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Managing the Welfare State: Lessons from Gustav Möller*

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The administrative problems of the present Welfare State have come into focus in recent research. The basic question being raised is whether an elected government can control the bureaucracies that handle the social programmes, i.e., whether the intentions of the parliamentary majority really can be translated into action when they reach the point of administrative implementation. The central subject of this study is the legendary architect of the Swedish Welfare State, Gustav Möller, who was Minister of Social Affairs 1924-26 and 1932-51. It is argued that many of the problems highlighted in present theories of public administration were already apparent to Möller. As the minister responsible for the administrative construction of the Swedish Welfare State, he developed several strategies to cope with the problems of bureaucracy. Having lost the battle over the Social Democratic party leadership in 1946, Gustav Möller left the government in 1951. Subsequently many of his original anti-bureaucratic administrative strategies were reversed.

Introduction

The Welfare State seems to be in some trouble at the moment. Questions are being raised about the possibilities of financing and governing it properly. Governments are said to be overloaded (Rose 1980), parliamentary intentions are perverted by administrative incapacity (Pressman & Wildavsky 1973, Barrett & Fudge 1981), or by the discretion wielded by 'street-level bureaucrats' in the social service apparatuses (Lipsky 1980). Interorganizational networks, combining powerful public and private interests into iron triangles, seem to be able to protect themselves from any form of democratic control in the policy process (Jordan 1981). Moreover, changing the policy of established public authorities is said to be a difficult task (Mayntz 1979).

There is, as Theda Skocpol and Kenneth Finegold have stated, no guarantee that government organizations can really execute the tasks they take on. They further state that: '(t)he administrative organization is crucial, especially when policies calling for increased government intervention are to be implemented' (Skocpol & Finegold 1982, 260). Ultimately, it is the Welfare State's long-term legitimacy that has come into question by the frequency of its policy failures and administrative 'schlamperei' (Scharph 1977, Mayntz 1975).

* This article is an outcome of two research projects, 'Public Administration and Social Change', directed by Lennart Lundquist, and 'Sweden under Social Democracy 1932-76', directed by Göran Therborn. In addition to these two colleagues, I am grateful to the late Tage Erlander, Michael Hill, Anders Sannerstedt, Nils Stjernquist and Rolf Torstendahl for having read and commented upon earlier versions.

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The subject of this article is the administrative policy of the legendary Swedish Social Democratic politician Gustav Möller (1884-1970). As Minister of Social Affairs for more than twenty years (1924-26 and 1932-51), he was undoubtedly the foremost pioneer and architect of the social insurance and welfare systems in one of the most developed Welfare States. During that time he was responsible for not only traditional social insurance questions but also housing, labour market, health care, work-protection and to some extent educational matters.

The method used in this article is historical and comparative. I wish to confront some of the questions raised in the literature about the governability of the Welfare State with the ideas of one of its most important Scandinavian constructors and ideologists. Did Gustav Möller, as a strategist of the Swedish Welfare State, recognize the problems raised in the theoretical debates of today? If so, how did he plan to manage them? Did he establish any particular or special kind of organizational design for the administrative systems that were to implement the social reform programmes that he launched?

The focus on a single person in a matter like this could of course be questioned. I do not believe that the rise and general development of the Swedish Welfare State are determined by any particular single individual but must be explained as the outcome of class conflicts and compromises between organized class interests (Przeworski & Wallerstein 1982, Korpi 1978, Therborn 1984). Nevertheless, I think that in administrative matters the thoughts and strategies of a person like Gustav Möller must be considered important since he was the foremost spokesman on social affairs for a Social Democratic party that holds the record of durability in governmental power among Western democracies: 1932 to 1976 (Korpi 1978, Therborn 1984). The theoretical reason for focusing the analysis on a person like Gustav Möller comes from the discussion about the relationship between actors and structures in the social sciences (cf. Elster 1983, Lundquist 1985, Lukes 1977, Giddens 1979, 1981, 1982). There can be no doubt that Gustav Möller was a political actor who came into a position where if he had (in the phrase of Anthony Giddens) 'acted otherwise', there would have certainly been a difference with regard to both social and administrative structures (Giddens 1979, 56).

Theoretical Notes

Taking up the problems of democratic government and control of the Welfare State is nowadays usually considered to be a conservative line of thought (cf. Offe 1984). The monetarist attack on the Welfare State and the demand for cut backs and for deregulation are well known. The normative and theoretical premisses of this article are, however, quite different from the monetarist school of thought. I believe that primary human needs should be provided collectively by institutions under democratic control. I am not arguing against markets in general as a way of effectively allocating resources. However, education,

housing, health care, social insurance and the like are not, in my opinion, suitable for production based on profit. The ultimate values of Welfare State activities such as justice, fairness, truth, etc., are not compatible with profitability. Or to put it more precisely, there is no definite relation between use-values and exchange-values in these matters of basic welfare. The serious theoretical shortcomings of the rational choice school's treatment of the political sphere have recently been shown by, among others, Barry Hindess (1984). But these considerations aside, it is of course important that decisions made by a democratic parliament are also implemented (Rein 1983, 114).

