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ESTABLISHING AN IDEOLOGICALLY COHERENT HISTORY

Swedish social-democratic historical culture, 1881–1900

Henrik Åström Elmersjö

This article analyses the historical culture of the Swedish Social Democratic Worker's Party (SAP) during its formation in the last decades of the 19th century. Utilising the theoretical concepts of myth and conceptual metaphor, the sense-making aspects of historical narration is studied, especially the way coherent stories are told in which the movement under formation is made part of a long history leading to a desirable future. The SAP utilised history both morally-defensively and tactically-offensively. The moral use of history depicts Jesus, Münster and the French Revolution, establishing the righteousness of revolt. The revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune, where the workers are seen as acting more independently, are depicted in a way which draws attention to tactical aspects; lessons are learned on how the workers should act in a revolutionary situation. As has been shown to be the case regarding national narratives, the sense-making mechanisms of historical narration also tends to appeal to issues of identity. The metaphorical conceptualisation of ideas and movements as individuals and families, further underlines these issues.

Keywords Sweden, social democracy, historical culture, myth, 19th century, metaphor, use of history

Introduction

History is frequently used as a political instrument and when political movements present themselves to the public, history can be considered one of the more convincing implements. Therefore, it is peculiar that so little scholarly interest has been devoted to the historical cultures of political parties in Scandinavia. This is especially the case for the early historical culture when the parties – or movements – were establishing themselves.

This article analyses how history was used to establish the ideas and moral on which the Swedish Social Democratic Worker's Party's [Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti] (SAP) based its policies, and to what extent history was utilised in order to explain and legitimise contemporary political demands. What images of history were presented to convey new ideas connected to a coherent narrative of society and political struggle? What historical examples were picked up, and how were they ascribed meaning and used to illustrate social-democratic policies and to establish a political social-democratic historical identity?

How history is utilised by politicians in debates on specific topics in Scandinavia has been researched, for example, regarding constitutional reform in early 20th century Finland and Sweden, with regards to the EU-membership debate in Norway and Sweden (1990–1994), as well as more generally.¹ This research has established that when history is used politically it often appeals to issues of identity.

The specific use of history within the SAP has also been given some scholarly attention.² However, this research has mainly investigated how history has been used as an 'ideological resource of power'³ or how different political arenas can be described as 'history-producing discourses'.⁴ This also means that the

object of investigation has not been the use of history that is needed to introduce political ideas to the public, but instead the use of history needed to establish and maintain power through the overtaking of interpretations of the meaning of history.⁵ The SAP's history writings about themselves and their role in a grand national narrative once they were established as the principal party of power, has been well researched, and this research has come to the conclusion that national history was colonised and gently reinterpreted to fit the SAP's agenda.⁶ The history of the ideas behind the SAP's policies is also well researched and has been a recurring topic of research for a hundred years.⁷ The party's theory of history, i.e. historical materialism, has sometimes been seen as an important indicator of how the SAP presented socialism as a necessity that was embedded in history itself.⁸ Investigations into how history was used to create an ideologically coherent narrative, how the ideological stands in contemporary society were explained and given meaning through historical references, and, equally important, how history was explained and given meaning through connections to contemporary society are issues that have been attributed less interest in earlier research.

When it comes to the organisation of workers in Sweden in the 19th century, some earlier research has also pointed out that a lack of independent theoretical debate led to a lack of insightful analysis of Swedish society. This in turn led to a rather warped debate within the workers' organisations where conditions in other countries, especially in Germany, were used to explain Swedish society.⁹ Furthermore, the social democrats themselves argued that the Swedish working class had no political history before coming into contact with socialist ideas (which happened in the 1880s).¹⁰ This also points to the need to analyse how Swedish social democrats made sense of the past; how did they use history from other countries in order to compensate for the lack of analysis of Swedish society? Historian Ulf Zander has investigated this sporadically, and his conclusion is that some revolutionary elements in the early movement were interested in the history of revolutions, and the Paris Commune was celebrated in the 1880s, but more seldom after 1891.¹¹

Earlier research that has been interested in the ideology of the SAP has also stumbled across these kinds of historical references without investigating them further. For example, political scientist Herbert Tingsten has cited a number of historical references without commenting on them.¹² Historian Rolf Karlbom has paid some attention to historical references, but not to the sense-making mechanisms of history. Instead, he corrects the social-democratic use of history.¹³

It has been noted that the early agitators for socialism followed a simple outline in their argumentation. First, they described a problem in contemporary society, then offered a socialist solution, and finally they urged for organisation and action. Furthermore, they identified three major actors: the oppressed (often described as *the people* or *the workers*), the oppressors (*upper class*, *employers*, or *the bourgeoisie*), and the liberators (*the labour movement*).¹⁴ This can also be seen in historical references, but there the roles of the oppressed, the oppressors, and the liberators are cast with what were considered historical predecessors of the contemporary actors. Furthermore, the labour movement also had an interest in showing the movement's growth, continuity, and results, and one can therefore expect that the historical narratives they produced were highly teleological.¹⁵

The references to history made by socialist pioneers in the first two decades of party/idea formation are vast, and it is not possible to address all historical references that the social-democratic debaters and press used between 1881 and 1900. This study focuses on the mythological images that representatives of the SAP used from what they conceived to be progressive forces in history. I have excluded representations of Swedish history, where the SAP was presented as something genuinely Swedish and as the heirs of Engelbrekt Engelbrektsson (1390s–1436) or Gustav Vasa (1496–1560). These sorts of historical references are also ideological and interesting, but they were more common in later years when the SAP had been established as the ‘state-bearing’ party.¹⁶ They also played a somewhat different role by presenting the party as genuinely Swedish and not as ideological ‘sense-makers’ of political demands, which is what is investigated here.

The timeframe of this article (1881–1900) has been chosen for a number of reasons. First, in 1881 August Palm (1849–1922) held the first public speech introducing the socialist ideas to the workers of Sweden. Even if socialist ideas were well known among academics and upper classes, Palm’s speech has been considered the first time these ideas were introduced to the broader public.¹⁷ Even if the party itself was not established until 1889, the first periodical publication that can be considered social-democratic (*Folkviljan* [The Will of the People]) was issued in the beginning of the 1880s, and this could also be considered the beginning of the formation of a political party. Second, it has been contended that the political ideology of the SAP became more or less fixed in the beginning of the 20th century, and the issue of reform or revolution was no longer an open question.¹⁸ During the period researched here, the SAP could be considered part of an extra-parliamentary movement, even if universal suffrage and a major role in the parliament were the stated objectives. The same cannot be said about the time following the election in 1902, when it became obvious that the SAP would play a major role in the parliament with or without universal suffrage.¹⁹ Third, two important leaders of the early social-democratic movement died in 1899 and 1900, Axel Danielsson (1863–1899) and Fredrik Sterky (1860–1900). Therefore, the turn of the century seems to be a ‘natural’ endpoint for this study. This also excludes the first major attempt to write the history of the social-democratic movement in Scandinavia, *Socialdemokratiens århundrade* [The Century of Social Democracy], published in Sweden in 1904–1906, and attributed to Hjalmar Branting (1860–1925) – although mainly written by Danish social democrats Carl Emil Jensen (1865–1927) and Frederik Borgbjerg (1866–1936).²⁰ This two-volume opus could in some sense be considered the end-result of the attempts to trace the social-democratic movements roots and produce an ideologically coherent history during the 1880s and 1890s.

