

och rättvisa och om behovet av att våga möta det förflutnas demoner. Verket bör med fördel kunna användas i universitetskurser om historiefilosofi, historiebruk och inte minst om historieämnets moraliska implikationer.

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Rikard Westerberg, *Socialists at the gate: Swedish business and the defense of free enterprise, 1940–1985* (Stockholm: Stockholm School of Economics 2020). 352 pp.

In his PhD thesis, Rikard Westerberg successfully describes and analyses efforts by Swedish business to influence public policies and opinions between 1940 and 1985. During this period, companies often felt they were facing "existential threats". "Free enterprise" was in danger, and it had to defend itself. It did so in a coordinated way. A US journalist, P. J. O'Rourke, observed that "in Sweden, even opposition to central planning is centrally planned" (p. 3).

The Swedish case is not entirely unique: During the Cold War, private business felt threatened in most European countries. Companies feared many things, and in particular socialism, nationalisation of industries, higher taxes, increased state regulation as well as other state intervention in their activities. When the Second World War ended, it was not at all self-evident that capitalism would survive. The Soviets helped local communists to take control in a number of Central and Eastern European countries, but in Western Europe capitalism was also under threat. Governments nationalised many industries and reduced the freedom of those that were left in private hands. Companies and entrepreneurs were not passive, but rather tried to defend their interests. In recent years, scholars have given increased attention to the political activities of European companies.

It is welcome that Westerberg has chosen Sweden as the topic of his thesis. Sweden was internationally known as a land of social democracy, and had also strong and influential trade unions. But it was and is also a land of big business, and many Swedish companies had been successful in international markets. Large firms were eager to defend their interests, but Westerberg's thesis also sheds light on the activities of small and medium-sized businesses.

Westerberg focuses on two periods of conflicts: The late 1940s, when business people feared nationalisation, higher taxes and economic planning, and the time period 1968–1985, when they were concerned about political radicalisation, and even more, the proposals to set up wage-earner funds. Between these two periods, there was a calmer period, but Westerberg argues

and shows that there was turbulence under the surface even then. Business was eager to influence public opinion and to help non-socialist parties to gain power.

Earlier scholars, such as Niklas Stenlås, have shed light on the same issues as Westerberg, but not as extensively as he does. Crucially, Westerberg has had access to many internal confidential business sources, which previous scholars were not able to use. The sources are rich and Westerberg has used them extensively and with great skill.

Sensibly, Westerberg has decided to focus on system-level issues. His thesis does not cover normal lobbying or labour market negotiations. Yet, the activities Westerberg describes were not small-scale operations: "During the 45 years covered in this thesis, leading figures in organized business systematically spent massive amounts of resources, time and energy on the defense of free enterprise." (p. 3) Businesses poured money into non-socialist newspapers to ensure that they survived, and to non-socialist parties so that they could compete effectively with the socialists. Companies also organised information campaigns and public projects, financed pro-business research and supported student organisations. In some cases, they ended up educating new political operators, as some of their employees became ministers or civil servants.

Already in 1940s, business people recognised that it was better that the central organisation of Swedish employers (Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen, SAF) and the main interest organisation known as the Federation of Swedish Industries (Sveriges Industriförbund) were not directly involved in such controversial affairs. Hence, they set up and funded new organisations. Most important of these was the Enterprise Fund (Näringslivets Fond), set up in 1940, but there were many others – so many, in fact, that a reader is sometimes confused. Different organisations had different tasks, but some of them were not very effective, and this might be the reason why they were replaced with others. A case in point was the Guarantee Foundation (Garantistiftelsen). According to one of its employees, it had in the late 1940s "a damned amount of millions – so many that we could not spend them in a reasonable way" (p. 112).

Swedish companies advocated policies that were pro-business, but not necessarily pro-market. For the businessmen of the 1940s and 1950s, freedom meant private ownership of assets and freedom from government control, not necessarily freedom of markets. During the first post-war decades, Swedish business leaders were as eager as many of their European competitors to build cartels that regulated competition. This, however, became increasingly difficult when the European competition laws became tougher.

Swedish business was at least partly successful in its political campaigns:

Capitalism did survive in Sweden, although it had to cohabit with social democratic governments. Industries were not nationalised, and the proposals for wage-earner funds were watered down. Business had feared that these union-controlled funds could gradually take over ownership of Swedish companies and hence lead to the end of private control.