The Welfare State has also been subject to attacks from the Left, in many ways similar to those of the Right (Crouch 1979). The state is said to be in the service of the dominant class and nothing but a political shell for the ruling bourgeoisie (cf. Jessop 1982, 32-77, Gough 1979, 155-157). I think this is a misunderstanding of the role and development of the Welfare State. Such a sterile line of thought, which has almost been abandoned today, conflicts with a more thorough and dialectical reading of Marx which shows that the relationship between state and society is not in any way structurally determined (cf. Jessop 1981, 183, Clarke 1977, 20, Giddens 1981, 215). The development of the 'closed door' and static state theory was peculiar to a general social theory which states that societies are dynamic to such an extent that they in fact sometimes explode into revolutionary transformations.

By abolishing production for profit in some central areas, the Welfare State can in Marxist terms be seen, I think, as a partial victory for the dominated classes under capitalism — a victory comparable to the rise of the Absolutist State under late feudalism which also can be considered a partial victory for a new class, viz. the emerging bourgeoisie (cf. Anderson 1974, Hilton 1984). Theoretically the state is considered a special area in society where, as in the economic and ideological areas, organized class interests meet in conflict and compromise over various issues (Przeworski & Wallerstein 1982, Crouch 1979, 29, Miliband 1983, cf. Therborn 1984, Jessop 1982, 185).

What seems to be especially valuable in the new development of Marxist theory of the State is the role assigned the administrative structures within the various State apparatuses (Jessop 1982, 187, 253, Wright 1978, Skocpol & Finegold 1982, Todd 1982, Benson 1982, Clark & Dear 1984, Weir & Skocpol 1983). The internal structure of the State is said to limit the range of actions of any political party holding governmental power. The administrative structure of the State is thus not a neutral instrument in the hands of whatever political coalition that may capture a parliamentary majority, but a constraint on the possibilities for the performance of effective State policies, especially policies in the interests of the dominated classes (Esping Andersen et al. 1976). As Giddens has stated, the most important social structures that limit the actions of social agents are the institutional ones (Giddens 1982).

Moreover, the administrative structure of the State is said to correlate with

class interests penetrating the State apparatus (Therborn 1978, Roy 1981). If this is true, we should expect the State organization to change when Welfare State policies are established as a result of working class political mobilization. This means that the structure of the administrative apparatuses that handle the Welfare State activities can be expected to differ from the traditional capitalist State apparatuses such as the army, the courts and the central legally dominated administrative bureaucracy (Therborn 1978, 39). The question is whether a man like Gustav Möller considered the existing internal State structure to be a hindrance to his social reform plans, and if so, what he did to change these structures.

Some Problems of Administrating the Welfare State

The problem of democratic control over the Welfare State is generated by an interest in the problems of the legitimacy of democracy. If the intentions of a parliamentary majority cannot be transformed into concrete implementation by the State apparatuses, the very point in voting for different political parties vanishes (Rein 1983, 114). Thus, if the freedom to vote for alternative political parties is illusionary, recourse to the market as a solution is near at hand. At least the market seems to give a possibility for choice between alternatives.

The problems of managing the Welfare State becomes most acute when decisive forms of state interventionism are required as a way of implementing government policy. The reason for this is that the Weberian type of bureaucracy, which is the primary organizational mode of the capitalist State (Therborn 1978, 47-54), is not suited for this kind of activity (Offe 1975, cf. Ripley & Franklin 1982). Interventionist, or productive, State policies cannot be managed with general rules and regulations which is the governing form 'par preference' of Weberian bureaucracy. Instead, in interventionist policy, there is a need for specific guidance because each case needs to be treated individually, albeit in accordance with the general aim of the policy. The bureaucratic mode of organization, however, lacks an adequate form for this type of management. Policy failures are most likely to occur when governments go into productive, and market dependent, activities (Offe 1975). This is because successful operations in markets cannot be guided by any general rules or regulations for the operative personnel because markets, like other kinds of social interaction between individuals, are continously changing. Thus, no standard operative principles or rule of thumb can be used to govern the bureaucrats when they intervene (cf. Perrow 1979, 4, Mintzberg 1979, 333-347, Ham & Hill 1984, 113-173). Parliamentary laws or governmental regulations simply cannot be made both to carry out the general aim of the interventionist policy and to take into account all the possible deviations that might occur in single cases (cf. Lipsky 1980). For example, two persons applying for work at the labour exchange cannot be treated in exactly the same way since they do not have the same qualifications, skills and requirements.

