jews and Christians of Jewish descent were saved (and brought) to various countries; a couple of hundred were sent to Sweden.²³⁷

During the war Svenska Israelsmissionen mainly brought Jewish converts to Christianity out of Vienna. Koblik has reported that Sweden was restrictive in allowing immigrants. And in 1938 only 15 "non-Aryans" under SvIM's protection were allowed to Sweden, Koblik said. And in the following years 125 and 150 children and teenagers were allowed in. The total amount of migrants helped by SvIM from 1938 to 1940 is estimated to around 3000 individuals. In the same period the Jewish bureau for emigration managed to

²³⁴ Pernow 1945, p. 41

²³⁵ Edvardsson 1976, p. 91

²³⁶ Edvardsson 1976, p. 89f

²³⁷ Hedenquist 1983, p. 7

help around 150 000 Austrian Jews. Koblik concluded that SvIM preferred young Jewish converts to Christianity. Koblik's interpretation is:

Their (the young converts) religious belief and their cultural development was easier to control for the Swedes.²³⁸

In the years following the war, it has been calculated 3,693 German children were brought to Sweden by Swedish organisations such as Rädda Barnen (Save the Children), Samarbetskommittéen för de tyska hjälporganisationerna, Svenska Scoutförbundet och Svenska Israelsmissionen. Other children had been brought to Sweden thanks to Inomeuropeisk Mission (IM), Pingstkyrkan and Bonde-Södermanska Förbundet. All in all, for the years 1946 to 1954, no less than 11,507 children were brought to Sweden from Germany. Many of these migrants cannot remember which organisation had brought them to their new country.²³⁹

In 1939 Birger Pernow devoted much time and effort to describe and condemn anti-Semitism in Nazi controlled areas. He called it the "plague of anti-Semitism." At the same time, he said, that he was certain that Nazi policies somehow came from God. This kind of ambivalence is documented to be present within other low church Christians in Sweden at the time. Gunner has shown how Per Nilsson and G Dahl "took it for granted" that Adolf Hitler was another small cog in God's plan.²⁴⁰ In one article Pernow referred to the Norwegian pastor Gisle Johnson, who worked in the Norwegian Israel mission society in Nazi-controlled area. Johnson described the Nazi atrocities and added: "Yet, one cannot escape what is healthy in all this. It is apparent that God is in it." "What is now happening," Johnson continued, "is forcing a revival (among Jews) and it shows to the Jew the road to the sources of power, which are located, far deeper than the old ones." "But the payment is not easy," Johnson continued, "It is not easy, but it will not work any in other way."²⁴¹

Pernow made use of Johnson's ideas for further reflections. He did so with no hesitation and no critical remarks. In fact Pernow's own conclusion was rather similar. He argued that suffering under the Nazis in Vienna had caused Jews in Vienna, and elsewhere, to visit the missions to find comfort and help. Pernow ended his article with more details of suffering and starvation among Jews in Nazi-controlled Poland and Romania. The article con-

²³⁸ Koblik 1987, p. 99

²³⁹ Lindner 1988, p. 124

²⁴⁰ Gunner 1996, p. 123

²⁴¹ Pernow April 1939, p. 110 "Och dock kan man icke komma ifrån det hälsosamma i allt detta. Man märker att Gud är med. Omsider tvingas man göra upp med sig själv, vem man egentligen är och varför man är till och vem man vill vara istället för att man såsom hitintills tagit livet såsom man själv velat och tänkt sig. Det som nu händer tvingar fram en väckelse och visar juden vägen till nya kraftkällor, som ligga långt djupare ned än de gamla. Men betalningen är inte lätt."

cluded with an appeal that readers pray for the work of the mission in Vienna. Pernow said that he believed God had a purpose with the suffering of Jews, for which God was responsible. Pernow said that God wanted to discipline his own people so that they would improve. The discipline would make room for consolation.²⁴²

Pernow kept this theologically motivated view rather intact throughout his thirty years in office, and hence throughout the Second World War. The Jewish people, Israel, Pernow argued was an example. To Pernow, all peoples should regard their fate as a warning.

But if the word may not cause bettering it will lead to hardening. If you say no when you are visited by God, then you will be haunted. If your refusal is reiterated the haunt will turn into judgement. Israel is a warning example.²⁴³

In 1963 Pernow commented upon the Nazi years in Vienna. He said that Jews did not visit the mission often, but they did when the Nazi persecuted Jews in Romania and in Vienna. These exceptional visits Pernow called revivalist periods ("som vi kan kalla väckelse"). His way of describing this period as a "revival" or an "awakening" among Jews poses a number of questions concerning his ethical basis. His ethics here seems to be cynical vis-à-vis the Jews: they have themselves to blame for being victimised by the Nazis. His own ethical practice manifests himself as a non-interfering spectator. He was quite aware of the fact that from March 1938, due to Nazi legislation, "non-Aryans" were not allowed to visit any church in Austria except for the Swedish mission at Seegasse, Svenska Israelsmissionen.²⁴⁴

Readers of *Missionstidning för Israel* were well-informed of the despair among Jews in Vienna, how Jews were tormented by fear due to Nazi policies and of the social work of Svenska Israelsmissionen. In September 1940 Svenska Israelsmissionen reported:

The material need among the Jewish population in Vienna is very big, in spite of the fact that this population has been considerably reduced in numbers. Before the population was 200,000, but now only 50,000 remain. Out of these, approximately 15,000 are given food at the Jewish soup kitchens. We have already reported that our mission has organised similar soup kitchens where 125-150 receive a nourishing daily meal.²⁴⁵

²⁴² Pernow Juli 1938, p. 178. "Vad mena då Gud med all denna nöd? Tvivelsutan vill han därmed söka tukta sitt folk till bättring och så bereda rum för trösten. Ty Han har alltfört fridens och icke ofärdens tankar med sitt folk."

²⁴³ Pernow September 1942, p. 261 "Men om ordet ej får verka bättring, då leder det till förhärdelse. Säger du nej till Guds besökelse, då kommer hemsökelsen. Vidbliver du ditt nej, övergår hemsökelsen i dom. Israel är ett varnande exempel."

²⁴⁴ Ljungquist 1971.

²⁴⁵ Pernow September 1940, p. 231

Greta Andrén had worked for Svenska Israelsmissionen in Vienna since 1934, and she wrote many articles in *Missionstidning for Israel*, where her own daily work was described. Her reports were most appreciated and she was encouraged to write more. Andrén wrote several so called Kristusbrev – Christ letters – that described Bible circles and how young Jewish girls gradually adopted Andrén’s specific Christian faith and a firm belief in God’s plan for each human being.²⁴⁶ Her stories were circulated widely within the mission. One popular story is about Gerty who had come to the service at Seegasse each Sunday in one year. Through much lobbying activity by Svenska Israelsmissionen Gerty was able to have her daughters and her husband released from the Gestapo’s jail. Later on her husband had to go underground, and Gerty visited him and read notes from Pastor Göte Hedenquist’s sermons. She remained in Vienna until the mass deportations began in February 1941, then she was deported to a concentration camp. While in the concentration camp Gerty wrote letters to the Swedish Mission in Vienna, saying, and this time Gerty’s story was reported by her pastor Göte Hedenquist:

When I heard the church bells from outside of the camp I knew it was Sunday. At night I brought out my little black note book where I keep notes from the pastor’s sermons. This way the Church of Christ is celebrating mass in the Jewish concentration camp. In this way several in the camp have heard of Christ, that is Messiah, for the first time.²⁴⁷

Both Greta Andrén and Göte Hedenquist were moved by Gerty’s piety. But I must confess I am surprised by the manner in which Gerty is reported to have written. Can she really have said that the concentration camp was Jewish? Many would have called them Nazi concentration camps. While reading this passage their quiet form of Christianity becomes apparent. These Christians who argued like Pernow did not participate in any resistance; they bowed their heads and prayed. And in my interpretation Pernow and Hedenquist did not expect Christians to do anything else. Christians should keep silent and suffer. One cannot escape the suspicion that the possibility for Gerty to preach Christ to Jews who had never before heard of him, to Andrén and Hedenquist, in some way overshadowed the brutal evil of the Nazi concentration camp. To them Gerty had got an opportunity to participate in the missionary work. The suffering of the camp was of course terrible, but no active resistance or opposition was preached.

²⁴⁶ Andrén December 1938, p. 306

²⁴⁷ Hedenquist 1983, p. 56–59 “När jag hör kyrkklockorna ringa därutanför lägret på förmiddagen då förstår jag att det är söndag. På kvällen brukar jag då i baracken ta fram min lilla svarta anteckningsbok som jag fick med mig hit. Och så läser jag pastors predikningar för de många som finns här. Och så håller Kristi Kyrka gudstjänst i det judiska koncentrationslägret. Det är flera år som då för första gången hör talas om att Jesus var Kristus dvs Messias”.

In her work as deaconess Andrén went to see Jews who were homeless and who had lost their jobs due to Nazi legislation. As a result of this she was well-informed about the concrete step by step implementation of Nazi policies, and she wrote about it in *Missionstidning för Israel*. As far as I know no specific research has been done on Svenska Israelsmissionen's or Andrén's contributions to inform the Swedish public about the Nazi genocide. And it could help analysing the formation of Swedish public opinion on the Nazi atrocities. In Andrén's stories, one or both of two spouses were perhaps considering suicide and the deaconess (Andrén) was often able to comfort the couple and persuade them not to take their own life/lives. Some of these stories include the notion that the couples Andrén visited became Christians and were baptised at Seegasse 16 in the Swedish Mission. Sometimes the story included a final message saying that the Swedish Mission received letters from a Nazi concentration camp XX in which the couple praised their Christian faith, and then no one had heard of the couple again. Greta Andrén's stories motivated support for Svenska Israelsmissionen. Jews were God's people, she argued, and they had to be loved.

The work of Svenska Israelsmissionen in Vienna was stopped in June 1941 and not resumed again until after the war. They had been forced to leave Vienna, but Svenska Israelsmissionen kept in touch with their parish members, even when they had been deported to camps. Svenska Israelsmissionen maintained its contacts with converted Jews in concentration camps until eventually it no longer received answers. Through this correspondence with many prisoners the mission learned much about the everyday, "normal" difficulties in the camps. It also followed the situation through other media. Its concern for detailed information may appear odd, but it signifies first and foremost a very deep compassion with the individual in combination with their theology in which God had a plan with all suffering experienced by Jews.²⁴⁸

In September 1942 Birger Pernow wrote a long article that described the fate of Jews who had been deported to Poland "to start a new life". These Jews had previously lived in Germany and Holland. The first deportees, Pernow said, were allowed to bring 50 kilograms of luggage and money. By the time the article was written, deportees were no longer allowed to bring their luggage. The money that the deportees brought could be exchanged for Polish Zloty, but Jews got only 40 Zloty each for the entire sum of money they had brought. As a reference to the value of the Zloty Pernow said that the price of one loaf of bread was 10 Zloty. The ghetto in Warsaw was described by one woman who had escaped and written to Svenska Israelsmissionen: it was terrible. The ghetto consisted of 600,000 individuals who slept in their thousands on the floors of synagogues and schools. The dirt and the misery were terrible. Pernow's oft-reported facts and details were brought to

²⁴⁸ See for instance Andrén & Jellinek 1959, p. 23f, 26f, 46f, 64f, 66f

him in letters sent by people with whom Svenska Israelsmissionen corresponded. One gets the impression that he was tormented by this information. These letters described the walls of the ghetto, built with glass, terrible epidemics and people who committed suicide as they could no longer stand living in such conditions.²⁴⁹

In the October issue of *Missionstidning för Israel*, the same year, the editors had published an article from *Svenska Dagbladet*. They did so in order to correct their own information published in the September issue in which they had mentioned that deported Jews in Poland only received a small daily salary (“en ringa dagslön”). However, *Svenska Dagbladet* on 11 September could give more precise information regarding the salary of Jewish deportees in Nazi-controlled areas. *Svenska Dagbladet* reported: A Jewish deportee in Minsk Belarus should not be paid less than a worker from Belarus, in order to maintain a fair job market. In reality the Jew would receive only 80% of the salary. Hence it worked out that a Jew would receive only 0.08 Mark per hour or for working 10 hours a day the daily salary reached just 0.8 Mark. From this, cost of 0.5 Mark per day for accommodation was deducted thereby leaving a net daily salary of 0.30 Mark.²⁵⁰

This example indicates how meticulously Pernow reported the daily suffering of Jews under Nazi control. This is so much more remarkable as the reports did not demand any change in the situation or demand any revisions to Swedish or European policies. These details did not appear in a political frame, but in an apocalyptic and superstitious worldview. God was seen to act in all of this, and the details of salaries, regulations, bread prices, etc. described implies that God used this form of suffering to make Jews realise that they should become Christians.²⁵¹

The mix of Svenska Israelsmissionen’s relief work, its theology, its mission endeavours, its stories from Nazi-occupied Vienna and Poland may have been in line with the broad sentiments or the religious “taste” among its readers in Sweden. By the end of the Second World War Svenska Israelsmissionen had succeeded in collecting a lot of money. Svenska Israelsmissionen had maintained good relations with academics, the clergy of the Church of Sweden and in 1944 it began planning for the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem. And the money collected was used to build a missionary institution in Jerusalem; and to help poor Jews, which was part of the same endeavour.

²⁴⁹ Pernow September 1942, p. 264 ff

²⁵⁰ Pernow September 1942, p. 314-315

²⁵¹ Pernow September 1942, p. 314-315

An outgrowth of European missions

In 1947 Svenska Israelsmissionen opened the Swedish Theological Institute (SvTI) in Jerusalem. Its premises were located on the second floor of the Swedish Consulate, along Nablus Road in the eastern part of Jerusalem. Later, in 1951, when SvTI was reopened, its new location was in Tabor House on Prophets' Street in West Jerusalem. Tabor House itself was built in 1882, by Conrad Schick, and it is one of the oldest houses outside of the walls of the Old City and a cultural site.²⁵²

One background issue to the establishment of SvTI is ecumenical, demonstrated by discussions within the International Missionary Council's Committee for the Christian Approach to the Jews in 1944-1947. Also, in 1944 Birger Pernow initiated discussions in Svenska Israelsmissionen to start a theological institute in Jerusalem and the fact that Svenska Israelsmissionen had financial resources to do so. In January 1946 Svenska Israelsmissionen planned to send Greta Andrén to Jerusalem to carry out investigations, but that trip was postponed because Andrén had been asked by the Swedish Red Cross and Count Folke Bernadotte to participate in a tour to Vienna.²⁵³ Only in April did Andrén leave for Jerusalem. During her visit to Vienna she met with Hilda Andersson, who now lived in Jerusalem. Andersson had previously been a missionary in China. Andersson wrote frequently in *Missionstidning för Israel* and Andersson wanted to sell her Jerusalem house, Svenskbo, to Svenska Israelsmissionen. However, the Board of Svenska Israelsmissionen considered Svenskbo to be too expensive and located in the wrong part of Jerusalem. Svenskbo was located on the Mt of Olives. The Swedish Consul to Jerusalem, Edmund Larsson, offered an apartment on the second floor of the Consulate in Nablus Road, which was accepted on 10 September, 1946. Then Nablus rd was one of Jerusalem's most busy streets, connecting the Old City with the Northern suburbs of Jerusalem and towns like Ramallah and Nablus.

During autumn 1946 Reverend Dr Gustaf Adolf Danell was approached by Svenska Israelsmissionen, because they wanted to employ him for work at SvTI. When he declined Svenska Israelsmissionen asked Rev. Dr Harald Sahlin, who accepted. Sahlin was formally appointed by Svenska Israelsmissionen at a board meeting on 17 January, 1947.

In his historical overview written in 1963, Pernow did not mention anything at all about the work of SvTI during Sahlin's period as director. Pernow merely described how Malin and Harald Sahlin had left for Jerusalem on 2 May, 1947. Pernow briefly describes the UN partition plan of November 1947 and how "resistance of the Arabs increased to a true civil war." In this period, Pernow states, contacts between SvTI and the Hebrew Univer-

²⁵² Read more at: www.svenskakyrkan.se/sti/8/thabors-hus/

²⁵³ Pernow Feb 1946, p. 49

sity were cancelled. In the autumn of 1947 the Swedish consulate was bombed. Later as the political conflict escalated Harald Sahlin asked permission to send his wife, Malin Sahlin, to Sweden. She returned to Sweden on 17 December. Harald returned to Sweden on 27 January, 1948. Greta Andrén, however, asked to stay longer and she did not return to Sweden until March 16 when the Swedish minister in Cairo ordered her to return to Sweden. This is how the first phase of the institute's prehistory ended, Pernow concludes.²⁵⁴ He obviously finds this first period, from May 1947 to January 1948, with Harald Sahlin in charge to be insignificant. But I shall return to it to some extent.

In 1944, as the end of the Second World War was approaching, Birger Pernow and his colleagues on the International Missionary Council's Committee for the Christian Approach to the Jews (IMCCAJ) intensively discussed how their missionary work should be re-organised to fit the new situation after the war. It was estimated that 90% of Central Europe's Jewish population had perished. Europe was no longer the right place for mission among Jews, Pernow argued. Instead, Jews now lived in two new centres, according to Pernow: one was New York and the other Jerusalem. Jerusalem attracted the particular interest of Pernow and Svenska Israelsmissionen. In these years around the end of the Second World War Pernow travelled a great deal as part of his commitments to IMC's Committee for the Christian Approach to the Jews. He participated in the planning of a European relief effort for surviving Jews. At several meetings with IMCCAJ in 1945, 1946 and 1947, the question of the future of Institutum Judaicum was discussed. Many in IMCCAJ were of the opinion that a new institute of this kind, where Jews and Christians could meet and talk openly, was needed. At a meeting with IMCCAJ in March 1946 the committee acknowledged IMC's interest in a continuation or reestablishment of Institutum Judaicum, which by now had changed its name to Institutum Delitzschianum, after its founder Franz Delitzsch. The suggested name of the proposed institute was "The Christian Institute of Jewish Studies." The committee's work was led by Pernow and delegates to the board were clergy and academics from Germany, England and the United States. In minutes from the March meeting in 1946 Pernow is quoted to have stressed "the necessity of raising the standard of mission work in Palestine."²⁵⁵ The same minutes stated:

The aim of the institute is to promote a more authentic understanding of Judaism among Christians and of Christianity among Jews. Its programme is: (a) research and study of the religious life of the Jews; (b) production of literature on the relation of Judaism and Christianity, especially literature designed for use abroad; (c) provisions of specialised training of missionary workers and those interested in Jewish questions; (d) study conferences for

²⁵⁴ Pernow 1963

²⁵⁵ Pernow 1963, p. 4

ministers and others interested in the parish approach [of ministry] to the Jews; (e) special courses and lectures in theological colleges and elsewhere.”²⁵⁶

When similar work in Palestine was discussed, the meeting of March 1946 emphasised the necessity of cooperating with existing missions in Jerusalem, such as the Newman School of Mission. In Pernow's description the position of Hans Kosmala in the planning of this new institute is somewhat vague. Kosmala was not asked to lead the work in England and Institutum Judaicum was never re-opened in London. Another institute called "The Christian Institute of Jewish Studies" was in fact established in London, but it had already closed down in December 1947. In this period the Institutum Delitzschianum had been re-opened in Münster with Professor Karl Rengstorf as director.

Institutum Delitzschianum maintained a focus on the significance of the "people," much as the founder had stressed. Contacts with Svenska Israelsmissionen were maintained as well. This is not in focus here, but in order to indicate the durability of the idea and contacts, I will quote Rengstorf from 1969. That year Göte Hedenquist wrote a long article on the relationship between the Lutheran Church and the Institutum Delitzschianum. He quoted Professor Rengstorf saying:

The fact that Jews are still in existence today is a consequence of Israel being the people of the Law. Because, God has not and he will never deny his will, laid down in the Law. Judaism bear witness about this for all the nations and religions by its mere existence and it will, according to the Bible, continue doing so until the end of time. The Law guarantees Israel's existence in *this* world (*italics in the original*).²⁵⁷

An interesting field of research could be to follow Lutheran theological reflections on Jews as a "people" through the 20th century and study to what extent Pernow's ideas have survived and or changed.

A connecting point between Israel and Sweden

As soon as the armistice agreements between Israel and Jordan had been reached in the spring of 1949, discussions at Svenska Israelsmissionen about the planned theological institute were resumed. From 13 to 19 June, 1949

²⁵⁶ Pernow 1963, p. 4

²⁵⁷ Hedenquist 1969, p. 203-204. "Det faktum att judar finns ännu idag är en följd av att Israel blev lagens folk. Gud har nämligen icke, och kommer heller aldrig, att förneka sin i lagen nedlagda vilja. Judendomen vittnar härom inför alla nationer och religioner genom själva sin existens och kommer enligt Bibeln, att fortsätta att göra så ända till tidens ände. Lagen garanterar Israels existens i denna värld."

Birger Pernow participated in the International Conference on Mission to the Jews in Edinburgh. On that occasion the leader of the Church of Scotland told Pernow that the Newman School of Mission in Jerusalem might be available. Greta Andrén left for Jerusalem on 15 November, 1949 and stayed at St. Andrews Hospice, run by the Church of Scotland. During her stay in Jerusalem she visited the Newman School of Mission (1 December, 1949) with Mr Morrison, a pastor of the Church of Scotland, and Mr Miller, manager of the Newman School. They helped her to determine the quality and the status of the premises. Andrén wholeheartedly supported that Svenska Israelsmissionen should rent the premises of the Newman School. After some negotiations with the owner, the American Methodist Church, a five-year lease was signed starting in September 1950. In his report, Pernow said that after the war the Swedish consulate had ended up on the Arab side of Jerusalem; therefore, Pernow explained, the Swedish consulate was no longer of interest as a location of SvTI. According to Pernow, all the concerned parties in Israel were contacted and were all in favour of moving SvTI to the premises of the Newman School.²⁵⁸

At this point, Andrén asked Pernow to come to Jerusalem as soon as possible. However, due to a temporary illness, Pernow asked Göte Hedenquist, then director of IMC's Committee for the Christian Approach to the Jews, to undertake the necessary arrangements and correspondence during a trip Hedenquist made to Israel as part of his work for the International Missionary Council (IMC). Hedenquist spent one month in Israel, 27 March – 24 April, 1950. During this visit he made contact with: Hans Kosmala, who served as the acting leader of the Church of Scotland's missionary work in Tiberias; Professor Martin Buber and Professor Hugo Bergmann, both at the Hebrew University; and, Dr Chaim Wardi at the Ministry for Religious Affairs. All expressed great interest in the plans for SvTI and promised to support it. After these consultations Pernow concluded that the institute should not be active in mission work. It would only be "an objective research institute:"

The principal topic for studies ought to be the common ground for the Jewish and Christian faith and include studies in the Old Testament, rabbinic literature, and the New Testament with an emphasis on both language and content.²⁵⁹

The only obstacle for the establishment of SvTI was the matter of mission and Svenska Israelsmissionen had to promise not to undertake any mission work, which they did. Göte Hedenquist communicated with Bishop Torsten Ysander, who was chair of Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1936 to 1946.²⁶⁰ Some of the issues were enumerated in correspondence between Göte He-

²⁵⁸ Pernow 1963

²⁵⁹ Pernow 1963, p. 10

²⁶⁰ Edvardsson 1976, p. 170

denquist and Mr Zalman Shazar, Minister of Education and Culture of the State of Israel.

Uppsala, Sweden. July 20, 1950.

Dear Sir,

On July 11th our representative Miss Greta Andrén, at former Newman School building, Street of Prophets 16 ²⁶¹, paid a visit to your secretary Mrs Brown, in order to receive your answer to the application we sent you in April, regarding the reopening of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem. On the same day she cabled to Sweden as follows:

”HEDENQUIST BIRKAGATAN 1B (street number unclear in print)
UPPSALA * REOPENING INSTITUTE ON PRINCIPLE
GRANTED BY MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED WE
GUARANTEE NO MISSION WORK STOP CABLE AND WRITE
OFFICIAL APPROVAL”

Our answer was sent to you on July 13th as follows:

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION JERUSALEM ISRAEL*SWEDISH
INSTITUTE JERUSALEM DOES NOT CONCERN MISSIONARY
WORK JUST STUDIES ACCORDING TO REQUEST SIGNED BY
GÖTE HEDENQUIST STOP LETTER FOLLOWS*YSANDER
BISHOP OF LINKÖPING SWEDEN.”

The Bishop of Linköping now asks me to confirm this telegram by writing to you. Once more I should like to affirm that the Swedish Theological Institute will not be a missionary Institute but will be, as is pointed out in my application, a research centre for Bible studies on the common ground of the Jewish-Christian faith. In this way the Institute also will serve the mutual understanding between Israel and Sweden. We are very grateful for your kind approval and will assure you, Sir that we shall always try to lead the studies of our institute on the highest possible level. We are looking forward to having your approval in writing, given to our representative Miss Andrén, so far you have given her the approval only orally.

On behalf of the bishop in Linköping
Yours sincerely, Göte Hedenquist ²⁶²

One might assume these conditions – an end to mission activity - would completely erode the motivation for Svenska Israelsmissionen to continue its work in Jerusalem. However, it did not. Kosmala, as we shall see, was convinced that through an institute of this kind Christianity would be made

²⁶¹ Street number is not the same as now, but the building is the same: Tabor House.

²⁶² Hedenquist 1950

known to Jews in a better way. Yet another reason for their ability to adapt to new conditions is if not the State of Israel was considered an authority and therefore their passivity in front of political facts was still the way to respond. On his trip to Jerusalem in April 1950, Hedenquist met with Hans Kosmala who agreed to assume the position as Director of SvTI awaiting the arrival of a Swedish director. Andrén was appointed matron of SvTI. Henrik Ljungman from Lund was asked to assume the position as Director of SvTI. He travelled to Jerusalem and spent some months there, but eventually he resigned. From the correspondence it is rather apparent that personal issues between him and Andrén were the reason for his resignation. But this conflict did not affect the overall focus of the institute's work. On 24 May, 1951 Hans Kosmala was employed as Director. In 1963 Pernow stated the purpose of SvTI had been:

- a. Scientific work with an emphasis on biblical research.
- b. To offer possibilities for young Swedish theologians, and for theologians from other protestant countries and churches to spend one semester or a full academic year at the institute for continued biblical research under qualified leadership. Svenska Israelsmissionen granted 2-3 such scholarships a year.
- c. To create a platform for conversations and exchange of research results between Christians and Jews.²⁶³

These objectives of SvTI did not differ much from the objectives expressed by Hans Kosmala in *News Sheet*, published by IMC in September 1951. But compared to Pernow, Kosmala had a fourth point. According to Kosmala the areas of focus were:

1. The isagogics and exegesis of the Old and the New Testament (with reference to history and archaeology);
2. Judaica and Rabbinica (Jewish history and religion);
3. Modern Hebrew;
4. The state of Israel and its problems.²⁶⁴

The origin of this fourth point is of course of interest. But an investigation to it would have to depend upon available correspondence from SvTI. As part of its work in Jerusalem, Svenska Israelsmissionen issued scholarships for students from Swedish universities. One to four students would spend one or two semesters at SvTI where they studied the four areas mentioned above by

²⁶³ Pernow 1963, p. 11

²⁶⁴ Kosmala 1951

Kosmala. Summarizing the number of students at SvTI until 1968 Østerbye reported:

So far over 200 students from all parts of the world have attended the lecture courses and seminars, many of the former students are now teachers in universities and theological colleges.²⁶⁵

Ending his description Pernow summarised the achievements of SvTI down to 1963. Pernow was not convinced that the cost of sending students to SvTI could be justified, but on the other hand, he argued the contacts created between Jews and Christians had exceeded all expectations. Pernow argued that SvTI had been able to win great confidence both within Israel and throughout Protestant Christianity. One may note here that he did not mention contacts with any Arab Protestant Christians. The success ascribed by Pernow proved to him that the idea of establishing an institute was right.²⁶⁶

Svenska Israelsmissionen was established in 1875 as a mission to Jews. Christian mission to Jews had been its *raison d'être* for half a century. But when SvTI was re-established in 1951, Svenska Israelsmissionen accepted that it would not undertake Christian mission in Israel. The Second World War had passed in Europe and the War of Independence/al-Naqba had passed in Palestine/Israel. Svenska Israelsmissionen maintained its fascination with the Jewish people and without any significant changes smoothly adapted its theology to meet with the new political reality. From its theological tradition Svenska Israelsmissionen could emphasize what was called the fulfilment of prophecies and the return of the Jewish people to their homeland, and obedience to authority.

Respected in Israel and in Sweden

In the 21st century, SvTI is sometimes ascribed a longstanding part in the histories of both the Church of Sweden and the Uppsala University. In 2001, the Church of Sweden published a document on Judaism called *Guds vägar, the Ways of God*. In this document SvTI is described as a centre for encounters between Christianity and Judaism since the 1950s.²⁶⁷ In 2005, Uppsala

²⁶⁵ Østerbye 1970, p. 189

²⁶⁶ Pernow 1963

²⁶⁷ *Guds vägar-judendom och kristendom*. Kyrkostyrelsens skrivelse till Kyrkomötet, 2001:5. In English this translates as: The Ways of God-Judaism and Christianity: a document for discussion within the Church of Sweden: "Represented by several distinguished theologians, the Church of Sweden has been, and still is, involved in the ecumenical work to establish theologically rooted principles concerning Christianity's relationship to Judaism. Since its start in 1951, the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem has functioned as a theological meeting place, where the relationship between the Church and the Jewish people is studied and re-considered." www.svenskakyrkan.se/svk/Guds_vagar/waysofgod.htm

University published a booklet called *The Call of the Orient – the Professorship of Semitic Languages at Uppsala University 400 years*. It includes a picture of SvTI at Prophets' Street 58 and the text states:

The Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem has since its establishment in 1951 been a support for theological, linguistic and cultural studies in the Middle East. The building, Bet Tabor ("The House of Tabor") was built in 1882 and is one of the most architecturally interesting and beautiful buildings in the quarter of Rehovot. It has been the venue for many conferences and seminars and has given lodgings to many scholars for short periods of time.²⁶⁸

However, as we have seen, SvTI was originally a mission station, was not part of the Church of Sweden or any university.

In 1951, SvTI was the first foreign academic institution established in the State of Israel in West Jerusalem. The significance of SvTI was appreciated and expressed by Professor Hugo Bergmann of the Hebrew University. On 23 April, 1951, he published an article in *Ha'aretz*, a Hebrew daily newspaper in Jerusalem, entitled "*The Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem and We*". He wrote:

The Swedes were the first to establish scholarly contacts and founded the Swedish Theological Institute for Scandinavian students in the Jewish Jerusalem. The object of the institute is the study of Judaism in its developments since biblical times as well as the life and thought of the Jews in the state of Israel. I am, therefore, of the opinion that we on our part, should, as far as possible, do everything in order to facilitate the task of the Institute and the visit of students from the northern countries.²⁶⁹

In *Christian News from Israel*, a periodical published by the Israeli Ministry of Religious Affairs, Hans Kosmala gave a vivid description in June 1956 of how Professor Schwabe, Rector of the Hebrew University, brought twenty volumes of the Babylonian Talmud to SvTI. Most lectures at SvTI were given by Kosmala, but guest lecturers were also invited. In 1956 Kosmala described the professors who had served as guest lecturers up to that date: H.S. Nyberg, G. Lindeskog and H. Ringgren from Uppsala; J. Lindblom and G. Gerleman from Lund; E. Hammershaimb from Aarhus; T.C. Vrizen from Groningen; P.A.H. de Boer from Leiden; and, S. Mowinkel and S. Aalen from Oslo.²⁷⁰ In *Christian News from Israel*, June 1965, the Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute (ASTI) was reviewed by Prof. Menahem of the Hebrew University, with apparent appreciation.²⁷¹ SvTI was well-integrated into the academic life of Jerusalem.

²⁶⁸ Ottosson 2005, p. 51

²⁶⁹ Bergmann 1951

²⁷⁰ *Christian News from Israel*, June 1956, p. 34 and 35

²⁷¹ *Christian News from Israel*, June 1965, p. 43

In May 1959, Kosmala participated in a discussion with Zwi Werblowski, an associate professor at the Hebrew University, broadcast on Israeli radio. It was the first of its kind in the State of Israel, was held in Hebrew and therefore reached a wide audience. The theme of the conversation was to what extent religions are bases for ethical judgement. The two intellectuals seem to have agreed that social structures are unthinkable without ethical codes. Even though ethics may not explicitly express religious ideas, Kosmala and Werblowsky thought they are almost always based on religious views. The discussion did not go into any particularities, but was undertaken in a friendly manner and was concluded with a common testimony on the tasks at hand: to struggle against all evil forces in the world and the evil instincts in man of greed and lust for power. The two agreed on much and Werblowsky, for his part, emphasised that structural aspects in society do not need be based on religions. He argued they can be based on the UN declaration on Human Rights and be brought about without reference to religions. Werblowsky furthermore argued that the historical and natural roots of ethical views should not be forgotten. Later in 1959, Kosmala again participated in a radio broadcasted discussion. In this second radio event Werblowsky discussed with Leo Rudloff, Abbot in the Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem.²⁷² Since the mid-1950s Israel had held a competition in biblical knowledge. According to Svenska Israelsmissionen they did not find this surprising, but greatly appreciated it because they viewed Israel as the land of the Bible. Therefore, it was perceived as a great honour for Svenska Israelsmissionen when Hans Kosmala was appointed one of the judges in the International Bible competition organised in the State of Israel in 1961. One of the other judges was Haim Cohn, Jurist in Israel. Both President Ben-Zvi and Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion attended the competition.²⁷³

In 1966 the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity (ETRF) was established. One of the initial promoters of ETRF was Hans Kosmala and he became its first chairman. From the early 1970s ETRF published a biannual magazine *Immanuel – a Journal of Religious Thought and Research in Israel*. The magazine was published in co-operation with the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the Department of Comparative Religion at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, the School of Jewish Studies at Tel Aviv University, the Israel Interfaith Committee, the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee, the Reformed Churches of Holland, as well as other institutions.

From this very brief overview one may conclude that SvTI have had a key position in connecting Sweden to intellectual Jews in West Jerusalem. The assessments done by Guds vägar and Ottosson are easily supported. Still, a more thorough assessment of its work should then be undertaken in which

²⁷² Kosmala March 1961, p. 75-80

²⁷³ Pernow December 1961, p. 292-294

the institute's rich network of contacts and correspondence ought to be included.

“As loyal to this State as the most loyal Jewish Israeli citizen can be”

From 1951 to 1971 Hans Kosmala directed SvTI. His attitude to the State of Israel was supportive. In 1953, Hans Kosmala asked the Israeli authorities for more expedient treatment at the Israeli port of Haifa for goods sent to SvTI from Sweden. In order to persuade the Foreign Ministry to help SvTI, Kosmala stressed SvTI's value for Israel as a pro-Israeli Swedish institution.

Since we started this Institute just over two years ago we have been walking, faithfully and conscientiously, the straight and narrow path, and God knows that it was sometimes extremely narrow. I affirm and declare that Miss Andrén and myself who are in charge of this Institute, have never done anything, nor have we allowed anything that prejudices the Jewish people, or is contrary to the laws and regulations of this country, or inconsistent with the undertaking we have given to the Israeli authorities. I am positive when I say that we have been, in word and deed, as loyal to this State as the most loyal Jewish Israeli citizen can be.²⁷⁴

A copy of this letter was sent to the Swedish Embassy in Tel Aviv and I found it in the archives of the Swedish Foreign Ministry in Stockholm. How honest or successful this appeal was I cannot tell. Also, I cannot ascertain to what degree visitors and students at SvTI were aware of Kosmala's political policy vis-à-vis the Jewish state. The Swedish Embassy in Tel Aviv was rather well-informed. Kosmala's work at SvTI was appreciated in Sweden. On the basis of the correspondence that I have studied, it has been impossible to establish a full chronology of events. It does appear, however, that Kosmala was appreciated in Sweden. On November 11, 1961 the King of Sweden appointed Hans Kosmala Riddare av Nordstjärneorden (RNO) at the Royal Swedish Embassy in Tel Aviv. The explanation was that he had been able to establish good contacts with government circles within the State of Israel. Greta Andrén received the Vasaorden (LVO) of the First Class on June 4, 1960. Both Kosmala and Andrén were recommended by Överhovpredikant (Chaplain to the King) Olle Nystedt, Chair of the Board of the Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1946. According to the formal procedures, the Swedish Department of Church Affairs (ecklesiastikdepartementet) and the Swedish Embassy in Tel Aviv had to approve these recommendations, which they did.²⁷⁵

²⁷⁴ Kosmala 1953, p. 3

²⁷⁵ Nystedt 1961

Good contacts between the Swedish state and SvTI were maintained. In February 1968, Hans Kosmala asked the Swedish Ambassador Mr Siegbahn if he, like his predecessors Mr Hugo Tamm and Mrs Inga Thorsson, would accept the position as chair of SvTI's board in Israel. The reason was legal and in 1964 SvTI was obliged to register the institute as "a corporation or a corporate body in the State of Israel." It was done under the title "Board of Trustees of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem." If this board had not been registered SvTI would not have been allowed to acquire the property – land and buildings – from the Methodist Church, Kosmala claimed. The original members of the Board of Trustees were Greta Andrén (secretary), Chaim Wardi (introduced as retired advisor to the Ministry of Religious Affairs), Dr Göte Hedenquist, Hans Kosmala and Ambassador Hugo Tamm (chair). From 1967 the board had to include seven or eight persons.²⁷⁶ Mr Siegbahn accepted via a letter on 6 February. Kosmala wrote to Siegbahn on 14 February to inform Siegbahn about the members of the board including Professor A. Schalit of the Hebrew University and Mr Pinchas E. Lapide of the Government Press Office.²⁷⁷

At Tabor House before the Swedish Theological Institute

Before SvTI moved to the premises of Tabor in 1951 the house was owned by the Methodist Newman Trust Fund, USA, which was originally established by Bishop John P. Newman and his wife. The Newman Fund held trust by the Board of Foreign Missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church, USA, since approximately 1912. On 1 January, 1928 a School of Oriental Studies was established in the Tabor House. Later in 1928 this school was called the Newman School of Missions.²⁷⁸ The Newman School educated Christian missionaries for work among Muslims, it had language courses (mainly in Arabic), and it had a translation service that sent translations of Arabic articles from the local press to subscribers in several Western countries.²⁷⁹

The Ward of the Newman School was Dr Eric F.F. Bishop, a missionary from the Anglican Church Mission Society. Bishop regularly wrote articles on Islam, Arabic and Middle East history, and kept up a vivid correspondence with several people interested in mission. From him there exists rich, but rather dispersed, archival material, some of which is stored at the Meth-

²⁷⁶ Kosmala February 1, 1968

²⁷⁷ Kosmala February 14, 1968

²⁷⁸ Annual report of the Board of Foreign Missions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1928. p. 40

²⁷⁹ Journal of the Annual meetings of the Board of Foreign Missions of The Methodist Episcopal Church, USA.

odist Hartford Seminary, Connecticut. The Newman School of Missions published a newsletter called the *Thaborian*.²⁸⁰ The Newman School of Mission operated approximately until the end of the British Mandate. Later Eric F.F. Bishop was a teacher at the Hartford based seminary in Connecticut and served on the editorial board of *The Muslim World*, published at Hartford Seminary since the late 19th century.

²⁸⁰ I have looked for this newsletter at several archives in UK, USA, Denmark and in Sweden but so far I have found only one of the issues.

4. The Swedish Theological Institute in its political context around 1950

Around 1950 large portions of the Swedish population were very supportive of the State of Israel. One reason for the rather widespread Swedish support for the State of Israel at the time was, of course, the Nazi atrocities against Jews in Europe. Sweden was shocked when Nazi Germany deported Jews from Norway in 1942 and many have revealed how shocked they were to see starving and fragile Jews arriving to Sweden in the buses organized by Count Bernadotte and the Red Cross Society in 1945.²⁸¹

SvTI, as a focal point, was no exception. In 1947, after several years of planning, Birger Pernow inspired SvIM to establish SvTI in Jerusalem. Its first director was the biblical scholar Harald Sahlin, who headed the Institute from May 1947 to January 1948. Due to the war in Palestine, SvTI minimized its activities for some time, but they were resumed after the ceasefire accord between Israel and the Arab countries, spring 1949. From 1951 to 1971 SvTI was headed by Hans Kosmala, a German-British scholar, together with Greta Andrén, who was a Swedish deaconess from SvIM. SvTI cooperated with the intellectual elite of those days both in Europe and in Israel, like Hugo Bergmann, Professor at Hebrew University, and Martin Buber, Professor at Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Swedish Board of SvTI had members like Johannes Lindblom, Professor and later Vice-chancellor of Lund University. Nils Ljunggren was a Supreme Court Judge. Professor H.S. Nyberg, since 1948 a member of the Swedish Academy, headed the Swedish Board of SvTI from 1955 to 1971.

A post-war debate on Jews in Europe – Arthur Montgomery

After the end of the Second World War many in Sweden argued that the dire situation for Jews in Europe, and rising anti-Semitism in Europe, would best be resolved by massive migration of Jews to Palestine and later to Israel. But some, like Arthur Montgomery (1889-1976), argued that the problem with

²⁸¹ Bjereld & Carmesund 2008, for instance contributions by Pierre Schori or Viola Furubjelke

all refugees in Europe – Jews and non-Jews alike - was the lack jobs, thus giving them no ability to support themselves.

In 1947, Jewish immigration to Palestine and the situation for Jews in post-war Europe was not only discussed in SvIM. In *Dagens Nyheter* and *Svenska Dagbladet* Eli F. Heckscher, Arthur Montgomery and Hugo Valentin (1888-1963) seriously addressed the issue.

In *Dagens Nyheter* on August 27, 1947, an appeal was signed by Jewish and Zionist organisations in Sweden supporting “a just solution of the Palestine problem.” This appeal argued that a just solution for Palestine presupposed “unlimited immigration to Palestine for all Jews who wish to settle there.”²⁸² The appeal referred to a ship called “Exodus” which had recently sailed from Europe to Palestine with 4,300 Jewish migrants. The ship had been stopped by the British Navy in the Mediterranean. Then “Exodus” and all its passengers had been brought back to Europe. The appeal was directed to Emil Sandström, a Swedish judge and, since the spring of 1947, head of the first UN committee (UNSCOP) appointed to investigate the future of Palestine, and the Swedish foreign minister. On August 28 Professor Eli F. Heckscher, of Stockholm University, published an article in *Dagens Nyheter* in which this appeal was criticised, and the debate began. The debate was brief, but its assessments of Europe, anti-Semitism, Zionism and Jews all display a divide in Swedish intellectual society at the time, controversies which are relevant for the theme of this thesis.

Heckscher did not share the opinions expressed in the appeal published on August 27 in *Dagens Nyheter*. The appeal had argued that “Exodus” was sent by the British Navy from Cyprus to Germany, “the country soaked in Jewish blood.” But, Heckscher said, the passengers on “Exodus” were not forced to travel to Germany. They were offered the opportunity to disembark

²⁸² Full text of the “Exodus” appeal in Swedish. *Dagens Nyheter* August 27, 1947.

”Svensk vädjan för judarna på ”Exodus”

Som en protest mot den engelska återtransporten av 4.300 judiska flyktingar till Tyskland har en rad judiska organisationer i Sverige till engelska ministern i Stockholm, svenska regeringen (t.f. utrikesminister Gjöres) och ordföranden för Palestinakommissionen, justitierådet Sandström, på tisdagen avsänt följande telegram:

Vi uttrycker vår förfäran och djupa sorg över engelska regeringens beslut att sända de 4.300 judiska flyktingarna från fartyget ”Exodus” till Tyskland, landet som dränkts i judiskt blod. Vi kräver att dessa 4.300 skall få tillstånd att komma till Palestina. Vi vädjar till svenska regeringen att den måtte intervensera hos engelska regeringen att denna måtte öppna Palestinas portar för judarna på ”Exodus”. Vi vädjar till ordföranden för Palestina-kommissionen, justitierådet Emil Sandström, att intervensera om tillstånd för dessa judar att få komma till Palestina. Vi vädjar till Palestinakommissionen och till hela den civiliserade världen att finna en rättvis lösning för Palestinaproblemet så att en möjlighet gives för obegränsad invandring för alla de judar som önska bosätta sig där, främst för de hemlösa judarna i lägren.

Telegrammet är undertecknat: World Jewish Congress, svenska sektionen, Skandinaviska judiska ungdomsförbundet, Judiska studentklubben, Judiska klubben, Föreningen polska judar i Sverige, Rechaluz i Sverige, Bachad i Sverige och Ligan för det arbetande Palestina.

Enligt vad dagens *Nyheter* erfarit väntas under onsdagen sympatiaktioner även från de mosaiska församlingarna i Sverige, Norge och Finland.

in France, but declined to do so. The refusal to disembark in France, Heckscher argued, was due to the “Zionist ambition to prevent Jewish settlement in any country other than Palestine.”²⁸³ The final plead of the appeal demanded unlimited immigration of Jews to Palestine. Questioning this position, Heckscher argued that Arabs had been in the country for more than 1,300 years. If Jews had the right to immigrate, Arabs too ought to enjoy the right of unlimited immigration. But, if that was to occur, he maintained, there would be a bloodbath in Palestine which would make not only Germany’s soil soaked in Jewish blood, but Palestine’s soil as well. Heckscher was of the opinion that Zionists were generally underestimating the strength of the Arab resistance to Jewish immigration. He maintained that Arabs in Palestine would defend themselves more intensely than Zionists were prepared to realise. One could be a warm and devoted friend of Jews without being a Zionist, he argued. There was no identification, and this point he stressed, between being a Jew and being a Zionist. Given the immediate threat of anti-Semitism in Europe Heckscher said:

Only by displaying the absence of identity between Jews and Zionists this danger can be opposed.²⁸⁴

Heckscher was not against Jewish migration to Palestine as such, but he wanted to take into account the Arab population and the Arabs’ possible enmity against Jews should Jews immigrate *en masse* to Palestine. Heckscher’s opponent in the debate was Hugo Valentin, associate professor of history at Uppsala University. Valentin had another analysis. He was of the opinion that the problems for Jews in Europe, and increasing anti-Semitism in Europe at the time, were caused by their “homelessness”:

(But) first and foremost: the Jews’ misfortunes emanate since 2,000 years [ago] from their abnormal situation as a people without a land of their own. Either one will have to abolish the Jews’ homelessness or leave things the way they are, seeking to help the victims of the inevitable catastrophes by spreading them around to the countries that are least reluctant to receive them – a vicious circle of permanently recurring catastrophes and relief actions.²⁸⁵

To Valentin, Jews lived in an “abnormal situation” because they did not possess a land of their own. Valentin referred to Chaim Weizmann, who

²⁸³ Heckscher August 28 1947 ”I själva verket utgör just denna episod ett slående bevis för sionisternas strävan att förekomma judisk bosättning i andra länder än Palestina.”

²⁸⁴ Heckscher August 31 1947. ”Enbart genom att visa frånvaron av identitet mellan judar och sionister kan faran mötas”.

²⁸⁵ Valentin September 1947. ”Men framför allt: judarnas olyckor härrör sedan 2000 år tillbaka från deras abnorma situation som ett folk utan eget land. Antingen måste man upphävas judarnas hemlöshet eller låta det vara som det är, sökande hjälpa de oundvikliga katastrofernas offer genom att sprida dem till de länder som minst ogärna vill ta emot dem – en *circulus vitiosus* av ständigt återkommande katastrofer och hjälpaktioner”

argued that allowing Jewish immigration to Palestine was a matter of either committing a small injustice against the Arabs or, should Jews be prohibited from immigration to Palestine, a large injustice against the Jews. Immigration for Arabs would, Valentin said, be regulated by the Jewish government and it would be restrictive. Arabs were among the world's richest peoples in terms of territory. If only Western technology were introduced Arab lands could yield immeasurable harvests and feed innumerable individuals. The small injustice to the Arabs, Valentin argued, was that Jews would be given a tiny piece of land, a mere slice of the plentiful land where Arabs lived. Jews had no other place to go to, so why then should they be denied the right to settle in Palestine?²⁸⁶

After the final exchange of arguments in *Dagens Nyheter* between Valentin and Heckscher, Arthur Montgomery wrote an article in *Svenska Dagbladet* in support of Heckscher. Montgomery was professor of history of economics at Stockholm University. He argued emphatically that not all Jews were Zionists. Zionists did not have the right to speak for all Jews.²⁸⁷ When emphasis is put on the fact that there is no identification between Jew and Zionist, Montgomery said, more opportunities appear for a true solution for the "Jewish problem." Such a solution presupposed cooperation between Western states. According to Montgomery, a true solution would be reached when refugees in Europe – Jews and non-Jews alike – were given the opportunity to make a living within the borders of the Western states.²⁸⁸ It is the responsibility of the Western world to reintegrate Jews, as Jews have lived in Europe and contributed to its culture and science.²⁸⁹

Having read Montgomery one may draw the conclusion that Jews did not have to "return" anywhere, but belonged and needed to be re-integrated in Europe. To him, all refugees in post-war Europe – "Jews or non-Jews" alike – belonged where they had contributed to the well-being of the society before they had become refugees. The task after the war was to reintegrate the refugees into the labour market and society. To Valentin, on the other hand, the core of the problem was the absence of a sovereign state for Jews. He believed Jews had no other place to go to, but Palestine. The solution to the problem is not, for Valentin, reached as soon as a refugee is able to make a living. Harald Sahlin had seen Montgomery's article in *Svenska Dagbladet* and he was very happy to have found an article that exactly expressed his

²⁸⁶ Valentin August 29 1947

²⁸⁷ Montgomery 1947 "Det är i denna situation mycket viktigt att det göres klart att judar och sionister icke äro samma sak, att sionisterna ingalunda ha rätt att tala å alla judars vägnar."