Historical culture, myth, and metaphors

History can be considered a discourse about the past, rather than a version of, or an unproblematic slice of, the past itself.²¹ Because narrating history is so much about selection, and, therefore, a moral and political act that always consists of elements of exclusion and inclusion, to create narratives about the past is to create homogeneity within a group of people who allegedly share a similar history. In creating

homogeneity within a group, differences between that group and other groups are also created, and the common identity created by history can serve as a basis for political action.²² Therefore, the process in which narratives that create common identity are produced – and later narrated, renegotiated, and re-narrated – could be considered a ‘group-making process’.²³ As E.P. Thompson underlined in 1963, the working class should be considered not as a structure, but as a relationship.²⁴ It has later been pointed out that the relationships under which class consciousness is ‘created’ should be considered contingent.²⁵ I consider this contingency to be very much dependent on how common experiences – narrated as a common history – are established within that relationship.

The term *historical culture* denotes the set of narratives about the past that are included in a cultural setting and are communicated within a group of people who embrace the narratives. A historical culture can be understood as both the communication processes and cultural structures that allow one to make sense of the past within a specific cultural setting.²⁶ History – the discourse that makes sense of the past – is thus always dependent on the cultural context that it is supposed to make sense of.

Sense making of the past requires what has been labelled ‘myth’. In making sense of the past, especially if the idea is to present the history of something that is considered important to a group of people (the group-making process of history), the point of departure needs to be a specific cultural context in the present. This requires ‘selecting, ordering, and simplifying, a construction of coherent narrative whose logic works to draw the life story towards the fable.’²⁷ However, myth should not be considered the opposite of ‘true’ because most, or perhaps even all, of the individual ‘facts’ in a coherent narrative might be possible to verify empirically; ‘It is the omissions, and the shaping which makes these stories also myth.’²⁸

It could be argued that the power of history becomes especially potent when history is packaged in easily understandable myths, metaphors, and tropes.²⁹ Historian William McNeill launched the concept *mythistory* in order to explain how myth and history are interrelated: ‘[...] the same words that constitute truth for some are, and always will be, myth for others.’³⁰ Even if historians and/or politicians tell stories that are well rooted in empirical evidence, they often establish coherent narratives with visions of communities that are extended in time beyond their empirically established existence, including nations, classes, or ethnic groups. This means that an empirically verified sequence of events lends itself to mythical understanding of community. This also means that the question: ‘What is history?’ – in regards to how many years need to go by before anything can be called ‘history’ – is answered by the way narratives are told.

Even without considering life to be easily understood as a narrative, the narrative structure can still be characterised as a sense-making mechanism that makes it possible to understand how the past and the present hold together. In understanding historical sense-making, *metaphorical concepts* can be regarded as a complement to narrative.³¹ The statement ‘life is a story’ is based on a metaphorical concept in that we understand something abstract (life) in terms of something concrete (a story). Added to the metaphor that ‘life is a story’ is often the assumption that it is a coherent story, but it has been pointed out that it is possible to understand life with the more unconventional Shakespearian metaphor ‘life is a story told by

an idiot, full of sound and fury – signifying nothing’, where the most striking feature of an idiot’s narrative is that it is *incoherent*.³² In the case of narratives of ideology, there is also a second important metaphorical concept, namely ‘ideas are people’ or ‘movements are people’, where ideas and movements have fathers and act as individual persons.³³

Earlier research has acknowledged the difficulties associated with changing narratives that are based on – and at the same time are the basis of – identity, especially in regards to national narratives. Even if the social-democratic movement wanted to change the basis of identity from the nation to the working class, it could be argued that this was not possible without also connecting to the national narrative. The will to change the identity basis of narratives has been considered more likely to showcase the elasticity of the historical culture in question than actually changing it in a fundamental way.³⁴

Sources

In the beginning of the 1880s, most of the socialist agitation in Sweden was oral, but it soon became supported by socialist publications.³⁵ The first issue of *Folkviljan* was published in March of 1882. Relentless organisational work that very much involved the party press has been considered the basis for the founding of the SAP in 1889.³⁶

The source material in this study is the party press (*Folkviljan*, *Social-Demokraten* [The Social Democrat], *Arbetet* [The Labour], and *Ny Tid* [New Times]).³⁷ All issues published between 1882 and 1899 has been skimmed through and all articles with headlines suggesting a historical topic has been read. The publications of some of the more dominant social-democratic agitators, organisers, and debaters in the 1880s and 1890s has also been studied. Mainly, but not exclusively, these include original works and translations (published by the SAP or affiliated organisations) by:

- Hjalmar Branting, editor of *Social-Demokraten* 1886–1892 and 1896–1908, the first Social-Democratic Member of Parliament (1896), and the first Social-Democratic Prime Minister (1920);
- Kata Dalström (1858–1923), joined the party in 1893 and wrote *Till arbetareklassens kvinnor!* [To the women of the working class!] in 1899, the first woman to be elected into the SAP’s executive committee (1900);
- Axel Danielsson, founder and editor of *Arbetet* (Malmö), 1887–1899, translated *The Communist Manifesto* into Swedish in 1886 (not the first translation, but the first with any significant proliferation), and the author of the first official SAP program in 1897;
- August Palm, the founder and editor of *Folkviljan*, 1882, the founder and editor of *Social-Demokraten*, 1885–1886, and habitually considered the founder of Swedish social democracy;
- Fredrik Sterky, founder and editor of *Ny Tid* (Gothenburg), 1892–1898, the first president of the National Trade Union Confederation *Landsorganisationen* (LO), 1898–1900.

Having had divergent views on many basic political issues, especially concerning political strategy, these social democratic figures are probably representative of the diversity within the social-democratic movement in the last decades of the 19th century.³⁸ While this diversity has been taken as evidence that there was no social-democratic ideology, but only the ideology of different people,³⁹ I would argue that this is precisely what makes it interesting when investigating the formation of the movement and the process of establishing ideological congruence. It is conceivable, and could even be considered probable, that these differences within the movement also meant differences in opinions on what history to use, and how to use it, in order to create ideological coherence. However, this is an empirical question.

The Swedish Social Democratic Workers Party, 1881–1900

Industrialisation started late in Sweden, even compared to other Scandinavian countries. At the turn of the 20th century, more than half of the labour force was working in the agricultural sector.⁴⁰ Earlier research has pointed to the 1850s as the time when Swedish workers started to act independently and separate from other groups. However, the early worker's associations perhaps lacked a distinct political direction.⁴¹

During the socialist agitation in the 1880s, the workers' movement became more political on a national level and was inspired by German social democracy. Even though no official political program was adopted until the party congress of 1897, there had been an unofficial 'program' since 1881, long before a party was officially established. However, there was much debate over which pillar of the movement was more important, the workplace-related union struggles or the struggle for political reform.⁴² There were also some issues concerning the forms of struggle where the movements in the southern parts of Sweden, constituted in 1888, have been considered more revolutionary than the social democrats in the Stockholm-area.⁴³ The SAP was constituted nationally in 1889.

