

Karin Kvist Geverts

10 Antisemitism in Sweden

A Neglected Field of Research?

Abstract: Research on antisemitism in Sweden can be divided into two categories: one which has antisemitism as a phenomenon as its object of study, and one where antisemitism constitutes part of the findings but where the object of study is something else (bureaucracies, organizations, etc.). No university currently has a centre for Antisemitism Studies and at centres for Racism Studies research on antisemitism is non-existent. One critical issue is how antisemitism is defined, since some definitions tend only to recognize propagandistic and violent examples; another is the popular notion that antisemitism is “un-Swedish” and therefore not part of Swedish culture. Based on these factors combined, this article argues that antisemitism is a neglected field of research in Sweden.

Keywords: Antisemitism; historiography; Holocaust; Jewish refugees; Nazism; racism; Sweden.

Introduction

The first study of antisemitism in Sweden is found in a book on the history of the Swedish Jews published in 1924, by historian Hugo Valentin.¹ Typical of historiography in the 1920s, it focuses on how the Swedish state handled diplomacy and foreign relations, and not on antisemitism as a phenomenon. It even lacks a definition of antisemitism. Eleven years later, in 1935, Valentin wrote a book where he analysed and critically examined the history of antisemitism.² It was translated into English in 1936 with the title *Antisemitism: Historically and Critically Examined*.³ The book gives an overview of antisemitism throughout history, but it only mentions Sweden in one short passage. Valentin explains why this is so by arguing that he has “not been able to devote much space to the position of the Jews in non-antisemitic countries – Scandinavia for example.”⁴ In

1 Hugo Valentin, *Judarnas historia i Sverige* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1924).

2 Hugo Valentin, *Antisemitismen i historisk och kritisk belysning* (Stockholm: Geber, 1935).

3 Hugo Valentin, *Antisemitism: Historically and Critically Examined*, trans. A. G. Chater (New York: The Viking Press, 1936).

4 Valentin, *Antisemitism: Historically and Critically Examined*, 5.

this book, Valentin gives a surprisingly modern definition of antisemitism as “hated or persecution of the Jews.” He points out that the term “antisemitism” is misleading since there are no “semites” to be “anti,” yet argues that “the expression Antisemitism however is preferable to any such word as *Judenhass*, since it denotes that Jews are not attacked in their quality of a religious community but as a race.”⁵ Unfortunately, he does not apply his own definition in his study. Instead, he falls into the trap of refuting the claim that the Jews are to blame for causing antisemitism, and spends the rest of the text trying to prove this accusation wrong.

In 1940 theology professor Efraim Briem published a book on the causes and history of antisemitism.⁶ The book was most likely a serious attempt on Briem’s part to explain antisemitism, but his argument is flawed by the accusation that the Jews are to blame for antisemitism, and thus the book itself feeds antisemitism instead of explaining and combatting it. This was understood at the time by contemporary readers, as can be seen for instance in a quite sharp review by the rabbi of the Jewish Community of Stockholm, Marcus Ehrenpreis, where he completely rejects Briem’s argument and exposes it as false.⁷

It would take over sixty years before historians chose to address the issue again.⁸ The first proper study of antisemitism in Sweden was produced in 1986 by historian Mattias Tydén.⁹ After this, more studies followed in the 1980s and 1990s. In a recent overview of historical research on racism and xenophobia, historian Martin Ericsson concludes that “the field [i. e. research on antisemitism] is today well established within Swedish historiography.”¹⁰ But is this characterization correct? Well, it depends on how you define Antisemitism Studies. If you choose to see Antisemitism Studies as a field in its own right, as is done internationally, meaning that the primary object of study is antisemitism as such, then

5 Valentin, *Antisemitism: Historically and Critically Examined*, 9.

6 Efraim Briem, *Antisemitismen genom tiderna: Orsaker och historia* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1940).

7 Marcus Ehrenpreis, “Judisk partikularism: Reflexioner kring Briems bok om antisemitismen,” *Judisk Tidskrift* 13, no. 7 (1940): 189–97. I would like to thank Pontus Rudberg for bringing this review to my attention.

8 Here, I have only included books published by scholars as part of the Swedish historiography of Antisemitism Studies, but it should be mentioned that articles by journalists and others were published in *Judisk Krönika* and *Judisk Tidskrift* from the 1940s to the 1980s addressing how antisemitism should be understood.

