4 Money: “Jewish” business activities

The pre-history of 1815’s economic arguments

Despite the strict restrictions on Jewish immigration from 1782 and 1806, resistance and propaganda against Jewish business competition grew, playing an important role in the debate on the “Jewish question.” The number of publications peaked during the first two or three decades of the nineteenth century, coinciding with broader debates about the national economic system. At the same time, especially during the first three decades of the century, royal decrees and announcements changing the regulations for the Jewish minority were published with increasing frequency – additions to or reinforcements of the judereglemente. These included attempts to restrict Jewish settlement to the three towns originally listed in the judereglemente,¹⁹⁵ the special regulations stipulating shortened apprenticeship periods for Jewish businessmen,¹⁹⁶ and motions delivered to the Riksdag.¹⁹⁷

It comes as no surprise that the standard works on the Swedish economy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century do not mention Jews at all, as their quantitative effect on the economy was vanishingly low. The general increase in the GDP between 1800 and 1850 was no more than 0.4% per capita.¹⁹⁸ The agricultural sector was by far the most important source of income for the majority of the population, and the most important social and economic pillar of the country was the ownership of agricultural lands.¹⁹⁹ The processes of international trade and factory production in which the Jewish entrepreneurs were active generally remained separate from these.

¹⁹⁷ Förslag till förändringar i 1782 års reglemente för svenska medborgare af judiska nationen. Riksgens höglofliga ständer tillegnadt (Uppsala: Zeipel och Palmblad, 1815).
Still, at the turn of the century, certain factors combined to create a particular economic situation. Land and agricultural products increased in price, the result of a long period of European wars which had limited grain imports to Sweden. Major agrarian reforms were carried out in 1803 (enskiftet) and in 1827 (laga skiftet), radically centralizing villages and land ownership, which in turn led to an improved supply of Swedish agricultural products. At the same time, inflation was fuelled by the state, which printed promissory notes in order to cover its military expenses. Loans became more freely available, and it was mainly long-distance traders who were active in the credit business.

The reform of the guild system was a topic which was intensely debated in the first half of the nineteenth century, though the guilds were not actually reformed until 1846. On several occasions it was tied together with the “Jewish question,” due to the positive and negative discrimination towards Jews in the system, as established by the judereglemente. Other topics of this kind included protectionism regarding imports and exports, manufacturing and factory production versus small-scale craft production, and land and real estate ownership. In all of these areas, the Swedish government planned or prohibited certain innovations, opening up the country’s closed and barely industrialized economy to international forces. In all of these areas, Jews became personifications of, and were held responsible for, modernization and competition – exactly as had been the case in the German Empire towards the end of the century. The process was also apparent in other countries and periods, but in Sweden it met with a very specific demographic situation in the Jewish community, shaped as it had been by the judereglemente. The first generations and families who were allowed to settle had had to show that they possessed a significant amount of cash, 2,000 riksdaler (§8), before they could immigrate. Subsequently, they had the right to build or own factories, “samt deltaga i Skeps Rederier, Handels Compagnier och Skeps Warf, i synnerhet at drifwa handel med Wäxlar, Actier och publique Pap- per” (and participate in shipping companies, trading companies, and ship-building companies, and in particular to trade bills of exchange, stocks, and commercial papers, §6), work in guild-free professions, and engage in new or previously unknown kinds of business (§33). They were prohibited from opening shops (minuthandel), pharmacies, and liquor stores (§12). Children of Jewish immigrants were allowed to learn guild-controlled trades but could not become masters or open their own shops.

200 Ibid., 37.
202 “Reglemente för dem av Judiska Nationen”. 
The requirement for high personal liquidity before entering the country, restrictions on settling in the major cities, restrictions on professions, the relegation to owning factories and working guild-free trades, in combination with easy access to professions which required long apprenticeship periods for Swedes, actually created a very distinctive Jewish minority: well off, internationally well connected, and successful in areas that were both modern and unusual in Sweden. In some of the replies to anti-Jewish texts, it was mentioned that many of the distinctive characteristics of Jewish businesses in Sweden were a result of the judereglemente, but in many others, these were pointed to as signs of Jews’ foreign “national character.” The judereglemente created a Jewish minority which resembled many anti-Jewish stereotypes, and this “knowledge” was used vividly in the text production dealing with the vast and hackneyed theme of “Jews and money.”

Regarding “Jewish business practices,” there are far fewer translated texts than original Swedish productions. This might be due to the fact that this thematic field was dominated by shorter interventions responding to specific contemporary events: most developed around single cases of accusations against individuals while also drawing on a rich repertoire of established anti-Jewish stereotypes. In contrast to the widely disseminated publications addressing other themes, the economic invectives almost all originate from Stockholm, and many target and name Jewish families and businesses in the capital.

