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# International Reformation of Swedish History Education 1927–1961: The Complexity of Implementing International Understanding\*

THOMAS NYGREN  
*Umeå University*

IN 1957 UNESCO's world history became the dominant line in Swedish history education at the expense of the European regionalism promoted by the Council of Europe and the nationalistic sentiments emphasized between the wars. The topics for history in the important final exams, which were decided by the Swedish authorities, gave the students a choice between "Sweden in the United Nations Security Council" and "Africa in the 20th century," both topics clearly in accord with UNESCO's recommendations on history teaching. The seventeen-year-old students preferred the latter in line with an interest in international history dating back to before the Second World War. Many teachers, on the other hand, criticized the absence of a national historical topic in the exams, which demonstrates how teachers could form a nationalistic barrier in the construing of history, but the student choices prove how central international history was to them. The

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ambitious work by primarily UNESCO for furthering international understanding seems to have had an impact on the minds of the young in Sweden.

In the present study I show the development in the interwar and postwar period toward a transformation in history teaching. I present the different recommendations for history teaching issued by the League of Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe,<sup>1</sup> showing how these international intentions were implemented and interpreted in the national curriculum, teachers' debates, and students' work in history. Last but not least, I show how the formulation and implementation of these recommendations was not merely a top-down procedure but allowed for interpretations and communication within and between different levels of the curriculum that formulated and construed history with different emphases.

Previous studies of UNESCO's and the Council of Europe's view of history teaching have described how the subject was seen as important for peace, cultural identity, and cultural exchange.<sup>2</sup> The teaching of history has been the subject of recommendations advocating a number of goals, contents, and methods.<sup>3</sup> The League of Nations and UNESCO have been described as ideological arenas, often encumbered by sharp disputes over the means and goals of history teaching.<sup>4</sup> It has also been claimed that the content of UNESCO's primary concerns—peace, education, science, and culture—has varied over time, and that UNESCO's intentions in certain cases have had ramifications on the

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<sup>1</sup> The League of Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe have been studied because these international organizations have produced guidelines that Sweden has been, and remains, part of. NATO, of which Sweden is not a member, has also issued recommendations for more transatlantic history education. Within the EU, the teaching of history has been discussed, but without producing any recommendations. The textbook revision of the Norden Association, much appreciated by both UNESCO and the Council of Europe, was not a part of the official mandate on history teaching.

<sup>2</sup> Otto-Ernst Schüdekopf, *History Teaching and History Textbook Revision* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1967); Thomas Buergenthal and Judith V. Torney, *International Human Rights and International Education* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, 1976); Pertti Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision by and under the Auspices of UNESCO, part I," in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 10 (1988); Pertti Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision by and under the Auspices of UNESCO, part II," in *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 11 (1989); Ann Low-Beer, *The Council of Europe and School History* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1997); Falk Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook on Textbook Research and Textbook Revision* (Hannover: Hahn, 1999); Katérina Stenou, *UNESCO and the Question of Cultural Diversity* (Paris: UNESCO, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Low-Beer, *Council of Europe*; Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook*, pp. 5–15.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation: The League Experience and the Beginnings of UNESCO* (Wrocław, 1962), pp. 48–92; Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision . . . part I,"; Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision . . . part II."

national level.<sup>5</sup> The weakness in a great deal of the early research on both UNESCO and the Council of Europe is that it has often been oriented toward textbooks,<sup>6</sup> financed by the organization being examined, and bent on improving practice.<sup>7</sup> No independent investigations have hitherto been done regarding how students understand the subject of history from the point of view of international organizations' guidelines. That international intentions can have an effect has, however, been pointed out.<sup>8</sup>

The implementation of national curriculum in teaching has seldom been investigated in previous Swedish research.<sup>9</sup> Scholars have noted that the relationship between the national curriculum and teaching is complex and that the teacher's autonomy and impressions from outside traditions as well as those within the subject are evident.<sup>10</sup> The fact that the implementation of curriculum involves both interpretations and disputes on various levels was described already in the 1970s, when it was claimed that interpretations and conceptions conflicting with central intentions can render these intentions rather null and void.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Roger-Pol Droit, *Humanity in the Making: Overview of the Intellectual History of UNESCO 1945–2005* (Paris: UNESCO, 2005); Poul Duedahl, *Fra overmenneske til UNESCO-menneske: En begrephistorisk analyse af overgangen fra ett biologisk til et kulturelt forankret menneskesyn i det 20. århundrede* (Aalborg: Aalborg universitet, 2007), pp. 236–240.

<sup>6</sup> Schüddekopf, *History Teaching*; Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision . . . part I"; Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision . . . part II"; Maitland Stobart, "Fifty Years of European Co-operation on History Textbooks: The Role and Contribution of the Council of Europe," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung* 21 (1999); Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook*.

<sup>7</sup> Schüddekopf, *History Teaching*; Buergethal and Torney, *International Human Rights*; Low-Beer, *Council of Europe*; Pingel, *UNESCO Guidebook*, pp. 5–15; Stobart, "Fifty Years of European Co-operation"; Stenou, *UNESCO and the Question of Cultural Diversity*; Droit, *Humanity in the Making*; Jean-Damascène Gasanabo, *Fostering Peaceful Co-existence through Analysis and Revision of History Curricula and Textbooks in Southeast Europe* (Paris: UNESCO, 2006).

<sup>8</sup> Connie L. McNeely, "Prescribing National Education Policies: The Role of International Organizations," *Comparative Education Review* 39, no. 4 (1995): 503; John W. Meyer, John Boli, George M. Thomas, and Francisco O. Ramirez, "World Society and the Nation-State," *American Journal of Sociology* 103, no. 1 (1997): 160; Stobart, "Fifty Years of European Co-operation," p. 158; Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), pp. 196–197.

<sup>9</sup> Lasse Petterson, "Pedagogik och historia: En komplicerad förbindelse," in *Kobran, nallen och majjen: Tradition och förnyelse i svensk skola och skolforskning*, ed. S. Selander (Stockholm: Myndigheten för skolutveckling, 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Ronald W. Evans, "Educational Ideologies and the Teaching of History," in *Teaching and Learning in History*, ed. G. Leinhardt, I. Beck, and C. Stainton (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1994), pp. 192–194; Thomas Nygren, *Erfarna lärares historiedidaktiska insikter och undervisningsstrategier* (Umeå: Umeå Universitet, 2009), pp. 93–94.

<sup>11</sup> Gunilla Svingby, *Läroplaner som styrmedel för svensk obligatorisk skola: teoretisk analys och ett empiriskt bidrag* (Gothenburg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1978), pp. 218–221;

Recently, it has been contended that, within the theoretical research on curriculum, it is “widely accepted that the direct influence of formal curricula on teaching practice is at best uncertain.”<sup>12</sup> It has also been asserted that national curricula, like textbooks, are the result of political power struggles and their importance in teaching depends on both selection and interpretation.<sup>13</sup> What is in the guidelines and textbooks is not necessarily what students learn.<sup>14</sup> More recent research has remarked, moreover, that students’ comprehension of history varies a great deal and is influenced by a complex interplay between school, society, and personal experience.<sup>15</sup>

Thus, on the basis of previous research, recommendations and curricula can be seen as containing diverse points of view and interpretations. The implementation of intentions in teaching is neither linear nor automatic. An important point of departure regarding curriculum theory is the division made by John Goodlad into different “curricular realities.”<sup>16</sup> Goodlad divided the curriculum into separate interacting levels for negotiating contents and interpretations.<sup>17</sup> Goodlad has described the various levels of curriculum and learning as “the ideological, formal, perceived, operational, and the experiential curricula.”<sup>18</sup> Each level can contain widely varying viewpoints regarding aims and

David Tyack and William Tobin, “The ‘Grammar’ of Schooling: Why Has It Been so Hard to Change?” *American Educational Research Journal* 31, no. 3 (1994).

