Christina Romlid

17 Visualizing Sweden at the 1937 World Fair in Paris

Sweden became the epitome of modernity during the 1930s mainly due to the book *Sweden: The Middle Way*, written by the American journalist Marquis Childs. Published in 1936, it contributed to the American debate on the New Deal and economic state interventions. Childs's thesis was that Sweden had found the "golden middle way" between capitalism and absolute socialism. He describes the reform policies of the Swedish social democratic government, while pointing out that Sweden had succeeded in addressing social and economic problems through a combination of strong cooperative movement, active state intervention in the market economy, and a powerful trade union movement. Childs's book influenced how the world viewed Sweden, and Sweden became a model.[1] Or as the Swedish historian Martin Kylhammar formulates it:

> It was at this time that Sweden became a model country, a paradise [. . .] The significance of this internationally sanctioned image of Sweden cannot be overestimated. The most important aspect, in addition to its exemplary image in general, was that Sweden became definitely and intimately intertwined with modern times and modernity. In our own eyes, we became the mindset of modernity and the good future.[2]

1 C. Marklund, "The Social Laboratory, the Middle Way and the Swedish Model: Three Frames for the Image of Sweden", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 33 (2009) 3, pp. 268–269; K. Musial, *Tracing Roots of the Scandinavian Model: Images of Progress in the Era of Modernisation*, Berlin: Humboldt Universität, 1998, p. 56; K. Musial, *Roots of the Scandinavian Model: Images of Progress in the Era of Modernisation*, Baden Baden: Nomos, 2002, pp. 153–154, 178; J. Werner, *Medelvägens estetik: Sverigebilder i USA, del 1* [The aesthetics of the middle way: Images of Sweden in the United States, part 1], Hedemora: Gidlund, 2008, p. 281–284.

2 M. Kylhammar, "Sveriges andra stormaktstid: Från världsstat till folkhem" [Sweden's second great power: From welfare state to folk home], in: P. Elmlund and K. Glans (eds.), *Den välsignade tillväxten: Tankelinjer kring ett århundrade av kapitalism, teknik, kultur och vetenskap* [The blessed growth: Thought lines around a century of capitalism, technology, culture and science], Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1998, p. 72–73 (own translation).

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Sweden also has, at least for most of the twentieth century, perceived itself to be "the world's most modern country".[3] In order to understand the processes that contributed to this, it is necessary to examine the construction of "Sweden" as an image of modernity and progressivity in a global context. Such a study requires a focal point in the form of a place, or a space, where cultural meetings took place in a regulated and organized form, or, in other words, what the historians Matthias Middell and Katja Naumann call a "portal of globalization":

> By such portals, we mean those places that have been centres of world trade or global communication, have served as entrance points for cultural transfer, and where institutions and practices for dealing with global connectedness have been developed. Such places have always been known as sites of transcultural encounter and mutual influence.[4]

Perfect globalization portals are the world fairs that were organized by the Bureau International des Expositions (Bureau of International Expositions, BIE). The BIE was founded in Paris on 28 November 1928, when 31 countries signed an international agreement that regulated the organization of world fairs.[5]

This chapter analyses the self-representations of Sweden at the 1937 world fair in Paris. It was the first BIE exhibition to take place after the publication of Childs's book.[6] The theme of the world fair was art and technology in modern life (Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne). It took place from 24 May 1937 to 2 November 1937, welcoming about 34 million visitors. The Popular Front, which came into power in early June 1936 after a landslide victory, invested in inexpensive trains and buses in order to make it possible for ordinary people to attend the exhibition. They also established the right to statutory paid holiday.[7]

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3 J. Andersson and M. Hilson, "Images of Sweden and the Nordic Countries", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 33 (2010) 3, p. 220; Musial, *Tracing Roots*, p. 23; Musial, *Roots of the Scandinavian Model*, pp. 235–237.

4 M. Middell and K. Naumann, "Global History and the Spatial Turn: From the Impact of Area Studies to the Study of Critical Junctures of Globalization", *Journal of Global History* 5 (2010), p. 162.

5 Bureau International des Expositions, http://www.bie-paris.org (accessed 22 March 2018); J. Findling and K. D. Pelle (eds.), *Historical Dictionary of World's Fairs and Expositions 1851–1988*, New York: Greenwood, 1990, pp. 372–373.

6 A. Jackson, *Expo: International Expositions 1851–2010*, London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 2008, pp. 122–125.

7 Findling and Pelle (eds.), *Historical Dictionary*, p. 378; K. Waldén, "Paris 1937", *Form: Svenska slöjdföreningens tidskrift* 84 (1988) 2, p. 24.

I will not discuss whether Childs's book *Sweden: The Middle Way* influenced the designing of the socioeconomic section in the Swedish pavilion. As such, the chapter focuses on the planning, not on how the section was designed at the end. As Childs's book was published in January 1936 and Swedish planning took place between January 1936 and January 1937, it is possible to find out if the plans were changed during the period when most attention was on Childs's book, although whether any changes came as a consequence of Childs's book may, of course, be difficult to determine.

However, what is to be investigated is what the geographer David Harvey, in his theory of space, calls "representations of space" – a space that is visualized, a space under construction, where nothing yet is decided. This space can in turn, according to Harvey, be understood according to three different dimensions of space: the absolute space, the relative space, and the relational space.[8] In the absolute space, the fixed, immobile, and measurable can be found; in the relative space, the processes and movements; and in the relational space, "forces" that are "creating their own time and space". In this chapter, this means that in the absolute space are the design plans for the socioeconomic section in the Swedish pavilion. In the relative space there is Childs's book, and in the relational space are the forces that created the space-time that dominated the 1937 world fair in Paris, that is to say fascism and communism.

This chapter begins with a presentation of the planning process and its results. In this section, the men who designed the Swedish exhibit, the planners, are also introduced. Childs's book is presented thereafter. The three plans involving the socioeconomic section, which was presented before the world fair in Paris and which are documented in writing, are described in the next sections. What the plans state about Sweden and Swedes should not be read as truths, but as what the designers considered important to show visitors to the Swedish pavilion. Class struggles, political struggles, and cultural contestation are, for instance, mainly suppressed. It is a simplified picture of Sweden, which also hid the fact that there were people living in Sweden who spoke different languages and had different cultural backgrounds. The chapter ends with a discussion about the different dimensions of space and with the answer to the question if Childs's book influenced the planning process.

8 D. Harvey, *Ojämlikhetens nya geografi: Texter om stadens och rummets förändringar i den globala kapitalismen* [The new geography of inequality: Texts on the city and space's changes in global capitalism], Stockholm: Atlas, 2011, pp. 21–51; D. Harvey, *Den globala kapitalismens rum: På väg mot en teori om ojämn geografisk utveckling* [Spaces of global capitalism: Towards a theory of uneven geographical development], Hägersten: Tankekraft, 2009, p. 132.

The 1937 World Fair in Paris

The original idea of the 1937 world fair in Paris was that it would be a decorative arts exhibition and "a humanistic and cultural manifestation in the pursuit of peace". For France, it was about consolidating, as in previous international exhibitions, its position as the capital of culture. But the Great Depression, inflation, and unemployment forced the government to change plans. It was hard to justify large sums of money being spent on a decorative arts exhibition at a time of economic crisis. The world fair therefore came to be launched as an opportunity for France to support its economy and create jobs for the unemployed. The French government and Paris city administration employed more than 2,000 artists to decorate the pavilions and also ordered 718 murals.[9]

Although the world fair took place during the depression, 44 countries participated and more than 300 French and foreign pavilions were exhibited. The exhibition area covered 105 hectares, from the Field of Mars at the Eiffel Tower across the Seine to the Palais de Chaillot, along both banks of the Seine from the Place de la Concorde to the island Île des Cygnes. The budget for the exhibition was FRF 789 million. The deficit amounted to FRF 495 million.[10]

The event was held during a politically and socially unstable time characterized by antagonism and polarizing camps "between Paris and the provinces, between France and her colonies, between art and science, between socialism and capitalism, between Fascism and Democracy".[11] Political tensions were also obvious during the world fair. Countries like Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union, Italy, and Spain clearly demonstrated their own political ideals. Picasso's painting *Guernica*, for instance, was displayed in the pavilion of the Spanish Republic in order to illustrate the horror of the Spanish Civil War.[12]

At the exhibition, the pavilions of Germany and the Soviet Union were placed opposite each other. The result was a brutal architectural confrontation.

