

# ‘The Catholic danger’

## Liberal theology and anti-Catholicism in Sweden

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Anti-Catholicism is a phenomenon as old as the Protestant church, and tales of scheming popes and treacherous Jesuits have historically formed an important part of Scandinavian culture. But whereas topics such as anti-Semitism in recent years have had increased attention from scholars, the Scandinavian history of anti-Catholicism has been notable for its continued neglect. True, there are several studies on Catholicism in the Nordic countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but they generally focus on Catholic missionary and pastoral activities, theological controversies, or reactions to specific Catholic activities, not on anti-Catholicism.<sup>1</sup> This chapter seeks to begin to fill this gap by offering a case study of Sweden in the first half of the twentieth century located in the wider Scandinavian context.

What makes anti-Catholicism into such an interesting object of study, is its spread and growth in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when it was established as a transnational frame of reference articulated all over Europe, as well as in North America. Secular liberals and conservatives, protestants and others, in both predominantly Catholic and Protestant countries all used similar negative images of the Catholic Church to position themselves politically and

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<sup>1</sup> Arne Palmqvist, *Die Römisch-katholische Kirche in Schweden nach 1781*, vol. II (Uppsala, Almqvist & Wicksell, 1958); Yvonne Maria Werner, *Världsvid men främmande. Den katolska kyrkan i Sverige 1873–1929* (Uppsala: Katolska bokförlaget, 1996); Bernt I., Eidsvig, ‘Den katolske kirke vänder tilbake’, in John W. Gran et al. (eds.), *Den katolske kirke i Norge. Fra kristningen til idag* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1993), 143–363; Yvonne Maria Werner, *Nordisk katolicism Katolsk mission och konversion i Danmark i ett nordiskt perspektiv* (Stockholm: Makadam Förlag, 2005); Yvonne Maria Werner, ‘Schwedentum, Katholizismus und europäische Integration: Die katholische Kirche in Schweden nach 1945’, in *Christliche Beiträge zur Europäischen Integration. Die politische Rolle der Kirchen. Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* (2006:1), 81–106; Yvonne Maria Werner, ‘Catholic Mission and Conversion in Scandinavia: Some Reflections on Religion, Modernization, and Identity Construction’, in *Scandinavian Journal of History* (2010:1), 65–85. Two studies deal with Catholicism in the media: Bengt Wadensjö, ‘Romersk-katolska kyrkan i svensk opinion 1920–1923’, in *Kyrkohistorisk årsskrift* (1968), 205–223; Erik Sidenvall, ‘The Elusiveness of Protestantism: The Last Expatriations for ‘Apostasy’ from the Church of Sweden (1858): A European Perspective’, in *Journal of Religious History* (2007:3), 253–268.

culturally. This anti-Catholic discourse served as a kind of uniting framework for European and North American Protestantism in its different forms until the 1960's, when the Second Vatican Council and the following reforms disarmed much of the previous anti-Catholic rhetoric. Vatican II thus stands out as a watershed in the Catholic Church's modern history.<sup>2</sup>

International research has emphasised the importance of anti-Catholicism for processes of identity formation in the modern era, both within established Protestant churches and national liberal movements. This was very evident in Germany, where, as among others Georg Hübinger and Frank-Michael Kuhlemann have pointed to, Catholicism served as an effective counter image to Protestant national identity and the modernity these groups claimed to represent.<sup>3</sup> Regarding Great Britain and the U.S., a number of studies have highlighted anti-Catholicism as an important aspect of British and North American culture. One example is Denis G. Paz, who, in a work which also summarises important parts of earlier research, underlines the impact of anti-Catholicism as a phenomenon of popular culture, and how it came to be used not only against Catholics, but against other religious and political enemies. Different groups developed their own variants of anti-Catholicism, which were used as weapons in the political debate.<sup>4</sup> The connection between anti-Catholicism and other anti-movements such as antisemitism, anti-feminism and anti-socialism has also been highlighted. In common with these movement's anti-Catholicism was a transnational cultural phenomenon, and similar accusations and stereotypes can be found in a number of countries.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example Franz-Xaver Kaufmann and Anton Zingerle (eds.), *Vatikanum II. und Modernisierung. Historische, theologische und soziologische Perspektiven* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996); P. Hünermann (ed.), *Das II. Vatikanum. Christlicher Glaube im Horizont globaler Modernisierung*, Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996).

<sup>3</sup> Frank-Michael Kuhlemann, *Bürgerlichkeit und Religion. Zur Sozial- und Mentalitätsgeschichte der evangelischen Pfarrer in Baden 1860-1914* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2001); Georg Hübinger, *Kulturprotestantismus und Politik. Zum Verhältnis von Liberalismus und Protestantismus im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Tübingen: Morh Siebeck, 1994). See also Norbert Schloßmacher, 'Entkirchlichung, Antiultramontanismus und nationalreligiöse Orientierungen im Liberalismus der Kulturkampffära. Der Deutsche Verein für die Rheinprovinz', in Olaf Blaschke and Frank-Michael Kuhlemann (eds.), *Religion im Kaiserreich. Milieus – Mentalitäten – Krisen* (Gütersloh: Chr. Kaiser, 1996), 474-502.

<sup>4</sup> John Wolfe, *The Protestant Crusade in Great Britain, 1829–60* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Robert Lockwood (ed.), *Anti-Catholicism in American Culture* (Washington: Huntington, 2000); Denis G. Paz, *Popular Anti-Catholicism in Mid Victorian England* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004); Susan M. Griffin, *Anti-Catholicism and Nineteenth-century Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Michael B. Gross, *The War against Catholics. Liberalism and the Anti-Catholic Imagination in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 2004); Erik Sidenvall, *After Anti-Catholicism? John Henry Newman and Protestant Britain, 1845–1890* (London: T & T Clark, 2005); Justin Nordström, *Danger on the Doorstep. Anti-Catholicism and American Print Culture in the Progressive Era* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); Manuel Borutta, *Antikatholizismus. Deutschland und Italien im Zeitalter der europäischen Kulturkämpfe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2010); John Wolfe, 'Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire', Hilary M. Carey (ed.), *Empires of Religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 43-63.