²⁸⁸ Montgomery 1947. "Ju mer man lyckas vinna förståelse för detta faktum, desto mer ökas också möjligheterna att ge en verklig lösning av det judiska problemet, att skapa ett samarbete mellan Västerlandets stater för att inom deras gränser ge utkomstmöjligheter åt de flyktingar, judiska eller icke-judiska, som ännu icke kunnat bereda sig någon varaktig stad."

²⁸⁹ Montgomery 1947. "Och ur mera allmän synpunkt är det likaledes en fördel att judarna i stort sett fortfarande ha sin verksamhet i den västerländska kulturvärld, där de gjort så stora insatser och där de äro en integrerad del."

own sentiments on the political problem in Palestine.²⁹⁰ Heckscher, Montgomery and Sahlin, indirectly, thought that both Jews and Arabs had a right to live in Palestine and Jews in Europe had a right to live in Europe. Like Montgomery Heckscher stressed there was no identification between being a Jew and being a Zionist.

Svenska Israelhjälpen and Sweden's war relief

In 1951 Svenska Israelhjälpen started as a short-lived campaign through which Sweden, the Nazi genocide, and Israel and Palestine are indirectly linked in practical ways. People in Sweden felt they wanted to help Jews who had been persecuted in the Second World War. Their way of helping Jews was manifest in the collection of money and the houses built at Kfar Achim. The campaign resulted in seventy-five wooden houses being brought from Sweden to Israel. One person who settled in an Aneby house was Malka Gantz, mentioned above. She lived in Hungary until the autumn of 1944 when the Nazis deported her to the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in northern Germany. In May 1945 she and all the other prisoners who were still alive were liberated by British troops. Malka Gantz was brought to Sweden in a White Bus organised by Count Bernadotte and the Red Cross. She stayed in Sweden some eighteen months before leaving for Palestine. Eventually she and her husband settled in Kfar Achim.²⁹¹ Inhabitants of Kfar Achim were mainly from Eastern Europe and some, like Malka Gantz, had barely survived the Nazi genocide perpetrated on a continent which had failed to protect its Jewish population. In 1952, Kfar Achim received Swedish houses from Aneby, and these were regarded as true palaces compared to the barracks Malka and others had lived in before. However, the Swedish wooden houses had been assembled on the land of a Palestinian Arab village called Qastina.²⁹² The 900 inhabitants of Qastina had grown citrus orchards and tilled fields where wheat and barley had been harvested. The village is known in literature since the 16th century. Qastina appears on maps showing the partition plan for Palestine adopted by the UN on November 29, 1947 (GA 181 II). (see Appendix 4, p 263.) In relation to the partition plan, it was located inside the Arab state, close to the junction between the eastern and western enclaves of the Arab state.²⁹³ (See Palestine - Plan of Partition, with Qastina. Copied in this work on p 109) In July 1948 it was conquered by the Israeli Defence Force:

²⁹⁰ Sahlin September 26, 1947

²⁹¹ Guber 1979, p. 33-42.

²⁹² Morris 2004, p. xix. References to nr 70 on map 3: "Yehiel (Kfar Ahim) – Qastina – 1949"

²⁹³ Cattani 1969, p. 206f

Operational orders issued by Brigade Commander Shim'on Avidan had called for civilians to be expelled; however, the inhabitants of this area fled almost as soon as the operation began, according to a later Israeli army report. The village had earlier been mentioned in Plan Dalet as one of the villages to be occupied by the Givati Brigade.²⁹⁴

Currently the history of this particular war is being reconsidered in international and Israeli debates. The quotation above does not finally settle this debate, but gives one relevant perspective. Literally, Kfar Achim means “village of the brothers” and is named after two Jewish brothers who died in a war which is called the War of Independence, by some, and al-Naqba – “the catastrophe” – by others. It is the same war during which Qastina’s population fled. Supporters of the State of Israel call this war the War of Independence, while Palestinian Arabs call it *al Naqba*. From the perspective of Qastina’s inhabitants and the 700,000 other Palestinian Arabs who fled to escape the aggressive troops of the Haganah, Irgun and the IDF, it was a catastrophe. From the perspective of the State of Israel, the land was liberated. In 1951, when Kfar Achim was built with support of Svenska Israelhjälpen, Qastina’s population had been living in refugee camps for three years like most other Palestinian refugees. Palestinian refugees are one crucial issue in the Palestinian conflict, which was partially influenced by the Swedish support for Kfar Achim.

In 1951, when Svenska Israelhjälpen began, the situation for Palestinian refugees was well known in Sweden thanks to reports from Count Bernadotte and articles published on the subject in the magazines of Rädde Barnen (Save the Children) and Röda Korset (the Red Cross).²⁹⁵ The Church of Sweden also participated in informing the Swedish population. In 1951, Oscar Rundblom, clergyman in the Church of Sweden and film producer, made a documentary on Palestinian Arab refugees called: Vadhelst I haven gjort mot en av dessa mina minsta, det haven I gjort mot mig (“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me”). This film was shown throughout Sweden during the 1950s. In Västerås clothes were collected for Palestinian refugees by Åke Kastlund and Rundblom.²⁹⁶ Kastlund was the head of the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), which was established in Lund in 1947. Work among Palestinian refugees was one of the very first major undertakings for LWF outside of Europe. In the early 1950s, LWF was the third largest employer in Jordan, including East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In its own words, LWF was working in Jerusalem and Bethlehem “on biblical land” in support of the Palestinian refugees.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁴ Khalidi 1992, p. 130-133

²⁹⁵ See for instance: *Rädde Barnen, medlemsblad för Föreningen Rädde Barnen*, April-Juni 1949, and *Vårt Röda Kors*, nr 3 1949, in which Major Hans Brunet reported from work among Palestinian Arab refugees in Jordan.

²⁹⁶ Ryman 1997, p. 143

²⁹⁷ Ryman 1997, p. 143

Kastlund was a close friend of Birger Pernow. On his many international trips, as well as those throughout Sweden, Kastlund sometimes spent a night or two at Pernow's office at SvIM in Stockholm.²⁹⁸

Many of the organisations which participated in Svenska Israelhjälpen had supported the Jewish colonisation of Palestine for some time. In *Missionstidning för Israel* a report was published in October 1939 about a camp for agricultural training at Tostarp in the south of Sweden. The camp was run and financed by the Swedish Mission Covenant Church, whose secretary for social affairs, Einar Rimmerfors was active in Svenska Israelhjälpen. It helped young, so called, "transmigrants" from Vienna. Some of the "transmigrants" were Jewish converts to Christianity and members of SvIM from Vienna. They had received permission from the Swedish authorities to stay in Sweden and wait for permission to migrate to North or South America, Australia, Palestine or elsewhere. During their stay at Tostarp these young refugees were trained in agriculture.²⁹⁹

Many of the organisations in Svenska Israelhjälpen had also participated in relief efforts during and after the Second World War, called Svenska Europahjälpen. In this work Rädde Barnen – Save the Children – had assumed a central role. In 1946, the foundation of Svenska Europahjälpen was announced in the January-March issue of *Rädde Barnen*. Margit Levinson said:

With participation from *Svenska Kommittén för internationell hjälpverksamhet*, two national institutions, Svenska Röda Korset and föreningen Rädde Barnen, identical with those who headed Norgehjälpen, constituted Svenska Europahjälpen in February.³⁰⁰

Margit Levinson began planning for Europahjälpen during the autumn of 1945. The Swedes saw Norgehjälpen as a model to learn from, bringing together the whole of "organisational Sweden."³⁰¹ Svenska Norgehjälpen operated support to Norway during the Nazi occupation. It was established in 1942 and it operated until 1945.³⁰²

In the spring of 1946 many parts of Swedish civil society were approached by Margit Levinson and the Swedish Rädde Barnen. In joining forces they established Svenska Europahjälpen which united some thirty-five organisations in Sweden, ranging from Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen (the

²⁹⁸ Kastlund 1995, p. 140. "Självt kinesade jag på olika ställen hos vänner och bekanta i Stockholm eller på Israelsmissionens kontor på Idungatan. Birger Pernow som då basade där, förbarmade sig över den hemlösa kollegan."

²⁹⁹ Pernow October 1939, p. 254 ff.

³⁰⁰ *Rädde Barnen, medlemsblad för Föreningen Rädde Barnen*, January–March 1946, page 2. "Under medverkan av Svenska Kommittén för internationell hjälpverksamhet, Svenska röda korset och föreningen rädde Barnen ha samma riksorganisationer som gått i spetsen för Norgehjälpen i mitten av februari bildat Svenska Europahjälpen."

³⁰¹ *Rädde Barnen, medlemsblad för Föreningen Rädde Barnen*, January–March 1946, p. 10.

³⁰² Bergh 1988, p. 22ff

Swedish Employers Association) to Sveriges Kommunistiska Ungdomsförbund (the Swedish Communist youth).³⁰³ They collected clothes, food and money which were sent to the victims of the war. At the same time, they had informed Sweden about the post-war situation in Europe. There were close links between Svenska Israelhjälpen and Svenska Europahjälpen. Some of the money collected within Svenska Europahjälpen was sent to the State of Israel and many organisations participated in both.³⁰⁴

Sweden's official policy towards the State of Israel around 1950

During the post-war period and through the early 1950s Sweden was not very involved in Middle East politics in terms of official statements and activities. Sweden's activity was limited to some individuals such as Judge Emil Sandström, chair of UNSCOP in 1947, and UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte. Being the former General Secretary of the Swedish Red Cross, Count Folke Bernadotte had been UN mediator in Palestine since May 1948. His mission was very short because he was shot dead a mere four months later in Jerusalem on September 17, not far from the UN Headquarter. During his mission as mediator, Bernadotte raised the issue of Arab refugees with Moshe Shertok, Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs. Bernadotte argued that Arab refugees should be allowed to return home, but Shertok replied that Arabs who had fled or been driven away during the war would under no circumstances be allowed to return.³⁰⁵ On December 11, 1948 the UN General Assembly issued resolution 194 which stated that Palestinian Arab refugees who had fled their homes had the right to return.³⁰⁶ Svenska Israelhjälpen, SvIM and SvTI paid no attention to UN resolution 194. They

³⁰³ *Europahjälpen* 1947

³⁰⁴ Letter from Levinson, Margit and Rössel Agda from Rädde Barnens to MP Waldemar Svensson. The letter is attachment 1, of Svenska Israelhjälpen's Protocol 4, of January 22, 1951. The full text of the letter is:

"Föreningen Rädde Barnen förklarar sig härmed villig att åtaga sig den räkenskapsföring som är förknippad med att ett speciellt postgirokonto inrättas för Svenska Israelhjälpen med Rädde Barnens adress. Auktoriserad revisor för Rädde Barnen är Herr Harry Sjöåker. Om Svenska Israelhjälpen skulle finna detta lämpligt och önskvärt, åtager sig Föreningen med glädje verkställigheten av den aktion, som kommer att beslutas mot bakgrund av det resultat den planerade insamlingen ger."

³⁰⁵ Bernadotte 1950, p. 203. "den judiska regeringen ville under rådande förhållanden under inga omständigheter tillåta, att araber, som under kriget flytt eller fördrivits, skulle få återvända hem."

³⁰⁶ United Nation General Assembly A/RES/194 (III) 11 December 1948: § 11. *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

did not use the resolution as a statement of an international authority and never referred to it. Instead they referred to biblical text.

In 1949, Sandström published an article in *Svensk Tidskrift* where he made a brief analysis of the conflict in Palestine and assessed the preconditions for bringing about the UN partition plan GA 181/II of November 1947. Important to keep in mind when this resolution is discussed are the various interpretations of it. Walid Khalidi has described how GA 181/II was interpreted by Arabs at the time:

the defining moment in which a legal, moral, fair, balanced, pragmatic, practicable (albeit with minor blemishes and flaws) “compromise” formula for the resolution of the conflict was accepted by one part in a statesmanlike and accommodating mode and brusquely rejected by the other for reasons difficult to fathom but assumed to be rooted in the arcane realms of religious or cultural atavism.³⁰⁷

The Arab portion of Palestine, at the time about 2/3's of the population, did not accept the partition of Palestine. To Arab leaders it was not legitimate for the UN to give away land against the will of the inhabitants. Still, in GA 181/II of November 1947 the UN voted in favour of partition. The UN was severely split on this issue and it is well known that strong arguments and strong political pressures were used in favour of the vote for partition. Such methods are often used in politics.

Sandström included a brief reflection on the reasons of the conflict in the British Mandate. He did not focus so much on the role of UN, but argued that it was the British Mandate for Palestine (in power from 1920 to 1948) which had driven the two people to a violent conflict against each other.

It was an inescapable fact, that the mandate itself and its ambition to implement the Balfour Declaration, had put two peoples up in arms against each other, two peoples that had been driven to excessive, if not fanatic, nationalism. The conflict was worsened by the moral and material support received by the two peoples from friends beyond the borders.³⁰⁸

Sandström's article indicates that the peoples in question were “driven to” a “fanatic nationalism” by the League of Nation's ambition to implement the Balfour Declaration within the British Mandate.³⁰⁹ To Sandström, the con-

³⁰⁷ Khalidi 1997, pp. 5-21.

³⁰⁸ Sandström 1949, p. 26. ”Det var ett ofrånkomligt faktum att mandatet självt med dess mål att genomföra Balfourdeklarationen satt två folk i harnesk mot varandra, två folk som drivits till excessiv, för att inte säga fanatisk, nationalism. Konflikten förvärrades av det moraliska och materiella stöd de båda folkgrupperna fingo av rasfränder utanför gränserna.”

³⁰⁹ Stein 1961,

“Foreign Office November 2nd, 1917.

Dear Lord Rotschild

I have much pleasure in conveying to you, on behalf of His Majesty's Government, the following declaration of sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations which has been submitted

flict was not biblical or eternal in any sense, but part and parcel of the tense politics between the First and the Second World Wars.

From his research on Sweden's foreign policy in the 1940s and 1950s, the political scientist Ulf Bjereld (1957 -) has drawn the conclusion that the Israeli/Palestinian conflict was perceived as "located in the periphery of Sweden's interests."³¹⁰ Sweden did not recognize the State of Israel in 1948. The reason was tension between Sweden and the State of Israel due to the assassination of Count Folke Bernadotte in September 1948. Sweden argued that the crime had not been sufficiently investigated by the Israeli police. Yet even though recognition was delayed until 1950, Sweden's attitude to the Jewish state was very supportive. In 1955, Foreign Minister Östen Undén expressed an attitude that is representative of Sweden at that time. Unfortunately his speech was not recorded verbatim, but a summary survives.³¹¹ He argued that Sweden had followed the emergence of Israel into a democratic and socialist state with admiration and with respect. Undén said that the State of Israel had provided millions of Jewish refugees with both labour and new hope: "To us it is self-evident that Israel has proved its right to exist."

³¹²

Palestinians did not appear in Swedish doctrine until 1956 and were mentioned only as a humanitarian refugee problem.³¹³ Until 1974, after the October War of 1973, officially Sweden did not pay much attention to the situation of Palestinian refugees, except for Lutherhjälpen and Åke Kastlund's work as well as a few other examples such as Svenska Röda Korset. Until 1974 the Palestinian people had been seen by the Swedish state only as refugees. The first Swedish change of policy was announced by Krister Wickman in his speech to the UN on October 11, 1973, six days before the Arab states announced that they would use oil as a political weapon. But Sweden did not explicitly accept either the national rights of Palestinians, or the PLO

to, and approved by, the Cabinet. ' His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish People, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.'

I should be grateful if you would bring this declaration to the knowledge of the Zionist Federation"

³¹⁰ Bjereld 1987, p. 7 & p. 11

³¹¹ Bjereld 1987, p. 46. "Periodens mest intressanta uttalande görs av Östen Undén vid Fackliga Centralorganisationernas länskonferens i Motala den 13 november 1955. Det finns dock inte återgivet in extenso i "Utrikesfrågor" utan endast i referatform. De enskilda formuleringarna får därför tolkas med stor försiktighet. Andemeningen är emellertid tydlig. Jag citerar referatet: "... den djupaste orsaken till konflikten är helt visst, att arabstaterna inte vill erkänna Israels existens och integritet som självständig stat. I Sverige har vi med respekt och beundran följt denna judiska statsbildnings uppbyggnad till en modern socialistisk och demokratisk stat, som kunnat ge arbete och nytt mod åt millioner judiska flyktingar. För oss är det självklart, att Israel har bevisat sitt existensberättigande."

³¹² Bjereld 1989, p. 46. "För oss är det självklart, att Israel bevisat sitt existensberättigande."

³¹³ Bjereld 1989, p. 83

as their legitimate representatives, until October-November 1974. The common approach to Palestinians, prior to 1974, was to regard them as refugees with no national rights. Bjereld has argued that the October War in 1973 was a wake-up call that motivated this change in the Swedish attitude.³¹⁴

In his study, Bjereld focused on official Swedish declarations and national policy. From 1947 to 1987 Sweden, as a state, did not take many initiatives. The highest degree of activity was displayed in 1947-1948 when Sandström and Bernadotte were active.³¹⁵ If Bjereld had chosen to focus on civil society organisations like Röda Korset, Rädda Barnen, the Swedish Trade Unions, Svenska Europahjälpen, Svenska Israelhjälpen, SvIM or SvTI, the picture would have been very different. He would have found a large number of organisations and individuals who were actively working to support the State of Israel. To them, the Jews as a people and Israel as a Jewish state were not peripheral issues. Via civil society organisations, individuals could express opinions that were not formulated, or perhaps not supported, by the state's foreign policy. Still the picture is complex. Svenska Europahjälpen and Svenska Israelhjälpen were supported by Swedish MPs, diplomats, journalists, academics, physicians, editors, authors, and others. A full picture of Sweden's view of Israel and Palestine would of course also have to include the broad variety of civil society organisations like: Samfundet Sverige-Israel, Svenska Röda Korset, Rädda Barnen, the Cooperative movement, the Labour movement (including the Social Democratic party and the Communist Party), the trade unions, the Liberal Party, individual physicians at Karolinska Institutet in Stockholm, and others.

³¹⁴ Bjereld 1989, p. 235ff

³¹⁵ Bjereld 1989, p. 107

5. Five key figures

Greta Andrén (1909-1971)

Greta Ebba Sofia Andrén was instrumental in the establishment of the Swedish Theological Institute, and she deserves a more personal introduction. Andrén was born on 4 March, 1909 in Marstrand, Sweden. She died in 1971. Marstrand is a small island on the west coast, well known as a summer resort. At secondary school and at college in Göteborg Andrén studied two modern languages and Hebrew. She was then accepted at Bräckö Deaconess Institute, Göteborg, for a three-year course. She was a talented student, particularly in languages. In her own words, since the age of twelve she had felt a calling: “God had laid down a desire in my heart to become a deaconess.”

³¹⁶ Missionary work on the other hand, never came to her mind. In a letter she expresses how missionary lectures made her feel uneasy and she avoided them. But God, she said, had thought differently. In the spring of 1933, Pastor Hannerz, Director of Vårsta Deaconess Institute in Härnösand, felt a calling from God to become a missionary in China. He sent a letter to Sweden which Andrén read. Hannerz described how he had tried to avoid mission work, but gradually God had convinced him about his task. When Andrén read these words she felt as though they spoke to her.

In the autumn of 1934 Andrén worked at Ersta Hospital, Stockholm. Every day one or two Jews would come to be cared for. This reminded her that God had a mission for Jews. Gradually, she said, “doors to other missions closed”. Finally, after much prayer, she decided to ask for an appointment with Birger Pernow at Svenska Israelsmissionen. When she came to him, he revealed to her that he had prayed that God would send a deaconess to Svenska Israelsmissionen. She wrote, “Then certainty came to my soul, like a great tranquillity”. ³¹⁷

In the same issue of *Missionstidning för Israel* in February 1935, Birger Pernow described the recent Christmas Eve he had spent at Seegasse, Svenska Israelsmissionen’s station in Vienna. He wrote: “

³¹⁶ Andrén February 1935, p. 36

³¹⁷ Andrén February 1935, p. 38

Joy and Christian love characterised Christmas Eve at Seegasse, where they strive to solve one of our time's most burning problems: the Jewish question".³¹⁸

Andrén's many letters, articles and booklets about her work in Vienna were published in *Missionstidning för Israel* and occasionally a series of articles from the journal was compiled and published separately in a book.

When Olle Nystedt suggested in 1960 to L. Häggqvist at Kungliga Ekle-siastikdepartementet that Greta Andrén should receive the Vasa Order (LVO) he stated that she had worked in Vienna for seven years and had rescued both Jews and Jewish Christian from the Nazi authorities. While in Jerusalem:

Andrén made the Institute into a Christian and a Swedish centre in Israel and one of Israel's ministers in Stockholm has called her: Sweden's second ambassador to Israel.³¹⁹

In 1946 she went to Jerusalem in order to find a location for the Swedish Theological Institute. She arrived before the first Director had arrived and she stayed on in Jerusalem after he had returned to Sweden. In 1949, when the war had ended, she travelled to Jerusalem to examine Tabor House on Prophets' Street. Andrén thought it was good and Svenska Israelsmissionen decided to reopen SvTI at Tabor House. New Testament theologian Henrik Ljungman from Lund was the first Director of SvTI in the spring of 1951, when SvTI was reopened. Ljungman came to SvTI but returned to Sweden after a few months. The official history of SvTI, written by Birger Pernow, described Ljungman's departure from SvTI as a decision made by Ljungman himself, motivated by family reasons.³²⁰ But the strong will of Greta Andrén was also a factor that mattered. On 19 May, 1951 Andrén wrote a letter to Bishop Torsten Ysander, Chair of the Board of SvTI in Sweden. Andrén described quite overtly that in her view Henrik Ljungman was not the right person to direct SvTI. Andrén told the bishop she would not continue her work at SvTI unless Hans Kosmala was appointed director. She stressed it was not an empty threat or blackmail when she stated that she would leave. Instead, she underlined she was firm in that decision:

if Kosmala would come here and if we can build something together here, then I know that the task is so great and so important and rich, that I cannot and I must not let it down, even if many threads will pull me home. I know

³¹⁸ Pernow February 1935, p. 42

³¹⁹ Nystedt 1960, "Andrén skapade av Institutet ett kristet och svenskt centrum i Israel och kallades av en av Israels ministrar i Stockholm för "Sveriges andra ambassadör i Israel""

³²⁰ Pernow 1963, p. 11

that we can work so well together that the inner front shall not burst, and we will pull the load together even if it is heavy.”³²¹

Andrén was a person with a strong will and from her letter to Ysander it seems she was prepared to fight in order to push her own will through. She worked in Jerusalem until 1971 when she returned to Sweden. She passed away the same year.

Birger Pernow (1888-1973)

Johannes Birger Pernow was born in Matteröd, Sweden on 24 June, 1888. Pernow was ordained as a priest in 1914 and an assistant vicar (komminister) in 1917. In 1923 he was assistant vicar in Blasieholmskyrkan, Stockholm. In 1930 he became Director of Mission for Svenska Israelsmissionen. From 1945 he was on the Swedish section of the Lutheran World Federation. In 1947 he was appointed as a member on the Ecumenical committee on refugees. He published several books, either by himself or in cooperation with others, including *Kan Judafolket räddas?* in cooperation with Bishop Torsten Ysander in 1943 and *För Sions skull* with Olle Nystedt's in 1950. Birger Pernow led Svenska Israelsmissionen from 1930 to 1961.³²² From 1932 he was as board member of the International Missionary Council's Committee for the Approach to the Jews (IMCCAJ) and from 1947 to 1954 he was chair of IMCCAJ.³²³

Pernow held a central position in Svenska Israelsmissionen for more than thirty years and his work in the organisation was much appreciated. As editor of *Missionstidning för Israel* he published items in almost every issue for thirty years. He wrote biblical reflections in the organisation's publication. He also was a frequent contributor at Nordic and European conferences on mission in general and on mission to Jews in particular.

In Svenska Israelhjälpen Birger Pernow acted as the line of communication between Svenska Israelhjälpen and Yngve Brilioth, Archbishop of the Church of Sweden. Pernow contacted and persuaded Brilioth to sign Svenska Israelhjälpen's appeal in January 1951.³²⁴ Pernow's work was much appreciated in Svenska Israelsmissionen. In the minutes of the board of Svenska Israelsmissionen on 1 December, 1955 an extra paragraph was included, written by Olle Nystedt. For fifteen years Nystedt was Chair of

³²¹ Andrén 1951, ”Men om Kosmala kommer hit och vi tillsammans kan bygga upp något här, så vet jag att uppgiften är så stor och viktig, och så rik att jag inte kan och får svika (även) om många tråder drar hem. Och jag vet att vi kan arbeta så bra tillsammans att den inre fronten inte skall brista utan vi drar lasset gemensamt (även) om det är tungt. ”

³²² Edvardsson 1976, p. 170

³²³ Brockway 1992

³²⁴ Pernow 1951

Svenska Israelsmissionen, 1946-1961.³²⁵ Nystedt expressed “the board’s warm thanks for the highly qualified and exceedingly significant work and the successful endeavour Pernow had undertaken throughout the past 25 years.”³²⁶ Other organisations also expressed their appreciation for Pernow. *Vår Kyrka* stated:

Birger Pernow, calm as a tree, wise as a patriarch, with a habit to use words as building blocks – it is simply for the listener to follow him upwards.³²⁷

After his retirement in 1961 Pernow was appointed honorary board member of Svenska Israelsmissionen. As yet another expression of how appreciated Pernow was, in 1970 Olle Nystedt asked him to write his memoirs.³²⁸

Harald Sahlin (1911-1996)

Harald Axel Sahlin was born in 1911. In 1945 he defended his doctoral thesis, entitled “*Der Messias und das Gottesvolk : Studien zur protolukanischen Theologie*”, in which he argues the origins of the Gospel of St Luke are distinguished by its Hebraic/Aramaic qualities.³²⁹ Sahlin was the first director of the Swedish Theological Institute. He and his wife, Malin, spent a mere few months in Jerusalem (May-December 1947). Due to the escalating violence, Harald and Malin returned to Sweden earlier than expected. Malin left in December 1947 and Harald left in January 1948. Soon after his return to Sweden he continued his professional life as teacher in philosophy and religion at an upper secondary school in Örebro. He said he had the choice between being a pastor and a teacher and he chose the latter. He was a teacher of religion who applauded the transformation of the school curriculum into one with a secular approach to teaching Christianity. He argued that teaching Christianity ought to be objective and not confessional, but he admitted difficulties in pursuing this. As a teacher one has to teach *about* Christianity not

³²⁵ Edvardsson 1976, p. 170

³²⁶ Board minutes Svenska Israelsmissionen. 1 December, 1955. Additional point after § 13.

”Med anledning av att det var på dagen 25 år sedan missionsdirektor Pernow tillträdde som ledare för Svenska Israelsmissionen framförde ordföranden till honom styrelsens varma tack för det högkvalificerade och synnerligen betydelsefulla arbete och den framgångsrika gärning han utfört under de gångna 25 åren.

Missionsdirektorn tackade för de erkännssamma orden och för det förtroende styrelsen städse visat honom, vilket i hög grad underlättat arbetet och gjort de gångna åren rika och lyckliga.”

³²⁷ Strömmerstedt 1960, p. 6ff. ”Därför måste vi missionera bland judarna – för att det är vår modernmission, den centrala missionen i alla tider – och för att betala en skuld, säger missionsdirektor Birger Pernow.”

”Birger Pernow, lugn som ett träd vis som en patriark, med vana att använda orden som byggstenar–det är bara för åhöraren att följa med uppåt.”

³²⁸ Pernow 1973, p. 6

³²⁹ Brodie 2004, p. 543

in it, he argued in 1967.³³⁰ He was much involved in both church and classical music. Sahlin belongs to a family of prominent academic professors and high-ranking clergy in the Church of Sweden, where he is remembered for his theological work in support of women's rights to become priests and to be ordained. Throughout his life he continued to publish learned articles on theology and Jewish-Christian relations. In 1982 he published *Några bibliska ledmotiv*

Hans Kosmala (1903-1981)

Hans Kosmala was born in Breslau on 30 September, 1903, the son of a master tailor. He first studied economics. Soon he developed an enthusiasm for languages and art. In autumn 1935, Kosmala became Director of the Institutum Judaicum Delitzschianum (IJD) in Leipzig, established upon the spirit of Franz Delitzsch for bringing Judaism and Christianity closer together, a move which inevitably led to a house search by the Gestapo. The same year Kosmala moved to Seegasse 16 in Vienna to work for the "Swedish Mission for Israel." Between 1936 and 1938 Kosmala held open public lectures each month at the Swedish Mission building. It has been claimed that the representatives of Vienna's Jewish population also showed an interest in these events. Göte Hedenquist and Kosmala co-edited the magazine *Aus zwei Welten* (From Two Worlds) until 1938. Pastor Arnulf H. Baumann has commented on the classes organised by Kosmala, stating: "Those who participated in such courses ... in Vienna, evidently developed immunity to the poison of hatefulness toward Jews and, further, taught others to open their eyes to the falseness of Nazi propaganda." One of these was Magne Solheim, who came to Vienna in 1937 as a young Norwegian pastor. He remembers that "Kosmala's lectures about 'the source of the literary argument for modern anti-Semitism' were immensely interesting. He showed how the Nazis fabricated their propaganda with knowledge and purpose, and damned themselves by shamelessly falsifying quotations."³³¹

In 1951, Kosmala became director of the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem. He held this position until 1971 when he retired. During his years in Jerusalem he taught many students in theology from the Nordic countries and he participated in the public life of Israel. From 1962 he edited The Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute (ASTI). After his retirement he settled in Compton Abdale (County Gloucester), England where he died on April 24, 1981. His obituary in The Times described him as: "one of this century's greatest Christian experts in the study of Judaism"³³²

³³⁰ Örebro-Kuriren, January 21, 1967

³³¹ Kosmala, Benno, www.christenundjuden.org/en/?id=301

³³² www.christenundjuden.org/en/?item=301

H.S. Nyberg (1889-1974)

Henrik Samuel Nyberg was born on December 28, 1889. He died on February 9, 1974 in Uppsala. In 1948 Nyberg became member of the Swedish Academy. He was also member in several scientific societies such as Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet 1934, Vitterhetsakademien 1935, Nathan Söderblom-sällskapet 1940, Vetenskapsakademien 1943, Kungliga Vetenskapssamhället 1954, Det Kongelige Danske Videnskabernes Selskab 1940, Egypt Academy of the Arabic Language 1948, Iraq Academy 1960.

He spent his whole life learning and teaching Arabic and Hebrew and his commitment to teaching about the close links between European and Arabic cultures is well-documented.³³³

In order to introduce his professional career I will refer only to some major works which were compiled in *Monumentum H.S. Nyberg* (Leiden: Brill, 1975) the year after he had passed away. The bibliography appears in *ACTA IRANICA Encyclopédie permanente des études iraniennes fondée à l'occasion du 2500e anniversaire de la fondation de l'empire Perse par Cyrus le Grande*.³³⁴ In 1959, on the occasion of Nyberg's seventieth birthday, a bibliography and Tabula Gratulatoria were compiled by Professor Christopher Toll (1931 -). The list of people in the Tabula Gratulatoria represents the academic elite of Sweden at the time. Professor Toll's introduction sheds light on Nyberg's reputation and position in Sweden:

Henrik Samuel Nyberg, the erudite and comprehensive Orientalist, the pioneering researcher of religions, the distinguished humanist, to him we bring, his colleagues, his disciples and friends, on his seventieth birthday expressions of our appreciation, and admiration, gratitude and affection. We wish him yet many years of continued beneficial activity in the service of science and spiritual cultivation. 28 December, 1959.³³⁵

³³³ Kahle 1991, p. 340.

³³⁴ Nyberg 1975

³³⁵ Toll 1959, "Henrik Samuel Nyberg, den grundlärde och vittfamnande orientalist, den banbrytande religionsforskaren, den lysande humanisten, bringa vi, hans kollegor lärljungar och vänner, på sjuttioårsdagen uttrycken för vår uppskattning och beundran, vår tacksamhet och tillgivenhet. Vi tillönska honom ännu många år av fortsatt gänerik verksamhet i vetenskapens och den andliga odlingens tjänst. 28/12, 1959"

6. Living on sacred soil - Greta Andrén

In an article from January 1940, Andrén described the work at Svenska Israelsmissionen's mission station at Seegasse. She reported life at Seegasse included prayer meetings and recurring encounters with worried people. These reports from meetings say a great deal about the particular type of piety demonstrated by Andrén and Svenska Israelsmissionen: Facing the deportations of Jews from Vienna to Poland, Andrén stressed, God Almighty rules the world and the larger political scene cannot be influenced by human beings. Instead, Andrén believed people should focus on the small steps of personal encounters and Christian mission work. That is how the so called "Jewish problem" was dealt with in Seegasse. Andrén formulated this in her way:

"God's right hand can transform everything." This word comes to be real among many of "our people" in Poland (that is human beings deported by the Nazis). Anxious, timid, mistrusting human beings have become strong, happy and candid. Among these Christians one does not encounter tired resignation in front of the inevitable, but a clear certainty that God has put them in this difficult and responsible position. They have a task to fulfil. They know they are standing as the outposts of our mission, where we cannot reach with the Gospel.³³⁶

What is most important for the interns in Poland, Andrén said, was not the suffering, but how to reach out with the Gospel. In this text an anonymous housewife, "Frau F", is the focus of Andrén. This woman, Andrén states, visited practically every meeting at Seegasse and she always took notes. Almost daily she came to Seegasse to see Andrén or someone else in order to ask for the correct interpretation of a certain passage in the Bible. She was most able, but at the same time anxious, worried and felt that she was in a hurry: Soon there will be no Christian brothers and sisters around me to help, feared Frau F. At the same time this, able women were unpractical and she could not run a household, Andrén said. She had come from a well-off home

³³⁶ Andrén 1959, p. 26. "Guds högra hand kan allting förvandla." Detta ord ser vi förverkligat av många av "de våra" i Polen. Ängsliga, försagda, tvivlande människor har blivit starka, glada och frimodiga. Det är ingen trött resignation för det oundvikliga, som man möter hos dessa kristna, utan en klar visshet om att Gud har ställt dem på denna svåra ansvarsfulla plats. De har en uppgift att fylla. De vet, att de står som vår missions utposter, dit vi ej kan nå med evangelium."

and she had never been asked to clean, cook or do anything practical. However, while in Poland, Andrén said, Madame F wrote letters about how she had began a solidarity committee for citizens who went to see people in the camp. She nursed, cleaned and cooked for 150 people. Frau F was in charge of it all, and completely without any money. In the letter Andrén sensed the gratefulness of Madame F, a gratefulness that she could actually help and contribute. According to Andrén, she could not comprehend that she was the same person. Yet Andrén believed: "This is what happens when God is allowed to take care of a pitiable creature."³³⁷

While reading the New Testament in a Hebrew translation, Andrén felt an extra affinity with Jesus and also with his experience of the synagogue. In this way, the connection between the Old and the New Testament was made obvious and meaningful for her. In 1952 she said:

This is merely one small example. But day by day we may in this way, read ourselves into the Word, not read anything into it or interpret it more or less hair-splittingly, but simply read it as it is written in the magnificently simple highness in which it is given to us. Here, in these surroundings and in this study, the Old Covenant's great men are not any longer distant characters for us, but *they live*.³³⁸

Palestinabilder

In 1949 Greta Andrén published a book called *Palestinabilder*. It does not appear in an English translation, but the title can be translated as *Images of Palestine*. The book comprises sixty pages of essays and ninety pages of photos, including 127 illustrations and photos taken in Palestine during Andrén's two first years in Jerusalem. She was a talented photographer and filmmaker. The archives of Svenska Israelsmissionen at Uppsala hold several of her films. Svenska Israelsmissionen possessed a series of films that they lent to local groups that wanted to study Israel or prepare for a trip. As an introduction to the book she wrote:

This is Palestine.

Old and new – the land of contradictions. The scene for love and hatred. Holy land for Christians, Jews and Muhammedans. Throughout millennia it has been the goal of the desire for countless [people]. This land has been the centre of history and it is the focal point for a whole world.

³³⁷ Andrén 1959, p. 27. "det blir så, när Gud får ta hand om en stackare!"

³³⁸ Andrén 1952, p. 261. "Detta är bara ett litet exempel. Men dag för dag får vi på detta sätt läsa oss in i Ordet, inte läsa in något i det eller lägga ut det mer eller mindre spetsfundigt, utan just enkelt läsa så som det står i den storslagna enkla höghet i vilken det är oss givet. Och här i denna omgivning, och i detta studium är Gamla förbundets store män inte längre avlägsna gestalter för oss, utan *de lever*."

The air is high, it is holy space and a clear flowing sun shines over Palestine in our thoughts. We have to love this country.³³⁹

What emerges in these 127 illustrations (mainly photographs) is a veritable love song for the Jewish colonies and praise of the young Jewish colonists. The book expresses a mixture of exotic feelings of compassion for distinguished and sublime Arabs who represent a pre-modern pace of life now being replaced by modernity, industry and a way of moving forward to something new. Arabs are depicted with sheep, camels and cows. Jews are depicted in industries, with tractors and in modern agricultural settings. Many of the brief essays, or parts of them, had been published in *Missionstidning för Israel*. One of the texts summarized a significant theme in her reports from Palestine: Till nya kolonier! (To new colonies!)³⁴⁰ In the text Andrén told the reader how she had undertaken a trip to the south of the Negev, close to Aqaba/Eilat, together with the local representative of the Jewish Agency. She noticed that the staff of the Jewish Agency had a fine car. On their way south they passed Beersheva and water was the main topic in the conversation. They reached a newly established kibbutz called Mishmar Hanegev (the guardian of Negev). It was one among eleven such "outposts" that were established during a single night in October 1946, Andrén said with admiration. She was impressed by the initiative and the ability, and she devoted no effort to reflecting upon whose land these outposts had been built. Before that initiative, the colonists had had to travel twenty-two kilometres to get water. However, since May 5 that year they had running water. She notes that,

Arabs, who live in the area, are allowed to get water from their water pipe.³⁴¹

The colonists were described as proud and happy. Andrén and her company were shown newly born calves from the colony with which they played. Cattle and calves clearly indicated fertility and growth. The life of the young colonists in the outposts was described as harsh but, along with Andrén, they nurtured a love for the country and the labour:

I have much veneration for these brave, happy youngsters. They are indeed examples in diligence, willingness and in taking pleasure in work³⁴²

³³⁹ Andrén 1949, p. 60. "Detta är Palestina. Gammalt och nytt – motsatsernas land. Skådeplats för kärlek och hat. Heligt land för kristna, judar och muhamedaner. Genom årtusenden målet för otaligas längtan. Landet som stått i historiens medelpunkt och är i blickpunkten för en hel värld. Det står hög luft, helig rymd och klart flödande solljus över Palestina i våra tankar. Vi måste älska det landet."

³⁴⁰ Andrén 1949, p. 55

³⁴¹ Andrén 1949, p. 57. "Araberna, som bor runt omkring får nu komma och hämta vatten i deras vattenledning."

³⁴² Andrén 1949, p. 57. "Jag hyser vördnad och stor beundran för dessa tappra, glada ungdomar. De är sannerligen ett föredöme i flit, villighet och arbetsglädje."

The trip went on and the group in the car reached more colonies. Again the significance of the colonists having water struck Andrén. On their way back they passed Arabs who were threshing in their old-fashioned way. Andrén described how a horse and a donkey were walking round and round in the field. Beside these animals, a man was sifting husks from the wheat. To me, as a distant reader, Andrén made Arabs representative of pre-modernity and Jews representative of modernity. Of course, she noticed the tractors in the Jewish colonies and the camels in the Arab villages, but the socioeconomic factors were not relevant explanations of the differences in the technological levels of the villages they passed in her trip with the Jewish Agency. But Andrén did not assess these societies as modern or pre-modern. To her they were primarily defined by their ethnic or religious majorities; that is, they were seen as Arab or Jewish societies.

The last encounter registered in *Palestinabilder* described a young boy in a Jewish colony who had hurt himself. In order to get treated he had to walk to the nearest clinic. Andrén asked him how he would get there and he answered that he would walk. Andrén then asked him if he really had the strength to do so in the midday heat with a wounded hand. She records the conversation:

It is not more than 6-7 kilometres, he said laughing.
I take off my hat for such youngsters, she concluded.³⁴³

Palestine was, for Andrén, a country to which Jews returned. They colonised barren land and made it fertile. Still Andrén is remarkably ambivalent on this issue. In 1950 she said she understood if a visitor in Jerusalem was surprised to find the city so entirely European. She thought most visitors expected to find the hurly burly of Oriental life. But the truly Oriental part of Jerusalem was gone, as the Old City was closed off from Israel, she said.³⁴⁴ The life and pace in West Jerusalem was European to her. Yet the immigrants are never described as Europeans or Germans trained in modern agriculture. Agricultural development in Palestine or Israel was not seen as the result of the policy of the British Mandate, but rather as the result of Jews coming home. To Andrén, immigrants were first and foremost Jews. Somehow she noticed the European and the modern lifestyle, but the actual transformation of the land did not depend on an influx of new techniques to Palestine but on Jews coming to their own land.

³⁴³ Andrén 1949, p. 60. "Och då jag frågar, om han orkar det mitt i middagshettan och med sin sjuka hand, säger han skrattande: "Ack det är bara 6-7 kilometer". Hatten av för sådana ungdomar."

³⁴⁴ Andrén August 1950, p. 245-246

Meeting Swedish visitors at the Swedish Theological Institute

Andrén met thousands of visitors at SvTI and I would think she in her own way conveyed to all of them her ideas of Israel, Palestine, Arabs and Jews. Her influence on Swedish public opinion over Israel and Palestine was significant, albeit not studied here. Hans Kosmala, the director of SvTI from 1951 to 1971, did not speak Swedish and Greta Andrén was the person who met visitors. On 2 May, 1965 Swedish Public Television showed a 30-minute programme that presented the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem. The programme shows both Kosmala and Andrén in action. The producer of the programme asked Andrén whether it is tiring to receive “all the visiting groups.” Andrén answered: “Well, when there are many, like this year when we have had 80 visitors each Wednesday, it does take time. On the other hand it is a great delight for us to receive Swedes here.”³⁴⁵ When she received visitors they were often brought for a walk in the garden of SvTI, where Andrén showed the flowers and described the flowers’ appearance in biblical passages. She somehow located SvTI in the biblical narrative. Many people visited SvTI. In 1962 the Swedish Prime Minister Tage Erlander paid an official visit to Israel accompanied by Olof Palme, Sverker Åström, Torsten Örn and Aino Erlander. The official visit in Israel also included a brief stop at SvTI.³⁴⁶

In her lectures to Swedish visitors at SvTI, Andrén displayed her own version of Christianity and reflections on biblical texts. Her experiences from Vienna and Jerusalem were combined and grew into a warm support for Jews and the Jewish state. Andrén was most certainly a strong personality and we may recall her letter to bishop Ysander, mentioned above, where she expressed an ultimatum. Again, in a report from Sten Sandström, one gets the impression she had a great capacity to capture an audience. In front of visitors she was able to fuse a broad array of perspectives through using her own and the visitors’ physical presence in the land.

When receiving visitors, Andrén described SvTI as a meeting place for students from all over the world and a place where boundaries between students were torn down. Addressing visitors she said:

First and foremost we are studying the Bible. During your first days here I suppose you have already felt that the Bible is alive here in another way than at home. Here they (the students) first receive theoretical training, they study in Hebrew and in Greek, the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New in Greek; then comes the teaching in world views offered by the country. Life in this land, climate, nature, everything – the Bible has its parables from this

³⁴⁵ Roslund 1965

³⁴⁶ Tage Erlanders arkiv. Arbetarrörelsens arkiv

land and not from Sweden. And therefore, at home infinite details were unclear but here they become clear. That is because the Bible is alive here.³⁴⁷

In her view the Bible had become a reality in Jerusalem around her. Secondly, Andrén said at SvTI they were studying Judaism, the history of the Jewish people, and the Jew's Holy Scriptures. She told the visitors that students of SvTI participated in Jewish Pesach Meals, which was much appreciated. The full Jewish ritual year was studied and many visits to synagogues were undertaken by students. Andrén explained differences between Jewish and Christian services. Many students were unfamiliar with Jewish services; some were afraid of the habit of walking about in synagogues during the service. However, she gave a colourful explanation. The service, according to Andrén, was conducted by a collective of people and she added it is the collective Jewish people that are in front of God. Therefore, she said, it was acceptable if any individual participant in the service should take a short break from the synagogue for some fresh air or water and then return to the prayers. The theological logic behind this behaviour, she argued, was the idea that it is Israel as a people and not the individual Jew who is permanently in prayers. While praying, she explained, Jews move constantly or prostrate because for the Jew it is important that the entire body is involved in devotion. She continued that it is the same for Swedish Lutherans when they are excited in a discussion and start waving their hands.³⁴⁸

In Sweden Andrén had encountered Christians, she said, who had not hidden their anti-Semitism. She told a story when she had lectured in Sweden and had raised money for Svenska Israelsmissionen. The audience in Sweden would listen, ask questions and they would cry when Andrén told them about persecution against Jews. After her speech the audience would even donate money. Still someone would pull her arm and ask:

“Between the two of us, aren't Jews most unpleasant to deal with?”

When such a question was posed Andrén would always answer:

“Have many Jews do you know?”

And they said; We never met one.³⁴⁹

In Andrén's view, lack of knowledge caused distance, distance caused estrangement and the estrangement caused anti-Semitism. To Andrén, knowledge about Jews also led to more knowledge about the Bible. At SvTI,

³⁴⁷ Sandström 1967, p 1. ”Vi studerar i första hand bibeln, det har ni väl känt efter de dagar ni varit här att bibeln lever på ett annat sätt här än hemma. Här har dom den första teoretiska undervisningen, studerar på hebreiska och grekiska, oeg (sic!) sedan kommer den åskådningsundervisning som landet ger. Livet i detta land, klimatet, naturen allting, bibeln har sina liknelsen (sic!) det här landet och inte från Sverige, och därför var det ändligt mycket som var oklart hemma som blir klart här, därför att bibeln lever här.”

