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From Reluctancy to Activity. Finland's Way to the Nordic Family during 1920's and 1930's

Leena Kaukiainen

Finland, who had gained her independence as recently as the end of 1917, was drawn only gradually into cooperation with the other Nordic countries. Did she play a positive role of her own in this process or was she rather a passively reactive participant, a kind of isolated stepdaughter in the Nordic family of nations who only reluctantly adapted herself to her new siblings?

1. *The earlier phases of Nordic cooperation*

Because of the close kinship existing between their languages Sweden, Norway and Denmark were natural partners in cooperative ventures but nevertheless, matters sometimes proved complicated. Each particular country had her own special characteristics while attempts at political cooperation had for various reasons all too often come to nothing. Norway had earlier been a part of Denmark and had since 1814 been joined with Sweden in a union, which, however, ended in mutual disappointment. "Scandinavianism", the dominant politico-romantic movement in the 19th century as well as any plans for Nordic union received a fatal setback in 1864 as a result of the German-Danish War when Denmark failed to get the support from her sister nations she felt entitled to receive.

Cooperation between the three nations certainly continued, in the 1880's at a functional level in the form of academic collaboration and within the literary and artistic movements. The cultural periodical "Norden. Illustreret skandinavisk Revue" (The Nordic Countries. Illustrated Scandinavian Review) which was published in 1886—87 had subscribers not merely in Sweden, Norway and Denmark but also in Finland.¹

¹ H. Nielsen, *Nordens Enhed gennem Tiderne*, vol. 2 (København—Oslo—Stockholm, 1938), pp. 305-307.

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Finland, which had previously been an integral part of Sweden, occupies a particularly interesting role in this picture. Although in 1809 she had been incorporated into the Russian empire as an autonomous Grand Duchy she had retained a legislative and an administrative system that dated from the Swedish period. Swedish continued to be the language of administration and cultural life while Sweden herself was generally considered by the educated classes to be a bridge to the rest of Europe. It was now, however, that Finland for the first time was "elevated to membership in the family of nations" and in the course of time began to develop her own distinctive national culture although this Finnish development was not widely recognized in Sweden. There admiration for the Finnish people tended to be based on the romantic accounts emanating from Finnish authors writing in Swedish while the effects of Russian influence in the country were often greatly exaggerated.²

Because of such favourable attitudes in Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries Finland now became "adopted" as a participant in various forms of Scandinavian cultural cooperation. Finnish schoolteachers for example regularly participated from 1868 onwards in Scandinavian school congresses.³

Finland gained a new emphasis as a topic of discussion in Sweden at the beginning of the 1890's when Russian foreign policy seemed bent on general territorial expansion and it was generally believed that that expansion even embraced territorial aspirations in Scandinavia itself. This was particularly evident in 1899 when the Russian government launched actions for the russification of Finland that actually ignored her constitutional laws. This began the phase known in Finnish history as the Period of First Oppression. In Sweden fears were expressed that Russia might aim at expanding via Sweden to the Atlantic and a similar "Russian peril" aroused anxiety in Norway.⁴

In this national emergency Finns needed all the support they could get. Many Finns, expelled by the Russians, moved over to Sweden and instigated there anti-Russian subversive activities which provided Sweden with a delicate problem.⁵

Although Denmark is at some distance from Finland geographically, even there feelings of understanding for Finland's position were readily expressed in view of the fact that at this same time Germany had begun a resolute germanization of the Danish-speaking areas in Schleswig that had been earlier conquered by Prussia. With such an atmosphere prevailing a Nordic association, "Nordisk Förening", was set up in the early spring of 1899 in Copenhagen.⁶ Already at the beginning of the 1890's some Finnish politicians had tried to influence the policy of the Russian empire through Copenhagen. As is widely known, the Empress Maria Feodorovna

² M. Klinge, *Bernadotten ja Leninin välissä. Tutkielmia kansallisista aiheista* (Juva, 1975), pp. 10—23, 84—91; V. Voionmaa, *Suomen uusi asema* (Porvoo, 1919), pp. 190—191.

³ V. T. Rosenqvist, "De nordiska skolmötena och Finland", *Nordisk Tidskrift* (1925), pp. 270-278.

⁴ F. Lindberg, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia 3:4, 1872-1914* (Stockholm, 1958), pp. 109-123.