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9 A. Chandler, "Confrontation. The Exposition internationale des arts et techniques dans la vie moderne 1937" (Expanded and revised from *World's Fair Magazine* VIII (1988) 1, pp. 1–19), http://www.arthurchandler.com/paris-1937-exposition/ (accessed 22 March 2018), pp. 2–4; Jackson, *Expo*, p. 32; Waldén, "Paris 1937", pp. 24–25 (own translation).

10 Findling and Pelle, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 378; S. Peer, *France on Display: Peasants, Provincials, and Folklore in the 1937 Paris World's Fair*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1998, p. 42; Waldén, "Paris 1937", p. 24.

11 Chandler, "Confrontation", p. 2.

12 P. Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral vistas: The Expositions Universelles, Great Exhibitions and World Fairs, 1851–1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, pp. 133–135.

The Nazi pavilion, designed by Albert Speer, consisted of a 54-metre-high tower. At the top stood a giant eagle on a huge swastika (9 metres high). At the top of the Soviet pavilion was a monumental statue that symbolized the unification between workers and peasants. The statue depicted an industrial worker and female kolkhoz farmer swinging the Soviet symbols: the hammer and the sickle. As the Soviet pavilion was only 24.5 metres high, the German eagle looked down upon the Soviet couple and the Soviet pavilion.[13]

According to the visitors, the world fair was characterized by

> an unpleasant feeling of tension, suspicion and hostility [. . .] No one could mistake the brute confrontation between the Russian and German buildings. And there were other tangible evidences of mistrust. Almost none of the major nations distributed information about the materials and processes used in the industrial exhibits. Knowledge was the hoarded property of the nation that discovered and applied it. Guards in every pavilion were posted to stop visitors from photographing the exhibits. Even apparently public displays were to be appreciated, not studied.[14]

World fairs are popular in research. Research on the 1937 world fair in Paris is extensive. The exhibition was discussed extensively in its time and marked a new phase in how France viewed its exhibitions.[15] The Paris exhibition is thus discussed in overviews of world fairs, some of which are generally descriptive,[16] others more thematic (architecture, gender, food, national identity, etc.).[17] There is also research that deals with the interwar exhibitions more generally and with the way in which countries competing for world leadership used the world fairs to demonstrate their power through propaganda and

13 Chandler, *Confrontation*, p. 15; Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*, pp. 130–132; D. Udovički-Selb, "Facing Hitler's Pavilion: The Use of Modernity in the Soviet Pavilion at the 1937 Paris International Exhibition", *Journal of Contemporary History* 47 (2012) 1, p. 22.

14 Chandler, "Confrontation", p. 16.

15 Ibid., p. 3.

16 See, e.g, J. Allwood, *The Great Exhibitions: 150 Years*, rev. edn. by T. Allan and P. Reid, London: Exhibition Consultants, 2001; Findling and Pelle, *Historical Dictionary*; Jackson, *Expo*; Greenhalgh, *Ephemeral Vistas*.

17 For architecture, see, e.g., R. Devos, A. Ortenberg and V. Paperny (eds.), *Architecture of Great Expositions 1937–1959: Messages of Peace, Images of War*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. For gender: T. J. Boisseau and A. M. Markwyn (eds.), *Gendering the Fair: Histories of Women and Gender at World's Fairs*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010. For food: N. Teughels and P. Scholliers (eds.), *A Taste of Progress: Food at International and World Exhibitions in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2015. For national identity: J. D. Herbert, *Paris 1937: Worlds on Exhibition*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998.

cultural achievements.[18] Of course, there are also monographs and articles that only deal with the Paris exhibition.[19] Some of these concentrate on the German pavilion and the Soviet pavilion.[20]

Overall, research on Swedish contributions to world fairs is uncommon; most attention has been directed to the Stockholm exhibitions from a national perspective. There is, however, some research on Sweden's participation and the Swedish pavilion at the 1937 world fair in Paris. It is mentioned in Elias Cornell's architectural dissertation on the major world fairs and in Richard Tellström et al.'s study of the food in the Swedish pavilions at the various world fairs that took place from 1867 to 2005. Iréne Winell-Garvén discusses it in an article about the selection of female artists for the world fair and the Women's Art Exhibition in Paris in 1937.[21] In addition, Katrin Fagerström, in a conference paper, discusses the colour of the Swedish pavilion in Paris in 1937.[22] Also, a thesis by Andreas Mørkved Hellenes was published in 2019, in which he, amongst other things, uses the exhibition in Paris to discuss the circulations of images of Sweden within France.[23]

18 R. Kargon et al., *Science, Technology, and Modernity, 1937–1942*, Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2015.

19 See, for example, Peer, *France on Display*; D. Udovički-Selb, *The Elusive Faces of Modernity: The Invention of the 1937 Paris Exhibition and the Temps Nouveaux Pavilion*, Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1994.

20 See, e.g., Udovički-Selb, "Facing Hitler's Pavilion", pp. 13–47; Chandler, "Confrontation"; K. Fiss, *Grand Illusion: The Third Reich, the Paris Exposition, and the Cultural Seduction of France*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009.

21 E. Cornell, *De stora utställningarnas arkitekturhistoria* [The architectural history of the major exhibitions], Stockholm: Natur och kultur, 1952; I. Winell-Garvén, "Tävla i kultur för Sverige: Konstens allrum och konstens kvinnorum i Paris 1937" [Competing in culture for Sweden: Art's living room and art's women's room in Paris 1937], in: M Björk and M. Flisbäck (eds.), *I sitt sammanhang: Essäer om kultur och politik tillägnade Rolf Törnqvist* [In its context: Essays on culture and politics dedicated to Rolf Törnqvist], Eslöv: Östlings bokförlag Symposion, 2005, pp. 117–131; R. Tellström, I.-B. Gustafsson and H. Lindgren, "Constructed National Food and Meal Archetypes at International Exhibitions from Paris 1867 to Aichi 2005", *National Identities* 10 (2008) 3, pp. 313–327; R. Tellström, *The Construction of Food and Meal Culture for Political and Commercial Ends: EU-summits, Rural Businesses and World Exhibitions*, Örebro: University of Örebro, 2006.

22 K. Fagerström, "Brutal Colours – The Swedish Pavilion at the Paris Expo 1937", in: K. Fridell Anter and I. Kortbawi (eds.), *Colour – Effects and Affects: Book of Abstracts*, Stockholm: Swedish Colour Centre Foundation/AIC, 2008, pp. 41–42.

23 A. Mørkved Hellenes, *Fabricating Sweden: Studies of Swedish Public Diplomacy in France from the 1930s to the 1990s*, Oslo: University of Oslo, 2019.