9 Mattias Tydén, *Svensk antisemitism 1880–1930* (Uppsala: Centrum för multietnisk forskning, 1986).

10 Martin Ericsson, *Historisk forskning om rasism och främlingsfientlighet i Sverige – en analyserande kunskapsöversikt* (Stockholm: Forum för levande historia, 2016), 254.

most research in Sweden will not fall under this definition. In this article, I will provide an overview of research on antisemitism in Sweden, as well as an overview of attitude surveys and the institutional milieu in which these studies have been undertaken, in order to evaluate the state of Antisemitism Studies in Sweden today.¹¹

Studies of Swedish antisemitism as a phenomenon

Previous research on antisemitism in Sweden can be roughly divided into two categories.¹² The first has its primary focus on antisemitism as a phenomenon. The second instead focuses on other phenomena, such as organizations, institutions, or government bureaucracies, where antisemitism appears as part of the findings but not as the primary object of study.

Following this categorization, the historiography of Antisemitism Studies in Sweden must be said to start only in 1986, with Tydén's book *Svensk antisemitism 1880–1930*. Tydén studies antisemitic organizations, antisemitism within business associations and the farmers' movement as well as antisemitism expressed by the authors Ola Hansson (1860–1925) and Bengt Lidforss (1868–1913), and provides a thorough description of the ways in which antisemitism was expressed around 1900. He argues that this shows that an antisemitic tradition was established in Sweden: it is thus not a phenomenon that came from abroad.¹³

In 1988, historian of ideas Magnus Nyman published a dissertation on the freedom of the press and opinions on minorities from 1772–86.¹⁴ Up until 1774, when Swedish King Gustav III invited Aaron Isaac to settle, Jews were only allowed to enter Sweden if they converted to Lutheranism.¹⁵ Nyman

11 This article will cover studies on antisemitism in Sweden. This means that I will not include studies on antisemitism in other countries, even if they were written by Swedish scholars, since they do not deal with Sweden. I will also disregard studies of Finland during the Swedish era written by Finnish scholars since they will be included in the chapter on Finland.

12 Karin Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen: Svensk flyktingpolitik och de judiska flyktingarna 1938–1944*, Studia Historica Upsaliensia (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, Historiska institutionen, 2008), 24; Lars M. Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...: Representationer av "juden" i svensk skämtpress omkring 1900–1930* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2000), 28.

13 Tydén, *Svensk antisemitism 1880–1930*.

14 Magnus Nyman, *Press mot friheten: Opinionsbildning i de svenska tidningarna och åsiktsbrytningar om minoriteter 1772–1786* (Uppsala: Uppsala University Press, 1988).

15 Nyman, *Press mot friheten*, 217.

shows that antisemitic opinions were expressed in the press in debates on freedom of religion, but also frequently in news reports where foreign Jews were accused of being hostile to the Swedish state and driven by a secret, international Jewish world conspiracy. He also shows that antisemitism existed in Sweden even prior to the settlement of the first Jews.¹⁶

The very same year, art historian Lena Johannesson published an article on antisemitic agitation in what was known in Sweden as the *rabulistpress*, the politically radical “rabble-rousing” press, from 1845–60. This press constitutes a good source for studying antisemitism for two reasons: because we can expect to find explicit examples published here, and because of the broad impact of this press we can surmise these perceptions were known and widespread throughout Swedish society. Johannesson looks at antisemitic agitation in illustrations in *Fäderneslandet* and *Folkets röst*; both newspapers launched campaigns against Jewish business owners, where they depicted them with antisemitic stereotypes as “capitalist,” “greedy Jews,” and “usurers.”¹⁷ Ericsson underlines that not all of the radical left press participated in these campaigns, the Stockholm-based newspaper *Demokraten* did not participate for example.¹⁸ Johannesson points out that previous studies of the antisemitic riots of 1838 and 1848 have either completely overlooked or misunderstood their antisemitic aspects.

In 1998 Rochelle Wright published *The Visible Wall: Jews and Other Ethnic Outsiders in Swedish Film*.¹⁹ Drawing on a cross-disciplinary approach, Wright provides a historical overview of how Jews and other ethnic minorities in Sweden have been depicted in films produced in Sweden from the 1930s until today. One of her findings is that antisemitism was only briefly discussed in film criticism during this period. She argues that this could be explained “perhaps because an acknowledgement of anti-Semitism, even in the past, conflicts with their own sense of a collective national identity characterized by broad-mindedness and tolerance.”²⁰ Historian Lars M. Andersson suggests that this tendency to overlook or inability to see antisemitism, as described both by Jo-

16 Nyman, *Press mot friheten*, 159.

17 Lena Johannesson, “‘Schene Rariteten.’ Antisemitisk bildagitation i svensk rabulistpress 1845–1860,” in *Judiskt liv i Norden*, ed. Gunnar Broberg, Harald Runblom, and Mattias Tydén (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1988), 169–208.