The first denunciation focusing on economic matters seems to originate from the year 1809, when the 70-year-old jeweller Bengt Sander felt compelled to write and publish a fiercely anti-Jewish text, Några bewis, att judarne äfwen på sitt sätt bidraga till den allmänna nöden i Sverige (Some evidence that Jews even in their way contribute to the general misery in Sweden).²⁰³ This may be the first Swedish instance of widespread and legal – but unpleasant – business practices being described as “Jewish.” Printed in Stockholm in Carl Delén’s print shop, the eight-page text appeared both as an independent publication and as an insert in the newspaper Dagligt Allehanda, which testifies to public interest and which also explains the fact that it provoked reactions.

Sander’s text starts off as a response to an earlier pamphlet, Några ord om nödwändigheten,²⁰⁴ which dealt with the need to provide financial aid and, even more importantly, suitable jobs to women, in particular to the widows and or-

²⁰³ Bengt Sander, Några bewis, att judarne äfwen på sitt sätt bidraga till den allmänna nöden i Sverige (Stockholm: Carl Delén, 1809).
phans of public employees. In this vein, it argued against the rigid guild system and its consequences in terms of restricting work opportunities for people outside of it, i.e., most women and many men in the urban areas. Several pamphlets were issued that year regarding a general need to improve salaries, the job market, and family support systems by liberalizing the guild system.

Bengt Sander’s text, however, was not really a response to this. From a general agreement on the aforementioned social issues, Sander leaves the topic of female work opportunities fairly quickly, moving on to a general condemnation of certain business practices, such as selling stolen goods (*lurendrejeri*), working with low-quality gold, and buying and selling cheap jewellery. All of these practices are ascribed to Jews as a group, as is a generally nasty character, prone to intrigues and deceiving the poor and unlearned. Sander comes to the momentous conclusion that before the arrival of Jews in Sweden 30 years prior, there had been no poorhouses, no need for social services, less people in jail, and Swedish companies and factories had been thriving, while they now suffered bankruptcy. Religious arguments were not invoked, but biblical language was used in order to emphasize the gravity of the Jewish threat: Jews are locusts, they treat Swedes as Egyptians, Sweden is Canaan for them but not for Swedes. Thus, Sander conceptualizes Jews as a religiously defined Other with certain fixed character traits and with a devastating effect on the Swedish economy and society. Obviously, comprehensive fears of social decline are projected onto the minority and combined with religiously informed “knowledge.”

Written responses to this treatise mainly criticized the ascription of collective guilt and collective character traits to all Jews.²⁰⁵ This is indeed a striking aspect of Sander’s text. The three responses adopted different strategies. *Några ord, i anledning af en nyligen utkommen Smädeskrift, kallad: Några bevis* [sic!] på sitt sätt bidraga till den allmänna nöden i Sverige [sic!] (Stockholm: Marquarkska Tryckeriet, 1809).


bewis,\textsuperscript{207} on the other hand, adopted a sharper tone and is both a counter-argument to Sander and an anti-Jewish statement in its own right. It accused Sander of defamation and depicted the Jews as a small and politically irrelevant group, one which could not possibly inflict any harm on the Christian Swedes. The author (who signed the text, “Friend of Truth and Justice”) uses distinctly religious vocabulary in order to defend the Swedish Jews’ right to exist and to engage in trade – but is at the same time hostile. As in Sander’s text, Jews are referred to as a swarm of locusts,\textsuperscript{208} refugees, and \textit{tjenestegwinnans barn} (the handmaiden’s children, alluding to the biblical story of Jacob, his wife Rachel, and his handmaid Bilhah, in Gen. 30), who would never be able to usurp the Christians’ rights as the firstborn. This is a reference to Jacob and Esau (Gen. 27), thereby mixing two biblical stories into a chronologically confused and generally condescending description of Jews. The idea that Christians inherit the rights of the firstborn is something this economic argument shares in common with supersessionist texts. It is written in a polemical and aggressive style; despite its general argument being a defence of Jewish business practices, it makes copious use of anti-Jewish religious vocabulary and imagery. The text also alludes to the famous speech by Shylock in Shakespeare’s \textit{Merchant of Venice}:

\begin{quote}
Eller äro Judarne icke menniskor? Äro väl de af en annan natur än vi? Känna de icke de plågor man tillfogar dem? Lida de icke af den grymhet som mot dem utöfvas lika mycket som viskulle lida?\textsuperscript{209}

(Or are Jews not human? Are they maybe of a different nature than we are? Do they not feel the pain inflicted on them? Do they not suffer from the cruelty that one directs at them, as much as we would?)
\end{quote}


\textsuperscript{208} On the development of the locust as a symbol for Jews, from medieval bestiaries up until the modern era, see Monika Urban, \textit{Von Ratten, Schmeißfliegen und Heuschrecken: Judenfeindliche Tiersymbolisierungen und die postfaschistischen Grenzen des Sagbaren} (Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, 2014).