³⁴⁸ Sandström 1967, p 2

³⁴⁹ Sandström 1967, p 2 ”men säg oss så här oss emellan, men är ändå inte judarna bra otrevliga och ha att göra med, och då brukar jag fråga: Hur många judar känner ni, och då sa dom: Vi har aldrig mött någon”

Andrén argued, students acquired knowledge about the Bible through meeting the Jewish people. For pious Jews, she told students, the biblical text permeated every aspect of their lives. For the Jew, she continued, religion, tradition and national affiliation were one united entity:

For the Jews religion, tradition and national belonging are one. We may be Swedes and Buddhists; a Jew if he is a Jew can only be a Jew, and belong to the Jewish people. Jewish religion and Jewish belonging, affiliation to a people is one and cannot be separated apart, it is an absolute singularity. That is why, here, the Bible is alive also for an atheist Jew. The Bible is not just his religious book, but the Bible is his history and the Bible is his foremost literary work; therefore everyone knows the Bible. Everyone quotes the Bible and knows it. And the Bible lives in the people, even among non-believing Jews, it is altogether different then it is for us.³⁵⁰

Andrén gave one example from her own experience in Israel. When the Six Days War was over, Andrén said, a friend called. The friend asked Andrén to switch on the radio, which she did. This was right after the end of the war. In order to comfort the people, a psalm was being read on the radio. The person who had suggested the psalm should be read was an atheist. Andrén suggested this explained the role of the Bible in Israel. This is the peculiar people, Andrén argued, and the peculiar land where the Bible lives more intensely in every step one takes and more for each human being you meet. The students at SvTI were also given a sense of modern Hebrew. Modern Hebrew is a continuation of the biblical language, she says. Ben Yehuda revived the language. To speak the language is to use old biblical words in a new setting. Old words, such as biblical descriptions from Psalms used to praise the journey to Jerusalem for certain feasts, are now being given new connotations that have to do with a rise in the temperature. In this way, she said, biblical themes are still alive and now the new meanings and the biblical language mutually enrich each other. Andrén claimed she could give innumerable examples of what it is like to live in the Hebrew language and this is what it means to live in the Bible.³⁵¹

Andrén explained that at SvTI they also studied the land. Whether you find it beautiful or not, she went on, it is at least different from Sweden. For some reason many people do not grasp the simple fact that Jerusalem is on earth. Some tend to argue that Jerusalem is in heaven. It is not enough to live on romanticism and sentimentality, Andrén said. One must live in reality.

³⁵⁰ Sandström 1967, p 2. "För judarna är det så att religion och tradition och nationell tillhörighet är ett. Vi kan ju vara svenskar och buddister, en jude om han är jude, kan bara vara jude, och tillhör det judiska folket, judisk religion och judisk tillhörighet, folktillhörighet är ett och kan inte skiljas åt, absolut ett. Därför är det så att bibeln här, lever också hos en ateistisk jude, för bibeln är inte bara hans religiösa bok, utan bibeln är hans historia, och bibeln är hans främsta litterära verk, därför kan man bibeln, citerar bibeln, känner väl till den, och den lever ocks (sic!) i folket, även hos icke troende judar, det är helt annorlunda än det är hos oss."

³⁵¹ Sandström 1967, p 3

Here, she said, the whole history of Christianity becomes a reality in this land. It is true that the beginnings of the Christian faith happened here, she stressed. Jesus Christ walked here and from here the message was spread. What are important; however, are not the holy places, but the soil, the land and the atmosphere. We have only two seasons. You may ask what season we have and assume it is summer. No it is winter. We have only two seasons, and that is biblical. In Genesis Chapter 8 the order of seasons is described.

Then Andrén entered into a lengthy description of the winter rains in Palestine. She called them a blessing for the country but a blessing in disguise. It is so cold in the winter, she stressed. She then continued with descriptions of meteorological statistics and the flora of the country. The land itself, with its soil, weather, flowers and seasons was part of the message she wanted to convey.

Andrén's stories are strikingly personal and apparently she loved being just where she was. She said that to know all these details about the seasons and temperature has everything to do with living the Bible. She told her audience about the rain, the humidity, the storms, the creeks, the drought, the flowers, the sunrises, dry wind from the desert, etc. All the details from geology, flora, meteorology, etc., were connected to passages in the Bible – Isaiah, the Psalms, etc.

To end the speech she entered into politics.

Probably you want to know, she said, what I say about politics here. But she continued, she did not say anything at all about politics, because she said, she was not a politician. She stressed she was not there for political reasons. But then she back-tracked saying, that perhaps she did have a political agenda: to bring about God's politics. That is the politics we try our best to support, she said. She was always astonished how able Swedish and other journalists were at solving all the problems in Jerusalem. While reading the Swedish press, Andrén continued, one may get the impression that Jews were the worst bunch of crooks on earth and that Jews were treating Arabs very badly, but that was untrue:.

When reading Swedish press one could easily believe that Jews are the worst robber band on earth, and that they treat Arabs so badly. This is not true. Naturally, Arabs would rather live under Arabs that is for sure. The Arabs are a proud people. And to lose three wars and then be led by Jews – it hurts a proud human being, it would have hurt us too should the Germans have taken over the Swedes. But let me tell you, Israel did not take. The Arabs started the war. Jerusalem would never have been exposed to war if Hussein had not started to shoot. I mean, I was a witness to it. I was here. I heard where the gunfire came from. I sat in this room and ate potatoes, and I am witness to what really happened.³⁵²

³⁵² Sandström 1967, p 4-5. "man skulle kunna tro om man läser svensk press att judarna är det värsta rövarpack som går på vår jord, man behandlar araberna så illa. Detta är icke sant. Na-

Well, Andrén concluded, now it is the way that it is. She understood the Arabs complaints. But she asked the group from Sweden to keep in mind that Arabs are attached to the land and she told them to keep in mind that Arabs are storytellers. The stories in *A Thousand and One Nights* were created in this land, she said. She urged the group to consider what she called the psychological factor. When so many people ask the Arabs what life is like in Jerusalem, Andrén argued, Arabs start feeling that there is something wrong and that there are problems living under an occupation. She concluded that what would happen is that the answer to the questions would have been given to the Arab in the questions themselves. "Should you come to me and tell me that I look tired", Andrén continued, "and should a second and a third person come to tell me the same thing, I would soon believe that I actually am tired, and I would soon be in bed". It is purely psychological, she argued. As a matter of fact, concerning Arabs, she continued, they are so much more open than Europeans. They will tell a stranger everything, but, she underlined, it must be taken with a grain of salt.

Andrén talked about the significance of building bridges between peoples. She said that she felt like grabbing the hand of both her Arab and her Jewish brothers. In spite of all the news reported internationally, Andrén argued, what are really important are all silent, ongoing, under-the-table-activities where Jews extend their hands to Arabs and where Arabs extend their hands to Jews. One should never forget she emphasised, that everyone on earth is our brother. (Alla äro våra bröder som på jorden bygga och bo.) "I am not pro-Israeli or pro-Arab", she went on, "I am pro-human. I am pro-Arab and pro-Jew, I am pro both of them. I am for everyone who will love each other and share equally".³⁵³ She recalled an atheist friend in Jerusalem who had organised language courses in Hebrew for Arabs. Once he had brought a group of adult and elderly Arab students of Hebrew to Tel Aviv. He showed them young Jewish boys and girls dancing. One of the old Arabs in the language class stood beside him. All of a sudden Andrén's atheist friend noticed that the old Arab had started crying and tears were flowing down his cheeks. The Arab said: "During the war they told us to drive these into the sea, but could I drive these into the sea?" Then the old man grabbed the language teacher's hand.³⁵⁴

turligtvis vill araberna hellre leva under araber det är klart. Araberna är ett stolt folk och att ha förlorat tre krig och böhöva (sic!) ledas av judar det kostar på en stolt människa, skulle kosta på oss också om Tyskland kom och tog oss svenskar, men låt mig få säga att Israel kom inte och tog. Araberna började kriget. Jerusalem hade aldrig blivit (sic!) utsatt för krig om inte Hussein hade börjat och skjutit. Jag menar jag var vittne till det. Jag var här. Jag hörde varifrån skotten kom. Jag satt och åt potatis i det här rummet, och är vittne till vad som verkligen hände."

³⁵³ Sandström 1967, p 5. "man säger också till mig: Du är naturligtvis pro-Israel som arbetar bland judar hela ditt liv. (men) Jag är pro-människa, pro-arabisk broder, pro-judisk broder, båda äro mina bröder. Båda dessa som i kärlek skall dela lika."

³⁵⁴ Sandström 1967, p 5

There are small and important things happening here, Andrén stressed: hands are finding other hands in silent approaches. She described the languages of the hearts are approaching one another. At this point Andrén was clearly upset, stressing that no one (media, politicians, etc.) cares to mention these silent approaches:

I do not believe in reconciliation between peoples. I do not believe in the Four Big, and I do not believe in the two big (powers) and not in U Thant, and not whatever they are called – all of them over there in America. But I believe in reconciliation between human beings. First and foremost I believe in Him who can make everything new, He who can make loving hearts out of hard hearts once filled with hatred.³⁵⁵

“It is our duty”, Andrén concluded in her lecture, “to help in this process. It is not our task to run with gossip but to love and take the hand of our Arab and Jewish brothers. This is what we are called to do, ‘Woe betide us if we fail’.”³⁵⁶ After this comment, her speech ended.

The theological and ideological ideas, or program I should say, formulated by Greta Andrén may not have been regarded as political, but rather as an interpretation of divine politics.

According to Andrén, Jews had sacrificed much to get hold of Jerusalem and the land. For her, their attachment and love for the country was strengthened by the suffering and sacrifices. Sacrifice and bloodshed gave Jews, Andrén believed, a particular right to own the land: “The right to own that comes with the blood.”³⁵⁷ The most necessary element in this process, for Andrén, was the development through which Jews were merged into one people, into one culture and were given one language. No effort is spared, she says, to melt the people into one unit. Many human beings and ideologies are being melted into one people:

Different religious views, political programmes, culture and habits, all shall be transformed into one unity. Here we see, in the new generation, the new type of human being, the young Israel, with one language: Hebrew, with one fatherland Israel, with one historical Jewish consciousness, with one Jewish culture, and with one desire – peace and reconstruction. With one firm decisiveness: Jerusalem – Israel’s capital!”³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ Sandström 1967, p 5. ”Sedan tror jag inte på folkförsoning, och jag tror inte på dom fyra stora, inte på de två stora och inte på U Tant, och inte vad dom heter allihopa där borta i Amerika, men jag tror på människoförsoning. Jag tror på honom framför allt som kan göra allting nytt, och som av hårda hatfyllda människohjärtan kan göra varma älskande hjärtan.”

³⁵⁶ Sandström 1967, p 5. ”Ve oss om vi sviker”.

³⁵⁷ Andrén April 1950, p. 138. “Man har offrat så mycket för Jerusalem: nu älskar man det på ett nytt sätt–med offrets och blodets äganderätt.”

³⁵⁸ Andrén April 1950, p. 139-140. “Vitt skilda religiösa åskådningar, politiska program, kulturer och vanor, allt detta skall formas om till en enhet. I den unga generationen ser vi den nya människotypen här nere, det unga Israel, med ett språk : hebreiskan, med ett fosterland.

Andrén as far as I have seen did not use literary criticism in her interpretation of biblical texts. She did not employ many socio-political arguments. She was happily living here dream in a country, or rather experiencing a narrative, which she shared with many in SvIM. To Andrén, this melting process through which the Jewish people were formed was a work of God who would again bring Jerusalem to be an object of praise among the nations. Andrén sometimes distinguished the political from the cultural and the religious, but that applied to Christians in Sweden only and not to Jews. For the Jews politics and culture and the whole situation was fused into a new type of singularity. Andrén's way of reading biblical texts was not apocalyptic, strictly speaking, and her language was not superstitious in her reflection upon Jewish or other histories. To Andrén, life in Jerusalem made history and the present merge together. In this way she resembles H.S. Nyberg, whom we shall meet later. The pivotal point through which all this became possible was the process through which the Jewish people were "transformed into one unity." Jesus had walked there and she was delighted that she could walk there too. The country allowed her live in the biblical narratives. In her view, God really wanted the new type of Jew to be created in front of her eyes in Jerusalem. She embraced her belief that God really wanted Jerusalem to be the capital of the State of Israel. And as part of her piety, Andrén interpreted a biblical narrative in which a national model for Israel was depicted in which Arabs were either absent, or were mere storytellers who did not really convey reliable information.

Israel – its military capacity and immigration

Andrén translated one book from English into Swedish in which the political and military history of Israel were described. In 1967 Pinchas E. Lapide, working at the Israeli Ministry for Information, published a book called the *Pilgrim's Guide to Israel*. Andrén translated the book and in 1968 it was published in Swedish by Verbum Publishing House under the title. *Israel – guide till gammalt och nytt* One chapter in the book was called "The Return Home after Two Thousand Years." There Lapide argued that those who returned home were a United Nations in miniature. He described how the new immigrants gradually came to earn their living from their own work. Everywhere throughout the country one could find cooperative villages side by side with kibbutzim. And in Lapide's view, the Arab villages around these settlements benefitted from Israel's modern way of living, whereas Arabs

Israel, med ett historiskt judiskt medvetande, med en judisk kultur, Och med en längtan: fred och uppbyggnad. Med en fast beslutsamhet: Jerusalem–Israels huvudstad!"

who lived elsewhere live like the patriarchs did.³⁵⁹ The idea that Arabs benefitted from the Jewish State is not uncommon, and Nyberg holds it too.

When Andrén described the State of Israel and the situation for Arabs in it, her words indeed resembled Lapidé. One gets the impression that he was an important source of information for her. On the cover of *Israel – guide till gammalt och nytt*, Lapidé was introduced as working at the Israeli Ministry of Information. But he was also on the Board of Trustees for SvTI in Jerusalem. The book was greatly concerned with the military situation in the area. In one chapter called “En nations födelse” (A Nation’s Birth), Lapidé described the newly established State of Israel as a small and weak newly-born state, threatened by troops from seven surrounding countries:

Jews had 35,000 partially trained Haganah men (the Jewish defence organisation) at their disposal in order to counter the united troops from Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and the Jordanian Arab legion, besides units from Saudi Arabia and Sudan.

Haganah’s entire equipment comprised of some thousands of rifles, homemade pistols, a few hundred machine guns, a few dozen anti-aircraft guns, mortars and a “secret weapon,” the “Davidka,” which as a matter of fact was nothing more than old water pipes – it’s most significant usefulness was a terrible noise.³⁶⁰

This work is not the right place for an in-depth analysis of these numbers and their military significance. My main concern is to draw a picture, or a background, which will help the reader understand how Andrén was thinking. Although I do not have the military expertise needed for a detailed assessment, it is beneficial to introduce alternative figures in order to assess Andrén’s view.

The alleged weakness of the Haganah and the Jewish forces has been questioned by Walid Khalidi and others. Andrén’s translation of Lapidé’s book appeared in 1968. By that time Khalidi’s article, entitled “Plan Dalet”, had already appeared in *Middle East Forum*, in November 1961. He argued:

By the end of March 1948 the Zionists could put in the field three brigades of the Palmach (a highly mobile striking force used wherever it was needed most), six brigades of the KHISH (Khayl Sadeh or field force) which operated in six brigade areas into which the country was divided and two brigades of the Irgun terrorist organisation. In addition there were the forces of the KHIM (Khayl Matza or garrison troops) who were at least as numerous as

³⁵⁹ Lapidé 1968, p. 25-26

³⁶⁰ Lapidé 1968, p. 11-12. ”Judarna hade 35 000 endast delvis utbildade Haganah-män (den judiska försvarsorganisationen) till sitt förfogande för att möta de förenade trupperna från Egypten, Irak, Syrien, Libanon och Jordaniens arabiska legion jämte enheter från Saudi Arabien och Sudan. Haganahs hela utrustning bestod av några tusen gevär, hemgjorda pistoler, ett hundratal kulsprutor, några dussin luftvärnskanoner, mörsare och ett »hemligt vapen», den så kallade Davidka, som egentligen bara var gamla vattenledningsrör – vars största värde bestod i att man med dem kunde åstadkomma ett fruktansvärt oväsen.”

the KHISH, the Jewish Settlement Police numbering some 12,000, the Gadna Youth Battalions, and the armed settlers.³⁶¹

Benny Morris has also described the capacity of Israel's industry to produce arms. The situation in Palestine at the time was special. Sahlin and others reported about Arab protests against the adoption of the UN Partition plan in November 1947. It is relevant to keep in mind that Haganah – the Jewish forces – was officially recognized by the authorities of the British Mandate, while Arabs in Palestine were refused permission to create a similar organisation.³⁶² Arabs in Palestine had been disarmed by the British forces in the late 1930s following the Arab revolt (1936-1939) against British rule.

Khalidi referred to how Jewish literature described the activities of certain troops and the production of weapons in local Zionist factories in Palestine. From March 1948 factories were said to have a capacity to produce 100 sub-machine guns daily; in early April 1948 that figure had risen to 200. Khalidi described how one Zionist agent operating in Poland was able to send 2,250 rifles and 250 machine guns to Haganah in the pre-war days.³⁶³ Khalidi also described how the Zionist factories in Palestine, before May 1948, produced ammunition, 2-inch and 3-inch mortar shells, the mortars themselves, flame throwers, anti-tank guns, and a heavy mortar called a Davidka. According to Khalidi, the Davidka was:

the Zionists' favourite weapon par excellence. According to Kimche (p. 161) "the Davidka tossed a lump of explosive some 300 yards." The unsuspecting reader may think that here was some harmless and rather quaint engine. But the fact is that the Davidka tossed a shell containing 60 pounds of TNT usually into crowded built up civilian quarters where the noise and blast maddened women and children into a frenzy of fear and panic.³⁶⁴

The information provided by Lapidé and conveyed to Swedish readers via Andrén's translation ought to be put in perspective. The State of Israel was not without military capabilities. How well Andrén was informed, we do not know. Perhaps Greta Andrén was not aware of the existence of different versions of the country's military history, or perhaps she was. Her own contribution to the flow of information, and hence the image of the State of Israel in Sweden, deserves a particular study. I draw the conclusion that to Andrén the only relevant perspective was the perspective provided by Mr Lapidé, a representative of the people whose reunification she was witnessing in front of her own eyes. She felt she was an eyewitness to a miracle. There was no need for her to corroborate the information and figures pro-

³⁶¹ Khalidi 1961, p. 25

³⁶² Khalidi 1959, p. 22

³⁶³ Khalidi 1961, p. 25-26

³⁶⁴ Khalidi 1961, p. 26

vided by Lapidé. The normative political-theological position she had adopted precluded alternatives.

In the book translated by Andrén, Lapidé described the Arab flight from Palestine and presented his version of the reasons behind it. Lapidé argued that it would be “meaningless” to try to pass an absolutely just verdict between the Arab and the Jewish sides. But he stressed:

one thing is clear: the refugee problem would never have existed had the Arab states not started the war, and this was done in order to stop the implementation of the partition plan for Palestine and to annihilate the Jewish state”.³⁶⁵

On the factual reasons for the flight of the Arabs, Lapidé had no doubts. He claimed, “

nine weeks before the invasion 1948 the Palestinian Arab Higher Committee and the governments in the neighbouring Arab states began an extensive campaign. They urged the Palestinian Arabs to leave their homes to escape bombing and acts of war. Also they were told they would come back in a few weeks and share in the division of the conquered Jewish property.”³⁶⁶

The 1960s were a tense political decade, not only in the Middle East, but in the Far East as well. Versions of history were used to legitimize positions adopted by all agents in the ongoing Cold War. The flight of Arabs from Palestine and the role of the UN were both at stake. The notion that Arab leaders had urged Palestinians to leave was one component in the overall picture. In the 1960s Lapidé’s version of history was not the only one. Arab and Western intellectuals, like Walid Khalidi and Erskine Childers, also answered the question of why the Palestinians had fled. Their answers were quite different from Lapidé’s.

In order to check this story Khalidi had searched the archives of the Near East monitoring stations of the British and American governments: the BBC Cyprus listening post and the CIA-sponsored Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). BBC and FBIS covered all radio in the Near East and local newspapers. Khalidi worked with these archives and also the BBC monitoring files in the British Museum, London. More or less at the same time, the Anglo-Irish writer Erskine Childers worked his way through the BBC monitoring files. Both Khalidi and Childers reached the same conclusion. They

³⁶⁵ Lapidé 1968, p. 97. ”Men en sak är klar: flyktingproblemet skulle aldrig ha existerat, om arabstaterna inte hade börjat krig för att förhindra genomförandet av beslutet om Palestinas delning och för att förrinta den judiska staten.”

³⁶⁶ Lapidé 1968, p. 96. ”...nio veckor före invasionen 1948 började den högsta palestinska arabkommittén och regeringarna i de arabiska grannstaterna en omfattande kampanj. De uppmanade de palestinsiska araberna att lämna sina hem för att undgå bombing och krigshandlingar. Men man sade dem också, att de skulle kunna återvända om några få veckor, och då skulle de få vara med om att dela den erövrade judiska egendomen.”

could not find support for the idea that Arab leaders had ordered the Palestinian Arab population to leave. Furthermore, they argued, had there really been a military order which prompted 700,000 individuals to leave their homes it should have been evidenced in the BBC and FBIS sources. Khalidi and Childers reached the conclusion that no such order had been issued.³⁶⁷

It does matter how right or how wrong Andrén was in relation to the political events at the time. And such an investigation will have to wait. What I have wanted to indicate is that while she was no political journalist or historian she still claimed to be an eyewitness and produced an image of Jews, Israel and Palestine that deserves to be more thoroughly studied. My suggestion is that her image of the political reality for Jews, Israel and Palestinian Arabs was dependent upon her ideological assessment that the Jews as people belonged there while Arabs did not. In her own words she called this ideology "God's politics". In this way she held the position that Jews should - implicitly or explicitly - live there. To her that was not only God's politics but God's will. Politics needed not be explained by reference to socio-economic arguments.

Palestinian Arabs intruding into Israel

Arab refugees were not neglected by Svenska Israelsmissionen. Generally the mission was well-informed and Johannes Jellinek's reports in *Missionstidning för Israel* played a significant role to this effect. He reported on the UN refugee work and the percentage of land in Israel owned by Arab refugees. Referring to UN figures, Jellinek claimed in 1955 that 200,000 Arab landowners – Arab refugees - held approximately 60% of the land in Israel. It was estimated that 100,000 of these wanted to return at any cost.³⁶⁸ Svenska Israelsmissionen, and Johannes Jellinek, was concerned with Arab refugees and the land they owned. But the political conclusions are different from the ones drawn in relation to Jews.

In 1954 a book was published in Sweden by J.M. Ollén entitled *Israel på farliga vägar*. This is one of very few books in Swedish from this period criticising Israel for having created the Arab refugee problem. Soon a prompt answer to the book appeared in *Missionstidning för Israel*, written by associate professor Gösta Lindeskog, first published in *Vår Kyrka* (16/9 1954). Lindeskog sharply criticised Ollén for being incorrect from both scientific and Christian perspectives. Instead the magazine recommended books and articles by Birger Pernow, Johannes Jellinek and Göte Hedenquist. *Mis-*

³⁶⁷ Khalidi 1988, p. 6

³⁶⁸ Jellinek 1955, p. 129

sionstidning för Israel also referred to Waldemar Svensson of Svenska Israelhjälpen as authoritative in the matter³⁶⁹

Both Svenska Israelhjälpen and Svenska Israelsmissionen made efforts to explain how Arab refugees had left their homes voluntarily or had left as the result of orders issued by Arab leaders. We have already seen this idea above, in the book by Lapide, and also we have discussed alternative interpretations. Svenska Israelhjälpen was of the opinion that the Jewish forces Haganah/IDF were not to blame for the existence of Arab refugees. In Svenska Israelhjälpen, one person who cared for the Arab refugees was Henrik Beer. He was Secretary General of the Swedish Red Cross Society (Rädda Barnen). In some articles he described the relief work of Rädda Barnen in Syria among Palestinian Arab refugees.³⁷⁰ When Arab refugees were mentioned by Svenska Israelhjälpen they were described as suffering human beings. Their wish to "return" home was never advocated. On the contrary, the immigration policy of Israel was much appreciated. A rather Euro-centric perspective was employed which can be exemplified by Henrik Beer. He argued that the Israeli immigration policies were "contributing considerably to solving the European refugee problem."³⁷¹ Jewish immigrants to Israel were helped and it is reported that Andrén collected clothing in Sweden that was distributed to Jewish immigrants in Israel.³⁷²

In Israel the debate on Arab refugees was a rather urgent matter. In 1950 the State of Israel had adopted the Law of Return, which stated that Jews in general had the right to settle in Israel.³⁷³ David Ben-Gurion has said:

A Jew, however, is entitled to settle in Israel according to the Law of Return by virtue of the fact that he is a Jew (if he is not an habitual criminal who is liable to endanger the public welfare [or] suffering from a disease liable to endanger the public health), and as soon as he settles in it he becomes, automatically, an Israeli citizen.³⁷⁴

While Jews arriving in Israel automatically would become Israeli citizens, Arabs could not move there nor could Arab refugees who left their farms a few years earlier return home. There was a democratic problem for Israel, but, how would the state control its citizens? Had a Palestinian Arab living

³⁶⁹ Lindeskog 1954, p. 222

³⁷⁰ *Rädda Barnen, medlemsblad för Föreningen Rädda Barnen*, January-March 1949 p. 11, and *Rädda Barnen, medlemsblad för Föreningen Rädda Barnen*, April-June 1949, pages 9 and 11.

³⁷¹ Svenska Israelhjälpen January 10, 1951. "Han framhöll dock, att det i Israel föreliggande hjälpbehovet vore notoriskt och underströk att Israel genom sin immigrationspolitik väsentligt bidrar till det europeiska flyktingproblemets lösning. Talaren påpekade samtidigt, att de arabiska palestinaflyktingarnas läge fortfarande vore lika prekärt som tidigare", Henrik Beer, Secretary general Röda korset.

³⁷² Hansen 1952, p. 115

³⁷³ Rolef 1993, p. 193

³⁷⁴ Ben-Gurion 1970, p. 12

in the country arrived there via “infiltration” or was he a legitimate citizen of the State of Israel? David Ben-Gurion addressed the problem:

In the light of our special situation, when there is no practical possibility of a thorough and permanent control of the country’s borders to prevent the entry of infiltrators from the hostile neighbouring countries, who are a source of grave and constant danger to the peace of the country and its population, it is essential that a legal resident in Israel should be able to identify himself at all times by means of a document supplied by an official authority.

The laws of Israel forbid all discrimination between one person and another on account of differences in race, colour, nationality, religion or sex, but Jews enjoy one special privilege alone by virtue of the Law of Return. A non-Jew who wishes to immigrate to Israel must receive permission to do so and the state is empowered to withhold such permission. If he settles in the country he may become a citizen of Israel only by naturalization, which he can request after two years residence.³⁷⁵

Readers of *Missionstidning för Israel* were given lots of factors to consider. In providing an overall theory and normative model to make sense of this political or judicious information from Lapide, Ollén, Lindeskog, Jellinek, Pernow, Hedenquist and others Andrén played a significant role. She lived in the land and she was a person that many had met on trips. And the overall emphasis for her was simply that Jews belonged in Israel.

Arabs in Israel

The assessment of Jews, Arabs and the State of Israel in Swedish press has been studied in academic research. In 1978 Gunnel Rikardsson published her doctoral thesis *The Middle East Conflict in the Swedish Press*. Her research was a content analysis of three Swedish daily papers’ reports from Israel and Palestine from 1948 to 1973. One general conclusion in Rikardsson’s work, which is at odds with Andrén, is that Arabs generally were negatively portrayed and Jewish Israelis positively.³⁷⁶ In these papers, Rikardsson said:

It is a fact that the Arabs carry most of the blame for the conflict and has nearly only active/aggressive aims, etc., something which is evaluated negatively in itself – or is all this only an expression of a double negative attitude: the newspapers dislike the Arabs, so they are given the blame for the conflict, etc. This question has been tested in several different ways in the material. Here we shall make a brief summary and say that most of the abovementioned comments probably belong to the latter type – i.e. Arabs are negatively evaluated and are thus described with certain types of comments.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ Ben-Gurion 1970, p. 12

³⁷⁶ Rikardsson 1978, p. 98ff

³⁷⁷ Rikardsson 1978, p. 99-100

Andrén's account of relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel also appears to be different also from the way it is portrayed in Arab literature in Israel. In 1978 Fouzi El-Asmar published a second version of his book *To be an Arab in Israel*. It is a personal account from his childhood to adulthood. He was born in Haifa in 1937 and lived his whole life in Palestine/Israel, which overlapped with the period of Andrén's worked at SvTI. Fouzi El-Asmar was a professional journalist and poet. While Arab he wrote his book in Hebrew in order to present the subject with Hebrew-speaking Israeli Jews. He argued that Jewish society treated Arabs in three different ways.

The vast majority treat Arabs with contempt and arrogance so that an Arab coming in contact with Jewish society often hears words such as "Arab work," meaning work of poor quality; "dirty Arab," "Arabush" a derogatory term for Arabs: "Arab taste" meaning of course bad taste, and scores of similar expressions.

A second type of reaction is an over-politeness towards the Arab, which means that the mere fact that a man is an Arab prevents one from doing or saying anything that might antagonize or hurt him, even if the man deserves such treatment.

The third and the normal attitude, to regard Arabs as normal people and to treat them just as one would treat a Jew, is shown by only a minority.³⁷⁸

El-Asmar did not present any statistics or empirical evidence, but the way he verified his conclusions from his own experience indicates that the type of under-the-table-contacts mentioned by Greta Andrén as: "hands are finding other hands in silent approaches", were rare or nonexistent. However, the story is even more complex. Another Arab writer, Sabri Geris, oriented his book on the situation of Arabs in Israel in the same period in relation to their legal and political situation as Israeli citizens. It was published in Sweden in 1970. Sabri Geris described how Arabs in Israel were subject to military regulations from 1948 until the mid-1960s.

The military government in Israel had their background in the laws of the British Mandate, and more particularly the defence laws of 1945 (Emergency Regulations) and in the Israeli Defence Laws of 1949. These British laws were used by the British Mandate regime in order to deport members of two Jewish groups, Lehi and Irgun. The laws were used to impose curfew in Jewish towns in response to violent Jewish resistance. These measures were seriously criticised by Jewish lawyers. In February 1946 the Jewish Association of Jurists in Palestine organised a conference with over 400 Jewish jurists present where a protest against the Emergency Regulations was formulated. During the conference Dr Dunkelbaum, who later got a seat in the High Court of Israel, stated:

³⁷⁸ El-Asmar, 1978, p. 236

These laws constitute naturally a constant threat to the citizens. We, in our capacity as jurists, view them as a flagrant crime against basic orders for rights, order and justice. They offer to the military and administrative authorities powers to impose sentences that, even if they are sanctioned by a legislative authority, can only be viewed as anarchistic and arbitrary.³⁷⁹

The conference demanded that the Emergency Regulations be abrogated. Soon, however, when the State of Israel was established these laws were included in Israeli legislation. The laws were changed to the effect that regulations against purchase of Arab-owned land were abolished. Geries gave several examples of how these regulations were applied against Arabs in the State of Israel. This is well documented and here I will give only one illustrative example.

The Emergency Regulations of 1945 regulated freedom of movement, freedom of expression, censorship, control of communications, legislation for weaponry, among other things. They gave authority to the Minister of Defence to appoint military commanders over particular regions³⁸⁰ and provided the commanders wide-reaching authority to deport or imprison Arab inhabitants in that area. Moreover, and the commander could not be called to defend himself in court. Therefore, the motives behind his work could not be investigated. Geries described how many efforts had been made to bring a military commander to court, but it had not been possible. The Israeli authorities would justify their decision as follows:

The military commander [italics are in original] is responsible for the protection of vital interests of the state, and it is his duty to judge whether these interests of the state may allow him to utter further details to elucidate the motives for issuing an order.³⁸¹

In this way the native Arab inhabitant could obtain no explanation why he was put in prison. The military commander had the right and duty to decide whether he should provide any further details. One of the more frequently used paragraphs in this regulation, according to Geries, was Section 125, which gave the commander the authority to declare an area a closed zone. Anyone travelling in or out of the zone during the stipulated period would be arrested.³⁸²

³⁷⁹ Geries 1970, p 11-12. "Dessa lagar utgör naturligtvis ett konstant hot mot medborgarna. Vi, i egenskap av jurister, ser dem som ett flagrant brott mot grundläggande rätts-, ordnings- och rättvisepprinciper. De ger militären och administrativa myndigheter makt att utdela straff som, även om de stadfästs av en lagstiftande myndighet, endast kan betraktas som anarkistiska och godtyckliga..."

³⁸⁰ Geries 1970, p. 14-15

³⁸¹ Geries 1970, p. 19 "Den militära kommandanten (kursiverat i källan) är ansvarig för skyddandet av statens vitala intressen och det är hans plikt att avgöra huruvida dessa intressen kan tillåta honom att tillfoga ytterligare detaljer för att belysa motiven för utfärdandet av en order."

³⁸² Geries 1970, p. 15

In December 1955 a large area in the central region of the Galilee was declared a closed zone, with reference to the Emergency Regulations. The area was approximately 100,000 dunums (one dunum is app. 1000 square meters or a tenth of a hectare) In 1954 as many as 50 such areas may have been declared. In principle, these regulations applied throughout Israel but they were enforced only in areas where a military commander had been appointed. In theory these regulations applied to all, but in practice they were applied only against Arabs.³⁸³ As Geris said, Jews were not expected to carry a permission to travel and usually no punitive actions are undertaken against Jews that broke Section 125.³⁸⁴

Geris reported one complaint against the Emergency Regulations produced by an Israeli judge. At a trial a few months after the establishment of the State of Israel, Judge Shalom Kassin argued that that all classes and groups in the Jewish society in Palestine, and in the Jewish people throughout the world, had universally opposed the Military Regulations during the British Mandate. The reason was that they invalidated the individual's rights and the competent court's control of the authority's undertakings.³⁸⁵ Kassin drew the following conclusion:

I cannot act and judge in accordance with these laws, that still are in our legal system. As I am convinced they are not valid one cannot demand from me to act against my conscience just because the present government has not yet abrogated them.³⁸⁶

In a later study on democratic freedoms in Israel, Sabri Geris described how the Emergency Regulations were enforced over time. In the mid-1960s the Israeli authorities announced that the Military Regulations had been abolished. But what happened, according to Geris, was that the contents of the Military Regulations remained but the authority to use them had been transferred from the army to the civil authority of the police.³⁸⁷ In 1958 the Military Regulations were applied for six months against one person, Ahmad Hassan, who was ordered to sit down under a large tree west of the village of Deir Hanna from dawn till sunset.³⁸⁸

My conclusion is that the image of the living situation for Arabs in Israel presented by Greta Andrén can be countered.

³⁸³ Geris 1970, p. 24

³⁸⁴ Geris 1970, p. 24

³⁸⁵ Geris 1970, p. 14

³⁸⁶ Geris 1970, p. 14 "Jag kan inte agera och döma efter dessa lagar, som fortfarande finns i vårt rättssystem. Eftersom jag dessutom är övertygad om att de är ogiltiga, kan man inte begära att jag skall handla mot mitt samvete, enbart därför att den nuvarande regeringen ännu inte avskaffat dem."

³⁸⁷ Jirjis 1972, p. 95

³⁸⁸ Geris 1970, p. 28

Greta Andrén – a summary

Greta Andrén was supportive of the Jewish State of Israel, but not for explicitly political reasons. The reasons she gave for her support are closely related to her understanding of the message of the Bible in combination with her ideas relating to the significance of Jews as the population of the land. She was convinced that in Jerusalem the Bible had come alive. While living in Jerusalem she had realised, she said, that the Bible was not just a religious book but also true history. The great men in the Old Testament had lived, but came to life again with the reestablishment of a Jewish presence in the land. When Jews lived in Jerusalem a new type of human being was created. Hebrew was used and rejuvenated. Jews were brought to one consciousness and a singular firm decisiveness by establishing Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Andrén did not believe in reconciliation between peoples, neither did she believe in the world powers, the UN or in its Secretary General U Thant. She believed only in reconciliation between individuals and in the politics of God. She praised God, who once again would make Jerusalem to be praised by all the nations of the world. Andrén's interpretation of history and her understanding of the processes leading to radical changes in society are not supported by a socioeconomic analysis of political circumstances, a fact that did not disturb her. As a result, should her understanding of history explicitly be called superstitious the way that the conceptions of Pernow have? She never opposes Pernow. And still there is a difference. As far as I have seen, Andrén did not view Jewish history and Christian history in relation to success or failure the way Pernow did. God is the master of all historical processes, she believed, therefore she never had a reason to affirm this obvious fact. Somehow she was at ease in God's arms and confident that her own view was right. When she watched the flowers, the rain and the seasons in her Jerusalem she was satisfied by simply reading about all this in the Bible. That being said, it must be noted that she was not naïve or ignorant of the political situation in the country. She translated a book by Pinchas E. Lapid which was filled with information about Israel's military capacity and information about the Arabs in Israel. In my understanding she was a rare intellectual capacity able to dress her own ideological conviction into a biblical language in a way that most people she met came to adore.

Andrén had lived in Israel on and off since 1946. She had written a book, *Palestinabilder*, which included several figures relating to the numbers of Arabs and Jews in Israel.

Andrén never referred to Arabs as a legitimate part of the demography in Palestine/Israel. To her, Arabs were not reliable storytellers. Some of them were nice old gentlemen, it is true, but they had no real credibility or political rights or status in the country. Thus we must conclude that for Andrén the situation is very simple: Arabs do not share with the Jews the right to live in Jerusalem. She did not detest or hate Arabs. She had no race prejudice

against them. Her relations to, or her opinions about, Arabs had probably one explanation as far as I can see. Her attitude represented a religious variety of the secular indifference sometimes referred to in religious terms as quietism. This can be said to have their origin in a precise idea that God alone is the master of mankind's life and history. If God allowed Jews to seize Arab land, water and houses, the transfer of material wealth from one part to another is his own matter. Humanity has nothing to do with it. People ought to remain indifferent or stay quiet when God is acting.

An artist or an author could have expressed a close affiliation to a landscape or to a country (such as its hills, lakes or forests) as metaphors for something else beyond what is seen. Andrén had an ideal of land and people that was rather close to the one presented by Ben-Gurion. But Ben-Gurion is much more politically concrete. The Jewish people, according to Ben-Gurion, had an exclusive claim to the land:

But it was not until the War of Independence and the coming of sovereignty that opportunity to study the Land that belongs to us, and only to us, has been amply given.³⁸⁹

This point was reiterated by Ben-Gurion, still in harmony with the basic exclusive claim.

Again I say, the state was made not for its inhabitants, but for all the nation of Israel, for those (Jews) too who do not purpose to dwell in it.³⁹⁰

Andrén's approach to biblical texts does recognize a difference between religion and history, but for her the Bible was both. "God's politics" had come to life in front of her eyes and no hair-splitting interpretation of the biblical word could change that fact, to her. In her eyes biblical texts interpreted life and she went beyond the apocalyptic approach. The great old men from the Old Testament came to life for her.

Her idea of the Jewish people is indeed an example of the Romantic concept of a nation in which each people has its *Volksgeist* – or its national spirit.³⁹¹ Swedes may be Buddhists and Swedes, but Jews, according to Andrén, are different:

For the Jews religion, tradition and national belonging is one. We may be Swedes and Buddhists; a Jew if he is a Jew can only be a Jew, and belong to the Jewish people. Jewish religion and Jewish belonging, affiliation to a people is one and cannot be separated apart, it is an absolute one.³⁹²

³⁸⁹ Ben-Gurion 1952, p. 45

³⁹⁰ Ben-Gurion 1952, p. 46

³⁹¹ Lübcke 1988, p. 226

³⁹² Sandström 1967, p. 2. "För judarna är det så att religion och tradition och nationell tillhörighet är ett. Vi kan ju vara svenskar och buddister, en jude om han är jude, kan bara vara

To Andrén, Jews are different. Perhaps unwillingly, she excludes Jews from the social and national community in Europe. They belong together in a particular way, at a particular place in a way that distinguishes them from other peoples. Jews were at home in Israel. Arabs, on the other hand, could not really be trusted. They were storytellers and interpreted the outcome of the war psychologically. Here Andrén is using the word psychologically in a strange and derogatory way, as if psychology were something less real or less serious.

Andrén had no problem cooperating with Birger Pernow or H.S. Nyberg. They all shared the same love for the State of Israel – more or less – as a God-given or historical home for the Jews.

jude, och tillhör det judiska folket, judisk religion och judisk tillhörighet, folktillhörighet är ett och kan inte skiljas åt, absolut ett.”

7. Pray for the authority – Birger Pernow

Apocalyptic theology – God’s blessing and God’s curse

During its years in Vienna, Svenska Israelsmissionen realised that the Nazi authorities were planning to bring about the annihilation of the entire Jewish people. In early 1943, some eighteen months after the moment that they had been forced to close its mission in Vienna, Svenska Israelsmissionen published a booklet entitled *Kan judafolket räddas?*³⁹³ Seth Asklund, a vicar in Sweden, wrote an article entitled “Is there a Christian stand on the Jewish question?” In it he wrote:

Each thinking human being in our country [Sweden] must admit that here we have seen no sign of the cruelty and danger that is attributed to the Jews. But the cruel treatment that Jews are subject to at so many places is another issue. It is no longer a secret, and they (the Nazis) are not any longer even bothering to hide it.³⁹⁴

Asklund discussed the fact that many individuals that he had met in Sweden, both Christians and Jews were not willing to believe what was said about the Nazi policies vis-à-vis the Jews. But Asklund affirmed that even the worst of the stories were true. He was upset on behalf of the culture and history of Germany. He discussed with fury and intensity how a Christian should respond. Asklund said the Golden Rule, as presented in St Matthew in the Sermon on the Mount, ought to be enough to guide Christians’ behaviour towards the Jew, “our neighbour”. If no other way was available, he said, “all Christians in Sweden ought to raise a common protest against this inhuman and unchristian annihilation of an entire people”.³⁹⁵ Knowing the situation in Nazi-controlled areas, Asklund thought that he was capable of defining a Christian response to the Nazi practise. He stated:

³⁹³ Pernow 1943

³⁹⁴ Asklund 1943, p. 71–72 ”Varje tänkande människa i vårt land måste ju erkänna, att de hemskheter och farligheter, som man på så många håll utmålar judarna med, därav ha vi ej sett något hos oss. Men en annan sak måste det väl vara med den grymma behandling, som judarna på så många håll utsätts för. Den är ju ej längre någon hemlighet, och man besvärar sig ej längre med att dölja den.”

³⁹⁵ Asklund 1943, p. 74

For Christians it is clear, the persecution itself is unchristian, whatever motivation it may have. There can be no escape for a Christian conscience. Modern anti-Semitism is anti-Christian and must be treated as such³⁹⁶

To Asklund, the first relevant conduct for Christians was not to protest against the Nazi policies. Jesus had suggested a method in St. Matthew 28:19: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations." Hence, for Asklund, the most relevant response to the politics in Nazi Germany was Christian mission work. He continued:

Therefore it is inevitable, just like mission to heathens is the Christian position vis-à-vis the coloured people's spiritual and bodily needs, mission to the Jews is a thoroughly Christian position on the Jewish question, and mission is the Christian answer to hatred against the Jews in the world.³⁹⁷

In his article, Asklund exemplified some central components in Svenska Israelsmissionen's general position on the Nazi genocide and on political processes in general: 1) Asklund knew rather well what was happening; 2) on a moral level Asklund judged the situation more or less like most people did in Sweden at the time – he disapproved of the policies and he could think of a united protest among all Christians; 3) still, the appropriate and most urgent response for Asklund was Christian mission to Jews, which he believed would solve the problem.

Birger Pernow contributed with a mere twelve pages to the booklet, which is a good summary of recurring themes in Pernow's theology. It displayed his thinking on motives for Christian mission among Jews throughout his thirty years within Svenska Israelsmissionen. Before discussing Pernow's theology in some detail we need to keep in mind the circumstances under which that the book was written and published. It was printed in early 1943. The writing probably took place in the summer and the autumn 1942 while the Second World War was raging.

On 26 November, 1942, SS Donau left Oslo with 302 Jewish men and 230 Jewish women and children on board. The ship arrived in Stettin on November 30. The women and children were immediately taken to the gas chambers.³⁹⁸ The deportation of Jews from Norway shocked Sweden. In December 1942 *Dagens Nyheter*, the biggest Swedish daily paper, undertook a Gallup opinion poll. They asked the readers what single event had made the strongest impression on them during 1942. By far, the deportation of

³⁹⁶ Asklund 1943, p. 77, "Oss kristna är det nog att förstå, att själva förföljelsen är klart okristlig, vilken motivering den än sedan söker rättfärdiga sig med."

³⁹⁷ Asklund 1943, p. 77, "Därför är det ofrånkomligt, att liksom hednamission är den kristna ståndpunkten inför de färgade folkens andliga och lekamliga nöd, så är judemissionen en äktkristen ståndpunkt i judefrågan och vårt kristna svar på judehatet i världen."

³⁹⁸ Jarlert 1993, p. 8-9

Jews from Norway ranked highest.³⁹⁹ Bishops in the Church of Sweden protested against the deportation. On Sunday 29 November, Olle Nystedt preached in Göteborg against the deportation.⁴⁰⁰

In January 1943 Pernow reported in *Missionstidning för Israel* that the bishops in Norway, two theological faculties, nineteen Christian organisations and the Church's leadership had signed a protest against the Nazi persecution of Jews in Norway.⁴⁰¹ The Norwegian protest was quoted in length in *Missionstidning för Israel* in January 1943 and commented on by Pernow. According to the Norwegian Christian protest, in Lutheran theology all human beings have the same principle value and therefore the same human and civil rights. As Jews were human beings, the protest stated, they had the same rights as all inhabitants in Norway and thus Jews could not be singled out and deported. According to the Norwegian protest, the constitution of the Norwegian state was built on the Evangelical Lutheran religion. Hence, they stressed, the Norwegian constitution did not allow the Nazi authorities to discriminate against or deport Jews.⁴⁰² The protesters wrote:

These Jews are not charged with breaking the laws of the country, and yet they are punished severely as grave criminals. They are punished due to their origins and only because they are Jews.⁴⁰³

The Norwegian Bishops accused the Nazi authorities of breaking the word of God, for in their interpretation the Bible "from cover to cover" taught them that "all peoples are of the same blood." The protesters argued they had to raise their voices because they had witnessed "legalised injustice" and if they would have remained silent, they felt they would have become culprits. They said: "If we shall remain faithful to the word of God and to the Church, we have to speak out."⁴⁰⁴

The Norwegian protest argued that all human beings had the same value and the same rights. They did not claim that God had a specific plan for history in which God's blessing and curse determined the fate of Jews. They did not argue that Jews having rejected Christ thereby had brought the Nazi violence upon Norway and/or upon the Jews themselves. No, the protesters in Norway had formulated another theology which was based on another way of assessing history, society and human beings. As we shall see, Pernow on the other hand often included God's blessing and God's curse as central

³⁹⁹ Svanberg & Tydén 1997, p. 260

⁴⁰⁰ See for instance Jarlert 1993

⁴⁰¹ Pernow January 1943, p. 24

⁴⁰² Pernow January 1943, p. 25

⁴⁰³ Pernow January 1943, p. 25 "Dessa judar äro ju icke anklagade för att ha förbrutit sig mot landets lagar, och dock straffas de så hårdhänt som endast få förbrytare straffas. De straffas på grund av sin härkomst och endast och uteslutande därför att de är judar."

⁴⁰⁴ Pernow January 1943, p. 25 "alla folk äro av samma blod".

components in his theology. Only once, as far as I have seen, which was on this particular occasion, did he argue principally for rights and righteousness:

One is tempted to remain silent, as it will not do any good to protest. Perhaps it will only make things worse. But at some occasions it is a crime to remain silent. Now it is that way, because right and righteousness is being trampled on.⁴⁰⁵

This is a rare example in Pernow's theology and it did not influence his theology in the long run. The idea of righteousness did not at all influence his contribution to *Kan judafolket räddas?* The deportation of Jews from Norway somehow cut right through his ordinary superstitious and apocalyptic interpretation of history and religion. On this occasion Pernow quoted Olle Nystedt, a close friend of Svenska Israelsmissionen and soon to be it's Chair. Pernow referred to the Swedish bishops and other Swedish Church leaders who had protested against the deportation, but his own theology was not changed.

In *Kan judafolket räddas?* Pernow started and ended his article with references to the first and the last days of history. On the first page he stated:

Already in the morning of history God called the people of Israel to be His servant in the people's world, and with a "Holy to the Lord" on its forehead it would bring the message about God's salvation to all peoples and to all times.⁴⁰⁶

In the concluding sentence of the last page he wrote:

We all await the day of salvation, soon to dawn, out of the darkness and agony of our time. And we could all hasten this day by more fully putting ourselves at God's disposal for the victory of His kingdom in the people's world, not the least among Israel.⁴⁰⁷

"Israel" and the "people of Israel" were crucial to Pernow both at the dawn of history and at its end, on the day of salvation. To Pernow, the end of history could be hastened by everybody's active participation in mission work, "not least" among the people of Israel, the Jews. Still the idea that the end of time could be hastened is not a central dogma of Svenska Israelsmissionen.

⁴⁰⁵ Pernow January 1943, p. 26. "Man frestas att tåga i tanke att det ändå inte tjänar något till att protestera. Det kanske bara ytterligare förvärrar saken. Men ibland är det brott att tåga. Och nu är det så. Ty här trampas rätten och rättfärdigheten under fötterna."