18 Ericsson, *Historisk forskning om rasism och främlingsfientlighet*, 43.

19 Rochelle Wright, *The Visible Wall: Jews and Other Outsiders in Swedish Film* (Uppsala: Studia multiethnica Upsaliensia, 1998).

20 Wright, *The Visible Wall*, 10.

hannesson and Wright, could be an explanation as to why there are so few systematic studies of Swedish antisemitism.²¹

At the turn of the century, three doctoral theses were published which all focused on antisemitism as a phenomenon and which all built on sociologist Helen Fein's definition of antisemitism.²² The first was by historian of ideas Lena Berggren, who investigated the propagandistic antisemitism of the extreme right in a study of the writer and publisher Elof Eriksson and the National Socialist association *Samfundet Manhem*.²³ Berggren defines propagandistic antisemitism as "an antisemitism which is far reaching, explicitly expressed, and articulated in a propagandistic way." She focuses on the relationship between antisemitism and Nazism, since antisemitism is "an essential and necessary element within National Socialism, but it also exists in itself, outside of Nazism, even in a propagandistic form."²⁴

The second thesis was by historian of ideas Henrik Bachner, who analysed antisemitism in Sweden as expressed in public debate after 1945.²⁵ Bachner shows that antisemitism came to be seen as illegitimate after the Second World War and that this was connected to the experiences of the Holocaust, but his most important finding was that antisemitism never disappeared. He argues that antisemitism was latent in the interwar period, and "returned" in the 1960s. He characterizes it as an antisemitism without antisemites.²⁶

The third thesis was by aforementioned historian Lars M. Andersson, who investigated antisemitism in popular culture by studying how "the Jew" was represented in the Swedish comic press from 1900 – 30.²⁷ He shows that "antisemitic perceptions to a large extent were seen as self-evident and given by nature," arguing that we should therefore consider ideas on "race" and "Jews" as aspects of Swedish modernity.²⁸ He also argues that it is possible to detect a

21 Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*, 28.

22 The definition is discussed below under the heading "Definitions of antisemitism."

23 Lena Berggren, *Nationell upplysning: Drag i den svenska antisemitismens idéhistoria* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1999). A revised version was published in 2014 with a new title: *Blodets renhet: En historisk studie av svensk antisemitism* (Malmö: Arx Förlag, 2014). As early as 1997, Berggren had published some of her findings in her thesis: "Från Bondeaktivism till rasmystik: Om Elof Erikssons antisemitiska skriftställarskap 1923–1941" (licentiate thesis, University of Umeå, 1997).

24 Berggren, *Nationell upplysning*, 10.

25 Henrik Bachner, *Återkomsten: Antisemitism i Sverige efter 1945* (Stockholm: Natur & Kultur, 1999). The book was revised and republished with a new afterword in 2000.

26 Bachner, *Återkomsten*, 456–57.

27 Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*

28 Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*, 14.

hegemonic antisemitic discourse in Sweden during the first decades of the twentieth century.²⁹

In 2001, historian Håkan Blomqvist published a book on antisemitism in the early writings of Arthur Engberg (1888–1944), a leading figure and ideologue of Swedish social democracy.³⁰ Blomqvist was surprised that he had never come across mention of Engberg's antisemitic ideas in other studies of his work, and suggests that perhaps his predecessors ignored his expressions of antisemitism because they did not fit well with Engberg's ideology as a social democrat.³¹

In 2008, in two chapters in an anthology, Mikael Byström and I investigated antisemitism in debates in the Swedish parliament and in the bureaucracy of the immigration department, finding that both discourses were affected by "antisemitic background noise."³²

In 2009, Henrik Bachner published a study on the so-called "Jewish question" as it was understood and expressed in Conservative, Social Democratic, and Christian debates in Sweden during the 1930s.³³ Bachner shows that antisemitic arguments were more seldom expressed in Social Democratic debates and more often in Conservative ones. All three defined antisemitism in a very narrow way, only including what Berggren would describe as propagandistic antisemitism. This meant that moderate expressions of antisemitism, what I have characterized as antisemitic background noise, were not recognized as antisemitism.³⁴

In 2013, Håkan Blomqvist published a new study on antisemitism in Sweden, this time with a focus on how perceptions of Bolshevism, Jews, and Judaism were expressed and connected in public discussions during and after the First World War.³⁵ He follows historian Henrik Rosengren and argues that we should

²⁹ Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*, 27.