<sup>12</sup> Ian Westbury, “Making Curricula: Why Do States Make Curricula, and How?” in *The SAGE Handbook of Curriculum and Instruction*, ed. M. Connelly (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2008), p. 46.

<sup>13</sup> Michael W. Apple, “The Text and Cultural Politics,” *Educational Researcher* 21, no. 7 (1992): 10; Christina Koulouri, “The Tyranny of History,” in *Teaching the History of Southeastern Europe*, ed. C. Koulouri (Tessanoliiki: Center for Democracy and Reconciliation in Southeast Europe, 2001), pp. 15–16; Sven-Åke Johansson, *Östersjöområdet i skolans undervisning och värderingar* (Uppsala: Föreningen för svensk undervisningshistoria, 2005), p. 219; Julian Dierkes, “The Decline and Rise of the Nation in German History Education,” in *The Nation, Europe and the World: Textbooks and Curricula in Transition*, ed. H. Schissler and Y. N. Soysal (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005); Gasanabo, *Fostering Peaceful Co-existence*, p. 66.

<sup>14</sup> Apple, “The Text and Cultural Politics,” p. 10; Koulouri, “The Tyranny of History,” pp. 15–16.

<sup>15</sup> Keith C. Barton, “Research on Students’ Ideas about History,” in *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education*, ed. L. Levstik and A. Tyson (New York: Routledge, 2008), p. 248. In a Swedish context, Ola Halldén has observed that students of history have a tendency to simplify through seeing history from an actor’s perspective: O. Halldén, “On the Paradox of Understanding History in an Educational Setting,” in Leinhardt, Beck, and Stainton, *Teaching and Learning in History*.

<sup>16</sup> John I. Goodlad, ed., *Curriculum Inquiry* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 20.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23, 348–349.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 347. The operational curricula, what teachers actually do in the classroom, was not studied since practice-based research on historical material is not possible.

means of history teaching.<sup>19</sup> The main advantage of Goodlad's depiction of curricula and their implementation is that he highlights how they concern both transactions and interpretations and more independent creation of values in a complex interaction with the world at large.<sup>20</sup> What is formulated in recommendations and guidelines does not necessarily filter down through the different levels.

The ideological curricula are illuminated in the present study through international guidelines aiming to affect the learning of history. Here I have studied primary sources from the League of Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe chronologically. All intentions were then placed in relation to each other to prepare the ground for what should be studied on the other levels of curricula. I then conducted a textual analysis of the national officially binding curricula and debates in teaching journals<sup>21</sup> examining the formal and perceived curricula. The annual upper secondary school reports from 1930–1931 and 1949–1950, with the titles of individual students' projects, revealed how the curriculum was experienced when students supervised by teachers construed subjects for in-depth study. I categorized and analyzed this information on the basis of the international recommendations concerning what history teaching should deal with. Subject categorizations were made in terms of the period, when, for example, culture was defined as art, handicrafts, and literature (in contrast to its later, more anthropological definition).<sup>22</sup> I scrutinized existing statistics for students' choice of essay topics in history to be able to examine how the curriculum was experienced in relation to international intentions.<sup>23</sup> Regardless of whether students' topic preferences in the final exams were an expression of their own interests or a way to meet examination demands, their choices attest to what they considered to be historical topics they could handle.

Although I do not claim total coverage of the field, the study of interpretations on several levels and their interaction reveals different

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<sup>19</sup> T. Englund, "Om nödvändigheten av läroplanshistoria," in *Utbildningshistoria* 1988, ed. G. Richardson (Skara: Föreningen för svensk utbildningshistoria, 1988), p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> Goodlad, *Curriculum Inquiry*, pp. 23, 348–349.

<sup>21</sup> *Tidning för Sveriges läroverk* (TfSL; Swedish Upper Secondary Teachers Journal) and *Historieläraarnas förenings årskrift* (HLFÅ; The Association of History Teachers Annual Report).

<sup>22</sup> Stenou, *UNESCO and the Question of Cultural Diversity*, p. 76; Droit, *Humanity in the Making*.

<sup>23</sup> Statistics for subject choices are available for the period 1938–1961; for 1918–1937 information on essay subjects is available.

views of history teaching. Detailed study of the period before and after the Second World War made it possible to compare the formation, transformation, and implementation of history teaching on different levels during a period of major changes in society.

#### HISTORY TEACHING AS ADVOCATED IN INTERNATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In 1927, the League of Nations' scholarly committee, the International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation (ICIC), issued their first international recommendations for history teaching. They urged member nations to develop students' and teachers' knowledge of the League of Nations and greater international cooperation.<sup>24</sup> With the family and the native country as points of departure, international understanding should be developed in education, both within and outside of school. "To imbue the child with a deep and lasting affection for its family and country remains today, as in former times, the first principle of sound education. But a true patriotism understands the patriotism of others; and a recognition of the necessity and omnipresence of co-operation, both within and without the State, must be emphasized in any education that is to fit young persons for modern life."<sup>25</sup>

To achieve this spirit of international understanding, ICIC proposed the use of lectures and films, exhibitions of foreign handicrafts, visits to museums, and comparisons between different civilizations.<sup>26</sup> During the time that the League of Nations, especially within the ICIC, focused attention specifically on the subject of history, the importance of a more internationally inclined teaching was emphasized, to create good relations over national borders.<sup>27</sup> The League of Nations' declaration concerning history teaching in 1937 asserted the importance of giving "as large a place as possible to the history of other nations," and in the treatment of world history, the selection of material should

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<sup>24</sup> UN Archives, Geneva, *League of Nations, International Committee on Intellectual Co-operation, Sub committee of Experts for the Instruction of Children and Youth in the Existence and Aims of the League of Nations, 4-6 July 1927*, C.I.C.I./E.J./24.(1), 1927. ICIC has been described as the predecessor of UNESCO: Droit, *Humanity in the Making*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>25</sup> UN Archives, Geneva, ICIC, 9.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>27</sup> These thoughts were dominant in the so-called Cesarès resolution for textbook revision. Launched in 1925 and a final text was taken in ICIC in 1932: Council of Europe Archives, *Final Text of the Resolutions on the Revision of School Textbooks*, Box 2750, 1932.

reveal countries' mutual dependence on each other.<sup>28</sup> Many countries from different parts of the world signed the declaration, but it was not signed by the great powers, even though they wanted, and were given, a say in the formulations.<sup>29</sup> It was a first and last declaration before the world once again landed in war.

During the war, allied European ministers of education advocated an education that would be for "the happiness and liberty of the largest number of human beings possible, and not the conquest of others by victorious wars and policies."<sup>30</sup> Later, when UNESCO was created, it was held that "since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."<sup>31</sup> On the basis of experiences from the Second World War, UNESCO subsequently strongly propounded the value of education for the UNESCO idea of peace through international understanding.<sup>32</sup> The content of this educational program should include history and geography, cleansed of nationalism and militarism, and actively promote understanding for other countries. The focus was to be on peaceful coexistence, human labor, cultural history, and scientific development.<sup>33</sup> In 1949 UNESCO

<sup>28</sup> *League of Nations Official Journal, 98th and 99th Council Sessions 1937* appendix 1667 (Geneva: League of Nations, 1937). The declaration has been interpreted as a way to underline the Césariès resolution: Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, p. 76.

<sup>29</sup> *A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials as Aids to International Understanding* (Paris: UNESCO, 1949), p. 107; Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation*, pp. 75–78. In 1938 the declaration was signed by the Argentine Republic, Afghanistan, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Sweden, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Iran, the Netherlands, Norway, and the Union of South Africa.

