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www.opiskelijakirjasto.lib.helsinki.fi
opiskelijakirjasto-info@helsinki.fi

On the Practicability of Scandinavianism: Mid-nineteenth-century Debate and Aspirations*

Ake Holmberg

1.

Scandinavianism is the term applied to the attempts made in the 19th century to create a closer union, political or otherwise, between the united kingdoms of Norway and Sweden on the one hand, Denmark on the other. Swedish optimists at times included Finland, lost to Russia in 1809.

The corresponding endeavours of the 20th century, usually less centred on political union, are termed "Nordicism", very seldom Scandinavianism. At least one of the reasons for this change of name is, I believe, the wish of presentday adherents of Nordic co-operation to dissociate themselves from the 19th-century movement, because they feel Scandinavianism was unsuccessful and that the reason for its lack of success was its unrealistic approach. Scandinavianism they feel, was made up of nebulous dreams, concerned with unattainable political unity and grandeur, out of touch both with the great majority of the Scandinavian peoples and their real aspirations, and with the gross realities of the European situation of the time. In the age of Cavour, Bismarck and *Realpolitik*, these university students, this handful of journalists and this sprinkling of other middle-class people who were the nucleus of the movement, just talked, sang and drank their toasts. Dreams thus, fantasy far removed from political realities.

One of the first contemporary writers to propound such negative views on Scandinavianism was a native of Orkney, later a citizen of Edinburgh, Samuel Laing, the first British translator of Snorri's *Heimskringla*. He is more widely known, however, for his travel books. Among them is a very enthusiastic description of Norway, and a much more critical account of a visit to Sweden in 1838.¹ Laing

Åke Holmberg, born 1915, Ph. D., Professor of History (retired), University of Gothenburg, has published books on Scandinavianism in Sweden, on African nineteenth-century history, and a two-volume *World History*. At present he is engaged in studies concerning Sweden and the Far World, 1750-1914.

Address: Fyradalersgatan 58, S-41319 Göteborg

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¹ S. Laing, *A Tour in Sweden in 1838: Comprising Observations on the Moral, Political and Economic State of the Swedish Nation* (London, 1839).

denounces the union of Norway and Sweden brought about in 1814 with British connivance. According to him this enforced union is doomed to dissolution.

Laing goes on to marvel at the fact that some people actually look forward to a union between all three of the Northern kingdoms, which would then serve as a bulwark against Russia. This is mere speculation, Laing claims. "The only real elements of union—the interests of the people—are naturally wanting between these nations. The one can give no market to the products or industry of the other: each is sufficient in itself for all it requires. The three British nations are united into one unit of power, because one of them requires and buys all the produce of the labour, and all the labour itself, which the others can spare.. But Sweden and Norway interchange nothing with each other... Denmark ... could take very little of the products of the other two countries... But if the two, or even the three northern kingdoms were as perfectly amalgamated as the British the speculation would still be a mere delusion in politics; for they form no mass of power... a population of five or six millions has not spare strength in modern times to move the wheels of war beyond its own territory."²

Laing was widely read both inside and outside Scandinavia, but I do not think he was influential in any material respect or that he set the tone for the debate of the following decades. Nevertheless it is interesting to note that this visitor to Scandinavia at a time when Scandinavianism as a movement had hardly got under way, made observations that were to be echoed again and again by critics and disappointed adherents alike. The impracticability of Scandinavianism has remained a dominating theme in later historiography as well.

To my mind this assessment of the Scandinavian movement is less than fair. Historians, even more than most other people, must be prepared to acknowledge other achievements than Bismarckian blood-and-iron ones. The Scandinavian movement and its 20th-century sequel Nordicism has failed to change the map of Europe, and did not even create a *Zollverein*. But just as the German and Italian 19th-century success stories had less glorious 20th-century results, so maybe Scandinavianism was not after all an unqualified fiasco.

2.