⁴⁰⁶ Pernow 1943, p. 9. "Redan i historiens morgon kallade Gud Israels folk att vara Hans tjänare i folkvärlden, och med ett »Helig Herranom» strålande på sin panna skulle det bära bud om Guds frälsning till alla folk och tider."

⁴⁰⁷ Pernow 1943, p. 20. "Alla åstunda vi, att frälsningens dag snart måtte gry ur tidens mörker och vånda. Och alla kunna vi vara med om att påskynda den dagen genom att mera helt ställa oss till Guds förfogande för hans rikets seger i folkvärlden, ej minst bland Israel."

The organisation did not build its theology or thinking on active expectations that the end of history would come sooner as a direct result of their work. But still it mattered, as one component in their thinking. More important to Svenska Israelsmissionen and to Pernow were the physical, political and social situations of the Jews and how Jews were treated by Christians. This is exemplified by Pernow's question: "Very often I am asked why the Jews always and everywhere are hated?"⁴⁰⁸

At this point Pernow did not try to verify this statement. He simply stated as a fact that Jews had been hated always and everywhere. Pernow's opinion reminds us of Arendt's critique of "eternal anti-Semitism". But Pernow had no reflections similar to those of Arendt and, as far as I can tell, neither did anyone else in Svenska Israelsmissionen. Stereotypes of Jews were common in Sweden at the time, as they recur throughout texts produced by Svenska Israelsmissionen. Pernow's own answer, in *Kan Judafolket räddas?*, was a reference to what he called "Jewish particularity". It is not easy to describe this particularity comprehensively, he argued, but it had to do with their energy. This energy, he continued, often produces rather "unsympathetic" expressions as Jews have elbowed their way ahead. But the issue goes deeper, Pernow stressed.

The inner kernel in this particularity, he explained, was to be found in the tension between the divine election and God's curse upon Jews as a result of their rejection of Christ. The deepest cause behind the Jewish nature, he told the reader, was that they had rejected Jesus as Messiah. Their original divine call had been to election and to be entrusted with the entire divine "revelation of salvation" (frälsningsuppenbarelse). Their divine call, he argued, had been to convey the revelation of salvation to non-Jews or, in Pernow's terminology, to the entire "people's world". But when they rejected Jesus as Messiah, the Jews had dispossessed themselves of the revelation's light and God's blessing. For Pernow, the consequence was obvious: "this had to leave deep marks behind" (Detta måste lämna djupa spår efter sig).

Pernow believed there was a divine "judgement over Israel," that is, over the Jewish people. When Pernow read about "Jews" in biblical texts, he did not think they represented an example or a model for humanity's relationship with God. Pernow did not see the Bible as literature or as a symbolic text. When "Jews" were mentioned in biblical texts, Pernow was certain that he had received knowledge about every Jew throughout history as well as all the Jews around him. The text, he was certain, conveyed eternally valid truths.

Most people, Pernow said, would immediately say that the divine judgement over the Jewish people was obvious and noticeable in the suffering inflicted upon them for 1,900 years. But to Pernow, this was not the whole truth. Even if God's judgement actually explained all physical suffering

⁴⁰⁸ Pernow 1943, p. 10

among the Jews, it would still not reveal the deepest level of the judgement. God's original election of the Jews was not limited to *receiving* God's revelation, he stressed. Moreover, he argued Israel was expected to *convey* this revelation of God's salvation to the rest of the world or to "the people's world", in Pernow's terminology. When Israel rejected Christ, Pernow explained, Israel betrayed the election. Here Israel failed, he said. At this point one may find the Jewish people's biggest fault.⁴⁰⁹ Pernow argues the consequences of this fault were immense and it affected not only Jews, but the entire world:

Had the ascended Lord in the moment of his elevation had an entire people of apostles – not merely a handful of men – to send into the world, what could not have happened! Then the Kingdom of God would have reached its promised fulfilment long ago and the world would have been saved much suffering. When the Jewish people turned their back on Christ in this manner, God grabbed his renegade people and lifted them aside. Instead he called other tools for the Gospel's triumphal procession through the world. But for all these centuries, Israel has stood beside God's acts of salvation with the [other] peoples and besides the blessing.⁴¹⁰

To Pernow, for more than 1,900 years Jews as a collective had been "set aside" from God's blessing. Pernow interpreted a position "aside" from the blessing as equivalent to being cursed and this curse was the reason for the suffering of the Jews as a collective. But not only that, throughout history Jews as a collective had been responsible for much suffering in the rest of the world which never would have occurred at all, according to Pernow, had the Jews collectively accepted Jesus as Messiah. Had all Jews been God's missionaries, as they were called to be, God's blessing would already have reached the whole world. To Pernow, the Jews and the world as a whole will not escape this situation – full of suffering, war and innocent deaths – until Jews collectively receive "Jesus Christ and him as Crucified."

In Pernow's interpretation, Jews had made God sad and disappointed Him. God would have preferred not to see the sign of suffering on the forehead of his people, he argued. God had wanted to see another sign. Yet Pernow perceived a particular meaning could be found in this suffering. He thought the work of Svenska Israelsmissionen in Vienna was witnessing a gradual spiritual change, if not a breakthrough. The Nazi "judgement," he said, that Jews would "disappear" in four years had been followed by a "re-

⁴⁰⁹ Pernow 1943, p. 11. "Här svek Israel, och det är detta folks största skuld."

⁴¹⁰ Pernow 1943, p. 12. "Hade den himlafärne Herren i sin upphöjelses ögonblick haft till sitt förfogande ett helt folk av apostlar - istället för en handfull män - att sända ut i världen, vad kunde icke då ha skett! Då hade väl Guds rike nått sin utlovade fullbordan för länge sedan och världen skonats från mycket lidande. När judafolket sålunda vände Kristus ryggen, då grep Gud detta sitt avfälliga folk och lyfte det åt sidan. Istället kallade han fram andra redskap för evangeliets segertåg genom världen. Men Israel har under alla dessa århundraden stått vid sidan om Guds frälsningshandlande med folken och vid sidan om välsignelsen."

markable spiritual breakthrough” (ett märkligt andligt genombrott) at the mission in Vienna. Jews “began flocking to the mission” (började strömma till missionen). After March 1938, the Svenska Israelsmissionen in Vienna had to arrange double services each Sunday. Visitors sat in the stairs outside the church, waiting from early in the morning, several hours before the service was due to start. On each Sunday over a number of years he reported that 150-200 guests participated in the Eucharist. He believed that a silent “revivalist spirit” (väckelsens ande) had come upon the congregation. It was, he said, a remarkable time of harvest.

I am probably excused, but in those days I believed I had caught sight of the dawn of the new day, foretold by the Scripture, when Israel finally shall bow at the cross in repentance and pray to its Messiah and Saviour.⁴¹¹

In the quotation above one of Pernow’s core reasons for being involved in Svenska Israelsmissionen is expressed. He wanted to participate in bringing about the day “when Israel finally shall bow at the cross in repentance and pray to its Messiah and Saviour.” This theologically motivated hope emerges as a pivotal component of his thinking. Much of his ambition and the driving force for his involvement revolve around this concept, to which he continually returns. In effect, Birger Pernow was convinced history was moving towards a period when Jews – and the entire world too – would be saved from suffering. In Pernow’s thinking he and Svenska Israelsmissionen laboured to save the entire world from suffering. The conversion of Jews was pivotal in this process, but still they were themselves instruments for the process itself. When Jews became Christians God’s salvation plan for mankind would be brought back on track.

The historical reflections and the theology of religion of Birger Pernow appear cynical and instrumental with regard to the role of human beings, especially the Jews, in God’s salvation plan. Therefore it must also be kept in mind that under Pernow’s leadership Svenska Israelsmissionen organized a relief action among refugees and starving Jews. This may appear contradictory, or ambivalent as Koblik said, but basically it was not. To him, Jews and all human beings were always of interest as pawns in God’s large spiritual game of chess unfolding in society and in history. History was the stage. Pernow always returned to the need for relief work among refugees. Pernow is no cynical anti-Semite, but a person who in his own view has seen deeper than the mere turmoil and hurly burly of political charades. For Pernow, God is seen as a heavenly father who sometimes has to correct and punish his children, thus the Jews are being punished by God in that purpose. Human beings cannot change God’s overall plan for society or history. What people

⁴¹¹ Pernow 1943, p. 15. ”Det må förlåtas om man då tyckte sig skönja gryningen till den nya dag, skriften säger skall komma, då Israel äntligen böjer sig i bot vid korset och tillbeder sin Messias och frälsare.”

can do is to care for other human beings, and in particular Jews, in order for Jews to realise their own mistakes. If Svenska Israelsmissionen is able to display Christianity's proper loving face then Jews would become Christians and God's plan will again start working as intended. Alas, to Pernow, Jews are too stubborn to see this for themselves and subsequently Christians will have to keep on and helping them.

In the concluding two pages of the article in *Kan judafolket räddas?* Pernow summarised the situation in which Svenska Israelsmissionen operated at the time and the prospects for the future of Jews in Europe and the world. There were, he said, almost insurmountable obstacles for the mission. Millions of lives were in danger, Pernow argued, but God's Word did not know any obstacle:

What is at stake is to bring as many as possible both earthly and spiritual help before it is too late, and hence seek to atone for some of the appalling crimes, being committed against the Jews by the "Christian" peoples.⁴¹²

Pernow was arguing strongly in favour of "both earthly and spiritual help." He was of the opinion that time was running out and it might soon be too late. He was not only talking about the chronology of his salvation history. He was also referring to the annihilation of Jews in Europe. He was concerned that it might become too late to help. Jews might be wiped out. When this dimension in the text is seen as the interpretative key, his notion of "atoning" for crimes committed by other "Christian" peoples" deserves some attention. Even though the perpetrators are "Christians" in a nominal sense, Pernow is somehow connected to them and somehow co-responsible for what they do. This perceived connection makes it possible for him to "atone" or ask God's forgiveness for sins committed against Jews by other "Christian peoples" like Nazi Germans. To him, Christians had a collective responsibility.

"What is about to happen to old Christendom in Europe?"

At the annual meeting of Svenska Israelsmissionen in 1937 Birger Pernow addressed the overall tense situation of Europe at the time. To Pernow, Europe was falling apart and the world was in dire straits. Pernow made a brief global overview and said:

⁴¹² Pernow 1943, p. 19. "Det gäller att bringa så många som möjligt timlig och andlig hjälp innan det är för sent, och så söka sona något av de förfärande brott, som de »kristna» folken begå mot judarna."

In North Africa we see how a large people are struck to the ground, and the people of South Africa are torn apart by racial struggles. India and China are fermenting. And what about old Christendom! One will need no prophetic insight to notice that the European cultivation is falling apart. We are on remnant ground. This creates agony and a sense of panic. The world's panic depends not upon the panic at the stock market, but on the demolished grounds in the world of souls. The general collapse is linked with the collapse of faith.

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To him Old Christendom was Europe. And the whole world was in between two world wars. Of course, in 1937 Pernow and the annual meeting of SvIM did not know what would happen in 1939, but they felt the increased tensions and the build up before both the Second World War and the liberation of colonies in India and Africa. I do not have more information on how Pernow analysed the social crisis at the time, apart from the text quoted here. But he did not spend too much time describing politics. It was merely a scene or a stage in which the true battle between spiritual forces takes place. Yes, he noticed that the stock markets were falling. Yet for Pernow, who addressed the annual meeting, the only relevant cure for all of this was to preach the gospel.

Then, what is it like in the world of Jews? We had a foreboding of that today. Do we then need to stand perplexed by the roar of the sea and the waves, when we know the cure for all the world's suffering? Can we stand as indifferent spectators until the end of the world, when we possess the cure? Do we not have to say like St Paul: Woe betide us if we do not preach the Gospel!⁴¹⁴

The world and Europe was falling apart and the cure was to preach the Gospel to the Jews.

While in the midst of this remnant Europe, Pernow stressed Christians should not be confused by the growing hatred against Jesus and the growing hatred against God's Old Covenant People – the Jews. To Pernow, all this should be regarded as “spring thunder” and this “spring thunder” heralded a spiritual spring and later a spiritual summer. Perhaps, Pernow said, these signs of spring would bring the eternal spring to the entire world.⁴¹⁵

⁴¹³ Pernow May 1937, p. 120-121, ”I Nordafrika se vi ett stort folk ligga slaget till marken, och Sydafrikas folk hålla på att sönderslitas av raskamp. Indien och Kina äro stadda i jäsning. Och den gamla kristenheten! Det tarvas ingen profetisk skarpsyn för att märka, att den europeiska odlingen håller på att falla samman. Allt säger oss, att vi stå på remnande grund. Detta skapar ångest, panikkänsla. Världspaniken bottnar ej endast i börspanik utan i raserad grund i själarnas värld. Det allmänna sammanbrottet hänger samman med trons sammanbrott.”

⁴¹⁴ Pernow May 1937, p. 121 “Hur är det då i judevärlden? Därom har vi fått en aning i kväll. Behöva vi då stå rädlösa vid havets och vågornas dån, då vi känna botemedlet för all världens nöd? Kunna vi stå som likgiltiga åskådare till världens undergång, då vi äga detta botemedel? Måste ej vi säga som Paulus: Ve oss, om vi ej predika evangelium!”

⁴¹⁵ Pernow August 1935, p. 195

In the Bible Pernow had found reasons why Europe and the world order were falling apart and explanations of what was happening to peoples and nations. Pernow never referred seriously to economic or political factors behind the processes in Europe at the time. World panic did not, as we saw, depend upon the panic in the stock market. Trying to assume his perspective I believe he was trying to see through politics and find reasons beyond history, beyond time. And he reached the conclusion that fundamentally the world was ruled by divine decree. Therefore spiritual work was the only cure, which the annual meetings and all its members probably agreed to.

At the annual meeting of SvIM in 1937 KJ Ekman resigned as chair of SvIM due to health problems. Bishop Ysander was elected chair of SvIM and Pernow was elected vice chair. Unquestioned he also kept his position as mission director. Also present at the meeting was Greta Andrén who had come from Vienna.⁴¹⁶ Pernow was the one who gave the central theological interpretation of the mission's world view and task.

Defending Jews against false accusations

Apart from his apocalyptic reflections, Pernow's work also included serious and successful efforts to defend both Jews and Judaism from slander and accusations in Nazi magazines in Sweden. One article in which he supported Jews was published in May 1933, a month after Hitler seized power in Germany and the Aryan legislation was adopted.⁴¹⁷ In this article, Pernow countered accusations that Jews committed ritual murders of non-Jews and also he defended Jews who were accused of trying to construct a secret world-wide association to control the world. Pernow had read these accusations in a "leading Swedish anti-Semitic magazine," but he did not mention in which.

The article Pernow read had printed a text from the Zohar – "the book of splendour" in the Kabbalah – in Swedish translation. The article argued that the "translation" from the Zohar verified that Jews practised ritual murder of non-Jews and also the custom of draining the blood of non-Jews. Pernow did not believe the accusations, and he thought that the translation from the Hebrew original was a forgery. Therefore, Pernow asked a scholar to translate the text. Having the two translations of the Zohar text in front of him, one from the anti-Semitic magazine and one from the scholar, Pernow analysed the differences. He concluded that the religious mysticism in the Kabbalah, as expressed in the Zohar, did not at all encourage Jews to kill non-Jews and it did not at all encourage Jews to drain the blood of non-Jews (skäckta främlingar).

⁴¹⁶ Pernow May 1937, p. 121-122

⁴¹⁷ Pernow May 1933, p. 110

Pernow argued that the article as it appeared in the Nazi magazine had misunderstood the religious symbolism of Jewish mysticism. The Zohar, according to Pernow, encouraged the pious Jew to consider an apostate Jew an animal. But it was the responsibility of the pious Jew, Pernow said, to pray that the apostate Jews would return to God and thereby again become human. In his prayers, Pernow said, pious Jews were symbolically offering their own prayers and themselves to God. While the text in the Zohar mentioned slaughtered persons, Pernow explained that the Zohar implied that pious Jews had ritually sacrificed themselves.⁴¹⁸

After having showed how a forged translation could spread lies and slander, Pernow went on to show how the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* had not been written by Theodor Herzl, which the Swedish Nazi magazine had claimed. Nor had it been written by Leopoldo Nilus in 1870, he said, but much earlier.⁴¹⁹

The Protocols of the Elders of Zion have been much debated in relation to anti-Semitism. Rosemary Radford Ruether says it was: “authored by the Russian secret police”, ... to justify Russian anti-Jewish pogroms “by claiming that a secret Jewish government, in existence since the time of Christ, was plotting the overthrow of Christendom and the establishment of the reign of Antichrist over the world in the last age of world history”.⁴²⁰ Given the world view of Pernow, in which Christendom was falling apart, one can easily imagine how terrifying it must have appeared that Jews were conspiring to overthrow the very basis of world civilisation. I would think many would still agree that he did a good thing, albeit out of his own peculiar motives.

On the other hand, if one does not share Pernow’s superstitious ideas on history or his apocalyptic view on biblical text, I can see many reasons why Jews – or any group targeted by missionary activities – would want to establish a secret government to protect themselves against the many state sponsored missionary endeavours at the time. The missionary activity itself was part of a cultural expansion emanating from the West. Is it not surprising we haven’t seen more attempts to counter mission or stop the missionaries by force?

Kristallnacht November 1938 interpreted

In February 1939 Birger Pernow reflected on the assaults on synagogues and numerous other Jewish institutions, shops and individuals in Germany in November 1938. To begin with, Pernow was appalled by the violence and

⁴¹⁸ Pernow May 1933, p. 112

⁴¹⁹ Pernow May 1933, p. 113

⁴²⁰ Radford Ruether 2009, p. 66

hatred. An abyss had opened in European culture, he said. Pernow was certain that God would avenge these wrongs according to “the laws of righteousness”. “God is the judge”, he said, “and not we.” He stressed that “not one single human being can escape God’s judgments.” Pernow did not devote much effort to describe the violence perpetrated during Kristallnacht in 1938. He must have assumed that readers of *Missionstidning för Israel* knew of the events. Pernow devoted more effort to elaborating its religious relevance. He asked:

Is this merely a deplorable consequence of violent warfare, like for instance the destruction of the cathedral in Reims, or do these events bare a deeper, divine significance? Are not these events the termination of something old, and the beginning of a new epoch in the spiritual development for the Jewish people? It so appears.⁴²¹

To Pernow, Kristallnacht and the violence against synagogues was both appalling and pointing ahead towards a spiritual development that Pernow hoped for. He saw Kristallnacht as “the beginning of a new epoch in the spiritual development of the Jewish people.”⁴²² In the article, Pernow argued previous suffering of Jews had always reached a peak and changed dramatically when their temple had been burnt; claiming the destruction of Solomon’s Temple in 587 B.C. had been the beginning of the end for the Temple cult and also signalled the beginning of “the period of the synagogues.” In Pernow’s interpretation, the “period of the synagogues” had begun in 70 A.D. when the Romans burnt and destroyed the Second Temple.

Jesus Christ the Messiah, whom they had rejected and crucified, had brought forward a sacrifice which is valid for eternity, (and) thereby the sacrificial service in Israel was ended for good.⁴²³

In Pernow’s logic, after the death of Jesus Christ sacrifice in the Jewish temple was no longer needed, because Jesus was the supreme sacrifice. Subsequently, therefore, it had been destroyed. At that time, according to Pernow, Jews had rejected Christ and for the next 1,900 years Jews they worshipped in synagogues. Throughout this long period, he argued that the service in the synagogue was the only way by which Israel worshipped God.

In November 1938, in a single night, Pernow said with apparent fascination that all synagogues in Germany had been burnt. This event was that

⁴²¹ Pernow February 1939, p. 40. ”Är detta blott beklagensvärda följder av en brutal krigsföring såsom t.ex. katedralen i Reims ödeläggelse, eller ha dessa händelser någon djupare gudomlig mening? Äro dessa händelser avslutningen av något gammalt och inledningen till en ny epok i judafolkets andliga utveckling? Det förefaller så.

⁴²² Pernow February 1939, p. 40

⁴²³ Pernow February 1939, p. 42. ”Därmed tog offertjänsten för alltid slut I Israel, emedan den Messias, som de förkastat och korsfäst, Jesus Kristus, hade framburit ett offer, vilket evigt gäller.”

much more remarkable, he continued, because more than 50% of Jewish youth had left the synagogues and their forefathers' faith. According to Pernow, youth had left Judaism due to "the internal decay of the service in the synagogue."⁴²⁴ These reflections on theology and history are characterised by a striking lack of empathy – made Pernow reach one conclusion: the period of the synagogue was about to end and Jews/Israel would begin to worship their God in the name of Jesus Christ. We cannot know, he said, but there are signs foretelling "wonderful perspectives". "Now, the world is crumbling in the throes of childbirth", Pernow asserted, but he was sure that something great would come out of it. He continued:

But what about us, what should we do? Should we protest against the violence? It would not do any good. Should we counter violence with more violence? That should not be our way as Christians. A spiritual rearmament has been discussed, and at the time being, that is the most important thing to do.⁴²⁵

Pernow did not encourage protests against the Nazi violence. The action Pernow supported was to strengthen the Christian faith and Christian mission in a "spiritual rearmament." To Pernow world history unfolded along a timetable which was determined by God's blessing and God's curse. Referring to St. Paul, Pernow argued that Christians should include both aggressors, enemies of the Kingdom of God and persecutors in their prayers. In Pernow's view, expressed in this particular article on Kristallnacht, Christians should thank God for all authorities, again quoting St. Paul, "so that we may be able to live a peaceful life, piously and decently." Pernow concluded that when the parish followed St. Paul's recommendation it left the battle in victory. The same weapon of spiritual rearmament was still available for Christians and, in Pernow's opinion; the prospects for victory were still the same. For comparison one may remind the reader of other Swedish comments on the Kristallnacht. After the assault in November the Swedish Bishops issued an appeal which said "no one can any longer withdraw from responsibility". On 10 December of the same year the Bishop's council appealed for monetary support for Jewish refugee children. In preparation for Christmas that year the Swedish Ecumenical Council recommended priests and all staff in churches to do all they could to counter anti-Semitic propaganda.⁴²⁶

In Pernow's interpretation, God had a purpose for the suffering Jews in 1938-1939. This purpose was to "cleanse or to ennoble" the Christians; a

⁴²⁴ Pernow February 1939, p. 42 "på grund av synagogalgudstjänstens inre förfall".

⁴²⁵ Pernow February 1939, p. 42 "Men vi då, vad skola vi göra? Protestera mot våldet? Det gagnar till intet. Möta det med nytt våld? Vare det oss kristna fjärran. Det har talats om en andlig upprustning, och det är för närvarande det angelägnaste av allt."

⁴²⁶ Runestam 2009, p. 10

matter of purification. According to Pernow, Christians had a duty to extend social services to those in need. Yet in his view, Christians should not only extend social services. There is a risk; Pernow continued in the article, that if Christians limited their work to social services they would spoil God's work. On the contrary, Pernow encouraged all Christians to listen to God and to bow in front of him. In February 1939 Pernow, commenting on Kristallnacht, declared "Now, God is at work".⁴²⁷ Pernow stressed his point that Christianity needed to wake up and improve, because he said time was short. Pernow was convinced:

God's purpose with the present despair is assuredly, to purge his Christendom and to discipline the inattentive to improvement.⁴²⁸

The way I read Pernow, these words should be interpreted as both a warning to Christians to remain steadfast in their faith and to continue their mission and their social work among the Jews or else God would also unleash his curse on Christians. Pernow position is that God is again punishing inattentive Jews.

In Pernow's theology of God's blessing and cursing Christians had to become more "Christian" and less concerned with trying to influence political decisions. Quoting St Paul he gives a clear recommendation: "Thank God for all human beings, for all Kings and for all authorities".⁴²⁹ Pernow reminds the reader that during St Paul's days Nero was the Roman Emperor and he concludes:

Assuredly the parish followed the apostle's advice, and they escaped as victors from the battle.⁴³⁰

In terms of involvement in society, Christians were only encouraged to undertake social work. Here Pernow is in perfect harmony with Peter Fjellstedt and some Bishops of the Church of Sweden whom we met earlier. Christians were not supposed to try to alter the basic social structure or the power base of states or regimes. That work could only be done by God. What Christians had to do, in Pernow's thinking, was to pray for the authorities, avoid criticism and avoid violence. This doctrine of political passivity applied even when the Nazis in Germany were burning all the synagogues, destroying Jewish shops and other privately owned property. If Christians did not per-

⁴²⁷ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 "Nu är Gud vid verket".

⁴²⁸ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 "Guds syfte med den nuvarande nöden är förvisso att luttra sin kristenhet och tukta de ohörsamma till bättring".

⁴²⁹ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 "Så uppmanar jag nu framför allt därtill att man må bedja, åkalla, anropa och tacka Gud för alla människor, för konungar och all överhet, så att vi kunna föra et i allt lugnt och stilla liv på ett i allt fromt och värdigt sätt."

⁴³⁰ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 "Förvisso följde församlingen aposteln uppmaning – och de gick segrande ur striden."

form their true spiritual –duties, Pernow anticipated a possible future catastrophe for Christians themselves. Pernow concluded the article by saying that it is “the duty of the Christians to light the fire that will put the world in flames for God.”⁴³¹

Similar interpretations of the Jewish situation in Europe at the time, coloured by similar apocalyptic Christian theology, were expressed by others. In November 1939 *Missionstidning för Israel* published an article from *Der Freunde Israels*, a magazine from a Christian mission to Jews in Germany. The article included a report from the 12th Zionist Congress held in Geneva in August 1939 and described positions at the Congress regarding the role of England vis-à-vis Zionism. Discussions at the Congress had been rather turbulent. Britain had just issued the White Papers, which limited Jewish immigration to Palestine. On the one hand, Britain appeared to be the only military power that could challenge Germany and save Jews from total genocide, the article argued. On the other hand, Britain had the mandatory power over Palestine and limited Jewish immigration to Palestine. In Palestine British policy did not please Zionist Jews, as they wanted unlimited immigration to Palestine. When the article from *Der Freunde Israels* concluded, it said:

But Israel has been deceitful; it has not fulfilled its calling and its election. Still in these days it wanders about outlawed on earth. Not until Israel returns to its God and Messiah will it regain the full possession of its rights and promises. Not until then it will receive the Promised Land, given by God.⁴³²

The idea that Jews were wandering about, suffering under anti-Semitism as a consequence of their lost blessing is one crucial component of this theology. Jews were wandering because they had lost their home, which was not located in Europe. In this way of thinking, Jews did not belong in Europe, but should and would live in Palestine if only they would obey God’s commandments.

The war in Palestine 1947-1949 as repetition of Deuteronomy 11:25

As we follow Birger Pernow into the 1940s and 1950s he maintained and applied his theology of God’s blessing and cursing to the social and political processes he encountered. One relevant example is found in *Missionsproblemet Israel*, a pamphlet published by Svenska Israelsmissionen in 1950. The

⁴³¹ Pernow February 1939, p. 44

⁴³² Pernow November 1939, p. 298. Article from *Der Freunde Israel*. ”Men Israel har svikit; det har icke uppfyllt sinkallelse och utkorelse. Än i dag irrar det fredlöst omkring på jorden. Först när Israel vänder åter till sin Gud och Messias, kommer det återigen i den fulla besittningen av sina rättigheter och löften. Först då får det utlovande landet, skänkt av Gud.”

pamphlet was a compilation of a series of articles first published in *Missionstidning för Israel*. He referred to letters from Hannah Hurnard, one of twelve Anglican missionaries in Jerusalem in the late 1940s. She had stayed in the city throughout the Israeli-Arab War and the War of Independence/^{al-Naqba}. Pernow devoted the last few pages of his booklet to Hurnard's interpretation of the war in 1947-1949 and the political scene in Palestine/Israel generally.

According to Hurnard, "Israel" had lost its land about 2,000 years ago due to rejection of Jesus as the Messiah.⁴³³ Yet while in the "Diaspora" among Christian peoples, Hurnard said, the Jews had not seen much of "true Christianity, but rather the opposite." This, in her view, was a serious failure by the Church. Hurnard argued that Christians for 2,000 years had been unable to show Jews a "true Christianity." Thereby Christians and the Church had failed to spread Christianity among Jews. Hurnard suggested that if Jews had believed in Jesus as the Messiah their "Diaspora" would have come to an end long ago. But immigration to Palestine was a theological problem too for Hurnard. She asked how immigration to Palestine should be interpreted so long as the Jews had not converted to Christianity. While studying the Bible she had found an answer which implied that the "return" of the Jews was not dependent upon their conversion. God could act, Hurnard concluded, on his own. In order to give that idea a biblical basis, she referred to Ezekiel 36:23-25 in which Jews, in her interpretation, were promised that they would return to their land. Having read Ezekiel 36 she suggested:

When the Christian Church has failed in this task: to be a witness to Israel, then God himself, with a stretched hand, according to his own Word, has led his people back to the land of their fathers and given it victory".⁴³⁴

For Hurnard, the 1940s represented the beginning of a process of "return" for Israel and a "coming to rest." But the real "fulfilment" was not yet present, she continued. In her theology the real "fulfilment" would not occur until the "spiritual revival" among the Jews had come, that is, when Jews would become Christians.

After these reflections on Ezekiel 36, Hurnard discussed the war in 1947-1949. The most striking feature of it was, she suggested, that the Arab troops were so "disorganised" and "struck by fear". She was astonished that they had fled. In her view fear was the main reason that the Arabs had lost the war. Hurnard had been convinced of Arab superiority and she was most surprised that the State of Israel had won. However, after some studies she had

⁴³³ Pernow 1949, p. 6

⁴³⁴ Pernow 1950, p. 13 "När den kristna kyrkan så har misslyckats i denna sin uppgift att vara ett vittne för Israel, har Gud själv enligt sitt ord, med utsträckt arm fört det tillbaka till fädernas land och givit det seger där."

found a biblical passage that explained both the Zionist victory and the “fearful” behaviour of the Arab troops in Deuteronomy 11:25, which reads:

“No man will be able to stand against you. The Lord your God as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go”.

In Hurnard and Pernow’s interpretation of Deuteronomy 11, God had spread terror and fear of the Zionist forces among Arabs. The actual area that she and Pernow had in mind was not drawn on a map and they were not overly concerned with geographic details.

Hurnard knew what had happened to the Palestinian refugees and she knew that Jewish colonisers settled abandoned Palestinian villages. To her this was a moral problem. Both Hurnard and Pernow had found the fate of the Palestinians deplorable and even shocking. They looked intensively for a biblical explanation for the existence of 700,000 Palestinian Arab refugees. Hurnard found it difficult to find an ethically acceptable explanation. She was tormented by something like an ethical crisis, which she wanted to solve. She identified it as:

A third question that comes to one's mind is this: It cannot possibly be right to take the Palestinian Arab's land from them? (But) what is right or wrong from this perspective, we can probably not decide⁴³⁵

Hurnard thought it was not right to take the land and houses from Palestinian Arabs. But at the same time her Bible told her that God was behind it. She had no solution to this problem and she had to conclude that she could not know what was right or wrong in relation to the Palestinian Arabs’ fate. Hurnard and Pernow reached the conclusion that God had been acting and therefore they could not, or were not entitled, to judge for themselves. Pernow had reached a similar conclusion in February 1939 while reflecting over Kristallnacht. Again Pernow had constructed a way of reading biblical texts and producing theology which included interpretations that described “terror and fear” as illegitimate but still acceptable as it was part of God’s deeds. The logic in the way they read the Bible was an authority which made them suppress their own moral judgement and bow. And, they let their own moral follow, or at least not oppose those who had won the battle. They obeyed the power.

⁴³⁵ Pernow 1950, p. 14 “Den tredje frågan som inställer sig är denna: inte kan det väl vara rätt att beröva Palestinas araber deras land? Vad som i detta fall är rätt eller orätt, kunna vi nog inte avgöra.”

“How the Jews build Palestine”

In 1934 Birger Pernow visited Palestine. The trip resulted in several articles in *Missionstidning för Israel* and a monograph entitled *Palestina förr och nu*, which was published in three editions. The first was published in 1936 and it sold out. The second appeared in 1936 and the third edition appeared in 1939. In 1935 he was asked to lecture on the topic at the Fifth Nordic Conference on Christian Mission to Israel held in Stockholm. Palestine was the land where the great “promises” to the fathers were fulfilled. While travelling through the country Pernow had experienced that:

one after one, the promises are fulfilled in a most literary way in front of your eyes. For instance in Isaiah 43:5-6 the Lord says: I will bring your children from the east, and gather you from the west. I will say to the north, “Give them up!”, and to the south, do not hold them back. Bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the ends of the earth.⁴³⁶

The introduction to the article is filled with references to biblical passages. Pernow knew he was talking to a crowd who were experienced Bible readers. The audience heard interpretations of Isaiah 43, Jeremiah 31:8 and Micah 4:4. All these passages were read in relation to politics in Palestine and “promises”. Pernow spoke to missionaries in the Nordic countries who were his “own” people. In this particular article, Pernow was rather concerned with the land itself. Geography was important, cultivation techniques were important, as were successes in agricultural endeavours. In Palestine he had noticed the difference between the agricultural techniques employed by the indigenous population or the Arabs and the agricultural techniques brought to the land by the immigrant Jews. Pernow interpreted this in a way that fit smoothly with his theology of God’s blessing and cursing.

Throughout the thirty years of his professional life that I have studied, Pernow never tried to view Palestine as part of the non-Western, non-industrialised world without Western agricultural techniques. He never described European (Jewish) immigrants as conveyers of modern technology or well-trained colonisers supported by European financiers. A socio-economic analysis in which power and political forces were taken into account was not absent in his worldview, but was used only to show the might of God. Still Pernow knew very well that some of these colonisers to Palestine had received Western agricultural training, for instance at Tostarp in Sweden, and this was described in *Missionstidning för Israel*.⁴³⁷ Pernow did

⁴³⁶ Pernow June 1935, p. 145 “Man får rent av bevittna hur det ena löftesordet efter det andra på det mest bokstavliga sätt fullbordas inför ens ögon. Så t.ex. säger Herren i Jes. 43:5-6: »Jag skall låta dina barn komma från öster, och från väster skall jag samla dig tillhopa. Jag skall säga till norden: Giv hit, och till södern: Förhåll mig dem icke; för hit mina söner från fjärran och mina döttrar från jordens ända.»”

⁴³⁷ Pernow October 1939, p 257

not draw the conclusion that immigrants to Palestine from Europe brought European methods as colonisers did in many parts of the world at the time. This can be explained by Pernow's solid belief that Europe had its wealth not because it had superior technique, but because it was Christian: it had accepted Jesus as Christ, while Jews had not. In Pernow's view, if Jews were not in "their" country, something was missing and the land did not yield crops. We often hear, he said, how dry, desolate and barren this land has become. Still the Scripture, he continued, has told us the land was once floating with milk and honey. Pernow knew the explanation:

The Lord's punishments have struck the land, and a lazy people, that live merely for the day at an incredible subsistence level has helped in laying the country waste⁴³⁸

According to Pernow, the local population in Palestine, the Arabs, was a lazy people and they had helped to lay the country to waste. The local population was mainly seen as a menace comparable to malaria. Whole (Jewish) families were swept away by the fevers, and armed Arab hordes attacked the colonists on roads and in the fields, plundering the colonies and robbing the cattle".⁴³⁹

With the arrival of immigrants from Europe, or as Pernow formulated it, with the return of Jews to Palestine, the land experienced an incredibly fast development. In his assessment, the reason for the success was the power of the British Mandate in combination with Jewish enthusiasm. He was fascinated by the roads being built and the buses that were able to bring passengers from Jerusalem to Haifa in a mere four hours. In Jesus' days, he told the audience at the Nordic missionary conference, the trip from Jerusalem to Haifa would have taken three days. He discussed the minerals in the Dead Sea and the production of industrial products from them. He mentioned the annual production of industries like cloth mills and he listed the achievements of the cloth, oil, silk, china, tobacco and chocolate industries. But when it came to practical and economic achievements, agriculture was of particular interest to him. Wherever Pernow went in Palestine, the land under his feet was virtually shivering from activity – as long as he met Jews. There are very few Arabs in his descriptions and when they appeared they were portrayed as the reason for the country's decline in the preceding centuries.

Many people have written about the economy of Palestine and there are economically relevant explanations for the level of economy and industry in

⁴³⁸ Pernow June 1935, p. 145 "Herrens straffdomar har drabbat landet, och ett lättjefullt folk som lever blott för dagen och på ett otroligt existensminimum, har hjälpt till att ödelägga landet."

⁴³⁹ Pernow June 1935, p. 150 "Hela familjer sopades bort av febrarna, och väpnade arabhorder överföll kolonisterna på vägar och marker, plundrade i kolonierna och rövade bort boskapen."

Palestine at the time. Sara Roy has explained the differences between the Jewish and the Arab sectors partly by the segregation of the two economies. She has written:

Whereas the Jewish economy was increasingly characterized by structural transformation and the development of a modern sector along capitalist lines, the Arab economy was, at best, experiencing some sectorial expansion with limited structural change within parameters (i.e. system of land tenure, methods of agricultural and industrial production) that had not fundamentally changed since before the Mandate period.

The evolution of two distinct socioeconomic orbits was never entirely accidental nor entirely planned, but the result of policies that combined to limit the interaction between Jews and Arabs, and, in effect, promoted the development of one group at considerable costs to the other.⁴⁴⁰

To Pernow, socioeconomic success stories were important when he wanted to support his own worldview. But socio-economic explanations were largely irrelevant when he was interpreting change and the driving forces in history. What is left then is a mixture of superstition, apocalyptic bible references and a romantic national ideal. When these three components are blended together in the Pernow way does so they become a good example of what I have in mind when I use the word essentialist. When Pernow once visited Tel Aviv on the Mediterranean coast, he described the location and the site planned for a World Exhibition. He admired the construction work in which hundreds of Jews were involved. Pernow described how Tel Aviv was built on dunes north of Jaffa in a way that could sum up his assessment of the country as a whole:

Where previously there was only sand, now avenues, gardens and parks are built⁴⁴¹

He was impressed by the large number of scientists, professors and doctors among the immigrants. He would give detailed lists of how many schools, teachers, kindergartens, doctors, seminars, vocational training centres and universities that had been established. He adored the revival of the Hebrew language. He was very impressed by the health situation, which he compared to the level in Sweden. He said the Jewish population had a child mortality of 6 % while Sweden had a child mortality of 5 %. However, the Arabs had a child mortality of 80 % he claimed.⁴⁴² He summarised the situation as follows:

⁴⁴⁰ Roy 1995, p. 51

⁴⁴¹ Pernow June 1935, p. 147 "Där det förut bara var sand, stå nu vackra avenyer, trädgårdar och parker."

⁴⁴² Pernow June 1935, p. 152.

Indeed great deeds have been performed in less than 10 years. But here are numerous skilled physicians. In the beginning of 1934 there were around 300 in Tel-Aviv, around 220 in Jerusalem, and in Haifa around 200 Jewish physicians. In comparison this is a large number, but one may notice that skilled Arab physicians are almost completely missing, therefore many Arabs have travelled from a far, such as from Damascus, Transjordan, Baghdad and Arabia to Palestine to seek help from skilled Jewish specialists.⁴⁴³

Pernow is constructing the situation as one of tension between Jews and Arabs. He never described Jewish physicians as part of an European group of people that had come to Palestine with European or Modern skills and resources. They were viewed as Jews who had returned home. To Pernow the wellbeing of the country depended on agriculture. But that wellbeing was not merely a matter of yields, irrigation and revenues from agricultural production and export. The involvement of Jews in tilling the soil and using the land had deeper, almost mystical, significance. Pernow argued that agriculture was of the utmost importance should Jews ever be able to get rid of their "restlessness created by the millennial exile."⁴⁴⁴ Shall Jews be able to settle in the land of their fathers, Pernow argued, "they will have to learn to love and till the soil." During his trip Pernow was not disappointed. He met newly graduated university students and he met ordinary "colonists". Almost all of them, Pernow said, displayed how work in the colonies had given them a sense of "anchorage and safety."

Most remarkable, after all, was that I met an entirely new type of Jew, so different from the Jew one is used to meet in the West. This was not the ingratiating and cringing type, but human beings with open and frank eyes, happy and glad, because they were at home in their own country, tilling their own plot of land.⁴⁴⁵

To Pernow, Jews in Europe were "ingratiating and cringing" descriptions rather similar to the banal stereotypes described by Arendt. But in Palestine, Pernow thought, Jews were strong, suntanned, tilling the soil and active. The tension between Arabs and Jews was a dark component in the picture, Pernow said. But even if this tension was exaggerated by many there is no doubt

⁴⁴³ Pernow June 1935, p 152. "Man förstår vilket storverk här har utförts på knappats mer än 10 år. Men så finns här också en talrik och skicklig läkarekår. I början av år 1934 fanns i Tel Aviv omkring 300, i Jerusalem 220 och i Haifa ca 200 judiska läkare. Detta är ett jämförelsevis stort antal, men härvid är att märka att skickliga arabiska läkare nästan helt saknas, varför många araber resa långa vägar såsom från Damaskus, Transjordanien, Bagdad, Arabien till Palestina för att rådfråga skickliga judiska specialister."

⁴⁴⁴ Pernow June 1935, p 149 "Skall juden kunna befrias från den oro som tusenårig landsflykt och vandrarliv famkallat".

⁴⁴⁵ Pernow June 1935, p. 149 - 150 "De märkligaste var dock, att man här mötte en helt ny judetyp så olik den man är van att möta i västerlandet. Det var icke den inställsamma och krypande judetypen, utan människor med öppen och frimodig blick, lyckliga och glada, ty de voro ju hemma i sitt eget land och brukade den egna torvan."

what would happen should the British take their hand away from Palestine. Should one ask which of the peoples is most capable as a cultured people, Pernow suggested, the answer could only be one. On top of that, he argued the divine promises apply only to one of the peoples. Pernow was certain: Jews were superior and the promises were given to them. Jews were strong and they would soon control the land should the British leave.

To end his report from the trip to Palestine, Pernow discussed religion and how Jews related to both Judaism and Christianity, but Islam was not of his concern. Before leaving for Palestine, Pernow visited Professor Klausner at the Hebrew University. Pernow introduced Klausner as one of the most well-known, learned personalities in the Jewish world. Pernow met him and discussed the religious situation among Jews. Klausner had written scientific works about Jesus and, to Pernow, Joseph Klausner's interest in Jesus was one "sign" indicating that Jews were "turning to their saviour."⁴⁴⁶ "Sign" here is close to signal or token, pointing to something.

Another "sign" that Pernow mentioned was the number of Jews that "have left the synagogue." He did not consider the process sociologically intelligible but as part of a spiritual process with a special significance. For Pernow this significance seemed to apply collectively to all Jews everywhere. To him Jews were one distinct group bound together by an essentialist core. Jews were not made up of subgroups and individuals who were living and interacting with surrounding societies in a multitude of ways. Pernow reported that Klausner supported the idea that among Jews in Palestine the synagogue had lost much of its influence. Leisure, dancing, cinema and other activities had taken its place. According to Pernow, Klausner argued that as "Israel is the people of the election" the religious component in Jewish characters could not be totally uprooted.

Klausner expected a religious revival to take place among Jews in Palestine. Pernow then invoked in the article that it was likely that Jews would meet their Messiah on that particular place on earth. Thus, Pernow thought in this way the prophecy of Ezekiel Chapter 37 would be fulfilled. In Pernow's interpretation there were many indications pointing to secret "spiritual preparatory work" taking place in Palestine during his visit. This belief was strengthened when he met Zionist leaders who argued that the people – the Jews – were forced to Palestine by God in order for God to fulfil his promises to their forefathers.⁴⁴⁷ He appreciated this piece of information.

⁴⁴⁶ Klausner and Klausner's family is mentioned in Amos Oz (1939 -): "A tale of Love and Darkness", 2002. Klausner is also mentioned in the works of Hans Kosmala.

⁴⁴⁷ Pernow June 1935, p. 155

Impressions from the State of Israel in 1954

In the spring of 1954 the Board of Svenska Israelsmissionen asked Birger Pernow to spend some time at SvTI in Jerusalem. They wanted him to get better informed of its work, Jerusalem and the land. The board wanted him to handle a sensitive staff-related issue as staff and students at SvTI had fallen out. I have read the available correspondence between SvTI and Stockholm on this matter. It is mainly related to accusations over private issues. The issue is relevant to the work of SvTI in a wider sense, but as far as I know at this point these personal accusations are irrelevant from my overall perspective and I will not pursue them here.

In 1954 Pernow travelled to Jerusalem via Vienna and Beirut. His first week in Jerusalem was spent in the Old City on the East and on the Jordanian side of the city. Pernow must have felt Israel was being attacked and criticised for its politics relating to Arabs. A large part of his article in the September issue of *Missionstidning för Israel* was a defence for the State of Israel and its policy. He criticised the Jewish state once, and on one point only, which was the bad situation for Jews who had converted to Christianity. He argued that Christians of Jewish descent in Israel did not have the same civil rights as the Jewish citizens. If equal civil rights had been offered to members of all religions in Israel, Pernow argued more Jews in Israel would choose to become Christians. He discussed briefly how this issue, in his view, could be solved through the establishment of a Hebrew-speaking Christian church in Israel. Other aspects of civil rights in Israel, such as the military regulations imposed on Arabs, were not mentioned.⁴⁴⁸

While in East Jerusalem Birger Pernow met with Christian Arabs and he was disappointed by his conversations with them. These encounters had made him “depressed.” In his view he had found among them a strong “hatred” for Jews. Unfortunately, he said, among Christians on the Arab side, one cannot find any sympathy for the Old Testament promises to Israel or for the suffering of Jews in Europe. But he argued that the hatred among Arabs was the result of propaganda, as Arabs in general are “good-natured, friendly and hospitable human beings.”⁴⁴⁹ During the war in the late 1940s, Pernow argued the Arab leaders either persuaded the Palestinian Arab population to leave under promises of future rewards or the Arab leaders had threatened Palestinian Arabs with reprisals if they did not leave. Pernow argued that the policies of the Arab states appeared inhumane to a Christian and he explained that: “Islam has a pronounced fatalism and it is inhumane.” According to Pernow, it was explicit and self-evident that it was the responsibility of the Arab states to solve the Palestinian Arab refugee problem.⁴⁵⁰ He did not mention the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights or UN

⁴⁴⁸ Pernow September 1954, p. 177

⁴⁴⁹ Pernow September 1954, p. 172

⁴⁵⁰ Pernow September 1954, p. 170

resolutions, such as 194 of 11 December, 1948, which stated that Palestinian Arabs who so wished should be allowed to return home.⁴⁵¹ The UN was referred to only as long as it supported Israel, not when the UN had criticised the State of Israel. But the Arab refugee situation was well-known to him and it was a considerable problem. His way of solving this dilemma was to argue forcefully that Jews had not stolen or taken any land from the Arabs. He claimed that,

before the partition, decided by the UN, they (Jews) bought every square meter of soil from the Arabs, often to a high price and furthermore swamps and malaria hearths.⁴⁵²

Pernow argued that the State of Israel was also guilty of excessive violence, but Israel's violence was seen only as punishments against intruders that had destroyed or stolen water pipes, cattle and harvests or committed murders. Such incidents were reported almost every day in Israeli newspapers, Pernow said. He did not consider at all whether these intruders could have been refugees, from for instance Qastina, who wanted to return home to see their houses or to taste their figs or oranges. To Pernow, Palestinian Arabs simply did not belong in Palestine.

Birger Pernow – a summary

We have encountered a leader of a missionary organisation in Sweden which is part of main stream Swedish Christianity at that time. Pernow's views on history, people and nationalism, as well as his views of Jews, Arabs and the Bible, are rather stable over the period studied. Given the state of research in Sweden on Christianity and anti-Semitism, I think that SvIM's theology and worldview ought to be studied in more detail. My analysis is threefold, choosing to enter into the material from the perspectives mentioned. At this point I will commence upon my reflections from the perspective of superstition. The way Pernow preached at the annual meeting in 1937 made it hard for members in SvIM to maintain a secular analysis of history and still be faithful to the mission. I will argue that Pernow forced the flock to choose. However, it did not have to be that way. Had Pernow developed a theology

⁴⁵¹ United Nation General Assembly A/RES/194 (III) 11 December 1948:

§ 11. *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

⁴⁵² Pernow September 1954, p. 171. "Vidare ha judarna icke tagit något landområde från Araberna. Före den av FN beslutade delningen köpte de varje kvadratmeter jord av araberna, ofta till högt pris, och därtill sådana sumpmarker och malariahärdar som,,"

more in line with Bultmann and the existentialist interpretation of narratives, the option for taking the stock market seriously would have been much greater. Instead, we see a person who is mocking the stock markets and resorting to superstitious explanations. At that time large economic and political changes swept the world, heralding the coming of a new war. While Pernow sees how the colonies are “fermenting”, he does not ask if they were trying to liberate themselves from European rule. Nations are not acting but following the laws of God’s blessing and God’s Curse.