<sup>30</sup> UNESCO Archives, *Conference of Allied Ministers of Education (CAME)*, 28 X, 1942. The Association of Educational Ministers from the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Holland, Norway, Poland, and Yugoslavia referred to as CAME has been described as an important basis for UNESCO's principles: Julian Huxley, "Science and the United Nations," *Nature* 156, no. 10 (1945): 553.

<sup>31</sup> UNESCO Archives, *Conference for the Establishment of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, held at the Institute of Civil Engineers, London, from the 1st to the 16th November, 1945*, ECO/CONF/29, 1946.

<sup>32</sup> UNESCO's first director-general, Julian Huxley, pointed out clearly in 1946 how peace through international understanding was central in the work for peace in a far too divided world, separated by ideologies and religions: Julian Huxley, *UNESCO, Its Purpose and Its Philosophy: Preparatory Commission of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, 1946* (Paris: UNESCO, 1947), pp. 6–7, 13, 61–62. Glenda Sluga has noted a lack of diversity in the organization and its thinking in the early years, but also how UNESCO and Huxley (in spite of the imperialist heritage) did highlight the vision of international understanding: Glenda Sluga, "UNESCO and the (One) World of Julian Huxley," *Journal of World History* 21, no. 3 (2010): 393–418.

<sup>33</sup> UNESCO Archives, *General Conference, first session, Paris 1946*, 1C, 1947, 149–153; UNESCO Archives, *Records of the General Conference of UNESCO, second session, Mexico, 1947*, v. 2: *Resolutions*, 2C, 16, 20–21; UNESCO Archives, *Records of the General Confer-*

published a handbook aimed at improving textbooks and teaching, particularly in history, through, for instance, including more world history and critical thinking.<sup>34</sup> Attitudes toward the losing side in the war were unmistakable in a UNESCO that otherwise did not deem it practically possible to adopt a stance vis-à-vis religious and political/economic questions that tended to divide member nations.<sup>35</sup> The handbook was followed up by seminars in which history teaching and the role of history books in international understanding were analyzed further by groups of experts from various member countries, including Sweden.<sup>36</sup> In 1953 the work of UNESCO for international understanding also started to include programs of associated schools and later also student exchange to promote its implementation.<sup>37</sup>

In its desire to highlight the UNESCO idea of a commonly shared and more peacefully mediated global history, UNESCO initiated a universal history project called History of Mankind. The goal here was to “provide for the general and specialist reader a wider understanding of the scientific and cultural aspects of the history of mankind, of the mutual inter-dependence of peoples and cultures and of their contributions to the common heritage.”<sup>38</sup> In 1953 UNESCO also started the *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale (Journal of World History)* to spread new knowledge of the subject. However, fundamentally different ideological perspectives within UNESCO made it exceedingly difficult to reach a consensus around a peaceful version of world history. Many

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ence of UNESCO, third session, Beirut, 1948, v. 2: Resolutions, 3C, 1949, 24; *Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks*.

<sup>34</sup> *Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks*.

<sup>35</sup> Various religious beliefs as well as divisive views of capitalism and socialism could not be handled by UNESCO without the risk of a large number of member countries leaving the cooperation, according to Julian Huxley: Huxley, *UNESCO, Its Purpose and Its Philosophy*, p. 7. The early difficulties of UNESCO have been described by T. V. Sathyamurthy as tensions between nations, ideologies, cultures, and general directors: T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Politics of International Cooperation: Contrasting Conceptions of UNESCO* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964).

<sup>36</sup> An experimental seminar for international understanding was conducted in Sèvres 1947, before the handbook, and it was followed by more seminars after 1949: UNESCO Archives, *UNESCO's first Summer Seminar: An Experiment in Education for International Understanding*, SEM/25/ED; UNESCO Archives, *The Brussels Seminar: Findings and Studies*, WS/061.32, 1951; UNESCO Archives, *Final Report of the Study Group III on Teaching History to Pupils above 15 Years of Age*, SEM.51/FR/III, 1951.

<sup>37</sup> Hugo Serdén, *Möte med främmande folk* (Stockholm: Kungl. Skolöverstyrelsen, 1962), p. 11; *TjS* 1954, 780, 785. UNESCO Archives, *Records of the General Conference, ninth session New Delhi*, 9C, 1956, 33.

<sup>38</sup> UNESCO Archives, *Records of the General Conference of UNESCO, second session, Mexico, 1947, v. 2: Resolutions*, 2C, 1948, 27.

historians had problems writing for a broad public, and many small nations and all sorts of interest groups wanted to assert themselves and their own story forcefully, since they had previously been overlooked in world history.<sup>39</sup> After 1954, when the Soviet Union became a member of UNESCO, the work on this universal history became even more strained because of the Soviet Union's many petitions and demands for revisions.<sup>40</sup>

UNESCO's work with history teaching clearly articulated a non-European perspective.<sup>41</sup> As an early part of a major East-West mutual appreciation movement in 1956,<sup>42</sup> an examination of the West's treatment of Asiatic history in national curricula and textbooks was undertaken. Asia was given very little attention, and the history teaching was criticized for being Eurocentric.<sup>43</sup> During the 1950s, UNESCO recommendations asserted the importance of international understanding and objectivity, and also the importance of teaching human rights and the role of the UN in the world.<sup>44</sup>

The Council of Europe was formed in 1949 with the goal to "achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage and facilitating their economic and social progress."<sup>45</sup> During the council's first year, the question of the need for writing a common European history and working against narrow nationalism was discussed. The need for historical studies and for scrutinizing textbooks, and even ideas about textbooks covering a common European history, were brought

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<sup>39</sup> Problems with a common universal history were pointed out in: UNESCO Archives, *The International Commission for a History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind: General Conference, 16th session, 1970, 16C/87, 1970, 2*. See also Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision . . . Part I," p. 343; Gilbert Allardyce, "Toward World History: American Historians and the Coming of the World History Course," *Journal of World History* 1, no. 1 (1990): 34–39. Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga have noted how the UN was an arena of competing views on universalism: Sunil Amrith and Glenda Sluga, "New Histories of the United Nations," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 3 (2005): 253–257.

<sup>40</sup> Poul Duedahl, "Selling Mankind: UNESCO and the Invention of Global History, 1945–1976," *Journal of World History* 22, no. 1 (2011): 101–133.

<sup>41</sup> UNESCO Archives, *Final Report of the Study Group III on Teaching History to Pupils above 15 Years of Age, SEM.51/ER/III, 1951, 52*.

<sup>42</sup> Iriye, *Global Community*, pp. 87–89; Laura Elizabeth Wong, "Relocating East and West: UNESCO's Major Project on the Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values," *Journal of World History* 19, no. 3 (2008): 349–374.

<sup>43</sup> UNESCO Archives, *Committee of Experts on the Treatment of Asian Cultures in Western Textbooks and Teaching Material, UNESCO House, 2–12 May 1956, WS/026.131, 1956, 6*.

<sup>44</sup> Human rights in education were clearly put forward in 1951: UNESCO Archives, *Records of the General Conference, sixth session, Paris, 1951: Resolutions, 6C, 1951, 20*.