The first man to insist explicitly on the practicability of Scandinavianism was Carl Jonas Love Almquist, the greatest genius of Swedish literature before Strindberg. In February 1846 he visited Copenhagen to lecture to the Scandinavian Society, an association formed in the previous year under the very suspicious and unwilling eyes of the Danish authorities, who feared newfangled and somewhat disloyal initiatives of this kind. Almquist's appearance in the Society may have sharpened their suspicions, because at the time he was *persona non grata* in Sweden, known even outside his country as a radical, not to say immoral critic of fundamental institutions of the State and the Church, notably matrimony. In a novel entitled "*Del gar*

² Ibid., pp. 414 ff.

an" ("It will do" or "Sara Videbeck") he had attacked marriage as an institution destructive both of true love and the fundamental rights of womanhood. Because of that he had been forced to leave his position as head of Sweden's most modern secondary school in Stockholm and to resign from the priesthood. The pressure had been applied that would soon drive him out of society and exile him.

On this occasion, however, Almquist told his large audience that he was not going to repeat what they had all heard many times, i.e. poetical and enthusiastic expressions of Scandinavian sentiment. He had chosen instead to view the matter in the perspective of practicability. Could practical methods be found, through which to bring the Scandinavian peoples closer together, to prepare the way for their fusion into one nation?

Almquist took his starting point in a field where indeed he was an expert. His main task as a school-master had been to provide Swedish pupils with a set of modern text-books. His Swedish grammar and spelling, his French and Greek grammars, his text-books in arithmetic, geometry and geography were all great successes. What matters most in the life of every individual, he now told his Danish listeners, is what we learn as children. As adults we are able to recognise as a truth the fact that Scandinavia forms a unity. But what is given to us in childhood will be much more indelible, will grow into instinct, will become the intellectual and emotional framework of our existence. You might call this indoctrination, Almquist admits, a way of inculcating prejudices. But the prejudice of Scandinavian unity is much to be preferred to its opposite, national hatred.

How is this fruitful prejudice to be built up? Almquist offers three suggestions of how to use the laws of psychology. The first one concerns the teaching of geography. In Swedish atlases you find maps of Sweden, full of colour and bristling with names of provinces and towns, hills, rivers and lakes. But to the West and Southwest of Sweden are white, empty territories labelled Norway, Denmark. In the same way Danish children study their own country in vivid colours, in full detail. In the periphery they may observe southern Sweden and a small portion of Norway as colourless and uninteresting wildernesses. Thus particularism becomes instinct.

If on the other hand schools were provided with new atlases, showing all three Scandinavian countries in the same profusion of colour and detail, our children would acquire a feeling of belonging to one common country, the home of one united nation. This is the answer to the Scandinavian question.

In a similar way our history books ought to treat the history of Scandinavia as the story of one Scandinavian people. That would mean reducing dynastic history with its manoeuvres, quarrels and wars to its proper proportions, relegating it to marginal positions. History on the grass root level—to use an expression of which Almquist was innocent—has no room for nationalistic distortions generating hatred between the Scandinavian peoples. Instead you would lay the foundation for a common Scandinavian patriotism.

In the third place Almquist advocated the teaching of Danish and Norwegian—considered at the time practically the same language—in Swedish schools, of Swedish in Danish and Norwegian ones. Dictionaries ought to be composed, which

treated the Scandinavian languages as dialectal varieties. A Danish dictionary would for example contain Swedish words and expressions on a par with the dialects of Jutland, Funen and Bornholm.