Anti-Catholic literature formed a veritable international canon, which also spread in Scandinavia.<sup>5</sup>

This chapter is one of the first fruits of a planned research project on anti-Catholicism and the formation of a Nordic national identity, 1815–1965, bringing together researchers from Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden.<sup>6</sup> Its main purpose will be to investigate the significance of anti-Catholicism in the construction of Scandinavian identity, how it was expressed and how it changed over time. Crucial here is the relationship between the existence of a common body of European ideas and developments specific to the Nordic countries. The project hypothesises that anti-Catholicism played an important part in the conceptions of Scandinavian national identity that developed during the nineteenth century, and that Catholicism came to serve as a counter-image to the notion of ‘national’ values articulated in the same period. A key point of departure for the analysis is the concept of the ‘unifying other’, proposed by Linda Colley and used previously to explain anti-Catholic sentiment in English political thought.<sup>7</sup>

The project is based on theories of religious culture and national identity that have been developed in recent research on social and ecclesiastical history. Hartmut Lehmann argues that religious revival, church mobilisation, and de-Christianisation were the dominant cultural trends in the Western world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>8</sup> Hugh McLeod has drawn attention to the close connection between confessional culture and national identity, emphasising that despite a downturn in religious adherence, Christianity continued to provide a normative body of values. Peter van Rooden has found similar tendencies in the confessionally divided Netherlands, where Catholics and Protestants formed their own

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<sup>5</sup> Timothy Verhoeven, ‘Neither male nor female: Androgyny, Nativism and International Anti-Catholicism’, in *Australian Journal of American Studies* (2005:1). One example is Charles Chiniquy, *Presten, kvinnan och bikten* (Stockholm; Huldberg, 1890).

<sup>6</sup> I have applied for funding from the Scandinavian research council *Norface*. In 2010, I organised an international conference ‘Anti-Catholicism in comparative and transitional perspective, 1750-2000’. The results of this conference will be presented in a *European Anti-Catholicism in a Comparative and Transnational Perspective*, that will be published by Rodopi at the beginning of 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992). See also Clement Fatovic, ‘The Anti-Catholic Roots of Liberal and Republican Conceptions of Freedom in English Political Thought’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* 2005, 1: 37–58.

<sup>8</sup> Hartmut Lehmann, ‘Von der Erforschung der Säkularisierung zur Erforschung von Prozessen der Dechristianisierung und der Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa’, Lehmann (ed.), *Säkularisierung, Dechristianisierung, Rechristianisierung im neuzeitlichen Europa. Bilanz und Perspektiven der Forschung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997).

distinct national identity.<sup>9</sup> Olaf Blaschke, drawing an analogy with the Reformation's confessionalisation, describes the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries as 'a second confessional age', characterised by church consolidation and conflict between the denominations.<sup>10</sup> The word 'confession' is understood in a broad sense, comprising not only a community based on Christian belief, but also the cultural context it shaped. Confessional heritage thus was also an important force in the identity constructions of those who had left Christian faith behind. Even atheism rested on confessional foundations, as did the images of religious enemies.

Until Vatican II, when the Catholic Magisterium repudiated the confessional ideology formed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, anti-Catholicism was fuelled by the strong language in which the Catholic Church condemned both Protestantism and modern developments towards a secular society. In many countries these controversies resulted in open clashes between the Catholic Church and the state authorities. From a Protestant and secular point of view, the international Catholic Church was considered a threat to progress and national integrity.<sup>11</sup> This was especially evident in confessionally divided countries such as, for example, Germany. In a study of the *Kulturkampf* at the end of the nineteenth century, Michael Gross has shown that the proponents of German liberalism portrayed Catholicism not only as an un-German and outdated form of religion but also as a threat to the Protestant, masculine character of the German nation. Manuel Borutta, who outlines a development in which a secular anti-Catholic discourse drew on biology and gender to discredit Catholic religious practices, reaches a similar conclusion. With illuminating examples, he illustrates how Catholicism became a formalised counter-image to the nationalist, Protestant, masculine, and future-oriented character of German society. Similar arguments were used in the British debate against Catholics and High Church Anglicans, who were accused of encouraging men to adopt

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<sup>9</sup> Hugh McLeod, *Secularization in Western Europe, 1848–1914* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 2000), 52–67, 147–158, 184–202, 285. Peter van Rooden, 'Long-term religious developments in the Netherlands, c. 1750–2000', Hugh McLeod & Werner Ustorf (eds), *The Decline of Christendom in Western Europe, 1750–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2003), 113–129.

<sup>10</sup> Olaf Blaschke, 'Das 19. Jahrhundert. Ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter?', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* (2000:1), 38–75; Blaschke (ed.), *Konfessionen im Konflikt. Deutschland zwischen 1800 und 1970, ein zweites konfessionelles Zeitalter* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2002). Regarding confessionalisation in Scandinavia, see Anders Jarlert, 'State Churches and Diversified Confessionalization in Scandinavia', in Nigel Yates (ed.), *Bishop Burgess and his World: Culture, Religion and Society in Britain, Europe and North America in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Lampeter: University of Wales Press, 2007), 171–197.

<sup>11</sup> An overview is found in Marjule Anne Drury, 'Anti-Catholicism in Germany, Britain, and the United States: A Review and Critique of Recent Scholarship', *Church History* (2001:1), 98–131.

effeminate, unmanly attitudes.<sup>12</sup> Such rhetoric was used also in German National Socialist propaganda, and in the eyes of many Protestants, the NSDAP appeared as a Lutheran party.<sup>13</sup>

In Sweden, as in other Protestant countries, the gradual dismantling of the legislation on compulsory religious adherence led to the politicisation of religious issues. What stands out in this process is, on the one hand, the de-confessionalisation of politics, and, on the other, the re-activation of Lutheran confessionalism. The latter also took secular forms; a term sometimes used in research is ‘secularised Lutheranism’. In this situation the old enemy images took on new functions. This was very much the case with the notion of the ‘Catholic danger’, which time and again surfaced in the Swedish media and in parliamentary debates.<sup>14</sup>

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, concern about the Catholic threat was especially strong in liberal theological circles. These theologians were inspired by German theology, and had close contacts with colleagues in Central Europe. This chapter focuses on these theologians, and discusses the impact of anti-Catholicism on German-Swedish cultural relations in the inter-war period. A central aspect is how anti-Catholicism was part of a wider climate of insecurity, relating to fears of Soviet Russia and Communism, which contributed to growing sympathies for National Socialism and the new regime in Germany.