\textsuperscript{209} Quoted in “Till juveleraren Sander, författaren af: Några bevis, att Judarne äfven på sitt sätt bidraga till den allmänna nöden i Sverige,” https://stockholmskallan.stockholm.se/post/27102 (includes a scan of the pamphlet). Cf. Shylock’s speech in Act III, Scene I: “Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions; fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us, do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?”
Three years later, a Jewish jeweller was at the centre of another scandal. Petter Jonas Junbeck, a clerk at the board of manufacturing (handelsfiskal), had accused Michael Benedicks and his son-in-law Isak Michaelson of irregular business practices. The case went to court, the jewellers were found not guilty, and both the court records and accompanying polemics were published.210 The Michaelson & Benedicks company belonged to two of the most prominent and successful Jewish immigrants. Benedicks had received citizenship as a royal gift due to his trading with Great Britain during the blockade in 1809. The family made good use of the civil rights they received; they were jewellers for the royal house, bank owners, factory owners, and merchants. Junbeck accused them, together with a Swedish jeweller, of using false weights and of general business irregularities, the accusation being published in Stockholm under the title Sedan hof-juvelerarne af judiska nationen herrar Michaelson & Benedicks behagat skynda .... Despite the title alluding to Benedicks belonging to “the Jewish nation,” there is nothing distinctly anti-Jewish in the text. Maybe the simple fact that Junbeck felt obliged to publish his accusation before the king had rendered his verdict, appealing for public support for his case, was noteworthy, but otherwise there is nothing much to the text. Michaelson & Benedicks came under much more heavy attack three years later, during the judefejd of 1815. Even before then, however, a second text dealt with the case against Michaelson & Benedicks, under the satirical and misleading title Ytterligare handlingar hörande till judarnas historia i Sverige.²¹¹ Written by Eric Peter Laurin, it said absolutely nothing about the history of Jews in Sweden but accused Michaelson & Benedicks of selling low-quality jewellery. The text shows clearly how anti-Jewish accusations and the construction of “Jewish business practices” were connected to general problems in the modernization of the economic system: the factory owners were held responsible for each good their factory produced, and assigning responsibility to a factory manager was not possible – a not very workable state of affairs in a growing capitalist economy. In this regard, the text actually made a strong argument against anti-Jewish stereotyping, by

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211 Eric Peter Laurin, Ytterligare handlingar hörande till judarnas historia i Sverige (Stockholm: Elméns and Granbergs, 1814).
noting that even if the two men were found guilty, the problem was structural not individual. The title, however, makes the whole intention behind the text more ambiguous, since it suggests general information about Jews and/or taking a stand on the case in question. None of this is actually present within the text, however.

Some of the contributions to the 1815 judefejd deal specifically with “Jewish” business practices and thus show how previously known accusations were popularized and became part of the contemporary debate. The anonymously published Jude-industrien eller Allmänna kreditens lik-begängelse²¹² (The Jew-Industry, or Funeral of the General Loan) accuses Jews of having withdrawn five million riksdaler in cash from Sweden through improper loans, basically arguing that as a result there was no money left for Swedes to borrow. Herman Anders Kullberg, to whom the text was later ascribed, was a relatively well-known translator of French and German plays and novels. What biographical information is available about him gives no indication as to why one of the few texts he did not translate, but that he wrote himself, dealt with economic affairs and explicit accusations against individual Swedish Jews and Jews in general. The only clue might be that he himself was constantly in financial trouble and negotiating with publishers for his translation fees,²¹³ and was thus perhaps nursing a grudge against people who were more well-to-do – that he identified these people as Jewish, however, was a result of the anti-Jewish “knowledge” he had previously acquired.

Claiming to wish to warn and inform the public, the author insinuates that Jews must have paid one ton of gold for the “pro-Jewish” texts by Grevesmöhlen and Pålhlman – perhaps something he surmised based on his knowledge of publishing and printing costs, given his work as a professional translator. Jews, he says, took their profits “over the Sea” just in time, lest the Riksdag vote against their right to remain in the country. He also lists the debts of individual Swedish Jews – between 100,000 and 600,000 riksdaler – as well as the debts of so-called “Jude-vänner” (Jew-friends), allegedly pro-Jewish Swedes. The text is quite dystopian, purporting to describe an impending all-encompassing catastrophe: even larger fiascos were expected from Gothenburg, to be followed by the general decline and collapse of the entire Swedish loan system.

The invention of “Jude-vänner,” even referred to as “omskurre och oomskurre Judar” (circumcised and uncircumcised Jews, p. 14), is an original feature of this text: people who do business with Jews, or practise similar businesses, or who do not argue against all Jewish immigration, are themselves labelled as Jews. Blaming Jews for all the economic misery in the country thus seems more credible, as they are said to have teamed up with Swedes who have turned their back on their national character and loyalties. Grevesmöhlan and Påhlman, the two most prominent figures in the debate, are named several times in this regard. The solution the author proposes is also original, compared with many others. He calls for a patriotic national revolt, which he sees as likely given the degree of popular unrest. The revolt, however, would not involve violence or political turmoil. Instead, a more peaceful strategy is proposed: buy only Swedish goods and return to the simple and modest way of life and values of your forefathers, for in their day no Jews were interested in coming to the country.