<sup>45</sup> *Statute of the Council of Europe, London, 5.V.1949*. European Treaty Series, no. 18 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1949), p. 3.

up.<sup>46</sup> In a resolution in 1952, the committee of ministers admonished member countries to ensure that textbooks and premises were available to the private individuals and organizations engaged in examining textbooks.<sup>47</sup> Aware of the League of Nations' and UNESCO's previous work, the council deemed it possible to build up an awareness of Europe's historical heritage, and to that end, a series of conferences on history teaching in Europe was held between 1953 and 1958.<sup>48</sup>

The first conference in Calw in 1953 had the straightforward title "The European Idea in the Teaching of History"; the conference addressed how Europe and the idea of Europe could be dealt with in history education. Studying European history was motivated because of the importance of avoiding traditional mistakes and prejudices and guaranteeing, or confirming, facts.<sup>49</sup> In its recommendations to teachers and textbook authors, the conference underlined the importance of describing Europe's contributions to the world and various regions' contributions to European development. Teachers were advised to begin by making local and regional history accessible to students and then guide them into a greater understanding of a "European conception of history."<sup>50</sup> The growth of European civilization should be treated, buttressed by new research within cultural, economic, social, religious, and intellectual history. By soft-pedaling political history and national conflicts, history teaching could contribute to peaceful relations. Nationalism should be considered a phase in Europe's development, and war as something waged between regimes, not between peoples.<sup>51</sup>

On 19 December 1954, the European Cultural Convention was signed, and member states pledged themselves to work for common ideals and principles on the basis of their European cultural heritage. History teaching was awarded a central role by the convention when the governments of member countries approved of efforts to augment as much as possible studies of shared European history.<sup>52</sup> European cultural heritage was described in terms of humanism, rule of law, scholarship, technical development, mercantilism, parliamentarism, and peace

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<sup>46</sup> *Statute of the Council of Europe*, London, 5.V.1949, pp. 750–774, especially p. 750.

<sup>47</sup> Council of Europe Archives, *Resolution (52) 17. History and Geography Textbooks* (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1952).

<sup>48</sup> Edouard Bruley and E. H. Dance, *A History of Europe* (Leyden, 1960), p. 14.

<sup>49</sup> Council of Europe Archives, *Report of the Working Group No. 2, EXP/Cult (53) 33*, Box 2747, 1953 reprinted in Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, p. 71. The recommendations are a literal reprint of the meeting notes from Calw.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 71–72.

<sup>52</sup> *European Cultural Convention*. 1954, 2.

efforts.<sup>53</sup> Having UNESCO's earlier work with a more global history freshly in mind, the Council of Europe's committee of experts claimed in 1955 that the best way to achieve understanding between nations was to call attention to special regional characteristics: "Between the bilateral level and the universal, which is that of UNESCO, it is necessary to provide an intermediate stage at the regional, that is to say European, level."<sup>54</sup>

"Unity in diversity" was addressed by both UNESCO and the Council of Europe at a very early stage.<sup>55</sup> The first meeting of the Council of Europe discussed Europe's heterogeneous population and unclear geographical boundaries. The minutes from the first session in 1949 register the notion of European unity in multiplicity: "European culture, which is the product of a long tradition, is at one and the same time a synthesis and the source of diversity."<sup>56</sup> The recommendations from conferences in 1954 underlined the importance of including regions and cultures that had received only marginal and rather unbalanced treatment in textbooks—for example, Byzantine and Muslim Europe.<sup>57</sup> While there should be greater appreciation of the intellectual and artistic contributions of Islam to Europe, the significance of Byzantium in Western Europe's thousand-year struggle against Islam was absolutely not to be ignored.<sup>58</sup> The recommendations emphasized the merit of historical objectivity and admonished teachers and textbook authors to avoid both condescending and exaggerating statements.<sup>59</sup>

International intentions primarily show similarities—but also differences—in their view of history teaching over time. They clearly hold that history teaching can contribute to building up peace through international understanding. That a too nationalistic depiction of history can generate war and conflicts was pointed out in post-Second

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<sup>53</sup> Council of Europe Archives, *Council of Europe, Committee of Cultural Experts: Eleventh Session, Report on the Conference on the Revision of History Textbooks held at Rome from the 15th to 22nd September, 1955*, EXP/Cult (55) 48, Box 2748, 1955, 10–11; Council of Europe Archives, *Recommendations Addressed to Members of the Teaching Profession and the Authors of Textbooks*, Box 2752, 1956 reprinted in Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, pp. 72–74.

<sup>54</sup> Council of Europe Archives, *Council of Europe, Committee of Cultural Experts*, 12.

<sup>55</sup> Julian Huxley claimed the importance of "unity-in-diversity" in 1947: *Report of the Director-General on the Activities of the Organization in 1947* (Paris: UNESCO, 1947), p. 13.

<sup>56</sup> *Council of Europe Consultative Assembly, first session, 10th August–8th September 1949*. Reports part III, sittings 12 to 15 (Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 1949), p. 750.

<sup>57</sup> *Recommendations to Teachers and Authors of Textbooks*, reprinted in Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, pp. 73–74. See also Bruley, p. 128.

<sup>58</sup> *Recommendations to Teachers and Authors of Textbooks*, reprinted in Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, p. 73.

<sup>59</sup> *Recommendations Addressed to Members of the Teaching Profession and the Authors of Textbooks 1956*, reprinted in Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, p. 73.

World War statements. UNESCO stressed world history in its guidelines for international understanding, whereas the Council of Europe underlined the importance of a more European history. Recommendations for greater international understanding also declared the merit of teaching less about politics and war in history. Instead, the creation of civilizations and social, economic, cultural, and scientific history should be highlighted. UNESCO and the Council of Europe also pointed out the importance of not ignoring minorities and weak groups in society. Although these statements were clear in both organizations, they entailed divergent views as UNESCO's intentions primarily focused on groups of people hitherto overlooked in world history, while the Council of Europe first and foremost wished to emphasize Europe's rich cultural heritage and its minority groups.<sup>60</sup>

### SWEDISH CURRICULA

In May 1927, two months before ICIC's recommendations, the Swedish parliament adopted a compromised school reform. The upper-level grammar schools in Sweden had started to admit female students, but Swedish upper secondary schools were clearly socially stratified during the interwar period and were mainly schools for the middle and upper classes. A movement promoting more general public schools had started, but the legacy from the male-dominated school, with roots in Catholic cathedral schools, remained.<sup>61</sup>

In the curriculum from 1928, we find the subject history with social studies, which also included the study of contemporary Swedish government. The new national curriculum involved fewer hours for history on the upper secondary level. Cuts in class hours have been interpreted as an attempt from the left to reduce the conservative element in school, since the subject of history was considered to be a bearer and mediator of right-wing ideas.<sup>62</sup> After major debates in the

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<sup>60</sup> Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, p. 74.

<sup>61</sup> Christina Florin and Ulla Johansson, "Där de härliga lagarna gro-": *Kultur, klass och kön i det svenska läroverket 1850–1914* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1993), pp. 81–125; Henry Egidius, *Skola och utbildning: I historiskt och internationellt perspektiv* (Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 2001), pp. 191–206.

<sup>62</sup> Göran Andolf, *Historien på gymnasiet: Undervisning och läroböcker 1820–1965* (Uppsala: Historiska institutionen, Uppsala Universitet, 1972), p. 93; Ulf Zander, *Fornstora dagar, moderna tider: Bruk av och debatter om svensk historia från sekelskifte till sekelskifte* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001), pp. 227–234.

press and pressure from both teachers and historians, the subject was allotted more hours in the reformed curriculum of 1933.<sup>63</sup> Another change in 1928 was that Swedish and general (European) history were to be studied together. This could be taken as a shift toward teaching a more internationally oriented history in school, but combining the two meant that the spread between Swedish and general history cannot be discerned in the national curriculum. What it does say is that all teaching should contribute to “awakening and maintaining in the student a patriotic /Swedish/ disposition,”<sup>64</sup> which was wholly in line with ICIC’s recommendations. History teaching should treat “what is of major significance for the understanding of our own culture and society and thereby make them coherent from an historical point of view.”<sup>65</sup> In the more detailed curriculum from 1935 regarding history, the uppermost goal in Sweden was “to awaken love for one’s country, to lay the foundations to be a good citizen and inculcate the importance of humanity and objectivity in one’s understanding and judgment.”<sup>66</sup> To awaken love for one’s country and at the same time be objective was not considered contradictory.