The World Fair as a Space-Time

A world fair is an artificially staged world in miniature. It is carefully planned and constructed, or as the anthropologist Penelope Harvey expresses it, it is: "the material outcome of the intentions, beliefs and values of many designers".[24] What is presented is the result of many discussions and decision-making processes about what should be included and what should be excluded. The 1937 world fair in Paris was also based, like all other international exhibitions, on the notion that it was possible, as the historian Anders Houltz writes, "to bring together and summarize a whole world in one and the same place, bounded in space and time".[25] This was also perceived by visitors. For example, the French author André Warnod writes in an essay about the 1937 world fair in Paris that "[a]s soon as you pass through its gates [. . .] you are [. . .] in a land that is located nowhere and everywhere at the same time. A land where all notions of distance and time are confounded".[26]

The 1937 world fair in Paris was also, like other international exhibitions, a global space and a hyper portal consisting of several national spaces. It was a seat for global communication and exchange aimed at giving countries opportunities to compare themselves with other countries and to find their comparative advantages. In this way, technological and scientific development was to be promoted through contests, competition, and rivalry. The general commissioner at the Paris exhibition, Edmond Labbé, expressed this clearly when he stated at the 1937 world fair that the purpose of international exhibitions was to "allow nations to become aware of their resources, to take stock of their strengths and weaknesses, to realize the prospects open to them, too see what their competitors have done, and to learn, if need be, how they have been left behind".[27]

The world fairs were constructed in a specific context of space. Not surprisingly, the Paris exhibition was strongly influenced by the political and economic context of the 1930s. The political element was therefore significantly more pronounced than before. This also had an impact on what was exhibited.

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24 P. Harvey, *Hybrids of Modernity: Anthropology, the Nation State and the Universal Exhibition*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 3.

25 A. Houltz, "Inledning: I världsutställningarnas tid" [Introduction: In the time of the world fairs], in: G. Alm et al (eds.), *I världsutställningarnas tid: Kungahus, näringsliv och medier* [In the time of the world fairs: Royal houses, business and media], Bromma: Förlaget Näringslivshistoria, 2017, p. 23 (own translation).

26 Herbert, *Paris 1937*, p. 16.

27 Peer, *France on Display*, p. 6.

It was no longer mainly commercial products that were displayed, but nations and political messages. The objects that were exhibited were not included for their own sake, but as props for something bigger, primarily aimed at showing a country's economic, social, and political ambitions.[28]

World fairs also played an important role in displaying and defining different versions of modernity.[29] The Paris exhibition was thus also a space-time for modernity and the modern project that involved building a new society. There were, however, different views on how to shape the new, modern society. Nazi Germany and the communist Soviet Union represented, for example, as historian Charlotte Tornbjer formulates it, "different paths into the future". They represented different ways of modernization, both of which focused on ideas as to how a good society could be created.[30] France also tried to launch its version of modernity. According to assistant general commissioner Paul Léon, the Paris exhibition intended to position France as an alternative, a third way, between the Asian and American production methods – between the primitive, artisan, and far-driven mechanized, standardized mass production.[31]

Sweden was launched at this world fair as an old cultural country, "displaying rapid progress in technical, cultural and social domains [. . .] but not lacking in difficulties to surmount and problems demanding solutions". Furthermore, the exhibit in the Swedish pavilion consisted of three different sections: a social section, which included an information hall and a socioeconomic exhibition hall; a fine art section; and a decorative arts and handicrafts section.[32] It differed from how Sweden was presented at the 1935 world fair in Brussels. The world fair in Brussels had been dominated by Swedish export goods, big industry, tourist organizations, and presentations of Swedish agriculture. Arts and crafts had been present at the exhibition in Brussels, but a socioeconomic section had not.[33] This change corresponded with the reduced emphasis on commercial

28 A. Houltz, "Det krönta varumärket" [The crowned brand], in: Alm et al (eds.), *I världsutställningarnas tid*, p. 165; Peer, *France on Display*, p. 6–7.

29 Kargon et al., *World's Fair on the Eve of War*, p. 3.

30 Ch. Tornbjer, "Modernity, Technology and Culture in Swedish Travel Reports during the 1930s", in: K. G. Hammarlund and T. Nilsson (eds.), *Technology in Time, Space and Mind. Aspects of Technology Transfer and Diffusion*, Halmstad: Halmstad University Press, 2008, p. 97.

31 Kargon et al., *World's Fair on the Eve of War*, p. 11.

32 Å. Stavenow (ed.), *Sweden: Illustrated Official Guide. Paris International Exhibition 1937: Arts and Crafts in Modern Life*, Stockholm: Publisher is unknown, 1937, pp. 11–43.

33 "Sverige på Brysselutställningen" [Sweden at the Brussels exhibition], *Svensk Export*, 9 February 1935, pp. 29–30; http://runeberg.org/svda/1935/0111.html (accessed 13 August 2018). For a reconstruction of the decision to include a social welfare section in the Swedish exhibit at

products and the increased emphasis on propagating one's nation as being a collective entity with a collective national identity, factors characteristic of the 1937 world fair in Paris.[34]

The Planning Process and Its Results

In December 1934, Sweden received an official invitation from the French government to participate in an international art and industrial exhibition that was to take place in Paris in 1937. The invitation was very general. Sweden did not take any major actions until the Bureau of International Expositions decided, in November 1935, that countries that participated had the right to build national pavilions. When this had been clarified, the National Board of Trade requested that the National Museum, the General Export Association of Sweden, and the Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts make a statement as to whether or not Sweden would participate in the exhibition. All of them advocated Sweden's participation.[35]

In January 1936, a committee of enquiry was appointed by the Swedish government to investigate the prerequisites for, and suitability of, Sweden's participation in the Paris exhibition. The members of the committee included ten men (and no women). They represented different areas of activity in society. The government administration was represented by the councillor of commerce pro tempore, Harald Carlborg. Three of the members were representatives of cultural institutions: the professor pro tempore of figurative painting at the Institute of Art, Otte Sköld; the CEO of the Swedish Society of Arts and Crafts, Åke Stavenow; and the director of the National Museum, Axel Gauffin. Four were representatives

Paris and a discussion about how the disparity can be explained between how Sweden was presented at the Brussels world fair in comparison to the Paris exhibit, see C. Romlid, "Promoting Sweden – the Socioeconomic Section of the Swedish Pavilion Display at the 1937 World's Fair in Paris", in: J. Leerssen and E. Storm (eds.), *World Fairs and International Exhibitions: National Self-Profiling in an International Context, 1851–1940*, The National Cultivation of Culture, Leiden: Brill (forthcoming).

34 Peer, *France on Display*, p. 7.

35 Riksarkivet [The Swedish National Archives] (RA), Kommerskollegium. Huvudarkivet. Stora dossierserien [National Board of Trade, The main archive. The large file series], FI aa, vol. 715. Letters from the Ministry of Commerce to the National Board of Trade, 17 January 1935 and 22 November 1935; RA, Utställningsbestyrelsens arkiv. Komm. U13. Bestyrelsen för Sveriges deltagande i konst- och industriutställningen i Paris 1937 [Archive of the organizing exhibition committee. Komm U13. The organizing committee for Sweden's participation in the Art and Industrial Exhibition in Paris 1937] (UBA), vol. 1, Committee of enquiry minutes, 14 January 1936.