The back and forth around Jude-industrien was typical of the debates that year. The author was accused of violating some rules of public discourse. Then, following this initial text which had got him in trouble in the first place, he had an additional statement to the court printed as well, Ingifvet till Stockholms Norra Förstads Vestra Kämnärs-Rätt den 7 December 1815. He used this opportunity to complain about the uses and misuses of free speech and “smädeskrifter” (diatribes), to make some personal attacks against Grevesmöhlan, and to list a number of new bankruptcies. The text is basically 20 pages of general polemics, personal opinions, and self-pity. Notwithstanding its title, which promised a follow-up to Jude-industrien, this text contained nothing about Jews whatsoever.²¹⁴

A similar mix of self-absorption, self-pity, and rättshaveri (litigiousness) was evident in many of the texts printed in 1815, and in many of them, these merged with anti-Jewish resentment. One of the later publications of the year, Israels barn i öcknen,²¹⁵ from 24 November, 1815, lamented the involvement of Swedish book publishers in what the author saw as a primarily personal matter. Instead, he promised to deliver a prudent piece of writing, not just something seeking public accolades and cheap entertainment (in contrast to most of the publica-

²¹⁴ Anders Herman Kullberg, Fortsättning af Jude-industrien, eller Författarens försvar, i den, angående sistnämde skrif, på hof-kanslers-embetets begäran, uppkomna rättegång (Stockholm: Olof Grahn, 1815).

²¹⁵ Anonymous, Israels barn i öcknen. Tillägnadt svenska judars försvarare och dem som blifvit ruinerade genom deras bankrutter (Stockholm: Olof Grahn, 1815).
tions around the Grevesmöhlen/Boije conflict, he probably meant). The publication was later ascribed to Anders Lindeberg, a publicist, author, and man of the theatre, who not only got involved in the quarrel with Grevesmöhlen, but some years later also with King Karl XIV Johan, being sentenced to death as a result but receiving a pardon.\textsuperscript{216} The subtitle, “tillägnadt Svenska Judars försvarare och dem som blifvit ruinerade genom deras bankrutter” (dedicated to the defenders of Swedish Jews and those who have been ruined by their bankruptcies), establishes what camp the author was in. His description of “Jewish” business practices in general, and in Sweden in particular, sums up most of what had already been said in 1815: Jews arrive poor and become rich by selling goods produced by others (procenthandel);\textsuperscript{217} they dominate the import of luxury goods, which had become far too large for a poor country like Sweden and which corrupts the population; and they charge too much interest on the money they lend out. *Israels barn i öcknen* is just as illogical as most of the other contributions to the debate – the assumption that only poor Jews had immigrated is refuted by the judereglementet itself, which restricted immigration to people with a certain liquidity in gold – and the assumption that within 30 years they came to dominate moneylending, trade, and imports seems paranoid.

**Emancipation aborted: Canaan in Sweden**

While people were rioting in the capital in the late summer of 1838, a text was printed which made numerous references to the events of that year. *Den nya tiden eller Kanaans land* was printed on 1 September, 1838 – right before the Emancipation bill failed. It was signed “sans nom” but was later attributed to Johan Vilhelm Sundborg, a notary at the Deputy Court of Appeals.\textsuperscript{218} Not much is known about Sundborg, except that under the pseudonym Engelbrecht Engelbrechtsson (alluding to the famous leader of a fifteenth-century revolt against the king) he also wrote a pamphlet about the other big scandal in Stockholm that year: the trial of Hans Magnus Crusenstolpe, who had been arrested for lèse-majesté following his public criticisms of the king and who continued

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\textsuperscript{217} This common practice was presented as Jewish in [Johan Gustaf Howenschild], *Några ord om export-handel och judar* (Stockholm: Carl Delén, 1815).

\textsuperscript{218} [Johan Vilhelm Sundborg], *Den nya tiden eller Kanaans land* (Stockholm: Elméns och Granbergs tryck, 1838).
to publish from his prison cell, provoking riots in Stockholm. Sundborg – if the attribution of Kanaans land to him is correct – appears to have been interested in constitutional law, since he picked up on a question raised in the newspapers, namely, whether or not the constitution gave the king and chamber of commerce the right to declare Emancipation. Liberal newspapers in the capital had raised this question and had used it in part to distract from their own opposition to Jewish Emancipation, which was not necessarily based on the claim that the Riksdag, representing the estates, should have been the institution to decide upon the question – as they knew very well that majority support for Emancipation did not exist in the Riksdag.²¹

Within an otherwise not particularly original text, Sundborg employs a number of key terms which point to his detailed and comprehensive knowledge regarding antisemitism. The text starts by describing the August–September riots and then paints a vivid picture of an impending dystopia, when Jews will have taken over Sweden entirely. They will have bought up all the property and will have therefore also brought the Church under their control, which will result in conversions by stupid and naïve people who serve the Jews. They will control the entire moneylending sector and will exercise a particular control over the university towns, corrupting the country’s intellectual elite by giving them loans and selling them unnecessary luxury items. Jews are called bloodsuckers and vampires – a designation combining myths about blood and murder, which had not appeared in any of the earlier texts. Sundberg also calls Jews “denna af Gud fördömda afföda” (God’s forsaken offspring, p. 16) and, by extension, asks the Christian state to inflict a punishment in line with what “our Saviour decided in His own prophecy” (p. 18). In a quotation attributed to Shakespeare, it is said that Jews “surely are Satan in real life” (p. 19).²²