Even though criticism of nationalism increased after the First World War, the Swedish curricula between the wars were infused with patriarchal attitudes and nationalism, in which the Swedish state had a central role. Teaching was to focus on national history but also include the history of Scandinavia and Western Europe. The Swedish national curricula did highlight the history of neighboring countries and paid attention not only to such parts of these nations’ history that were of significance for Sweden, but also to events that were special for them. The national curricula mentioned Swedish and general history, but non-European cultures were conspicuous by their absence. National and political history was the core of the 1935 guidelines, but it was also considered important to present ideas, cultural movements, and economic and social factors in teaching. Cultural progress was seen to often be achieved at a high cost, but students should learn about the victories of the work of cultivating peace and learn that it is mostly the positive and constructive forces that carry the history of mankind forward. In contrast to the curricula of 1928, the 1935 docu-

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<sup>63</sup> *TfSL* (1931): 217–218; *TfSL* (1932): 34–35, 52, 185.

<sup>64</sup> SFS 1928:412 §48, 1334.

<sup>65</sup> SFS 1928:252, 658.

<sup>66</sup> *Metodiska anvisningar till undervisningsplanen för rikets allmänna läroverk* (National Guidelines) (Stockholm: SÖ, 1935), p. 108.

ment presented the League of Nations as an important actor and one to be included in the teaching of history.<sup>67</sup>

After the Second World War, a more scientifically objective treatment of history was advocated in the national curricula to provide a critical point of view and to shield the student against propaganda. Contemporary, social, and economic history were given more space, and in the instructions for the upper secondary level, it was claimed that the study of history should open up new perspectives and broaden students' horizons by offering a more international subject matter, including more cultural encounters and cultural history.<sup>68</sup> The first guidelines after the wars, from 1956, stated: "What is common to European cultural development, its cornerstones and characteristic features should be highlighted when summarizing and reviewing so that unifying elements are not omitted or overlooked in favor of divisive individual national elements. Equally, a global perspective in history teaching should be stressed so that not all of world history is presented from a purely European point of view."<sup>69</sup>

Articulations of "good" patriotism disappeared from both international intentions and Swedish curricula after World War II. That history teaching should propagate love for one's country was replaced by an emphasis on objectivity and international perspectives. The merits of political history were toned down in favor of more cultural, social, and economic history, wholly in line with the international intentions. Both the Council of Europe's recommendations on more common European history and UNESCO's on more global and less Eurocentered history teaching were complied with in the new Swedish postwar curricula.<sup>70</sup> Scandinavia was, on the other hand, largely overlooked. To what extent that was a direct effect of international efforts cannot be determined in the sources studied, but links are certainly conceivable. The national guidelines introduced the concept of international understanding as part of history teaching in 1956, and it was more strongly underlined as an important part of history teaching in 1961.<sup>71</sup> In a response from the Association of History Teachers to a suggestion for

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108–110.

<sup>68</sup> SOU 1947: 34, 448–460 (National Curriculum Report); *Aktuellt från skolöverstyrelsen* (National Guidelines) 1956: 19, 288–289; Andolf, *Historien på gymnasiet*, p. 61.

<sup>69</sup> *Aktuellt från skolöverstyrelsen* (National Guidelines) 1956: 19, 288.

<sup>70</sup> *Aktuellt från skolöverstyrelsen* (National Guidelines) 1956: 19. "The European Idea" was implemented in the national guidelines in 1965: *Läroplan för gymnasiet* (Stockholm: SÖ, 1965), p. 181.

<sup>71</sup> *Aktuellt från skolöverstyrelsen* (National Guidelines) 1956: 19, 289; ASÖ 1961: 29, 546.

new guidelines the teachers highlighted international understanding as one of the primary values of history. Using the exact words from the teachers' report-response, the value of history for international relations was thereafter emphasized in the Swedish national curricula in 1961.<sup>72</sup>

#### TEACHERS' DEBATES ABOUT THE MEANS AND GOALS OF HISTORY TEACHING

The debates about the reduction of hours for teaching history in 1928 were reflected in a number of articles in Sweden's only journal for upper secondary teachers, *Tidning för Sveriges läroverk* (*TfSL*; Swedish Upper Secondary Teachers Journal). In conjunction with their protests, the historians and history teachers who criticized the decision to cut the number of hours for history founded the Association of History Teachers in 1933.<sup>73</sup> Articles on history teaching in *TfSL* were heavily influenced during the entire period by reactions to the national state proposals for changes in schedules and curricula. A national perspective on history was prominent in the teachers' views of history. Nothing was written in *TfSL* about the international recommendations from ICIC, even though the debates on history teaching were very comprehensive.<sup>74</sup> In the early 1930s political history was considered central in history education and the importance of the cultural heritage for the fostering aspect of school and its patriotic goals was stressed.<sup>75</sup> However, both historians and history teachers were concerned that too much culture and intellectual history could fragment the subject.<sup>76</sup> The journal supported having more art and culture history outside the subject of history, while at the same time there were admitted problems with competence in these subjects, crowded schedules, and lack of time.<sup>77</sup> In 1937, there was more discussion about how economic and social history should be handled, and both textbooks and teaching approaches were criticized for being out-of-date.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *HLFÄ* (1961–1962): 5–6; *ASÖ* 1961: 29, 546.

<sup>73</sup> The identification of the debate is based upon the articles on history education that were published in *TfSL* 1927–1957 and in the Association of History Teachers annual report from its first edition in 1942 to 1961.

<sup>74</sup> One author even argued that the paper had become a “pedagogical annex” to the *Historisk tidskrift* (Historical Journal): *TfSL* (1932): 246.

<sup>75</sup> *TfSL* (1932): 211–213; *TfSL* (1932): 93–94; *TfSL* (1932): 190.

<sup>76</sup> *TfSL* (1936): 235, 353.

<sup>77</sup> *TfSL* (1935): 234; *TfSL* (1939): 285, 286, 325–326.

<sup>78</sup> *TfSL* (1937): 46; *TfSL* (1937): 49, 85. A contest to modernize textbooks was also launched: *TfSL* (1937): 47.

After the Second World War, international efforts regarding history teaching entered into Swedish teachers' debates. The teachers' journal and the Association of History Teachers Annual Report, *Historieläraarnas förenings årsskrift* (HLFÅ) reported in detail from the meetings on history teaching arranged by UNESCO, and later by the Council of Europe. Both organizations recommended a more international and peace-oriented teaching of history, which also should address contemporary problems in an objective way.<sup>79</sup> From UNESCO's meetings on history teaching in Brussels in 1950 and Sèvres in 1951, Swedish participants reported that these meetings advocated more world history and cultural encounters to generate peace, mutual understanding, and "general human loyalty and solidarity."<sup>80</sup> UNESCO's meeting on human rights in Woudschouten in 1952 and the meetings in Paris in 1955–1956 on Asian history in Western teaching were also reported in *TfSL*.<sup>81</sup> Criticism in 1955 against an all too Eurocentric tendency in the national curricula in the debate was a direct effect of UNESCO's work for mutual appreciation between Eastern and Western cultures.<sup>82</sup> The more European-oriented meetings in Calw and Oslo under the auspices of the Council of Europe were also reviewed in the journal, accompanied by a discussion of the difficulties for Scandinavians to digest, in principle, the idea of Europe. The reporter from Calw advised history teachers "to treat one's own country's history always in conjunction with contemporary related phenomenon in other parts of Europe."<sup>83</sup> To an extent, the Swedish representatives in these meetings used their experiences from Calw and Oslo to discuss a more international and peace-oriented teaching of history. The teachers in Sweden showed great interest in world history but also admitted difficulties in cutting back on other parts of the crowded subject.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the fact that international subjects became more prominent, they were still subordinated to the national issue concerning the division of the subject of history into history and social studies.<sup>85</sup> The

<sup>79</sup> *TfSL* (1950): 438–439; *HLFÅ* (1951): 38–49; (*TfSL* 1952): 561; *TfSL* (1953): 547–550; *HLFÅ* (1954): 47–64; *TfSL* (1954): 11, 57, 61; *TfSL* (1955): 710–712.