In addition to these three points — which were all, Almquist pointed out, open to private initiative—the speaker gave a list of seven practical steps that ought sooner or later to be initiated by the authorities. Efforts ought to be made to harmonise Scandinavian Criminal and Civil Law as well as Constitution, on the ground that the Scandinavian countries were all, as Almquist put it, free of the contagion of *Jus Romanum*, which afflicted the rest of Europe. He further recommended customs and monetary union in Scandinavia, united postal services, a defensive military alliance and co-training of troops, and—again an educational point—community in the academic field, either through a new common university in Göteborg, or through opening the existing universities to students and teachers from all Scandinavian countries and through mutual recognition of the degrees awarded by them.³

Some of the thoughts offered by Almquist in Copenhagen are commonplace today, some have been realised on a wider scale than he was able to imagine. Others are still Utopian. The fact I want to stress, however, is that already in the hey-day of Scandinavianism in the 19th century something was done along the lines Almquist suggested, especially in respect to his three main educational propositions.

3.

Let us start in the linguistic corner of Almquist's educational triangle. Efforts to increase mutual understanding and appreciation in this field had been made long before Almquist spoke, at least since the end of 18th century.

In 1799 Jens Kragh Høst published a small Swedish pocket dictionary for Danes. In about 150 pages he offered roughly one third of the Swedish vocabulary at the time, or about 9000 out of 30000 words. He had chosen to include words and expressions that he felt would be stumbling blocks to Danish readers of Swedish literature; for the booklet, according to its preface, was intended as a reading aid, not as a phrase book.⁴

A Swedish counterpart to Høst's dictionary did not appear until 1819, when a lecturer in politics at the University of Uppsala published a Dano-Norwegian and Swedish dictionary, expressly on the same lines as Høst's, of about the same size and with a corresponding purpose.⁵ But it is probably characteristic of the difference in climate between Copenhagen and Uppsala that the author almost had to apologize for his undertaking. "The excellence of literature in the Danish tongue and the need felt by Swedish people to know the Norwegian dialect" he wrote in his Introduction, "would be sufficient excuse even to those compatriots who prefer to enjoy beauty and truth in Southern languages rather than in the related languages of the North."

³ C. J. L. Almquist, *Om skandinavismens utförbarhet* (Stockholm, 1846, reissued Göteborg 1950 and 1956).

⁴ J. K. Høst, *Svensk Haandordbog for Danske* (København, 1799).

⁵ S. Lundblad, *Dansk-norsk och svensk ordbok* (Stockholm, 1819).

Lundblad had acquired his knowledge of the Dano-Norwegian language during a prolonged stay in Christiania (modern Oslo). In Norway the third and by far the most ambitious attempt originated to provide a linguistic *vademecum* for all Scandinavia. It was made two decades later by Ludvig Kristensen Daa, a leading figure in the literary, scientific and political life of Norway up to his death in the 1870's, a great believer in Scandinavianism and in the importance of the development of free nationalities generally.⁶

His Swedish-Norwegian pocket dictionary was in two parts and comprised nearly 20000 entries.⁷ Daa was a disciple of the great Danish linguist Rasmus Rask. Like Rask he wished to bring the Scandinavian languages closer to each other and make them more mutually intelligible by removing all purely orthographical differences. To Rask and to Daa this was by no means a small detail. The fact that all Scandinavians—6 or 7 million at the time— could easily understand each other in speech (that at least is what they both claimed), but would much sooner read French books than anything in another Nordic language, constituted a threat to the survival of their languages and thus to their very nationality. The Danish nationality by itself was weak, too dependent on and influenced by German, French and English culture, its literature consisting up to more than 50% of translations from these languages. What had happened to Cornish and Irish, extinct or about to disappear—a danger threatening the Dutch language in Belgium and the Netherlands as well—might happen to the small Scandinavian nations, if they were to remain separated in respect to literary culture. Daa considered it possible and even to some degree rational that in the long run the Scandinavians would be swallowed up by more populous nations. But not to fight against such destruction would be treasonable. Literary and linguistic unity might save the Scandinavian genius from being lost in European imitation.⁸

The student of 19th-century Scandinavianism should take proper note of such sentiments and opinions. They show up very clearly the anachronism we commit if we brush aside Scandinavianism as merely an idealistic, literary movement. To 19th-century Europeans, including Scandinavians, there was nothing superfluous or unimportant about language and literature. They were a matter of life and death to nations.