### Court records

It was not uncommon to publish and sell trial records and accounts deemed of public interest – the files from the Grevesmöhlen trial, for example, were published, as were several hundred other local and central court documents and decisions. Every year, a couple of cases from each of the local courts, dealing with various cases and people, were published. Most seem to have been from trials involving people of the upper classes – ship captains, factory owners, and the

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²¹ Regarding the newspaper debates of 1838, see Heß, “Eine Fußnote der Emanzipation?”
²² Sundborg, Kanaans land.
like – or dealing with bizarre or otherwise interesting cases, such as the year-long fast by a woman in Skåne, which the population considered miraculous, and which therefore had to be disproven by the Lutheran authorities. A handful of these cases dealt with a range of economic themes and accusations regarding Jewish defendants. Besides the simple court records, which were usually issued by the courts themselves, more provocative and biased accounts might be published by one of the parties to the trial. Such was the case in the aforementioned Benedicks trial about fake jewellery, or when the account of the lawsuit of J. P. Liljeström, a janitor, against Moses Marcus was published in 1822 under the title *Den bortskänkte juden.* Jews did not only appear as evildoers in the publicly commissioned records, however: cases were also published in which Jews had been falsely accused and the trials served to restore their reputation. In 1802, Lars Larsson Rylander, a landlord (gästgivare), accused Philip Jeremias, a Jew, of having stolen his seal and of having used it to produce counterfeit bills of exchange, but the Norrköping court found Rylander guilty of committing the crime in question and of having also paid a weaver apprentice and a driver to provide false testimony. Götha Hofrätt, the court, published the outcome of the trial, including the names of the accused, the witnesses, and the verdict, as well as the punishment for Rylander and his accomplices. In the case of the falsely accused Philip Jeremias, the fact that he was a Jew under the protection of the king (like all Jews in Sweden at the time, according to the judereglemente) was specifically mentioned and might very well have been one of the reasons the account of the trial was published. The authorities probably wanted to con-

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221 *Den bortskänkte juden: Rättegångshandelningar rörande vaktmästaren J.P. Liljeströms klagan öfver de af till förordnande öfver-ståthållaren samt Stockholms dråtsel-commission och tre fjerdedelar af borgmästaren Hallqvists rådhus-rätts-division vidtagne åtgärder, hvarigenom fångne juden Moses Marcus tvärt emot K. Majts nåd. dom på fri fot kommit* (Stockholm, 1822).

222 *Kongl. maj:ts och rikets Götha hof-rätts utslag uppå rådstufwu-rättens i Norrköping, efter wid kämmers-rätten derstädes hållne ransakningar den 23 sistlidne januarii och den 7 sistledne augusti fälldte, samt ... konlg. hof-rättens pröfning: underställdt utslag, igenom hwilket förstnämnde utslag, ej mindre skydds-juden Philip Jeremias ... blifvit befridad från det emot honom af gästgifwaren Lars Larsson Rylander gjorde tillmäle, att hafwa olofigen borrtagit Rylandes [!] sigill och med nyttjande deraf uti Rylanders namn utprånglat falska skuldsedlar, än afwen Rylander skyldig förklarrad, att så wäl för denna desz falskeliga och af argt uppsåt Jeremias gjorda tillwitelse, som ock för det han, till styrko: deraf, sökt förmå wittnen att wittna falskt ... mista äran och böta tretton riksdaler sexton skillinger ... äfwensom kläдвäfware-gesäljen Johan Fredric Strömstedt för det han i målet burit falskt wittnesmål och äkaren Lars Marckenberg: för det han i ett annat Rylander rörande skuldfordrings mål wittnat falskt, äro ... wordne dömde, att hwardera böta tretton riksdaler sexton skillinger samt att aldrig vara wittnesbära ...* (Norrköping: Ad. Fr. Raams enka, 1802).
vey the message that Jews would not be easy targets for bullying or false accusations.

One case in particular illustrates both the integration and the fragility of Jewish–Christian relations and business dealings under the judereglemente, recounted in a surprisingly voluminous collection of court records from Karlskrona in 1818–1819.223 The trial records are reproduced in 35 pages, dealing with the theft and sale of silverware from a parish church in the village of Madesjö. A local vagrant, Israel Wideman, initially admitted to having stolen the silverware, then claimed he only received and sold it. An entire ring of thieves and a number of different thefts in the same area were connected to this case, and more and more witnesses needed to be heard. Among the accused was Moses Ruben, who admitted to having bought a small quantity of the goods in question from Wideman but said he did not know and could not have suspected that they were stolen. Ruben appeared before the court with a relative who acted as interpreter; Ruben himself had moved to Karlskrona from Hamburg eight years earlier and claimed he could not understand Swedish. He was married to Eleonora Philip, the only daughter of Fabian Philipson, who had been the first Jew to have received permission to settle in Karlskrona, along with his three brothers. The entire family had recently received Swedish citizenship, in contrast to the rest of the local Jewish community, which Philipson had founded.224 The testimonies of good character and conduct they had to submit for their citizenship application were also attached to the court records and were cited in the judge’s final statement.