When it comes to the types of nationality and people in his thinking he is stuck in the dual image of Jews. Jews are either the ingratiating and cringing type or they are skilled physicians who draw Arabs from Bagdad to get advice. At the same time, they are to blame for the world’s crises in the deepest possible sense that Pernow could imagine. They had rejected Jesus as Messiah and therefore brought war, pain and epidemics over the world for 2000 years. Pernow was certain he was witnessing the beginning of the end of this calamity and believed the process boiled down to the return of Jews to their home. When Jews are in Europe they are ingratiating and cringing, but when they are in Palestine they are happy and healthy. Arabs on the other hand are “Arab hordes” robbing and stealing.

His idea of God being the true origin and explanation behind historical processes was superstitious, but at his time he was not alone in fostering this view. To Pernow, a Christian should not try to change the world through politics and here he argued much like Fjellstedt and Swedish bishops in the 19th century.

To Pernow, “religion” provides historical factual knowledge, explanations and normative guidelines beyond human ethical considerations. The norms he adheres to are from God. When Pernow realised the full extent of Kristallnacht he was appalled and argued the culture of Europe was trembling. Yet even so Christians should not protest. Christians should stay calm and continue with their labour while God and the political leaders solved the problems undisputed. The ideal Christian is an obedient servant of the authorities. The given hierarchical order of a society is from God and the Christian should pray for all authorities, not criticise them.

His way of arguing comes close to a conclusion formulated by the mean merchant Karl Orsa in Torgny Lindgren’s novel *Ormens väg på hälleberget*, who, while demanding that the indebted farmer’s wife sleep with him to pay the family’s bills, summarised life and the situation in one brief sentence: “Ordningen är gud” (The Order is God.) Pernow would probably have argued that this order is from God. But for both, the hierarchic order is central. The implication of this brief sentence – the order is God – is as complex as the novel, but clearly power and a hierarchical order go hand in hand. God and order have everything to do with power and subordination, not with agreements reached between conscious human beings. Pernow did not advocate human protests after Kristallnacht. Instead, Pernow tried to interpret

Kristallnacht as part of God's plan for the world as a whole and he reached the conclusion that God was at work.

Of course, when churches are part of the powerbase of a societal majority it matters tremendously how they relate to people of other faiths. And one may ask whether Jews were asked if they wanted to be included in this missionary approach or whether the Church ever asks the objects of missionary endeavours if they want to be included in the churches concerns?

I believe, along with Lewis, that it is necessary to view this thinking – both its theology and its ideology - in relation to contemporary national ideals. But for the individuals studied in this thesis that was not possible. For many of them theology and religion were the basis for history and their basic understanding of how history, or even time itself, was moving. In this way they are fundamentalist, following the definition suggested by the Chicago project. Theologians who stress religion as a way to interpret history tend to make a mistake which is similar. They risk exaggerating the explanatory role of religion. A more fruitful way ahead is the type of analysis provided by Lewis and Werner Ustorf. In particular, Ustorf has shown how the notion of “people” was crucial for much of German mission theology. This view affected how they constructed society, groups and many social structures. When trying to find social solutions, they looked only backwards. As Hoekendijk has put it:

To put it bluntly; the call to evangelism is often little else than a call to restore ‘Christendom,’ the *Corpus Christianum*, as a solid, well-integrated cultural complex, directed and dominated by the Church. And the sense of urgency is often nothing but a nervous feeling of insecurity, with the established Church endangered; a flurried activity to save the remnants of a time now irrevocably past.⁴⁵³

On top of this, when trying to understand Pernow and his kin, I think one has to complement the analysis with an assessment of Pernow's lack of socio-economic perspective. Hereby his superstitious understanding of the driving forces in history becomes apparent. This can be exemplified by Pernow interpretation of St Paul. Pernow used this to urge the members in SvIM to pray for all authority including the Nazis, and Pernow asked his audience to stand passively in front of the gravest form of violence known in the 20th century. In order to do so they would prevail, he argued. When this superstition is combined with a view of Jews and their alleged disbelief in Jesus as Messiah as the root of all evil, we have described one way through which Christian theology was behind anti-Semitism. But some of the individuals studied in this work do not stop at this. Seth Asklund and Birger Pernow argued that Jews and the people in Africa ought to be treated the same way through missionary work. The liberation of peoples in Africa was not rele-

⁴⁵³ Hoekendijk 1950, p. 163

vant for SvIM, nor was it relevant to liberate Jews from oppression, segregation or disrespect in Europe. Instead, both the problem and the solution lay beyond political or social liberation, because God was at work. Also, development or economic realities, including health, welfare and yield of crops, result from God's blessing or cursing. The world that SvIM saw was not possible to steer. SvIM was a Christian mission who preached the existence of defined ethnic groups who lived in nations under the rule of God almighty and under rulers who were sent by the same almighty God. This theology was forcing each listener not to use his or her own reason but to obey the message and not to enquire too deeply into the way their theological leaders had reached their conclusions on, for instance, why there were no skilled Arab physicians in Palestine in the 1930s. Hence, the mission did not view Arabs as backward or pre-modern, because modern and pre-modern are irrelevant categories to Pernow. To him there is no linear social or historic progress to relate to; instead history unfolds as a series of events that can only be explained by the involvement of God. In this superstitious interpretation of the world Christians and Jews are either to be blamed and punished or to be rewarded with success for their spiritual choices.

8. A theology approaching poetry – Harald Sahlin

Reverend Dr Harald Sahlin arrived in Jerusalem in May 1947 to work as a missionary for Svenska Israelsmissionen at SvTI, but in January 1948 he returned to Sweden. During his few months as a Christian missionary in Jerusalem Sahlin actively took part the city's academic and social life. Greta Andrén had been in Jerusalem since the autumn of 1946 and she introduced Sahlin to many of her contacts and friends. Sahlin met Professor Hugo Bergmann (1883-1975) whom he saw as a fine and sympathetic person. He also met with Samuel Yosef Agnon (1888-1970), the philosopher, author and later Nobel Prize winner. Agnon appeared a little shy in Sahlin's view. Sahlin took private Hebrew classes and discussed the political situation in the country with his teacher, Ms Böhm. He went to the Christian Orthodox churches and he described their services in letters he sent to his sister Margit Sahlin (1914-2003). Sahlin and his wife Malin were not impressed by the Christian Orthodox services, or by the Anglican or Jewish services. In a letter of 20 November, 1947 to his sister he told her that he had listened to a Swedish radio church service. The Swedish radio service had offered, he thought, a thoroughly constructed sermon. But such was not to be found in Jerusalem, according to Sahlin.⁴⁵⁴ Sahlin could be perceived as an expatriate Swede who longed for his own tradition. Like many other Western Christians of this time he considered other forms of Christianity and other cultures as less sophisticated.

In one letter Sahlin reported that he and Malin had visited a cinema on Midsummer's Day together with consul Larsson. They went there to see *Hets*, directed by Ingmar Bergman (produced in 1944). *Hets* had received very good reviews in Jerusalem. In his letter Sahlin expressed how surprised he was that Midsummer's Day was not celebrated in Jerusalem. He had arrived in Jerusalem in early May and June 24 was a mere six-seven weeks later. It seems that he still sought to participate in Swedish culture.⁴⁵⁵ Still one may wonder why Sahlin did not pay attention to the fact that the cycles of feasts of the year in Jerusalem were organised in several different calendars. The city hosted Armenian Orthodox Christians, Greek Orthodox Chris-

⁴⁵⁴ Sahlin November 20th, 1947 & Sahlin June 5th, 1947

⁴⁵⁵ Sahlin June 24th, 1947

tians and Roman Catholics, as well as Muslims and Jews within a variety of churches, mosques and synagogues. The public religious life was expressed according to several parallel calendars which all were equally important for their followers. In Jerusalem the Nordic Midsummer was very distant.

On Judaism and Zionism in Jerusalem in 1947

Harald Sahlin appreciated Arthur Montgomery's analysis of the Palestine conflict, published in Svenska Dagbladet on 4 September, 1947. Another analysis which Sahlin sympathised with was Richard Crossman, who published *Palestine Mission* in 1947. Crossman was a British Labour MP, an Anglican Christian and a pro-Zionist. *Palestine Mission* was dedicated to two kibbutzim, Shari Zwi and Mishmar Ha'emek.⁴⁵⁶ When referring to this book in a letter to his parents, Sahlin was very appreciative and recommended it warmly.⁴⁵⁷ In his history of SvTI, Åke Skoog describes Sahlin as an anti-Zionist,⁴⁵⁸ but that is an oversimplification. There are many forms of Zionism, such as labour, religious, cultural, national and political. Sahlin supported the Zionism formulated by Judah Magnes, which has a distinct character as we shall see below. Sahlin's view of the State of Israel and of Jews differs from that of most others in SvTI and its founders.

In 1947, in Europe and in Sweden, Zionism and the Jewish state were debated intensely and Sahlin was drawn into the debate. Just like Crossman, Sahlin was a European and just like Crossman he supported the Jewish state. The influence of Crossman on Sahlin's thinking is hard to determine. Crossman had a broad sociological approach to Jews in Germany and in Palestine, an approach which was rather different from that of Pernow and Andrén. In January 1946 Richard Crossman participated in the Anglo-American Committee which met Jews in Camps for Displaced Persons in Europe. Crossman asked them about their view on the future. They told him that they wanted to go to the USA but alas, the USA was closed due to immigration quotas. Therefore, the displaced persons – Jews - in Europe wanted to leave for Palestine. Crossman asked them if they were aware of the conflict in Palestine at the time. They answered that they would handle it once they got there.⁴⁵⁹ Crossman did not argue that Jews had to live in Palestine or Israel to fulfil prophecies. He respected the will and the choices of the Jews themselves.

In Jerusalem Sahlin went to public lectures at the Hebrew University and listened to David Ben-Gurion, Chair of the Jewish Agency. Sahlin found him

⁴⁵⁶ Crossman 1947, p. 4

⁴⁵⁷ Sahlin August 14th, 1947

⁴⁵⁸ www.skm.svenskakyrkan.se/sti/tc/Skoog_SvTI_historik.htm

⁴⁵⁹ Crossman 1947, p. 88 ff & 187 ff

both aggressive and arrogant. On the other hand, Sahlin also listened to Judah Magnes, Vice-Chancellor of the Hebrew University, whom he found more reasonable, an intellectual of his taste. Both in his speeches and in the article published in *Missionstidning för Israel*, Sahlin argued that there were both moderate and sober Zionists such as Dr Judah Magnes, Rector of Hebrew University, while others like Ben-Gurion were aggressive and immoderate. In Sahlin's judgment, Magnes:

represents a moderate and fine form of Zionism. He is leader of a political party, alas too few in number, that really strives for mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs.⁴⁶⁰

Sahlin found Magnes's opinions sound and respectable. He had found leading Arabs in Jerusalem who supported Magnes's way of arguing about politics. In Magnes's ideas about the conflict, Sahlin had identified options for peaceful co-existence between Jews and Arabs. But Sahlin asked himself whether Jews in general wanted to find ways of developing a *modus vivendi* with local Arabs. Sahlin expressed this view in *Svenska Dagbladet* on 4 July, 1947 where he wrote:

Zionists claim a right to unlimited Jewish immigration in this land which they call Erez Israel, the land of Israel. The Arab point of view is best expressed by the following words by an Arab in leading position: If the Jews enter through the gate and offer cooperation with us, then we greet and them welcome; on the other hand, if they try to break through the wall and force themselves upon us, then we have to answer with an inexorable no.⁴⁶¹

Sahlin, one may say, was not very interested in politics, but was rather intrigued by Judah Magnes's Zionism with its ambitions to make Jews and Arabs live side by side. Just like Judah Magnes, Sahlin did not argue against Jewish immigration, but he opposed unlimited immigration. Sahlin supported a Jewish state in the way that Magnes had suggested, a solution which presupposed the consent of the local Arab population. At the same time, Sahlin was against the establishment of a Jewish state, according to Ben-Gurion, without any consent of the local Arab population. Thanks to Sahlin's respect for the local Arab political opinion, he must be said to be unique in Svenska Israelsmissionen and in SvTI during the period studied. As is evident also in the way that Sahlin referred to both Montgomery and Crossman,

⁴⁶⁰ Sahlin May 1948, p. 119. "Han representerar en måttfull, förnämlig, form av sionismen. Han är ledare för ett politiskt parti, tyvärr blott alltför fåtaligt, som verkligen strävar efter samförstånd mellan judar och araber."

⁴⁶¹ Sahlin July 4, 1947. "Sionisterna anser sig ha rätt att kräva obegränsad judisk invandring i detta land som de kallar Erez Israel, Israels land. Den arabiska ståndpunkten åter kan uttryckas med följande ord av en arab i ledande ställning: "Om judarna kommer in genom porten och erbjuder samarbete med oss, så hälsar vi dem välkomna; om de däremot söker bryta sig genom muren och tvingar sig på oss, så måste vi svara med ett obevekligt nej".

he indicates that he was more concerned about the will of the Jews than about biblical prophecies as the factor for determining where Jews should live.

David Ben-Gurion and Judah Magnes – points of reference

During 1947, when Sahlin listened to Ben-Gurion in Jerusalem, political tensions grew in Jerusalem. Late in 1947 Britain announced it was about to withdraw from the British Mandate. In August 1947 Ben-Gurion addressed the Mapai Council in Tel Aviv and he argued strongly in favour of preparations for war and strongly in support for the idea that Jews were rooted in Palestine. In early August 1947, while Emil Sandström's UNSCOP had yet to make public its proposed partition of Palestine, Ben-Gurion asked the Mapai Council rhetorically: "Is there a danger to the survival of the Yishuv (the Jewish community in Palestine)?" He went on:

it would be a grave, perhaps fatal, error to refuse to take a clear-eyed view of the situation and *prepare to meet it with all our strength*. I do not know what recommendations the United Nations Committee will put forward, or what the UN General Assembly will decide. But I do know two things which the world community cannot ignore. First, the Jewish community in this country is unlike other Jewish communities, for it is a community which is also a nation, with all the characteristics of an independent nation rooted in its Homeland. Second, the Jews of the Diaspora are longing to come to Israel. ... Finally, our first concern at this juncture must be defence; everything else depends on it. Today this is the entire doctrine of Zionism.⁴⁶²

Ben-Gurion warned his colleagues in the Jewish political and military establishment of an Arab invasion, and according to Yoav Gelber, he advocated "total war" against Arabs. Ben-Gurion's colleagues in the Haganah thought he was exaggerating and regarded him as "hysterical." In mid-October 1947, however, they changed their minds when Syrian troops gathered along the Palestinian borders. Yoav Gelber has said that this initiative took the Haganah by surprise, but soon both Haganah and Palmach troops were dispatched to the upper Galilee.⁴⁶³ In his speeches Ben-Gurion stressed armed defence, Jewishness and the attachment of Jews to their Homeland. Ben-Gurion became one of those who stressed the significance of the Holy Scripture in justifying the Zionist endeavour. The core of the political Zionist doctrine of that time, for Ben-Gurion, was armed defence. In the spring of 1946 Ben-Gurion had just addressed the Anglo American Committee and he had em-

⁴⁶² Ben-Gurion 1971, p. 64-65

⁴⁶³ Gelber 1991

phasised that Israel intended to be a Jewish country, built by Jewish labour, Jewish agriculture, Jewish language, Jewish schools and Jewish culture. For Ben-Gurion there was little space for Muslim and Christian Arabs in his presentations: "We do not want to say it is our country because we conquered it. We want to be able to say it is ours because we made it." ⁴⁶⁴ Hence, what Sahlin heard and reported about Ben-Gurion is found also in other reports.

Magnes, on the other hand, was known for a different political policy. For Magnes the living Jewish people were the primary value and not the Jewish state. He saw no reason to fear for the future of the Jewish people, even if they had to remain outside of the land of Israel or if it did not have a state of its own. While the land is holy for Jews and it is "the very scroll on which our history is written," it could not, according to Magnes, be seized unethically. Regarding the ongoing Jewish colonization of Palestine, Magnes was known from the 1930s for having formulated the following two options.

The one maintains that we can establish a Jewish Home here through the suppression of the political aspirations of the Arabs, and therefore a Home necessarily established on bayonets over a long period – a policy which I think is bound to fail because of the violence against us it will occasion, and because good opinion in Britain and the conscience of the Jewish people itself would revolt against it. The other policy holds that we can establish a Home here only if we are true to ourselves as democrats and internationalists, thus being just and helpful to others, and that we ask for the protection of life and property the while we are eagerly and intelligently and sincerely at work to find a *modus vivendi et operandi* with our neighbours. ⁴⁶⁵

He concluded by arguing that the "our goal must be to have our enterprise rest upon the conviction of all concerned that it is right and just." ⁴⁶⁶ Magnes was co-founder of a small political party called Ihud which he headed when Sahlin listened to him in autumn 1947. ⁴⁶⁷ Ihud worked for a bi-national state in Palestine. At the time there were a few other parties advocating the bi-national solution to the Palestine problem, such as the League for Arab-Jewish Rapprochement and the American Jewish Committee in the United States. ⁴⁶⁸ Most plans for a bi-national state were based on the principle of parity in government, irrespective of the numerical strength of each side and the right of each nation to autonomy in its internal affairs. Moshe Smilansky was one prominent thinker in the Ihud tradition. He was one of the pilgrim fathers of Zionism; he passed away in 1953. In that year Israel passed the

⁴⁶⁴ Ben-Gurion 1959, p. 203

⁴⁶⁵ Magnes 1959, p. 448

⁴⁶⁶ Magnes 1959, p. 449

⁴⁶⁷ *The Encyclopedia of Jewish life and thought*. Carta Jerusalem, 1996. p. 281

⁴⁶⁸ Khalidi 1971, p. 526

Land Requisition Law, which legalized expropriation of Arab land and Smilansky wrote:

When we came back to our country after having been evicted two thousand years ago, we called ourselves “daring” and we rightly complained before the whole world that the gates of the country were shut. Now when they (Arab refugees) dared to return to their country where they lived for one thousand years before they were evicted or fled, they are called “infiltrators” and shot in cold blood.⁴⁶⁹

Among individuals who stood for a bi-national solution were some of the intellectuals in SvTI’s network, such as Professors Martin Buber and Hugo Bergmann.⁴⁷⁰ Hans Kosmala sometimes referred to Ihud’s point of views in his lectures at SvTI.⁴⁷¹ The type of Zionism that Sahlin supported was supported also by some persons in the SvTI tradition, but in Israel it was a tiny minority. This position was built by Jewish internationalists who were proud of humanistic Jewish cultural history and therefore unwilling to impose a political solution on the Arabs. In future studies on the actual work of SvTI and a detailed account of their contribution to the Swedish image of the Arab-Israeli conflict, I would think that a discussion about their cooperation with Ihud-minded Jewish intellectuals would be an interesting topic to focus upon.

Speeches on Zionism in Sweden

The few months that Sahlin spent in Jerusalem were violent and he became an eyewitness to serious incidents. In the autumn of 1947 the Swedish, Polish and U.S. consulates were bombed. The Swedish consulate, where Sahlin lived, was hit on the eve of September 27, when a bomb exploded in its entrance. The event was on the front page of *Svenska Dagbladet* on September 29. Edmund Larsson, acting Swedish consul and descendent of farmers from Nääs in Dalarna, Sweden, reported to the Associated Press. Sahlin commented on the violence in the city, for instance in *Svenska Dagbladet* in December. It is quite apparent that Sahlin had expected the Jews in Palestine to act less violently. Sahlin’s brief item is called “Skuggor över Juda” (Shadows over Judah). The UN had recently accepted the partition plan. Among Jews, Sahlin said, this decision was met with ecstasy.

The future of Jews in Palestine was rather uncertain, he argued. He said that (Jewish) terror organisations were pursuing an irresponsible gamble in a true gangster manner. It would have been much better, he argued, had the

⁴⁶⁹ Khalidi 1971, p. 833-834

⁴⁷⁰ Rolef 1993, p. 61-62

⁴⁷¹ Kosmala June 1957

Haganah alone – without Irgun and Stern – been allowed to handle the defence:

So far one has not seen any serious attempts from the Jewish leadership to get control over the terrorists⁴⁷²

Sahlin argued that he had heard many nice words from Jewish leaders, but the facts sent another message. In particular, according to Sahlin, the situation was alarming in the religious field. In private conversations he was appalled by what he described as Jewish and “Muhammedan” practices vis-à-vis individuals who converted to Christianity. In the Jewish family individuals who became Christians were treated without mercy and in the “Muhammedan” family it is even worse, he argued. “Muhammedans” who convert to Christianity are simply killed by their families, Sahlin wrote.⁴⁷³ In public statements Jewish officials had said that the new Jewish state would honour the principle of full religious freedom, but, in Sahlin’s judgement, that would require a thorough change within Jewish thinking.

At present, Sahlin stated, freedom of religion was not present. He gave two examples of Jews who had left Judaism and converted to Christianity. The first had been fired from his job and the second had been forced to stop working in medicine at the Hebrew University. There was, practically speaking, a system of informing against Jews who converted to Christianity. The situation within Jewish society, he continued, involved a situation where nationalism and religion were fused in a way that resembled the way Nazism permeated German society during the Nazi regime:

The same nationalism, at times in religious disguise, the same ruthless suppression of non-accepted ideas – on the whole the same Blut und Boden mentality with all its people collectivism, or state collectivism and individual non-freedom, (the same) conceit and contempt for everything that does not conform.⁴⁷⁴

After his return to Sweden he mentioned similarities between Nazism and Zionism in *Uppsala Nya Tidning* in March 1948.

The way Zionists quote the Bible reminds one of the Nazis’ ways of quoting *Mein Kampf*. This is just one of the many similarities between Zionism in to-

⁴⁷² Sahlin December 1947, ”men hittills har man inte sett några allvarliga försök från den judiska ledningens sida att skaffa sig kontroll över terroristerna.”

⁴⁷³ Sahlin July 8th 1947, p. 2

⁴⁷⁴ Sahlin December 1947. ”Samma nationalism med stundom religiös förklädning, samma hänsynslösa undertryckande av icke önskvärda åsikter – över huvud taget samma Blut und Boden-mentalitet med allt vad däri ligger av folk- eller statskollektivism och individuell ofrihet, av självförhåvelse och förakt för allt som icke är likriktat”.

day's Palestine and Nazism, said Teol. Dr Harald Sahlin last Sunday at the annual meeting of the Uppsala branch of Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen.⁴⁷⁵

From Sahlin's perspective the mainstream Zionist ideology in Jerusalem, both among religious leaders and in newspapers, was not interested in religion. In his judgment the majority of Zionists had replaced "religion" with "people" and "nation." In this, Sahlin argued, Zionism had reinterpreted belief in God into belief in the people. While Sahlin, quite obviously, was most critical of many parts of Zionism, he was still able to differentiate among aspects within Zionism. In spite of his criticism, he was supportive of what he considered the basic idea of Zionism that Jews need a state of their own. The problem was the rights of non-Jews:

Concerning the basic idea of Zionism, that Jews finally will have their own land, a state of their own, it is of course both reasonable and correct, and it is worth all our sympathy and our support.⁴⁷⁶

But when Sahlin described Zionism and gave examples of practical politics in Jerusalem and in Palestine, he was less supportive of the Zionist idea. The very practice of Zionism, he said, was not at all a form of "idealism." In his view, it should rather be seen as a political endeavour that often too much resembled "National Socialism and Communism." At the same time, one has to keep in mind, he said, that the ideal of Zionism cannot always be held high, given the tremendous problems it faces, because the Arabs, were determined to "destroy Judaism in Palestine."⁴⁷⁷ After all, he argued, we have a right to express our disapproval of Zionism.

As Christians in particular, we have to be clear that the religious view of Zionism is incomprehensive with our own.

Perhaps Zionism can best be described as a piety transformed into an idealism which has developed into political opportunism and its goal is a worldly Kingdom of God, not a Kingdom of God that God will create, but one built by the Zionists themselves.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁵ Sahlin March 1 1948, "Sionisternas sätt att citera bibeln påminner om nazisternas sätt att citera Mein Kampf. Detta är endast en av de många likheter mellan sionismen i dagens Palestina och nazismen, yttrade av teol.d:r H a r a l d S a h l i n vid söndagens årsmöte med uppsalakretsen av Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen."

⁴⁷⁶ Sahlin May 1948, p. 116. "Vad sionismen beträffar är själva grundtanken, att judarna äntligen bör få ett eget land, en egen stat, naturligtvis rimlig och riktig och värd all vår sympati och allt vårt stöd."

⁴⁷⁷ Sahlin May 1948, p. 118

⁴⁷⁸ Sahlin May 1948, p. 116 "Särskilt måste vi såsom kristna göra klart för oss, att sionismens religiösa inställning är oförenlig med vår egen... Den kan sägas vara ett slags fromhet, översatt till idealism, ja till politisk opportunism, och dess mål är ett inomvärldsligt Gudsrike – inte ett Guds rike, som Gud skall skapa, utan ett som sionisterna själva bygger upp".

In Sahlin's understanding of Zionism, to most Jews in Palestine the Messiah was nothing other than the Jewish people. To Jews the arrival of the Messiah simply implied an independent Jewish state. The relationship between the Jewish people and the Jewish state in Palestine became very strong

Sahlin was painting the future for Jews in Palestine in rather dark colours. He argued that the Arabs numerically and militarily were superior. Sahlin also believed that Arabs were determined to destroy the Jews. He argued that the situation for Jews was unsustainable. The situation for Jews becomes even darker, he continued, as the American and the Soviet spheres of interests collided in Palestine. What was at stake on the overall political level, in Sahlin's view, was control over oil and the Eastern Mediterranean region.

The Arabs are determined to solve the Palestinian question in their way, that is, by exterminating Judaism in Palestine. The Arabs are numerically vastly superior. In the long run, Jews cannot withstand the terrible superiority. Their weapons and their soldiers are used and cannot be replaced. On top of this, the situation is more complicated for the Jews as Palestine is in the midst of a grand political conflict of interests; here Russia's and USA's interests collide. It has to do with the access to oil in the Near East and it has to do with domination over the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. This collision of interests seems to destroy the possibility for Jews to receive real help.⁴⁷⁹

If one asked for God's purpose with all this, Sahlin asked rhetorically, it could not be determined. Regarding his personal opinion on Zionism, he was certain it was not God's work. Quoting from the Psalms he said: "if God does not build the house, the work is in vain".⁴⁸⁰

When replacing "religion" with "people" in its political program Zionism, Sahlin argued, expressed a national self-assertion of "the same kind as Nazism." The "Messianism" of Zionism, he argued, fostered a sense of superiority in relation to all other peoples. For Zionism, according to Sahlin, Israel alone represented God's chosen people. Psychologically this is understandable to him, due to the atrocities committed by Hitler in Europe. But this psychological fact, he thought, could not stop a foreign observer from being critical of Zionism.⁴⁸¹

Sahlin was not very elaborate in his analysis of similarities between Zionism and Nazism. Given the material he has left behind on the topic, I cannot

⁴⁷⁹ Sahlin May 1948, p. 118 "Araberna är fast beslutna att lösa Palestina-frågan på sitt sätt, nämligen genom att förinta judendomen i Palestina. Araberna är numerärt sett oerhört överlägsna. I längden kan judarna inte stå emot den fruktansvärda övermakten. Deras vapen och soldater förbrukas och kan inte ersättas. Dessutom kompliceras situationen för judarnas del genom att det råder en storpolitisk intressekollision i Palestina; där stöter Rysslands och U.S.A:s intressesfärer samman. Det gäller tillgången till främre orientens olja och det gäller herravälde över östra Medelhavet. Denna intressekollision synes förstöra möjligheterna för judarna att få verklig hjälp."

⁴⁸⁰ Sahlin May 1948, p. 116

⁴⁸¹ Sahlin 1950 & 1951

enter into a thorough analysis of his ideas on this. In principle I find his discussion of the relationship between people, religion, culture and land relevant, but far too shallow to be of real interest. The components of Nazism and Zionism Sahlin mentioned have not convinced me that he was correct in his comparison. I would think he was upset by what he saw and wanted to criticise Jews by comparing them to their worst enemy. I ask myself if he gave a voice to his frustrations and perhaps to a political pessimism. There is no need to stress the importance of his comparisons. To be quite clear on the matter, I do not find enough similarities between Zionism and Nazism to support Sahlin.

While Sahlin sometimes gave rather sweeping characterizations of Zionism, in *Missionstidning för Israel*, he also distinguished between various types of Zionism. He said he had found both Zionism that was “apparent propaganda” and more sober trends like the Zionism of Judah Magnes.⁴⁸² When compared to other staff in Svenska Israelsmissionen, Sahlin expressed a unique critique of Zionism. Sahlin and Kosmala were the only ones among SvTI’s founders who distinguished between different forms of Zionism.

Europeans or Jews at home in Palestine

Sahlin may first and foremost appear to be profoundly critical of political Zionism, but at the same time he was impressed by many of its achievements. He was impressed by schools, hospitals, the colonies and the university. What was particularly admirable, he thought, was the individual sacrifices he had seen. Many inhabitants were former lawyers, doctors and professors from Germany and other countries. They had fled to Palestine and settled there. Jerusalem was a place where you could see Europeans in Western clothes in quarters of a modern Western style city. At the same time you could see ancient Oriental quarters and people dressed in Oriental clothes. Jerusalem was a crossroads between East and West, but also a cross roads between Heaven and Earth, and between good and evil. While he was impressed by individual Zionist sacrifices, at the same time he was not very impressed by the overall achievements as the same types of institutions mentioned had been built elsewhere before.⁴⁸³

This notion – *en passant* – that many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem were former lawyers, doctors and professors from Germany is rather important, simply because it is said as a commonplace fact. Sahlin, unlike all others in

⁴⁸² Sahlin May 1948, p. 118-119

⁴⁸³ Sahlin May 1948, p. 116 “Men det beundransvärde ligger kanske inte så mycket i resultaten i och för sig – liknande ting har utförts också på andra håll. Men vad som är beundransvärt finner jag vara de personliga insatser många enskilda judar gjort. Många invånare i dessa jordbrukskolonier är förutvarande lärare, advokater, professorer o.s.v. från Tyskland och andra länder som har flytt till Palestina.”

Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI, did not stress a connection between Jews and the land. The way he supported Montgomery's article in *Svenska Dagbladet* in September 1947 makes him an exception in his own organization. To him Jews did not have to "return" home but could be at home in Europe. He did not agree with Andrén in her glorifying descriptions of the colonies or with the idea of H.S. Nyberg that kibbutzim exemplified how the past and present had merged into a harmonious unity. It therefore appears that Sahlin regarded the constructors and workers at kibbutzim primarily as professionals, lawyers, doctors and professors who had come to Palestine from Germany and Europe.

Criticising Christian support for Zionism

In early autumn 1947 Sahlin addressed the relationship between Zionism and Christianity. He did so in an unpublished article called "*Kirche und Zionismus*" – with quotation marks in the original. His article was written in German and sent to a German magazine. Sahlin wrote his article in response to an article called *Kirche und Zionismus* – without quotation marks. I have not been able to find the original article from Germany, but have had access only to Sahlin's response. His analysis there is interesting as an autonomous piece of work even without the article that he is criticising. Sahlin focused his critique on the interpretations of biblical texts in support of Zionism. Among other biblical passages Sahlin discussed Jeremiah 16:16-18, which in the original German article was used to support the Jews' physical "return" to Palestine. The biblical passage reads:

"But now I will send for many fishermen," declares the Lord, "and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill and from the crevices of the rocks. My eyes are on all their ways; they are not hidden from me, nor is their sin concealed from my eyes. I will repay them double for their wickedness and their sin, because they have defiled my land with the lifeless forms of their vile images and have filled my inheritance with their detestable idols".

Sahlin argued that Jeremiah 16: 16-18 has nothing to do with Jews' physical return to the land of Israel. Instead Sahlin emphasized the text's literary genre. To Sahlin this text was a legal judgement and it had no significance for political development in Palestine in the 20th century. In contrast to Pernow, Sahlin employed a methodology of literary criticism, while the German original was more similar to Pernow's apocalyptic interpretation. Sahlin commented on more sections of the German article in the same manner. The next passage to be commented upon was Hosea 3: 4-5, which also was discussed in the first article *Kirche und Zionismus*. The text in Hosea reads:

For the Israelites will live for many days without a king or prince, without sacrifice or sacred stone, without ephod or idol. Afterwards the Israelites will return and seek the Lord their God and David their King. They will come trembling to the Lord and to his blessings in the Last days.

In Sahlin's understanding of this text from Hosea, it is concerned with religious conversion and not with a political or national physical return to a land or to a state. Sahlin was not at all impressed by the theology of the original German author. Sahlin summarised part of his critique of Christian theology in support of a Jewish state in the following way:

In a superficial historical meaning they (the prophecies) are (already) fulfilled. To make them apply in an entirely different period of time, our own, is all together arbitrary. In that way Zionists, also Christians, present selected narratives from the Old Testament and consciously or unconsciously they allow themselves to be spirited away by this superficial mind. In so doing they neglect all narratives that do not fit their purposes, either because these cannot be humanly or worldly fulfilled, or as they deal with religious issues that require a divine intervention, for instance a true conversion to God. A Christian must not read the Bible like that. As Christians we know that God's promises are true, we also know that the truth of the prophecies is found purely on a religious level.⁴⁸⁴

According to Sahlin, Christians who supported a Jewish state with supposed biblical arguments were using the Bible in a superficial and arbitrary way. To him Christianity was not about states or geography, but personal encounters with God:

As Christians we can only say that God wants all human beings to be helped, also the population in Palestine.... One cannot deduce a political programme from the word of God.⁴⁸⁵

To Sahlin Christians should try to form the society themselves, not to await God's intervention. When doing so Christians should use their own wisdom and/or power to suggest and create Christian laws. In his vocabulary a "Christian law" implied a law that rests upon "Christian" demands for justice and love. In a similar way, he anticipated that Christian labourers in society would present Christian ideas while involved in societal work.⁴⁸⁶ Christians should not, in his view, simply await the fulfilment of God's prophecies. While Sahlin is critical of what he calls a "superficial" use of the Bible in support of a political programme, he also expressed his own pious Christianity, which seems greatly inspired by Lutheran Two Kingdom theology in which the spiritual and the temporal realms have their respective roles to

⁴⁸⁴ Sahlin August-September 1947. Translation from German to Swedish, Per Englund.

⁴⁸⁵ Sahlin August-September 1947

⁴⁸⁶ Sahlin August-September 1947

play. And this theology may motivate a Christian to assume the role as active critique of the power structures, instead of passive subject to it.

To Sahlin the everyday political Zionism that he encountered in Jerusalem was a fatal mistake committed by Jews and felt there was no possibility of looking upon Zionism as a partner of Christianity or the Church. He stressed that “the Zionist rebuilding project (in Palestine) is not, however admirable one may regard it, a fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies, as many Christian have wanted to judge the issue.”⁴⁸⁷ Sahlin wished for another type of Zionism, a Zionism that would locate Jesus Christ at the centre. Sahlin’s own Jesus-centred Zionism would not focus on Palestine on earth, he argued, but on the heavenly Jerusalem. The Jesus-oriented Zionism would (only) be possible if God gave it life, he argued. For that purpose God would need all his co-workers. This was, Sahlin said, the very core of his mission to Israel and the core mission of Svenska Israelsmissionen to Israel. Sahlin even said it would be an illusion to claim that Christianity or the Church has a solution for the problem in Palestine.⁴⁸⁸

Stereotypes of Jews – Joseph’s dream

In 1948 Sahlin published an article in which some of his opinions on Jews, Judaism and Jewish nationalism in Palestine were displayed in a way that is revealing. In particular his ideas on Jews and what he called a Jewish “mentality” or Jewish “national traits” are displayed. The article was written in November 1947 while he was still in Jerusalem and called: “Josefs dröm” (Joseph’s Dream). He compared his own observations in Jerusalem with his own interpretation of Joseph’s dream in Genesis 37 in a way that, in my opinion, might reveal his prejudices against Jews.

In one of Joseph’s dreams Joseph and his brothers were working in the fields. Suddenly his brothers’ sheaves of corn were gathered around Joseph’s sheave and his brother’s corn bowed down to Joseph’s. In Genesis 37 Joseph told his brothers about the dream, but his brothers did not appreciate what they heard – instead they became furious. To them Joseph’s dream meant that Joseph wanted them to bow in front of him. In his article, Sahlin argued that it was not hard to understand the anger of Joseph’s brothers. He believed they responded in a reasonable way to the unreasonable conceit expressed by Joseph. But even if the reaction made some sense, Sahlin stressed when Joseph’s brothers wanted to get rid of him their conduct against Joseph was unacceptable. Joseph’s brothers, Sahlin argued, had chosen the same practise as anti-Semitism had: “To do away with the Jews.”⁴⁸⁹ To Sahlin, anti-

⁴⁸⁷ Sahlin August-September 1947

⁴⁸⁸ Sahlin May 1948, p. 117

⁴⁸⁹ Sahlin Vår Kyrka 1948, ”bort med judarna”

Semitism – to do away with Jews – was “unworthy for a reasonable person” and to him it was particularly unworthy for one who wanted to be Christian. In this article of early 1948 Sahlin mentioned that Joseph’s dreams had come to him after two particular events in Jerusalem during 1947. These two events displayed “two expressions of true Jewish mentality.”⁴⁹⁰ What then is “true Jewish mentality” to Sahlin?

One of the events Sahlin was commenting upon was the opening ceremony of the Hebrew University in the autumn of 1947, which Sahlin had attended. The Vice-Chancellor of the Hebrew University, Dr Judah Magnes, had addressed the students. In his speech Magnes had criticised Jewish terror groups and Sahlin agreed with Magnes when he criticised Jewish terror and the terrorists’ ideology. Sahlin agreed with Magnes when he argued that Jewish leaders ought to control the Jewish terrorists. But Sahlin did not agree with him when Magnes described the expected role of the Jewish people in the future and he did not agree with Magnes’s argumentation for why Jews should oppose terrorism. Terrorism, Magnes argued, was dangerous because “the Jewish people risk losing its peculiarity, its position as the special people among all the peoples of the earth; and yet it should have been the teachers of mankind”⁴⁹¹ In this passage, Sahlin argued that Magnes expressed an attitude of Jewish superiority toward the rest of mankind. Sahlin called this attitude “a national trait which is characteristic for Judaism.” Jews had reasons, Sahlin argued, to consider themselves in regard as a special people. According to the theology of Sahlin there was only one legitimate reason for Jews to claim that they were unique as a people and that is only on a religious level based on biblical texts.

For a Jew it is simply self-evident that his people are higher than any other people – just like Joseph knew he was higher than any of his brothers. Surely there is biblical support for this self-assessment: Israel is God’s elected people. But for Christians it is self-evident that Israel’s unique position is entirely on the religious level.⁴⁹²

There was a specific *task* for Israel in God’s plan for universal salvation, Sahlin said. Jesus, the world’s Messiah, had come from the Jews. But this fact, he maintained, could not give Judaism the right to claim a generally higher status than other peoples. Sahlin believed that Judaism had misinterpreted God’s election. He argued that this misinterpretation was characteris-

⁴⁹⁰ Sahlin Vår Kyrka 1948, “två utslag av äkta judisk mentalitet”

⁴⁹¹ Sahlin Vår Kyrka 1948, ”Judafolket riskerar att förlora sin egenart, sin ställning som sär-folket bland jordens alla folk; det skulle dock vara en mänsklighetens lärare”.

⁴⁹² Sahlin Vår Kyrka 1948. ”För en jude är det helt enkelt ett självklart faktum, att hans eget folk står högre än alla andra - alldeles som Josef visste sig vara förmer än alla sina bröder. Visst finns det bibliskt stöd för denna självbedömning: Israel är Guds utvalda folk. Men för oss kristna är det självklart att denna Israels särställning ligger helt på det rent *religiösa* planet.”

tic of Judaism in all times. He thought that the Judaism of his own days considered itself as “in all respects superior to all other peoples.”⁴⁹³

To Sahlin Jews had certain national traits and these, he believed, were described in Joseph’s dream. In the article Sahlin felt it necessary to stress that his statement was not anti-Semitic. He believed that he was presenting a fair summary of Jewish thinking at the time. Magnes had highlighted a Jewish self appreciation, which he wanted to criticise. Jews could not be teachers of mankind, Sahlin emphasised, because they had misunderstood their election. In Sahlin’s view, it was a Christian’s responsibility to help Jews escape from this “misinterpretation” of divine election.⁴⁹⁴

Sahlin mentioned Shmuel Yosef Agnon, as a second example he thought illustrated Jewish conceit. Agnon had written a story about a Christian king in Germany. Long ago the king had been interested in astrology but his binoculars were broken. A learned Jew repaired them and in reward the Jew was appointed the king’s counsellor. The priests persuaded the king to force the Jew to convert to Christianity, but the king failed to persuade the Jew. The Jew insisted that he was satisfied being a Jew. Then, outraged, the king pushed the Jew out from a high tower in order to kill him, but miraculously God saved the Jew.

The story is rather long and detailed, but the point Sahlin made is that Agnon wanted to show that both Jews and Judaism were superior to Christians and Christianity. Hence, in Sahlin’s estimation, Agnon had portrayed Christians in a derogatory way. Sahlin was upset. Sahlin firmly believed that Agnon was wrong, because to him Christianity was superior to Judaism. Jews were lost in the same feeling of superiority which, according to Sahlin, was expressed in Joseph’s dream. In Sahlin’s view Joseph’s dream expressed a more or less eternal truth about Jews as a people. In this way Sahlin was reading the biblical text in an apocalyptic way. But why did he do so here?

Sahlin had made some theological reflections relating to God’s salvation plan and he separated secular history from religious history, which made Sahlin different from Pernow. As we have seen, biblical prophecy is supposed not to give any information about future political events, but only on one specific aspect – the Jewish mentality. In Sahlin’s understanding, Jews were a distinct and homogenous people who kept their “national traits” throughout history, irrespective of circumstances. In this particular regard he resembles Pernow and others in Svenska Israelsmissionen. To Sahlin, as well as to Pernow, Jews had made only one particular mistake to their own disadvantage: they had refused to accept Jesus as Messiah. Sahlin added that the whole people were disqualified because some Jews were terrorists. His expectations of Jews were obviously unrealistic.

⁴⁹³ Sahlin *Vår Kyrka* 1948, p. 9 “att i alla avseenden stå över alla andra folk”.

⁴⁹⁴ Sahlin *Vår Kyrka* 1948, p. 9

When it comes to his understanding of Jews in society, Sahlin did not endeavour to interpret their behaviour and politics in relation to their circumstances. Arendt argued that the psychology of each individual Jew did not differ very much from the psychology of other individuals.⁴⁹⁵ Sahlin had another argument. He suggested all Jews since biblical times had inherited a personality of superiority from Joseph's dream of election. Another reader of Sahlin's assessment could legitimately ask himself whether Joseph was the only Jew? What about his brothers? Had Sahlin instead adopted an interpretation of the Biblical text as literature, he could have explored the text via identification with all agents in the story. But he did not. He saw the text as information about Jewish mentality.

Circumcision in Christ

In 1947 Sahlin published "Omskärelsen i Kristus" (Circumcision in Christ). In that article he outlines some aspects of his theology with relevance for the issues discussed in this work.

Through circumcision/baptism, Sahlin maintained, both pagans and Jews were equal citizens in the true Israel. In baptism all became "holy" and they began households of their own in which God was the father of the household. Within this household all members had equal access to God. This had significance on all social levels in society, he argued.

(The fact that) the Christian baptism has come to replace the Jewish circumcision had furthermore a great principal significance in another respect; in Judaism only the circumcised, that is men, religiously – and in terms of civil rights – were full legal citizens of God's chosen people (egendomsfolket); women did not have full citizenship. In Christianity all are baptized, irrespective of sex, hence the difference, in religious regards, between man and woman is abolished; there is neither male nor female. (Galatians 3:28)⁴⁹⁶

The Christians made a house of their own, Sahlin maintained, and hence they were splitting up former houses based on the family structure within Jewish community.

This text was published in 1947, but throughout his life Sahlin would continue to write and debate theologically in support of the principle of equality between the sexes and all human beings. It seems to be a theme of immense

⁴⁹⁵ Arendt 1968, p. 21

⁴⁹⁶ Sahlin *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalskrift* 1947, p. 14 "Att det kristna dopet kommit att avlösa den judiska omskärelsen har vidare en mycket stor principiell betydelse i ett annat avseende: i judendomen voro endast de omskurna, alltså männen, religiöst – liksom även civilrättsligt – fullmyndiga medborgare i egendomsfolket; kvinnorna hade icke full medborgarrätt. I kristendomen döps alla, oavsett kön: därmed är skillnaden i religiöst hänseende mellan man och kvinna upphävd; "här är icke man och kvinna" (Gal. 3:28).

significance to him, a cornerstone of his worldview and Christian faith: baptism does not distinguish between sexes or between Jews and Greeks, or other ethnic groups. For Sahlin, there is no room in Christianity for male chauvinism or other forms of self-assertion; citizenship in the Kingdom of God is open to everyone irrespective of background and baptism is the way of entering. Sahlin believed that he had found a particular value in St. Paul's Christianity which made Christianity different from Judaism. He did not, however, try to describe the idea of equal value in an historical or sociological context. To him it was a concept which he believed he had found in Christianity.

In Sahlin's theology baptism was a demarcation line. Baptism was the difference between life inside or outside a new realm which offered a new concept of time. Even though baptism is undertaken once only, for Sahlin this demarcation line was not perceived as a fixed point in time or space. To Sahlin, baptism should be seen as a demarcation line between the old and the new *eon*, and it went right through each human being.

It (the *eon*) goes right through each individual human being's life. Each Christian belongs, at the same time, to the old and the new *eon*, the old and the new man. "Before" and "now" run parallel throughout life. "Circumcision in Christ" is merely the marked beginning of this demarcation line.⁴⁹⁷

In each Christian's life, Sahlin argued, this demarcation line has to be remembered and maintained. Each human being is both sinful and saved. But the demarcation line has to result in practical results, which Sahlin called daily conversion. Sahlin argued with reference to St. Paul's letter to the Ephesians (5:8) that Christians "should walk as children of light." The Christian community should, according to Sahlin, be characterized by peace. While baptism was momentous in Sahlin's theology the Eucharist was seen as manna during the exile in the wilderness; it was food during the walk through life. It was seen as a reminder of the significance of Christ as the fulfilment of all biblical promises. The *eon*, on the other hand, was a reality of an internal kind. Internally the Christian had become a new human being, a new person. The relevant relation was found between human beings and God, not between a people and God or between a people and the land. The *eon* was the name which Sahlin used to describe history, the biblical salvation history, and this distinction between secular history and salvation history was significant and very important to him. It made him capable of pur-

⁴⁹⁷ Sahlin *Svensk Teologisk Kvartalstidskrift*, 1947. p. 23 "Den går alltså tvärs igenom varje enskild människas liv. Varje kristen tillhör ju på en gång den gamla och den nya eonen, den gamla och den nya människan. "Förut" och "nu" löpa alltså parallellt med varandra livet genom. "Omskärelsen i Kristus" innebär blott den markerade begynnelsepunkten för denna gränslinje."

suings a secular political analysis in which he never tried to decipher God's hidden purpose in political or military history.

Chassidism and the irrelevance of historical truth in biblical texts

In 1952 Sahlin published an article on Chassidism in *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok*. Here he explored the role of the rabbi in Chassidism and reached the conclusion that many of the Chassidic rabbis were performing deeds that were expected only from the Messiah. His admiration of Chassidism is apparent, but he finally reached the conclusion that only the real Messiah – Jesus Christ – performed all the deeds Chassidic Jews expected. In this sense he is a devoted Christian who is pursuing his academic work to somehow protect his own faith. We could argue that he is rather exclusivist in his approach to Judaism, but that conclusion is not primarily what I want to extract from this passage. I am interested in a small reflection in which Sahlin expressed the idea that biblical texts or stories about miracles performed by rabbis should not primarily be viewed as either true or false. They were talking about something else.