## The Scandinavian context

In Scandinavia, likewise, the heritage of the Reformation played an important role in the conceptions of national identity that developed during the nineteenth century. The Reformation was depicted as a break-through of liberty, freedom, and as liberation from religious superstition and Papal oppression. Catholicism thus came to serve as a counter-

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<sup>12</sup> Gross, *The War against Catholics*; Borutta, *Antikatholizismus*; Francis Knight, ‘“Male and female he created them”: Men, women and the question of Gender’, in John Wolffe (ed.), *Religion in Victorian Britain*, Vol. 5 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), 23–57. See also Christopher Clark and Wolfram Kaiser, eds, *Culture Wars. Secular-Catholic Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003).

<sup>13</sup> Manfred Kittel, *Provinz zwischen Reich und Republik, Politische Mentalitäten in Deutschland und Frankreich 1918–1933/36* (München, Oldenbourg, 2000). See also Walter Fleischmann-Bisten, *Der Evangelische Bund in der Weimarer Republik und im sogenannten Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1989); Wolfgang Altgelt, *Katholizismus, Protestantismus, Judentum: Über religiös begründete Gegensätze und nationalreligiöse Ideen in der Geschichte des deutschen Nationalismus* (Mainz: Matthias Grünewald Verlag, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> Palmqvist, *Die Römisch-katholische*, 316–406; Werner, *Världsvi*, 34–46, 71–97, 316–271. Regarding enemy images in Swedish politics, see Sverker Oredsson, *Svensk rädsla. Offentlig fruktan i Sverige under 1900-talets första hälft* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2001).

image to the notion of ‘national’ values articulated in the period.<sup>15</sup> Until the liberalisation of religious legislation the mid-nineteenth century, it was illegal for Scandinavian citizens to belong to churches other than the established Lutheran churches. The connection between Lutheranism and Nordic national identity stayed relevant long after the disappearance of religion as an all-encompassing norm in daily life. Anti-Catholicism was not only important in a religious sense, for, as some historians have shown, such sentiments were also prevalent in politics, not least in the Social Democratic Party. Another interesting feature is that – in the same way as in Great Britain and the USA – anti-Catholic rhetoric and stereotypes were used not only against Catholics, but also against other religious and political enemies and as weapons in political debate.<sup>16</sup>

Negative views of the Catholic Church had deep roots in Scandinavian mentality. In public opinion, even the vaguest possibility of Catholic expansion was considered a threat to national and cultural integrity. The steady growth in papal power in the centralised Catholic Church and the strengthening of political Catholicism elsewhere in Europe merely fuelled these suspicions. One important factor was pre-Vatican II Catholic ecclesiology, which strongly stressed the claim of the Catholic Church to be the only true Church. Other Christian communities were not considered to be Churches, properly speaking. As a consequence, even formally Christian, though non-Catholic were regarded as missionary fields. The Scandinavian countries, which until 1953 had the status of Apostolic Vicariates under the authority of the Roman Congregation for mission, the *Propaganda Fide*, were thus subjected to missionary activity.<sup>17</sup>

With the Tolerance Edict of 1781, the public exercise of the Catholic faith was officially permitted in Sweden, but only for foreign subjects. Swedish citizens were still prohibited from belonging to a religious community other than the established Lutheran Church. With the Dissenter Act in 1860, these stipulations were abolished, and defection from the

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<sup>15</sup> Werner, *Världsvind*, 34–99, 265–269 & Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 309–323; Dag Thorkildsen, ‘Religious Identity and Nordic Identity’, in Øystein Sørensen, Bo Stråth (eds.), *The Cultural Construction of Norden* (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997), 138–160; Kjell Blücker, *The Church as Nation. A Study in Ecclesiology and Nationhood* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 2000).

<sup>16</sup> Erik Petrén, *Kyrka och makt. Bilder ur svensk kyrkohistoria* (Lund: Bokförlaget Signum, 1990), 39–46; Daniel Alvunger, *Nytt vin i gamla läglar. Socialdemokratisk kyrkopolitik under perioden 1944–1973* (Göteborg: Församlingsförlaget, 2006), 157–170; Werner, ‘Schwedentum?’, 2006:1, 81–106.

<sup>17</sup> Karl J. Rivinius, ‘Die Entwicklung des Missionsgedankens und Missionsträger’, in: Erwin Gatz (ed.), *Katholiken in der Minderheit. Diaspora-Ökumenische Bewegung – Missionsgedanke* (Freiburg; Herder, 1994, 217–218); Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 9–22.

established Lutheran Church, which from now on was called the Church of Sweden, lost its criminal status. But conversion to one of the so-called foreign religious communities was still hedged about by strong restrictions. We find the same pattern in Norway, which was separated from Denmark and joined with Sweden in a monarchical union in 1814. Many of the legal restrictions had an obvious anti-Catholic purpose, and were intended to prevent people from converting to the Catholic Church. Full religious freedom was introduced in the two countries as late as 1951 respectively 1964, a move long delayed not least by the strong anti-Catholic sentiments in the countries and the fear that the Catholic Church would grow strong under the protection of a more liberal religious legislation.<sup>18</sup>

This fear was not without foundation. In fact, the liberalisation of Scandinavian religious legislation in the mid-nineteenth century opened the way for Catholic mission and conversions to the Catholic Church. This was particularly evident in Denmark, where the new liberal constitution of 1849, which replaced the absolutist and confessional regime with its severe religious regulations, introduced virtually full religious liberty. In the debates that preceded the new religious legislation anti-Catholic attitudes were voiced by a strong minority in the constitutional assembly and also in the media, and it was warned against Jesuit infiltration and Catholic proselytising.<sup>19</sup>

The Catholic missionary work was indeed fairly successful in Denmark, and the numbers of Catholics consequently increased to about 25 000 in the early 1930s. This expansion was partly caused by immigration, but was primarily a consequence of conversion, and at the turn of the twentieth century, the number of Danish converts averaged 230 per year. In Norway and Sweden, where restrictive dissenter laws impeded the activities of 'foreign' religious communities, the Catholic mission was less successful. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Catholic population did not amount to more than a few thousand. A common feature, however, was the prominent role played by native converts, who contributed to give the Catholic parishes, with their foreign, mostly German and French priests and nuns, a

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<sup>18</sup> Yvonne Maria Werner, 'Katholicism och religionsfrihet. Den svenska religionsfrihetslagen 50 år', *Signum* (2002:9), 32–40. Bernt Oftestad, 'Norway and the Jesuit Order: A History of Anti-Catholicism', in Jonas Harvard and Yvonne Maria Werner (eds.), *European Anti-Catholicism in a Comparative and Transnational Perspective*, chapter 11 (Fortcoming, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Jes Fabricius Møller and Uffe Østergård, 'Lutheran Orthodoxy and Anti-Catholicism in Denmark 1536-2011', in Harvard and Werner (eds.), *European Anti-Catholicism*, chapter 9.