Moses Ruben’s main defence was that he was Jewish and only understood Hebrew letters and that he was not able to recognize the Christian symbols on the silverware because he had never attended a mass. The court believed this – probably due to profound ignorance regarding Jewish life in Hamburg and Karlskrona. Even though a specific German-Yiddish accent was a recurring target of mockery, a Jewish person who had moved to another country, married into a wealthy family, and worked as a merchant and trader, would not have survived only knowing Hebrew letters and Yiddish. It would also have been difficult for any person to live in a majority Christian society and never see a cross. In this case, the ignorance was to Ruben’s benefit, as he was only found guilty of having

223 Handlingar uti den wid södre Möre hårads lofl. tings-rätt hållne undersökning om en i Made-
sjö kyrka skedd stöld af silfwer, så widt frågan rörer handlanden af judiska nationen Joachim Moses Ruben i Carlskrona, såsom den der köpt och: innehaft af samma silfwer (Karlskrona: Swinhuvuds änka, 1819).
bought some of the silver, but not of knowing its origin, and he only had to re-munerate the church and pay a minor fine for having dealings with a person selling silverware of dubious origin.

In an interesting, but most likely unrelated, postscript to this story, Moses Rubens was murdered in Karlskrona in October 1846. A well-known local confessed to this and to a large number of other felonies; he was executed, while the townspeople formed a citizens’ guard to patrol the streets at night.²²⁵

Given the accusation of buying and selling stolen goods, as well as mistreating church property, the outcome of this trial is surprising. The comprehensive publication of the written records, including the character testimonies for the Philipson-Rubens family, was probably an attempt to assuage potential public misgivings in this regard. It also served to demonstrate that even non-Christian citizens could expect a fair trial – but it also showed that class was a factor working to the benefit of upper-class Jews, while the Christian vagrant Wideman was seen as living down to what was expected of him and was sentenced accordingly, receiving a fine more than five times as high as Rubens’s, which he would not be able to pay off during his lifetime.

The academic discourse

In the middle of the century, Bishop Carl Adolph Agardh made a lengthy and very prominent contribution to the debate²²⁶ – Lars M. Anderson has even described it as “the most important anti-Jewish contribution in the Emancipation debate of the 1840s and 1850s.”²²⁷ Considering the quantity and rate of anti-Jewish texts being produced in those decades, this assessment merits further investigation. Monopolium mot Judarne was published relatively well disguised, as a subsection to a statistical analysis of Sweden’s economy and demographics. Coming from a well-educated and highly regarded man of academic standing, it fed into an academic discourse of Jew-hatred, but the popularity and significance of his work cannot compare with others that transmitted similar ideas. There were some direct responses, but other texts also provoked responses. In

any case, it is not particularly original in its antisemitism, and the significance of
the text can simply be attributed to the significance of the author.

Carl Adolph Agardh was a man of many talents, a professor in economics
and botany, a member of the Svenska Akademien from 1831, and of the Kungliga
Vetenskapsakademien from 1817. His academic home was Lund and his diocese
was in Karlstad. Agardh was even active in politics as a member of parliament.
His many fields of activity and influence make him one of the most significant
and prominent supporters of an academic antisemitism which derived from
both religious and economic stereotypes, and which even contained distinctly
racist elements.

Together with C. E. Ljungberg, Agardh published Försök till en Statsekono-
misk Statistik Öfver Sverige (1852–1863, 4 vols), in which the bishop advocated
a state economy. In the first part, he described the Swedish people from pre-
Christian times to the year 1772 and the land, culture, religion, and economy
during the roughly 80 years following. He then moved on to the monetary system
and general thoughts regarding various forms of labour engaged in by men
and women. In the last and longest subsection to the chapter “De som vilja
men icke få arbeta” (Those who want to work but are not allowed), he discusses
Jews as one of the obstacles to male and female fairly paid labour, along with the
guild system, patents, and different toll systems for different towns. The subsec-
tion “Monopolium mot Judarne,” in which he directly blames Jews, consists of
about 35 pages.

Agardh saw Jews as mainly being interested in monetary affairs, not because
of the restrictions of the judereglemente, but because of the Law of Moses. He
went over the legal changes to Jews’ status which the 1838 reform proposed,
the conflict around it, and the final decision by the Riksdag in 1840 to reinstitute
the judereglemente of 1782 (pp. 149–150). He also summarized debates in the
Riksdag from 1853. It was mainly in the footnotes that he voiced his own fears
of a Jewish influx: soon Jews would buy all the land in Sweden and possess it
as their “new Palestine, their own promised land” (p. 154) – an already-familiar
scenario from the debates of 1815 and 1838.