<sup>80</sup> *HLFÅ* (1951): 42; *TfSL* (1950): 438–439; *HLFÅ* (1951): 38–49.

<sup>81</sup> *TfSL* (1952): 561; *TfSL* (1955): 710–712; *TfSL* (1956): 434.

<sup>82</sup> *TfSL* (1955): 711.

<sup>83</sup> *TfSL* (1953): 550; *TfSL* (1953): 547–550; *HLFÅ* (1954): 47–64.

<sup>84</sup> *HLFÅ* (1955–1956): 5–6.

<sup>85</sup> *TfSL* (1948): 235; (1950): 12–13; *TfSL* (1950): 432, 451; *TfSL* (1951): 63–64, 476; *HFLÅ* (1951): 5; *TfSL* (1952): 251; *TfSL* (1953): 635–636, 640, 778–779, *TfSL* (1954): 116, 514; *TfSL* (1955): 286, 741–742, 786, 827–828; *TfSL* (1956): 180. In 1951 Anglo-American history teaching was noted as an example of how history can be a part of social

Association of History Teachers and history teachers who opposed the proposal to create a separate social studies subject stressed the political and economic aspects of the subject of history. History as it appeared in the debate was peaceful and more and more international, but not particularly oriented toward culture.

#### TEACHERS AND STUDENTS CONSTRUE HISTORY

In 1928, individual student projects were introduced to raise the degree of individual work on the upper secondary level. The aim was to give students a chance to develop their "aptitudes and interests" and "to plan and carry out a piece of work on their own, and utilize those sources of knowledge that are available."<sup>86</sup>

The annual reports from upper secondary schools in 1930–1931 and 1949–1950 give a picture of how students, supervised by history teachers, chose their topics for more advanced individual studies in history.<sup>87</sup> The subject of history as it could be formulated in individual projects reveals a considerable breadth. Although, in 1930–1931, eight out of nine essays at one upper secondary school were about Charles XII, in other schools topics such as "Cultural Relations in the Roman Empire," "Women's Emancipation," "The Viking Period," and "The Native Peoples of America" were studied. It may be said that most students wrote about national and European history. About half of the essays dealt with Swedish history; a somewhat smaller percentage were about European history, both before and after the Second World War. In 1949–1950, one student essay was about "Peace Organizations in World Politics," which demonstrates that this was a viable subject. Writing about the work of the Red Cross must also be considered a choice in accord with international ideas on international understanding. From the titles of students' work we can conclude that the cultural heritage of countries outside of Western Europe was in principle ignored, if we do not interpret work on

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studies as opposed to the French who "passionately" defended "pure history with an insurmountable wall against social science." *HFLÅ* (1951): 49.

<sup>86</sup> SFS 1928: 412, §9, 1333.

<sup>87</sup> The analysis is based on the reported titles of 258 and 146 students' individual work in history 1930–1931 and 1949–1950: "Årsredogörelser för allmänna läroverk samt enskilda och kommunala läroanstalter" (Annual reports of upper secondary schools) from the National archives of Sweden, Upper Secondary School Department, F Ilda, 1930–1931, 1949–1950.

English and French imperialism and colonialism as being about cultural encounters. "Japan's Historical Development" is the only title without a European point of departure indicating the world outside of Western Europe.

As regards European history, titles of essays in 1930–1931 often referred to the French Revolution and Napoleon; in 1949–1950 topics included English and German political history. Even if students' choices frequently indicate that "kings and war" remained popular objects of study, after the Second World War there were several examples of essays in sociopolitical history. Industrialism appeared as a subject for study, and titles such as "Economic and Social Development during the Swedish Era of Great Power" and "The Economic Crisis, 1920–25" suggest that more and more areas were open for studies using economic and social perspectives. The choices of subject matter indicate that cultural exchange over national borders was not treated. The history of art and culture had mainly to do with national and European questions, primarily taking up the cultural heritage from antiquity and the Swedish nineteenth century.

From the point of view of implementation, it is interesting to note that in the work preceding the setting of a new curriculum and national guidelines in 1931–1932, attention was paid to the essay topics produced by students and teachers in the previous two years. Both experts and history teachers discussed the contents of the subject of history on the basis of the information gleaned from these essays written in 1930–1931.<sup>88</sup> After noting the points made by historians in conferences and associations such as the Swedish Association for the United Nations, proposals were made for the subject area and for subjects that were especially suited to individual history projects.<sup>89</sup> The formulation of the contents was thus influenced from different directions, not least from the students. The formal curriculum was developed under the influence of other curricular levels.

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<sup>88</sup> At the meeting in 1933, reference was made to the annual accounts of the 1930–1931 topics of students' individual work in history: *TfSL* (1933): 244–245. The report contains clear links to titles on student works, such as "Sugar Prices on the World Market," "Nordic Housing," and "Charles X Gustav before the Polish War." Also, the more general topics that were proposed had similar titles to those of students' individual work, for example, "The Bloodbath of Stockholm," "Charles XII's Russian Campaign Plans," "London during the 17th Century," "The Causes of the French Revolution," and so forth. *SOU* 1932: 31, 150–151.

<sup>89</sup> *SOU* 1932:31, V–XI, 150–151.

## STUDENTS CHOOSE HISTORY

In the 1930s and 1940s the final exams in Swedish upper secondary schools were considered to be a very serious matter, with great efforts required from the students, not least regarding their essays.<sup>90</sup> The stress and strains experienced before these written and oral exams, which in principle covered the entire upper secondary period, were discussed as a serious problem among the students being examined.<sup>91</sup> In order to reduce stress, the Swedish essay, in which the subject of history was included, became less crucial after 1928, a measure that was both praised and criticized.<sup>92</sup> The final exams were discussed and investigated but remained until 1968 as a cardinal element in upper secondary education, and academic subjects such as history had high prestige in essay writing.<sup>93</sup> These national final exams contained two essay topics, formulated by the Swedish authorities, which related to history. Other topics, on the basis of today's categorization, could very well be considered history, but in the 1930s and 1940s, and as defined by the national curriculum and their subject placement, they would be categorized as sorting under academic subjects like religion, classics, geography—or under general topics (the so-called “last resort”).<sup>94</sup>

Given the percentage distribution, we can see how history topics were received among the examined students.<sup>95</sup> In the statistics from

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<sup>90</sup> C. E. Sjöstedt, ed., *Studentexamen 100 år* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1963), pp. 52–53; *TfSL* (1928): 45; *TfSL* (1928): 46.

