Nationalism i fredens tjänst
Svenska skolornas fredsförening, fredsföreningen och historieundervisningen 1919–1939

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Akademisk avhandling

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Abstract
The overall aim of this thesis is to contribute to the field of research that examines the relationship between peace efforts and nationalism. The relationship will be studied from perspectives of educational history and history didactics. More precisely, by focusing on history education, this dissertation will analyse the demands for a comprehensive peace education in schools that were put forward by a long list of actors in the Western world during the interwar period, and as such discuss to what extent, and in what ways, nationalism influenced the content and design of this peace education. The main theoretical framework of this thesis is the concept of nationalism, and the position of nationalism as a hegemonic ideology during the first half of the 20th century. Another central understanding is the assumption that the educational system, specifically history education, played a central role in creating, maintaining and strengthening collective identities as well as the prevailing ideological hegemony. The empirical investigation has been limited to studying the demands and ideas presented by Nordic peace educators, mainly The Swedish School Peace League (SSF), regarding peace-educating history teaching. As such, the empirical aim has been to investigate the SSF’s views on the relationship between nationalism and peace education, i.e., how internationalism and pacifism were to be taught, as well as how this understanding affected the League’s ideas regarding history teaching. The results have also been analysed from a gender perspective, based on the assumption that contemporary notions of gender in relation to nationalism, war and peace in different ways had an impact upon the content and format of the proposed peace education.

The study shows that the SSF regarded nationalism as the very foundation and prerequisite for any peace education. SSF thus tried to reconcile nationalism, internationalism and pacifism under one and the same ideological approach; “patriotic pacifism”, which in turn strongly influenced the endorsed peace-educating history teaching. Furthermore, the study highlights boys’ central role in the peace education project, which essentially set the long-term goal of creating a new pacifist and internationally oriented male ideal and yet, despite these aims, continued an intimate association with the “national”. Key concepts in SSF’s peace education were unite and supplement, and thereby they redefined central meanings of hegemonic nationalism. SSF’s patriotic pacifism and its impact on the association’s demands for a peace-educating history teaching can best be described as an “intra-hegemonic counterforce”.

Keywords
Nationalism, pacifism, internationalism, patriotic pacifism, peace and war, peace education, ideological hegemony, gender, manliness/masculinity, collective identity, history education, the Interwar era, history textbook revision.