It seems there was a market for books like Daa's, for within a few years two similar dictionaries were published by a Swedish writer, both intended to serve so-called educated people desirous of extending their Scandinavian reading.⁹

In the 1850's representatives of the four Scandinavian universities, in Copenhagen, Uppsala, Lund and Christiania, decided to publish a common journal, entitled *Nordisk Universitetstidskrift* (Nordic University Journal). They also felt

⁶ On Daa see *Norsk biografisk leksikon*, vol. 3, pp. 156 ff.

⁷ L. K. Daa, *Svensk-norsk haand-ordbog*, 2 vols (Christiania, 1838-1841).

⁸ Daa, op. cit., pp. vi ff.

⁹ P. O. Welander, *Norskt- (och danskt-) svenskt handlexikon* (Christiania, 1844), and *Svensk-dansk-norsk Lommeordbog* (København, 1846).

that prospective readers of the journal would need short lists of difficult words so as to be able fully to understand contributions in another Scandinavian language than their own. J. G. Ek, professor of Latin in the university of Lund and for some time Vice Chancellor of the university, undertook to do so from the Swedish side, i.e. to provide his compatriots with translations of tricky Danish words. He soon gave up, however, mainly because he became convinced that year by year such a vocabulary grew increasingly superfluous: readers of the University Journal could easily do without it. Instead in 1861 he published a Danish-Swedish dictionary aimed at a wider circle of users and containing some 5 000 words, the form or usage of which were considerably different in the two languages.¹⁰

It may be of some interest to note that Ek included a number of words more or less obsolete in modern Danish literature although often still fully alive in dialects, because, he wrote, they were found in Holberg's comedies, still number one favourite among Swedish readers of Danish literature.¹¹

The companion volume to Ek's dictionary, "Swedish Dictionary for Danes and Norwegians" by the Norwegian writer Anton Larsen, was slightly broader in scope—about 7 000 entries.¹² It was first published in 1865, had a second edition as early as the following year and a third one in 1884. Thus it seems to have answered a real need. One remark by the author in the Preface of the second edition particularly links this booklet to Almquist's Copenhagen proposal twenty years earlier. This is not really a dictionary, he wrote, but a glossary, based on the view that Swedish is just a dialect, slightly different from but fundamentally the same language as Dano-Norwegian. A proper Pan-Scandinavian dictionary still remained to be written.¹³

The ultimate aim of all these efforts was a wider and stronger Scandinavian nation. There were other literary ways of working towards that end, e.g. the edition of Scandinavian anthologies. From 1841 to 1843 C. J. Lénström, lecturer in Literature in Uppsala, published in Copenhagen a substantial volume of between 600 and 700 pages, entitled "Swedish reader containing samples of Swedish prose and poetry, together with a short Swedish grammar, dictionary and history of literature".¹⁴ Lénström tried to familiarize Danish readers with Swedish *belles-lettres* from about 1780 up to his own time.

The next attempt at a Scandinavian anthology can be seen to have achieved a tremendous success. In 1844 the Swedish educationist P. E. Svedbom issued the first edition of his "Reader for Swedish youth containing selected pieces of prose and poetry by the very best Swedish, Norwegian and Danish authors".¹⁵ Svedbom was a successor of Almquist's both as headmaster of Stockholm's most modern high

¹⁰ J. G. Ek, *Dansk-svensk Ordbok*. (Lund, 1861).

¹¹ Ek, op. cit., p. vi.

¹² A. Larsen, *Svensk Ordbog for Danske og Norske* (København, 1865, 1866, 1884).

¹³ Larsen, op. cit. (1866), p. viii.

¹⁴ C.J. Lénström, *Svensk Laesebog*. (København, 1845).