Sahlin explains in the article that both Chassidism and the New Testament had their origins in the Old Testament. Therefore, a study of Chassidism would shed light on the New Testament and even provide a deeper understanding of it. To Sahlin, Christianity was a continuation of Judaism, just like Chassidism was.

In order to reach a proper understanding of Christ as a person it seems to me to be of utmost interest to study for comparison the rich material that Chassidism constitutes. Through it one gets a strong impression of how genuinely Jewish the Messianism of both the New Testament and Chassidism is, and how deeply rooted both are in the Old Testament and in its religious heritage.

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In Chassidism, Sahlin said, one may find examples of all the *Gattungen* that historians have wanted to extract from the gospel. He refers to a series of stories from Chassidism as conveyed by Martin Buber, Cajim Bloch and Samuel Josef Agnon. Not only the form is similar, but also the content of the very stories themselves, he says. While Nathan Söderblom, Sahlin says, makes use of the legends on St Francis of Assisi in Fioretti to shed light on narratives in the Gospels, Sahlin would rather use stories from the Chassidic

⁴⁹⁸ Sahlin 1952, p. 142. "Men för en rätt förståelse av Kristus-gestalten synes det mig vara av utomordentligt intresse att studera det rika jämförelsematerial som chassidismen erbjuder. Man får därigenom ett starkt intryck av hur genuint judiskt såväl N.T:s som chassidismens messianism är och hur djupt bådaderna äro grundade i G. T. och det religiösa arvet därifrån."

movement for that purpose.⁴⁹⁹ Some of the Chassidic stories are strikingly similar to the narratives in the gospel. The Chassidic masters, according to Sahlin, performed “exactly the same kind of miracles as those performed by Jesus.” He brought one example from Samuel Josef Agnon who tells a story about Rabbi R. Eliezer Rokeeach.

The Rabbi was travelling in a boat on his way to the Holy Land accompanied by some of his disciples. The boat was struck by a terrible storm and his disciples were frightened. However, the Rabbi was deep in holy thoughts and his disciples could not disturb him. In the meantime, the boat took in more water and their lives were in danger. Now the disciples decided to interrupt their master. When he realized that they wanted to talk to him, he asked: “What do you want?” They cried to him, “we are in great danger and in dire need”. Then the rabbi asked them to bring the shofar, which he blew. When he blew it the storm subsided and they repaired the boat. Hence they were saved from the danger. In Sahlin’s comments to this story, he said that it is not certain whether the story is historically true or not, but that does not matter. Sahlin argued:

A distinction between the factual and more or less legendary material could not be made, whether in this case or in other similar cases. Concerning miracles in the gospels a similar principle should be honoured, the distinction (between factual and legendary material) neither should nor could be made.⁵⁰⁰

Apparently the narratives presented in the story about the rabbi and in the biblical text did not have their significance from being factual or historically true. In this regard Sahlin opens the perspective for Amos Wilder’s idea of biblical texts to be seen as poetry wherein it takes its value from an aesthetic or mythological quality and not from its presumed historical truth. In the article, miracles performed by Chassidic rabbis were described. These rabbis woke up dead people, they broke the Sabbath referring to God’s spirit as a source of legitimacy, and they were rabbis who met people in a peculiar and healing way. The foremost of these was Rabbi Baal Shem Tov, the founder of the Chassidic movement. It was said about Baal Shem Tov, according to Sahlin, that it was easy for him to wake up dead people and he could help the oppressed to regain their strength:

He stretches out his hand to the oppressed, and they regain their strength. He wipes pain and sorrow away from the foreheads of human beings. He liber-

⁴⁹⁹ Sahlin 1952, p. 123

⁵⁰⁰ Sahlin 1952, p. 124 ”Någon gräns mellan det faktiska och det mer eller mindre legendariska lär icke kunna dragas, vare sig i detta speciella fall eller beträffande likartade berättelser. Även i fråga om evangeliernas underberättelser måste ju den principen hyllas, att en dylik gränsdragning varken *bör* eller över huvud taget *kan* företagas”.

ates them from the cramp of hate and for the sad he discloses the beauty of creation.⁵⁰¹

The examples of Chassidic tzaddikim, presented by Sahlin, were enough for him to describe the three classic offices of the Messiah: the king, the priest and the prophet. Could we, Sahlin said, combine all these three offices and the rabbis who performed them into one person, we would also come close to a striking similarity with the Christ of the New Testament. Sahlin began his article with a parable in which Chassidism and Christianity were seen as two flowers from the same root. But while both are similar and both are beautiful, Christianity, Sahlin said, has to be seen as the flower which in a deeper sense is the authentic one. After having used the Chassidic stories to understand images of the Messiah, Sahlin in his last comparison refers to St. Paul's letter to the Colossians 2:17: "These are a shadow of the things that were to come, the reality, however is found in Christ."

Harald Sahlin – a summary

In some ways Sahlin is a representative of Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI, while in others he is quite unique. In some ways it seems that Sahlin was a somewhat naive or private observer of the social and cultural situation in Palestine. For instance, he was surprised that people in Jerusalem did not celebrate Midsummer. He also said that he was unable to see any quality in the services and liturgy in either the Anglican or Orthodox churches, or in Judaism. He could have been more generous and less narrow minded.

In comparison to others in SvIM he is eloquent in his missionary approach to Judaism and Jews, and displays a rather exclusivist Christianity. Sahlin was upset when Magnes argued that Jews could be teachers of mankind. Sahlin was upset because he was convinced of the fact that Christianity was the reality while Judaism was not. From one perspective one may say that Magnes and Sahlin are equally arrogant; Sahlin in support of Christianity and Magnes in support of Judaism. Sahlin was simply convinced of the superiority of his own faith. He did not always distinguish religious ideals from the religious practices carried out by its followers. The question can be asked whether his theology contains some traits of anti-Semitism. In my opinion, he was not anti-Semitic. Fein has argued that anti-Semitism is:

a persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs toward Jews as a collective manifested in individuals as attitudes, and in culture as myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery, and in actions – social or legal discrimination, political

⁵⁰¹ Sahlin 1952, p. 129 "Han sträcker ut sin hand åt de betryckta, och de få nya krafter. Han stryker bort sorg och smärta från människors pannor. Han befriar från hatets kramp och uppenbarar för den svärmodige skapelsens skönhet. "

mobilization against the Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews.⁵⁰²

From this point of departure we could conclude Sahlin made use of some stereotypes against Jews, but we cannot conclude that they were “designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews”. Sahlin did not argue along those lines of thought. In one way, which is similar to Judah Magnes’ idea that Jews should be teachers to mankind, Sahlin as a Christian is convinced of his own faith’s superiority and he is rather patronising to all other religions and denominations. As far as I can conclude from the material I have studied, all other religions and denominations are disrespected by Sahlin to some extent. Against this background his attitude towards Chassidism is strikingly generous. He acknowledged that his encounter with Chassidism was enriching. Sahlin, a mere five years after his return from Jerusalem, was curiously exploring Judaism. Possibly he was trying to find an alternative Judaism to the politicized Zionist versions he had met in Palestine, the kind of Judaism which had repelled him. In Chassidism he was glad to find a spiritual friend. He found rabbis who were able to liberate people from their sins, performed miracles, and broke the strict regulations of the Sabbath and rabbis who were involved in profound encounters with people seriously seeking the existential. This is what religion was all about, for Sahlin. I have the impression that Chassidism for him was, despite its lack of faith in Jesus as Messiah, a Jewish example of true religiosity.

Sahlin had another intellectual strand which made him different from most other staff and founding members of SvTI. Sahlin emphasized the connection between Christian theology and justice. This is something quite unique at Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI. Justice was rarely mentioned in their theology; instead they emphasized God’s plan for mankind, the significance of the Jewish people for the fulfilment of God’s plan and Christian feelings of guilt in relation to the treatment of the Jews. The intellectual room in which Christianity could be employed to develop ideas of justice was rarely visited by any other individual addressed in this study. Pernow mentioned “justice” or righteousness only in relation to the strong statement by the Christians in Norway who protested against the Nazi deportation of Jews from Oslo in October 1942.

Sahlin’s critique of Christian support for Zionism is rather unique in the material, but he shares it with Hans Kosmala. Yet in his critique, Sahlin is more articulate and much more critical than Kosmala. In some of Sahlin’s criticism of Zionism, he wants to replace political Zionism with Jesus-centred Zionism. In this regard he is representative of Svenska Israelsmissionen’s old theology, in which something like a “Christian society” was an

⁵⁰² Fein 1987, p 67. Used in Swedish translation in Bachner, Henrik: *Återkomsten, Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945*. Natur och Kultur, Stockholm 1999. p 28.

ideal. In this theology Jesus is assumed to be the mystic solution of all social problems. But on the other hand, referring to problems in Palestine he stressed that the Church or Christianity had no solutions for them. This dual approach to Christianity and society forces me to describe Sahlin – at least sometimes – and Svenska Israelsmissionen in terminology suggested by the Chicago project: “religious identity thus renewed becomes the exclusive and absolute basis for a recreated political and social order.”⁵⁰³ In this sense Sahlin has tendencies similar to the type of fundamentalism described by the Chicago project. Or, one may ask whether is he was a fundamentalist in the Chicago project sense or just an ordinary Swedish Lutheran? If so, how useful is the definition of fundamentalism proposed by the Chicago project?

In one respect, Sahlin is unique in Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI. He does not emphasise that Jews belong in Palestine; they could belong in Europe, based on his support for Arthur Montgomery’s article. Of interest is also that Sahlin referred to Arthur Montgomery’s analysis of solving anti-Semitism in Europe through creating job opportunities for all refugees – Jews and non-Jews alike. Sahlin is exceptional, one might say, among his colleagues in more than one way: he was the one who explicitly argued that Palestinian Arabs should have a say in the political conflict, and apparently he was influenced by Magnes. While his constructions of Jews are full of stereotypes, they do not include a geographic component. To Sahlin, Jews can be at home in Europe. Also, he viewed Jewish immigrants in Palestine as Europeans with European culture. Therefore, he was not overly impressed by the colonising project; Europeans had achieved the same and more elsewhere. To him the political turbulence in Palestine and in the Middle East was not at all about God unfolding his plan for universal salvation through the Jewish people, but rather was a matter of colliding interests where Russia and the USA were at odds. In Sahlin’s view they were fighting for oil and dominion in the region. Thanks to his sober – albeit not very deep – political analysis, Sahlin is never close to a superstitious idea of history and one cannot help asking if he could stand the apparent superstitious thinking of Pernow, his superior in Stockholm. Also Sahlin never resorted to the king of apocalyptic theology of Pernow, in which the secular and religious are fused into the same historic process. Instead, Sahlin has developed another theology of time and of salvation history in which a Christian lives in a new *eon* which is a continuous “now” cutting through all chronological periods of time. His theology was concerned with the individual’s encounter with God and not with a whole people’s salvation. In this way, God’s counterpart on earth is each individual human being and not a people.

Sahlin is a transitional figure hesitating between an apocalyptic theology which leads him to formulate stereotypes of Jews and one that separates secular history from the *eon* in which God’s salvation history unfolds. Also,

⁵⁰³ Appleby & Marty 1991, p. 835

Sahlin is separating political Zionism from Judaism and he is differentiating various forms of Zionism in a way that contradicts his stereotypes of Jews. In order to understand Christianity better he studied Chassidism and found several bridges to Christian theology, which are steps in the direction of a theology which resembles the inclusive nature of poetry. Finally, when studying Chassidism he argued that the historical facts of biblical texts were not the most crucial aspects. In this way he indicates a resonance with both Rudolf Bultmann and Heikki Räisänen. Sahlin is both a child of his time, convinced of his own tradition's superiority, and an intellectual who is making references to opinions formulated by historians like Montgomery and British politicians like Crossman. His way of reading biblical texts points both towards the Norwegian sense of justice oriented theology and towards Amos Wilder's expressive poetry. But he does not reach all the way.

9. Atoning for Christian sins against Jews – Hans Kosmala

In relation to my over all analytic perspectives, Hans Kosmala is not an apocalyptic thinker when it comes to biblical texts, nor is he superstitious in his view of history. Ideologically he probably comes closest to a romantic national ideal, but by and large my previously formulated analytic tools are not as relevant for an understanding of Kosmala as they are for an understanding of Andrén and Pernow. Kosmala is more of a modern intellectual and I assume he would have fitted in well with an interreligious dialogue today. Still there are aspects of his thinking that we need to look into more closely. He believed all Christians had a shared responsibility to atone for atrocities committed against Jews. One aspect to how he approached this was to maintain good relations with the State of Israel and never to criticise it. In Kosmala's view, after the Nazi Genocide of Jews all Christians had forfeited their right to criticise anything done by Jews. This will be discussed in more detail below.

From the early 1960's the local Board of SvTI in Jerusalem was chaired by the Swedish ambassador to the State of Israel. All from the outset relations with the State of Israel were important to both SvTI and Sweden. Perhaps Kosmala had to exaggerate the loyalty of SvTI to the State of Israel, the way he did in 1953: "we have been, in word and deed, as loyal to this State as the most loyal Jewish Israeli citizen can be".⁵⁰⁴ In an article in *Christian News from Israel* in June 1956 Kosmala returned to the issue of how SvTI related to the State of Israel. His article was called "The Swedish Theological Institute," in which he introduced the work of the institute and its recent guest professors. At the end of his article Kosmala summarized what the students at SvTI would bring back home:

None of them leaves the country without taking with him the deepest impressions of the land and its people, and each becomes, in his own way, an emissary of Israel and a fervent friend of the Jewish people everywhere.⁵⁰⁵

In Kosmala's description, SvTI operated as a connecting point between the Jewish people, the State of Israel and Sweden. The SvTI considered itself

⁵⁰⁴ Kosmala 1953, p. 3

⁵⁰⁵ Kosmala 1956, p. 36

not to be an overt mission to the Jews but a place for the study of religions which would lead to support for the State of Israel. This in turn would covertly make Jews want to become Christians. For Kosmala, this represented the new mission to Jews for all Christianity: to atone for other Christian's deeds and to show the Jews another, true Christianity.

No biblically motivated support for the State of Israel

Kosmala did not produce or distribute an apocalyptic theology of the kind that Pernow or others in Svenska Israelsmissionen did. Kosmala's thinking is not compatible with such theology. In July 1952 Kosmala visited Denmark to participate in an international mission conference organised in Nestved. On his departure a reporter from the Danish paper *Kristelig Folkeblad* interviewed him. At the end of the interview the reporter asked Kosmala what the State of Israel implied for the Christian world. The topic had been discussed at Nestved, Kosmala replied, but the question was not answered at the meeting. The reason was, he explained, that there are at least two large Christian groups present at the conference. "Fundamentalists" are the first group, he said. They believe in the literal fulfilment of the Bible. They believed, he continued, that when the State of Israel was established the Messiah would come soon. The second group, Kosmala said, prefers to wait and see. "And what about yourself?" the reporter asked. "I am not a fundamentalist," Kosmala replied.⁵⁰⁶ But the basic question remained open, because the answer "not a fundamentalist" indicated openness, but said nothing for certain.

In the choir of voices within Svenska Israelsmissionen and SvTI Kosmala is both exceptional and ordinary. He is like no other, save H.S. Nyberg, combining theological criticism of Judaism with an inner urge to reconcile Judaism with Christianity and Christianity with Judaism. He believed that Christianity and the Church must reconnect with the Old Testament in order to find their way in the future. In his view the foundations of the Christian faith are found in the Old Testament, but the Church has forgotten them. To Kosmala, they are still alive in Judaism and hence Christians need closer contact with Jews of Judaic conviction.

Kosmala's teaching included studies on Jewish texts, such as Halakha, Haggadah and Talmudic Judaism. His concluding comment in a lecture given to students at SvTI in 1957 is significant for him and for his learned approach:

⁵⁰⁶ Kosmala, Hans: *Kristelig Dagblad*. "Jødiske kirkegaarde ødelægges igen i vore dages Tyskland. Lederen af det svenske teologiske institut i Jerusalem om 1952's antisemitisme, det teologiske instituts arbejde og forholdet kristendom og jødendom i Israel." Tuesday, July the 29th, 1952.

Let us watch the situation (in the State of Israel) with a real factual understanding, and follow the development within Israel's people and Israel's land with sympathy and love and never forget that the Jewish people have gone through ineffable suffering which often has been caused by Christians.⁵⁰⁷

In the article Kosmala had offered a brief but rather sharp overview of contemporary theology and sociology in Israel concerning Jews. In comparison, he had much less interest in Palestinian Arabs and their day-to-day conditions. What mattered to Kosmala were Jews, the Jewish state, the broad variety of discussions going on in the Jewish society, and, most importantly, Christians' responsibility for Jewish suffering.

In his lecture Kosmala described immigration of Jews to the British Mandate of Palestine and to the State of Israel. The numbers increased during Hitler's reign. After the war the UN finally decided that the former British Mandate of Palestine should be divided between Jews and Arabs. The state was called Israel and not the Jewish state, as the UN had discussed. "Israel" for two reasons, Kosmala said: The founders wanted to create a modern democracy where others than just Jews could live; and secondly, he continued, no Jew had the tiny little state in mind that existed under Ezra with a mere 40,000 inhabitants. Rather, they thought of Israel under King David or King Salomon, when Israel was a superpower in the region. Two additional factors were required for the state to come into being and survive: colonisation of the land and defence.⁵⁰⁸

Kosmala told the students that the young generation of Jews in Israel was taught to till the earth and defend the country. Training in agriculture had been part of military service and had made it possible to establish colonies along the borders of the country, which Kosmala said were part of the defence strategy. Ben-Gurion used great words, Kosmala said, to describe the mission of the country. To Kosmala, Ben-Gurion was well known for his opinion that they were living in a new era, a messianic era.⁵⁰⁹ For Israel to create a unified nation the army was instrumental, Kosmala said.

Then Kosmala described the Ihud Party established by Judah Magnes, mentioned above, who criticised Ben-Gurion's emphasis on military training. Kosmala quoted *Hammodia*, the magazine of Aghudat Israel, an Orthodox Jewish group arguing that "the world was created for Israel, and it is Israel's duty to fulfil the Torah.... But the final goal is not yet reached, because the entire people of Israel do not yet live in the country."⁵¹⁰ Kosmala also referred to the ideas of Naturei Karta, which argued that Israel was a blasphemy because God had promised that the Messiah would establish the Jewish state, a man should not. A Jewish state, Naturei Karta claimed, would

⁵⁰⁷ Kosmala June 1957, p. 139

⁵⁰⁸ Kosmala June 1957, p. 128

⁵⁰⁹ Kosmala June 1957, p. 129-30

⁵¹⁰ Kosmala June 1957, p. 137

be established in the future when the history of the peoples came to an end. Kosmala in a way rejoiced in the disparity and the vital energy of these discussions. To emphasise the range of fervent activities, he also said, new feasts were being formulated in Israel. To Kosmala the entire country was practically fermenting with development and optimism.⁵¹¹

Judaism, Christianity and the purpose of Kosmala's labour

If we compare articles by Kosmala in *Missionstidning för Israel* with other articles that he wrote for the *International Review of Mission* before his years at SvTI there is a striking difference. In 2009 the *International Review of Mission* is the missiological quarterly of the World Council of Churches, but in Kosmala's days it was the publication of the International Missionary Council. Before his period at SvTI, Kosmala was outspokenly critical of Judaism. In 1941 he compared certain traits of Judaism in Ezra and Nehemiah with Nazi race legislation in Germany. One may conclude that once in the State of Israel Kosmala kept a low profile. One may think this attitude was part of his overall ambition to narrow the gap between Christians and Jews, between Christianity and Judaism. Below I will describe his manner of arguing.

In Kosmala's interpretation of Judaism the main purpose of this religion had always been "the preservation of Israel, as represented by the Jewish people."⁵¹² The question arises, which Israel? Seen the other way around, Kosmala argued, "when the Jew speaks about his people, he speaks about his religion." To Kosmala, Judaism both included a stress on universalism and the "equality of all races and colours",⁵¹³ but also Judaism entailed a mutual fusion between people and religion which omitted any universality. Kosmala quoted Rabbi Kopul Rosen, who in 1946 warned the Anglo-American Committee that "in the name of God, do not play politics with the remnants of the Jewish people."⁵¹⁴ In order to strengthen his argument further, Kosmala quoted A. Abraham in the *Jewish Standard* on 21 June, 1946: Abraham wrote:

In touching the problem of the Jewish people you are touching one of the eternal values, one of the unchangeable facts in history beside which you remain a mere individual, elevated but for the moment, and hardly discernable

⁵¹¹ Kosmala June 1957, p. 137

⁵¹² Kosmala 1946, p. 121

⁵¹³ Kosmala 1946, p. 117

⁵¹⁴ Kosmala 1946, p. 121

against the vast stage on which the Jewish people shall yet emerge as a great civilizing force, radiating happiness and culture from its own land.⁵¹⁵

Kosmala concluded that “the Gentile cannot truly understand the meaning and the weight of such words unless he realises that the Jewish people are the theme and the aim of Jewish religion.”⁵¹⁶

A second vital component of Judaism in the eyes of Kosmala was the idea of unique separateness. Kosmala embraced universalistic ideas of religion and ethics. He was very critical of tendencies towards exclusivity and separation. When he tried to make the Jewish idea of separateness, as described by Ezra and Nehemiah, intelligible to European readers he compared it with the Nazi ideology:

The expressions used in Ezra and Nehemiah sounded very familiar to everyone who knows something about Nazi Germany and her racial legislation. Ezra speaks of the “holiness of the seed,” the Nazi race doctrine of the holiness of the blood. Even the register of genealogy is mentioned in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah – the Nazis have their Ahnenpass.⁵¹⁷

Kosmala said that universal tendencies in Judaism, like the prophets, existed but had never reached into the Halakha or into the commanding legal structure of Judaism. Many have argued, both Jews and Christians, Kosmala said, that Judaism harbours profound universalistic tendencies, but the fact of the matter is that it does not.⁵¹⁸

In Kosmala’s view all religions develop their own type of ethics, and the ethics in Judaism were strictly based on the idea of preserving the Jewish people and their unique character. Their teachings, he said, maintained that being a Jew by descent offered the Jew a religious privilege. This fostered, according to Kosmala, a feeling of superiority among Jews which has been inherited for generations and has its basic roots in religion. It leads, he said, to a discriminatory moral attitude towards non-Jews. The Jewish people have the promises of God, but according to Jews the outside world cannot truly know and acknowledge God. That sense of superiority has an impact on ethics and for a Jew to help a Gentile, Kosmala said, would mean helping the enemy of God and promoting paganism in the world. Kosmala argued that an expression of this kind of ethics was found and enforced in regulations from the second century. One rule that had never been declared invalid in Talmudic Judaism, was, he said:

⁵¹⁵ Kosmala 1943, p. 121

⁵¹⁶ Kosmala 1943, p. 121

⁵¹⁷ Kosmala 1941, p. 157

⁵¹⁸ Kosmala 1943, p. 125

A Jewess is not allowed to perform midwifery for a non-Jewess, for she helps a child to be born for idolatry”⁵¹⁹

Having said this, Kosmala underlined that the authentic spirituality of the prophets was never entirely dead in Judaism. This was so because “time after time, the spirit of love revolted against the selfish narrowness of Jewish tradition”. But Kosmala concluded that there is no single law in Judaism which co-ordinates the Christian universalism with Judaism “on principle.”⁵²⁰ The Jewish attitude has occasionally developed “astounding moral laxities,” he argued, and he gave two examples found both in the Talmud and Shulhan Arukh, the Common Laws of Orthodox Jewry in the 17th century:

To rob a Gentile is forbidden (as against the commandment: Thou shalt not steal) – but we are allowed to keep what he has lost. (Babli BK 113b; ShA ChM 266, I)

If a Gentile bargaining with a Jew is mistaken, the Jew is allowed to take advantage of the Gentile’s mistake. (Babli I.c; ShA ChM 348, 2 Haga)⁵²¹

Kosmala concluded that “it seems as if in the deepest recesses of the Talmudic Jewish mind something like the slogan (could emerge): What serves Israel also serves God.” Kosmala continued, the commandment “Thy shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” could never be realized in its wide apprehension by Jews, “for the Talmudic Jew only accepts a Jew as his neighbour.”⁵²² Orthodox and liberal Judaism could differ in their emphasis on religious legislation, Kosmala said. But, he stressed, on one point they agree: on Jewish particularity.⁵²³ Both liberal and Orthodox Jews will agree, Kosmala argued, that some form of real separateness between Jew and Gentile – including the Christian – is necessary.⁵²⁴ While the inner aim of Christianity is to *bring every man* to perfection before God, according to Kosmala, there is no such universal aim in Judaism. Kosmala argued that Judaism held universal tendencies in the prophetic tradition. But, he said, the first person to teach universal love was Jesus. He was the first to teach Jews that “our neighbour is not only our fellow Jew, but every human being, even the despised Samaritan.”⁵²⁵

To Kosmala, the emancipation of Jews and contacts with Christians and Christianity has brought about a profound revolution within Jewry and Judaism. The transformation of Ghetto Judaism into various forms of modern Orthodox and liberal Judaism are examples of this, he said. This, he contin-

⁵¹⁹ Kosmala 1941, p. 158

⁵²⁰ Kosmala 1941, p. 161

⁵²¹ Kosmala 1941, p. 159

⁵²² Kosmala 1941, p. 159

⁵²³ Kosmala 1946, p. 120

⁵²⁴ Kosmala 1946, p. 120

⁵²⁵ Kosmala 1946, p. 118

ued, has led to a fundamental change in attitudes towards the Gentile world, indicated by mass conversions to Christianity. But these mass conversions have stopped and world Jewry does not embrace Christianity. Kosmala asked himself what had happened. He had found one visible sign that Judaism had been influenced by “modern”, or as he put it, Christian non-discriminatory ethics and was thereby reminded of its own prophetic tradition. This, he said, was “Noachism” whereby Jews could acknowledge Christianity as a means for the uplifting of Gentile (Jacob Emden 1751).

The old traditional line that the cardinal doctrines of Christianity are idolatrous teachings and unacceptable for the Jew has never been given up, whereas the gradual Christianization of the Gentiles is seen as the preparatory stage in the evolution of the world religions towards Noachism.⁵²⁶

In Kosmala’s final analysis these tendencies and the fact that various groups of Jews and Christians were united by the seven commandments of Noachism could not solve the problem. The Church has another main task and another main problem. Kosmala argued:

After more than two hundred years of missionary activity among the people which live in our midst, we must confess that our results have been meagre, for our efforts were inadequate. The Jewish problem is one which concerns the life centre of the Church and even threatens to affect it and it can only be solved when we recognize it as a central one.⁵²⁷

The problem for the Church, he said, was that it had lost contact with the social life and ordinary people’s real questions in life. People have never, Kosmala stressed, stopped asking themselves: What shall I do with my life? This is the fundamental religious question. That is the question, Kosmala argued, that Jesus saw in the eyes of those who followed him to the Mount of Beatitudes. If the Church cannot deal with that question it will fail over and over again, Kosmala concluded. If Christianity cannot describe the true purpose of life in society then “she has failed to recognize the day of her visitation.”⁵²⁸ The most crucial task for the Church, according to Kosmala, was to create a new universal order based upon the principles of Christian faith.⁵²⁹ Kosmala asks rhetorically whether the “living Christ” will ever be the “never ceasing source of life” for this world, and his love the fulfilment of all its needs.

One could say that Kosmala comes a bit close to the Chicago project’s definition of making the religious identity the basis for society. But here Kosmala stopped and stressed that he did not want to return to the medieval

⁵²⁶ Kosmala 1941, p. 163

⁵²⁷ Kosmala 1941, p. 168

⁵²⁸ Kosmala 1941, p. 170

⁵²⁹ Kosmala 1941, p. 170

Church (or Corpus Christianum) which put its “controlling hand in all human activities.” That role of the Church had been a mistake in Kosmala’s judgement and would continue to be. The Church, Kosmala stressed, had had an altogether different task in history and in God’s plan. Like Israel, the Church was made for the world, but the Church, unlike Israel of the Old Testament, must not fail in its mission.⁵³⁰ That very task, in which the Church must not fail, for Kosmala, was to remind people of their divine origin. He believed the Church must be a conscience for the world that reiterates the universal ethical code presented by the prophets and reformulated by Jesus in order for people to be permanently aware of God’s will and judgment in the life of all human beings.

The Church, for Kosmala, was built for interaction with the world but had failed in her mission to do so. For two thousand years of the history of Western civilization, he argued, the Church was (rightly) accused of having lost touch with the real life of ordinary human beings. Kosmala stressed that one is mistaken if this modern criticism is assumed to have nothing to do with Christianity’s contact with Jews and Judaism. It is “in essence what Christianity really has done.” Kosmala stressed that Christianity has lost contact with Jews who are gifted with a certain *élan vital*, which is an earth-mindedness that originally came from the Old Testament. This manifests itself in a “love for life,” curiosity, and a concern for the wholeness of human life. Jews, Kosmala continued, have a sensitive feeling for life which they have used to explore science, culture and society. They have made inventions, discoveries and contributed actively to building society:

All we can say is that his (the Jew’s) feeling for religion differs in some decisive way from that common among his Christian neighbours⁵³¹

In the eyes of Kosmala the basic principle of religion in Judaism and the Old Testament is the “affirmation and appreciation of life which was given to us by God.”⁵³² After emancipation Jews have kept and nurtured the religious fervour of the Old Testament and Jews have become “the champion of a better social order and a more equal treatment of humanity.”⁵³³ While Jews have invented and elaborated and improved society as a whole, the Church on the other hand has continued with charity and social “ambulance work.” However, ordinary people do not want charity, they cry for justice. One thing was abundantly evident, for Kosmala:

⁵³⁰ Kosmala 1941, p. 171

⁵³¹ Kosmala 1941, p. 172

⁵³² Kosmala 1941, p. 173

⁵³³ Kosmala 1941, p. 174

The needs of humanity are the exclusive concern of Judaism, religious and otherwise, while the Church still keeps aloof from them.⁵³⁴ Kosmala stressed with fervour that the only way ahead for the Church out of her shortcomings is to invigorate herself via a closer encounter with Jews and Judaism who have kept Old Testament humanity alive. The Church has to find its way back to her Old Testament foundation or it will be unable to make its universally valid message of sin and forgiveness heard and understood.⁵³⁵

For Kosmala it was imperative to study Judaism and Jewish ideas about Jesus. His own motivation was not only to learn, but to learn more about Judaism in order to be able to better meet the religious needs of Jews, because: "We (Christians) believe that there is only one way that leads to God. Jesus said: I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. The Jews will also come one day to this knowledge, for it lies in God's plan of redemption."⁵³⁶ But, after all Kosmala sought to discover God's plan and God's task for the Church, Christians and Jews in this plan. Here he is less apocalyptic than his peers in SvTI and his arguments are not at all superstitious. His approach was expressed in the interview with the Danish journalist. Kosmala said he "prefers to wait and see."

Kosmala – a summary

Kosmala directed SvTI for some twenty years. One may assume that he set its agenda in a significant way. This particular study is not concerned with the daily activities at SvTI or its role in Israel; a study which remains to be done. But it seems likely to assume that Kosmala and Andrén's understandings and information about Israel mattered for how visitors from Sweden shaped their political and theological opinion on the State of Israel, Jews and Palestinian Arabs. First, Kosmala was most loyal with the State of Israel, at least by lip service. Second, Kosmala believed that Christians had to reconnect with Jews and Judaism in order to invigorate the Church. He believed that Christians had to do so to be able to represent genuine Christianity to Jews. And then, finally, just like many others in Svenska Israelsmissionen, even Kosmala, in spite of his intellectual approach to religion, believed that he knew crucial components of God's plan for the world's redemption. Perhaps that was a common perspective among Christians at the time, albeit the individuals studied here held differing ideas of how God's plan was shaped.

In his assessment of Jews he might describe how Jews were theologically and ideologically diverse. Some argued ethically and universalist, others did not. Some supported the State of Israel. Others did not. Kosmala proclaimed

⁵³⁴ Kosmala 1941, p. 177

⁵³⁵ Kosmala 1941, p. 178

⁵³⁶ Kosmala 1935, p. 141

that Jews have a certain *élan vital*, which to Kosmala involves an earth-mindedness and shared wisdom that in his view stems from the Old Testament. It manifests itself in a “love for life,” in curiosity, and in a concern for the totality or integrity of human life. Both Sahlin and Kosmala traced what they believe to be discernable “Jewish” qualities from the Old Testament. Sahlin said he had found expressions of a Jewish mentality which he did not like. Kosmala had found expressions of what to him was typically Jewish and those are things he seems to have appreciated. Both of them were convinced that under various circumstances they had come to know the Jew, who is somehow an eternal being. Kosmala did not, as far as I have detected, establish intellectual relations with Arabs in Jerusalem, not Christians and not Jews. I get the impression that to him, in God’s plan, Christians had to make friends with Jews.

10. Chair of the Swedish Theological Institute – H.S. Nyberg

In Sweden H.S. Nyberg is well known and highly respected for his academic excellence. Beside of this he is appreciated for his firm stand against Nazism and against anti-Semitism. In December 1935 at Uppsala Nyberg analysed anti-Semitism and denounced the persecution of Jews.

I do not hesitate to say that Europe's spiritual health, the existence of the European thought is entirely dependent upon whether this race and blood theology can be overcome.⁵³⁷

Nyberg is remembered as a learned giant, but also as a pious Christian humanist with an active interest in contemporary politics. In the 1960s he sided with Dr Martin Luther King during the struggle for civil rights in the United States. On 10 April, 1968, during Holy Week, Nyberg spoke at the Rotary Club in Uppsala. Concluding his speech discussing the significance of the Christian faith, Nyberg mentioned Dr King who had been assassinated the week before.

Yesterday Martin Luther King was buried, the black leader who had preached nonviolence, who had laboured to overcome racial hatred on the road of peace, on a morally higher level.”⁵³⁸

In his speech he condemned both “the white man's *Herrenvolk* claims” and “men of black power” as two evil components in the United States at the time. He ended his speech with a clear reference to Christian interpretations of Holy Week: “even where violence appears to win, there is still a power which is stronger than all violence.”⁵³⁹ To all Rotary members the nonviolent emphasis in his presentation and his support for King must have been apparent. To Nyberg, as a Christian, it was inevitable to side with Dr King.

⁵³⁷ Kahle 1991, p. 238

⁵³⁸ Nyberg, H. S. 1968, p. 14

⁵³⁹ Nyberg, H. S. 1968, p. 15

The academic and his Christian belief

H.S. Nyberg was a devote member in the Church of Sweden, and he was keen to go to church each Sunday.⁵⁴⁰ In his view, the greatest moment in the history of mankind was the dialogue between Pilate and Jesus. Here, history holds its breath.⁵⁴¹ Nyberg knew large sections the Old Testament by heart, and he lived with its personalities, referring to them, seriously and jokingly in everyday conversations. Certainly God must have a sense of humour, Nyberg would say.⁵⁴² To him, science was concerned with everything underneath faith, but up to it science would never reach. Faith, to him, could not be produced or achieved by human efforts. It was situated on a profoundly existential level, and the human being could experience faith only as an immediate contact outside of logic categories.⁵⁴³ In order to explain the religious experience he chooses the experiences of art as comparison. The ability to experience art is inherited, he said. The active experience of art is intuitive and emotional, it cannot be commanded, and, Nyberg said, the same goes for religion. Religion, he said, is the soul's encounter with God. It is the revelation of God and a communion with God. It cannot be commanded or achieved by intellectual efforts.⁵⁴⁴ The depth of faith, to Nyberg, was not part of any scientific structure, but was a prerequisite for all human activities, he stressed, even for science. From this depth all scientific activities become meaningful, but, Nyberg said, a scientific truth is not a statement of truth about faith⁵⁴⁵.

In *Svensk Exegetisk Årsbok 1942* Nyberg published a theological commentary on Isaiah. The article is an exegetic examination of portions of Isaiah 53. Here I have no intentions to comment upon its exegetical qualities or at his approach to the Bible as a whole that is a far too large task for this work. But, in spite of Nyberg's distinction between faith and science, exemplified above, I want to share some examples where he is perhaps not confusing science and faith, but still not able to keep the two apart.

To the 21st century reader, Nyberg's conclusion of his study on Isaiah "Smärtornas man" (literally "the Man of Pains") is strikingly confessional and quite irrelevant to the scientific value of his work. In the 1940s it was perhaps common for a scholar to include private religious confessions in the way that Nyberg did. In the concluding passages of the article, Nyberg argued that the "Semitic" spiritual development – throughout history – has passed through a particular process which can be summed up in one formula: the Word became flesh. What was once perceived in terms of mythical

⁵⁴⁰ Kahle 1991, p. 534

⁵⁴¹ Kahle 1991, p. 524

⁵⁴² Kahle 1991, p. 529

⁵⁴³ Kahle 1991, p. 528

⁵⁴⁴ Kahle 1991, p. 536

⁵⁴⁵ Kahle 1991, p. 528

statements, Nyberg argued was absorbed by and expressed in one human being and it became real through this human being, Jesus of Nazareth. Throughout Isaiah, Nyberg emphasised, one could detect:

an undertone of excited gratitude over one man's saving self-sacrifice, and wonderful, undeserved salvation from lethal danger – it is a tone that no mythograph can produce by magic from nowhere, it springs from life's own grief and relief from it. To us this tone is not unknown, it is from Good Friday.⁵⁴⁶

The way Nyberg finds a tone from Good Friday in Isaiah, a text written several centuries earlier, is remarkable as part of a scientific work. Now, one may compare literary descriptions of agony and grief from different periods of time and find similarities and differences. However, Nyberg does not employ a comparative perspective, but a polemic. According to H.S. Nyberg, the author of Isaiah had realised a deeper truth which could not have been formulated by a mere “mythograph”. Implicit in Nyberg's text is the idea that the text is produced from a direct inspiration from God. It is not just myth. To him the Bible was history, and true history: Nyberg said:

My generation learned to know the Bible as history and we learned to see the greatness and strength of Christianity in its position in the midst of history, and at the same time above it.⁵⁴⁷

Nyberg did not accept to view the author of Isaiah as a “mythograph”. I am inclined to agree with Hidal who has said that, H.S. Nyberg displayed a linear connection between his comparative scientific approach to the text and his religious Christian interpretation of it.⁵⁴⁸ To illustrate the problem I borrow a formulation from historian Eric J Hobsbawm (1917 -) in his study of nations and nationalism:

To be a Fenian or an Orangeman, I would judge, is not so compatible, any more than being a Zionist is compatible with writing a genuinely serious history of the Jews; unless the historian leaves his or her convictions behind when entering the library or the study. Some nationalist historians have been unable to do so.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁶ Nyberg 1942, p. 82. ”en underton av upprörd tacksamhet över en mans frälsande självutgivelse och underbar, oförtjänst räddning ur dödsfara – det är en ton som aldrig någon mytograf kan trolla fram ur intet utan som springer direkt fram ur livets egen vånda och lösningen ur den. Oss är denna ton icke obekant; den är långfredagens”

⁵⁴⁷ Kahle 1991, p. 531

⁵⁴⁸ Hidal 1997, p. 76

⁵⁴⁹ Hobsbawm 2003, p. 13

A pious academic may pursue a life as prescribed by his faith but he has to leave this conviction "behind when entering the library or the study. H.S. Nyberg did not.

Nyberg was an academic who was often heard on Swedish Public Radio. If something happened in the Arab world, Kahle wrote, Swedish Public Radio would call for Nyberg.⁵⁵⁰ He published learned articles, not only for scientific magazines but for daily papers as well. His own personal Christian faith was not hidden. In June 1955 he appeared at the Wallin Society presenting a speech called: "Evangeliet, kristendomen och vi" (The Gospel, Christianity and Us). Characterising Christianity's exclusive significance, he said:

As the gospel was delivered in sacrifice, the entire Jewish religion was blown up from the top all the way down, and because it contained everything of importance in the history of religions, hence the drama in Jerusalem implies the blowing up of the history of religions. The Gospel, with its unparalleled radicalism is the greatest, the only real revolution in humanity's spiritual life.⁵⁵¹

Nyberg's interpretation of Christianity, as expressed in this particular quotation, does not leave much room for alternative spiritual paths to God. Christianity is the only thing left after the drama in Jerusalem, by which he means Jesus' death and resurrection. The entire Jewish religion, he said, had been blown up from top to bottom (*från topp till botten*). The approach is rather self-assertive and the language sounds rather aggressive. But Nyberg did not look down upon human beings or their traditions. When he criticised other religions he was doing so, should I say, in the arena of art and poetry. Throughout his exclusivist Christian fervour he is a humanist with respect for the human beings in the traditions in which he took an interest. He described Arabs as decent and talented people,⁵⁵² and as a member in the Church of Sweden he took initiatives against anti-Semitism. As a result of his efforts two hymns (no 80 & no 88) were lifted out from Church of Sweden's hymn book.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ Kahle 1991, p. 340

⁵⁵¹ Nyberg 1955, "Då evangeliet var framburet i offerdöden, var hela den judiska religionen sprängd från ovan och ända ned, och eftersom den inneslöt allt väsentligt i religionernas historia, så betyder dramat i Jerusalem hela religionshistoriens sprängning. Evangeliet med dess oerhörda radikalism är den största, den enda verkliga revolutionen i mänsklighetens andliga liv."

⁵⁵² Kahle 1991, p. 340

⁵⁵³ Kahle 1991, p. 532-533

The Hebrew University in Palestine – a tool for colonisation

In order to display Nyberg's understanding of the Palestine problem I will refer to and analyse some articles and speeches by Nyberg from the mid-1940s to the mid-1960s. In 1993 Kahle wrote the foreword to a Swedish edition of Edward Said's *Orientalism*. By and large, I agree with her assessment of Nyberg. To her H.S. Nyberg was:

one of the few who tried to sort out (*bena ut* – in Swedish) the problems between Arabs and Israelis, but even though he stressed the unjust treatment of Arabs, in 1948, like the rest of the Western world he wholeheartedly protected Israel's right to survive.⁵⁵⁴

In 1944 he published an article in *Judisk tidskrift*, a Swedish Jewish journal with Professor Rabbi Marcus Ehrenpreis, chief rabbi of Stockholm, as editor. Originally the article had been a speech, which Nyberg presented because an organisation called Friends of Hebrew University had launched a public appeal entitled *Den hemlösa judiska vetenskapen* (Homeless Jewish Science). Sweden's Prince Eugene was head of Friends of Hebrew University in Sweden. Nyberg had been associated with the Hebrew University in Jerusalem since at least 1937 when he had been asked by Hugo Valentin to join the European Consortium of Hebrew University. It is possible that consortium and the Friends of Hebrew University are identical.⁵⁵⁵

Initially, in the 1944 article, Nyberg gave an overview of the history and work of the Hebrew University. The idea of a Hebrew university had first been expressed, Nyberg said, in 1882 by Herman Shapira, a professor in mathematics in Heidelberg. Nyberg then related some crucial events in its history, including its inauguration by Lord Balfour in 1925. In the article, he argued that the Hebrew University was a genuinely European research centre located "in the middle of the Orient." Symbolically enough, he said, the university is located on Mt Scopus overlooking the desert. Hebrew University, Nyberg argued, is upholding its position among European and American universities, "whose legitimate child it is." Nyberg argued that Jewish scholars were well-known in learned history and science. Many were among the foremost in their fields. However, the Hebrew University had some special features that Nyberg focussed upon. One was the language used in all its classes: Hebrew. "In this way this university is alone in the world". The Zionists undertook a peculiar experiment with the language, he continued. They wanted to revive it, and they succeeded.

⁵⁵⁴ Kahle 1993, Nyberg är "en av de få som försökte bena upp problemen mellan araber och israeler, men trots att han framhävde det orättvisa i behandlingen av araberna, ställde han 1948 liksom hela västvärlden upp för att värna Israels rätt att överleva".

⁵⁵⁵ Valentin 1937

In their program (the Zionist programme) was also included to again make Hebrew a living language, and not only in writing or as a kind of Latin: it would be the spoken language. It would be the only language for all Jews who were about to return to Palestine.⁵⁵⁶

But the special role of the Hebrew University was not limited to the mere quality of its scientific research or to the language. For Nyberg it had wider tasks as well:

But this university has special tasks of a kind that are rarely assigned for our universities. It is the theoretical clearing post, if one may say, for everything that has to do with the Jewish colonisation in Palestine and the practical problems it gives rise to. Few universities work in closer contact with a concrete reality than this does. At present it is the world's true centre for Jewish scientific activity. In Europe the persecution of Jews has destroyed several flourishing Jewish centres of learning, wasted their libraries and annihilated their teachers and talented individuals. Learned Jews and students are not welcome at most European universities. Here they have a refuge.⁵⁵⁷

The background and explanation of these "special tasks" Nyberg described, was the fact that Jewish teachers and students were forbidden to attend universities in Europe. But at the Hebrew University he argued they had a refuge. The university had received many scholars from Europe and the standard corresponded, he said, to the standard of universities in the West. It was, Nyberg argued, the only place where Jews could preside over the academic work and study the specific problems that were relevant for Judaism. Finally, the "very important" and last of the special tasks of the Hebrew University mentioned by Nyberg was to provide contacts between the Arab world and the Western world, "between Islam's culture and ours."⁵⁵⁸ One year later, when the Hebrew University celebrated its 20th anniversary, Nyberg explained his ideas on the role of the Jewish academy in general and of the Hebrew University in particular. In 1945, the world had barely escaped from a devastating world war and Nyberg reflected upon the overall purpose of being an academic:

⁵⁵⁶ Nyberg 1944, p 62

⁵⁵⁷ Nyberg 1944, p. 63–64. "Men detta universitet har speciella uppgifter av en art som sällan tillkommer våra universitet. Det är den teoretiska clearinganstalten, om man så får säga, för allt som rör den judiska kolonisationen i Palestina och de praktiska problem den ställer. Få universitet arbetar i närmare kontakt med en konkret verklighet än detta. Det är f.n. det egentliga centrum för judisk vetenskaplig verksamhet i världen. I Europa ha judeförföljelserna förintat otaliga blomstrande judiska läroanstalter, ödelagt deras bibliotek och utrotat deras lärare och adepter. Judiska lärde och studenter äro portförbjudna vid de allra flesta europeiska universitet. Här ha de en tillflykt."

⁵⁵⁸ Nyberg 1944, p. 64. "Och slutligen har detta universitet en mycket viktig uppgift att fylla för att förmedla kontakt mellan den arabiska världen och Västerlandet, mellan islams kultur och vår."

Our work (as academics), which in its more distinguished aspects should have helped achieving a calm and dispassionate view on the human world and its nature and thereby serving the understanding between peoples. Has it at any given point been able to prevent or even mitigate the catastrophes now threatening us all with ruin?⁵⁵⁹

In Nyberg's view, the world around him, so full of war and atrocities, was nothing but a sheer mockery of all values that to him the academic strove for. But in spite of this gloomy picture, Nyberg stressed that academics should not to get tired in their struggle:

Let us continue to labour for what are the true glory and the highest goals of the human race: peaceful development in the sign of fraternity between all peoples".⁵⁶⁰

Nyberg ended his speech in 1945 by saying that in his view the Hebrew University in Jerusalem was called to contribute to the world of peace that we all long for.⁵⁶¹

The 1940s was a decade when European colonisation was widespread in Africa and Asia. In many places Western, and not the least British colonialism or military presence, were aggressively, and increasingly so, opposed by growing local resistance. But, while resistance was rising, the eventual widespread liberation of colonies had not yet begun. Instead, in that period of time, European colonial masters were often preoccupied with trying to preserve their dominance in other continents, and their methods were often both violent and cruel.⁵⁶² In 1944 Nyberg did not express any reluctance to use the term "colonisation". To him Jewish colonisation in Palestine did not imply an illegitimate activity. On the contrary, to him the Hebrew University should be supported, because it was actively involved in the colonisation in Palestine and this was compatible with its calling to contribute to the peace of the world. Western culture, Nyberg said, had its roots in Greece, but, our religion he said is inseparably fused with the Gospel from the desert.⁵⁶³ And to him the European culture was a universal culture. It has become a universal culture, he said, because the European culture has been able to rise above the particular limitation that made the Greeks label all other peoples as barbarians.⁵⁶⁴ Via the Hebrew University European ideas, learned thinking and science had been brought to Jerusalem. This, he argued, would lead to contacts between "Islam's culture and ours." Also, the Hebrew University ought

⁵⁵⁹ Nyberg 1945, p. 110

⁵⁶⁰ Nyberg 1945, p. 110

⁵⁶¹ Nyberg 1945, p. 110 "Jag tror att det hebreiska universitet i Jerusalem är kallat att göra en stor insats i den fredens värld som vi av hela vårt hjärta längta efter".

