

## **Abstract for half-time control,**

**Time: Monday October 26<sup>th</sup> 2020, at 10-12 a.m. (BMC-D house, ground floor, conference room, Lund)**

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**Title: Swedish physicians within the force-fields of political ideologies between 1930 and 1960. White robes and dark shadows**

**Background:** The time period 1930 to 1960 were turbulent years, not only in Sweden, but globally. The world was split between different political ideologies and nodes. In the East the communist left wing was gathering power and spreading from the Soviet Union since the October Revolution in 1917, and in Germany the National Socialism (NS) regime was growing steadily stronger during the 1930's. In between these two nodes were those politicians more liberal in their political views, maybe best represented by London and the United Kingdom, who tried to maintain a grip of the political status quo. Apart from this the world was ravaged after World War I, and even more so after World War II, which saw the end of the Nazi Regime but instead the start of the Cold War that separated Europe in two halves.

The political scene in Sweden, as well, was split between the different political ideologies and was, during the 1930's, a community with great rifts between opposing views. There were strong German sympathies that influenced a cultural life and politics, but also several smaller left- and liberal-oriented groups that fought for an understanding of the growing threat from the NS regime and for Sweden to aid the victims. Whereas many of the important individuals and groups supporting German ideas in Sweden during this period have been studied, those on the liberal and left-wing side have been less so. There were several important individuals and groups, also within the medical field, whose work has gone largely unnoticed.

After the war Sweden's political sympathies leaned to the west and NATO, but several important and influential groups supporting ideas spread from the Soviet Union existed, for

examples within the peace movement and ban on Swedish nuclear weapons during the 1950's. Among these were several female doctors who worked hard for peace, equal rights and to create a better relationship between Sweden and the Soviet Union with its allies during the emerging cold war with hot wars like in Korea in the early 1950's.

**Aims and methods:**

The aim of this thesis is to investigate some of the groups and individuals (physicians) involved in working against the German NS influence in Sweden during the 1930s. They tried to aid refugees, mostly academicians with their families, and spread the understanding of what was happening in Germany at the time. Furthermore the aim is to try and understand some of these individuals (physicians) and their reasons for advocating Soviet ideas during the Cold War. It will be investigated whether they knowingly advocated support for the Soviets, but did it for what they perceived as the greater good of promoting peace, or if they were real believers and followers of the communist ideology.

The methods used to conduct this research include studying and analyzing primary and secondary sources from libraries and archives, even from the Swedish Security Police ("Säkerhetspolisen", SÄPO). Several archives have been visited to collect information from primary sources from the actual time periods. Interviews have also been conducted with living relatives to some of the individuals studied, and with people having expert knowledge in the area.

**Preliminary results:**

Thus far, the work has mainly centered on the 1930's in Sweden and has started to cover the early decades of the Cold War. It has become clear that the situation was more complex and nuanced than expected and that the struggle conducted by the left- and liberal groups was a hard and long one. Moreover, despite the groups being quite a few they lacked proper cooperation which may have eased their work. Several individuals, including physicians, whose work was paramount during this era have been identified and an attempt to try and understand their ideas and convictions has been made.

**Significance:** To better understand the people (focus on physicians) involved in the left- and liberal groups during the 1930's in Sweden is significant as it gives a better view of the situation as a whole in the country. There has not been much published concerning these

individuals and groups and thus it is significant to delve into their work and what they accomplished. Furthermore it is significant to try and shed some light on the work of some of the female physicians in Sweden involved in the struggle for peace and against nuclear weapons during the Cold War. It will illuminate part of the political spectrum in Sweden at the time and will hopefully illuminate what their reasons were to side with the Soviet ideology. So far there are two publications [1, 2] and one manuscript in preparation [3] for the PhD thesis. A fourth paper is under consideration and planning.

### **Papers for the PhD Thesis:**

1. **Nicolaidis A**, Nilsson PM. Fritz Bauer – en kontroversiell läkare och humanist. *Svensk medicinhistorisk tidskrift*. 2014; 18 (1): 71-82.
2. **Nicolaidis A**, Nilsson PM. Svenska Kommittén för landsflyktiga intellektuella 1933-1940 – en kamp förd i motvind. *Svensk medicinhistorisk tidskrift*. 2020 (accepted for publication in late 2020).
3. **Nicolaidis A**, Nilsson PM. Andrea Andréén – Pacifist, fredskämpe och Sovjetvän. (manuscript in preparation).