¹⁵ P. E. Svedbom, *Läsebok för Sveriges ungdom* (Stockholm, 1844, 1849, etc.).

school (*Gymnasium*) and as a writer of modern text books for schools." His reader went through four editions in 15 years and has in some respects served as a model for all later anthologies to this day. It was the first of its kind also from a purely Swedish point of view. Up to that time familiarity with national literature had been considered purely a matter for family life. Svedbom's Reader gave to generations of Swedish high school boys a fair knowledge not only of Swedish literature but at least some idea of Danish and Norwegian literary achievements as well, from Holberg to Oehlenschlaeger and Wergeland.

Again it is worth while quoting some remarks from the author's preface. Educated people in Germany, France and England, he wrote, learn to love their authors and poets while still children. Swedish school boys are fed on Xenophon, Horace, Schiller, Descartes, Locke, Leibnitz, but school gives them no knowledge of our own literature from the 17th century to the present day. You may become a doctor in all faculties without ever having read a single line by a Swedish novelist or poet. How can you expect Swedish boys and girls to develop a pure and vital love for their country, if you neglect its literature?

Why then include Danish and Norwegian authors? Svedbom gave four reasons: (i) the close relationship between the Scandinavian peoples and their languages; (ii) the fine quality of Danish and Norwegian works of literature and the absolute need to acquire a working knowledge of them; (iii) the fact that such knowledge could be acquired easily and enjoyably, and (iv) the pedagogic value of the comparative study of languages. Finally Svedbom advised Swedish teachers to pay proper attention in their lessons to the correct pronunciation of Danish and Norwegian, because—unlike Daa for example—he felt that many Swedes who could read Danish and Norwegian books, failed to understand spoken Danish or Norwegian.¹⁶

In 1860 Svedbom's Reader had a competitor in Herman Bjursten's "View of the history of Swedish language and literature".¹⁷ Again together with a generous collection of Swedish prose and poetry the pupils of Swedish secondary schools were offered some forty pages of selections from Danish and Norwegian authors. For several decades Swedish boys and girls were made to read among other poems the national anthem of Scandinavianism, Carl Ploug's poem written in 1842:

Split into three shoots	Once again slowly
The glorious tree of	Bending together
Scandinavia	Now ere long the
Withered away.	Three will be one.
A power that might have	Then Scandinavia
Ruled over nations	Mighty and free will
Beggarly waited	Lead to its triumph
At foreigners' doors.	The national cause. ¹⁸

¹⁶ On Svedbom see *Svenska män och kvinnor*, 7, pp. 366 ff.

¹⁷ Svedbom, op. cit. (1849), pp. v ff.

¹⁸ H. Bjursten, *Öfversigt af svenska språkets och litteraturens historia*, 2 vols. (Stockholm, 1860 and later editions).

I shall deal much more briefly with the remaining two corners of Almquist's educational triangle of Scandinavianism. Whether or not his proposed fully-coloured maps of Scandinavia were produced, I do not know. However, text-books treating at least Norway and Sweden in roughly the same detail were in fact published. For some decades after 1860 the geography textbooks most widely used in Swedish schools were written by a Danish geographer, Edvard Erslev.

During the 19th century Scandinavian historiography undoubtedly moved in the general direction recommended by Almquist, i.e. towards stressing Scandinavian community rather than inter-Scandinavian hostility. It was a slow development however. The task of removing all traces of national prejudice from handbooks, and more especially from school books, was not completed until fairly recently. I shall only give a few glimpses of this type of development in the era of Scandinavianism.

