

segments of middle-class culture. A perhaps more novel and interesting angle to a study that sets out to improve and deepen our knowledge of perceptions of manhood, womanhood, and class among middle-class youth would have been to try to better separate and define the discrepancies within the studied group itself. This would have been an important contribution to the field.

Finally, the sources presented in the dissertation show a lot of potential that reaches far beyond the scope of the actual study. This should not be seen as a criticism because one of the keys of finishing a thesis is undoubtedly to try to keep it focused. But as a reader you cannot avoid asking yourself what would have been the outcome of the study if the thesis would have been just a little more up to date with contemporary trends within the field. For example, it could have contributed significantly to our understanding of various emotional and bodily aspects connected to schooling during the investigated period and how certain sets of emotions became institutionalised in school life. However, this would have called for a different and more apt framing of the study.

With this said, Backman Prytz's dissertation is still an interesting read. It is a book that will likely work well as a basis for discussion when educational history is taught in teacher training programs, both to highlight the importance of gender and class in the history of schooling and to give female students a much needed voice in all this. It is also a dissertation that lays the foundation for further and more penetrating studies in the areas addressed above. It would be very interesting to see Backman Prytz taking a leading role in such research.

Björn Norlin
Umeå University
Email: bjorn.norlin@umu.se

Per Höjeberg
Utmaningarna mot demokratins skola: Den svenska lärarkåren, nazismen och kommunismen 1933–1945 [The Swedish teaching profession, Nazism and Soviet Communism from 1933 to 1945]
Lunds universitet (PhD diss)
2016, 230 pp.

In his doctoral dissertation, Per Höjeberg attempts to analyze how the Swedish teaching profession handled the challenges against the democratic school coming from German Nazism and Soviet Communism in 1933–1945. He wants to uncover the teachers' strategies of argumentation in facing these challenges, if the arguments and strategies changed over time, if there were any differences in how Nazism and Soviet communism were treated and how the challenges affected the identity and ideals of the teacher profession.

The dissertation is a development of Höjeberg's licentiate thesis from 2011, which dealt exclusively with the Swedish teaching profession's relationship to Nazism. The source material is periodicals published by four teacher unions, three for elementary school teachers and one for grammar school teachers.

Theoretically Höjeberg departs from a discussion about the role of actors and structures, using concepts such as collective conceptions, cultural identification, professional identity and cognitive dissonance. He wants to study the choices of actors in relationship to the framework of collective conceptions which he has identified mainly based upon earlier research. Höjeberg claims that the argumentation in the periodicals was limited by the teacher profession's ambition to remain neutral, but he does not discuss to which degree the periodicals were also affected by direct wartime censorship. That, in addition to personal choices and cultural conceptions, could very much influence what teachers were able to write at different points in time.

Methodologically, Höjeberg uses Stephen Toulmin's model of analysis, which aims at unveiling supportive arguments in the argumentation. Höjeberg also studies the discursive struggle in which the teachers used the vocabulary of the Nazis and Communists but with a changed meaning.

The chapter on earlier research focuses upon publications about collective conceptions of Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union and about the professional identity of teachers. Höjeberg does not mention any earlier research which has dealt with his specific subject of investigation, the Swedish teacher professions view of Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union. If he had looked in wider circles, such research should not be impossible to find. For example, my doctoral dissertation *Den politiska läroboken* describes how Swedish textbooks portrayed the Soviet Union during Höjeberg's period of research, and sometimes the very same teachers wrote textbooks and articles in the teacher periodicals. My finding that the Swedish textbooks from the 1930s contained much less information about the Soviet Union than Norwegian and Finnish would also have helped put the relative lack of articles about the Soviet Union in Swedish teacher union periodicals in perspective.

Höjeberg claims that Nazism was almost completely rejected by the Swedish teachers from the beginning, although the Nazis had some support especially among male grammar school teachers. In contrast, the Soviet Union could function as a kind of educational utopia, especially among female elementary school teachers. Höjeberg notes that this was nothing unique for Sweden, but that many international reknown pedagogues such as John Dewey were very excited about the Soviet educational experiment. Höjeberg believes the reason why the Soviet Union in spite of the Gulag, mass killings and persecutions could function as role model is that Soviet communism unlike Nazism was not seen as a threat to schools and education; it was this and not the general political development which had an effect on the Swedish teachers' attitudes. Based upon this assumption, it is not surprising that Höjeberg explains the 1942 "breaking point" in the views on Nazi Germany with the Germans' tightening grip on the Norwegian teachers. Although this was certainly very important, it is likely that the breaking point was also influenced by the turn of war fortune in that year, when the German offensive was broken, allied victory suddenly seemed more possible and, most importantly, Germany's resources were stretched thin to such an extent that the Swedish government could allow increased

criticism of Germany without fear of German reappraisals.