Westerberg shows that the business activities probably influenced public debates and views also in the post-Cold War era. He concludes that business gradually moved from defensive to offensive. It began to import free market and neoliberal ideas from the United States and the United Kingdom, and spread them to wider public. Rolf Englund, head of the business-funded Research Bureau during the early 1980s, stated that "in our house, we have good ties with thought producers in the US and England. These ideas should be brought home to Sweden" (p. 223). These kinds of activities had a long-term impact on Swedish politics and public opinion and probably contributed to the increased popularity of market-based solutions in public affairs. Yet, this change could have been as much, or mainly, the result of international trends. Free market ideas spread to most European countries during the 1980s and 1990s, and even to those that officially opposed Thatcherism and Reaganism.

Swedish business was not always quite as successful as it had hoped to be. Money did not open all doors. Before the parliamentary election of 1948, the Liberals refused to accept money from the Garantistiftelsen, which was trying to create a united non-socialist front. And the opponents had their own sources money, in particular the trade unions.

Westerberg's thesis is well-written and logically structured. Some aspects of the work could nevertheless have been improved. From a theoretical perspective, it is not particularly sophisticated. Westerberg utilises some well-known interest group theories: David Truman's disturbance theory, Mancur Olson's views on collective action, and Robert Salisbury's concept of organizational entrepreneur. Yet, it is not clear why these were selected from what is an exceptionally wide body of literature. There would have been room for wider theoretical discussion. For example, Swedish business seemed to be more able to organise effectively and gather money to defend collective interests than what Olson's more pessimistic theories suggest.

Westerberg could also have explained more on what lessons international scholars working on similar cases in other countries could draw from his work as there are a lot of similarities between the Swedish case and wider international developments. Now a foreign reader has to mostly figure out for himself or herself what conclusions to draw.

Nevertheless, Westerberg makes a real and important contribution to existing research by filling gaps and expanding our understanding and knowl-

edge on political motives, actions and tactics of organised Swedish business. His work will no doubt be useful to a number of Swedish and foreign scholars, in particular those interested in the links between business and politics, ideological struggles, the arrival of neoliberalism to Nordic countries, as well as the operations of interest groups.

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Ola Innset, *Markedsvendingen: Nyliberalismens historie i Norge* (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget 2020). 246 s.

Historikern Ola Innset har med *Markedsvendingen* producerat en koncis, välskriven och produktiv introduktion till "nyliberalismens historie i Norge". Föredömligt börjar han med den centrala frågan: vad betyder egentligen "nyliberalism"? Innset använder begreppet i två bemärkelser. Den ena är för en uttalad ideologi och rörelse, den nyliberala rörelsen. Den andra är nyliberalism som analytiskt begrepp, som beteckning för "ändringar i økonomisk politikk over hele verden i etterkant av 70-tallets økonomiske krise" (s. 12). Innsets bok handlar mindre om den i Norge ganska lilla rörelsen av politiskt aktiva nyliberaler, mer om övergripande ekonomiska och politiska förändringar i landet.

För Innset börjar nyliberalismens historia under mellankrigstiden. Efter ett introduktionskapitel genomför han sin skildring i sex kapitel, i princip kronologiskt ordnade. Kapitel 1 börjar med mellankrigstiden och motsättningen mellan den politiska demokratin, implementerad på nationalstatens nivå, och den globala ekonomin: vad den österrikiske liberalen Wilhelm Röpke, viktig under mellankrigstiden, kallade den moderna världens två sfärer, *dominium*, ekonomins och egendomens gränslösa värld, och *imperium*, den politiska världen indelad i nationalstater (s. 46). Allmän rösträtt för män och kvinnor infördes i Norge 1913 och arbetarrörelsen arbetade inom det nya demokratiskt parlamentariska systemet för att upprätta en styrning av ekonomin, med användning av nationalstaten, medan nyliberaler som Trygve Hoff argumenterade att ekonomisk planering var omöjlig. Denna dikotomi löper som en röd tråd i Innsets hela bok: en pendelrörelse mellan socialdemokratins nationalstatliga projekt för en planerad och reglerad samhällsekonomi, och nyliberalernas projekt för att öka marknadernas betydelse i samhället.

Efter kapitel 1, som både inleder kronologiskt och implicit formulerar bokens analytiska ramverk, följer kapitel 2 om efterkrigstiden, som Innset