Moreover, what kind of work should a person on the dole have to accept according to his age, experience and skills so as not to risk losing the allowance? Cases at the social or welfare office are almost never precisely identical.

The development from a juridically dominated State to an interventionist Welfare State means that governments' ambitions change. From wanting to establish rules for regulating the meeting of independent actors in markets and other social relations (eg. civil law), the State itself becomes an actor in the markets and other social relations in order to change them (such as, e.g., social therapy for divided families, guidance at labour exchanges, prevention of child abuse, State enterprise in nonprofitable industrial regions, etc.). For the first kind of tasks, the Weberian type of bureaucracy is adequate, for the second it is not (cf. Offe 1975). As an organizational form, it does not give government the possibility of 'fine-tuning' its activities and it can therefore, when used for interventionist policies, hardly be democratically controlled in the traditional parliamentary way. It is precisely here, I think, that the structural limitations of the internal institutional form of the State is situated, i.e., in its inherited organizational structure (Benson 1982). How can it be assured that every official, or even the majority of the officials in the gigantic welfare bureaucracies, in every single case, or even in the majority of cases, act in accordance with the intentions behind the parliamentary policy decision?

Thus, the failure to establish correspondence between political intentions as expressed in a parliamentary policy decision and concrete actions in the field might be due neither to the policy per se nor to the public organization as such, but to the fact that the two are just not suited to one another (cf. Mayntz 1982). Just as there is a contradiction between the development of productive forces and relations of production in the economic sector, the rise of the Welfare State might create a contradiction between the development forces shaping public policy and the relations of organization in the political and administrative sector of society (cf. Mouzelis 1984).

Gustav Möller — A Short Background

Gustav Möller entered the Swedish government for the first time as Minister of Social Affairs in a Social Democratic minority cabinet 1924-26. From 1932 he held that post, with a minor break, until 1951, when he left the government because of lack of support for his more generous social policy (Erlander 1974, 245-255). He was one of the four big names in the second generation of Swedish Social Democrats (the others being P.A. Hansson, E. Wigforss and P.E. Sköld). His main political achievement consisted of planning and enforcing a large social programme containing innumerable reforms that were to result in a Welfare State of the most expanded kind seen so far in history. Son of a blacksmith and raised very humbly, he was appointed secretary general of the party in 1916, a post which he held until 1940. He was, according to one biography, the leading Social

Democratic politician, who had the closest contacts with the party's grass roots, and in many ways personified the party's reformist and popular political line (*Svenska Män och Kvinnor* 1949, 377).

It should be noted that Gustav Möller, although a firm anti-revolutionary and political enemy of Left-Socialists and Communists, did not consider social reforms as the general aim, or even long-term main purpose, of Social Democratic politics. He thought that before nationalization of industry could take place and socialism be introduced, it was necessary to develop the productive and human forces of society, and this could be done primarily by implementing a large number of social reforms. His reason for this was that the level of production was still so low that even if its fruits were to be more equally shared, they would not suffice to give the working classes a reasonable standard of living. In the meantime, it was essential to build a system of social reforms as a means to ensure the right to pensions, free education, unemployment insurance, health care, housing, etc. to make the working class strong enough for the transformation to socialism (Gunnarsson 1975, Nyström 1983). Thus, being the foremost spokesman in the government for extending social policies, he criticized the group that worked on the famous and important reformist document called the Swedish Labour Movement Post-war Programme in 1943 for not giving sufficient consideration to the questions and problems of socialism (Ohlson 1958). At the party congress in 1944 he strongly opposed the revision of the party programme that started the process of deprecating the socialist and Marxist theses in the Swedish Social Democratic party.

Gustav Möller also had a firm knowledge of and a living interest in Marxist theory. He was one of the founders of the Society for Marxism in 1916, a sort of study group of Social Democratic and other left-wing intellectuals. Two decades later he strongly opposed a proposal to abandon the study of Marxism in the Society raised by some of its members during the dark 1930's (according to Nyström 1977, the proposal came from the economist Gunnar Myrdal). What is especially interesting in this context about the Society for Marxism and Gustav Möller is that when the Social Democrats entered the government in 1917, he persuaded the Society to take up administrative issues in its discussions as well as its traditional theoretical Marxist questions. Some aspects of the administrative style he later was to develop as Minister of Social Affairs were thus discussed in this small group of leading Social Democratic intellectuals (Nyström 1977).