of the business community: former consul general and the founder of the department store NK, Josef Sachs; director of the Nobel Foundation, Ragnar Sohlman; the CEO for the Swedish Transport Association, Edward Wilhelm Peyron, and the director of the Orrefors glass mill, Edward Hald. Almost all of them had previous experience planning international exhibitions. Sachs, Sohlman, Sköld, Stavenow, and Peyron had been on the organizing committee that planned the Swedish exhibit at the 1935 world fair in Brussels, and Sachs and Sohlman had also been members of the organizing committee that planned the Sweden's participation at the International Exhibition of Modern Decorative and Industrial Arts in Paris in 1925. Two of the members of the committee were different from the others. They had not been on any previous organizing committee and did not come from cultural institutions or from business life. One of these was Gunnar Myrdal, a professor of economics, who, in the spring of 1936, became a social democratic member of parliament.[36] The other was the manager of city planning in Gothenburg, Uno Åhrén, one of the most radical architects in Sweden and a strong representative of functionalism. They both belonged to a new generation of people who emerged around 1930 and who came to be referred to as social engineers. As they could demonstrate new solutions to social problems, they received strong support from the social democratic government that came to power after the 1932 election. Myrdal and Åhrén knew each other very well. They had, for instance, worked together on the book *Bostadsfrågan såsom socialt planläggningsproblem* (The question of housing as a social planning problem), published in 1933. They had both been members of a commission that investigated housing statistics in 1933, of which Myrdal was chairman, and they were both members of the Housing Social Investigation, which lasted between

36 RA, Kommerskollegium. Huvudarkivet. Stora dossierserien [National Board of Trade, The main archive. The large file series], FI aa, vol 715. Letter from the Ministry of Commerce to the National Board of Trade, 9 January 1936; RA, UBA Committee of enquiry minutes, 14 January 1936, appendix 2, Organizing committee minutes, 18 March 1936. *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon (SBL)* [Dictionary of Swedish national biography], vol. 32, Stockholm 2006, "Sköld, Joseph", pp. 539–544; vol. 33 (2011), "Stavenow, Ludvig", p. 172; vol. 16 (1966), "Gauffin, Axel", pp. 756–759; vol. 31 (2002), "Sachs, Josef", pp. 209–212; vol. 32 (2006), "Sohlman, Ragnar", pp. 632–635; vol. 29 (1997), "Peyron, Edward Wilhelm", p. 280; vol. 26 (1989), "Myrdal, Gunnar", pp. 144–160; "Sverige på Brysselutställningen" [Sweden at the Brussels exhibition], 9 February 1935, p. 29–30; A.-M. Ericsson, "Parisutställningen 1925: Den svenska tolkningen av det moderna" [The Paris exhibition 1925: The Swedish interpretation of the modern], in: K. Wickman (ed.), *Formens rörelse* [Movement of form], Stockholm: Carlsson, 1995, p. 88.

1933 and 1947. Both of them played a central role in the formulation of the Swedish welfare policy and social-democratic housing policy.[37]

The committee of enquiry held eight meetings between 14 January and 5 March 1936. The committee also proposed that Sweden should participate. They also felt that an organizing committee should be appointed that would further investigate Sweden's participation. However, this did not prevent the committee of enquiry from submitting a plan for the Swedish pavilion. The Swedish exhibit in Paris in 1937 should, according to them, be a "collective and uniform exhibit in its own pavilion with emphasis on the country and the people, the national culture and social life". Furthermore, "the emphasis should be placed on a general section" that would "give an image of Sweden's country and people, our working and social relationships, and the lives and aspirations of different groups".[38]

The government decided in March 1936 that Sweden would participate in the Paris exhibition and that the cost was not to exceed SEK 325,000. At the same time, they established an organizing committee for coordinating and handling Sweden's participation and that was to have "the right to decide on the [. . .] programme for participation, the scope of the various exhibitions, and the choice of exhibits". The committee consisted of nine of the men who had been in the former committee of enquiry and five new members, again all of them men.[39] This meant that the government administration came to be represented by the permanent undersecretary pro tempore of the Ministry of Commerce, Gösta Engzell, instead of Carlborg and another architect was added – Hakon Ahlberg, who is most famous for having founded the Swedish Architectural Association in 1936 – as well as an

37 Y. Hirdman, U. Lundberg and J. Björkman, *Sveriges historia: 1920–1965* [History of Sweden: 1920–1965], Stockholm: Norstedt, 2012, p. 208; E. Rudberg, "Rakkniven och lösmanschetten: Stockholmsutställningen 1930 och 'Slöjdstriden'" [The razor and the loose cuff: the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and the craft battle], in: Wickman (ed.), *Formens rörelse*, p. 131; Kylhammar, "Sveriges andra stormaktstid", p. 83; O. Svedberg, *Planerarnas århundrade: Europas arkitektur 1900-talet* [Planners' century: Europe's 20th-century Architecture], Stockholm: Arkitektur, 1988, p. 93; G. Myrdal and U. Åhrén, *Bostadsfrågan såsom socialt planläggningsproblem: under krisen och på längre sikt: en undersökning rörande behovet av en utvidgning av bostadsstatistiken* [The question of housing as a social planning problem during the crisis and in the longer term: A study on the need for an expansion of housing statistics], Stockholm: Statens Offentliga utredningar, 1933, p. 4; "Myrdal", *SBL*, 26 (1989), pp. 144–160.

38 RA, UBA, Letter from the committee of enquiry to the Government, 28 February 1936 (own translation).

39 RA, Kommerskollegium. Huvudarkivet. Stora dossierserien. FI aa, vol 715. Letter from the Handelsdepartementet to Kommerskollegium, 13 March 1936; RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 18 March 1936 and Kungl. Maj:ts resolution 29 May 1936 (own translation); "Sverige på Parisutställningen" [The Paris exhibition 1925], *Svensk Export*, 21 March 1936, p. 68.

artist – Baron Erik Fleming, who was a royal silversmith. It also meant that the business sector was strengthened with the addition of two new representatives: the director of the porcelain factory Gustafsberg, Axel Odelberg; and the CEO for the Swedish ball bearing factory SKF and chairman of the General Export Association of Sweden, Björn Prytz. Two of the new men, Prytz and Odelberg, had previously been involved in the planning of international exhibitions.[40]

The organizing committee had 21 meetings between 18 March 1936 and 24 November 1937. They also had a meeting on 12 September 1939, during which they discussed, amongst other things, the report on the Swedish exhibit in Paris that they were obliged to submit to the minister of trade and the National Board of Trade. The organizing committee decided that the exhibit would consist of three sections, just as the committee of enquiry had advocated. In June 1936, the organizing committee reported to the government that its intention with the social section[41] was for it to be "a general section designed to provide a picture of Sweden as a country and its people, our working and social conditions, and the lives and aspirations of different groups".[42] The organizing committee, in other words, agreed with the suggestions of the committee of enquiry.

In October 1936, the organizing committee also approved Myrdal's proposal to engage Mauritz Bonow to draw up a programme for the social section. Bonow was employed by the Cooperative Union (Kooperativa Förbundet, KF) and worked as an assistant to KF's organizational manager, Axel Gjöres. As well, Bonow had, at least in the early 1930s, participated in the economics seminar at Stockholm University and also presented a couple of papers about the cooperation movement as an economic and political factor. It is therefore possible that Myrdal, who became a professor of economics at the university in 1933, knew Bonow. However, Bonow also wrote about the agricultural policy. In 1935, he published the book *Staten och jordbrukskrisen* (The state and the agricultural crisis) in which he argued for the need for a more planned agricultural policy. But as the historian Per Lundin writes, it was "however, Gunnar Myrdal

40 *Svenska män och kvinnor: Biografisk uppslagsbok* 2 [Swedish men and women: Biographical reference book 2], (1944), "Engzell, Gösta", pp. 422; 1 (1942), "Ahlberg, Hakon", p. 36; 2 (1944), "Fleming, Erik", pp. 532–533; 3 (1946), "Hald, Edward", p. 244; *SBL*: 28 (1994), "Odelberg, Axel", pp. 29–32; 29 (1997), "Prytz, Björn", pp. 497–500; Ericsson, "Parisutställningen 1925" [The Paris exhibition 1925], p. 88.