³⁰ Håkan Blomqvist, *Socialdemokrat och antisemit? Den dolda historien om Artur Engberg* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2001).

³¹ Blomqvist, *Socialdemokrat och antisemit?*, 114.

³² Mikael Byström, "En talande tystnad? Ett antisemitiskt bakgrundsbrus i riksdagsdebatterna 1942–1947" and Karin Kvist Geverts, "'Fader Byråkratius' rädsla för antisemitism: Attityder mot judiska flyktingar inom Socialstyrelsens utlänningsbyrå," in *En problematisk relation? Flyktingpolitik och judiska flyktingar i Sverige 1920–1950*, ed. Lars M. Andersson and Karin Kvist Geverts, *Opuscula Historica Upsaliensia* 36 (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, Historiska institutionen, 2008), 119–38 and 73–94 respectively.

³³ Henrik Bachner, "Judefrågan." *Debatt om antisemitism i 1930-talets Sverige* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2009).

³⁴ Bachner, "Judefrågan," 302.

³⁵ Håkan Blomqvist, *Myten om judebolsjevismen: Antisemitism och kontrarevolution* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2013).

differentiate between allosemantic and antisemitic perceptions, where the former would describe Jews as different but not necessarily in a negative or hostile way.

Recently, the new project *The Archives of Antisemitism in Scandinavia: Knowledge production and stereotyping in a long-term historical perspective*, led by Cordelia Heß and Jonathan Adams, has published two new articles on the antisemitic riots of 1838 and on the blood-libel affair in *Aftonbladet*.³⁶

Studies where antisemitism is one focus among many

The second type of studies, where antisemitism is not the primary object of study but rather one focus among many, is much more common than the first. Both due to the number of studies and to the fact that these do not qualify as Antisemitism Studies per se, I will only mention them briefly here. The purpose of mentioning them at all is that doing so provides an overview of what has been studied and where we lack knowledge of antisemitism in Sweden.

Many studies fall under the category of immigration control or refugee policy. From these we know that antisemitic perceptions expressed either as Judaeophobia regarding Eastern European Jews or antisemitic background noise had as a practical outcome discrimination against Jews when it came to applications for citizenship from 1880–1920 and residence permits from 1938–44.³⁷ We also know that legislation and regulations concerning foreigners in Sweden were influenced by ideas of “race” and fear of a rise in antisemitism, expressed explicitly in the legislation of 1927 and implicitly in the legislation of 1937.³⁸ Several studies have shown that antisemitic ideas influenced Foreign Office officials,

36 Cordelia Heß, “Eine Fußnote der Emanzipation? Antijüdische Ausschreitungen in Stockholm 1838 und ihre Bedeutung für eine Wissensgeschichte des Antisemitismus,” *Jahrbuch für Antisemitismusforschung* 27 (2018): 65–87; Jonathan Adams and Cordelia Heß, “A Rational Model for Blood Libel: The *Aftonbladet* Affair,” in *The Medieval Roots of Antisemitism: Continuities and Discontinuities from the Middle Ages to the Present Day*, ed. Jonathan Adams and Cordelia Heß (New York: Routledge, 2018), 265–84.

37 Carl Henrik Carlsson, *Medborgarskap och diskriminering: Östjudar och andra invandrare i Sverige 1860–1920* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2004); Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen*.

38 Tomas Hammar, *Sverige åt svenskarna: Invandringspolitik, utlänningskontroll och asylrätt 1900–1932* (Stockholm: Caslon Press, 1964); Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen*.

members of Parliament as well as university students during the Second World War and the Holocaust.³⁹

Several studies focusing on the reception of Jewish refugees during or after the Second World War by the Jewish community in Stockholm have discussed the importance of antisemitism.⁴⁰ Others have studied antisemitism in connection with the reception of Eastern European Jews from 1860–1914,⁴¹ the reception of the Hechaluz,⁴² Jewish converts in the nineteenth century⁴³ and during the Second World War⁴⁴ as well as the reception and integration of the Jewish children who came with the *Kindertransport*⁴⁵ or the groups of Jews who fled

39 Paul A. Levine, *From Indifference to Activism: Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938–1944* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1998); Hans Lindberg, *Svensk flyktingpolitik under internationellt tryck 1936–1941* (Stockholm: Allmänna förlag, 1973); Sverker Oredsson, *Lunds universitet under andra världskriget: Motsättningar, debatter och hjälpinsatser* (Lund: Lunds universitetshistoriska sällskap, 1996); Mikael Byström, *En broder, gäst och parasit: Uppfattningar och föreställningar om utläningar, flyktingar och flyktingpolitik i svensk offentlig debatt 1942–1947* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 2006); Steven Koblik, *The Stones Cry Out: Sweden's Response to the Persecution of Jews 1933–1945* (New York: Holocaust Library, 1988).