⁵ S. Eskola, *Suomen kysymys ja Ruotsin mielipide. Ensimmäisen maailmansodan puhkeamisesta Venäjän maaliskuun vallankumoukseen* (Porvoo, 1965), pp. 13—14.

⁶ Nielsen, op. cit., pp. 394-414.

was a daughter of the Danish King, and her brother Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark discreetly acted as a spokesman for Finland, with the Finnish-born teacher of the Crown Prince's children acting as an intermediary.⁷

The publication of a periodical "Nordisk Revy. Tidskrift for Norden rörande politiska och kulturella spörsmål" (The Nordic Review. A Periodical for the Nordic countries on political and cultural life) in 1903–04 can be considered only as a short-lived manifestation of orientation to a Nordic viewpoint. As time passed the earlier enthusiasm diminished, the most influential single factor in this decline being the crisis between Sweden and Norway over their union which eventually led to the independence of Norway in 1905.

From the point of view of Nordic cooperation the period before the outbreak of the First World War saw contradictory trends, sometimes towards cooperation and sometimes towards renewed "separatism". Economic cooperation, for example the possibility of a customs union for the three Scandinavian countries, was indeed discussed; but the "Nordisk Forening for økonomisk Samarbejde" (The Nordic Association for Economic Cooperation) which was set up in 1904 for promoting that plan remained largely, however, an organisation on paper only. From the Finnish standpoint it is worth mentioning that circles in the woodmanufacturing and printing industries launched a number of joint Nordic periodicals and that some Finnish enterprises participated in these ventures.⁸

After 1905 the most significant form of cooperation lay in the Nordic Interparliamentary Group and its annual meetings of members of the Nordic parliaments which started in 1907. Although Finland had after the 1906 Parliamentary reform the most democratic representative institution in Europe the participation of Finnish delegates became very difficult once the Russians had launched a new period of oppression. Events in Finland and Schleswig caused something of a revival of "Neo-Scandinavianism" among youth in the North. University and *gymnasium* students held meetings annually and at the 1914 conference in Helsinki the foundations were laid for the "Nordisk Studenter- og Gymnasiastforening" (The Nordic Association of University and Gymnasium Students) which spoke in its programme of "the spiritual and brotherly unity of the North."⁹

The outbreak of the First World War also brought many problems to the neutral Nordic countries. Political cooperation among the Scandinavian countries was restricted to a joint declaration on neutrality issued in the early stages of the war, a joint manifesto of protest against violations of neutrality in November 1914 and a meeting of the three monarchs of Scandinavia to give further emphasis to those policies. Otherwise each particular country concentrated on safeguarding its own

⁷ T. Torvinen, *Suomen puolustusta Kööpenhaminassa. Ina Langen salainen toiminta Danielson—Kalmarinasiamiehenä 1890—luvun alussa*. (Porvoo, 1967), *passim*.

⁸ Since 1895 *Nordisk Papir-Tidende. Central-Organ for Papirfabrikation, Bogtrykkeri, Boghandel og Bogbinderi i Danmark, Norge, Sverige og Finland*. Nielsen, *op. cit.*, p. 333–384, 415–421, 438.

⁹ Nielsen, *Nordens Enhed gennem Tideme*, vol. 3, pp. 39–41, 62–66. Cf. also Knud Larsen, "Scandinavian Grass Roots", *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 9:3 (1984).

basic welfare and it was only towards the end of the war, in 1917, that economic cooperation began again mainly in the form of a mutual exchange of goods.¹⁰

2. Finland's achievement of independence and its attendant problems

The outbreak of the First World War created the required conditions in Finland for a reassessment of her relationship with Russia, the outcome of which was an independence movement aimed at her separation from the Empire by collaboration with Russia's enemy, Germany.

Sweden had her own particular role to play in these plans. Indeed, the original goal of the independence movement was to get Sweden militarily involved in the realigning of Finland's position. In particular the Swedish press was considered to be of value from a propaganda point of view. However, collaboration with those Swedish activists who had similar aims collapsed in the autumn of 1915. The work of the activist movement in Finland was itself delayed and the enthusiasm of the Swedish activists had already passed its peak. Yet, the efforts of the Finns were not wasted, for one has to acknowledge it as a significant achievement that the Swedish authorities never interfered in the operations of the activists and their supporters. In addition the extremely influential press of the Swedish Social Democratic party, although itself pro-Entente, remained silent about the activities of the Finnish liberation movement, the *Jägers*. As a result Finnish young men were able to travel via Sweden to their German training camps for secret military training without their movements ever being disclosed."