41 During the exhibition planning stage, the socioeconomic section was referred to as the "social" section. It was only in the final report of the Paris organizing committee that it was referred to as the socioeconomic section.

42 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 8 March 1936, 12 June 1936, 12 September 1939; Committee of enquiry minutes, 17 February 1936 (own translation).

who would give the criticism a more programmatic character, while also providing the crucial impetus to a review of the current support policy". In the end, the minister of agriculture instigated an agricultural investigation in 1938. Two of the experts involved in the investigation were Myrdal and Bonow.[43]

Bonow did, however, present three proposals for the organizing committee. The first was presented on 30 October 1936 and was an outline of how the social section could be designed. The second was a revised proposal presented orally on 19 December 1936, and the third was a written compromise proposal submitted 2 January 1937.

The Swedish pavilion opened on 6 June 1937, which was later than planned. Most of the other pavilions were also delayed as the construction work in Paris was affected by strikes, the introduction of a 40-hour workweek, prohibition of overtime work, etc. The pavilion was located on the west bank of the Seine, near the Pont d'Iena and the Eiffel Tower. The closest neighbours were Great Britain and Czechoslovakia. It was designed by Sven Ivar Lind and had a floor area of over 1500 m^2. When it closed on 25 November 1937, it was estimated to have received about 4 million visitors.[44]

Marquis Childs's Book *Sweden: The Middle Way*

Marquis Childs's book should, as pointed out by the historian Jeff Werner, rather "be regarded as a product of the great interest in Sweden" not as "its cause". During the interwar period, an image of Scandinavia and the Nordic region had emerged as the "happy countries" and the "happy communities". European writers wrote in French, German, Italian, and Spanish about the happy Nordic democracies. According to the historian Peter Stadius, these types of descriptions reached their peak in the late 1930s. It was pointed out that these countries had managed to find solutions to both the economic and democratic crises, without abandoning democracy and without falling into

43 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 7 October 1936; L. Eronn, *Boken om Bonow: Grundare av kooperativ samhällspolitik* [The book of Bonow: Founder of cooperative social policy], Stockholm: Kooperativa institutet, 1989, pp. 6, 14–15; M. Bonow, *Staten och jordbrukskrisen* [The state and the agricultural crisis], Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1935; P. Lundin, *Lantbrukshögskolan och reformerna: Från utbildningsinstitut till modernt forskningsuniversitet* [The College of Agriculture and the reforms: From educational institute to modern research university], Uppsala: Sveriges lantbruksuniversitet, 2017, pp. 94–95 (own translation).
44 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 12 June 1936, 15 September 1937, 9 December 1939; Findling and Pelle (eds.), *Historical Dictionary*, p. 285.

communism or fascism.[45] This, in combination with, as the historian Kazimierz Musial expresses it, "the spectacularly quick economic recovery of Sweden was seen as proof of their progressiveness" (Sweden had overcome relatively quickly the international crisis that followed the stock market crash in 1929). The Nordic countries were therefore seen as modern role models. European writers highlighted them so to demonstrate alternatives to fascism, whereas North American authors did so to showcase political alternatives during the depression era.[46]

It was not only Childs who contributed to the American debate on the New Deal. There were also other articles in US newspapers and magazines in which Sweden was highlighted as being a positive example for the Roosevelt administration. In spring 1934, what is also known as the first modern American book about Sweden was published: *Sweden: The Land and the People* by Agnes Rothery. Childs also published a long article titled "Sweden: Where Capitalism is Controlled" in *Harper's Magazine* in 1933.[47]

Childs visited Sweden for the first time in 1930. He had, like one hundred other journalists, been invited to visit the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition. It was an exhibition that "played an important role as a symbol of a new national self-identification of Sweden as a "modern" and "progressive" country". He then made several trips to Sweden during the 1930s. Most of them were funded by the state and the business community in Sweden.[48]

In his book, Childs describes the specific economic conditions that enabled the Scandinavian countries, and Sweden in particular, to manage the economic crisis better than other countries. In these countries, capitalism had been controlled and curtailed through cooperatives and state industries. The private sector had thereby been exposed to competition. The growth of monopoly and monopolistic price policy as well as the concentration of capital had thereby

45 These writers were in other words not put off by the brutal civil war of 1918 in Finland, fought between the conservative "white" and socialist "red" factions, portraying the region as one marked by peace, compromise, and democracy.

46 Werner, *Medelvägens estetik*, p. 280 (own translation); Musial, *Roots of the Scandinavian Model*, pp. 10–11; P. Stadius, "Happy Countries: Appraisals of Interwar Nordic Societies", in: J. Harvard and P. Stadius (eds.), *Communicating the North: Media Structures and Images in the Making of the Nordic Region*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2013, pp. 242, 244, 259.

47 Marklund, "The Social Laboratory", pp. 267–268; Werner, *Medelvägens estetik*, pp. 281–282; Musial, *Roots of the Scandinavian Model*, pp. 144–148, 153, 176, 178–179.

48 J. Chrispinsson, *Stockholmsutställningar* [Stockholm exhibitions], Stockholm: Historiska Media, 2007, p. 79; C. Marklund and P. Stadius, "Acceptance and Conformity: Merging Modernity with Nationalism in the Stockholm Exhibition in 1930", *Culture Unbound* 2 (2010), p. 614; Werner, *Medelvägens estetik*, p. 470, fn 177.

been prevented, together with hindering capitalism's inherent self-destructive forces from having free rein. A strong "all-powerful trade union movement" had also played a major role in keeping capitalism in check. To illustrate this, Childs mainly used descriptions from Sweden as he considered Sweden to be "almost the only country in the world in which capitalism has 'worked' during the last decades".[49]

Child's book has a 6-page introduction and twelve chapters totalling 173 pages, including illustrations. In the introduction, Childs gives different explanations as to why Scandinavia was so progressive and thus successful in dealing with the economic crisis. He mentions, amongst other things, that it may have been because the Scandinavian countries were small and because the people in Scandinavia had characteristics such as "patience, intelligence, perseverance, courage" while the population was "remarkably" homogeneous. Childs also gives a brief description of the historical development in Scandinavia from Viking times to industrialization, with emphasis on Swedish development. He mentions, amongst other things, that a crude form of democracy had arisen at an early stage in Sweden and that there had been peace in Scandinavia for more than a hundred years.

Almost half of the book is devoted to cooperative movements. In five of the twelve chapters (a total of 82 pages), the cooperation movement is analysed. Four of these chapters are devoted to the cooperation of Swedish consumers and producers, and the fifth chapter to the Danish agricultural organization.

One-third of the book deals with the Swedish state (four chapters, totalling 53 pages). In these chapters, the tradition of state ownership in forestry, mining, power production, etc. is highlighted. State competition with regard to, for example, transportation, public communication, and state control, such as alcohol control and state monopolies as well as the pension system and the national power system are also discussed.