Scandinavian character. Among the converts we find artists, academics, politicians, and also former Protestant priest. Yet, the majority came from the lower classes.<sup>20</sup>

Catholic orders and congregations played a significant role in the missionary work. Most of these religious institutes were female congregations, and at the beginning of the 1930s, there were more than 1.300 Catholic sisters working in Scandinavia. Male religious often took over responsibility for the parishes, whereas the female religious mainly dedicated themselves to education, health care, and other social work. Among the male orders, the Jesuits were the most important, and at the beginning of the twentieth century they had five residences in Denmark and Sweden and a college for boys outside Copenhagen. The leading female congregation was the Sisters of Saint Joseph from France. At the beginning of the 1920s, nearly thousand of these sisters were working in the three Scandinavian countries, managing hospitals, private schools and other social institutions. Catholic schools and hospitals were used as missionary tools, and most pupils and patients were Protestants.<sup>21</sup>

This naturally served to reinforce anti-Catholic feelings in the Scandinavia. Anti-Catholic sentiments were expressed in parliamentary debates, political tracts, satirical images, pamphlet literature, and last but not least, in the media. Anti-Catholic media debates were especially frequent in the inter-war period, partly due to the strengthened Catholic position in Europe after the war, partly because of intensified Catholic missionary activities in the Nordic countries. One of the most spectacular events was the Eucharistic Congress held in Copenhagen in 1932 under the aegis of the prefect of *Propaganda Fide*, Cardinal Willem van Rossum. This triumphant manifestation of the Catholic presence in Scandinavia naturally led to fierce attacks on the Catholic Church in the media, and to intense debates on how to prevent Northerners from being attracted or infected by Catholicism.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Eidsvig, 'Den katolske kirke', 155–165; Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 124–125, 179–182. In Finland, Catholic conversions were forbidden until 1922, when a new religious legislation came into force.

<sup>21</sup> Yvonne Maria Werner, *Katolsk mission och kvinnlig motkultur, Sankt Josefsystrarna i Danmark och Sverige 1856-1936* (Stockholm, 2002); Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 106–110, 134–143. The Jesuit order was forbidden in Norway at this time. The expansive development of Catholic health care was broken in the 1950s when the welfare policy of the state became fully established.

<sup>22</sup> Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 154–160. Cardinal van Rossum made a first pastoral visit to Scandinavia already in 1923 and he took part in the Catholic celebrations of St Ansgar in Sweden in 1929. Also these events provoked anti-Catholic reactions in the press.



## Liberal theology and German influences

Protestant liberal theology was, as is generally known, a movement that strove to adapt the Christian message to modern society and its mentality, and to bring it into line with the new scientific worldview. The ‘liberal’ theologians deliberately played down the metaphysical and dogmatic side of Christian faith, and instead focussed on its ethical dimensions. While in the nineteenth century the first generations of liberal theologians concentrated their energies on biblical criticism, its early twentieth-century adherents increasingly engaged in public debate. A common feature was that they wanted to create a new synthesis of Christianity and culture. In Europe, liberal theologians took a positive view of the modern state, which they saw as a guarantor of academic freedom in the university theological departments and a bastion against conservative dogmatism and clerical abuse of power.<sup>23</sup>

Liberal theology was especially successful in Germany, where it formed the basis of the bourgeois *Kulturprotestantismus* (cultural Protestantism). Also the movement that emerged in the late 1910s and that came to be known as *Deutsche Christen* (German Christians) was based on liberal theological foundations. The theologians of the movement used the term *Religionswissenschaft* (religious science) to underline their wish to include pre- and non-Christian religions and popular religion in their work, and they also drew on so-called *völkische Ideologie* (folk ideology). They had a clearly racist approach and wanted that Christianity should be cleansed of its Jewish elements. The idea of an Aryan Jesus was launched, and their conviction was that the Jewish Old Testament should be replaced by German myths, adapted to the German mentality. The over all aim was to reform the German Protestant churches in a German national – Germanic – spirit and to bring them together in a *Reichskirche* (national church).<sup>24</sup>

This goal was partly realised after the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, when one of the German Christian movement’s leading figures, Ludwig Müller, was appointed *Reichsbischof* (national bishop). The movement, which sought to reshape the Protestant

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<sup>23</sup> Matthias Wolfes, *Protestantische Theologie und moderne Welt : Studien zur Geschichte der liberalen Theologie nach 1918* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999); Georg Hübinger, *Kulturprotestantismus und Politik. Zum Verhältnis von Liberalismus und Protestantismus im wilhelminischen Deutschland* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> See for example, Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross. The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1996); Manfred Gailus, ‘Nationalsozialistische Christen’ und ‘christliche Nationalsozialisten’, in Hartmut Lehmann, Manfred Gailus (eds.), *Nationalprotestantische*

church fellowship in accordance with National Socialist ideas of blood, soil, and race, was not only markedly antisemitic, but also strongly anti-Catholic. The movement's constitution, adopted in April 1933, clearly stated that atheistic Marxism and Roman Catholicism were regarded as the enemies of the Christian faith. The Nazi regime saw the German Christian movement as a way to gain control of the German Protestant churches. But due to the theological struggle that soon started and that led to the formation of the *Bekennende Kirche* (Confessing Church), the regime gradually ceased to support the *Deutsche Christen* movement.<sup>25</sup>

In Sweden, liberal theology was introduced by Fredrik Fehr, who was associate professor at Uppsala University and from 1884 *pastor primarius* (first pastor) in Stockholm. He was also a very fervent representative of anti-Catholicism, and warned from time to time for the 'Catholic danger'. On the commemoration day for Gustavus Adolphus in autumn 1889 he called for vigilance against Catholic propaganda. A bazaar in Stockholm for the benefit of Catholic sisters of mercy the following spring prompted him to convene the Stockholm clergy to discuss this new threat to 'evangelical freedom' and to pass a resolution urging the Swedes not to support Catholic social activities in the capital.<sup>26</sup>

At the first decades of the twentieth century, Swedish liberal theology was represented by a group of theologians connected to the journal *Kristendomen och vår tid* (Christianity and our time) that was published in the years 1906 to 1933. Like Swedish theology in general, the movement drew much of its inspiration from Germany and interacted with representatives of the German Protestant churches.<sup>27</sup> This connection was also apparent in the common view of Catholicism and the 'Catholic danger', which was a prominent theme in the magazine. In issue after issue, the Catholic Church was presented as a menace to modern society and its principles, and Catholicism was described as an inferior form of religion that hampered the development of society, and as a threat to the autonomy and authority of state power. Anti-

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*Mentalitäten in Deutschland (1870–1970). Konturen, Entwicklungslinien und Umbrüche eines Weltbildes* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005), 223–262.