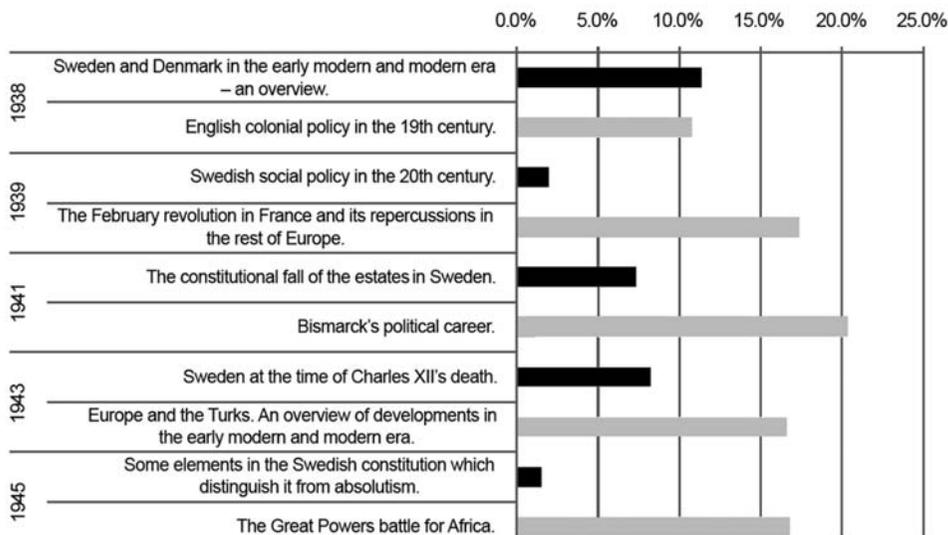
<sup>91</sup> *TfSL* (1931): 204–205; *TfSL* (1931): 205; *TfSL* (1936): 154; *TfSL* (1936): 155–156.

<sup>92</sup> Sjöstedt, *Studentexamen 100 år*, pp. 52–73; *TfSL* (1932): 119–120.

<sup>93</sup> Tor G. Hultman, “Prov i svenska” in *Allt är relativt: Centralt utarbetade prov i svenska, matematik, engelska franska, tyska, fysik och kemi—beskrivning analys och förslag*, ed. T. Lindblad (Göteborg: Göteborgs universitet 1991), p. 55.

<sup>94</sup> Topics that today would be considered as historical subjects were not necessarily considered as history then, for example, “Swedish Communications Services through the Ages” (Spring 1955) was considered geography, and both “Boys’ and Girls’ Education Now and a Hundred Years Ago” (Autumn 1949) and “Peoples and Defense” (Spring 1953) were categorized as general subjects, and not history. Ancient history was regarded as a subject for the education in the Latin language and considered as a classic topic. Student interest in ancient history topics was very poor.

<sup>95</sup> The following presentation is based on topics and statistics for student exam essays in history from 1927 to 1957. Statistics are available from 1938 to 1957, except for 1940, 1942, and 1944: “Ämnen för svensk uppsats” (Topics for Essays), National archives of Sweden, Upper Secondary School Department, F Ibb, 1927–1957; “De svenska uppsatserna vid allmänna läroverk samt enskilda och kommunala läroanstalter med studentexamen, fördelade efter ämnen och betyg” (Topics and statistics), National archives of Sweden, Upper Secondary School Department, B II: 6–15, 1938–1957.

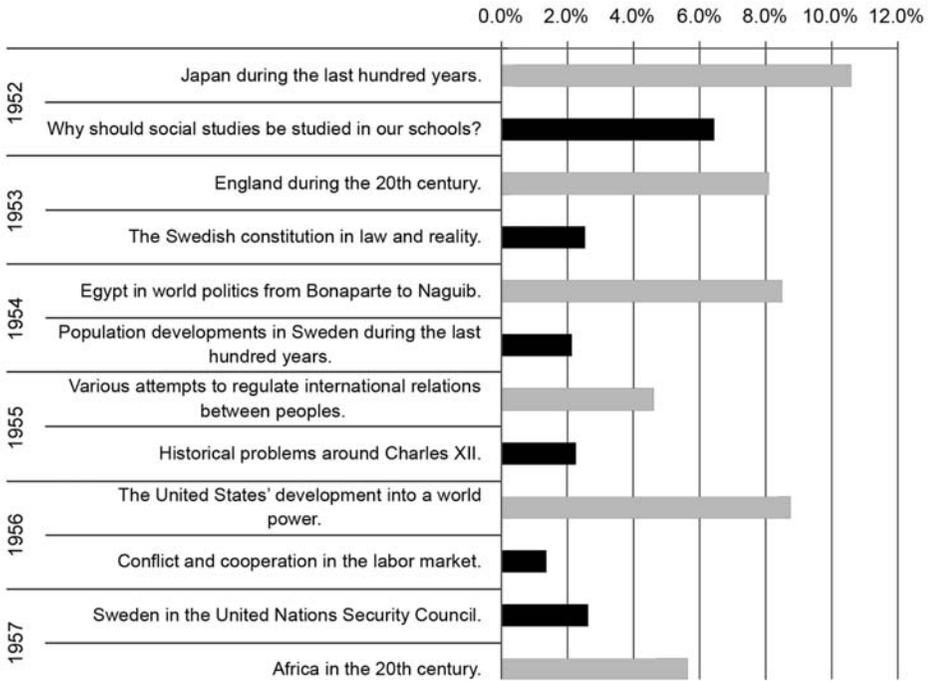


Note: In 1938 a total of 3,522 student essays were reported. In 1939: 3,701; 1941: 3,819; 1943: 4,155; 1945: 4,169.

FIGURE 1. Number of students, in percentage out of total, writing their essays in various historical topics, on the basis of existing statistics, 1938–1945.

the final exams in Figure 1, it is clear that one of the two essay topics was internationally oriented (gray bar) and one nationally (black bar). This may indicate that the state, in an extension of the formal curricula, advocated equal status between Swedish and international history—what was then termed “general history.” Students’ choices suggest that international history was manageable and part of the curriculum. Between the wars and during World War II, European political history was the most popular; favored international topics in 1938–1945 were either European history or non-European history as seen from a European perspective (see Fig. 1).

The League of Nations and the UN were included as topics at four of the total of seventy final exams between 1927 and 1961. The appearance of the UN and a new emphasis in the 1950s on world history indicates an important shift in history education. The previous clearly Eurocentric point of departure was replaced in the 1950s by themes acknowledging a more non-European perspective, and the students chose to write about world history rather than national his-



Note: Total number of students writing exam essays in 1947: 4,164; 1949: 4,167; 1950: 4,315; 1951: 4,315; 1952: 4,763; 1953: 5,022; 1954: 5,307; 1955: 5,845; 1956: 6,566; 1957: 7,319.

FIGURE 2. Number of students, in percentage out of total, writing their essays in various historical topics, on the basis of existing statistics, 1952–1957.

tory.<sup>96</sup> The students' choices suggest great interest in conflicts and power politics. More peaceful subject matter—economy and population development—was far less frequent. Typically, when in 1949 the international exam topic did not focus on conflicts, it was less popular than the national alternative. The choice of a topic such as “Egypt in World Politics from Bonaparte to Naguib” by the majority of students in 1954 clearly indicates a preference and ability to write about world history, as well as in the following year when international relations

<sup>96</sup> However, that students treated the essay subjects from a more global point of view is doubtful; in 1952, “Japan During the Last Hundred Years” could very well be a political historical analysis of Japan’s buildup before and participation in the Second World War.

were more interesting than the national “Historical Problems around Charles XII” (see Fig. 2). Thus there was a shift in the experiential curricula even before the national, officially binding, formal guidelines were issued in 1956.

The essay subjects in 1957, on African contemporary history and Sweden in the UN Security Council, were addressed in the debates in both teachers’ journals, *TfSL* and *HLFÅ*. The subjects were criticized by the Association of History Teachers for being too contemporary, and the teachers wanted an alternative topic in Swedish history.<sup>97</sup> In the journal we find articles complaining of a vulgarization of exam subjects, which did not reflect the schools’ teaching of history but instead lent themselves to “chat around the breakfast table, but scarcely more than that.”<sup>98</sup> However, the opposite view was also expressed; the topics were seen by teachers as good examples of how the subject of history could include both the history of Africa and that of the UN.<sup>99</sup> Thus changes were met with mixed feelings by teachers, but the students preferred African history, and world history continued to dominate the final exams into the 1960s.