The Administrative Strategies of Gustav Möller

The main inspiration for the content of the social security system that Gustav Möller was to plan and enforce came from two Danes, C.V. Bramsnaes and K.K. Steincke. The latter was to become Minister of Social Affairs in Denmark from

1929 (Nyström 1983). Through their ideas, which he came to know in 1920, Möller found a way of avoiding both the Bismarckian authoritarian/anti-socialist line, and the liberal charity line of directing social reforms only to the poorest and thereby socially stigmatizing them (Nyström 1983). To cope with the administrative problems of the Welfare State mentioned above, he developed five different administrative strategies. These were,

- general instead of specific reforms
- trusting local and popularly established organizations with public administrative tasks
- reducing the power of the juridical State apparatus
- closing down old and building up new State apparatuses
- recruiting union cadres as 'street level' bureaucrats for the new 'reform bureaucracies'.

General vs. Specific Reforms

Gustav Möller's main line of managing the Welfare State was to make a decisive break with the traditional specific character of public social assistance. When constructing social reforms, he consistently tried to make them as general and equal as possible. The foremost example of this was the scheme of child-allowances that he launched. According to Möller, the allowance was to be distributed to the families as a fixed sum for each child without regard to the level of family income. The child of a millionaire was thus to get the same allowance as the child of a poor family. The pension and health insurance systems were to be organized in the same way. The reason for this was to avoid administrative complexity and forms of humiliating treatment by the bureaucracy (Möller 1971). Social allowances were to be a 'civil right', not something to be asked or begged for (Möller 1952, 392, cf. Nyström 1983).

The use of general allowances in the social reforms was a way of avoiding the flavour of charity in the policy as, in principle, everyone would pay for the policy and everyone would gain from it (*Socialsverige* 1956, 105-111, cf. Möller 1946, 1947, 1971, 1952). General allowances were also aimed at avoiding social stigmatization of those benefiting from the social policies. In one of the pension reforms, launched just after the Second World War, he supported this line against both the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. In his own words: 'The ... reason for me to support a general pension system without any limit of income was that the pension scheme for the elderly should be changed to a general civil right instead of being a gift of charity from society' (Möller 1971, 181, my translation). The same goes for his strategy when constructing a health insurance scheme. The Royal Commission that had made the preliminary study for the scheme proposed a system where people would be placed in 20 different insurance classes according to their incomes. Möller opposed the commission on this point and launched an insurance scheme with only one class. In parliament

(1946), he argued that the multi-class scheme would need a too large bureaucracy and would be exposed to too much bureaucratic discretion. [1] Enforcing this kind of generally oriented social policy schemes, he had to engage in some hard political fights with his own cabinet, even to the point of threatening to resign (Möller 1971, 188, 190, Erlander 1974, 245-255). Even in one of his last years in parliament (1953), he opposed the change of the health insurance scheme towards a more specific character with the same antibureaucratic arguments as in 1946.[2] And as early as 1937, arguing for a general and egalitarian social insurance scheme, he criticized the humiliating bureaucratism wielded in the old poor relief administration:

> If there is anything destructive in this area, it is the bureaucratization of the poor relief system ... it frequently happens that on behalf of the poor relief administration, a young civil servant, recently educated from some institute, appears, who has been trained in how poor relief cases generally are to be handled. He then poses the most peculiar questions to the person who eventually is to get support (my translation).[3]

Trusting Local and Popularly Established Organizations

In the many cases when general policies could not be used, Möller did not trust the old bureaucracies to implement his social reforms. Instead he preferred to let public administrative issues be handled by local and popularly established organizations. The foremost example of this administrative line is the unemployment insurance scheme. When a public unemployment insurance scheme was introduced in 1934, the administrative responsibility to implement it was given to the union unemployment funds. Having existed as a part of the union movement since the late 19th century, the Swedish dole system was thus not to be administered by any public 'street level' bureaucrats, but by the union cadres themselves. This was of course greatly disputed by the bourgeois parties (Möller 1938, Rothstein 1982, 1985). Similar arrangements were made for the health insurance system and for the supplementary pension scheme (Möller 1947, Fürth 1983). Complementing this new anti-bureaucratic administrative style was his confidence in letting local authorities have the responsibility for the field management of other social reforms (Möller 1947, Nyström 1983).

Even in the case of the distribution of allowances and credits to help small firms grow during the crises of the 1930's, Möller officially (in the government bill) expressed distrust in the central public bureaucracy. The Royal Board of Commerce, which had existed for centuries, was told that it would not be allowed to handle the system, as according to Möller, no government authority was suited to do this from its central position in Stockholm.[4] Instead, to get public support, the small firms in each county had to organize themselves into societies of their own. These were then given the full responsibility to handle the credit system and distribute the allowances among their members. In the Parliament Bill he stated that,

> support should be given under conditions that make possible the necessary discretion for the society in its activity. Contrary to the Royal Board of Commerce, I believe that a locally working organization of this kind is more qualified than a ministry or a central agency to judge in every particular case how one, with the existing resources, might get the best possible result (my translation).[4]

The small firms were to hold the majority of seats in these new semi-public societies, but representatives from other local semi-public societies and from the regional authorities were also to be represented. Thus, for the implementation of this kind of policy, Möller created local inter-organizational networks. As was the case with the union unemployment funds, the local pension boards and the popularly organized local health insurance boards, the societies for the small firms were supervised but not directed by central authorities (Nyström 1963, cf. Fürth 1983).