40 Svante Hansson, *Flykt och överlevnad: Flyktingverksamhet i Mosaiska församlingen i Stockholm 1933–1950* (Stockholm: Hilleförlaget, 2004); Pontus Ruddberg, *The Swedish Jews and the Victims of Nazi Terror, 1933–1945* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2015), also published as *The Swedish Jews and the Holocaust* (London: Routledge, 2018).

41 Anna Besserman, “...eftersom nu en gång en nådig försyn täcks hosta dem upp på Sveriges gästvänliga stränder.’ Mosaiska församlingen i Stockholm inför den östjudiska invandringen 1860–1914,” *Nordisk Judaistik* 5, no. 2 (1984): 13–38.

42 Malin Thor Tureby, *Hechaluz – en rörelse i tid och rum: Tysk-judiska ungdomars exil i Sverige 1933–1943* (Växjö: Växjö University Press, 2005).

43 Per Hammarström, “‘Judar öfversvämma landet.’ Den judiska gårdfarihandeln i Kungl. Maj:ts befallningshavandes femårsberättelser 1865–1905,” in *Den nya staten: Ideologi och samhällsförändring kring sekelskiftet 1900*, ed. Erik Nydahl and Jonas Harvard (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2016), 25–50; Per Hammarström, “Israels omvändelse som jordens fulländning: Antijudiskhet och antisemitism i Missionstidning för Israel 1874–1885,” in *Makt, myter och historieberuk: Historiska problem i belysning*, ed. Stefan Dalin (Sundsvall: Mittuniversitetet, 2014), 123–42; Per Hammarström, “I sällskap med judar: Association, assimilation och konversion i Stockholm 1809–1838,” in *Nationen så in i Norden: En festskrift till Torkel Jansson*, ed. Henrik Edgren and others (Skellefteå: Artos & Norma bokförlag, 2013), 157–68; Per Hammarström, “Omvändelseberättelser, judemission och svensk lågkyrklighet runt sekelskiftet 1900,” in *Från legofolk till stadsfolk: Festskrift till Börje Harnesk*, ed. Erik Nydahl and Magnus Perlestam (Härnösand: Institutionen för Humaniora, 2012), 137–53.

44 Pär Frohnert, “‘De behöva en fast hand över sig.’ Missionsförbundet, Israelmissionen och de judiska flyktingarna 1939–1945,” in *En problematisk relation? Flyktingpolitik och judiska flyktingar i Sverige*, 227–48.

45 Ingrid Lomfors, *Förlorad barndom – återvunnet liv: De judiska flyktingbarnen från Nazityskland* (Gothenburg: Göteborgs universitet, 1996).

pogroms in Poland and Czechoslovakia in the late 1960s and early 1970s.⁴⁶ Some have focused on antisemitism and the integration of the Jewish group in Lund⁴⁷ or in Sundsvall, Hudiksvall, Östersund, and Härnösand from 1870–1940.⁴⁸

The connections between Nazism and antisemitism have been studied by several researchers,⁴⁹ as has antisemitism within conservative groups,⁵⁰ among musicians,⁵¹ and in business organizations.⁵² For a long time, there was a lack of studies on the Church and its connection to antisemitism, but this has begun to change.⁵³

In Ericsson's previously mentioned overview of the research on racism, he argues that there is a lack of knowledge about antisemitism in the period pre-1850 as well as a lack of studies on continuity, i. e. of studies with a long histor-

46 Łukasz Górnioł, *Swedish Refugee Policymaking in Transition? Czechoslovaks and Polish Jews in Sweden, 1968–1972* (Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2016).

47 Anna Svensson, *Nöden – en shtetl i Lund* (Lund: Gamla Lund, 1995).

48 Per Hammarström, *Nationens styvbarn: Judisk samhällsintegration i några Norrlandsstäder 1870–1940* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2007).