Most scholars agree that some form of Marxism had an ideological influence over the party in the 1880s, even if it was not the only influence. However, it has often been pointed out that this Marxism had close ties to the German Social Democratic Party and Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864), who was harshly criticised (after his death) for misinterpreting Marx by Marx himself.⁴⁴

Three issues on tactics was thoroughly debated within the movement during the 1880s and 1890s, namely violence, parliamentarism, and suffrage. In Branting's famous 'Gävle-speech' in 1886 (on why the labour movement had to be a socialist movement), and in resolutions adopted when the party formed in 1889, as well as in the first proper party program (1897), the parliament was seen as the agent by which socialism would be established.⁴⁵ In the beginning of the 1890s, the anarchists were practically thrown out of the party by the adoption of a resolution (1891) that denounced any links between anarchism and social democracy. However, there has been some scholarly debate over whether this also meant that the SAP should be considered a non-revolutionary party.⁴⁶

The party program of 1897 has been considered by some researchers to be based on the German Erfurt Program.⁴⁷ For the party delegates who pursued the reformist route to socialism, it was probably considered a clarification of the resolution from 1891. For the supporters of revolution (in the Marxist

sense) the program was probably considered a failure because it declared that the SAP would administer the transition to socialism and, therefore, govern a capitalist society. The schisms within the top tier of the party hierarchy have been considered less obvious in the latter half of the 1890s. Even if the view of some influential social democrats still was that the party had a 'revolutionary' approach in some sense, it has been said that this was based on an idea of 'revolution' that included creating a better society through parliamentary reform.⁴⁸

The ideological shifts from 1881 to 1900 are far too complicated to do justice here, but it seems pretty clear in earlier research that the SAP had an ideologically diverse cadre in the 1880s and beginning of the 1890s, and when they started to converge (by debate and exclusion) the party emerged as a reformist socialist party by the turn of the century.⁴⁹ This makes the political historiography/mythmaking of this particular period especially interesting to look at.

Historical themes

The social democrats of the 1880s and 1890s had a mostly materialist conception of history. In their general descriptions of history, Branting, Dalström, Danielsson, Palm, and Sterky constructed narratives that can be considered materialistic. However, it is difficult to describe this materialistic view any further; change was sometimes described in evolutionary terms and sometimes as the dialectical product of immense class struggles. There was often an ambiguous representation of the driving forces behind historical development.⁵⁰

The representatives of the movement seemingly had a very defensive strategy when it came to explanations of socialism. They clearly felt (or made themselves out to feel) smeared by what they considered to be a dirty anti-socialist campaign with the ultimate goal of breaking the movement before their ideas could spread.⁵¹ It has also been pointed out that engagement in fictional dialogues with adversaries was a characteristic feature of social-democratic agitation in the early years.⁵²

The historical references made by Swedish social democrats in the ending decades of the 19th century can be categorised in different ways. As stated in the introduction, I have chosen to only analyse references to history that showcased examples of progressive movements or figures that could be used to create an ideologically coherent narrative for the social-democratic movement. These references could be further categorised into two different groups, including those with moral connections to movements that were considered progressive, but not socialist,⁵³ and those with connections to the more direct and tactically important experiences of socialist movements in the recent past.

The empirical survey indicated four major themes of historical references, and I shall discuss these themes in chronological order of the actual events depicted. The references were used in the context of defending socialism by arguing for universal suffrage and social reform, but they often appeared in articles and pamphlets without any outspoken relevance other than explaining social-democratic views on these particular historical events – and in doing so, also explaining social-democratic ideology by relating it to these historical events and often in connection to anniversaries of the events depicted.

I have not included the idealisation and mythologising of Ferdinand Lassalle. The references to him, while interesting in their mythological, romanticised, and almost hagiographical features, were not historical because they depicted him as an ideologue rather than as a historical figure.⁵⁴ Lassalle is too much involved in the creation of ideology to be able to also metaphorically explain it.

Christianity – Jesus and Luther

The earliest movement that the Swedish social democrats wanted to identify with was the movement described in the gospels.⁵⁵ However, it was not Jesus as a divine figure that was considered worthy of attention, but the rebellion that he stood for as a historical figure.⁵⁶ At a time when religion had a profound meaning in people's lives, and religion was also used in arguments against socialism, the references to Jesus and his rebellion against the authorities were potentially powerful. In the social-democratic writings these references were not religious, but there was a respectful tone that conveys an awareness of the possibly strong beliefs of their audience.⁵⁷ However, the references to Jesus and religion did provoke the authorities and some Swedish social democrats were sentenced to spend time in jail in the 19th century on charges of blasphemy.⁵⁸

The most basic use of a 'metaphoric Christianity' that sheds light on the social-democratic movement is the reference to Jesus and early Christians as preachers of some form of socialism. Not all social democrats would consider this a 'scientific' approach to socialism because, as Danielsson says when summarising a debate over alleged failed attempts at socialism during the Middle Ages: 'There needs to be a capitalist organisation of labour before any socialist ideology or movement, in the modern sense, can be established.'⁵⁹ However, this did not deter the early social-democratic movement from mythologising the 'historical part' of the gospels and the early Christian movement morally, and this was not unique to the Swedish social-democratic movement. The German social democrat Wilhelm Liebknecht (1826–1900) wrote in a pamphlet published by the Swedish social democrats: '[T]he new testament preaches communism in its "rawest" most initial form.'⁶⁰

Biblical historical motifs were, ambiguously enough, also used to show the difference between the idealism associated with religion and socialist materialism. The social democrats and the labour movement did not expect to be helped by divine intervention, and, therefore – unlike the rebellion of Jesus – they would be successful.⁶¹ It was pointed out that if the people described in the gospels were allowed to be defined by their *historical* accomplishments, they would have been valuable examples for anyone who wanted a better world. The point made was that the Church had depoliticised them by hiding their political motives and struggle for equality behind the mysteries of religion.⁶²

If Christ had lived in our time, he would have violated the penal codes [refers to Swedish laws enacted with the alleged purpose of impeding socialist agitation]. He, who drove the religious hypocrites of his time out of the temple, would not have been preaching in the Churches, but in The People's House [*Folkets hus* – Swedish labour movement's community centre].⁶³

The references to Jesus could be interpreted as a way of choosing metaphors for the political message that people would understand and relate to. At the same time it is a pastiche of the Bible that would be expected to provoke the establishment. It is also a defensive moral reference, because religion was also used in arguments against the early social-democratic movement, and the social-democratic use of religious references could be interpreted as a response to this. This is especially noticeable in the pamphlet *Sosialismens lilla katekes* [Socialism's small catechism], where the literary genre of catechisms was used with questions and answers about ten socialist commandments.⁶⁴ However, there was also a religious tone in this pamphlet with some references to God and to the creation.⁶⁵

One of the more unique booklets published by leading social democrats during the 1880s and 1890s is Kata Dalström's *Luther och de lifägna* [Luther and the serfs] from 1898. It is unique because it is a publication that is entirely about history, but not at all about the social-democratic movement (at least not explicitly). The history depicted is, of course, used to make a point about contemporary society and what steps need to be taken in order to make change happen, but nevertheless it does not explicitly state anything about the history of socialism. Again, a sequence of events, which is known to the people who Dalström wanted to reach, is depicted in a highly politicised way, drawing the narrative away from its historical setting and into the social reality of working men and women of the 1890s.

Dalström makes the narrative about the protestant reformation entirely about the social issues of the movement, while only recognising its religious aspects enough to relate the narrative to something that was known to her audience. The description of the events lends itself to show how a movement might be impaired if people in the movement advocate hasty, helter-skelter solutions to problems. It is possible to see the booklet as a contribution to the debate on anarchism within the social-democratic movement. Martin Luther (1483–1546) becomes the moderate social democrat wanting to revolutionise the Church by means of reform, and the eager supporters of 'everything right now' become the anarchists.⁶⁶ Dalström takes Luther's side in the arguments. However, she later abandons Luther when he fails to support the peasants in their fight against the aristocracy. Instead, the leader of the rebellious peasants, 'the religious zealot Müntzer', assumes the role as the narrative's hero.⁶⁷ In this second part, Dalström is clearly drawing on Engels' description of the events even though she never explicitly mentions his work.⁶⁸

There are basically two levels of mythologising in the narrative, two separate lessons deriving from the two separate heroes creating two separate narratives. First is the story of how it is better to organise and slowly change society through reform, and second is the story of how lower classes always need to rely on their own abilities in order to make change happen. Dalström ends her narrative by stating that the peasants' demands for freedom were very much the same demands 'proclaimed today, by the mighty crowds of proletarians, in the name of humanity and justice'.⁶⁹

While others in the social-democratic movement also use Luther and the German Peasant's War (1524–1525), they only use the second part of Dalström's narrative, and they very clearly repudiate Luther and his role in what is seen as the material, or social, part of the reformation.⁷⁰

Overall, the most striking feature of the social-democratic references to Jesus, the gospels, and Luther is not the blasphemy of these references, but the way these stories are used to protect and argue

for their own ideology. They are not striking down on Christianity, but on the reactionary interpretation of it by the contemporary Church authorities.