<sup>25</sup> Gailus, 'Nationalsozialistische Christen'.

<sup>26</sup> Werner, *Världsvind*, 171–180

<sup>27</sup> Karl G. Hammar, *Liberalteologi och kyrkopolitik. Kretsen kring Kristendomen och vår tid 1906-omkr. 1920*, (Lund: Gleerup, 1972). Regarding the relations between the Swedish and German Protestant churches in this period and Nazi sympathies among the Swedish clergy, see Gunnar Appelqvist, *Luthersk samverkan i nazismens skugga; Sverige och Lutherakademien i Sondershausen 1932–1945* (Uppsala: Teologiska institutionen, 1993); Lars Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen och demokratin. Åsiktsbildning kring svensk kyrklighet 1919–1945*,

Catholic rhetoric was also used against theological enemies within the Church of Sweden, not least against the High Church movement, which was criticised for adopting Catholic rituals and traditions.<sup>28</sup> Such tendencies are found also within British anti-Catholicism, where High Church Anglicans were accused of promoting “popery” by subverting the Church of England from within and destroying the Protestant character of the British empire.<sup>29</sup> Another manifestation of anti-Catholicism was the foundation of *Evangeliska Utskottet* (the Protestant Committee) at the meeting of *Allmänna Svenska Prästföreningen*, an association of Church of Sweden pastors, in the city of Norrköping in 1923. The Protestant Committee had ties to *Internationaler Verband zur Verteidigung des Protestantismus* (the International League to Protect Protestantism), which was founded in Berlin that same year and took the struggle against Catholicism as its *raison d’être*.<sup>30</sup>

There were close links between these organisations and the Lutheran World Convention, founded in 1923 to assist Lutheran minority churches, particularly in Eastern Europe. A few years later national committees were set up. These included a Swedish committee, which from 1931 was led by the liberal theologian pastor Sam Stadener. Swedish missionary activities in Eastern Europe were funded by church collections and fund-raising by the magazine *Kyrkor under Korset* (Churches under the Cross), which was a mouthpiece both of the Protestant Committee and the Swedish National Committee. Its editor was the chaplain of Lund cathedral, Lars Wollmar, who belonged to the circle associated with the aforementioned journal *Kristendomen och vår tid*.<sup>31</sup> With his colleague Magnus Pfannenstill, one of the leading liberal theologians in Lund, Wollmar had participated in the founding of the International League to Protect Protestantism. The League’s general secretary, Gerhard Ohlemüller, was also chairman of the *Evangelischer Bund zur Wahrung der deutsch-protestantischen Interessen* (Protestant Union for Protection of German Protestant Interests), a Protestant association founded in the 1880s to combat the growing influence of the Catholic Church in Germany. It was this latter organisation that, together with its Dutch counterpart, had taken the initiative in founding this militantly anti-Catholic organisation. Ohlemüller

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Stockholm: Almqvist & Wicksell, 1995); Birgitta Brodd, *Var Sveriges sak också kyrkans? Svenska kyrkans utrikespolitiska aktivitet 1930–1945. En tidslägesorienterad analys* (Skellefteå: Norma 2004) 259–294, 323–517.

<sup>28</sup> Several articles in *Kristendomen och vår tid* are dealing with Catholicism and the Catholic Church.

<sup>29</sup> David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in modern Britain. A history from the 1830 to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 100–102, 147–148, 220.

<sup>30</sup> Wadensjö, ‘Romersk-katolska kyrkan’, 205–223.

<sup>31</sup> Ingmar Brohed, *Religionsfrihetens och ekumenikens tid. Sveriges kyrkohistoria*, vol. 8 (Stockholm: Verbum, 2003), 163–165.

participated at the meeting in Norrköping in 1923, where he gave a speech on the Catholic danger; the same theme was addressed by Pfannenstill, who called for a watch on the Catholic Church's 'imperialistic ambitions', and for a 'united Protestant front'.<sup>32</sup> These bodies resembled organisations active in the English-speaking world, such as the Protestant Truth Society, which in 1930 the Protestant Truth Society warned against the world wide missionary activities of the Vatican.<sup>33</sup>

In *Kyrkor under Korset* both the Catholic and the Communist threats were a constant theme. As editor, Wollmar looked favourably on the Nazi regime in Germany, and like many other Protestant clergymen he hoped that National Socialist policies would lead to a Protestant revival. He was at first positive about the German Christian movement and its quest to unify German Protestants, but the conflicts within the movement left him increasingly sceptical.<sup>34</sup> Swedish relief work was concentrated on East Poland and the Ukraine, where a Protestant revival had led to the creation of several new parishes. With the outbreak of the Second World War this missionary work had to be abandoned, but it was resumed after the German occupation of the area. Swedish relief work in German-occupied territory gave rise to fierce debates in the Swedish press between in 1942 to 1946, with critics arguing that these activities – and the funds raised – were being used for the German occupiers' benefit.<sup>35</sup> The inquiry arranged by Bishop Anders Nygren after the war concluded that these accusations were unfounded; according to him, *Kyrkor under Korset* had not been engaged in Nazi propaganda, although the magazine had issued some 'inappropriate materials' and 'unfortunate statements'. It should be noted that the principal critic was a Communist journalist, who belonged to the Stockholm Clarté association.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Lars Wollmer, 'Evangeliska utskottet 1923–1932. En översikt', *Kristendomen och vår tid. Skrifter tillägnade kyrkoherden teol. D:r Oskar N. Lewan* (Lund: Berlingska, 1932), 98–104.

<sup>33</sup> Wolffe, 'Anti-Catholicism and the British Empire', 52–60.