Considering his position as bishop, Agardh paid relatively little attention to
the religious aspects of Jewish immigration and integration. In line with his fear
of a massive influx of Jews, he elaborated on the danger of Christians converting
to Judaism and judaizing – there were no known cases of this having occurred in
Sweden, but it had been a Christian fear since the Early Middle Ages. He admit-
ted that Jews did not proselytize in Sweden but did not count this to their advant-
age, explaining instead that “this incurs harsh punishments in Swedish law.” He
also noted that circumcision is a high price to pay for anyone in their right mind
and that this probably prevents conversions more than the lack of proselytizing:
“ingen förnuftig människa nu mera kan vilja underkasta sig den operation, som är villkoret för judeegenskapen” (no human in their right mind would want to submit themselves to the surgery which is a precondition for being Jewish, p. 153). This is actually the most original part of his article, as circumcision and Jewish proselytizing were otherwise barely mentioned in Swedish texts of the period.²² An open letter responding to Agardh focused on this aspect, arguing that Jewish law was itself very hesitant to allow people to convert to Judaism and relatively tolerant towards pious people of all faiths.²² This letter was published under the signature “by a Swedish Jew” and is attributed to Lipman Lipmanson, a prominent member of the community in Stockholm, a school director, author of Swedish-German conversation books, and one of three people invited to speak on behalf of Swedish Jews at the funeral of Henrik Wergeland in Norway in 1849. The fear in the Jewish community that Agardh’s text would have a negative influence on public and political opinion is evident in the responses.

Agardh’s antisemitism derived from his view of Judaism as a culturally determined religion and is distinctly racist: Jews are said to be the people with the highest birth rate, completely biologically homogenous, with a distinctive “märkvärdig typ” (notable typology) which they all share, and an inherent need to move to other countries (p. 165). He rejects the idea that the centuries-old hatred of Jews could have had a religious origin, since their religion was based on the Old Testament “hvarifrån såsom ur en rot det nya testamentets [tro] har utgått och som ännu erkännes af de Christne” (which the New Testament’s [faith] is also derived from, as from a root, and which is still recognized by Christians). According to this argument, religious hostility makes no sense because Judaism and Christianity share the same root – or rather, because even Christianity accepts the Old Testament as a holy book – and the supersessionism informing the argument is not seen as religious hostility. Instead, the political and cultural characteristics set out in the Old Testament define Jews negatively for Agardh: a major error in their religion is that they believe in the messiah as a secular ruler, which keeps them separate as a nation (p. 170). Religion, he argues, has never been more than a cover for the real reason for rejection and expulsion:

[att tänkande personer] ansett judarne utgöra ett folk inom folket, en stat inom staten; och att de om än bosatte ibland ett annat folk, fortfara att utgöra ett eget folk för sig. Ett motsvarande exempel finns uti Katholikerne ... derför att de lyda Påfven ...

²²²² For circumcision, see the discussion of Omskärelsen eller den stundande tiden above.  
²²²² Lipman Lipmanson, Öppet sändebref till herr biskopen m. m. C. A. Agardh, med anledning af uppsatsen “Monopolium mot judarne” (Stockholm: Isaac Marcus, 1856), 10.
Agardh claims that it is theoretically possible that Jews could keep their religion while ridding themselves of everything else that makes them "Jewish," namely, the homogeneity which makes them a nation within the nation (p. 171). A paradox occurs here, since Agardh believes that rites and laws such as circumcision, the Sabbath, and kashrut were only established to preserve Jews as a separate and homogenous people – according to his argument, there is therefore no religious core to Judaism, just the aspects which make Jews a nation within the nation. Religious and cultural aspects are merged: Jews, as an Eastern people, do not share the idea of male and female equality, which according to Agardh is a sign of Western spiritual superiority (p. 176), and instead construct family life as concubinage (p. 177). Jewish law sees all non-Jews and even converts as foreign because they lack a direct family connection to Jacob and Israel. This leads Jews to see themselves as a kind of nobility, and if Jews were to receive political representation, this would mean instituting a new nobility (p. 180). The idea of Jews seeing themselves as a nobility had already been mentioned in the contributions of the previous decades.

Despite the perceived Jewish focus on monetary affairs, Agardh was mainly afraid that once they were given permission, Jews would buy and own all the land in Sweden and would make the Swedes their servants (p. 186). This conclusion from his summary of contemporary debates, historical expulsions, and Jewish law and religion is somewhat surprising and might have been elicited by the farmers’ estate’s resistance to the liberalization of the judereglemente in the Riksdag – Agardh probably saw the farmers as his closest allies and sought to address their concerns, even though the question of land ownership did not feature in his pamphlet and its list of Jewish attributes. A biographical motive is also possible, considering Agardh’s failure as a land owner, which preceded the publication of Försök till Statsekonomisk statistik.