The French Revolution

The significance of the French Revolution for the social-democratic movement is not surprising. It could be considered to be the most significant historical event when trying to explain and prove the validity of dialectical historical materialism, especially by the Russian revolutionaries of the 20th century.⁷¹ However, its use as a testimony for the legitimacy of the social-democratic historical perspective is not the issue here, but how it is mythologised in order to say something about the contemporary times at the turn of the 20th century.

An article published in *Social-Demokraten* in 1888 discusses the topicality of the French Revolution because many of the monarchies of Europe wanted to boycott the World Fair in Paris the following year. France was still, almost 100 years after the revolution, one of only two sovereign republics in Europe (the other being Switzerland), and the author(s) of this lengthy article believed that the example of the Third Republic was thought of as being too much for the monarchies of Europe to handle, especially with the working classes starting to make acquaintance with socialism. This is elaborated upon by comparing the aristocracy of the *Ancien Régime* with the 'financial aristocracy' of the 1880s. In the article, there is a long list of reforms made by the French revolutionaries that the author(s) deem as progressive. However, it is also noted that this would not be considered enough in the 1880s.⁷²

The utility of the *mythistory* of the French Revolution is threefold. First, it shows the way in which the bourgeoisie put an end to oppression and became the masters of their own destiny through revolution. Second, it serves the pedagogical purpose of showing how middle classes always have taken advantage of lower classes in revolutionary situations and that the emancipation of the working class must be something they make for themselves. Third, there is a general romanticised mythology of 'the people rising up' that is exposed in the narratives of the French Revolution.⁷³

In 1889, the hundredth anniversary of the French Revolution and the year the SAP was officially established as a national political party, the social democrats were claiming the French Revolution as their own:

[...] no one can tell how close we are to this time [when the proletariat tries to put an end to class rule], but it is obvious that the ruling classes themselves can feel that the time is near when they, during the 100-year anniversary of the great revolution, anxiously try to forget it and belittle its merit and importance.⁷⁴

This sort of hinting that the anniversary of the revolution *should* be something for the bourgeoisie to be proud of and celebrate was very common, but it also points towards the claim of the revolution as part of the social-democratic heritage: 'The working class [in this context synonymous to the SAP] is the only rightful heir to the principles of [17]89,⁷⁵ and 'which of the hostile brother's, bourgeoisie or proletariat, liberalism or socialism, has the right to the heritage of these memories? [...] Liberalism has no use of its

own revolutionary history,⁷⁶ and 'the bourgeoisie is [rightfully] wary of [...] playing with fire. Once herself a revolutionary, she now has a true fear of revolution. She has not anything more to gain, but everything to lose.'⁷⁷

While depicted as progressive, the French Revolution was also seen as the beginning of the bourgeois oppression of the working class. For example, Branting mentions that at the very moment that the bourgeoisie defeated the hated aristocracy, the new upper class took its place as the new rulers.⁷⁸ This line of reasoning is dependent on the dialectical materialistic view of history that was also part of the social-democratic historical culture. The reason stated for the fact that the French Revolution was not universally liberating was that it was not the time for universal liberation in a materially dependent Marxist way. '[S]ociety does not stop to listen to explanations; [...]. Feudalism was doomed – because its time was up. A new society would soon blossom on its grave, but it was not a society of eternal and universal human rights, but the old in a new developmental state.'⁷⁹ In this sense, capitalism was the Bastille of the social democrats.⁸⁰

The events of the French Revolution were also separated in this line of reasoning. The fifth of May, in 1789 (the day on which the Estates-General convened), was considered by social democrats to be an appropriate day for the bourgeoisie to celebrate (which Swedish liberals also did) because there was nothing revolutionary about the assembly of the Estates-General. For the social democrats, the choice to celebrate the French Revolution on the fifth of May mirrored the Swedish bourgeoisie's relation to the Swedish people: 'On the fifth of May the overture began, on the 20th of June, the curtain was raised [the tennis court oath], but the protagonist, the people, did not take the stage until the 14th of July [the storming of the Bastille].'⁸¹

On the 14th of July 1889 (a Sunday), demonstrations were organised by the SAP in the major cities in Sweden. These demonstrations were not reported in the social-democratic press as expressions of joy over the storming of the Bastille. Instead, these were depicted as demonstrations for universal suffrage⁸² chosen to be held on this day, perhaps as a subtle hint about what might happen if the demand for universal suffrage was not met. In the debates with anarchists in 1891, the French Revolution was put to a different use. For example, Axel Danielsson expressed his view of the freedom that the French Revolution fought for and won as the given starting point for the social democrats. They could not turn their back on political freedom and democracy because they identified with the struggle for these causes.⁸³

In the references to the French Revolution, which for obvious reasons were mostly made during the anniversary summer of 1889, the view of the need for revolution was apparent. However, in line with Branting's speech in Gävle in 1886, the threat of revolution was conditioned to a situation where reforms tending towards universal suffrage were not adopted. There was still ambivalence as to whether the SAP was a revolutionary party or not in their historical references, and perhaps they were more uncertain in relation to historical revolutions than in their expressed views on contemporary policy.⁸⁴ In the way representatives of the SAP mythologised the French Revolution, the need to compare themselves, from a defensive point of view, with their contemporary adversaries, the bourgeoisie, was evident. It was by pointing to this revolution that their own 'threats' of revolution could be put into context, as they

perceived it. They identified with the revolution, even if that meant identifying with contemporary enemies. However, they also referenced the revolution in order to show how the lower classes were betrayed by the bourgeoisie. This means that there were two different narratives, one offensive, and one defensive, where social democrats identified with different actors in the French Revolution.

1848

In the closing decades of the 19th century, 1848 was a mythical year in Swedish social-democratic historical culture. The year 1848 symbolised popular struggle against the supremacy of the authorities. The myth consisted of three uprisings in Paris, Vienna, and Berlin, and unlike the French Revolution, there was an identification with the revolutionaries that was also projecting ideological similarities onto them – the revolutionaries were considered socialist. In particular, the demands made to the provisional government in Paris in February of 1848, like universal suffrage and unemployment relief, were considered to be in line with social-democratic politics. However, there was no consensus within the social-democratic historical culture on whether it was a political revolution aiming at universal suffrage or if it was indeed a social revolution.⁸⁵

Some even went so far as to label the 1848 revolutionaries in Paris ‘the social democracy of that time’.⁸⁶ There are similarities in the myths of the French Revolution and the revolutions of 1848. In both cases the popular movement was celebrated, but with an edge towards what was considered the bourgeois betrayal of the working class. The lesson was that the freedom of the working class must be in their own hands, and they cannot entrust anyone with making freedom happen for them. In much of the Swedish social-democratic writings of the 1890s, the working class of 1848 was seen as having a class-consciousness that made them a force to be reckoned with in a much deeper sense than had been the case in 1789. However, the revolutions of 1848 were still often seen as bourgeois revolutions, but with a more sophisticated participation by a conscious working class.⁸⁷ The uprising in Vienna in particular was seen as evidence for the need for the workers to be the makers of their own destiny. The social-democratic press described the uprising as a joint venture between students, the bourgeoisie, and the proletariat in a struggle for freedom of the press, a people’s army, and a new constitution. However, as it turned out the proletariat had fought the war for bourgeois freedom: ‘the first day of freedom for the Austrian bourgeoisie, had cost the proletariat a lot of blood’.⁸⁸ The descriptions of the uprising in Berlin are similar: ‘the proletariat shed its blood for the bourgeoisie’.⁸⁹ One of the major differences between the French Revolution and 1848, which was pointed out by leading social-democrats, was that in 1848 the workers had their own demands, even if it was only the demands that were shared by the bourgeoisie that were met in the end.⁹⁰