The three other chapters consist of a chapter about the relationship between the Swedish socialists, the king, and capitalists (16 pages), in which the culture of consensus and cooperation is highlighted. There is also a chapter (16 pages) about how Sweden recovered from the depression. The final chapter (6 pages) is titled "Direction for the future". In this chapter, one thing is pointed out: "The wisdom of the Swedes lies above all in their willingness to adjust, to compromise".[50]

49 M. Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1936, see, e.g., pp. xv, 50, 158, 161.

50 For the quote, see Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way*, p. 161.

Childs's book quickly became a sales success.[51] It also inspired President Roosevelt to commission an enquiry on cooperative enterprise in Europe in 1936/37. The commission went to Sweden in July 1936 and interviewed two members of the organizing committee: Josef Sachs on 13 July and Gunnar Myrdal on 17 July.[52]

The First Plan: The Plan of the Committee of Enquiry

The plan of the committee of enquiry, presented on 28 February 1936, was that the Swedish exhibit in Paris in 1937 would be, as stated above, a "collective and uniform exhibit in its own pavilion with a focus on the country and the people, the national culture and social life". Furthermore, "[t]he emphasis should be placed on a general section" that would "give an image of Sweden's country and people, our working and social relationships, and the lives and aspirations of different groups". The image of Sweden would be designed in such a way that it would inspire "goodwill and interest in Sweden" without rejecting "objectivity and honesty". In this way, it would be able to "represent tourist propaganda". It would further "present an image of Sweden as being a free, old country of culture that finds itself in a state of rapid technological, cultural, and social progress". This meant that Swedish nature, housing, population conditions, living standards, and how the living standard had changed over time would be highlighted. The situation concerning housing supply, education, health care, etc. would also be presented. A significant part would also be devoted to presenting popular movements, popular education, and intellectual life.[53]

The committee of enquiry also highlighted the exhibit of the Swedish realm (*Svea rike*) that was presented at the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition, as a model.[54] The exhibit of the Svea rike, which Childs had visited, had described the development in Sweden from ancient times to modern times, with an emphasis on

51 Werner, *Medelvägens estetik*, p. 281, p. 470, fn 177.

52 M. Hilson, "Consumer Co-operation and Economic Crisis: The 1936 Roosevelt Inquiry on Co-operative Enterprise and the Emergence of the Nordic 'Middle Way'", *Contemporary European History* 22 (2013) 2, p. 192.

53 RA, UBA, Letter from the committee of enquiry to the Government, 28 February 1936 (own translation).

54 Ibid.

industrialization. It contained descriptions of, for example, the population, age distribution, income, household budgets, housing market, housing standard, industries, occupational groups, racial types, popular movements, major companies, export industries, the tourist association, and owner-occupied home movements.[55] It wanted above all to show the enormous progress that Sweden had made since the beginning of the twentieth century.[56] The planners had also made an effort to "emphasize the continuity between the Swedishness of the past with the Swedish community of the future, using a narrative which compares past achievements on the European battlefield with present-day victories on the global market".[57]

The committee of enquiry felt that an exhibit about modern Swedish city planning art and architecture should also be organized in order to show how these were linked to Sweden's current housing problem. Such an exhibit, the committee further proposed, should be part of the general section and, amongst other things, should use models to show the production of housing that had been achieved through state and municipal support. In connection with this, it should also show what had been done to "create more beautiful and more appropriate household goods and furniture".[58]

The committee of enquiry also referred, when discussing the content of the general section, to a memorandum that Gauffin had submitted in which he had underlined the significance of museums "as limbs in modern society". According to the committee, Sweden was also a pioneering country in this area. Therefore, the social significance of museums should be displayed using photos. In addition, a museum hall should be reconstructed to show how technologically advanced Sweden was in modern museum technology.[59]

Finally, it was pointed out in the letter that the major export industries should be included in the pavilion as a reminder of the central role they played in Sweden's economic development. With the help of some items, which, for example, could be exhibited in the entrance hall, one could be reminded of the "the notable deeds of Swedish inventors, which led to the development of

55 E. Rudberg, *Stockholmsutställningen 1930: Modernismens genombrott i svensk arkitektur* [1930 Stockholm Exhibition: Modernism's breakthrough in Swedish architecture], Stockholm: Stockholmia, 1999, pp. 137–139.

56 *Svea Rike* [Swedish realm], Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Förlag, 1930.

57 Marklund and Stadius, "Acceptance and Conformity", p. 630.

58 RA, UBA, Letter from the committee of enquiry to the Government, 28 February 1936 (own translation).

59 RA, UBA, Letter from the committee of enquiry to the Government, 28 February 1936 (own translation).

safety matches, the telephone, AGA lighting, ball bearings, and the proud popularity of other Swedish inventions throughout the world".[60]

Attached to the letter was a report in which the design of the general section was specified.[61] It is not clear who wrote it; however, there is reason to believe that it was written by Myrdal as it. Childs wrote in the edition of *Sweden: The Middle Way* published in 1961 about the discussions regarding the Swedish pavilion at the Paris exhibition:

> Certain members of the commission appointed to plan it favoured a display which would show the country's very real social advance – evidence of the "middle way" that is so closely in accord with the Swedish temperament. But Gunnar Myrdal [. . .] led a faction that took another point of view. Professor Myrdal said: "No, we cannot afford to do that; we can show the achievement, but it must be merely as the dynamic element by means of which we hope to raise standards which are still far too low". This was the line finally adopted by the commission.[62]

The memorandum that the committee submitted was written in a way that Myrdal felt to be appropriate. According to the final Swedish report that was written about the world fair in Paris, the social exhibit was also drafted by Bonow "mainly in accordance with the guidelines that professor Myrdal commissioned".[63]

In the memorandum, which was probably submitted by Myrdal, some guidelines were initially given to how Sweden should be portrayed. According to the memorandum, the presentation should be honest and not demonstrate that the conditions were better than they really were. On the matter of Swedish housing standards, for example, new types of houses, such as cottages (*småstugor*), would be presented. But this would be done without concealing the low standards in terms of Swedish housing. It was important that changes over time were shown and that the attempts to improve the average standard were demonstrated so that the dynamics of Swedish society were noted and the problems and endeavours highlighted. In addition to the exhibit, films would be shown, and there would be a brochure in which all the material from the exhibit was presented.[64]

It was suggested that the general section would consist of five parts. In the first part, "The land and the People", Sweden's geography, natural resources,

60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 M. Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961, p. 170.
63 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 9 December 1939, p. 6 (own translation).
64 RA, UBA, Letter from the committee of enquiry to the Government, 28 February 1936.

and possibly means of transport would be presented. Demographic conditions such as race, religion, nativity, mortality, migration, marital status, and age pyramids would be displayed. In particular, the Swedish population statistics, which were the oldest in the world, would be highlighted. In addition, "Lundborg's portrait album" could "get its first correct use".[65] In other words, the mapping of the different races in Sweden, which had been conducted at the Swedish State Institute for Racial Biology under the leadership of the physician Herman Lundborg, was to be presented. Probably, it was meant to show how far ahead Sweden was in the field of eugenic research. During this time, eugenic research was a concern for social engineers and "an element of the general progress thinking".[66] Besides this, social mobility could also be presented, together with data showing the level of education, the number of telephones and newspaper subscriptions, as well as how, for example, occupations, income, and wealth were distributed.[67]

The second part, "Society", would present how Swedish society was governed. Parliament, local self-governments, as well as Swedish organizational life, with its trade unions, industry associations, and popular movements (such as religious movements, the temperance movement, and cooperative and educational movements) would be presented.[68]

In the third part, the change in working life would be described through the inclusion of, amongst other things, national income, income distribution, income development, unemployment statistics, and real wage development. The different industries (agriculture, heavy industry, trade, and communications) would be further elucidated on the basis of different variables. Problems would also be addressed, such as urban-rural issues, export industry versus the home market industry, and challenges related to Norrland. The social point of view would also be treated, such as the state's role as a mediator in the labour market, legislation on the 8-hour workday, occupational protection, and labour inspection.[69]

In the fourth part, facts about family demography and family economics would be presented, as would different types of help that families could receive,

65 Ibid. (own translation).

66 O. Sigurdson, *Den lyckliga filosofin: Etik och politik hos Hägerström, Tingsten, makarna Myrdal och Hedenius* [The happy philosophy: ethics and politics at Hägerström, Tingsten, spouses Myrdal, and Hedenius], Eslöv: B. Östlings bokförl. Symposion, 2000, pp. 198–199 (own translation).