The Russian revolutions opened the way to the promulgation of Finnish independence on December 6th 1917. It was recognized by Sweden on January 4th 1918 and by Norway and Denmark six days later. However, during the Finnish Civil War, which began at the end of January, opinion in Sweden was very divided. Controversy over the future of the Åland Islands arose at a time when a new "Greater Swedish" activism was reaching its zenith and as a result the relationship between Finland and Sweden at a political level became aggravated while tension was exacerbated by separatism among the Åland islanders who wished to join Sweden. Sweden was not unwilling to accede to this request while the Finnish government could not agree to the cession of an archipelago that had hitherto been part of her territory. An escape from this impasse was achieved only after an Investigation Commission appointed by the League of Nations recommended in favour of Finland, a recommendation which formed the basis of the resolution of June 24th 1921. The group of islands was demilitarized and given local autonomy by the Åland Islands Convention signed on October 20th 1921.¹²

¹⁰ Nielsen, vol. 3, pp. 67-76, 102, 115-125.

¹¹ Eskola, op. cit., pp. 37-47, 78-186.

¹² V. Rasila, *Suomen poliittinen historia 1809-1975.2: 1905-1919* (Porvoo, 1976), pp. 61-69; J. Kalela, *Grannar på skilda vägar. Det finlandsk-svenska samarbetet i den finländsk och svensk utrikespolitiken 1921-1923* (Borgå, 1971), pp. 43-79; H. Tingsten, *Svensk utrikesdebatt mellan världskrigen* (Lund, 1964), pp. 89-148; J. Barros, *The Åland Island Question* (Clinton, Mass, 1968), *passim*.

The solution of the dispute over the Aland Islands was followed with keen interest in Norway, the neighbour with whom Finland had a joint northern border, and general opinion there tended to favour Sweden rather than Finland.¹³ This interest was in part stimulated by the Norwegian claim to be the true owner of Spitsbergen as well as by a general desire on the part of both Finland and Norway to extend their territory at the expense of Soviet-Russia. Finland sought a port on the Arctic Ocean and on the basis of the peace treaty signed with Soviet-Russia in Tartu in 1920 she was ceded the Pechenga area, a grave disappointment to Norway. Norway had herself wanted to extend her territories in Eastern Varanger and according to her most far-reaching plans she wanted also to expand into the western arm of Finland and into the crown of her head, the Utsjoki area. Apart from the economic issues behind these speculations there was also the question of the Finns who had moved to the Finnmark area of Norway. Norway suspected their loyalty and aimed at their "norwegianization". Finland on the other hand wished to defend the rights of these people of Finnish stock to use their native tongue. Thus in the minds of the Norwegians Finland had inherited from Russia the image of a state intent on expansion into Finnmark and towards the Atlantic.¹⁴

During the early stages of her independence Finland was naturally in great need of support, but she did not primarily seek that from the other Nordic countries. While Sweden and Norway belonged to the British camp in the League of Nations Finland preferred closer relations with France and directed her attention also to the Baltic states belonging to the group of Border States led by Poland. However, this political orientation towards the South soon collapsed when in 1922 the Finnish parliament did not ratify the Warsaw Pact although it had already been signed by the parties concerned.¹⁵

The door to the East was closed, so the only remaining possibility for cooperation lay with the Nordic countries even though the political relationships with them were still at a merely formal level.

This was not at all due to lack of suitors. On the contrary it was the Maiden Finland herself who seemed to be indifferent to advances. For Sweden an orientation towards Scandinavia seemed Finland's natural foreign political choice and the ill-feeling engendered by the Aland Islands dispute had now deliberately been

¹³ Finnish Envoy in Kristiania Serlachius to Acting Foreign Minister Ehrnrooth 19 March 1919, nr. 661; Envoy Thesleff to Foreign Minister Holsti 16 November 1919, nr. 2098. Foreign Ministry 5 C 4:1. National Archives. Helsinki.