The revolutionaries of 1848 were also mythologised in their sacrifice for something they did not achieve, but which the workers of the 1890s might be able to. Here are two examples, the first dealing with the uprising in Berlin and the second dealing with the June Days uprising in Paris:

Even if the enemies of the people always have tried to deceive, deny, silence and annihilate the importance of these days, they shall never succeed. The 18th of March grew more powerful the more its rich heritage during the following years was lost through lies and deceit, and not least by the people's generous credulity. [...] If they stood up today, the March-fighters, out there on the cemetery in Friedrichshain, the most bitter feelings would surely fill their hearts when they saw how little of what they laid down in the hands of the people has stayed with the people.⁹¹

Ever since the bourgeoisie burnt its fingers on its juvenile ideals during 1848, and learnt to know the horrific and victory-promulgating force of the young giant, the proletariat, during the June Days, it is filled with anxiety and fright and cannot suppress the indications of an imminent threat and the coming of the end.⁹²

There are numerous examples of this kind of highly mythologising language in the descriptions of the uprisings of 1848.⁹³ As in the references made to the French Revolution, the social-democratic press also points to the refusal of the bourgeoisie to acknowledge their own revolutions. The 'children of the revolutionary men of 1848' had noticed that the monarchy was by no means harmful to them and, therefore, they were not interested in celebrating how they won their position in society by violently rising up against this monarchy.⁹⁴

In the myth of 1848, almost all identification is with workers, and not with the bourgeoisie, as was the case in the references to the French Revolution. The lessons learned from 1848 were very important in the eyes of the Swedish social democrats. Fifty years after the revolutionary year, one of their papers wrote:

Even now [...], there is unrest deep in the ranks. But this time, the workers have a class consciousness, are better organised, and they keep calm until the moment when their acknowledged leaders give the signal for a struggle to the death against corruption and against the capitalist dominion of violence.⁹⁵

The Parisian February Revolution of 1848 also had repercussions in Stockholm. The issue of popular representation in the Swedish Diet probably had some significance for the so called 'March Disturbances' which resulted in the death of 18 civilians.⁹⁶ However, the 'March Disturbances' in Stockholm are almost invisible in the social-democratic press during the 1880s and 1890s. This uprising is made totally apolitical in the few references made to it.⁹⁷

The Paris Commune

Perhaps the most interesting event in recent history, from the perspective of social-democrats in the 1880s and 1890s, was the Paris Commune. Taking place during the spring of 1871, this uprising was highly debated and mythologised in the socialist movement from 1871 onwards.⁹⁸

The basic narrative in the social-democratic papers in the 1880s and 1890s was told roughly as follows. Following the French loss in the war against Germany, and especially because of the French government's allowing Paris to be humiliated by the invading army, an uprising was staged by the proletariat of Paris. However, there had been some unrest in Paris even before March of 1871, and the

workers of the city had been demanding that Paris would be granted the same municipal status as other cities in France. Because France was at war, the workers of the city were armed. Following the humiliating peace treaty, the French government wanted to disarm the National Guard, mainly comprised of workers. Instead, the workers turned on the government who fled to Versailles leaving the proletariat of Paris as masters of their own city on the 18th of March. However, the Commune was actually born on the 26th of March because that was the day of the first election to the Commune council. Held under immense pressure from the government and the upper classes of France, the Commune held its ground for two months before fought down during ‘the bloody week’.⁹⁹

In the references to the Commune, the Communards was granted a mythological sacrifice;¹⁰⁰ there was a will to grant them what the bourgeois press had denied them. The language used to describe the Commune was highly mythological, and the authors were very specific in the reasons for that; the bourgeois press lied about the commune: ‘More vicious lies have been told about the Paris Commune than about the medieval huns. But we have learned a different story, and in it there are no thieves and murderers, but a working class fighting for its rights and interests.’¹⁰¹

The Swedish social-democrats of the 1880s and 1890s described the Commune as a socialist endeavour, listing the decisions of the Communards and commenting on their progressive spirit, and proclaiming that the only thing that had stopped the Communards from making socialism real in Paris in 1871 was their limited time.¹⁰² In 1891, the board of the northern regional district of the SAP decided to publish Prosper Lissagaray’s (1838–1901) book *Histoire de la Commune* (translated by Fredrik Sterky with the title *Kommunen 1871*) in 34 booklets. In the final booklet, there is a summary of the meaning of the Commune and there is no hint of criticism towards the Parisian Communards. On the contrary, there is a mythological description of their heroic effort. Lissagaray concludes by addressing people who believe that the Commune was a delinquent rebellion: ‘In that case, the uprising on the 14th of July 1789 was also a crime, because it too had its executions [...]. The uprising on the 18th of March 1871 is as much as the one of the 14th of July 1789 a crying of: Order!, to the despots.’¹⁰³ On the inside of the covers of the booklets, the SAP regional board wrote:

He who wants to know a *true* description of the events during this world-historical occasion, when the working class made a serious attempt to rid itself of the capitalist yoke, [...], he who wants to know something about heroic proletarian struggle for real culture, he should read Lissagaray’s book about the Commune.¹⁰⁴

This is where the references to the Commune differ from the references to the French Revolution, or 1848. The Paris Commune was not a struggle *with* the bourgeoisie, but a struggle against them, and it was mythologised in a way that shows how the social-democrats identified, almost totally, with the Communards: ‘The Paris Commune is without parallel in history. It was the first time that the proletariat revolutionised for themselves.’¹⁰⁵

However, already in the beginning of the 1890s social-democratic texts hinted about a need to demythologised the Paris Commune, and even though there was a vibrant and enthusiastic identification

with the Communards in the texts, there were also distinct statements that denied the Communards social-democratic status; the uprising was too spontaneous and when socialist leaders were beginning to get things moving in a socialist direction, the Commune was crushed in May of 1871.¹⁰⁶ The tension between mythologising and demythologising efforts cannot be attributed to differences between ideological fractions of the party. Both the mythologising and the hints about demythologising are printed in all the papers studied and in pamphlets by both Branting and Danielsson.

Every year during the 1880s and 1890s, there was at least one article about the Paris Commune in the days around March 18. One thing that was pointed out as something to learn from the Commune was that the social democrats now knew what would happen if they seized power but were unable to hold on to it; the bourgeoisie would drench them in blood. The bourgeois cruelty during the ‘bloody week of May’ was a vivid memory in the social-democratic historical culture of the 1880s and 1890s.¹⁰⁷

Conclusions

All of the themes presented in this article are in some way about violent revolutions, sacrifice, and/or victimhood. All of these themes are also connected to social democracy in that they cast historical figures and movements in the typical roles of social-democratic political argument of the time: the roles of the oppressed, the oppressors, and the liberators. However, when it comes to Christianity and the French Revolution, the liberators are portrayed as inadequate in comparison with the contemporary liberators of the SAP. Regarding the revolutions of 1848 and the Paris Commune, the liberators are not described as inherently inadequate; instead, they were betrayed or unsuccessful for other reasons, reasons that were not inherent in the movements themselves.