⁵⁶² See for instance: Prashad 2010.

⁵⁶³ Kahle 1991, p. 277

⁵⁶⁴ Kahle 1991, p. 238

to be supported as it did not have any state funding in Palestine. Nyberg was convinced that the Hebrew University contributed effectively to a “peaceful development in the sign of fraternity between all peoples”.⁵⁶⁵

To Nyberg, the Hebrew University represented “pioneer work for Western culture among Arabs” and to support the “Jewish colonisation in Palestine” was not seen as an obstacle to the university’s ability to convey contacts between “Islam’s culture and ours.” This may have appeared a contradiction for a contemporary reader at the time, as it does in the 21st century as we can look back upon the last decades’ political tensions in the area. But as far as Nyberg was concerned, the Hebrew University was something of an exception in the political landscape and the political tensions from the streets of Palestine had not reached the institution. Nyberg said:

The opposition between Arabs and Jews in Palestine’s practical life may sometimes be regarded as impossible to reconcile. (Still) into the lecture-halls of this university the fight does not reach.⁵⁶⁶

The term “colonization” is much debated and used in many different ways. The then rector of the Hebrew University, Dr Rabbi Judah Magnes, originally from the United States, was a Zionist whose Zionism was aimed at Jewish colonisation of Palestine. But Judah Magnes argued (as noted above) that Jewish colonisation was legitimate provided it could be done with the consent of the population of Palestine, that is, the Palestinian Arabs. This friendly variety of colonisation could have been the type envisioned by Nyberg. But we cannot know this for sure, because Nyberg did not specify his assessment of the “return” to Palestine or its colonisation. He was generally positive over Jewish colonisation in Palestine.

We should note, though, that colonisation in Palestine was not uncontroversial at that time. Arabs had protested against the British Mandate and Jewish colonisation for many years. In Palestine, an Arab revolt started in 1936 which was violently suppressed by the British Mandate authorities in 1939. Other Western scholars of the time, such as Harvard’s Professor Ernest Hocking, interpreted “Jewish colonisation” rather differently from Nyberg. Hocking (1873 – 1966), professor at Harvard from 1920 to 1943, was an expert in Natural Religion, Moral Philosophy and Civil Polity. Within the Christian Ecumenical movement he is probably best known for his participation in *the Layman’s report*, published in the early 1930s, which was a critical assessment of Methodist missions in Asia undertaken not by clerics or missionaries, but by academics and businessmen.⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁵ Nyberg 1945, p. 110

⁵⁶⁶ Nyberg 1944, p. 64. ”Motsättningen mellan araber och judar i Palestinas praktiska liv må ibland synas nästan omöjligt att överbrygga. In i detta universitets lärosalar når striden ej.”

⁵⁶⁷ Hocking 1932. p. xi

Like Nyberg, in his analysis of Jewish colonisation in Palestine Hocking included references to the Arab and Jewish economies, the role of the Hebrew University and the crucial land issue. But Hocking and Nyberg reached different conclusions. In his analysis of Jewish colonisation, Hocking referred both to the Jewish National Fund and to the constitution of the Jewish Agency. The Jewish Agency was established in Palestine in the 1920s with the active support of the British Mandate in Palestine. Regarding land in Palestine the Jewish Agency constitution provided that: "Land is to be acquired as Jewish property ... title to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people."⁵⁶⁸

Hocking stressed the fact that the charter of the Jewish National Fund (JNF) stated that land possessed by the JNF could be sold or leased to Jews only. If the JNF would be successful in buying land in Palestine, Hocking argued Arabs risked losing their land permanently. It was for this reason that Arabs opposed Jewish colonisation.⁵⁶⁹ Hocking's reference to the Jewish National Fund is most relevant and it deserves a brief summary. Such a background is so much more relevant in this study because in 1953 H.S. Nyberg also commented upon the Jewish National Fund. When visiting kibbutzim south of Lake Genesareth, he noted that "the kibbutz does not own the land it is farming, but it is leasing it from the National Fund, Kéren kajiémet, which is Israel's only land owner".⁵⁷⁰ But, as we shall see, Nyberg was in fact incorrect. There were more land owners in the State of Israel. Moreover, as a Lutheran Christian he was partly involved himself through the Lutheran World Federation.

The Jewish National Fund was founded in 1901 at the Fifth Zionist Congress. It had one prime purpose: "the purchase of land in Palestine and in Syria".⁵⁷¹ In 1903 the purpose of the Fund was extended: "to lease it (land) to Jews".⁵⁷² The extended purpose was defined expressly to lease land "only to Jews". In 1907 the Fund was registered in England and in 1954 it was registered in Israel. The primary purpose of JNF was "identified as the acquisition of land for the purpose of settling Jews on such land".⁵⁷³ It was aimed at leasing land:

"to any Jew or to any incorporated body of Jews or to any company ... under Jewish control and ... (which) is engaged or intends to engage in the settle-

⁵⁶⁸ Hocking 1945, p. 504

⁵⁶⁹ Hocking 1945, p. 499-508

⁵⁷⁰ Nyberg 1953, "Kibbutz'en äger icke den jord den brukar utan arrenderar den av National-fonden, Kéren kajiémet, som är Israels enda jordägare".

⁵⁷¹ Lehn 1988, p. 186

⁵⁷² Lehn 1988, p. 186

⁵⁷³ Lehn 1988, p. 186

ment of Jews” in Palestine; it does not authorize the leasing of land to non-Jews.⁵⁷⁴

When Hocking and Nyberg were commenting on the JNF it was a well known body whose purpose had been known for decades. After the war in 1947-1949, the Jewish National Fund expanded the land under its control. The gradually developed legal structure of the State of Israel made this enlargement possible. One significant legal structure that facilitated the enlargement of land under the JNF was the Land Requisition Law adopted in 1953. In the mid-1980s the JNF controlled over 90 % of the land in the State of Israel.⁵⁷⁵ In the 1950s the Jewish National Fund was not, as Nyberg said, the only landowner in Israel, but during the course of time it evolved into the dominant one.

But Hocking went further, he analysed the arrival of European Jews – the colonizers – from the perspective of the people already living in Palestine.

In Hocking’s view the progress of the Zionist project in Palestine, like the Hebrew University, had been remarkable.

The great Hebrew University on Mt Scopus and its Library are monuments to the breadth and wisdom of its founders and builders. The large influx of Jewish capital into Palestine has furnished a basis for taxation (levied on the Arabs as well) which the British Government in part has used for public improvements -- roads, public health, etc. – in which the Arabs have a natural share. At the same time, the Arab feels his total economic position less secure than before.⁵⁷⁶

Hocking was explaining the Arab feeling of insecurity with reference to the colonisation of Palestine and the land policy of the Jewish National Fund. Even though Arabs had some advantage from the influx of Jewish capital, Hocking expressed that in his understanding of the colonisation, the overall tendency made Arabs feel insecure, and legitimately so.

After the establishment of the State of Israel, and after the flight of Palestinian Arabs, much property and land was abandoned. Research has shown how the State of Israel acted to acquire land abandoned by Palestinian Arabs. Among refugees were Protestant missions, as we shall see, private landowners and muftis who were in charge of Islamic religious endowments, Waqf property. Political scientist Michael Dumper has described how one Israeli law, the Absentee Property Law of 1950, affected the ownership of abandoned land in the State of Israel. In Dumper’s conclusion, as an effect of the implementation of this complex legislation “80 percent of the total land area of Israel was acquired from Palestinians”. When this legal procedure was finalised, this land came under the control of the Jewish National Fund. Land

⁵⁷⁴ Lehn 1988, p.186

⁵⁷⁵ Amnå 1988, p. 57

⁵⁷⁶ Hocking 1945, p. 503

acquired this way was categorized by the Israeli state as “abandoned property”. Dumper has estimated that this “abandoned property” made it possible for the State of Israel to sustain itself.⁵⁷⁷

Earlier we demonstrated how Harald Sahlin and Greta Andrén had left their mission work due to the war. During the war from 1947 to 1949 staff of several Christian missions left the area, and their property which was then occupied by the State Israel, as a result of the war. In 1950 formal representatives of Lutheran World Federation (LWF) visited their abandoned hospitals, schools, orphanages, religious institutions, etc. LWF wanted to assess the situation and estimate the value of the lost property. A committee was established between the State of Israel and the Lutheran World Federation, working with Protestant property located in areas controlled by the State of Israel. While the Protestant mission work had been helping mainly the Arab Christians, after the war and as a result of it, there were not many Arabs left. A council of trustees within LWF, under the presidency of Swedish Professor Anders Nygren, watched over the negotiations. On 29 August, 1951 an agreement was signed between the State of Israel and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF). The agreement was said to: “contribute to the normalization of relations between the State of Israel and Protestantism”.⁵⁷⁸ A sum of money was paid from Israel to the Lutheran World Federation as part of the agreement.

Re-immigration to Palestine

On 11 June, 1948 the Swedish UN mediator Count Folke Bernadotte had been able to negotiate a ceasefire between the State of Israel and the Arab states. On 25 June, 1948 H.S. Nyberg, Dr Gustaf Olsson and Count Bernadotte commented upon the situation on a 43 minute long broadcast on Swedish Public Radio. Gustaf Olsson of Lund University described the political situation and called the Zionist Jewish forces attacking the British Mandate “terror organisations.”⁵⁷⁹ In a 16 minute presentation Nyberg gave an overview of the history of the area. In his conclusion, after a wide exposé of the Levant, Nyberg brought the listener to the 20th century and to the political conflict in Palestine/Israel:

The life of Palestine, throughout the new period in history, has been characterised by an escalating impoverishment and decay that has been stopped only by the large Jewish re-immigration and colonisation during this century. The battle now being waged between Arabs and the re-immigrated Jews is profoundly tragic. If one considers the time span during which Arabs have

⁵⁷⁷ Dumper 1997, p. 31

⁵⁷⁸ *Christian News from Israel* November 1952, p. 22-25

⁵⁷⁹ Nyberg 1948

inhabited the land and the cultural labour they have undertaken from time to time, Arabs have at least as strong a right to the land as the Jews. But it is equally undeniable that not until the [arrival of the] modern Jewish colonisers has the new era begun in the land.

That is what has made the land blossom. *That* is what has made the considerable natural resources of the land bear fruit. Thereby, in a short period of time, prosperity has been built up in the land of a magnitude that it probably never has experienced. Life has become easier to live for all, not the least for the Arabs themselves. Let us hope that the powers of peace shall finally become victorious and create for this remarkable land, so rich in memories, the era that Israel's prophets dreamed about, when swords shall be beaten into ploughshares, and when the garment rolled in blood, and the warrior's boot will be destined for burning.⁵⁸⁰

To Nyberg the "re-immigration" of Jewish colonisers had stopped the decline of Palestine and for him it brought a better life to all, not least to "the Arabs themselves." Hocking, for his part, said that Jewish colonisers and the Jewish National Fund made Arabs feel less secure. In his article on the Hebrew University Nyberg had praised the European standard of its teachers and had claimed they had been forced to leave Europe. At the same time Nyberg could say that the European Jewish academics were "re-immigrating" to Palestine, as if Europeans could re-immigrate to Palestine, where they never had lived. Once they had settled in Palestine they were no longer described as professors from Heidelberg, Berlin, Tübingen or Jena. They were said to be all re-immigrated Jews.

Referring to Hocking one has reason to formulate a question, not ironic, as to whether the end of the economic decline in Palestine was due primarily to the arrival of "Jews" or if it was due to the arrival of capital, modern techniques in agriculture, modern construction of infrastructure and science, and with backing of investments from the Western world? You can never neglect the role of science, technology, bureaucracy, communication and capital in the development of a country.

The role of Jewishness is almost impossible to test scientifically, I think. If you argue for a significant role of Jewishness, might this idea be a good example of an essentialist approach to ethnicity? Do you not come close to

⁵⁸⁰ Nyberg 1948, "Palestinas liv under hela den nyare tiden kännetecknas av fortskridande utarmning och förfall som har hävts först med den stora judiska återinvandringen och kolonisationen i detta sekel. Den strid som nu föres mellan araber och dessa återinvandrade judar är djupt tragisk. Ser man på den tid araberna har bebott landet och det kulturella arbete de tidvis har utfört där så har araberna minst lika stor rätt som judarna till det. Men lika oförnekligt är att det först är med de moderna judiska kolonisterna som den nya tiden har brutit in över landet. Det är *det* som har fått marken att blomstra på nytt. Det är *det* som har fått landets icke föraktliga naturtillgångar att bära frukt. Och därigenom har på kort tid ett välstånd skapats i landet som det väl knappast någonsin har upplevt. Livet har blivit lättare att leva för alla, inte minst för araberna själva. Låt oss hoppas att fredens krafter till sist skall vinna seger här och skapa åt detta märkvärdiga och minnesrika land den tid som Israels profeter drömde om, då svärden skall omsmidas till plogbillar och manteln som sölades i blod, och skon som krigaren bar skall brännas upp i eld"

asking yourself if Nyberg is presuming here that Jews have a rather particular “Jewish” skill to handle money? One may ask oneself, whether or not colonisation in other parts of the world often resulted in similar economic growth in some sectors of the society at the very same time, at least when Europe offered similar influx of capital, administration and technique?

While Nyberg does not neglect the significance of an influx of external capital, he is stressing the significance of one particular ethnicity and religion as one over all reason behind the success. One must also ask why Nyberg, on the one hand, praised the Hebrew University as having European standards and described it as being built by persecuted Jews who had been forced out of Europe. The answer must be, to Nyberg they brought a universally valid – or superior - culture, the European culture. But, at the same time, as soon as the Jew set foot in Palestine their Europeaness was not mentioned and instead their Jewishness was emphasized. Why did he not continue calling them Europeans? One explanation could be the idea that their belonging in Europe was so self-evident that he had no reason to mention it. But that does not fit with him talking about the return of Jews. In the 1930’s Nyberg had opposed any ideological support for the Nazi race theory. He argued intensively against the idea that history would prove that a pure race was superior. It is quite to the contrary, he stressed. “It seems as if the anxiety brought into the blood via the mixture of races is by all means promoting both life and culture”.⁵⁸¹ Considering his critique of Nazism and considering his humanism, still Nyberg is more supportive of the Hebrew University and Jewish “return” to their country then he is arguing for the Jews’ belonging in Europe.

I have no definite answer and I of course cannot draw conclusions from his silence on this point. It seems to me that Nyberg in his particular, non-verbalised construction of Jews held that they belonged in Palestine and therefore they could return and re-immigrate there. Other interpretations will be welcomed.

Kibbutzim – harmony between history and the present

In November 1952, Nyberg lectured at the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem. After having returned to Sweden he wrote two articles in which he commented upon his impressions from his stay in the State of Israel. He appeared on Swedish Public Radio, Dagens Eko, on December 2. The contents of his commentary in Dagens Eko and his article in *Svenska Dagbladet* on 24 December, 1952 are very similar. His article in *Svenska Dagbladet* on December 24, 1952 is entitled “*Jerusalem*”. It begins with a rather long bib-

⁵⁸¹ Kahle 1991, p. 239 ”Det ser tvärtom ut, som om den oro rasblandningen för in i blodet vore i hög grad livs- och kulturfrämjande”.

lical passage from Deuteronomy 34: 1-5, which is not uncommon when Christians are discussing a divine right to the land:

Then Moses climbed Mount Nebo from the plains of Moab to the top of Pisgah, across from Jericho. There the Lord showed him the whole land – from Gilead to Dan, all of Naphtali, the territory of Ephraim and Menasseh, all the land of Judah as far as the western sea, the Negev and the region from the valley of Jericho, the City of Palms as far as Zoar. Then the Lord said to him: “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, when I said ‘I will give it to your descendents.’ I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it”. And Moses, the servant of the Lord died there in Moab, as the Lord had said.

In his article Nyberg referred to the case when Moses was not allowed to enter the land, but he was allowed to see it from a distance. In Nyberg’s interpretation, the children of Israel could only look into the “classic Jerusalem” but they were not allowed to enter it themselves. At that time Jews could not visit East Jerusalem, which was controlled by Jordan. But to Nyberg the text indicated an historical parallel that located Jews outside of classic Jerusalem or the Old City. The rest of the article is an assessment of recent political history, vague references to the UN partition plan, Israel’s borders, the results of the war, and brief mentions of Palestinian and Jewish refugees. At the time there was much criticism formulated against the State of Israel, both by the UN and by the Arab states.

Nyberg avoided any criticism of the State of Israel, but without giving examples he criticised what he called “wicked deeds” committed by Jewish terrorists. One central, much discussed issue at that time was the right of Palestinian Arab refugees to return home. Nyberg mentioned the Arab refugees, but he did not mention their claim, supported by the UN, that Arab refugees had a right to return home.

The borders of Israel, Nyberg said, were made of the line of demarcation between what was called the Arab and Jewish sides. These lines had, he claimed, “in their essential features” been established in 1947. One would think that Nyberg had in mind the majority proposal, GA 181 II, presented to the UN by UNSCOP, the one that won the majority’s support at the UN GA referendum on 29 November, 1947. Nyberg’s vague references require some brief background on the matter.

Earlier it was demonstrated that UNSCOP, headed by Swedish judge Emil Sandström, prepared the partition plan that was accepted in November 1947. After the war between Israel and the Arab states (1947-1949) armistice agreements were reached in the spring of 1949. In these agreements the demarcation lines were used as borders. Compared to the partition plan of November 1947 the size of the Arab and the Jewish areas differed considerably. The demarcation lines of 1949, referred to by Nyberg, gave approximately 77% of the British Mandate to the Jewish state, while the Jewish state

had received only 55% of the British Mandate in the UNSCOP plan of 1947. If one compares the 1947 borders of the partition plan with the 1949 armistice demarcation line, the Arab side had been reduced from 44% to approximately 22% of the British Mandate of Palestine. In other words, the Arab side had lost 50% of its territory. However, in 1952 H.S. Nyberg said the borders “in their essential features” had been established in 1947. Here he had a margin of error of approximately 50%. Maybe he was ignorant, or maybe he was not. But given the political significance of land in Israel and Palestine the notion is striking.

Peace was not in sight, Nyberg argued. Although all the Jews had been removed from the Jordanian side, the State of Israel had not been purged of Arabs to the same extent. Many Arabs remained in the Jewish state and there were many enclaves of Arabs continuing to live in Israel’s territory. As examples he mentioned Abu Gosh, about 10 kilometres west of Jerusalem, the Arab villages in the Galilee and the separate populations in Ramla. But the vast majority of the Arab population, Nyberg stated, fled in panic at the armistice agreement.⁵⁸²

Commenting on the reasons behind the Arab’s mass exodus, Nyberg argued it was the unfortunate result of several wicked deeds committed by Jewish terrorists. We do not learn what type of wicked deeds he had in mind, or who these Jewish terrorists were, but he believed Arabs who remained in the State of Israel had lost much but were still rather fortunate.

Those (Arabs) who stayed in Israel appear to have found their way about comparatively well in the new circumstances, which nevertheless must have implied rather considerable material losses for them.⁵⁸³

Nyberg’s description is an eloquently presented mixture of biblical references and a significant neglect of important demographic and geographic information that was essential to the Arab perspective. Most Arabs in Palestine did not leave at the armistice agreement in the spring of 1949. Most Arabs refugees who left fled in 1948, starting in March 1948 and on as a result of Plan Dalet launched by Haganah in that month. Nyberg also neglects to mention that the area suggested by GA UN 181 to come under Arab control was app.44 % of the British Mandate, while the area under Arab control in Palestine as a result of the armistice agreement in 1949 was only app. 22 % of the British Mandate. When discussing land ownership and the Jewish National Fund Nyberg did not mention the Emergency Laws in Is-

⁵⁸² Nyberg 1952, ”Men det stora flertalet araber flydde i panik vid vapenstillståndet – åtskilliga illdåd förövades tyvärr också av judiska terrorister – och framläpar nu en eländig tillvaro i flyktingläger i Syrien och Jordanien”.

⁵⁸³ Nyberg 1952, ”De som stannade kvar i Israel synas jämförelsevis väl ha funnit sig till rätta i de nya förhållandena, som dock för dem torde ha inneburit rätt kännbara materiella förluster”.

rael, under which Arabs lived, nor did he mention UN resolution 194 of 11 December, 1948, which stated that Palestinian Arabs who so wished should be allowed to return.⁵⁸⁴

In brief, Nyberg made use of biblical passages but he did not refer correctly to demographics, legal structures or to geographic facts such as borders and land control.

Jerusalem's geographic position did not make the city economically significant, but rather militarily significant, Nyberg argued in the article of December, 1952. Its material or physical significance, he argued, was its topographical location, which made it into a natural fortification able to control the surrounding area. That is why, he argued, its history is a long series of wars and calamity. But also, he argued the city brings forth a story of mystery and calamity that triggered "immense spiritual power resources." Nyberg argued:

Jerusalem, 'the city upon high', has throughout its history been a spiritual lightening-conductor, and there the lighting which has struck has shone around the world.⁵⁸⁵

According to Nyberg, Jerusalem's history was "a spiritual drama of worldwide proportions." He argued the city's history had already been violent in 1300 BC when the Egyptian pharaoh helped the land against the attacking "khabiru" – the Hebrews. Nyberg argued these "khabiru" were a "vanguard of the latest Israelite invasion." In Nyberg's description of the ensuing history the "wheels of history" turned round and round again and invasion after invasion would continue to come. However, in spite of the power of the invaders and the glory of the emperors, for Nyberg the greatest of the dramas in the city was the Easter drama when Jesus was crucified. With intensity and fervour, Nyberg argued that the words were uttered by "the man from Nazareth" in front of the earthly powers are the greatest words that have ever emerged from Jerusalem's mountains to humanity. These words were: "My kingdom is not of this world."⁵⁸⁶

After the crucifixion of Jesus, which he described as the greatest drama in history, Nyberg said there would never again be peace and order in the city.

⁵⁸⁴ United Nation General Assembly A/RES/194 (III) 11 December 1948:

§ 11. *Resolves* that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible;

⁵⁸⁵ Nyberg 1952, "den högt belägna staden", har under hela sin historia så att säga tjänstgjort som en andlig åskledare och där ha blixtrar slagit ned som ha lyst kring hela världen."

⁵⁸⁶ Nyberg 1952, "Mitt rike är icke av denna världen", är det största ord som från Jerusalems berg har utgått till mänskligheten."

The following clash with the Roman forces was inevitable, he maintained.⁵⁸⁷ The reader does not get any explanation for this inevitability, but to Nyberg the city somehow lost something crucial when Jesus was crucified. Nyberg is silent on this, but the way Nyberg has built his argument resembles what Pernow said about Jerusalem and the Jews having lost God's blessing when the Jews did not become Christians. Here H.S. Nyberg is silent, but still he comes close to Pernow's interpretation.

Commenting on the events in 70 CE, when the Jewish temple was destroyed, Nyberg said: "All Jews were driven away from the city – it is exactly like today – and soon all the Jews were exiled from the entire area of this part of Palestine".⁵⁸⁸ In 638, Nyberg went on; Caliph Omar accepted the capitulation of Jerusalem. "Terms were very favourable for Christians," he argued, "but devastating for the Jews" who were forbidden to dwell there. Nyberg found historical parallels between the 7th century and his own period: "It is obvious that contemporary Muhammedan rulers have examples to follow".⁵⁸⁹ After having described briefly the bloodbath perpetrated by Christian crusaders such as Gottfried of Buillon, Nyberg moved swiftly through history to the 20th century. Turkish rule for 400 years was characterised as "putting a dead hand over Palestine." When ending his article Nyberg reached the conclusion that there is "something apocalyptic" over Jerusalem. There is deep symbolism, he argued, in the Muslim folklore that argues the final judgement will occur in Jerusalem and that Jesus will be the judge.

A mere three weeks later, on 10 January, 1953, Nyberg published another long article in *Svenska Dagbladet*, this time called: "Det moderna Israel," (Modern Israel). In contrast to the December 1952 article, "Det moderna Israel" had no biblical references and referred to the UN, but only when the UN supported the State of Israel. This is a recurring feature not only for Nyberg, but for many more individuals within the Swedish Theological Institute. They praised the UN when it proposed a partition of Palestine. But they never referred to the UN when it issued resolutions against Israeli warfare or demanded that Israel allow Palestinian refugees to return.

Nyberg's article "discussed the partition plan of 1947, the Hebrew language and the Hebrew University, the Swedish Theological Institute, construction work in Israel, agriculture, kibbutzim, Jewish history in the area and archaeology. Together with Benjamin Mazaar, archaeologist and Rector of the Hebrew University, Nyberg made a visit to Galilee. Impressions from that visit were used as concluding remarks in the article. The days he spent

⁵⁸⁷ Nyberg 1952, "Efter detta ville det aldrig mer bli ro och vardag i Jerusalem. Sammanstötningen med den romerska makten blev oundviklig, och år 70 e. Kr. sjönk templet samman i eldslågorna för att aldrig mer uppstå."

⁵⁸⁸ Nyberg 1952, "Allt vad judar hette fördrevs från staden – det är alldeles som nu – och snart vore judarna landsflyktiga från hela denna del av Palestina".

⁵⁸⁹ Nyberg 1952, "man ser att dagens muhammedanska härskare här ha gamla förebilder att gå tillbaka till".

in the Galilee gave him a completely different image of Israel, he said, and compared the Galilee with Jerusalem: “the two days I spent there gave me a completely different image of Israel than the divided Jerusalem. Here history and the present merge into a harmonious unity”.⁵⁹⁰ On his trip through Galilee he passed several biblical sites and he made repeated references to biblical passages which guided his way. He described how they passed Mt Carmel “where Elijah killed Baal’s prophets” and a bit later he described how they passed Mt Gilboa “where Saul fell”. When he passed En-dor he informs the reader of the article that at this place a fortune-telling woman called forth Samuel’s ghost which made Saul terrified.⁵⁹¹ H.S. Nyberg, the biblical scholar, is travelling through a geographic landscape and a biblical landscape at the same time. These two, the inner and the outer landscapes, interact and merge with each other. He knows the biblical stories so well, and one can hear them in his mind, and somehow they are indeed true, although not historically true in the scientific sense, but at the same time he signalled no hesitation that Elijah killed Baal’s prophets or that the fortune-teller actually called forth that ghost. His article is strong evidence how the Biblical narrative and certain ways of reading biblical text has occupied a history of several layers, and give just one of all narratives from that place a position in the Swedish Christian’s mind.

Nyberg also visited the kibbutzim of Degania established in 1909 – the first kibbutz in the world – and Kinnéret established in 1911, located about 10 km south of Tiberias. These were described by Nyberg as “splendid model societies created by the hardest pioneering spirit.” What Nyberg saw in the Galilee meant a lot to him. He was full of respect and in the final sentence of the article Nyberg characterised the kibbutzim: “And in the Galilee lives, a rich pulsating modern life in the midst of the ancient history and all its memories.”⁵⁹² In 1952 Galilee was an area that was almost emptied of its Palestinian Arab population. In the spring of 1948 the Plan Dalet military campaign had been launched by Haganah and Irgun. It resulted in a mass flight of Arabs from Galilee. But Nyberg did not see abandoned Arab villages. In his article on 24 December, 1952, Nyberg mentioned the Arab refugees but he incorrectly said they fled when the armistice agreement was signed, that is, in the spring of 1949. It has been estimated that before the Arab-Israeli War started on 15 May’ 1948, the number of Palestinian refugees had already reached about 250,000. As Anthony Nutting said in a speech delivered under the auspices of the Council of American Judaism: “It would be more adequate to say that the refugees were the cause of the first

⁵⁹⁰ Nyberg 1953, ”Här sammansmälter historia och nutid till en harmonisk enhet”

⁵⁹¹ Nyberg 1953, ”Vi passerade Karmel där Elia dräpte Baals profeter.... Gilboa berg där Saul föll, och vid sidan av vägen En-dor, där spåkvinnan manade fram Samuels vålnad för den förskräckte Saul omedelbart före den ödesdigra striden.”

⁵⁹² Nyberg 1953, ”Och så lever i Galiléen, ett rikt pulserande modernt liv mitt uppe i forntiden och alla dess minnen.”

Arab-Israeli war, and not the result”.⁵⁹³ If the Arab refugees were the cause of the Arab-Israeli War they must have left before the war erupted. And it is well known that tensions in Palestine increased rather soon after the UN partition plan was adopted in November 1947. The UN Palestine Commission reported that from 30 November, 1947 through 1 February, 1948 the number of Arab casualties was 1,462 and the number of Jewish casualties was 1,106.⁵⁹⁴ During the summer of 1948, Count Bernadotte attempted to make Israel allow Palestinian refugees to return, as was mentioned above. By October 1948, when Count Bernadotte had been assassinated, the Acting UN mediator estimated there were 472,000 Arab refugees.⁵⁹⁵ In contrast to Count Bernadotte, Nyberg was mainly interested in the way Jews had “re-immigrated” to Palestine and not the rights of Palestinian Arab refugees to return.

In 1953 he reported that Arab refugees had left after the end of fighting and that the Jewish colonies implied that the past and the present had merged into a harmonious unity.

H.S. Nyberg – a summary

Nyberg was Chair and member of the Board of SvTI between 1954 and 1971. His participation offered the institution and the entire structure behind SvTI an impeccable academic reputation. His position in society gave SvTI a status quite different from its background in a low church Christian mission with an apocalyptic theology such as the one produced by Birger Pernow. So one may ask why a humanist and scholar like Nyberg joined? What did he have in common with Svenska Israelsmissionen and an apocalyptic leader such as Pernow?

One obvious connection between the two is that both Nyberg and Pernow were equally convinced of Christianity’s exclusive role in world history. Should Nyberg have studied Pernow he would probably have had difficulties with Pernow’s theology concerning the two roles ascribed to God, those of blessing and cursing. I don’t know if he did. But the theology and ideology produced by Nyberg on Israel and Palestine was not irreconcilable with that of Pernow. And this is where they meet.

Still, Nyberg has this conviction that the Bible is history, and it makes him use biblical references in relation to contemporary politics in ways that are questionable.

When Nyberg wrote the article in December 1952 based on his visit in Jerusalem, he began with a long quotation from a biblical text which referred

⁵⁹³ Cattán 1969, p. 49

⁵⁹⁴ Cattán 1969, p. 47

⁵⁹⁵ Cattán 1969, p. 52

to how God had given the land to Moses' people and how Moses could not enter the land. To Nyberg it was relevant to link the biblical text to the political circumstances of the 1950s. And in spite of his vast learning, when commenting on the events in 70 CE and the destruction of the Jewish temple, Nyberg said:

All Jews were driven away from the city – it is exactly like today – and soon all the Jews were exiled from the entire area of this part of Palestine”.⁵⁹⁶

In what sense could he argue that the situation in the first Christian century was exactly like the situation in the 1950's? Does his way of arguing not neglect 1900 years of political changes, the British Mandate and its policies, the Nazi genocide and all support for the State of Israel motivated by the atrocities committed in Europe. These atrocities were not part of the context 1900 years ago. The two situations were not identical.

The most apparent link between the apocalyptic message and the academic deliberations is found in the idea of Jews as a particular people having a particular home. Described in different terminology, Jews were seen by those working in SvTI as a people with a particular tribal and geographic origin. Both Pernow and Nyberg appear to have been convinced that Jews belonged in and should return to Palestine/Israel. They did not argue in favour of forcing Jews to leave Europe and both men were ardent critics of anti-Semitism. But both of them, along with Greta Andrén, displayed a construction of Jews that - however benevolent - excluded made Jews belong more in Palestine/Israel than in Europe. It never seems to occur to them that collective and individual identities are contextual constructions or that there are many people and many human beings all over the world who have migrated back and forth across the landscape over the centuries. With Mamdani we need to keep in mind that patterns of migration have constructed a broad variety of groups, political entities and several types of borders and frontiers. Nyberg formulates his fascination and his ideological position as eloquently, as ever; Jewish life and presence in Degania implied that he had seen “history and the present merge into a harmonious unity”.⁵⁹⁷

Anyone who has visited Degania is struck by the European architecture of its early 20th century countryside mansions. And when you visit the place, inhabitants are proud to tell you about Moshe Dayan, who came from there, and of other sons and daughters of the kibbutz who participated and sacrificed their lives in the many wars since 1948. While immigrants to Degania brought European culture with them in so many ways, Nyberg inhabitants of Degania are not described as Europeans but as Jews. When describing the

⁵⁹⁶ Nyberg 1952, ”Allt vad judar hette fördrevs från staden – det är alldeles som nu – och snart vore judarna landsflyktiga från hela denna del av Palestina”.

⁵⁹⁷ Nyberg 1953, ”Här sammansmälter historia och nutid till en harmonisk enhet”

Hebrew University he located it in a Western and European tradition. But still, it was the arrival of Jews to that country that had made Israel blossom.

But it is equally undeniable that not until the modern Jewish colonisers has the new era begun in the land.

That is what has made the land blossom. *That* is what has made the considerable natural resources of the land bear fruit.⁵⁹⁸

You get the impression from the accounts of Nyberg that when he arrived at Degania he felt that the Jews had come home.

As a learned Arabist, Nyberg was familiar with all the history of the region better than most specialists in Sweden. In Nyberg's assessment of the situation in 1948, he thought that the Arabs as the former owners of the land had not suffered, or lost anything as a consequence of the Jewish colonisation, on the contrary. He said that Arabs had benefited from the Jewish reimmigration. To him there was evidently no legitimate reason for Arabs to complain or to oppose the process of Jewish immigration and colonisation, even if they had lost their houses and their land. The basic idea is not unique in Europe. "Man proposes. God disposes."

Nyberg's way of dismissing the "mythograph" deserves a few reflections. I have not seen any comment where Nyberg assess Rudolf Bultmann. But the way he talks about the Bible as history I would think that Bultmann's idea of demythologizing the New Testament is not at all appreciated by Nyberg. In this way he stands closer to a reading of Biblical text where the Bible is assumed to deliver historic truth, that is, he stands closer to a reading of Biblical text which would not be apocalyptic in Pernow's sign-seeking sense fundamentalist way, but still, it gives the Bible an authority that transcends contextual interpretations. To Nyberg the Bible is not written by a mythograph. His way of assessing the return of Jews and their reimmigration to their land makes me judge him a Romantic nationalist of Herder's kind, and Isaiah Berlin's comment on Herder may shed some light on the discussion.

Herder was fascinated by the survival of the Jews; he looked upon them as a "most excellent example" of a Volk with its own distinct character. "Moses bound the heart of this people to their native soil." Land, common language, tradition, sense of kinship, common tradition, common law as freely accepted "covenant" – all these interwoven factors, together with the bond created by their sacred literature, enabled the Jews to retain their identity in dispersion – but especially the fact that their eyes remained focused upon their original geographical home – historical continuity, not race, is what counts.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹⁸ Nyberg 1948, "Men lika oförnekligt är att det först är med de moderna judiska kolonisterna som den nya tiden har brutit in över landet. Det är *det* som har fått marken att blomstra på nytt. Det är *det* som har fått landets icke föraktliga naturtillgångar att bära frukt."

⁵⁹⁹ Berlin 1976, p. 159. Note number 6.

The present study does lead me any further, but tentatively I would suggest that future studies on Nyberg, his view on the Bible and nationalism could be guided by this notion from Berlin, if one changed Herder to Nyberg in the quotation.

11. Refugees or returnees – reflections on the results

In the present study we have seen how the Swedish Theological Institute and its founders have regarded Jews moving from Europe to Palestine and Israel as if they were returning home. We have interpreted this thinking with tools developed by Hannah Arendt in her analysis of 19th century European racial thinking and we have used theories by Rudolf Bultmann in order to suggest that biblical text cannot be seen as an objective truth and also not as national ideology, but rather as a complex myth.

Churches and mission organisations are of course children of their time and their theology and general thinking are influenced by the discussions and ideals of their time. The first part of the 20th century was an extraordinarily violent and turbulent period. The European colonial structure was falling apart and once colonised people struggled for independence. In 1937, between two world wars and in the midst of a rising anti-Semitism in Europe, Birger Pernow, the director of Svenska Israelsmissionen said stated:

In North Africa we see how a large people are struck to the ground, and the people of South Africa are torn apart by racial struggles. India and China are fermenting. And what about old Christendom! One will need no prophetic insight to notice that the European cultivation is falling apart. We are on remnant ground. This creates agony and a sense of panic. The world's panic depends not only upon the panic at the stock-market, but on the demolished grounds in the world of the souls. The general collapse is linked with the collapse of faith.⁶⁰⁰

During the first few decades of the 20th century Sweden saw an increasing urbanisation and industrialisation, during which the material standards rose and the Swedish welfare state was built. The possibility for the individual citizen to influence and to make his and her voice heard gradually increased and Sweden became more democratic. A sawmill strike in Sundsvall, Sweden, in 1909, contributed to a new power-balance between labourers and

⁶⁰⁰ Pernow May 1937, p. 120-121. ”I Nordafrika se vi ett stort folk ligga slaget till marken, och Sydafrikas folk hålla på att sönderslitas av raskamp. Indien och Kina äro stadda i jäsning. Och den gamla kristenheten! Det tarvas ingen profetisk skarpsyn för att märka, att den europeiska odlingen håller på att falla samman. Alt säger oss, att vi stå på remnande grund. Detta skapar ångest, panikkänsla. Världspaniken bottnar ej endast i börspanik utan i raserad grund i själar-nas värld. Det allmänna sammanbrottet hänger samman med trons sammanbrott.”

industry. In 1921 both men and women, irrespective of income, were granted the right to vote. Major power-relations in society were changed.

But to the studied missionary organisation liberation of colonised people, equal rights and social reforms were not the right way to change society or bring about peace and security for all tormented peoples. As Pernow said above: "The general collapse is linked with the collapse of faith". Svenska Israelsmissionen was convinced world history was guided by God via his blessing and his curse. To them the Bible was not a complex myth, but a practical guide that told them how world history, now off the track, could get back on track. In order to understand this thinking we need, first of all, to realise that to them Christianity and the Bible replaced other sources of information and it provided them with both ideology and a model for how world history unfolded. Hence, we will need to decode their religious language and translate it into a secular one.

Earlier in this work we have seen how Steven Koblik assessed the role of Svenska Israelsmissionen during the Second World War. Koblik argued that SvIM was the Church of Sweden's expert on the "Jewish question."⁶⁰¹ Koblik made some reflections on the work of Svenska Israelsmissionen. He is describing Pernow's attitude to Jews as ambivalent,⁶⁰² which is possible only because Koblik did not study Pernow's theology. It is not ambivalent. Based on a quotation from Svenska Israelsmissionen's annual report in 1939, Ingvar Svanberg and Mattias Tydén have argued correctly, that Svenska Israelsmissionen knew that the Jews faced a catastrophe in Nazi Europe.⁶⁰³ But just like Koblik, they did not analyse the theology or other thinking of Svenska Israelsmissionen and the Swedish Theological Institute.

In this study their theology is analysed. And by using the method formulated on how Svenska Israelsmissionen and the Swedish Theological Institute related both to European Jews and Palestinian Arabs it is possible to translate their religious thinking into a secular one.

Jews – the problem and the solution

To Birger Pernow "The general collapse (in society) is linked with the collapse of faith." And to many in Svenska Israelsmissionen, the core of the religious matter was that Jews had refused to accept Jesus as Messiah. When Israel rejected Christ, Pernow explained, Israel betrayed the election. Here Israel failed, he claimed and here one may find the biggest fault of the Jew-

⁶⁰¹ Koblik 1987, p 9 & p. 88 "Dess enda mål var att omvända judar till luthersk tro, och den tjänstgjorde som kyrkans expert i frågor som berörde judarna."

⁶⁰² Koblik 1987, p 114. "Pernow blev aldrig kvitt sin ambivalenta inställning till judarna."

⁶⁰³ Svanberg & Tydén 1997, p. 200-201

ish people.⁶⁰⁴ Pernow argues that the consequences of this fault were immense and that it affected not only the Jews, but the entire world:

Had the ascended Lord in the moment of his elevation had an entire people of apostles – not merely a handful of men – to send into the world, what could not have happened! Then the Kingdom of God would have reached its promised fulfilment long ago and the world would have been saved much suffering.⁶⁰⁵

This was written by Pernow in 1943, when the Nazi Genocide of Jews was well known. How shall it be interpreted? What is he saying?

Pernow is arguing that the conversion of Jews to the Christian faith would be the solution to the problems of the world. Since I'm not satisfied with that interpretation the origins of problems in the world I have developed an analytic tool to decipher it.

People, history & Bible

To come to grips with the thinking in the Swedish Theological Institute and among its founders, I have focused on their way of describing the Jewish people, on how they describe the driving forces in history and on their way of reading biblical texts. One key is their interpretation of “people”. When looking at the concept from the perspective of a Republican national ideal, the “people” are those who are lacking power. According to the Swedish constitution all power emanates from the “people”. The “people” in this context is not defined by culture but by the fact that they are the majority. On the other hand, in a Romantic national perspective, the “people” are the cultural community, which is the base for the nation-state. Following the analysis of Hannah Arendt, the origins of anti-Semitism is found in 19th century racial thinking. In this thinking people had their own tribal and geographic origin. Jews were supposed to have come to Europe from Asia, and in order to build their nation-state they should return where they came from. This way we may translate the religious language concerned with the return of Jews, into a language that is intelligible on an ideological and secular arena. When talking of the Jewish people, most often Svenska Israelsmissionen had a Romantic national ideal in mind.

Harald Sahlin is the only one this structure that questioned the idea that Jews belonged in Palestine. He supported the idea of a Jewish state, but also

⁶⁰⁴ Pernow 1943, p. 11. ”Här svek Israel, och det är detta folks största skuld.”

⁶⁰⁵ Pernow 1943, p. 12. “Hade den himlafarne Herren I sin upphöjelses ögonblick haft till sitt förfogande ett helt folk av apostlar - istället för en handfull män – att sända ut i världen, vad kunde icke då ha skett! Då hade väl Guds rike nått sin utlovade fullbordan för länge sedan och världen skonats från mycket lidande.”

he supported Arthur Montgomery, who in a public debate in 1947, explicitly said that Jews belong in Europe, since they have lived there for centuries and have contributed to the culture. In 1947 Sahlin is also the only one in the material stressing that one have to listen to Palestinian Arabs in discussions on the political future of the Palestine.

H.S. Nyberg's support of the return of the Jewish people to their land is learned, elegant and subtle. He is not neglecting the significance of the influx of agricultural know-how and foreign investments, but he stresses the return of Jews to their home as the main reason behind the agricultural success in the State of Israel. While immigrants brought European culture with them in so many ways, and Hebrew University was described as a European institution, still Nyberg did not describe immigrant Jews in Palestine and in the State of Israel as Europeans but as Jews. According to him, it is as Jews, not Europeans, they make Israel blossom.

The life of Palestine, throughout the new period in history, has been characterised by an escalating impoverishment and decay that has been stopped only by the large Jewish re-immigration and colonization during this century. The battle now being waged between Arabs and the re-immigrated Jews is profoundly tragic. If one considers the time-span during which Arabs have inhabited the land and the cultural labour they have undertaken from time to time, Arabs have at least as strong a right to the land as the Jews. But it is equally undeniable that not until the [arrival of the] modern Jewish colonisers has the new era begun in the land.⁶⁰⁶

To Nyberg it is not only foreign investments and modern technology that brought a new era to the land. To him it was the re-immigration of Jews to their land which made the land blossom.

History interpreted

As mentioned earlier, Birger Pernow, including SvIM and the Swedish Theological Institute, explained the political and social collapse in Europe in the 1930's with a reference to a collapse of the Christian faith and not with secular arguments. What does this tell us about his idea of driving forces in history?

⁶⁰⁶ Nyberg 1948, "Palestinas liv under hela den nyare tiden kännetecknas av fortskridande utarmning och förfall som har hävts först med den stora judiska återinvandringen och kolonisationen i detta sekel. Den strid som nu föres mellan araber och dessa återinvandrade judar är djupt tragisk. Ser man på den tid araberna har bebott landet och det kulturella arbete de tidvis har utfört där så har araberna minst lika stor rätt som judarna till det. Men lika oförnekligt är att det först är med de moderna judiska kolonisterna som den nya tiden har brutit in över landet."

In February 1939 Pernow commented on the Kristallnacht and declared “Now, God is at work”.⁶⁰⁷ Pernow stressed his point that Christianity needed to wake up and improve, since, he said, time was short. Pernow was convinced:

God’s purpose with the present despair is assuredly, to purge his Christendom and to discipline the inattentive to improvement.⁶⁰⁸

The inattentive he had in mind were Jews in Europe. Pernow saw the Kristallnacht as “the beginning of a new epoch in the spiritual development of the Jewish people.”⁶⁰⁹ From 1938 throughout June 1941 Svenska Israelsmissionen worked actively to help Jewish Christian converts to leave Vienna. They managed to help some 3000 individuals flee. While doing this Svenska Israelsmissionen for some time had their office in the Gestapo Headquarters in Vienna. Both during that period and later, staff at Svenska Israelsmissionen have expressed with pride, that Svenska Israelsmissionen enjoyed the confidence of the authorities in Vienna at the time. When Göte Hedenquist was leaving his post in Vienna on April 1, 1940 Pernow wrote a brief article in *Missionstidning för Israel*.

Through his wisdom and good manner he has won the confidence of both the [German Nazi] authorities and the public, and our mission in Vienna is now well known and respected.⁶¹⁰

In 1983 Hedenquist summarised what the mission achieved at the bureau for migration:

Through this work – under the name of “Schwedische Mission Stockholm, Missionsstationen Wien” – more than 3,000 Jews and Christians of Jewish descent were saved (and brought) to various countries; a couple of hundred were sent to Sweden.⁶¹¹

These quotations shall not be understood as support for Nazism or for the Nazi policy as such. I suggest that they shall be understood as expressions of an idea that is closely linked with the theology and the overall view on history among staff in Svenska Israelsmissionen. In their view at that time, God is behind history; hence God is behind the political forces that make history

⁶⁰⁷ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 “Nu är Gud vid verket”.

⁶⁰⁸ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 “Guds syfte med den nuvarande nöden är förvisso att luttra sin kristenhet och tukta de ohörsamma till bättring”.

⁶⁰⁹ Pernow February 1939, p. 40

⁶¹⁰ Pernow April 1940, p. 104. ”Genom stor klokhet och taktfullhet har han vunnit myndigheternas och allmänhetens förtroende, så att vår mission i Wien nu är allmänt känd och aktad.”

⁶¹¹ Hedenquist 1983, p. 7

unfold. Therefore Svenska Israelsmissionen was proud to have earned the confidence of the Nazi authorities.

In the 21st century in Sweden such uncritical respect for power, and in particular the Nazi regime, is something that goes beyond what can be comprehended. But we need to remember that Christians and mission organisations especially, have a long record of teaching their disciples not to interfere in political matters. In mission studies this attitude has been identified by Stiv Jakobsson who studied Methodist missionaries and their assessment of slavery. These Methodists said:

With the politics of the country we never interfere, with the civil conditions of the slaves we have nothing to do; our only object, Sir, is to render them industrious and obedient, by enforcing upon them the principles of Christianity. Loyalty and subordination have ever been conspicuous characteristics of the Christian body to which we are attached.⁶¹²

Pernow explained his position to the Nazi authorities in 1938 with a reference to St Paul: "Thank God for all human beings, for all Kings and for all authorities".⁶¹³ Pernow reminds the reader that during St Paul's days Nero was the Roman Emperor and he concludes:

Assuredly the parish followed the apostle's advice, and they escaped as victors from the battle".⁶¹⁴

Hence, the theology produced was a variety of how to safeguard their own survival in the midst of what Nero, the Nazi authorities or any other authority would do. This was a variety of a pre-democratic political ideal where the ordinary human being should not interfere in politics. This attitude echoes the attitude described among 19th century missionaries like Peter Fjellstedt and Bishops of the Church of Sweden. And it exemplifies what Hannah Arendt is having in mind when talking about superstition.

The hatred of the racists against the Jews sprang from a superstitious apprehension that it actually might be the Jews, and not themselves, whom God had chosen, to whom success was granted by divine providence.⁶¹⁵

The five key figures in this study were not racists and they did not hate Jews, but some of them had a superstitious idea of history. While being obedient Christians, some people at Svenska Israelsmissionen was making sure that

⁶¹² Jakobsson 1972, p. 383

⁶¹³ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 "Så uppmanar jag nu framför allt därtill att man må bedja, åkalla, anropa och tacka Gud för alla människor, för konungar och all överhet, så att vi kunna föra et i allt lugnt och stilla liv på ett i allt fromt och värdigt sätt."