Reducing the Power of the Juridical State Apparatus

The third way Gustav Möller translated his intentions into actions was to reduce the power of the traditional legal system. He made sure that the last word in the interpretation of social reform laws was not, as it used to be, in the hands of the high courts. Instead the last instance of appeal should be the Ministry of Social Affairs, in practice himself.[5] The argument was that he wanted to be sure that the laws would be implemented in a way that was in accordance with his own intentions (Nyström 1983). The Swedish welfare system was thus organized differently from the system in the United States, since the responsibility for the development of the social reforms stayed in the hands of the politicians. Even in his last year in the parliament, Gustav Möller kept to this standpoint. Opposing a proposal from a bourgeois party, he argued that practically all new social reform laws when put into practice needed to be interpreted to establish rules of implementation. Because of the importance of how laws were interpreted, he considered it reasonable that the politicians who enacted the laws should also take the responsibility for the establishment of precedents.[6] He further argued that he believed that those who wanted the courts to interpret the social reform laws wanted to put the existing government, recruited from a new social stratum, under the supervision of interests represented by the earlier rulers who could no longer secure a majority for their policies.[7]

Closing Down Old and Building Up New State Apparatuses

The fourth main strategy that Möller launched to control the administrative processes in the Welfare State was to close down or bypass the traditional bureaucracies and create new forms of central, regional and local public organizations. The most clear case is the shift from the pre-war Unemployment Commission to the post-war Labour Market Board. The activities of the Unemployment

Commission, established in 1914, became one of the most disputed political issues in Swedish politics in the 1920's and early 1930's. In short, it can be said that the way the Unemployment Commission handled relief to the unemployed masses during the economic crisis threatened the very base for the Social Democratic Party, i.e. the organizational reproduction and strength of the blue-collar unions. This was because the Commission could force unemployed workers to take jobs at workplaces that were affected by strikes or blockades by the threat of depriving them of assistance from the Commission if they would not comply. The Commission's policy, supported by the bourgeois majority in parliament, forced two minority Social Democratic cabinets to resign during the twenties (Unga 1976). In the prologues to the two cabinet crises, the leading official in the Commission actively co-operated with the bourgeois political leaders to make the Social Democratic governments resign over the question of the Commission's policy in labour market conflicts (Unga 1976, Rothstein 1982, 1985).

Another threat from the Commission towards the union movement was that the Commission made it possible for local authorities to get work projects done with unorganized labour if they were made relief projects administrated by the Unemployment Commission (Unga 1976). The Unemployment Commission, for such relief job projects, paid wages well under the level that was established by the market, the argument being that this would force the unemployed to search for work on the ordinary labour market (ibid). This wage policy naturally threatened the unions' possibilites for maintaining wages at the level agreed upon in negotiations with the employers. Thus the fundamental 'raison d'etre' of the unions was under attack. Lastly, the Commission was determined to give assistance only to about half the unemployed in order to increase the reserve army of labour available for jobs with lower wages than those agreed upon in union-employer negotiations. Thereby the most vital union weapon, monopoly of the supply of labour, was threatened (Rothstein 1982, 1985, cf. Möller 1938, Thomson 1944).

To close down the Unemployment Commission was to become a primary goal, not to say necessity, for the labour movement. The Unemployment Commission was commonly seen by the organized working class as a genuinely hostile bourgeois state apparatus, also because of its rigidity and the humiliating circumstances under which relief to the unemployed was given (Rothstein 1982, cf. Unga 1976). In parliament Möller frequently criticized the Unemployment Commission for wielding to much power by exploiting its possibilities for discretion,[9] for its bureaucratic rigidity,[10] its bourgeois character[11] and the unnecessary inhumanity of its policy.[12] To close down the Commission and start a completely new programme for unemployment relief was therefore one of the main Social Democratic promises in the elections of 1932 (Unga 1976, Öhman 1970). When they won a large electoral victory, but not their own majority in Parliament, the Social Democrats established the famous 'horse-trade' com-