49 Heléne Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 2000–2014* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2015); Heléne Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1980–1997. Den rasistiska undergroundrörelsen: Musiken, myterna, riterna* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 1998); Heléne Lööw, *Nazismen i Sverige 1924–1979: Pionjärerna, partierna, propagandan* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2004); Heléne Lööw, "Kampen mot ZOG: Antisemitismen bland moderna rasideologer," *Historisk Tidskrift* 116 (1996): 65–91; Eric Wärenstam, *Fascismen och nazismen i Sverige 1920–1940: Studier i den svenska nationalsocialismens, fascismens och antisemitismens organisationer, ideologier och propaganda under mellankrigsåren* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1970).

50 Gunnar Åselius, *The "Russian Menace" to Sweden: The Belief System of a Small Power Security Élite in the Age of Imperialism* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 1994); Rolf Torstendahl, *Mellan nykonservatism och liberalism: Idébrytningar inom högern och bondepartierna 1918–1934* (Stockholm: Svenska bokförlaget, 1969).

51 Henrik Rosengren, "Judarnas Wagner." *Moses Pergament och den kulturella identifikationens dilemma omkring 1920–1950* (Lund: Sekel, 2007); Petra Garberding, *Musik och politik i skuggan av nazismen: Kurt Atterberg och de svensk-tyska musik-relationerna* (Lund: Sekel, 2007); Henrik Karlsson, *Det fruktade märket: Wilhelm Peterson-Berger, antisemitismen och antinazismen* (Malmö: Sekel, 2005).

52 Cecilia Fredriksson, *Ett paradiset för alla: EPA mellan folkhem och förförelse* (Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1998); Sven Nordlund, *Affärer som vanligt: Ariseringen i Sverige 1933–1945* (Lund: Sekel, 2009); Sven Nordlund, "En svensk tiger? Svenska reaktioner på tyska ariseringskrav under 1930-talet och andra världskriget," in *Sverige och Nazityskland: Skuldfrågor och moraldebatt*, ed. Lars M. Andersson and Mattias Tydén (Stockholm: Dialogos, 2007); Göran Blomberg, *Mota Moses i grind: Ariseringsiver och antisemitism i Sverige 1933–1943* (Stockholm: Hillelförlaget, 2003).

53 Anders Jarlert, *Judisk "ras" som äktenskapshinder i Sverige: Effekten av Nürnberglagarna i Svenska kyrkans statliga funktion som lysningsförrättare 1935–1945* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006); Besser-mann, "...eftersom nu en gång en nådig försyn"; Bachner, "Judefrågan".

ical perspective.⁵⁴ Ericsson also suggests that historians have a lot to gain from interacting with researchers in the social sciences, who primarily study racism but not so often antisemitism.⁵⁵

Definitions of antisemitism

One problem with some of the studies in the second category is how they define antisemitism. Andersson argues that too often only extreme utterances, what can be categorized as propagandistic antisemitism, are regarded as antisemitism. This leads to “moderate” expressions of antisemitism becoming invisible.⁵⁶ This problem is also connected to a tendency to view antisemitism as “un-Swedish,” imported from abroad, as Heléne Lööw has put it.⁵⁷ Related to this is what Andersson characterizes as “the biographical dilemma,” meaning the “tendency to deny, downplay, and trivialize antisemitic expressions uttered by famous persons.”⁵⁸

Most researchers who study antisemitism in Sweden follow sociologist Helen Fein’s definition:

I propose to define antisemitism as a persisting latent structure of hostile beliefs toward Jews as a collectivity manifested in individuals as attitudes, and in culture as myth, ideology, folklore, and imagery, and in actions – social or legal discrimination, political mobilization against Jews, and collective or state violence – which results in and/or is designed to distance, displace, or destroy Jews as Jews.⁵⁹

Several also adopt the scale elaborated by John C. G. Röhl which separates antisemitism into different levels, ranging from everyday antisemitism on the lowest

54 To some extent this might change with the research project being undertaken by the editors of this anthology.

55 Ericsson, *Historisk forskning om rasism och främlingsfientlighet*, 254, 266.

56 Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*, 49. For an example of this, see Sven B. Ek, *Nöden i Lund: En etnologisk stadsdelstudie* (Lund: Liber, 1982).

57 Heléne Lööw, “Det finns antisemitism men inga antisemiter,” in *Tankar i “judefrågan.” Nedslag i den svenska antisemitismens historia*, ed. Lars M. Andersson and Karin Kvist Geverts, *Opuscula historica Upsaliensia* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, Historiska institutionen, 2019 [forthcoming]).

58 Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*, 51.