The starting-point will be a booklet by a Swedish author, well-known in his own time, afterwards happily forgotten, Lorenzo Hammarsköld. In 1813, during the attack launched by Sweden against Denmark to deprive it of Norway, Hammarsköld published a treatise on the history of Dano-Swedish wars throughout the ages. He chose as his motto: *Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes*. It is an objective historical fact, he claimed, that most of the time Denmark has played the role of the unreliable and envious disturber of the peace, whereas Sweden in its liberal magnanimity has seldom taken advantage of its greater courage and military prowess. In fact Denmark should now be dissolved, to no great disadvantage to herself since Swedish rule had always and everywhere proved itself beneficial to conquered provinces.²⁰

A quarter of a century later such brazen propaganda would have been next to unthinkable. Even outside observers discovered a new Scandinavian spirit. In 1843 Ernst Moritz Arndt, the great German patriot of the Napoleonic era and from that time also a staunch friend of Sweden and the Swedish people, had recently been allowed by the reactionary Prussian government to return to his history chair in Bonn.²¹ In a series of lectures on the comparative history of the nations, he said of Scandinavia that economically and politically the Nordic peoples were now experiencing growth and progress. "And reason begins to dawn among the inhabi-

¹⁹ The Danish text in Bjursten, op. cit. (1863), part 2, pp. 525 ff:

Laenge var Nordens	Atter det Skilte
Herlige Stamme	Beier sig sammen;
Spaltet i trende	Engang i Tiden
Sygnende Skud.	Vorder det Eet.
Kraften, som kunde	Da skal det frie
Verden behersket,	Mægtige Norden
Tyggede Sul fra	Føre til Seier
Fremmedes Bord.	Folkenes Sag!

²⁰ L. Hammarsköld, *Sammandragen berättelse om Dannemarks krigsförhållanden till Sverige* (Stockholm, 1813), pp. 1, 29 ff.

²¹ On Arndt see *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 1, pp. 541 ff.

tants of Scandinavia, the veil of prejudice and error under which for so long they inflicted deadly wounds upon each other, is falling from their eyes. They now talk not only of neighbourhood and neighbourly peace, but of union, a new alliance much stronger than the Kalmar Union of old ... It is not a question—as people believe on this side of the Baltic—of a literary game... but of a real, firm and political alliance."²²

References like the one made by Arndt to the Kalmar Union of the late Middle Ages were to abound in the Scandinavianist rhetoric of the age. But also in more serious historiography a revaluation of that era took place. About 1850 the Danish historian Frederik Hammerich, a great believer in Scandinavianism, published a two-volume account of the history of Denmark during the union of the Nordic Kingdoms 1375–1523. In the late Middle Ages, he wrote, people all over Europe longed for something fundamentally new. That was true of Scandinavia as well. Queen Margrete tried to realise the innermost thought of the Nordic Spirit, viz. to create a united Scandinavia, strong against the South and strong against the East. But her time was also the era of the magnates, and they were unable to grasp the great idea and to solve the problems of Scandinavia. In the 17th and 18th centuries absolute monarchy failed likewise to achieve Scandinavian union. Now the time of democracy had dawned. Would a solution now be found to Scandinavia's fundamental problem? The question, Hammerich believed, would be answered in the near future.²³

E. G. Geijer, the prince of Swedish 19th-century historiography, earlier in the century had coined a phrase concerning the Kalmar Union, a phrase that caught on and has been quoted innumerable times since then: the Union was a coincidence that looked like a thought. That was the very opposite of Hammerich's verdict, "the innermost, immortal Scandinavian thought". One of the most prominent leaders of the Scandinavian movement in Sweden, the prolific author O. P. Sturzen-Becker once tried to turn Geijer's dictum inside out. The Kalmar Union, he said, was in fact a thought that looked like a "happening", i.e. an idea drowned in the coincidences of political intrigue and petty economic rivalries.²⁴

About a decade later on C. T. Odhner, one of the most prominent of our 19th-century historians and the author of history school books that have dominated history teaching in Swedish schools for almost a century, published a review article in a leading Scandinavian university journal. The article was entitled "Concerning the importance of the Kalmar Union in Scandinavian history".²⁵ Now, in 1869, Odhner was able to refer to modern investigations concerning the epoch in all three

²² E. M. Arndt, *Några ord om Skandinavien och dess närvarande förhållanden* (Swedish extract from "Versuch in vergleichender Völkergeschichte", Uppsala, 1844), pp. 22 fT.