The fact that teachers writing for other teachers in a teacher union periodical mainly write about teaching cannot be used as support for the argument that they were not influenced by the general political development. The connection to general politics should not primarily be investigated through *what* they write but *when* they write it. Höjeberg's decision to analyze only certain years in the case of Germany (1933, 1936, 1938, 1939, 1942, 1945) does however make it difficult to exactly identify when breaking points take place, and thus which events in general politics they might be related to.

The emphasis in the dissertation is placed on Nazism, which Höjeberg justifies by the smaller amount of articles about Communism in the periodicals. However, this difference in the amount of sources is undoubtedly in part explained by Höjeberg's choice of periodisation, 1933–1945, which the doctoral dissertation has inherited from the licentiate thesis about Nazism without discussion about its appropriateness for studying Soviet Communism. It is likely that a longer period of research, incorporating the beginning of the Cold War, would have revealed more about the teachers' attitudes towards communism, and so would probably an inclusion of the 1920s, when the Soviet Union was a novelty as Nazi Germany became after 1933.

This point is illustrated by a quote on page 173 in the dissertation. In 1933, a teacher union periodical claimed that "The most pervasive event within the realm of schooling during the last year is the German school system and the German teachers' conversion to the National Socialist revolution. Regarding scope and importance it can only be compared to the corresponding change in Russia or Italy after the advancement of dictatorship there." [Den mest genomgripande händelen inom skolans område under det senaste året är det tyska skolväsendets o. den tyska lärarkårens omstöpning efter den nationalsocialistiska revolutionen. Den kan i omfattning o. betydelse endast jämföras med motsvarande förändring i Ryssland o. Italien efter diktaturens genombrott därstädes.] Höjeberg claims that the quote shows that the writer did *not* consider the Italian and Russian revolutions to have af-

fected teachers, which in his mind explains why the rest of the article only deal with the problems in Germany. It is however obvious from a close reading of the quote that the author believed that the Russian revolution *had* a similar impact on the teacher profession as the Nazi accent to power, but that the article dealt with Germany since it was there the most important development had taken place *during the last year*. The corresponding events in Russia were older, and thus not news anymore in 1933.

That Swedish teachers viewed the situation for their colleagues in Russia as problematic is also apparent from Swedish elementary school textbooks, which described the maltreatment of Russian teachers (i.e. Lundborg, 1928).

Höjeberg's main finding, that the teacher profession rejected Nazism and saw Soviet Communism as a utopia is based upon his comparison of arguments using Toulmin's model of analysis. However, his empirical chapters does clearly illustrate that Nazi sympathisers among the grammar school teachers could continue their work throughout the war, still in 1945 occupying 3 of 19 seats in the board of the grammar school teachers union, while communists were labelled as traitors and kicked out of the teacher unions for elementary school teachers during the winter war. The discussion of how the teacher unions treated Nazis and Communists within their own ranks is however completely bypassed in the conclusions, which is solely based upon the analysis of arguments in the periodicals.

The misinterpretation of quotes and the omission of part of the empirical study in the conclusions does call into question whether Höjeberg's picture of a nearly total rejection of Nazi Germany in sharp contrast to a utopian view of the Soviet Union really is correct. Furthermore, the latest positive description of the Soviet Union found in Höjeberg's references is from 1937; after that year all reports from the country deal with negative aspects such as militarisation, the shooting of schoolboys in Tallinn et cetera. Thus the Soviet Union disappears as a positive example at exactly the time of the Moscow trials, when Stalin's purges took the form of mass killings, once again illustrating that there is a stronger link between general political development and the writings of the teacher union periodicals than Höjeberg has recognised.

The large differences between how the elementary and grammar school teachers depicted the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany also call into question whether it is really possible to talk about a united teacher profession. In the conclusions, the views of the elementary school teachers are made synonymous with the views of the teacher profession, while the grammar school teachers, which were much more careful in taking political standpoints, are not discussed at all.

Höjeberg does however convincingly show there was a utopian twist to the periodicals' reports from the Soviet Union in the early and mid-1930s. I believe that he correctly associates this phenomenon with the ideals of reform pedagogy prevalent among Swedish teachers at the time, which made them willing to believe the Soviet propaganda displaying a modern utopia of progressive pedagogics.

References

- Holmén, Janne, *Den politiska läroboken: Bilden av USA och Sovjetunionen i norska, svenska och finländska läroböcker under Kalla kriget*. Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 2006.
- Lundborg, A.G. *Lärobok i geografi för folkskolan*. Stockholm: Magn. Bergwall, 1928.

Janne Holmén
Uppsala University
Email: janne.holmen@hist.uu.se
Södertörn University
Email: janne.holmen@sh.se