promise with the Agrarian Party in 1933, comprising both a more generous unemployment policy and agricultural policy. The political price of this compromise was that the Commission should continue as before, but it was no longer permitted to force the unemployed under its assistance to act as strike breakers (Öhman 1970). In addition — and this was Möller's greatest achievement — the main portion of the money to be spent on measures to combat unemployment was to be directly controlled by the Ministry of Social Affairs, thus cutting much of the Commission's power (Rothstein 1982, 21, Parliament Bill 1933/211, 126-136). The increase in the total amount of money involved to combat unemployment, which was one of the outcomes of the compromise with the Agrarian party, also meant a decrease in the reserve army of labour. During the rest of the 1930's the funds channelled through the Commission diminished in proportion to those directly controlled by Möller's ministry. Practically without importance, the Unemployment Commission was finally closed down in 1940 (Rothstein 1982). Thus, in a special Social Democratic (and Swedish) way, a State apparatus was 'smashed'.

In the place of the Unemployment Commission, a whole new organization to cope with labour market problems was established in 1939. Originally set up as a war time crisis commission, it was to develop into the National Labour Market Board which became permanently established in 1948. The Board was later to become the central State organization in the establishment of the post-war special Social Democratic 'Swedish Model', with its encompassing and generous labour market policy (Shonfield 1965, 200-202, Hedborg & Meidner 1984, Hanf et al. 1978, 307, 333). The new Board's Director General was taken directly from LO, the central Swedish blue-collar union organization. He was, in fact, its vice chairman and, moreover, union representatives were given a majority of the seats on the new agency's board. The union movement also kept control over the administration of the unemployment funds, which to an increasing extent were publicly financed (Möller 1952, Rothstein 1980, 1985).

This way of overriding the old bureaucratic state apparatuses when launching new social reforms was again used by Möller when the great post-war reform era came. In some of the most important and structurally oriented social reforms, such as the public housing policy, the traditional bureaucracy was put aside as new central authorities were created. Especially at the regional administrative level the existing State County Administrative Boards did not obtain any influence over the social reforms as new regional reform agencies were created. For example, the new National Housing Board, established in 1948, got its own 24 regional administrative boards and thus could enforce its policy throughout the country independently of the old State County Administrative Boards (Nyström 1983, 231, *Housing in the Nordic Countries* 1968, 218, Norrving 1981, 40-43).

A similar system was used for the National Labour Market Board and the National Board for Work Protection, both established 1948 (Rothstein 1981, Nyström 1983). In these new 'reform bureaucracies' Möller was anxious to get

leading administrative personnel whom he knew to support the intentions behind the programmes (Nyström 1983). The boards of these new State apparatuses, central as well as regional, were often staffed in a corporate manner with representatives from the union movement and employers together with parliamentarians as a way of checking the influence of the civil servants (cf. Rothstein 1981, 1985).

Möller interfered even in educational matters, which formally were not under the responsibility of his ministry. The vocational training system had until then been very small. It has been administered by the old National School Board, established in 1918, with a Conservative MP as its Director General. The National School Board was known for its internal conflicts between the comprehensive and academic school systems and teacher categories. Möller, who wanted to expand the youth vocational training schools, was dissatisfied with the slow and bureaucratic way in which the question of vocational training was handled by the National School Board, which concentrated its efforts on the traditional educational system. Aiming to lower the level of youth unemployment, he took the matter into his own hands and created a new organization, the National Board for Vocational Training, in 1943, organized in much the same way as the other 'reform bureaucracies' mentioned above (Thomson 1944, 79, interviews with Nils Gustav Rosen, Tore Karlsson and Gunnar Nilsson, cf. Rothstein 1981, Marklund 1982, 162-163).

With the exception of one case, we do not know whether all these new 'reform bureaucracies' really came to act in a way different from that of the traditional government organizations. The one case is the National Labour Market Board, which acted very un-bureaucratically in its enforcement of the extensive Swedish manpower policy programme from the late 1940's onwards (Rothstein 1980, 1985, cf. Hanf et al. 1978, 33). The only major work (from 1952!) that has dealt with these macro problems of the Swedish State in an empirical manner states that 'the social administration — the Board of Social Affairs, the Labour Market Board, the Social Insurance Board, the Housing Board, etc. are beginning to appear more and more as a special branch of the public administration' (Heckscher 1958, 48, my translation). The personnel at these agencies were told to take into consideration 'other things than papers', and to seek personal contact with their clients to discuss their cases with them in order to avoid the impression that decisions are just acts of administrative force (Hecksher 1958, 71).