<sup>34</sup> Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen*, 90–92, 117–131. See also Martin Lind, *Kristendom och nazism. Frågan om kristendom och nazism belyst av olika ställningstaganden i Tyskland och Sverige 1933–1945* (Lund: H. Olsson, 1975) Lind is focusing on conservative groups and is not discussing the liberal theologians. The connection between anti-Catholicism and anti-Communism was especially evident in Finland. See Ainur Elmgren, 'The Jesuit Stereotype – A Metaphor of the Universal Enemy in Finnish Nationalism', in Harvard and Werner (eds.), *European Anti-Catholicism*, chapter 10.

<sup>35</sup> Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen*, 203–215.

<sup>36</sup> Anders Nygren, *Sanningen om 'kyrkonazismen'. En granskning av 'Svenska landskommitténs' verksamhet*, Lund 1946; Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen*, 215–218. Wollmar had to give up his position as editor of *Kyrkor under korset* and his seat in the Swedish Committee in summer 1946.

The question is just what this inappropriate material was, and which statements Nygren was referring to? His booklet *Sanningen om 'kyrkonazismen'* (The Truth about 'Church Nazism') gives some answers. In it, he quotes from two articles from 1935 and 1936, in which the church politics of the Nazi regime were characterised in positive terms, and articles from 1941 and 1942 that described the German occupation of Eastern Europe as an act of liberation.<sup>37</sup> Most of the articles in *Kyrkor under Korset* were about the plight and persecution of Lutheran Christians in the Ukraine and the Protestant mission and relief work in the area. These articles were, understandably, sharply anti-Communist in tone. Poverty and misery were described as direct results of Communist policy and a deliberate strategy in the fight against religion.<sup>38</sup> Several wartime articles described improvements in the situation of the Protestant Christians in German-occupied Poland, the Ukraine and in Austria after the *Anschluß*.<sup>39</sup> Yet there was not the least indication of the growing difficulties experienced by the Protestant communities in Poland, where the regime pursued a fierce anti-Church policy that also directly affected German Protestant communities.<sup>40</sup>

The situation of Lutherans in majority Catholic countries such as Austria and Spain was also addressed in *Kyrkor under Korset*, with angry attacks on the Catholic Church for perceived bullying, narrow-mindedness, gaudiness, and presumptuous claims to represent the only true faith.<sup>41</sup> Another recurring feature of the magazine was its celebration of the heroic king Gustavus Adolphus, whose noble, open-minded and truly Lutheran character was contrasted with Bolshevik barbarism and Catholic absolutism; while Luther himself was presented as one of world history's great heroes and liberators.<sup>42</sup> Several articles deal with the Protestant World Convention and the collaboration between Swedish and German Protestant mission institutes in Eastern Europe. An illustrative example of a positive view of National Socialism

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<sup>37</sup> Nygren, *Sanningen*, 35–62.

<sup>38</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset*, 1932, 11–29; 1933, 115–137; 1935, 23–33, 178–193; 1937, 270–294. These articles are, although they often relate to individual cases, stereotypical in their descriptions of the horrors and suffering of Christians in the Soviet Union.

<sup>39</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset*, 1938, 288–296, 1941, 47ff, 152–155; 194ff, 209ff, 254–263, 266ff; 1942, 21ff, 62ff. It is also noted that the situation for the Protestants in Spain had deteriorated and that the Catholic Church used its position as established religion to suppress Protestant worship: 1941, 50–53.

<sup>40</sup> R. Löffler, 'Protestantismus und Auslandsdeutschtum in der Weimarer Republik und dem Dritten Reich', in Manfred Geyer, Hartmut Lehmann, *Religion und Nation. Beiträge zu einer unbewältigten Geschichte* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2004), 298–335 (esp. 234–334).

<sup>41</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset*, 1932, 75–81; 161–164, 1935, 49–58, 123f, 254f; 1936, 15–20, 248ff, 344; 1937, 63–69, 73–76; 1938, 288–296, 297ff; 1941, 50ff, 59. Yet, this did not prevent the editors from publishing Catholic reports about the persecutions of Christians in the Soviet Union and parts of the papal encyclical letter against Communism (*Divini Redemptoris*) from 1937 (87f).

<sup>42</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset*, 1932, 131f; 1933, 108–113, 158–161; 1934, 4ff; 1939, 4–8; 1941, 233f.

is an article by Pfannenstill in 1936 entitled ‘German Church Reconstruction’, in which he stressed the importance of Protestant participation in the construction of a National Socialist people’s society. Yet, he also warned of sweeping change, and underlined that the preaching of the Gospel always had to be given priority.<sup>43</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset* was far from being the only church magazine that took a favourable view of the new Germany. Also *Svensk kyrkotidning* (the Swedish Church Journal), which was the mouthpiece of the Swedish Pastors’ Association and represented a more conservative Lutheran standpoint, published a series of sympathetic articles on the German Christians and the new political order in Germany.<sup>44</sup>

A positive perception of National Socialism was clearly connected to anti-Catholicism. It was the political dimension of Catholicism that came in for particular criticism.<sup>45</sup> According to prevalent Catholic social doctrine, both church and state were *societas perfecta et completa*, sovereign in their respective fields, and should collaborate on equal terms for the benefit of the public good. *Kyrkor under Korset* stressed time and again the Lutheran principle of a division between the spiritual and the secular, arguing that the churches should not interfere in politics. In a 1936 article on Catholicism and politics, Oscar Hippel expressed the hope that National Socialist church policies would lead to a de-politicisation of Catholicism and a de-confessionalisation of ecclesiastical life in Germany.<sup>46</sup> Another danger emphasised in the magazine is German neo-paganism, whose Nordic racism, interestingly enough, is clearly rejected.<sup>47</sup>

Besides the Catholic Church’s political activities, the Swedish liberal theologians’ greatest objections were to its centralist structures and authoritarian management. In *Kristendomen och vår tid*, Catholicism was described as a threat both to the modern social order and individual freedom, while the Roman Church leadership was accused of lust for power, manipulative missionary methods, and intolerance.<sup>48</sup> This view was not confined to liberals,

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<sup>43</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset*, 1935, 169ff; 1936, 94–100.

<sup>44</sup> Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen*, 89–96, 117–131. Most of these articles are written by the editors Wollmar and dean Per Pehrsson in Gothenburg.

<sup>45</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset* 1935, 77–82, 123f, 245f; 1936, 186–191.

<sup>46</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset* 1936, 186–191. He refers to an article by Ohlemüller on political Catholicism Ohlemüller

<sup>47</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset* 1935, 169–176.