67 RA, UBA, Letter from the committee of enquiry to the Government, 28 February 1936.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

such as financial maternity aid, public childbirth care, preventive maternity and infant care, and child welfare centres, along with schools, educational institutions, colleges, vocational counselling, vocational education, social assistance, and public pensions. The housing policy would be highlighted in a major part in which, amongst other things, the work to improve housing in rural areas and the project initiated by the Housing Social Investigation to build for large families would be presented. In addition, housing inspection, slum sanitation, etc. would be addressed. Health care (outpatient clinics and district nurses would be mentioned specifically) and financial security measures, such as social insurance, would be presented. Current problems would also be highlighted, such as the issues surrounding salt and vitamin deficiencies by children living in northern climates, as evidenced in the Norrland investigation and noted by the new Nutrition Council. The population crisis and social and economic family problems, stressed by the Population Commission and the Women's Workers Committee, would also be presented.[70]

In the fifth part, "The Lives and Aspirations of Individuals and Groups" was to be the focus. Facts would be presented concerning the popular movements (the popular education movement, the temperance movement, religious movements, sports movements, and political movements), including information on libraries, radio, and press. In addition, the popular education movement with its lecture activities, study circles, and folk high schools would constitute a large component, as they were something "that can be shown with pride abroad". Additionally, the liquor control system in Sweden (the Bratt System) was to be given place in the exhibit.[71]

The entire exhibit ought to "conclude on a few broad chords: A free, old country of culture – American, technical, modernistic, with burning social problems, which we seek to resolve in conflict or cooperation in accord with a democratic basis".[72]

The Second Plan: Bonow's First Outline

Bonow's outline, presented on 30 October 1936, consisted partly of a suggestion as to the design of certain parts of the entrance way and entrance hall and a proposal as to how the social section would be designed. In the entrance from

70 Ibid.
71 Ibid. (own translation).
72 Ibid. (own translation).

the portico (outside the entrance hall of the pavilion), Bonow suggested that there should be a heading saying "Sweden's people in work and cooperation". Below three revolving texts would appear:

> I. We are a free and therefore happy people. We have – according to the International Labour Office's investigations – the highest standard of living in Europe. But we are aware that certain groups amongst our people still live in pitiful conditions.
>
> II. We are not a "satisfied" folk. We are fighting for new social and cultural progress. We have life issues to solve. On the original basis of self-government, we are creating our own future.
>
> III. But we are not self-sufficient. We have a united will to work in peace with all people. We learn humbly from other nations. We, the people of Sweden, invite you to see some testimonies about our work results and endeavours.[73]

On the south wall of the entrance hall, there would be a text that read: "These are the foundations for the material and spiritual culture of our country." The text would run across five different parts. With each part, there would be different types of illustrations, and the texts would say:

> I. Uninterrupted external peace for 130 years. Undisturbed, all forces have been able to work together building the cultural and the material world. On fields and seas, in workshops and laboratories [. . .] the creative work has been achieved without being interrupted. These are the words – the creative work is the melody of peace in the Song of Songs.
>
> II. Internal peace: Countries are to be built by law – it is an ancient principle for the cohabitation of the Swedish people. However, there are political and social contradictions in our country. But they are not devastating. On the way to cooperation and negotiation or in the form of strict disciplinary power measurement, opposite interests are triggered or equalized. We have inner peace in our community building.
>
> III. Nature's wealth and international commodity exchange: Nature has given us some of its riches in abundance: the vast forests, the treasures of iron ore from the mountains, the waterfalls' energy masses – the white coal. We exchange our abundance with goods from your countries. But for our agriculture, the soil is often barren. Growth and maturity time short. But the difficulties have already been overcome through intensive plant breeding and tireless cultivation flux.
>
> IV. Folk material and technology: in our country lives *one* people with *one* mother tongue and *one* common cultural heritage. In rural areas, a large proportion of the peasants are farmers on ancestral farms and land. These people have never known serfdom. In cities and industrial societies, the population is primarily derived from the secure, earthbound peasantry. But our spiritual character is not only characterized by the mentality inherited

73 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 30 October 1936 (own translation).

> from peasants. The development has actualized the latent push to create. From the masses of the population, there comes wave after wave of technically talented individuals. As inventors and engineers and perhaps primarily as skilled specialists, they create it, which is our pride: Swedish quality production.
>
> V. People's self-government: In our country people's self-government has prevailed since ancient times. Our first parliament gathered 500 years ago, yet the beginnings of self-government go even further back in time – back to pagan times. In modern times, municipal self-government was created. The efforts of organizations and associations have been designed according to the principles of self-government. Our cultural heritage includes religious freedom, freedom of thought, freedom of expression and freedom of the press. This legacy is essential for our statutory social order.[74]

In the entrance hall, there would also be a glass wall that would consist of three parts. In the first part there would be a monumental image of "The Unknown Ploughman", which would symbolize prehistoric times. Below the picture, the text would read: "Before the dawn of history lit, there was the unknown ploughman. He is one in the endless line of those who broke the countryside for us." Next would follow pictures of "Gustaf Wasa (the builder of the kingdom), Linnaeus, John Ericsson (the creator of the propeller), Nobel (the promoter of world culture)." On a frieze below, there would be a whole series of names. In the second part, the following would be stated:

> We bow in gratitude and reverence for the life work of past generations.
> We rejoice, but do not brag over deeds that are ours.
> For we know that in spite of all our endeavours, our children inherit work that has yet to be completed.[75]

After that, some of Sweden's distinguished people from modern times would be listed. These were "Hjalmar Branting (leader for workers' rights, peace fighter, European), Dalén (AGA lighthouses), De Laval (the steam turbine, the separator), Elsa Brändström (the war prisoner's sister of mercy)." On a frieze beneath, this information would be supplemented by a whole series of names. In the third part, there would be an image that would symbolize the future, together with a title: "This is our people's material development programme." Under this, the following text would be found, illustrated by contrasting images:

> Sufficient and appropriately composite nutrition for all citizens, especially children.
> Spacious and healthy housing, primarily for agricultural and forestry workers.

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74 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 30 October 1936 (own translation).
75 Ibid. (own translation).

Security for the people (for example, the needs resulting from unseen unemployment).[76]

Alternatively, the third part could consist of an image that symbolized the future and had the heading "Youth of today will carry on the work."[77]

Bonow's proposal for the design of the social section was similar to the proposal from the committee of enquiry in so far as it would consist of five main parts. In the first part, production life and possible working life would be presented. Swedish business life would be presented by showing what was collected from nature: the soil, forests, mountains, and waterfalls. Bonow also explained in detail what he thought about the design of the respective production branch with as few facts as possible, rotary devices, and many illustrations. He also thought that the communication system and population development would be presented in this part and also indicated how it could be visualized. The development of the railway network could, for example, be displayed on a map that would be lit up and used as a symbol of the development of industrialization. In the second part, organizational life would be presented. It would show how the Swedish people were layered into different interest groups and how these interest groups had built up economic and trade union organizations. In addition, the different markets in Swedish society would be illustrated and around them the different associations would be grouped: the labour market, where employer associations and the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige, LO) were the major organizations, and it was these organizations that set the price of labour; the domestic market, where the pricing was balanced through trusts and cartels, on the one hand, and the Cooperative Union, on the other; the food market, where there were many different sales organizations and competition-determined price fixing; and finally the rental and housing market, where real estate owners and tenants and housing cooperatives affected prices. According to Bonow, it was important to pay attention to the fact that Sweden "in this area probably has reached the farthest in the world". The other three parts were presented in the outline without any concrete proposals on how to design them. They would deal with social life (socioeconomic enterprises and social power), cultural life (the free adult education movement [*bildningsrörelsen*] pursued by popular movements and organizations), and some current and great problems, such as "nutritional problems, housing issues, population issues, our aspirations to influence and mitigate cyclical changes".[78]