The narratives also display congruency with each other, and in that sense they create a ‘whole narrative’ that is coherent and tells the ideologically, morally, and tactically useful story that the social democrats of the 1880s and 1890s wanted to make themselves out to be a part of. The different historical themes describe the same basic plot and make the same points: 1) revolutions are sometimes necessary and inherently good in the cases portrayed (a moral point), and 2) the working class will be betrayed (as they have been in the past) if they do not take control of their own future (a tactical point, deriving from the International Workingmen’s Association: ‘the emancipation of the working classes must be conquered by the working classes themselves’¹⁰⁸). It is perhaps surprising that the French Revolution is referenced in mostly moral settings, and the tactical side, which was so important for the Russian revolutionaries, as well as for Marx and Engels themselves, is almost completely ignored. This could be considered a consequence of the context in which these historical references were narrated. In presenting to the public, a political party and an ideology that was very much about change, the morality of wanting to change society was perhaps more important than pointing out tactical lessons. This could also be considered a difference between utilising history as a weapon for legitimising authority and utilising it – perhaps also as a weapon – to present something new; history is not used to connect the movement to power directly, but it is used to connect it to morality, in search of power. Considering the sources utilised for this article – texts

directed towards the general public – it is perhaps not so surprising that morality was more important than tactics.

Apart from the metaphorical aspects of the social-democratic use of historical figures (Jesus, the revolutionaries of 1848 and 1789, and the Communards as metaphorical social democrats), the historical references can be understood as metaphors in themselves. In that sense, they are ways of explaining – and understanding – something that might be considered abstract – the social-democratic ideology – in terms of something more concrete – the historical references that their intended audience could be expected to understand. This also shows an ambiguity with regard to the historical materialism that the representatives of the social-democratic movement sometimes tried to convey. In the metaphorical and mythological historical references, an idealistic interpretation of history, perhaps ill-suited with the (sometimes) materialistic claims of the narratives themselves, was embedded. In order to use history as metaphor, there needs to be an ideological connection to historical actors, even if – by a strict materialistic interpretation of history – these connections should not exist. This could also be interpreted as a distinctive character of narratives of identity.

This coherent historical narrative, used by the SAP during the 1880s and 1890s, created more than ideological clarity and valuable explanations of ideology, strategy, and tactics through metaphor. In creating coherence and explanatory value, they also created identity. Even though – at least to some extent – this identity was rooted in empirically verifiable historical facts, the narratives of the SAP created a diachronic bond and projected a social-democratic identity onto movements and people beyond the historical reach of the term ‘social-democratic’. History was utilised in a fashion that is recognised from national movements, where nationalities are projected onto people who lived perhaps thousands of years ago, clearly beyond the historical reach of any nation. The metaphorical concept of ‘movements are people’ is evidently very useful in construction of ideological narratives. The proletariat is referred to as a ‘young giant’, someone who ‘sheds blood’, ‘she’, etcetera. This sort of narration also lends itself to the metaphorical concept of ‘family’, which is often visible in nationalist thought (the nation has a ‘home’, ‘forefathers’, and a ‘mother tongue’) and is utilised by social democrats when discussing the contemporary bourgeoisie in terms of ‘children of the revolutionary men of 1848’ or the relation between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat in terms of hostile siblings fighting over heritage.

It is quite clear that the SAP was involved in a struggle for history. Many of their historical references were accompanied by descriptions of how the SAP/‘the people’/‘the working class’ were entitled to the ‘heritage’ associated with certain historical events. These events were sometimes also claimed by others – because historical cultures do overlap – and there was a salient feature of awareness vis-a-vis these intersecting historical cultures in the SAP’s references to history. The history that social democrats wanted to be associated with was not just there for the taking. It had to be won in a struggle over the right to formulate contemporary problems and the right to interpret history in a way that pointed to the solution of that problem. This is what mythologising history and fusing it with the right questions about contemporary society can accomplish. This is also visible in the twofold narratives of – especially – Jesus, the French Revolution, and the revolutions of 1848. There is both a defensive and moral narrative, as well

as an offensive, tactically useful narrative, which indicates that the historical culture is struggling for hegemony over how events are to be interpreted and into which larger narratives they should be incorporated.

However, the struggle for history does not seem to be an internal endeavour. The historical references are almost always the same and also described in the same way, across divides on political and tactical issues within the social-democratic movement in the 1880s and 1890s. This might be a consequence of history being referenced mostly in relation to moral issues, and not in relation to tactical ones. Propaganda directed towards the general public might not be the place for disagreement on important issues, but the absence of different views on historical issues is still surprising given the many different authors and different publishing channels included in this study.

In light of the findings of this article, the early abandonment of revolutionary vocabulary and ideology that has been pointed out in earlier research needs to be problematized. When it comes to what historical references were chosen to paint a vivid image of what the SAP wanted to achieve and how they wanted to achieve it, there is no evidence that this changed in any substantial way before 1900. The same revolutions were celebrated in the same highly mythologised way during the entire period from 1881 to 1900.

It is possible that it is the general stability of historical narratives that needs to be considered in order to explain why the SAP's historical references did not change in a period that saw so many changes and debates over ideology and political tactics. Mythical history easily lends itself to politics, but it is also powerful in itself. Abandoning a narrative that has been used to explain who or what something is, by means of historical references as metaphorical concepts, is often immensely difficult. Following this line of thought, the historical culture of the SAP does not follow suit when ideological and tactical considerations change because the narrative is deeply rooted in identity.

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Notes

¹ Ihalainen, 'The 18th-Century Traditions'; Axelsson, *Historien i politiken*; Zander, *Fornstora dagar*.

² E.g. Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*; Johansson, *Kampen om historien*; Zander, *Fornstora dagar*; Strahl, *Nationalism & socialism*; Björlin, 'Politik och historia'. For some notes on the use of history within the Danish social democratic party see Bryld, *Den demokratiske socialismes gennembrudsår*; Bryld, 'Arbejderhistorie og erindringspolitik'.

³ Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*.

⁴ Nielsen, *Historie til aftenkaffen*; Axelsson, 'Historia i bruk'.

⁵ Cf. Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*; K-G Karlsson, *Historia som vapen*, 66–73.

⁶ Strahl, *Nationalism & socialism*, 47–8; Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 456; Lundberg, *Folket, yxan, orättvisans rot*, 123; Edquist, *Nyktra svenskar*, 269–89; Edquist, *En folklig historia*, 390–2; Zander, *Fornstora dagar*, 152–9. As for other political parties in Sweden, there has been some scholarly interest in The Left Party's (the former

Communist Party) view of Soviet history and how this relates to the party's view of their own history and ideological development. Bergner, *Med historien som motståndare*. The conservative party's (*Högerpartiet*) relation to Swedish history has also been the subject of scholarly interest. Nilsson, 'Med historien som ledstjärna'.

⁷ E.g. S.O. Karlsson, *Det intelligenta samhället*; Millbourn, "Rätt till maklighet"; Simonson, *Socialdemokratin och maktövertagandet*; Hentilä, *Den svenska arbetarklassen*; Lewin, *Planhushållningsdebatten*; Tingsten, *Den svenska socialdemokratins idéutveckling I–II*; Nordström, *Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti*; Lindgren, *Det socialdemokratiska partiets uppkomst*.

⁸ Millbourn, "Rätt till maklighet", 133

⁹ Hjelm and Ekdal, 'Reformismens framväxt', 18.

¹⁰ *Social-Demokraten*, 18 March 1887; *Arbetet*, 17 March 1888.

¹¹ Zander, *Fornstora dagar*, 150–2. See also Lindbom, *Den socialdemokratiska ungdomsrörelsen*, 14.