<sup>48</sup> *Kristendomen och vår tid*, 1923, 297–324, 1921, 264–269, 1923, 200–215, 1924, 241–249, 350–357, 1927 (G. W. Lindeberg), 4–20, 348–359; *Svensk kyrkotidning* 24 Mai 1924, 8 July 1925, 26 Nov. 1924, 1 July 1925, 14 July 1926, 21 Juli 1926, 11 Sept. 1929

but was shared by virtually all Protestants. In debates on the Swedish dissenter legislation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, conservative churchmen and politicians alike constantly stressed the need for more rigid religious legislation to protect the individual's freedom of conscience from Catholic proselytising. The Catholic principle of authority was emphasised as one of the main factors that made Catholicism a danger to society and public order. There was particularly sharp criticism of Catholic monastic orders with their strict rules and demands for absolute obedience, and articles on the 'monastic question' overflowed with the usual anti-Catholic stereotypes: manipulative confessors, oppressed nuns, and ecclesiastical thirst for power. Moreover, Catholic religious orders and congregations, which established themselves in the Nordic countries from the 1850s onwards, were seen as tools of 'Roman propaganda', not least the female institutes, which were described as insidious in their attempts to entice Nordic women to convert and join Catholic orders.<sup>49</sup> Even in the 1960s, Catholicism in general and convents in particular were still depicted as a threat to Nordic identity and values. This was clearly expressed in newspaper reports and comments arising from the founding of a Carmelite monastery at Glumslöv in southern Sweden. Opponents stressed the Catholic Church's political aspirations and the incompatibility of monastic life both with Sweden's legal tradition and with modern notions of individual rights and freedoms.<sup>50</sup>

These kinds of anti-Catholic sentiments were in part due to the traditional Nordic view of women's role in society. The Lutheran doctrine of vocation and the household (*tabula oeconomica*), which strongly emphasised the reproductive and domestic duties of women, still functioned as a generally recognised social ideology in Nordic society.<sup>51</sup> Marriage was given prominence, while celibacy and monasticism were condemned as unnatural and unethical. In pamphlets, schoolbooks, fiction, and debates of all kind, and, of course, in several articles of *Kristendomen och vår tid*, monastic life was portrayed as a refuge for lazy monks and oppressed women, while the Reformation was depicted as affecting liberation from spiritual darkness and religious despotism. The ideal of celibacy, together with the strong position of the Catholic priest, was described as a threat to family life and to the

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<sup>49</sup> Edvard Leufvén, 'Katolskt kloster i Djursholm', *Svensk Kyrkotidning* 10 Okt. 1923; *Kristendomen och vår tid* 1924, 114 ff. Regarding the negative views in the Swedish press, see Y. M. Werner, 'Himmelskt fängelse eller andligt vilorum: svenska perspektiv på klosterliv' (*Vårstingkristna i drevet*, Skellefteå: Artos, 2009) 25–48.

<sup>50</sup> Göran Inger, 'Klosterförbudet i Sverige och dess upphävande', *Statsvetenskaplig tidskrift* (1962), 133–173.

authority of the husband and father.<sup>52</sup> In some articles, Catholicism was presented as effeminate and unmanly and prominent churchmen – liberal as well as representatives of the nationalist Young Church movement – stressed the need to masculinise Christianity and to create a manlier image of Christ.<sup>53</sup> This is in line with the argumentation of the German Christian, who in their efforts to defend Christianity against Nazi and neo-pagan critics insisted that the Protestant church should be a manly church that promoted masculine qualities.<sup>54</sup>

Similar views were expressed by the new and more radical form of liberal theology, launched in the 1920s by the church historian Emanuel Linderholm in Uppsala, which found its institutional form in the association *Sveriges Religiösa Reformförbund* (the Swedish League for Religious Reform). This association, with the journal *Religion och Kultur* (Religion and Culture) as its mouthpiece, strove to adapt the Christian message to modern man's religious needs by weeding out supernatural elements and perceived 'myths' – such as Jesus' miracles and Resurrection – from Christian preaching. It was argued that civic improvement and education should be at the centre, rather than the eschatological doctrine of salvation. Another feature was the tendency to tone down the significance of the Old Testament for Christian faith. The connection between race and religion was emphasised and also the need to cleanse the Gospel from Jewish materialism and to restore the image of Christ in accordance with modern masculinity. Thus here too there was a certain kinship with the views expressed by the German Christians. Linderholm initially had close contacts with this movement, and like several of the other members of the League he was a member of Society Manhem, which was founded in 1934 to promote German–Swedish cultural and academic contacts on a Lutheran ground. At the synod of the Church of Sweden that year he defended the German Christian movement in a debate with Bishop Nygren. The reason for this debate was Nygren's book on the church struggle in Germany, which according to Linderholm gave a one-sided picture of the conflict.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> The Lutheran doctrine of vocation and its importance for the Scandinavian women's movement is discussed in Pirjo Markkola (ed.), *Gender and Vocation. Women, Religion and Social Change in the Nordic Countries, 1830-1940* (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2000).

<sup>52</sup> This is expressed in several articles in *Kristendomen och vår tid* in the 1920s.

<sup>53</sup> This is explored in Yvonne Maria Werner (ed.), *Christian masculinity. Men and religion in northern Europe in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2011).

<sup>54</sup> Bergen, *Twisted Cross*, 62-65, 74-75. Gailus, 'Nationalsozialistische Christen'.