From a parliamentary debate in 1926, we learn about Gustav Möller's plans for reorganizing the State administration. Just a few weeks before the Social Democratic minority government decided to resign, he took part in a debate on how to organize the public accident insurance system. In the government Bill that he launched, he stated that because of the 'law of inertia', The National Insurance Agency, established in 1902, had been organized precisely in the same bureaucratic way as all the other Royal national boards and agencies with origins

in the 17th century.[13] He did not deny that this kind of organization had its advantages, especially in its security and firmness. But, he argued, these organizations were created first and foremost to ensure law and order in a static society. They were not fit to handle the new public tasks in a developing and rapidly changing society like Sweden of the 1920's. Instead, to solve new tasks such as social insurance, a more flexible and management like organization was needed in which, for instance, the civil servants would not have a life-time contract but could be removed if their work performance was unsatisfactory.[13] He also proposed an un-bureaucratic system of recruitment and promotion where formal merits 'that played such a large role in the public administration' should not have to be considered in the National Insurance Agency.[14] The part of the Bill that proposed this kind of reorganization of the administrative structure was, however, rejected by parliament.[15]

Union Cadres as 'Street-Level' Bureaucrats

The last significant change in managing the Welfare State that bears the mark of Gustav Möller has to do with the recruitment of personnel to the new 'reform bureaucracies'. In spite of the very sparse amount of research also into this question (Lundquist 1971, 87), it is clear that in one of the three 'reform bureaucracies' established in 1948, the National Labour Market Board, a decisive break was made with the traditional bureaucratic form of recruitment of State personnel.

To this politically important State apparatus, which was to handle the Swedish manpower policy programme launched during the late 1950's, know as the Rehn-Meidner model (named after its two founders who were union economists, cf. Meidner 1969), personnel were to be recruited on the basis of their individual merits. This meant that no consideration would be given to formal merits, breaking with one of the most sacred principles of the Weberian model of bureaucracy (Rothstein 1980, 1985, cf. Therborn 1978). In practice this meant that a large number of the lower union cadre was recruited as 'street-level' bureaucrats to this State apparatus. When a formal parliamentary question was posed to Möller in 1943 about the recruitment policy, he stated that '(t)he existence of a theoretical education should, of course, not be looked upon as a disqualification'.[8]

In the area of promotion also, the established practice in the Swedish public administration system, which primarily took formal merits into account, was rejected when the Labour Market Board was set up. In its place a so-called free system of promotion was introduced (ibid). In practice this meant that the Social Democratic Director General could hand-pick people he thought suitable for key positions in the organization (Bertil Olsson in interview). As a result of this system of promotion, 7 of the 24 directors of the strategically important Regional Labour Market Bureaus in 1968 had been educated at the central blue-collar

union college, while only 5 had academic degrees (Rothstein 1980). According to Per Nyström, Möller's Under-Secretary of State 1944-1950, this kind of un-bureaucratic recruitment policy also characterized the other 'reform bureaucracies' that Möller established. This led to some opposition in parliament, where Möller's recruitment policy several times was close to be taken up by the Standing Committee on the Constitution. The Swedish constitution stated (and still states) that formal merits shall have primacy in connection with the recruitment and promotion of civil servants (Nyström 1983, 232).

This kind of anti-bureaucratic recruitment and promotion system for State personnel was, of course, aimed at ensuring that the administrative personnel would both want to and understand how to enforce the government policy (Lundquist 1985). As the union movement was the main creator of the post-war labour market policy (the Rehn-Meidner model, Hedborg & Meidner 1984), it was important to recruit the 'street-level' bureaucrats as well as the middle and top management from the labour movement. Moreover, considering the pre-war experience of the organized working class with State activity on the labour market, a State apparatus dominated by people of working class origin may have been a necessity if policy implementation were to be possible at all. As early as in 1926, Möller attacked the discretionary power wielded by the civil servants in the National Pension Board, arguing that it was necessary to have lay-men influencing the concrete decisions of the board.[16]

In his personal administrative practice in the Ministry of Social Affairs, Möller was known for not permitting formal and juridical obstacles, often erected by the old legally trained civil servants surrounding him, to interfere with his construction of the social reforms (Björck 1944). He personally played a central role in the concrete formulation of government bills, especially those that concerned the unemployment issue (ibid.). One of his closest collaborators in the Ministry of Social Affairs during the 1930's stated later on that his experience with poor people's living conditions made it possible for him to forecast the concrete impact of the proposed social programmes' rules and regulations (Björck 1944, 15).

A New Way of State Management?

Summing up, I think the evidence presented so far in this analysis indicates that the Welfare State builder Gustav Möller was very well aware of some of the problems of social programme administration highlighted in the theoretical literature today. When constructing his social reforms as well as designing the organizations that were to administrate them, he tried to prevent his original intentions from being thwarted in the implementation stage. Considering the durability of Social Democratic governance in Sweden, it seems reasonable to conclude that he had some success in this effort. It also seems reasonable to believe he had some understanding of the importance of the organizational

structure of the existing state apparatuses in terms of limiting the possibilities for implementation of his policies.