¹⁴ K. E. Eriksen—E. Niemi, *Den finske fart. Sikkerhetsproblemer og minoritetspolitikk i Nord 1860-1940* (Oslo—Bergen—Tromsø, 1981), pp. 26—176; M. Jokipii, *Ruijan suomalaisasutuksen historian päälinjoja/ Finsk bosetning i Nord-Norge—historiske hovedlinjer* (Suomalaiset Jäämeren rannoilla. Siirtolaisinstituutti, Turku, 1982), passim.

¹⁵ The Warsaw Pact, signed 17 March 1922, was not a military but a political, consultative agreement. H. Schauman, *Reunavaltiohistoria (Itsenäisen Suomen ulkopoliittikan alkutaival. Historian Aitta, vol. 15. Porvoo 1962)*, pp. 121-144; E. Jutikkala, *'Ensimmäinen tasavalta' (1919-1945) (Suomen poliittinen historia, vol. 2, Porvoo, 1979)*, pp. 126-129; Kalela, op. cit., 59-97.

forgotten. Among those promoting Finnish—Swedish cooperation especially industrious were two men, Henning Elmqvist, the new Swedish envoy to Helsinki noted for his close contacts with Finns, and Werner Söderhjelm, the Finnish envoy to Stockholm. In addition, the King of Sweden, Gustavus V, was willing as early as 1922 to pay a state visit to Finland though this clashed with protocol which demanded that the President of Finland visit Sweden first, a suggestion which in no way interested President K. J. Ståhlberg. Such a visit occurred only after there had been a change of President, in 1925. The new head of state, President Lauri Kr. Relander became known as an enthusiastic traveller and his state visits contributed to the creation of a more favourable atmosphere.¹⁶

Nevertheless Sweden was not willing to make concessions to Finland, that were too far-reaching. When Carl Hederstierna, the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs carelessly adverted in an after-dinner speech in 1923 to the possibility of a military alliance between Finland and Sweden he was compelled to resign.¹⁷

3. Nationalism and the language question

The reasons for Finnish reluctance could be found not only in her foreign political orientation but also in the struggle between the ethno-linguistic groupings within her own boundaries. Linguistic nationalism had already materialized during the 19th century and among the Swedish speaking gentlefolk it was connected with Social-Darwinistic feelings of superiority to the Finnish speaking common people. The parliamentary reform of 1906 brought a decrease in the power of the Swedish-speaking upper class and on the other hand an increase in the influence of the general Finnish-speaking population. The Finnish nationalistic movement demanded a finnification of the country's cultural life in proportion to the scale of Finnish-speaking in the total population. The Swedish-speakers held their ground and the most radical of them ended as supporters of the "East-Swedish" movement, which aimed first at the separation of Swedish-speaking areas into cantons and later into autonomous parts of Finland. This separatism had its strongest foothold among the Swedish-speaking population in Southern Ostrobothnia and following the example of the Åland islanders some of its supporters made proposals concerning a referendum on reunion with Sweden. Sweden, however, was not interested in this prospect while the majority of Swedish-speakers on the Finnish mainland wanted in any case to retain their Finnish citizenship. Equal status with Finnish-speakers was not, however, enough to satisfy the East-Swedish movement, which now aimed at strengthening the privileges of the Swedish-speaking population. It succeeded to the extent that in the language statutes of 1921 and 1922 each citizen of Finland was guaranteed the right to an education in his mother-tongue and the right to carry on all his business with courts and government offices in that same

¹⁶ Kalela, op. cit., 75, 77, 105-109, 141 - 142, 171 -173; L. Ehrnrooth, *Från ett skiftesrikt liv* (Helsingfors, 1947), p. 317.

¹⁷ Kalela, op. cit., pp. 204, 219; Tingsten, op. cit., pp. 155-161.

tongue, and this right was valid for each individual citizen not just for groups or particular localities. In practice it led to the creation of mono or bilingual communal government on the basis of linguistical distribution in a particular locality. By international standards the language legislation of Finland was very liberal indeed, and the position of the minority well guaranteed. The East-Swedish group as a political movement withered away in 1923, but controversies like that over bilingualism in the University of Helsinki still lay in the future.¹⁸

The new constitution and language laws did not, however, produce total national harmony. Issues concerning education and culture could still lead to strong agitation, which finally resulted in the establishment of new private universities for each of the language groups. The Åbo Akademi in Turku opened its doors to Swedish students in 1919 and three years later the same town became the seat of a university for Finnish-speakers. The state university in Helsinki was bilingual. Nevertheless the Finnish-speakers who saw it as the home of Finnish culture felt dismayed by the strong position which the Swedish language still occupied inside it. Indeed according to them the University was the greatest stronghold of Swedishness in the whole of Finland.