In 1934 Linderholm published in *Religion och Kultur* a translation of a number of the declarations of principle taken from one of the German Christian movement's journals. In another article in the same issue, Nils Hannerz, also a member of the Manhem Society, gave a positive picture of the German Christians and their aspirations to create a popular Germanic, manly, Lutheran, and modern Christianity in accordance with the demands of the time. As examples he mentioned the efforts to come to terms with the Jewish *lönemoral* (profit ethics) and to highlight Jesus as a heroic figure of Aryan descent. He also described the passion for the Nordic that characterised a part of the German Christian movement.<sup>56</sup> In his book *Den levande Gudens ord* (The Word of the living God), also published in 1934, Hannerz developed his ideas of a Nordic Christian faith. He pointed to the Christian spirit of the religious costumes of the Germanic tribes, including those of the Scandinavian peoples, and called for a second Reformation that would entail both a revision of the New Testament and the total repudiation of the 'Jewish' Old Testament. He rejected overseas Christian missions – as this would force people to adapt to a system of faith that ran contrary to their own 'racial nature' – along with ecumenism with non-Nordic churches and 'Jewish materialism'. The Catholic Church was depicted as the great enemy and a threat both to society and to the Protestant churches.<sup>57</sup> The Reform League had, not unexpectedly, a very negative attitude towards the Catholic Church, but in the 1930s there were surprisingly few direct anti-Catholic elements in the articles published in *Religion och Kultur*. The German Jesuit Max Pribilla, who gained prominence through his debates with Nathan Söderblom on Christian unity in the late 1920s, was invited by Linderholm to lecture on the subject at Uppsala University in 1933, and this lecture was later published without any negative comments in *Religion och Kultur*.<sup>58</sup>

Another liberal theologian with close ties to the German Christian movement was the above-mentioned Stadener, who had a leading position both in the Swedish Pastor's Association and the Lutheran World Convention. From 1927 he was bishop first of Strängnäs and later of Växjö, and he was church minister in a liberal government from 1930–32. Stadener had intended to participate as a representative of the Church of Sweden at the installation of the German *Reichsbischof* Müller in 1934, but had to cancel after Sweden's Social Democrat

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<sup>55</sup> Anders Jarlert, *Emanuel Linderholm som kyrkohistoriker* (Lund: Lund University Press, 1987) 168–174; Brohed, *Religionsfrihetens*, 173.

<sup>56</sup> *Religion och Kultur* 1934, 23–36, 186–194. See Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen*, 125ff; Lena Berggren, 'Completing the Lutheran Reformation: Ultra-nationalism, Christianity and the Possibility of 'Clerical Fascism' in Interwar Sweden', *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* (2007: 8), 303–314.

<sup>57</sup> Nils Hannerz, *Den levande Gudens ord* (Stockholm: Svea rikets förlag, 1934).

government intervened. It should be noted that there were other Swedish clergymen who were similarly favourable to Swedish participation at this event.<sup>59</sup> Stadener was engaged in the International League to Protect Protestantism, and he gave the opening address at the League's meeting in Stockholm in 1932.<sup>60</sup> For him, like so many others, anti-Catholicism was a constant element in his theological mindset, and also a strong motive for his positive interest in the German Christians. Yet, like most of his colleagues, he later distanced himself from the movement.<sup>61</sup>

## Final reflections

The liberalisation of religious legislation and the disintegration of Protestant religious unity in the 19<sup>th</sup> century led to a shift in the perception of the Catholic Church. Whereas anti-Catholicism in the early modern era had been based on religious convictions, twentieth century anti-Catholicism was closely connected to ideas of progress and modernisation. Hence, anti-Catholic rhetoric came to focus on the political and ideological dimensions of Catholicism and the supra-national character of the Catholic Church and its demands for independence from state power were regarded as a threat to national identity and integrity. Through its missionary activities in Protestant countries and its rejection of the liberal principles on which modern development was based, the Catholic Church contributed to increasing these kinds of anti-Catholic sentiments and to their spread to non-religious and secular groups in society.

Liberal theologians played a major role in this transformation process. They wanted to develop a more civic-minded and less dogmatic form of Christianity in step with modern society and the new scientific worldview. In Sweden, liberal theology, which represented a mixture between confessionally motivated anti-Catholic perceptions and secular anticlericalism, were very much engaged in the fight against the 'Catholic danger'. From their point of view, the Catholic Church appeared as a dangerous enemy not only in a religious but also, and that first and foremost, in a political and ideological sense.

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<sup>58</sup> Religion och Kultur 1934, 37–42.

<sup>59</sup> Gunnarsson, *Kyrkan, nazismen*, 129f. 147; Anders Jarlert, 'Ausländische Legitimation für den Reichsbischof? Die mißlungenen Versuche, durch britische oder skandinavische Teilnahme an der Einführung des Reichsbischofs der deutschen Kirchenleitung internationale Anerkennung zu verschaffen', *Kirchliche Zeitgeschichte* (1995:2), 325–343; Anders Jarlert, 'Nygren, Aulén och nationalsocialismen: omvärderingar av historiska positioner', in Samuel Rubenson, Anders Jarlert (eds.), *Kyrkohistoriska omvärderingar* (Lund: Lunds universitets kyrkohistoriska arkiv, 2005), 45–70.

<sup>60</sup> *Kyrkor under Korset* 1932, 81–86.

Celibacy and monasticism was another common focus for their critics. Monastic life was rejected as unnatural, and as threat to family life and social morality. The female institutions were seen as especially dangerous as representatives of female ideals that conflicted with traditional Protestant family ideology and also as tools of Catholic propaganda. Some of them argued for a more manly form of Christianity, and criticised Catholicism for being an unmanly and effeminate. The liberal theologian's anti-Catholicism was further linked to anti-Communism and fears of Soviet Russia, which lead to sympathies for National Socialist ideas and the new regime in Germany. It is further interesting to note that the anti-Catholic rhetoric and arguments used by Swedish liberal theologians for a great part were taken from the German debate.

More research is needed to identifying the distinctiveness of anti-Catholicism in Sweden and the other Nordic countries in relation to the characteristics common to the Protestant world as a whole. It is also important to look at Christian groups outside the established churches. The Protestant revivalist movements that emerged in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were also very anti-Catholic in their attitudes, but unlike the liberal theologians and other representatives of the mainline state churches their leading representatives of draw their inspiration from British and US-American Christian thinking. It is further important to examine anti-Catholic attitudes and expressions in the light of Catholic anti-Protestantism at the time. In Catholic publications in Scandinavia as elsewhere we find plenty of negative stereotypes and partial and excessive accusations against Protestantism.<sup>62</sup> This tendency of exaggeration in an apologetic purpose was simply an expression of a common confessional conflict culture dating back to the Reformation.

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<sup>61</sup> Clarence Nilsson, *Sam Stadener som Kyrkopolitiker* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 1964).

<sup>62</sup> Werner, *Världsvid*, 242-246, 316-332; Werner, *Nordisk katolicism*, 307-321. See also John Wolffe, 'North Atlantic Anti-Catholicism in the Nineteenth Century – A Comparative Overview' and Olaf Blaschke, 'Anti-Protestantism and Anti-Catholicism in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: a Comparison' in Harvart and Werner (eds.), *European Anti-Catholicism*, chapter 1 and 7.