After the Second World War students obviously cultivated an interest in international non-European history. The changes from the period before the war are palpable. At the same time, it is clear that European history was already an integral part of the subject also in the 1930s and during the war, and national history was retreating.

## CONCLUSIONS

The formulations in the Swedish curricula and guidelines followed the international intentions—or at least the then current conceptions of history teaching.<sup>100</sup> During the interwar period, patriotic elements were obvious in both ICIC’s recommendations and the Swedish history curriculum. In the first post–World War II syllabus in 1956, the subject was reformulated in accord with UNESCO’s recommendations concerning increased world history and the Council of Europe’s propa-

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<sup>97</sup> *HLFÅ* (1957): 10–11.

<sup>98</sup> *TfSL* (1957): 228.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Of course, decolonization and other global events also could have affected this change. In higher education a more international university curricula was noted by David John Frank, Suk-Ying Wong, John W. Meyer, and Francisco O. Ramirez, “What Counts as History: A Cross-National and Longitudinal Study of University Curricula,” *Comparative Education Review* 44, no. 1 (2000): 46.

gating more common European history. The national points of departure for encounters with the surrounding world seem to have shrunk over time, possibly to be replaced by a more global, but also Eurocentric, worldview. Interest in international history was extensive among students throughout the period studied, with a particular interest in international conflicts. The international subjects formulated by the state for the final exams after 1950 were more in line with UNESCO's intentions than with those of the Council of Europe. World history had replaced European history, at least in the final exams. Questions concerning solidarity and cooperation promulgated especially by the League of Nations and UNESCO had no dramatic impact on Swedish history teaching, but in individual projects and in the final exams, these questions were taken up by some students. The "unity in diversity" called for by UNESCO and the Council of Europe seems not to have been implemented. The formal, perceived, and experiential curricula did not contain any cultural universal world history or clearly regional cultural heritage. The contradictory recommendation from the council to treat Islam as a friend and enemy was certainly not an easy vantage point for the teaching of unity in diversity. Interaction and cultural exchange between civilizations recommended by the League of Nations, UNESCO, and the Council of Europe was overshadowed primarily by political history, but also economic and social history.

As regards teachers, there seems to be a shift of interest from the interwar to the postwar period. The recommendations of the League of Nations were seldom if ever discussed, while there seems to be an acceptance—even going as far as enthusiasm—of international perspectives after the Second World War.<sup>101</sup> It is clear that several actors may well have functioned as agents of change. History teachers' participation in international meetings and those of the history teachers' association, writing in the teachers' journal and the history teachers' yearbook, all the while being active as teachers or principals in schools, could very well have facilitated the transference of intentions between and among different curricular levels.<sup>102</sup> Active teachers who met their

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<sup>101</sup> *TjSL* (1953): 550; *TjSL* (1953): 547–550; *HLFÅ* (1954): 47–64; Council of Europe Archives, Sweden, *A Short Report Referring to the Revision of Text-books in History During the School-year 1953/54*, Box 2747, 1954; *TjSL* (1955): 710–712, *TjSL* (1956): 434; UNESCO Archives, *Documents Concerning the Improvement of School Textbooks and Teaching Materials*, ED/CIM/10, 1955.

<sup>102</sup> Allan Degerman, Vilhelm Scharp, Waldemar Lendin, Sixten Björkholm, Birgit Rodhe, Erik Brännman, Hans Lennart Lundh, and Ivar Seth were all history teachers and/or principals who were active in several curriculum levels and participated in international activities.

students and also participated in the formulating of international recommendations could definitely influence and reflect on history education on many curricular levels. In 1961 it was actually the Association of History Teachers that wrote the text that became the first national guideline explicitly emphasizing international understanding. However, it is evident that in the teachers' debates other questions than those highlighted by the international organizations were considered more central, even if the international intentions were not ignored. The debate primarily concerned the ability of the subject of history to satisfy the school's social studies requirements. The recommendations that lay close to the national debate on the subject of history, such as the value of more social and economic history, were to some extent reflected in the titles of some students' independent projects, but only a few chose to write on economic and social subjects in the final exams, when these subjects were approved by the state after the Second World War. What was underlined by authorities and teachers was not considered very interesting by the students. The new emphasis on more contemporary social and economic history may be explained by a strong political desire to foster among the citizens the values of a modern society based on Social Democratic ideas, in which history, as it had been taught, was thought of as conservative and reactionary.<sup>103</sup> Economic and social history research was also becoming more prominent, which also might have affected this new emphasis. There was little response to the appeal for more international art, cultural, and intellectual history—subjects most likely outmaneuvered by a more social scientific perspective. Cultural history, with art, ideas, and literature from the past would have been taken as conservative matter by the Social Democratic majority and the international intentions not in keeping with the national were difficult to implement. The "European Idea" in the history of parliamentarianism was, during the whole period studied, taken up on all national levels, but in this case, the recommendations can be seen more as a confirmation of prevailing practice than an implementation of intentions. The evolution of parliamentarianism was a part of the Swedish curriculum long before the recommendations of the Council of Europe.

In students' choices of subject matter for individual projects and essays, there was a strong international interest during the whole period under examination. About half of the individual projects and subjects

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<sup>103</sup> Andolf, *Historien på gymnasiet*, p. 83; Zander, *Fornstora dagar*, pp. 227–234.

formulated by the state for the final exams dealt with international history and half focused on national history. In the final exams the students preferred international history over national, which suggests that in the experiential curricula there was more interest in, and knowledge of, international history than Swedish history. When the teachers and students put together the history subjects for individual projects, they tended more toward national history than when the students could choose between a national and international alternative in the final exams. This, as well as the teachers' debate, implies that the teachers functioned as both defenders of national history and agents of change. Some of the teachers most certainly became more "globalized instructors."<sup>104</sup> This underlines how teachers could have different emphases in their history teaching and also highlight many different things during a history course. In the light of the national statistics the students could nevertheless cultivate an interest in and knowledge of international history. Students' ability to handle international historical topics indicates that teachers and history teaching promoted knowledge of world history and European history, despite conservative reactions. The Swedish students in the 1950s were clearly oriented toward world history, greatly in contrast to the then strongly criticized world history course in the United States.<sup>105</sup>

The great variations in the choice of subjects for individual projects and differences among schools indicate a broad scope in the formulation of the school subject's content. Teachers and students could transform history in many ways, more varied than what was suggested by the formal curriculum's intentions. That students' supervised choices of subjects for their individual projects were used as the basis for discussions in the Association of History Teachers and in the considerations taken by the Swedish authorities when forming a new curriculum shows that different levels can interact in devising the contents of history teaching. The teachers' discontent with reduced hours for history teaching did have an impact on the national curriculum in 1933; another example of bottom-up influence in the implementation was how the students' interest in contemporary history was noted in the 1953 Council of Europe meeting in Calw.<sup>106</sup> The students' preferences

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<sup>104</sup> "Globalized instructors" was used by Stavrianos: quoted in Allardyce, "Toward World History," p. 44.

<sup>105</sup> Allardyce, "Toward World History," p. 55.

<sup>106</sup> Council of Europe Archives, *Report of the Working Group No. 2*, EXP/Cult (53) 33, Box 2747, 1953.

were used as an argument particularly against the French idea that objective history teaching should not deal with the present.<sup>107</sup> The fact that international relations and the concept of international understanding, which was formulated in the ideological curricula, was actually highlighted by Swedish teachers in the formal curricula in 1961, shows how implementation was more than just a top-down process. History was formulated, interpreted, and transformed in and between the different levels of curriculum, which reveals the complexity of history education and its implementation in an international society.

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<sup>107</sup> Bruley and Dance, *History of Europe*, p. 48.