According to the Helsinki University Act passed in 1923 the proportional amount of teaching in either language at the University in different faculties had to correspond to the ratio of Finnish- and Swedish-speaking students during the previous three years. Teaching would be provided in both languages and the student's mother tongue would be used in examinations. The professors holding privately funded chairs were allowed to choose their teaching language, but at least 15 professors had to lecture in Swedish. Wide-ranging public discussion preceded the passing of the law and thanks to the activity of Swedish-speakers the issues were debated also in Sweden. Under the influence of propaganda from Finland many newspapers in Sweden seemed convinced of the existence of linguistic oppression by Finnish-speakers; however, the Swedish government did not see eye to eye with those Swedish-speaking Finns who were attempting to spread such notions.¹⁹

Debate following the reform showed that neither side was satisfied with the law. The growing strength of Finnish nationalism, however, posed a more serious threat to the relationship between the linguistic groups than did the agitation of the Swedish-speaking Finns themselves. Finnish nationalism gained strength not merely from these linguistic antagonisms but also from the new national pride engendered by the achievement of independence; it was reinforced also by the disappointments of the Tartu peace treaty, the failure of East Karelian ambitions and the atmosphere that was the legacy of the Civil War. In the form of an ultra-Finnish movement it began to gain support especially among young educated Finns and farmers, but it failed to attract the working class although it aimed at national

¹⁸ G. v. Bondsdorff, *Svenska folkpartiet. Bakgrund, tillblivelse och utveckling till 1917* (Helsingfors, 1956), *passim*; v. Bondsdorff, *Självstyrelsetanken i fmlandsvensk politik åren 1917–1923* (Helsingfors, 1950), pp. 323–347; P. K. Hämäläinen, *Kielitaistelu Suomessa 1917–1939* (Porvoo, 1968), pp. 37–84.

¹⁹ Hämäläinen, *op. cit.*, pp. 86–98.

integration. For this new movement the strong position of the Swedish language in Helsinki University and school education as well as the conspicuously high proportion of Swedish-speaking officers in the Finnish Army were still considered as issues of the first rank.

The vicious circle could be recognised in all nationalistic activities. When complaining about Swedish interference in the internal affairs of Finland the ultra-Finns readily referred to the treatment of the Finnish population in the Norrbotten of Sweden, which led in turn to accusations by the Swedes concerning Finnish interference in her internal affairs. Pekka Kalevi Hämäläinen who has studied the language dispute maintains, however, that the leading national parties used nationalistic agitation mainly as an effective election ploy and that the nationalistic programmes remained merely electioneering slogans never intended to get accepted.²⁰

Not all those Finnish-speaking people with influence were, however, as uncompromising as the ultra-Finns. The National Progressive Party (liberals) had rather a moderate standpoint and the Social-Democrats never did consider the language question as an issue of importance.²¹ Thus an eminent Social Democratic politician and professional historian Väinö Voionmaa declared in his book "Suomen uusi asema" (The new position of Finland), published in 1919, that "Until general disarmament became a reality the defence alliance between Finland and Sweden was as natural as it was necessary; and one could imagine such an alliance to be more advantageous to Sweden for she would then be in a much more protected position than Finland. But the greater and higher goal for which Finland and Sweden should work together, would always be an alliance for peace, cooperation and the promoting of economic, social and cultural life in the North, especially as this cooperation had so great geographical and historical justification."²²

Similarly among Swedish-speaking Finns with influence there were individuals, who—like Amos Anderson, the proprietor of the leading Swedish newspaper in Finland, *Hufvudstadsbladet*—considered separatism among the Swedish-speakers a dangerous phenomenon. The Finnish envoy to Stockholm, Werner Söderhjelm found it annoying that the press in Sweden was continually being provided with material discussing the hostile attitude Finnish-speakers were supposed to hold towards the Swedish-speaking population in Finland.²³

²⁰ Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 98-144; M. Klinge, *Ruotsalaisten eristäytymisliike ja aitosuomalaisuus 1920-luvulla (Kaksi vuosikymmentä Suomen sisäpolitiikkaa 1919-1939. Historian Aitta*, vol. 16, Porvoo, 1964), pp. 132-138; H. Tenertz, *Folkupplysningsarbetet i Norrbottens finnbygd under förra hälften av 1900-talet jämte språkdebatten* (Stockholm, 1963), *passim*.