¹² Tingsten, *Den svenska socialdemokratins idéutveckling I*, 169, 195.

¹³ Karlbom, *Revolution eller reformer*, 70–1.

¹⁴ Hedström and Josephson, 'Agitationsbroschyrerna', 106.

¹⁵ Bryld, 'Arbejderhistorie og erindringspolitik', 25–28.

¹⁶ Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 272–319; Zander, *Fornstora dagar*, 207–39.

¹⁷ S.O. Karlsson, *Det intelligenta samhället*, 243–4.

¹⁸ Hentilä, *Den svenska arbetarklassen*, 155; Karlbom, *Revolutioner eller reformer*, 5; S.O. Karlsson, *Det intelligenta samhället*, 297–321; Millbourn, 'Rätt till maklighet', 36, 51, 361; Simonson, *Socialdemokratin och maktövertagandet*, 218.

¹⁹ Karlbom, *Revolution eller reformer*, 1–5.

²⁰ Branting, *Socialdemokratiens århundrade*.

²¹ Cf. Jenkins, *Re-thinking history*, 6.

²² White, 'The Value of Narrativity'; Alfred, *Peace, Power, and Righteousness*.

²³ Zander, 'Historia och identitetsbildning'; Brubaker, 'Ethnicity Without Groups'.

²⁴ Thompson, *The Making*, 8–11.

²⁵ Cf. Scott, *Gender and the Politics*, 88–90.

²⁶ Rüsen, *Geschichte im Kulturprozess*; Karlsson, *Europeiska möten*, 76–9.

²⁷ Samuel and Thompson, 'Introduction', 8.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁹ Cf. Aronsson, 'Historiekultur, politik och historievetenskap'; Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 36.

³⁰ McNeil, *Mythistory*, 19.

³¹ Zanazanian, 'Historical Consciousness and Metaphor', 17.

³² Lakoff and Johnsson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 174.

³³ *Ibid.*, 33–4, 47.

³⁴ Carretero, *Constructing Patriotism*, 5; Edquist, *En folklig historia*, 390–2; Elmersjö, *Norden, nationen och historien*, 297–300.

³⁵ Mral, 'Kata Dalström i talarstolen', 227.

³⁶ Lindgren, *Det socialdemokratiska partiets uppkomst*, 78–108.

³⁷ The establishment of these papers in the three largest cities in Sweden (Stockholm, Gothenburg, and Malmö) can also be considered the end of the era of city-establishment. Beginning in 1899, the SAP also started papers in smaller towns. Ledin, 'Från politisk dialog', 296.

³⁸ Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*, 44–8; Lindgren, *Från Per Götrek*, 50–80.

³⁹ Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 440.

⁴⁰ Tingsten, *Den svenska socialdemokratins idéutveckling I*, 19; Elvander, *Skandinavisk arbetarrörelse*, 23–8; Karlbom, *Hungerupplöpp och strejker*, 139, 194.

⁴¹ Karlbom, *Hungerupplöpp och strejker*, 194–228; Hjelm and Ekdahl, 'Reformismens framväxt', 14–20.

⁴² Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 243; Lindhagen, *Socialdemokratins program, del 1*, 9–13.

⁴³ Lindgren, *Det socialdemokratiska partiets uppkomst*, 222–5.

⁴⁴ S.O. Karlsson, *Det intelligenta samhället*, 638–43; Ekdahl and Hjelm, 'Reformismens framväxt', 17–18; Tingsten, *Den svenska socialdemokratins idéutveckling I*, 106–8; Marx, *Critique of the Gotha program*. The ties to the ideology of the German Social Democratic Party has also been considered overrated. Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*, 48; Millbourn, "Rätt till maklighet", 363; S.O. Karlsson, *Det intelligenta samhället*. However, the printing of a version of the Gotha Program as a pamphlet in 1885, and in *Social-Demokraten* on 5 February 1886, in order to present social-democratic ideas strongly suggests that the ideological ties to the German movement was strong, at least in the 1880s. See also Josephson, "I alla händelser", 46.

⁴⁵ Branting, *Hvarför arbetarrörelsen måste*, 28–31; Lindgren, *Det socialdemokratiska partiets uppkomst*, 349. See also Hentilä, *Den svenska arbetarklassen*, 113; Karlbom, *Revolution eller reformer*, 42.

⁴⁶ Cf. Hentilä, *Den svenska arbetarklassen*, 118; Nordström, *Sveriges socialdemokratiska arbetareparti*, 333; Simonson, *Socialdemokratin och maktövertagandet*, 86.

⁴⁷ Simonson, *Socialdemokratin och maktövertagandet*, 28–9. However, others disagree, even though they can see some resemblance. E.g. Millbourn, "Rätt till maklighet", 347–51; Berman, *The Social Democratic Moment*, 48.

⁴⁸ S.O. Karlsson, *Det intelligenta samhället*, 313–27.