⁶¹⁴ Pernow February 1939, p. 43 "Förvisso följde församlingen aposteln's uppmaning – och de gick segrande ur striden."

⁶¹⁵ Arendt 1968, p. 242

they would get the success granted by divine providence. By praying for the authority and spreading the gospel they were doing what they, in their mind possibly could do, to help Jews.

The Bible - provider of facts and values or ambiguous myth

For both staff at Svenska Israelsmissionen and staff at the Swedish Theological Institute the Bible was an important source of inspiration. It provided Birger Pernow with guidelines and throughout this work we have found innumerable references to biblical scriptures that were considered historically true, as normative guidelines and moral support. In order to analyze how they read the Bible I have created two varieties of how to read the Bible. I call the first an apocalyptic reading and the other a poetic way of reading biblical texts. In the definition of “the apocalyptic reading” I focus on the apocalyptic idea that the bible is providing the reader with secret, historic knowledge, rather than the speculations on the near end of history, which is also common in apocalyptic thinking. Such end time speculations were not common in the studied material. In order to define the poetic reading I have made use of theories of Lars Hartman and Amos Wilder, who suggested the term “poetic”, and also of Rudolf Bultmann who has argued that the Bible should be seen as myth.

The real purpose of myth is not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man’s understanding of himself in the world in which he lives. Myth should be interpreted not cosmologically, but anthropologically, or better still, existentially.⁶¹⁶

Following Bultmann, what is important in biblical texts or in myth is not its imagery or the metaphors used to convey the message. Instead:

, the importance of the New Testament mythology lies not in its imagery but in the understanding of existence which it enshrines. The real question is whether this understanding of existence is true. Faith claims that it is, and faith ought not to be tied down to the imagery of New Testament mythology.⁶¹⁷

While studying both Svenska Israelsmissionen and the Swedish Theological Institute we may conclude that they did not read biblical text like Rudolf Bultmann, who was contemporary. The imagery used in the Bible – like land, people, hills, weather, flowers, time speculations, etc – are not seen

⁶¹⁶ Bultmann 1961, p. 10

⁶¹⁷ Bultmann 1961, p. 11

existentially, but turned into the Bible's centre and via the particular ideological angle, informed by their Romantic understanding of "people" turned into a support for a Jewish nation state. They do not discuss biblical text as the source of existential inspiration as Bultmann suggests. Their way of reading was to connect biblical imagery with concrete political and geographical facts around 1948. Greta Andrén really emphasised the imagery of the Bible, and through this, I would think,, she captured the imagination of thousands of visitors at the Swedish Theological Institute. She talked about the flowers, and the seasons, and the language, and the people of the Bible as if it was identical with the landscape around her.

Pernow was convinced that his assessment of world history, and his idea that Jews should live in Palestine all derived from the Bible. And this idea must be seen as expressions of a national ideology, one could call it support for a particular version of Zionism legitimised by his particular theology. There is an extensive debate on whether Holy Scripture and religion provide values and ideologies. And, of course, these texts and traditions do convey both values and ideology. But I argue that when a human being is formulating values and ideologies he or she is more dependent upon their own social security, their own level of income and ideologies in their own contemporary society. Welzel and Deutsch have argued that the level of industrial technology plays a significant role for changes in values in societies:

Societies tend to change their prevailing value orientation from more traditional (rigid) values to more secular-rational (permissive) when the rise of industrial technology increases human control over basic life risks and thus nurtures a basic sense of existential security, making traditional moral obligations superfluous.⁶¹⁸

Even if there are values in ancient texts, the reader, preacher and listener will always have to determine whether these values deserve to be defended. It is not possible to cut and paste motives or values from religious myth and apply them in entirely new setting centuries later. Because in that new setting values and ideology depends upon the "basic sense of existential security" in that particular situation. Differences in social contexts and differences in the "basic sense of existential security", and differing normative preferences explain why Christians all over the world interpret the same texts so differently. And with Benedict Anderson I would say that:

The extraordinary survival over thousands of years of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam in dozens of different social formations attests to their imaginative response to the overwhelming burden of human suffering – disease, mutilation, grief, age, death.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁸ Welzel & Deutsch 2007, p. 243

⁶¹⁹ Anderson 2006, p. 10

Concluding remarks

What unifies the studied key figures, is, first of all, an approach to Christian faith where it is seen as the only valid religious way, and secondly a support for the Jewish State in Palestine, but they all have their own particular blend of motives. They never expressed support for the Arab state which was part of the UN partition plan in 1947. It is quite clear that Pernow and the others in Svenska Israelsmissionen did not employ a historically critical approach to Biblical text, save for Harald Sahlin. Nyberg, the academic, had a learned approach to biblical text, but it was more historical than critical. Nyberg was not active in Svenska Israelsmissionen, only in the SvTI. Kosmala was a respected scholar in Judaism, but after my analysis I conclude that his own Christian belief and missionary zeal was his motivation. He studied Jews to get close to them, to be able to spread his message. Even though the approach to his mission objects may appear instrumental, almost like the one of Pernow, Kosmala, as far as I can judge, was still able to maintain a fair analysis and fair descriptions of Jews. But why did the learned H.S. Nyberg participate in all this? Again, he shared a firm belief in Christianity as the only religious creed. According to Nyberg, what was once – before the arrival of Christianity – perceived in terms of mythical statements, Nyberg argued, was absorbed by and expressed in one human being and it became real through this human being, Jesus of Nazareth. Throughout Isaiah, Nyberg emphasized, one could detect:

an undertone of excited gratitude over one man's saving self-sacrifice and wonderful, undeserved salvation from lethal danger – it is a tone that no mythograph can produce by magic from nowhere, it springs from life's own grief and relief from it. To us this tone is not unknown, it is from Good Friday.⁶²⁰

This work is not concerned with H.S. Nyberg's overall view on the Bible. I have only studied a few texts of him where he is reflecting on Israel and Palestine and referring to Biblical text. Biblical scholars would perhaps want to investigate into Nyberg's overall perspective on biblical text. Still, I would like to indicate some areas which, in my opinion, ought to be investigated further, but which requires a thorough study of his entire production. There are areas where Nyberg is not keeping a clear distance between his religious convictions on the one hand, and his scientific ambitions on the other. Nyberg, himself a person who is a devote Christian and a supporter of the Jewish state, commits the mistake described by Hobsbawm:

⁶²⁰ Nyberg 1942, p. 82. ”en underton av upprörd tacksamhet över en mans frälsande självutgivelse och underbar, oförtjänst räddning ur dödsfara – det är en ton som aldrig någon mytograf kan trolia fram ur intet utan som springer direkt fram ur livets egen vanda och lösningen ur den. Oss är denna ton icke obekant; den är långfredagens.”

To be a Fenian or an Orangeman, I would judge, is not so compatible, any more than being a Zionist is compatible with writing a genuinely serious history of the Jews; unless the historian leaves his or her convictions behind when entering the library or the study. Some nationalist historians have been unable to do so.⁶²¹

In the first place, Nyberg cannot accept that the author of Isaiah in fact is a mere mythograph. From the quotation above I conclude that at this point Nyberg did not consider the Bible as myth. And to him Isaiah was not produced by “magic from nowhere”. Then from where was it produced? His answer is implicit: from Good Friday or from divine intervention. To Nyberg the tone in Isaiah came from Good Friday. But Good Friday occurred long after Isaiah was written. Hence, this sentence seems to signal that Nyberg was prepared to give the text contents of an anachronistic type, as if a “tone” had actually been moving backwards through history. Of course all literature may include references to “life’s own grief and relief from it”. And we may interpret Nyberg as if he argued that to Christians with their particular set of interpretative frames that particular “tone” in Isaiah did not come from a “mythograph”, but from Good Friday. Still, in conclusion, I am curious to see research undertaken by a biblical scholar on, speaking with Hobsbawm, what Nyberg brought into his study.

Secondly, when Nyberg is travelling through the State of Israel in 1952 he is clearly fascinated. And Nyberg was fascinated by the “return” of Jews to Palestine. To him Jewish life and presence in kibbutz Degania implied that he had seen “history and the present merge into a harmonious unity”. To Nyberg, and to most of the others in Svenska Israelsmissionen and in the Swedish Theological Institute, in my interpretation, the intellectual bridge between history and the present that made possible this “harmonious unity” was the biblical word. Even though UN resolutions were sometimes mentioned, no other sources were used to describe the old contact between Jews and the country, but the Bible. This becomes apparent when he travelled through Israel with Benjamin Mazaar. His trip was filled with references to biblical events – as if they really had occurred at those places. The Bible was a bridge from the 20th century to Palestine immemorial.

This does not make Nyberg an apocalyptic Christian and he did not have a superstitious analysis of history. The point where there are clear connections between Nyberg and Pernow is their support for the Jewish State.

Also, Nyberg, like Pernow, were not really looking for available information about Palestinian Arab refugees or the size of the Arab area before and after the Arab-Israeli war in 1947 – 1949. In June 1948, as this war was raging, Nyberg commented upon the conflict. Contrary to the opinion of concerned Palestinian Arabs Nyberg stated that: “Life has become easier to live

⁶²¹ Hobsbawm 2003, p. 13

for all, not the least for the Arabs themselves.⁶²² Nyberg resembles Pernow also in adopting this type of patronising attitude to Palestinian Arab perspectives on the political conflict.

An emphasis on the return of people to their origin risk both to question and to conceal an analysis of society and politics where power and socio-economic factors are key elements. This risk has to be taken into account both regarding Europe's and Palestine/Israel's history. A second reason why socio-economic factors and power are neglected is the superstitious view on history, found among some in the materiel. If God almighty are steering history then there is no point paying attention to power structures or labour to achieve social and political change. And thirdly, if norms and ideology stem derive from religion, then how shall we interpret Welzel & Deutch? In my view, arguments for religion as the base for values and norms questions Welzel & Deutch secular analysis.

Hannah Arendt was convinced that her historic period was "witnessing the gigantic competition between race-thinking and class-thinking for dominion of the minds of modern men".⁶²³ She viewed ethnicity and class thinking where as two different approaches to explain social change. This study has indicated what role religion may assume in this gigantic competition. Theologians may either support a class related secular analysis of history and bible, or support an interpretation of history and social change which is based on ethnicity, religion and elements which stem from European racial thinking from the early 19th century. These two ways of thinking are incompatible. Rudolf Bultmann did not produce theology in relation to the conflict studied, but, the way he focused the human being's existential situation influence what type of ideology his theology may legitimize. Bultmann was not, and here he differs from all five key figures discussed above, discussing "peoples". As mentioned above, SvIM's emphasis on Jews as a people – and not individuals – made Besserman characterise SvIM as being in opposition to crucial ideas emanating from the Enlightenment.⁶²⁴ Probably this is one point where a deeper analysis of Swedish theology in relation to Jews and Palestinian Arabs may start.

The analytic tools produced in this thesis do not bring me any further. So, in order to analyse Nyberg properly we need sharper tools. I suggest that the intersection between history, bible and ideology is one area that should be investigated further.

In relation to contemporary political and social problems the Swedish Theological Institute with its founders emphasized – in different ways - the Bible and the Christian faith as the sole provider of a reliable solution. In this

⁶²² Nyberg 1948, "Livet har blivit lättare att leva för alla, inte minst för araberna själva."

⁶²³ Arendt 1968, p. 161

⁶²⁴ Besserman 1991, p. 72

way they resemble the fundamentalists described in the Chicago project in 1990's. Previously I have described Harald Sahlin as a transitional figure, but possibly all individuals studied could be characterized that way. Many in Svenska Israelsmissionen advocated a pre-democratic view on how society should be organized and they argued in support for a superstitious view on history. In this view on history the human being was made into a mere pawn in God's chess game.

For all of the studied individuals Jerusalem's own vibrant city life, pulsating of its particular multiculturalism, developed over millennia, was more or less neglected. Sahlin visited other sermons and lectures, and he was interested in the city. But still, to him no sermons were good, and he questioned why Midsummer's day was not celebrated in Jerusalem. People in the Swedish Theological Institute did not explore and they did not enrich themselves in the city's rich history, cultural and social life. They were mainly interested in pursuing their own missionary activity. Dutch 19th century theologian Johannes Christian Hoekendijk has described the missionary zeal of many Western Christians in this period, and he has captured the agony and panics which Pernow has expressed. To Hoekendijk this was mostly: "a flurried activity to save the remnants of a time now irrevocably past."⁶²⁵ They were somehow lacking curiosity and they did not appreciate what the Chicago project on Fundamentalisms observed has called Christianity's inherent ambiguities.

Possibly new ways of creating Christian interpretations of Bible, history, peoples and nationalism can be developed where religious text is seen more as poetry and less as a means of defining political and social borders. Possibly Jews, Christians, Muslims and others can enjoy the company of other religions instead of creating religiously motivated social ideals where sections of the population are not supposed to move away, as refugees or as returnees.

⁶²⁵ Hoekendijk 1950, p. 163

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Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek

Tage Erlander, reserapport Israel 1962.

Arbetarrörelsens arkiv och bibliotek

Box 1124

111 81 Stockholm

Besöksadress: Upplandsgatan Tel: 08-412 39 29

e-mail: forskarexpedition@arbark.se

Audiovisuella medier

(fd States ljud och bildarkiv)

Visiting address:

Karlavägen 98, Stockholm

Postal address:

Box 24124,

104 51 Stockholm

Telefon: +46-8-783 37 50

E-mail: foexp@kb.se

Bohusläns föreningsarkiv

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Bohusläns föreningsarkiv

Box 403

451 19 Uddevalla

Visiting address:

Bohusläns Museum, Uddevalla

Tel: +46-522 - 370 11

Fax: +46-522- 65 65 05
E-mail: info@bohusarkiv.se

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Sysslomansgatan 31, Uppsala, Sweden.

Tel: +46-18-16 99 92

e-mail: kyrkokansliets.arkiv@svenskakyrkan.se

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www.gcuh.org

36 Madison Avenue

Madison, NJ 07940-1434

(973) 408-3189

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Rädda Barnen, medlemsblad för Föreningen Rädda Barnen, April-Juni 1949.

Riksarkivet Arninge
Visiting address:
Mätslingan 17, TÄBY
Fax: +46-10-476 72 20
Tel: +46-10-476 72 50

Riksarkivet Marieberg, Stockholm
Visiting address:
Fyrverkarbacken 13,
Marieberg, Stockholm

Harald Sahlin family archives

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Harald Sahlin's family archives
c/o Erland Bohlin
Kyrkogatan 20,
702 10 Örebro, Sweden
e-mail. erland_bohlin@hotmail.com
Soon it will be sent to Carolina Rediviva, Uppsala University Library

Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem

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Swedish Theological Institute, Jerusalem
Postal address
Swedish Theological Institute
PO BOX 37
IL 910 00 Jerusalem, Israel

Visiting address
Profeternas Gata 58 (58 Rehov Haneviim)
Jerusalem, Israel
Telefon: (+972) 02 - 625 38 22
Fax: (+972) 02 - 625 44 60
E-mail: sti@swedtheol.co.il

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Carolina Rediviva (UUB), Uppsala University Library, Sweden
Handskrifts- och musikenheten
Tel: +46-18-471 39 53
e-mail: handskriftochmusik@ub.uu.se

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Arabic summary

لاجئون أو عائدون
يهود أوروبيون، عرب فلسطينيون و المعهد اللاهوتي
السويدي في القدس حول عام 1948

حظيت دولة إسرائيل بعد قيامها بدعم العديد من السويديين إذ اعتبرت ملجأ لليهود، هذا الشعب الذي كاد أن يباد في أوروبا خلال الحرب العالمية الثانية. و جاء تأسيس منظمة "المساعدة السويدية لإسرائيل" في استوكهلم تعبيراً عن هذا الرأي في الرابع من يناير 1951. و تمكنت هذه المنظمة من جمع ما لا يقل عن مليون كراون سويدي في خلال سنة واحدة بعد تأسيسها، استخدمت في بناء 75 وحدة سكنية بنيت بأخشاب سويدية في قرية كفار اخيم الإسرائيلية. و حظيت هذه الحملة حينها بدعم واسع من أعضاء البرلمان السويدي و من النقابات كما أيدها أعضاء الحزب الاشتراكي الديمقراطي و الليبراليون و أساتذة الجامعات ورئيس الأساقفة و أغلبية الكنائس البروتستنتية و المنظمات التبشيرية المسيحية كإرسالية السويد إلى إسرائيل التي أسست المعهد اللاهوتي السويدي في القدس عام 1947. و قد حضر مدير إرسالية السويد إلى إسرائيل برجر برنو شخصياً حفل افتتاح مقر المنظمة في إسرائيل عام 1951 قبل انضمامه إلى لجنة المنظمة التنفيذية.

استقبلتني ملكة جانتس في بيتها في كفار اخيم في نيسان 2005، عجوز روت لي قصة حياتها و كيف انتهى بها المطاف إلى تلك البقعة المعينة من الأرض. ولدت ملكة في المجر، ثم أدخلت مع الكثيرين من أترابها في معسكر بيرغن بيلسن في ألمانيا النازية. هناك ضعفت و مرضت و وصل وزنها إلى 27 كيلو فقط حتى قام الجيش البريطاني بتحرير المعتقلين في أيار 1945. و في فلم تصويري أخذته الجنود البريطانيون للمعتقلين تظهر ملكة جانتس كشبح امرأة متجول يلقي بنظرات فارغة صوب عدسة الكاميرا و قد ظهرت عليه آثار الجوع و الإنهاك. كانت ملكة جانتس واحدة من 15000 معتقل نقلوا إلى السويد في الحافلات البيضاء التابعة للصليب الأحمر السويدي تحت قيادة فولكي برنادوت. استعادت ملكة صحتها و قوتها بعد سنة و نصف في جنوب السويد ثم سافرت عام 1947 إلى

فلسطين، و على متن السفينة التي نقلتها إلى فلسطين التقت بزوجها و استقرا معا بعد وصولهما في كفار اخيم حيث سكنت حتى اليوم.

عند زيارتي للموشاف سألت إحدى بنات ملكة التي كانت في عمري عما تعرفه عن ماضي المنطقة التي بنيت فيها بلدة كفار اخيم. و علمت منها أن حوالي 900 شخص من عرب فلسطين كانوا يسكنون قرية اسمها قسطينة في هذه المنطقة قبل أن قامت كتبية جيفاتي التابعة لقوات الدفاع الإسرائيلية بطردهم منها. سألت بنت ملكة عن رأي سكان كفار اخيم اليوم في مصير أهل قسطينة فقالت لي: "لا نتكلم عنهم"، ولم تفتح معي الموضوع ثانية.

في كانون الأول 2007 قمت بزيارة مخيم اللاجئين في عروب الواقع بضع كيلومترات من كفار اخيم شمال الخليل في الضفة الغربية. و في عروب التقيت ن. ن. خليل، موظف في السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية و ابن عف سلمان خليل و قد أراني جواز سفر والده الذي كان ما يزال بحوزته. و قد صدر الجواز في القدس في الثاني من تموز 1946 ، و قال لي أن والده عف سلمان كان يسكن في قسطينة. و لكن مع انتهاء صلاحية الجواز في الثاني من تموز 1951 كانت حملة دعم كفار اخيم في السويد في أوجها بينما كان ن. ن. خليل صبيا صغيرا يلعب في أوحال مخيم اللاجئين في عروب حيث ولد، و كان ما يزال في رحم أمه عندما أجبرت عل مغادرة بيتها في قسطينة في تموز 1948.

تأسست الإرسالية السويدية إلى إسرائيل في استوكهلم عام 1875. و فكرة أن اليهود ينتمون إلى فلسطين كانت من الأفكار السائدة حينذاك و إن لم تكن الفكرة الأساسية، إذ كان هناك هدفا آخر من الإرسالية ألا و هو نشر المسيحية بين اليهود، و لم تكن فلسطين فقط ملجأ لليهود المطاردين في أوروبا من وجهة نظر الإرسالية و لكنهم اعتبروها حقا موطنهم الأصلي. و من وجهة نظر الإرسالية السويدية لم يكن اليهود الذين هاجروا إلى فلسطين مجرد مهاجرين، كبقية المهاجرين الأوروبيين إلى الولايات المتحدة في بداية القرن العشرين، و لم ير هؤلاء المسيحيين في اليهود مستعمرين أوروبيين يقيمون مستعمرات أوروبية في غرب آسيا، بل نظرت الإرسالية إلى هجرة اليهود إلى فلسطين على أنها عودة إلى وطنهم الأصلي، حيث قاموا بإعادة بناء هذا الوطن. و هنا أصل إلى المشكلة الأساسية في دراستي للموضوع :

1. كيف نقوم بوصف و تحليل فكرة أن اليهود الذين عاشوا في أوروبا و هاجروا منها إلى فلسطين قد عادوا إلى وطنهم؟

و قد قام المعهد اللاهوتي و مؤسسه (من بينهم الدكتور هارالد سالين) مرة واحدة فقط باستفتاء بين عرب فلسطين كانت نتيجته أن هناك شعب واحد فقط له الحق في البلاد، ألا و هو الشعب الفلسطيني.

2. المشكلة الأخرى تكمن في تعامل علماء مسيحيين كالبروفسور ه. س. نيبيرج في جامعة أبساله و عضو في المجمع السويدي، مع المسيحيين المتشددين كبرجر برنو، مدير الإرسالية السويدية إلى إسرائيل. و السؤال هنا هو ما الذي يجمع بين الأستاذ الجامعي و المسيحي المتشدد؟ تأسيس المعهد اللاهوتي السويدي بين قوة المواطنين و عجزهم

الشفقة على الفقراء و حماية الأقوياء

في فبراير 1939 و بضعة أشهر بعد ليلة البلور النازية في تشرين الثاني 1938 و الهجوم الشرس على كنائس اليهود و ممتلكاتهم في ألمانيا قال برجر برنو في محاوره له أنه ليست هناك فائدة للمسيحيين من وراء انتقاد العنف.

"و لكن ما بوسعنا أن نفعل الآن؟ أجب علينا أن نواجه العنف؟ لا فائدة تجني من وراء ذلك. هل نواجه العنف بالمزيد من العنف؟ ليست تلك بطريقتنا كمسيحيين. لقد قمنا بمناقشة فكرة النهضة الروحية و هذا أهم ما يمكن أن نقوم به في الوقت الراهن." (1)

لم يدعم برنو الاعتراض على العنف، بل أمر بالقيام بنهضة روحية، و كان يرى في الجرائم المرتكبة ضد اليهود في تشرين الثاني 1938 "نهاية عصر قديم و بزوغ عصر جديد في التطور الروحي للشعب اليهودي". (2) كان مكتب الإرسالية السويدية لشعب إسرائيل و مكتب الجستابو يقعان آنذاك في نفس المبنى ، و قد رأينا من قبل كيف ترك جوتي هادنكفيست منصبه في فيينا في نيسان الأول 1940 بعد أن كتب برنو مقالة قصيرة في مجلة الإرسالية قال فيها:

"بفضل حكمته و حسن تصرفه حظي على ثقة السلطات (النازية) و الجمهور في آن واحد، و قد أصبحت الآن إرساليتنا في فيينا معروفة و محترمة." (3) يبدو من ذلك أن كسب ثقة السلطات النازية كان جديرا بالثناء في رأي برنو، و لاهوتية البركة و اللعنة المعروضة أعلاه تؤيد هذا الانطباع، و لكن كانت الإرسالية السويدية ضد مناهضة السامية و كانت تشفق على اليهود كونهم ضحايا المحرقة النازية. كان على الإرسالية أن تتملق إزاء السلطات النازية حتى لا تقوم تلك بعرقلة جهودهم الدعوية، و من هنا كانت في رأيي الخاص تهب تلك السلطات دورا تلعبه في الخطة الإلهية. من هنا كانت لاهوتية هذه الإرسالية تقدم الحماية للسلطات النازية.

بعد مرور عقد من الزمان قام برنو بترجمة مقالة لحنا هورنرد، و هي مبشرة انجليكانية مقيمة في القدس، إلى السويدية في مجلة الإرسالية، و استنادا إلى هورنرد قام برنو بمناقشة نتائج الحرب بين اليهود و العرب الفلسطينيين في فلسطين. وجد هورنرد و برنو تفسيراً لنتيجة هذه الحرب في كتاب حزقيال، فصل 36، و كانت أهم مميزات هذه العلاقة كما فسرتها هورنرد هي الفوضى المتفشية بين الجيوش العربية التي أدت إلى هزيمتها. كانت هورنرد تعتقد أن العرب أقوى بكثير من اليهود و لكنها فوجئت بانتصار دولة إسرائيل و استندت في تفسيرها إلى مقطع في الكتاب المقدس من كتاب التثنية 11:25:

"لا يقف إنسان في وجهكم. الرب إلهكم يجعل خشيتكم و رعبكم على كل الأرض التي تدوسونها كما كلمكم."

اعتقد برنو و هورنرد أن الرب وضع الرعب في قلوب الجنود العرب، فكانت النتيجة هي كارثة اللاجئين التي نتجت عن انتصار اليهود كما نعرفها و اغتصاب الأرض من أهلها الذين تركوها فرارا.

"سؤال ثالث يأتي إلى الذهن: هل كان اليهود محقين في اغتصابهم لأرض الفلسطينيين؟ و كيف يمكننا البت في هذا الموضوع؟" (4)

لم ترد هورنرد أن تتحاز إلى أي من الأطراف، و لم تجرؤ على إصدار حكم على مجرى الأحداث في فلسطين، و كيف لها ذلك و في اعتقادها أن الرب ينشر بمشيتته الرعب في البلاد. كانت فقط تراقب الخطة الإلهية و هي تحت التنفيذ. قام المؤرخ استيف ياكبسون بوصف أحد النماذج التي كانت قد بدأت في الظهور في دراسته لرأي الإرساليين الميثوديين في العبودية:

"لا نتدخل أبدا في سياسة البلاد، و لا شأن لنا بأحوال العبيد المدنية. غرضنا الوحيد يا سيدي هو أن نعلمهم الاجتهاد و الطاعة من خلال فرض مبادئ المسيحية عليهم، فالولاء و الخضوع كانا دائما من مميزات المنظمة المسيحية التي نؤمن بها." (5)

كان هؤلاء الإرساليون يفسرون فهمهم لعدم الانحياز في سياسة البلاد عبر تمسكهم بمبدأ الولاء و الخضوع للسلطة و أصحاب الملك. و هناك مواقف مشابهة لمؤسسي المعهد اللاهوتي السويدي. لم يهدف برنو إلى معارضة الحكم النازي، بل كان هدفه نشر الإحسان و النهضة الروحية كوسيلة للتأثير. نظرا إلى الأحداث التاريخية في فلسطين و إسرائيل كان برنو مهتما بهجرة اليهود و ما أدت إليه من تصادمات عسكرية. و لكن من الغريب أنه لم يقدّر بتحليل استراتيجي لقوة المقاتلين العسكرية. قام بذلك آخرون مثل ريجرد كروسمان، عضو البرلمان البريطاني الذي قرأه سالين، و استنتج من تحليله أن الجانب اليهودي كان أقوى بكثير عسكريا من الجانب العربي. (6) نعرف من تقارير الأمم المتحدة أن الجانبين قاما بهجوم متبادل من آخر 1947 حتى 1948 و أن الجانب الإسرائيلي تمكن من السيطرة تدريجيا، و كما أثبتت البحوث المتتالية منذ ذلك الوقت تمكنت المجموعات اليهودية من تطوير قدرة عالية على إنتاج السلاح و شن الحملات بينما لم تكن هذه القدرة متوفرة عند الفلسطينيين. (7) و حسب تفسير برنو قام الرب بنشر الرعب على الأرض بين العرب و بالتالي دعم بذلك انتصار الجانب اليهودي. نستنتج من ذلك أن المسيحي حسب تفسير برنو لا يسعه أن يتمرد على السلطة أو الشك في صحتها بما أنها نابعة من الرب. في نظر هورنرد و برنو تختفي الاعتبارات الأخلاقية و الإنسانية عندما يتدخل الرب في تطور الأمور. لم يكن بوسعهما رؤية تراكم القوة في المجتمع بسبب جوهر تفسيرهم الذي كان خرافيا فيما يتعلق بفهمهم للتاريخ و رؤيوي فيما يتعلق بنص الكتاب المقدس و القومية الرومانتيكية، و كي يحل المشكلة منحا قوة السلاح دورا في الخطة الإلهية و اعتبر أن الرب يحمي الأقوياء بين اليهود و الفلسطينيين على السواء. بالطبع كانا يشفقان على الفلاحين الفلسطينيين الفقراء الذين أرغموا على ترك بيوتهم و أرض الأسلاف، و لكن هذه الشفقة كانت كشفتهم على اليهود إثر ليلة البلور في 1938، فلم تقم الإرسالية السويدية بانتقاد السلطة في كلتا الحالتين، لا النازية و لا الصهيونية.

لم يكن هناك قاعدة أخلاقية يمكن إتباعها في نقد العنف الزائد في نظر لاهوتية الإرسالية السويدية، إذ لم تر أمامها محنة الكائن البشري بل جماعات خالدة في طريقها عبر تاريخ يسيطر عليه الرب سيطرة كاملة، فكان على اليهود أن يعودوا إلى أرضهم كما أراد لهم الرب، و كان على الفلسطينيين أن يتخلوا عن أرضهم كما أراد لهم الرب كذلك، و على البشر أن يتقبلوا إرادة الرب دون تذمر.

هذا النوع من التفكير يجعلنا نتفهم لماذا لا يكثر المسيحيون الغربيون أحيانا لقدر الضعفاء حول العالم، يهودا كانوا أم غير يهود، و يدل هذا البحث بين أشياء أخرى على ضرورة التفريق بين الأخلاق و اللاهوت و عدم الخلط بين إرادة الرب و العمليات السياسية، و أن على كل إنسان أن يتحمل مسئولية أفعاله و تقاعسه عن مواجهة العنف و الاستبداد.

(1) برنو، شباط 1939، ص 42

(2) برنو، شباط 1939، ص 40

(3) برنو، نيسان 1940، ص 104

”Genom stor klokhet och taktfullhet har han vunnit myndigheternas och allmänhetens förtroende, så att vår mission i Wien nu är allmänt känd och aktad.”

(4) برنو، 1950، ص 14

(5) ياكسون 1972، ص 383

(6) كروسمان 1947

(7) موريس 2004، ص 16 و 31 :

”Moreover the Yishuv had advanced arms production capacity.”

إن التساؤل الذي يبرز الآن لماذا تعامل الأكاديميين السويديين مع الإرسالية السويدية إلى إسرائيل في هذا الوقت؟ إن الشخصية الأكاديمية التي اخترت التركيز عليها في البحث هو أستاذ الدكتور س. ه. نيبيرج ، والمعروف عربيا عضوا في المجمع السويدي منذ عام 1948.

إن الإرسالية السويدية إلى إسرائيل مع المجمع السويدي أنتجوا فكرة عودة اليهود إلى الوطن الأم وتناولوها من عدة زوايا والفكرة مبنية على أن اليهود أساسا من فلسطين وان فلسطين مملوكة لهم والتي تبناها وامن فيها الفريقين وهذا يفسر التعاون السلس بين الأكاديميين و اللاهوتيين في هذا المجال. و في عام 1952 أمضى ه. س. نيبيرج مدة شهر واحد في القدس. جنبا إلى جنب مع بنيامين مزار ، عالم الآثار وعيد الجامعة العبرية أن ذاك.

وفي هذه الأثناء قام ه. س. نيبيرج بزيارة إلى منطقة الجليل. الأيام التي قضاها في الجليل أعطت ه. س. نيبيرج رؤيا جديدة لإسرائيل ولقد قال عنها (لم تكن مثل القدس إطلاقا).

إن اليومين التي أمضيتها في الجليل أعطتني تصور مختلف تماما عن إسرائيل أكثر من تقسيم القدس هنا في كيبوتس (ديغانا الجليل) التاريخ والماضي متجانسا ومندمجين بشكل متناغم تماما. واقترح ه. س. نيبيرج البناء والوجود اليهودي كجزء من التاريخ والأرض في فلسطين / إسرائيل وهذا يجسر جميع فرص الخلاف بين الأكاديميين مثل ه. س. نايبيرج واللاهوتيين مثل برونو رئيس الإرسالية السويدية إلى إسرائيل.

لقد أوجد نيبيرج القاسم المشترك بين زمن الكتاب المقدس والوقت الحاضر. في عام 1952 علق نيبيرج علي عام 70 ميلادية في القدس وقال ان الهيكل اليهودي قد تم إحراقه بالنيران في وقت لاحق.

ولقد طرح ه. س. نيبيرج فرضية جمع جميع اليهود الذين كانوا طردوا من مدينة القدس في مثل هذا اليوم وإعادتهم حالا إلى هذا الجزء من فلسطين كل اليهود الذين كانوا في المنفى يعودوا. وهذا مجرد فرضيه لمحاولة فهم التاريخ وهي مشكوك في صحتها ككل شيء اليوم. الأحداث في 70 ميلادية و عام 1952 ليست هي نفسها. ولكن لنيبيرج هناك وحدة وطنية بين كل يهودي في النص ويهودي في بالنسية الشارع ، ووحدة بين الحالة القديمة حيث عاش اليهود في الماضي والوضع السياسي الحالي لنيبيرج الكتاب المقدس ليس الشعر. إنما الكتاب المقدس يقترب من الكشف عن الحقائق المخفية. إن هذه طريقة تتجاهل قرون من التغيير السياسي و تتجاهل كثيرا من الأمور على سبيل المثال الحرب في فلسطين وإسرائيل 1947-1949. بالرغم من أن هذه التغييرات كان لها آثار واضحة ومحددة وكذلك فإن بعض العناصر السياقية لم تكن في متناول اليد حول عام 70 م.

وأنتي أتفهم فرضية نيبيرج والتي تهدف إلى إعادة توطين اليهود في بلد يعني لهم أهمية خاصة من عدة جوانب وخصوصاً الأهمية الدينية.

لقد كان برونو شديد الوضوح في هذا الشأن لكن نيبيرج غير مباشر ولقد قال: إن المعركة التي تدور رحاها الآن بين العرب واليهود المهاجرين مأساوية بشكل عميق. إذا ما أخذنا في الاعتبار الفترة الزمنية التي سكنها العرب لهذه الأرض والعمل الثقافي الذي قاموا به من وقت لآخر يتضح أن العرب لديهم الحق في هذه الأرض على الأقل بنفس القوة مع اليهود. ولكن من المهم بالقدر الذي لا يمكن إنكاره أن المستعمرين الجدد اليهود قد بدءوا عصراً جديداً على هذه الأرض والذي جعل الأرض تزهر وتخرج مواردها وتحمل ثمارها. بالنسبة لنيبيرج المعركة بين العرب و المهاجرين اليهود كانت مأساوية ، ولكن اليهود قد جلبوا شيئاً غير عادي لهذا البلد شيء استثنائي والذي يرغب أن يسميه برونو ببركة الرب. إن نيبيرج يرى أن إعادة توطين اليهود بهذه الأرض قد أنشأت اتصال وعلاقة شبه صوفية بين الناس والأرض نفسها. وإني أميل إلى رأي نيبيرج كزعيم قومي للرومانسية الوطنية السويدية الذي يشبه الراعي في تفسيره للإنسانية والقائل بأن كل الناس تستطيع أن تحدد مصيرها السليم و الوحيد فقط حين تنتمي لراعي الأمة.

وان الثقافة والقومية ترتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً. وانه ينظر إلى الثقافة باعتبارها جوهر الشعوب ، وكل شعب له ما يخصه من سمات محددة تتواءم مع الزمان والجغرافيا ، والتي تحدد معالمه ومستقبله. وفكر و ثقافة الرعاة هذه أدخلت مفاهيم ومصطلحات جديدة ذات طابع وطني مثل شعبي و الروح الوطنية والأغنية شعبية والوطنية و كل شعب يحدد روحه الوطنية الخاصة به. وكذلك كل ثقافة في نفس الوقت تحدد ظروفها الخاصة ، وهذه الثقافة والشخصية تشارك في العملية التي تؤدي إلى تحقيق ذاتها الإنسانية.

وان هذا الفكر يجب أن لا يؤخذ باعتبارات حصرية أو استعمارية ولكن يؤخذ على أساس انه السبيل الوحيد للشعب ليقوم بدوره التاريخي. وأود أن أقول على الرغم من أن فكرة الرومانسية الوطنية عند تصديرها من أوروبا إلى فلسطين / إسرائيل تهمل التاريخ والديموغرافيا في تلك المنطقة إلا ان التنفيذ الناجح للرومانسية الوطنية في فلسطين / إسرائيل اعتمد على من يملك القوة والسلطة.

ان الأكاديميون والمسيحيين اللاهوتيين السويديين كانوا متحدون في طريقة قراءة النص الانجيلي على انه يعطي معلومات من التاريخ ، وأيضاً يعطي سياسية وطنية مثالية محددة.

إن الأساس المعياري والإيديولوجي لهذا الفكر يقترب من الرومانسية المثالية الوطنية الأوروبية ، والتي تفرض على فلسطين والعالم العربي.

وهذا المثل الأعلى وهذا الفكر الوطني يعني أنه يوجد شعب واحد لديه مكانة خاصة و بعض السمات الخاصة وهؤلاء هم اليهود واليهود فقط وحدهم الذين يجب أن يعيشوا في فلسطين / إسرائيل. والعرب لا يملكون مثل هذا الحق في العيش في فلسطين ، أو أي اتصال من هذا القبيل بالرومانسية الوطنية المتعلقة بهذه الأرض.

وعلى الرغم من الاحتجاجات العربية ، في عام 1940 فإن المجمع السويدي يعتقد أن العرب قد استفادوا من وصول المهاجرين اليهود ومن الدولة اليهودية. ولهذا فإنني اخلص للقول أن المركز و الوصف الملائم لهذا الوضع بالأحرى هو هيمنة.

Translation to Arabic; Ingvar Rydberg and Shareef Abu Watfa

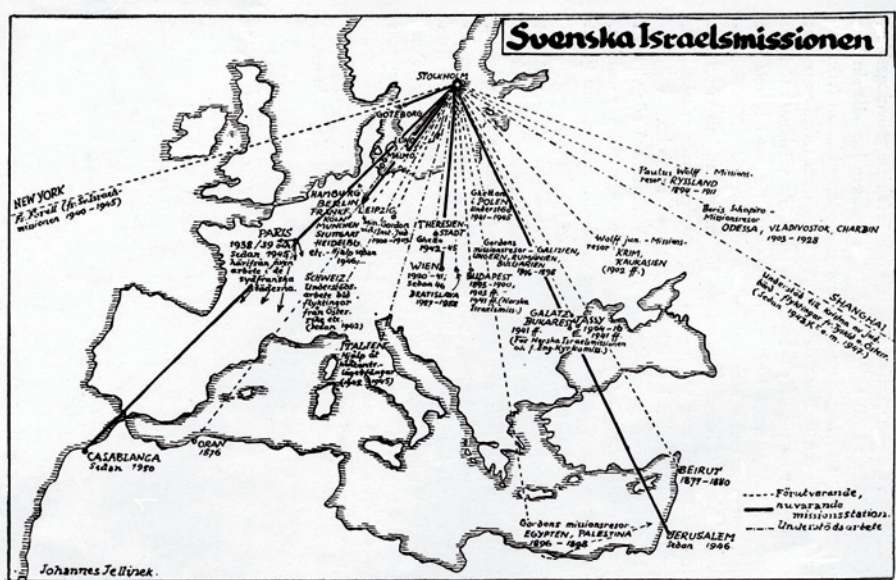
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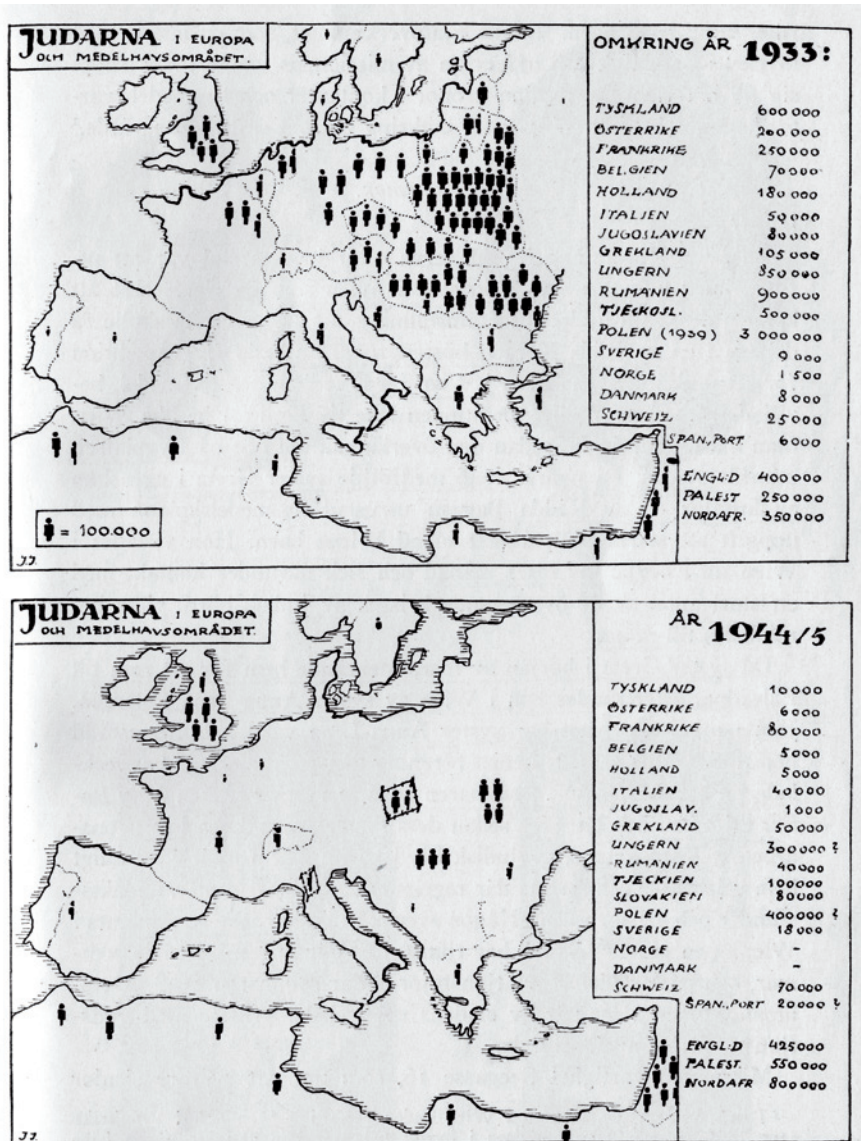
Svenska Israelsmissionen in Europe



Reprint from Pernow, *För Sions skull*, 1950, p 8

Appendix 2

Jews in Europe in 1933 and in 1944

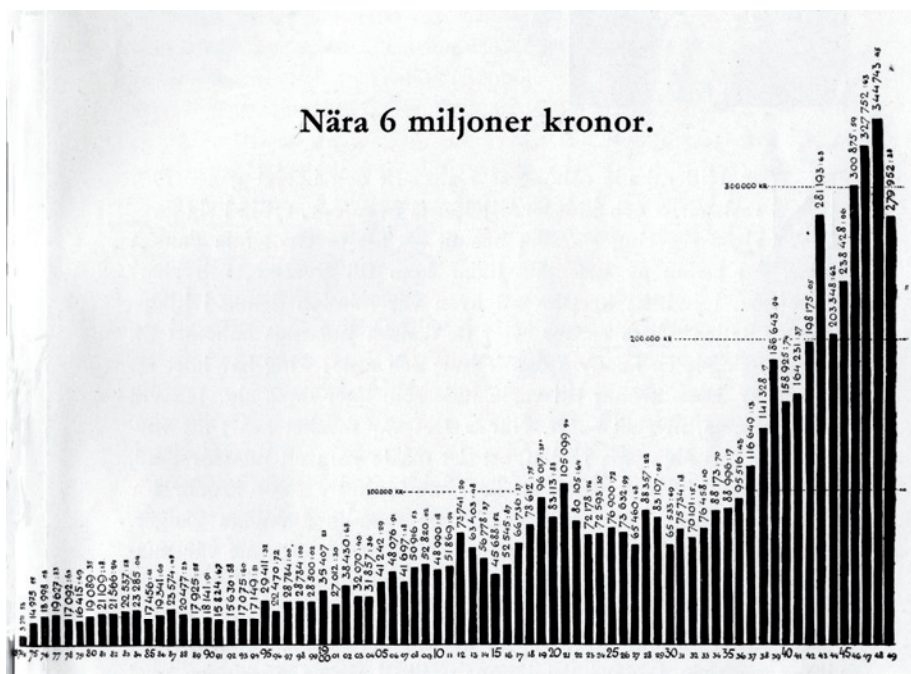


Den nationalsocialistiska judeförföljelsen 1933—1945.

Reprint from Pernow, *För Sions skull*, 1950, p 35

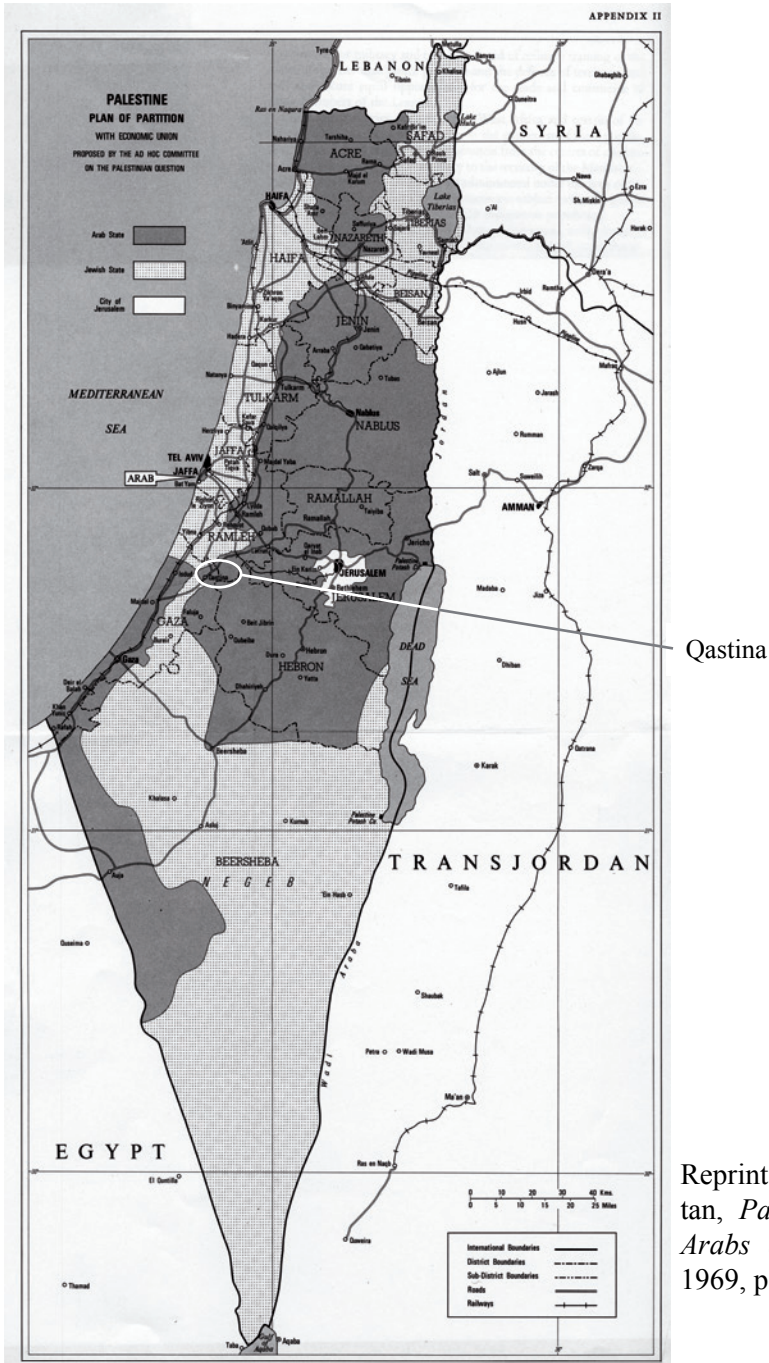
Appendix 3

Almost six million SEK collected from 1874-1949



Reprint from Pernow, *För Sions skull*, 1950, p 83

Palestine–UN Plan of Partition, 1947, including Qastina



Reprint from Cat-
tan, *Palestine, the
Arabs and Israel*,
1969, p 206

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