Besides occasional hints in the texts that have his signature, there is nothing to indicate whether his attempts at organizational change of the Welfare State were part of a more general political and administrative ideology or just ordinary Social Democratic political pragmatism. He never formulated his thoughts on these issues in any complete way. We might, however, point to two facts that suggest that the former possibility is the right one. First, his interest in discussing administrative issues in the Society for Marxism mentioned above; and, second, his activity from 1915 to the late 1920's as one of the foremost socialist debaters in Sweden. While we unfortunately do not know what thoughts on administrative issues he actually expressed in the Society for Marxism, his participation in the public debate tells a great deal about his general administrative strategy.

In some politically important articles published around 1920 in the Social Democratic party's theoretical journal *Tiden,* he discussed the issues and problems of administrating the socialist society. The standpoint he took was anti-Statist, that is, socialism should not be organized as mere State capitalism. 'There can be no doubt', he stated, 'that when we shall realize these great plans, we must solve the problem of bureaucracy. It is no use to create a State where the civil servants sit in the bureaus and command the production' (Möller 1920, 104). Instead of State control, he wanted the socialist production to be based on some form of self-management (Möller 1920, cf. Kjellberg 1981). It was important, he argued, that establishing economic democracy should not mean the same as 'to enlarge our bureaucracy' (Möller 1919a, 191, cf. Möller 1919b, Möller 1915, 12). In an article published in 1921, he strongly opposed the bourgeois class character of the existing state apparatuses, especially the church, the schools, the police and the courts (Möller 1975, 135). In a widespread political pamphlet from 1924, he stated that '(i)n a really democratic society all institutions should be democratic in their spirit and in their construction. If the people are the political masters of their house, they shall not have to meet oppressing masters in the public boards, in the courts, in the schools ...' (Möller 1975, 171). As a member of the national commission for socialization during the 1920's, he kept to this anti-bureaucratic standpoint when administrative questions came up. As an example, he proposed a de-bureaucratization of the National Railway Board to make it more efficient, stating that it was the bureaucratic form that made the organization inefficient (cf. Kjellberg 1981).[17]

I believe, therefore, one can conclude that Gustav Möller not only distrusted the existing bureaucracy and its bureaucrats, but also the bureaucratic organization as such. It seems that he made use of Marx's famous statement after the downfall of the Paris Commune to the effect that the working class could not just take over the existing bourgeois State machinery and use it for their own purposes without changing it radically. However, his neglect to write down his thoughts on the administration of the Welfare State was to have serious conse-

quences for the development of the Swedish Welfare State after he left the political scene. He lost the battle for the party leadership in 1946 to a Cabinet member of the younger generation, when he had been pretty sure of getting it, and left the government after a rather bitter fight in 1951 (Möller 1971, Erlander 1974). He then soon lost his seat in parliament and thus no longer had any political platform. In administrative and strategic political matters he did not, to my knowledge, make any further important public statements.

Many of his administrative arrangements were changed after he had left the political scene. During the late sixties the party almost abandoned his line of general social reforms, relying more and more on specific allowances administratively decided upon in each single case (Heckscher 1984, 227-253). The courts were given back their traditional role as the last instance of appeal in social reform laws (Hyden 1984). The popular and local influence over the health insurance administrations and pension boards was taken away during the late 1950's and the 1960's. The tasks were put under the administration of the traditional central bureaucracy (cf. Fürth 1983, Nyström 1983). In 1965, the vocational education system was returned to the National School Board (Marklund 1982). In the words of his former Deputy Minister, Per Nyström: 'when Gustav Möller left, the bureaucracy regained its power'. Thus, in this case, in the long run the structure defeated even an actor who really 'acted otherwise' (Giddens 1979, 56).

This article was not written to put forward the name of Gustav Möller as one of history's administrative or political geniuses. Neither was it written just to point at a neglected perspective in theory and research concerning the emergence of the (Swedish) Welfare State. It was written because I believe there might be some important lessons to learn from Gustav Möller in the discussion about the problems of the present Welfare State. The first, and most important, is that the institutional form of the State apparatuses is important for policy, i.e. that (organizational) structure matters. Another lesson is that top-down control has its limits; reforms constructed with general and thus simple rules are to be preferred because what actually happens in the implementation process of specific social reforms is so hard to control. Still another lesson is that when you cannot exercise top-down control, make the enemy your friend and give popular and local organizations control over the concrete implementation of the programme. In this way there is a possibility of checking the influence of the State personnel. Finally, if you need 'street-level' bureaucrats to handle your programme, make sure you get the right people, which means those who can be assumed to share your intentions with the programme. In short, the main lesson to learn from Gustav Möller would be: Do not let the traditional Weberian type of bureaucracy handle your interventionist social programme.

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