- ⁴⁹ Later developments of the party's ideology have also been subject to debate. See S.O. Karlsson, 'Om folkhemsmytens återkomst', 54–7.
- ⁵⁰ Cf. Danielsson, *Ur kapitalets värld*, 42; Branting, *Socialismen*, 36–7.
- ⁵¹ Branting, *Hvarför arbetarrörelsen måste*, 28–9; Palm, *Nutidsbetraktelser*, 2, 10–1; Danielsson, *Ur kapitalets värld*, 5, 35–47; Rylander, *Hvad vilja Socialdemokraterna*, 7–8; Sterky, *Socialismen*, 14.
- ⁵² Hedström and Josephson, 'Agitaktionsbroschyrerna 1881–1909', 104.
- ⁵³ These morally founded historical references could be linked to what Klas-Göran Karlsson labels 'moral use of history'. See, for example, Karlsson, *Europeiska möten*, 88–91, 377–96.
- ⁵⁴ Johannesson, 'Agitatorn hot eller ideal', 16. See also *Social-Demokraten*, 12 February 1887; 19 August 1890; Bonnell, 'The Lassalle Cult'.
- ⁵⁵ There are very short references to Socrates (470–399 BC) and also to the Pythagoreans. However, I consider these references too short to analyse (two sentences each). Palm and Nordman, *Sanning utan prester*, 3.
- ⁵⁶ The biblical references in the agitation for social democracy have been paid some attention in earlier research concerning the rhetoric of the early labour movement in Sweden. See, for example, Hedström and Josephson, 'Agitaktionsbroschyrerna 1881–1909', 101–2; Josephson, "I alla händelser", 79. Linderborg has also described how the leaders of the party (especially Branting) later have been described in Messianic terms. Linderborg, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia*, 90–2. The use of Christian vocabulary and socialist interpretations of Christianity in the labour movement has also been studied elsewhere. See Burns, 'The Soul of Socialism'; Arvidsson, *Morgonrodnad*. For more general use of Jesus' radicalism, see Burns, *Life and Death*.
- ⁵⁷ See, for example, Palm, 'Hvad vil Sosial-Demokraterna', 8; Palm and Nordman, *Sanning utan prester*, 3–6.
- ⁵⁸ E.g. Lidforss, 'Levnadsteckning', xxiv–xxv; Lindgren, *Det socialdemokratiska partiets uppkomst*, 253–4.
- ⁵⁹ Danielsson, *Ur kapitalets värld*, 46–7.
- ⁶⁰ Liebknecht, *Socialdemokratien och dess syften*, 16 (Fredrik Sterky's translation into Swedish, my translation into English). See also Branting, *Socialismen: En historisk framställning*, 12; *Arbetet*, 14 September 1893.
- ⁶¹ *Social-Demokraten*, 14 April 1888. See also *Folkviljan*, 19 July 1884.
- ⁶² *Arbetet*, 28 December 1894; *Social-Demokraten*, 31 December 1894. See also *Arbetet*, 15 April 1890; Palm and Nordman, *Sanning utan prester*, 3–6.
- ⁶³ *Arbetet*, 12 April 1897 (my translation). See also *Arbetet*, 24 August 1895.
- ⁶⁴ Heurlin, *Socialismens lilla katekes*. See also Palm, 'Hvad vil Sosial-Demokraterna', 11.
- ⁶⁵ Heurlin, *Socialismens lilla katekes*, 3–7. See also Hedström and Josephson, 'Agitaktionsbroschyrerna 1881–1909', 107–10; Josephson, "I alla händelser", 58. This line of argument is also used in Dalström, *Till arbetareklassens kvinnor!*, 6–7, where Dalström addresses working class women who are afraid of socialism on religious grounds: 'there is no support for this in the Bible, which on the contrary states that "he who won't work, shall not eat"' (my translation).
- ⁶⁶ For Dalström's view on anarchism, see Dalström, *Socialdemokrati och anarkism*.
- ⁶⁷ Dalström, *Luther och de lifegna*, 3–12. Quotation on page 10 (my translation).
- ⁶⁸ Engels, *Peasant War in Germany*.
- ⁶⁹ Dalström, *Luther och de lifegna*, 12 (my translation).
- ⁷⁰ See *Arbetet*, 24 December 1896; 12 April 1897.
- ⁷¹ See, for example, Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*; Engels, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*. The early labour movement's use of the French Revolution for learning about revolutionary tactics has been studied in other contexts as well. See, for example, Bergman, 'The Perils of Historical'.
- ⁷² *Social-Demokraten*, 30 June 1888.
- ⁷³ *Social-Demokraten*, 30 June 1888; *Ny Tid*, 5 May; 4 August 1892; Branting, *Hvarför arbetarrörelsen socialistisk*, 3–4; Branting, *Rösträtt och arbetarerörelse*, 7–8.
- ⁷⁴ *Arbetet*, 10 January 1889 (my translation).
- ⁷⁵ *Social-Demokraten*, 4 May 1889 (my translation). See also *Arbetet*, 20 July 1891.
- ⁷⁶ *Social-Demokraten*, 27 July 1889 (my translation).
- ⁷⁷ *Arbetet*, 7 January 1890 (my translation).
- ⁷⁸ Branting, *Rösträtt och arbetarerörelse*, 8. See also *Arbetet*, 7 January 1890.
- ⁷⁹ *Arbetet*, 18 May 1889.
- ⁸⁰ This was a very common reference. See *Ny Tid*, 5 May; 4 August 1892; *Social-Demokraten* (the weekly edition) 18 December 1891, *Social-Demokraten*, 25 July 1893; 12 July 1895.
- ⁸¹ *Social-Demokraten*, 4 May 1889 (my translation).
- ⁸² But 'the celebration of the Storming of the Bastille' was the second slogan of the demonstration. *Social-Demokraten*, 13 July 1889; 20 July 1889.
- ⁸³ *Arbetet*, 27 July 1891.
- ⁸⁴ Cf. Millbourn, 'Rätt till maklighet'.
- ⁸⁵ Branting, *Socialismen, historisk framställning*, 28–9; Branting, *Rösträtt och arbetarerörelse*, 9–14; *Ny Tid*, 18 March 1898.
- ⁸⁶ *Arbetet*, 26 June 1891.
- ⁸⁷ E.g. *Social-Demokraten*, 16 March 1887; *Arbetet*, 17 March 1888; 23 March 1889; 26 June 1891; 19 March 1892; 23 March 1893; 16 March 1894; 23 March 1895.

- ⁸⁸ *Arbetet*, 15 March 1898 (my translation).
- ⁸⁹ *Ny Tid*, 18 March 1898 (my translation).
- ⁹⁰ Branting, *Militärriksdag – folkeriksdag*, 9; Branting, *Rösträtt och arbetarerörelse*, 14.
- ⁹¹ *Social-Demokraten*, 23 March 1889 (my translation).
- ⁹² *Ny Dag*, 14 April 1892 (my translation). This article was originally published in the German social-democratic paper *Vorwärts*.
- ⁹³ E.g. *Arbetet*, 17 March 1888; 17 February 1898; *Ny Tid*, 30 March 1893; *Social-Demokraten* 24 February 1898.
- ⁹⁴ *Ny Tid*, 1 April 1898.
- ⁹⁵ *Arbetet*, 23 February 1898 (my translation).
- ⁹⁶ Berglund, *Massans röst*, 349–97.
- ⁹⁷ *Arbetet*, 24 March 1898; 31 March 1898.
- ⁹⁸ E.g. Miller and Pothoff, *History of German Social Democracy*, 32; Marx, *Der Bürgerkrieg*.
- ⁹⁹ For this basic description of the Commune, see for example Danielsson, *Socialdemokratin*, 21; *Ny Tid*, 30 March 1893; *Arbetet*, 17 March 1888; *Social-Demokraten*, 16 March 1887.
- ¹⁰⁰ For a discussion on mythological sacrifice and historical victimhood, see Liljefors, *Bilder av förintelsen*, 47.
- ¹⁰¹ *Social-Demokraten*, 16 March 1887 (my translation). The same article was printed in *Arbetet*, 17 March 1888. For more comments on ‘the bourgeois lies about the Commune’, see *Ny Tid*, 20 March 1896; *Arbetet*, 20 March 1890; *Social-Demokraten*, 17 March 1888; 20 March 1891; 9 October 1891; 18 March 1896.
- ¹⁰² Danielsson, *Socialdemokratin*, 22–3; *Arbetet*, 23 March 1889; *Social-Demokraten*, 24 March 1888.
- ¹⁰³ Lissagaray, *Kommunen 1871*, 484 (Sterkys translation from French into Swedish, my translation into English).
- ¹⁰⁴ The inside of the cover, signed ‘The regional board’ (*Distriktsstyrelsen*), in Lissagaray, *Kommunen 1871* (my translation, their emphasis).
- ¹⁰⁵ *Social-Demokraten*, 16 March 1887 (my translation). For this line of argument see also, Lissagaray, *Kommunen 1871*, 484; *Arbetet*, 23 March 1889; 29 May 1889; 24 March 1896; *Ny Tid*, 31 March 1892; 30 March 1893; 23 March 1894; 22 March 1895; 20 March 1896; 19 March 1897; 24 March 1899.
- ¹⁰⁶ Danielsson, *Socialdemokratin*, 20–6; Branting, *Militärriksdag – Folkeriksdag*, 17–9; *Arbetet*, 16 March 1894; *Ny Tid*, 23 March 1894; 24 March 1899.
- ¹⁰⁷ See for example, Danielsson, *Socialdemokratin*, 20–6; *Arbetet*, 17 March 1888; 28 May 1896; *Ny Tid*, 30 March 1893; 19 March 1897; *Social-Demokraten*, 18 March 1887; 18 March 1896.
- ¹⁰⁸ IWA, *General Rules*.

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Henrik Åström Elmersjö, PhD is a researcher at the Department of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, Umeå University, Sweden. He is researching issues regarding educational history as well as historical culture. He is on the editorial team of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History*. Recent publications include: 'The Norden Associations and international efforts to change history education, 1919–1970: International organisations, education, and hegemonic nationalism', *Paedagogica Historica* (2015), and 'Negotiating the nation in history: The Swedish approval scheme for textbooks and teaching aids between 1945 and 1983', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory, and Society* (2016). Address: Department of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies, Umeå University, 901 87 Umeå. [email: henrik.astrom.elmersjo@umu.se]