76 Ibid. (own translation).
77 Ibid. (own translation).
78 Ibid. (own translation).

The Third Plan: Bonow's Compromise Proposal

According to the compromise proposal presented by Bonow on 2 January 1937, the main heading on both the facade against the Seine and the portico wall at the entrance would read: "The Swedish people united in work." On the portico wall at the entrance, there would also be the following text:

> We build our national life on spiritual freedom, democracy, (voluntary) cooperation.
> We want outer peace, inner peace.
> We fight for work for all and better living conditions.
> We invite you to see some testimonies about our work results and our endeavours.[79]

According to the new proposal, the section would have thirteen parts. In the first part, "The Foundations of Swedish Society" would be presented. It would be noted how 130 years of peace had enabled peaceful construction work; how inner social peace had contributed to the construction of society; how there were indeed internal contradictions but how these were settled through negotiation and cooperation; how Sweden was rich in natural resources; how foreign trade was important; how the Swedes were a people of peasants and that amongst them could be found a great deal of technical talent that contributed to quality within Swedish production; how democracy had a long tradition, since the first parliament had been constituted in 1435; how self-government had its basis in pagan times; and how an indispensable part of the country's cultural heritage lay in freedom of religion, freedom of research, and freedom of thought.[80]

In parts two to five, Swedish natural resources (soil, forest, iron, and water) would be treated with regard to variables such as production, employment, technical development, and export figures.[81]

In part six, the rationalization and renewal of business in the form of modern workplaces would be given focus, with demonstrations as to how these had led to increased production and -improved living standards.[82]

National income and living standards would be included in part seven, indicating how national income, foreign trade, and living standards had grown; how Sweden had been transformed from an agricultural society into an industrial society; how the occupational composition had changed; how the various

79 RA, UBA, Organizing committee minutes, 2 January 1937 (own translation).
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.
82 Ibid.

markets for goods, housing, and work had occurred; and how consumption had increased as had the purchase of books and magazine subscriptions.[83]

In part eight, the trade unions and economic associations would be highlighted: how they had emerged, together with what they signified and how they worked as well as how they either measured "their powers in disciplined forms" or agreed by negotiation; how the state had given them "great freedom" even if the state sometimes acted as mediators; and how the organizations rested on the right of association, which applied in the "free society" of Sweden.[84]

In part nine, there would be emphasis on the Swedish government, and it would be noted, amongst other things, that Sweden had had self-government for a thousand years; that there had never been any serfdom; that Sweden had the second oldest parliament in the world; that a modern parliament was created in 1866; that in the society of that time, everyone had equal political rights; and that the secret ballot was inviolable.[85]

In part ten, the focus would be on the Swedish state, and it would be stressed that it had never been a night-watchman state but had far back in time tended the country's commodity assets; that its importance and business activity were increasingly expanding; that it was a modern welfare state; and that state wealth was greater than the central government debt. In addition, it would be illustrated how assets, liabilities, expenses, incomes, and social spending had changed since 1913.[86]

In part eleven, facts about how Sweden had successfully fought the crisis would be presented and how this had been done by way of monetary policy, agricultural protection, and public works.[87]

In part twelve, the Swedish school system as well as the free adult education movement would be described. With regard to the school system, the different pathways from kindergarten to universities and colleges with its academic freedom, would be described. It was also considered important to highlight that the folk high school had been mandatory for all children since 1842. The area of the free adult education movement would be exhibited as if it fought a cultural battle in Sweden. The battle was about culture as the people's property and most importantly about freedom of research and freedom of thought. The enemy was the routine. The army consisted of hundreds of thousands who volunteered to partake in systematic studies conducted in the form of study circles. Part twelve

83 Ibid.
84 Ibid. (own translation).
85 Ibid.
86 Ibid.
87 Ibid.

would further describe, amongst other things, what a study circle was; what different study associations there were (such as the study circles of workers, cooperatives, farmers, and the temperance movement) and how many participants they had; and how they had used radio technology to reach out to participants.[88]

In part thirteen, the low housing standard would be raised as being Sweden's greatest problem. How this problem had developed and what was being done to address it would be discussed.[89]

Conclusion

The space that was visualized – "representations of space" – as the socioeconomic section in the Swedish pavilion at the 1937 world fair in Paris has, in this chapter, been understood from three different dimensions of space: the absolute space, the relative space, and the relational space. In the absolute space, I have focused on the three design plans for the socioeconomic section of the Swedish pavilion. Childs's book has been discussed as part of the relative space while conflicts between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany has been analysed as an expression of the relational space.

Without doubt, the plans – the absolute space – were influenced by the forces in the relational space. The geopolitical relations in Europe were tense. Fascism and communism were seen as threats to the survival of the social democratic movement and parliamentary democracy.[90] This influenced plans since they emphasized Sweden as being a free, peaceful, and democratic country as well as a safe country where development was positive.

Freedom was reiterated in different ways (plan 1, 2 and 3). Different types of liberties that existed in Sweden were also mentioned (plan 2 and 3). Peacefulness and cooperation were something that was depicted as a foundation of Swedish society (plan 2 and 3). According to plan 3, the battle that took place in Sweden was not military in character but instead cultural, focusing on culture as the property of the people and ultimately on freedom of research and freedom of thought. The image that was constructed in the plans was the image of Sweden as being a country with no major contradictions and where consensus existed. In

88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 J. Kurunmäki, "Nordic Democracy in 1935", in: J. Kurunmäki and J. Strang (eds.), *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy*, Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2010, pp. 37–38.

Sweden, people worked together in order to improve living standards and to increase prosperity.

Regarding democracy, the proposal was that Sweden would be described as being a country that solved its problems "in accord with a democratic basis" (plan 1). Plan 3 proposed that the declaration on the portico wall at the entrance would be: "We built our national life on [. . .] democracy" and accordingly would be a statement that was one of the first things that the visitors saw.

The plans also suggested that Sweden should be viewed as a country under modernization and transformation (plan 1 and 3). Moreover, it would be shown how Sweden successfully fought the economic crisis (pan 3). But Sweden would not only be portrayed as a country in progress but also as a safe country that had stood on solid ground. Security rested on a historical legacy and long traditions (plan 2 and 3). The Swedish people would also be described as a homogeneous people with roots in "the secure, earthbound peasantry", marked by a hereditary peasant mentality. From these people, technical talent had emerged, which helped with Swedish quality production (plan 2 and 3). It was, in other words, the people combined with old traditions and rich natural resources that would be highlighted as being the basis on which the country and its development rested (plan 2 and plan 3).

Undoubtedly, the plans in the absolute space were also affected by the movements and processes that were taking place in the relative space. That is, Childs's book influenced the planning of the design of the socioeconomic section in the Swedish pavilion. In plan 1, the model was the exhibit of the *Svea rike*, which was presented at the 1930 Stockholm Exhibition, not Childs's book. The *Svea rike* exhibit also influenced the designs of plan 2 and plan 3. But there is a big difference between the three plans with regard to the space that the cooperative movement gets especially in plan 2 and the way in which the state is presented in plan 3. Childs devoted almost half of his book to the cooperative movement and one-third to the state. The organizing committee also hired Bonow, who worked at the Cooperative Union secretariat, to design the socioeconomic section. Childs's book undoubtedly affected the Swedish plan, but to what extent is open for discussion.