59 Helen Fein, “Dimensions of Antisemitism: Attitudes, Collective Accusations, and Actions,” in *The Persisting Question: Sociological Perspectives and Social Contexts of Modern Antisemitism*, ed. Helen Fein (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1987), 67.

level to genocidal antisemitism on the highest.⁶⁰ Some have elaborated on the description of the everyday level of antisemitism; for instance, I myself have used the metaphor of antisemitism being a background noise, in order to catch those moderate antisemitic utterances by state officials which indeed should be categorized as expressions of antisemitism, but which were seen as unbiased and “normal” in contemporary society.⁶¹ The aforementioned Henrik Rosengren has introduced Zygmunt Bauman’s term “allosemitism” in order to distinguish between negative stereotyping of Jews (antisemitism) and descriptions of Jews as different but not necessarily in a negative way (allosemitism).⁶²

Institutional affiliation and attitude surveys

So, where are the studies on antisemitism in Sweden being produced? In an article from 2017, Lars M. Andersson and I argued that almost all research on antisemitism has been conducted by scholars at the departments of history or the history of ideas in Lund, Stockholm, Uppsala, and Umeå.⁶³ Most of this was already completed during the years 1999–2007. After 2007, there have only been a few more studies, for instance by Blomqvist and Bachner. In our article, we also searched for studies on antisemitism at institutions for international migration and ethnic relations (IMER), since studies on racism are often pursued there, but we found almost nothing.⁶⁴ Since our article was written in 2017, I updated some of the research. A search for university courses on antisemitism reveals that there are a few where antisemitism is a part of what is studied, but symptomatically none of these are taught within centres for Racism Studies or IMER institutions.⁶⁵ Our conclusion, that “despite a few exceptions, there seems to be a

60 For a discussion of Röhl, see Andersson, *En jude är en jude är en jude...*, 15, or Carlsson, *Medborgarskap och diskriminering*, 36–37.

61 Kvist Geverts, *Ett främmande element i nationen*, 37–38.

62 Rosengren, “*Judarnas Wagner*,” 61–62. Håkan Blomqvist has used the term “allosemitism” in his study on the myth of Judeobolshevism: *Myten om judebolsjevismen*, 21–25.

63 Lars M. Andersson and Karin Kvist Geverts, “Antisemitismen – antirasismens blinda fläck?” in *Från Afrikakompaniet till Tokyo: En vänbok till György Nováky*, ed. Marie Lennersand and Leos Müller (Stockholm: Exkurs, 2017), 146–175. One exception is the studies by Berit Wigerfelt and Anders Wigerfelt at Malmö University.

64 Andersson and Kvist Geverts, “Antisemitismen – antirasismens blinda fläck?,” 154.

65 The search was conducted in March 2019; it showed that there are only a few courses where antisemitism is taught, but in all of them antisemitism is not the sole object of study. Instead, antisemitism is studied as part of something else, the Holocaust or human rights for instance. These courses were found at four universities, see *Religionsvetenskap och teologi: Förntelsen i*

clear division both when it comes to space and discipline, as well as time, between antisemitism and racism research,” remains valid.⁶⁶

The lack of studies on antisemitism is also a sad constant when it comes to attitude surveys in Sweden. Very little has been done apart from some surveys conducted by the Living History Forum and Brå (The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention).⁶⁷ One exception is a study of antisemitic attitudes among Arabs and Muslims by Mikael Tossavainen,⁶⁸ and there are also a few comparative studies of antisemitism in Europe where Sweden is included.⁶⁹ Thus, it seems equally symptomatic that the national SOM (Society Opinion Media) institute at the University of Gothenburg, which measures almost every attitude held by the Swedish people, never asks any questions on antisemitism.⁷⁰

korsets skugga – Antisemitismens framväxt och konsekvenser (7.5 credits), given at the Centre for Religious and Theological Studies at Lund University, < <https://www.ctr.lu.se/kurs/TEOB16/VT2018/> >; *Nutida rasism och mänskliga rättigheter* (7.5 credits) given within the master's programme of human rights at the Department of Theology at Uppsala University, < <http://www.uu.se/utbildning/utbildningar/selma/utbplan/?> >; *Nazismen, Nazityskland och Förintelsen* (7.5 points), given at the Department of History at Stockholm University, < <https://www.su.se/sok-kurser-och-program/hi1311-1.412155> >; *Sverige och förintelsen* (15 credits, part-time studies), given at the Department of Historical Studies at the University of Gothenburg, < <https://www.su.se/sok-kurser-och-program/hi1311-1.412155> >.