²³ F. Hammerich, *Danmark under de nordiske Rigers Forening*, vol. 1 (København, 1849). Quotation p. 2.

²⁴ O. P. Sturzen-Becker, *Den skandinaviska frågan* (Stockholm, 1857), p. 11.

²⁵ C. T. Odhner, "Om Kalmarunionens betydelse i Nordens historia", *Nordisk tidskrift för politik, ekonomi och litteratur*, vol. 4 (1869), pp. 1-21.

Scandinavian countries: by C. G. Styffe in Sweden, P. A. Munch in Norway, C. F. Allen in Denmark. All these historians and several others had published important works in the 1860's. Thanks to their labour, Odhner wrote, we are now able to see that the Union did not only look like a thought but was one, founded both on conditions inside the Nordic countries and on their relations with the outside world. During the earlier parts of the Middle Ages separate provinces in all the Scandinavian countries had been brought together under strong kings and common laws. But national consciousness was still weak or non-existent. The growing together of provinces did not of necessity result in separate kingdoms; the process might just as well have continued to produce a common Scandinavian nationality. Language and culture after all were practically the same all over Scandinavia. The growing strength of Germany, threatening Scandinavian independence in Church and State alike, was the exterior motive behind the Union. Its failure was brought about by the aristocracy of the three Scandinavian kingdoms, who tried to use the union for the selfish interests of their estate. Underlying Odhner's assessment of the union was the conviction that a new union, founded on the will of the people, would present a much more durable structure.

5.

The views and suggestions launched by Almquist in 1846 were thus both realistic and fruitful. He pointed to a number of educational and scientific fields in which work could be done to bring the Scandinavian peoples closer together. I have tried to show that in fact such work was already afoot as Almquist spoke, and that much more was done in the 1850's and 60's. As to the remaining economic, financial, administrative and political points touched on by Almquist in his speech, a few examples and remarks must suffice. In fact, I shall concentrate on a single year, the year in which the final political crisis of Scandinavianism began to unfold, i.e. 1863, when the second war between Germany and Denmark was brewing.

Early in that year two leading members of the Estate of the Burghers, one of four parts of the Swedish *Riksdag*, proposed legal measures to bring about a common monetary system for all Scandinavia, and also a common system of weights and measures. The motions went through the cumbersome machinery of the four estates and their various committees, and met with some resistance, especially from members of the Estate of the Peasants, who did not like any changes in these fields. But the final outcome was positive to the reforms suggested: the *Riksdag* decided to have the whole question investigated, the classic although cautious way of forwarding a cause.

During the debates an interesting speech in favour of the reforms was made in the Estate of the Clergy, which included a number of university professors. J. G. Agardh, professor of botany in Lund and engaged in many social, financial and economic endeavours in his own province of Scania, spoke on behalf of the whole of South-western Sweden when he argued that these reforms were much needed. It is always dangerous, he said, if one part of a country is increasingly assimilated to a

neighbouring country. This is what is happening in the Duchy of Schleswig where a portion of the population has become more German than Danish. Something similar can now be observed in Scania because of its very close relations to Denmark. Many Scanians buy most of their necessities of life in Copenhagen. A great many Danes have taken up their abode in Scania. Swedish money is accepted in Copenhagen, Danish money in Scania. Even the language is closer to Danish for example in Malmö, opposite Copenhagen, than in Lund some miles to the east.