Old theme, old arguments

As was the case for the religious arguments and text genres, the economic aspects of the "Jewish question" had already been produced by 1815, and they included the tropes which would dominate anti-Jewish thought for the rest of the century. A relatively new addition to this discourse was the invention of “Jude-
vänner” and the labelling of people with certain political views as “Jews.” This created an opening for far-reaching conspiracy theories, filled some of the logical holes in the argument that a quantitatively very small group of people was responsible for such widespread economic consequences, and also completed the disengagement of hermeneutic Jews from actual people of Jewish faith. According to this definition, a Jew is simply someone who does Jewish things, with “Jewish things” being character traits and, resulting from these, business practices previously defined as Jewish.

In 1838, Jews were described as vampires, bloodsuckers, and Satan himself; the myths and arguments behind these terms were old and familiar, but the terminology was updated in connection with the failed Emancipation. *Den nya tiden eller Kanaans land* fits into the liberal-constitutionalist discourse of newspapers like *Aftonbladet*, *Freija*, and *Dagsposten*, which similarly condemned the Emancipation edict as signalling Sweden’s downfall. Most newspaper articles made a point of proclaiming their liberalism and even religious tolerance, arguing instead that the edict had been issued without proper permission from the estates, thereby indicating a return to absolutism – which was not exactly true, as there had been thorough consultations with the local governors involved. *Den nya tiden* is more open in its hostility towards Jews as a group. The language is harsh, no counterarguments are presented, and the repeated mention of how the cavalry put down the Stockholm riots suggests that a bloody condition approximating civil war already existed in Sweden, thanks to the Jews. Regarding antisemitic imagery, the connection between moneylending, bloodsucking, and total control is distinctly modern and also new in the Swedish context.

The short-lived but lively debate that followed jeweller Bengt Sander’s screed shows that the “Jewish question” was seen as being of public interest, worth discussing in the country’s leading daily newspaper. Both he and some of the responses he elicited described Jews as a group with collective traits, using religious language. It is striking how Sander himself, a seemingly random person, felt compelled to write a manifesto against Jewish business practices – maybe he felt threatened by new competition in his field of expertise. In any case, he combined personal fears, an ongoing debate about the guild system, and whatever he had in terms of “knowledge” about Jews, and turned these into a pamphlet. This widely distributed publication is like a volcano, spitting out lava from an underlying, invisible, but always active, stream.

The Michaelson and Benedicks families were popular targets of anti-Jewish propaganda. It was enough that they were rich, internationally well-connected, savvy immigrants with successful businesses, rewarded by the king – anti-Jewish knowledge filled the gaps in this picture with greed, fraud, and malice, and thus
populated an anti-Jewish matrix with actual people, leading to serious accusations against them and translating purely abstract knowledge into real-life actions.

Bishop Agardh combined economic arguments with other stereotypes in a powerful way – it is actually difficult to tell whether he saw economic or religious factors as being the primary cause of what he saw as “Jewishness”; certainly, the two are intimately connected in his interpretation of Jewish law and its influence on Jews as a group. His contribution is original in that regard, as it does not trace the money connection back to the European Middle Ages and the practice of usury and its condemnation by the Latin Church – for him, the connection between Jews and money ran much deeper, going back to the Torah and its laws. The circular argument, about Jewish difference deriving from religion but not being religious in nature, is a central pillar of Agardh’s text, the other being the connection between Jews and money, with this too being grounded in the religion itself, in his view. Already in biblical times, Jews had invented most of the basic institutions of monetary trade in use in modern times: currency exchange, because they needed to pay the temple tax from foreign lands; loans, because it is written in the Mosaic laws; and credit, to be followed by slavery for those who were not able to pay their debts (p. 183).

Money played a role in many, but certainly not all, anti-Jewish texts in the nineteenth century. Moreover, it was rarely the sole theme in texts, even though the bankruptcies of Jewish businesses in 1809 and the prominence of a few Jewish business owners were used as a peg on which to hang texts about generalized Jewish malice. Besides Bishop Agardh’s comprehensive and intricate combining of various stereotypes, most texts dealing with primarily economic prejudice focus on a single specific case, deriving from a personal conflict or a personal fear of business competition or general poverty. From this combination of personal fears, conflict with specific people, and traditional “knowledge” about the connection between Jews and money, the authors generalized an image of the Swedish-Jewish minority being rich, greedy, unfair in their business practices, as well as too successful to be good for the Swedish economy and, at the same time, dangerous because of their lack of success and their alleged attempts to hold on to their personal assets and funds, despite the bankruptcies.

Considering the longevity of the stereotypical “Jews–money” connection, the process that can be observed here is significant for the updating of the anti-Jewish archive. Since the Jewish minority in Sweden actually did form an economically atypical and privileged minority, due to the immigration restrictions, it might have been expected that most of the texts would focus on this fact and update their knowledge from the combination of actual people like Michael Benedicks, their success, and centuries-old images of usury. But even though this happened, it was far from being the most prominent strand of anti-Jewish text production.