66 Andersson and Kvist Geverts, “Antisemitismen – antirasismens blinda fläck?,” 154–55.

67 Henrik Bachner and Jonas Ring, *Antisemitiska attityder och föreställningar i Sverige* (Stockholm: Forum för levande historia, 2006); Brottsförebyggande rådet (BRÅ), *Hatbrott 2015: Statistik över polisanmälningar med identifierade hatbrottsmotiv och självrapporterad utsatthet för hatbrott* (Stockholm: Brå, 2015); BRÅ, *Antisemitiska hatbrott, Rapport 2019, no. 4* (Stockholm: Brå, 2019).

68 Mikael Tossavainen, *Det förnekade hatet: Antisemitism bland araber och muslimer i Sverige* (Stockholm: SKMA, 2003).

69 See Lars Dencik and Karl Marosi, *Different Antisemitisms: Perceptions and Experiences of Antisemitism among Jews in Sweden and across Europe* (London: Institute of Jewish Policy Research, 2017); Johannes Due Enstad, *Antisemitic Violence in Europe, 2005–2015: Exposure and Perpetrators in France, UK, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Russia* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2017); European Commission, *Perceptions of Antisemitism* [report], Special Eurobarometer 484 (Brussels: European Commission, 2019), < <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/ResultDoc/download/DocumentKy/85035> >. See also yearly studies of antisemitism such as World Value Studies, Pew Research Center, and European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA).

70 Thanks to a tip from Heléne Löw, I checked the questions of the SOM institute national questionnaire but there were none dealing with antisemitic attitudes. See also the introduction to this volume by Cordelia Heß.

Antisemitism Studies – a Neglected Field of Research

This article has shown that although several works which mention antisemitism have been published since Hugo Valentin's book in 1924, there are still only a few that deal solely with antisemitism as their primary object of study. This means that Lars M. Andersson's conclusion from 2000 still stands: research on Swedish antisemitism comprises just a handful of studies. Why this is the case is difficult to answer with certainty. In our 2017 article, Andersson and I argued that antisemitism constituted a blind spot in Racism Studies in Sweden, and perhaps this could be explained by the tendency pointed out here – that antisemitism is a racism which tends to be either unseen or characterized as “un-Swedish.” Either way, I conclude that Antisemitism Studies, narrowly defined, remains a neglected field of research in Sweden.

Hopefully, this conclusion might become dated as soon as within a few years' time. The reason for this is the newly awakened interest, on a political level, to combat racism. In 2016 the Swedish Government gave a special mandate to the Swedish Research Council to establish a programme on Racism Studies.⁷¹ So far only one project dealing with antisemitism has received funding; managed by the editors of this anthology, Jonathan Adams and Cordelia Heß, its goal is to establish an Antisemitism Studies network in the Nordic countries. This is all well and good, but in order to succeed a large political investment should ideally be made, for instance similar to the one in Norway.⁷²

Also, on 21 January 2019, Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven uttered these words in the Statement of Government Policy: “Wherever anti-Semitism exists, and however it is expressed, it must be identified and fought.”⁷³ Prime Minister Löfven also made a promise that the Swedish government would host a conference on Holocaust remembrance in 2020, and would establish a Holocaust museum. Time will tell if the political commitment to fight antisemitism will also

⁷¹ Utbildningsdepartementet, “Uppdrag att utlysa medel för ett forskningsprogram,” regeringen.se, 2 February 2016, < <https://www.regeringen.se/regeringsuppdrag/2016/02/uppdrag-att-utlysa-medel-for-ett-forskningsprogram/> > .

⁷² For a presentation of the Norwegian projects “Shifting Boundaries” and “Jøden som kulturell konstruksjon” (The Jew as a social construct), see the webpage of HL-Senteret < <https://www.hlsenteret.no/forskning/jodisk-historie-og-antisemittisme/> > .

⁷³ Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven in the Statement of Government Policy (Regeringsförklaringen) of 21 January 2019, 14, < <https://www.government.se/speeches/20192/01/statement-of-government-policy-21-january-2019/> > .

materialize in the funding of new research,⁷⁴ but we certainly live in interesting times. Scientists usually do not make wishes, but if I could, I would wish that in ten years' time Antisemitism Studies would be a growing research field in Sweden and that my conclusion in this article will be outdated.

74 The Swedish Government has recently committed funding to establish a Holocaust museum in Sweden and is currently investigating the future museum's focus, organization, and partnerships.