All these changes, Agardh went on to say, are the result of only two decades of improved communications. What is going to happen in the next twenty years? Southwestern Scania will be more or less danicised. This is unavoidable, since a policy of isolation is out of the question. A wise policy then is to move in the opposite direction by trying to amalgamate the institutions and customs of the Scandinavian countries. You must make a virtue of necessity.²⁶

Thus tangible and practical links were not lacking when in June 1863 some 500 Scandinavian men of commerce, industry, administration, science and letters met in Göteborg. The conference called itself "Scandinavian conference on political economy" and was to be followed by similar meetings during the rest of the century.²⁷ On the agenda were ways and means of initiating Scandinavian co-operation and union in regard not only to currency, weights and measure but also to post and telegraph systems, customs and shipping, commerce and various trades, exhibitions of industry, etc. In this last respect the model was of course the Crystal Palace Exhibition of 1851, which had been followed by similar arrangements in Paris and again in London in 1862. But whereas these fairs had tried to cover the world, the proposed Scandinavian exhibition would be purely regional. August Sohlman, editor-in-chief of Sweden's leading newspaper the "*Aftonbladet*" (Evening Paper) and the main spokesman at the conference for the exhibition plan, said the aim was to show the outside world that Scandinavia was an entity, not mere annex, and thus had a right to act of its own accord and to gain the recognition of Europe for its industry and its nationality.²⁸

Scandinavia and the outside world naturally was an underlying theme during most conference deliberations. Just one more example. One of the resolutions adopted by the meeting laid down as the basic principle to be followed in Scandinavian customs policies that customs might be levied for financial reasons but never in order to protect any trade or industry in any one of the Scandinavian countries. All were agreed on this principle of free trade, but some of the participants regretted the absence from the resolution of a reference to a future Scandinavian Customs Union. They felt this to be as realistic a proposition and as effective a way to national fellowship as the German *Zollverein*. However, the adherents of a Scandinavian

²⁶ *Preste-Ståndets protokoll vid... Riksdagen ... 1862-1863*, vol. 3, pp. 353 f

²⁷ On the conference and its background see Å. Holmberg, "Sverige och den ekonomiska skandinavismen vid 1860-talets början", *Studier tillägnade Curt Weibull* (Göteborg, 1946), pp. 195 ff., and A. M. Mailer, "Economic Relations and Economic Cooperation between the Nordic Countries in the Nineteenth Century", *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 8 (1983), pp. 37-62.

²⁸ *Förhandlingar vid Skandinaviska national-ekonomiska mötet... 1863* (Göteborg, 1863), p. 79.

Common Market were in a minority at the conference. The prevailing opinion was pure Manchester liberalism: you must not foul Scandinavianism by linking the movement to the destructive concept of customs duties.

A final point leading up to my conclusion: not even at this conference directed to practical and economic problems were thoughts of literary and cultural co-operation far removed. In debating the removal of inter-Scandinavian customs duties speakers voiced complaints about the unnecessary obstacles to free literary communion raised through duties being levied in some cases on books crossing Scandinavian boundaries. In the debate instances and counter-instances were bandied about: could or could not the Scandinavian peoples read and understand each other's languages, and—if the answer to that question was in the affirmative — did they or did they not make use of such opportunities — a debate still going on in the Scandinavian countries. Among the optimists was the great leader of the Scandinavian movement Carl Ploug. As proof that the Danish public could and would read Swedish he pointed to the fact that at least 1 500 copies of Runeberg's "Songs of Ensign Stål", published in two volumes in 1848 and 1860, had been sold in Denmark.²⁹

19th-century Scandinavianism has been much ridiculed as bombastic academic oratory, or dismissed as impractical dreams. Obviously it did not reach its political aims, and the program outlined by Almquist in 1846 has only been realised to a limited extent. Still the movement deserves a more balanced verdict. To quote the final assessment of Runeberg's Ensign Stål on one of the heroines of the Songs, Lotta Svärd:

"She might be laughed at, if you choose,
more justly be honoured, though."³⁰

²⁹ Ibid., p. 81.

³⁰ The Swedish text:
"och något tålte hon skrattas at,
men mera hedras ändå."