²¹ Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 142-144, 155-159.

²² Voionmaa, op. cit., p. 200.

²³ Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 152—155.

4. The Norden Associations

Already towards the end of the 19th century short-lived associations called "*Norden*" (the North) were functioning in different Nordic countries and the last of them only withered away with the dissolution of the union of Sweden and Norway.

A few years after the outbreak of the First World War the time seemed ripe again for a fresh attempt. The initiator was a Danish doctor C. Heerfordt, who endeavoured to promote the issue, not only in Denmark but also in Sweden and Norway, by his many writings and by his personal contacts. The Danish Norden Association was founded in 1917 and by the beginning of the following year the organising of similar associations was already being discussed in the other two Scandinavian countries. Many eminent scholars and influential people in cultural life expressed their support and there was general enthusiasm. The formulation of a programme proved to be tricky, however, because of the many divergent interests involved and it seemed necessary to include the encouragement of cultural contacts as well as economic cooperation. There was also lively discussion on the form of future activities. Should the associations concentrate on the diffusion of general information or should the main emphasis be on collaboration between these countries at a very concrete level? A middle course prevailed and accordingly the Norden Associations were intended to play a role at the centre of Nordic endeavours as agents for coordinating joint activities.

At a meeting of representatives from Denmark, Sweden and Norway in September 1918 unanimity was reached on the aims and forms of their activities. The final organisation was postponed, however, till February 1919 because of the upheavals during the last phases of the World War. The appeal presented at the organizing meeting was signed by 104 Danes, 149 Norwegians and 177 Swedes. Local branches were established in each of the three countries and the first general meeting was held in May of the same year in Stockholm. There it was agreed to hold a joint meeting of representatives at least once a year. Between times the leadership and the secretaries of the Associations were to explore necessary and possible opportunities for Nordic cooperation. The aims of the Associations included the spreading of information on each of the Nordic countries by means of lectures, meetings, travels and literature. The yearbook "*Nordens Aarbog*" was founded as a joint organ and its first issue was published in 1920.²⁴

The lively economic cooperation between the Scandinavian countries, which had begun in 1917, decreased with the improvement of conditions after the war. In order to bring new life to what were now dwindling cooperative efforts it was decided to establish Joint Delegations for Nordic Economic Cooperation, "*Nabolandsnevnden*". Their activities, however, showed no tangible results in spite of many meetings. From the Finnish standpoint it deserves to be mentioned that F. Raestad, the Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, tried in 1921 to get Finland involved, but

²⁴ Nielsen, vol. 3, 195-199; A. Houken, *Det nye Norden. Det nordiske Samarbejde siden 1914 i kortfattet fremstilling* (Senderborg, 1940), p. 1-34.

the leaders of the Swedish Foreign Office were not willing to expand Scandinavian fields of activity in this way, for the outcome of the Åland Islands question was still too fresh in their minds. These delegations were, however, abolished soon afterwards, in 1922.²⁵

In spite of this setback Finland was soon participating in Nordic cooperative activities quite conspicuously, for in the summer of 1922 Helsinki acted as host city to two Nordic congresses: The Third Nordic Congress of Journalists and the Nordic Congress of Social Politicians. The former in particular was just what was needed to dispel mutual suspicions and it was exceptionally well publicized. The same summer there were Finnish participants also in the First Nordic Congress on Administration in Stockholm while Finns also took part in the activities of the Nordic Interparliamentary Group.

The enterprise of the Swedish envoy to Helsinki, Elmqvist seemed to lie behind the attempts to make Finland join in the activities of Norden Associations in the same year. The Swedish Norden Association let it be understood that it had no objections to Finland's becoming a member and the same opinion was expressed by the Norwegian and Danish Associations. The envoy had also prepared the ground in Finland through his personal acquaintance with Leo Ehrnrooth, a bank manager and a former minister. The leaders of the Swedish People's Party in Finland were, however, unwilling to appear alongside Finnish-speaking figures even when participating in forms of Nordic cooperation. So for this reason in spite of the fact that Swedish-speakers in Finland were willing to see themselves as a "bridge" to Scandinavia these attempts to found a Norden Association in Finland eventually came to nothing.²⁶

By the autumn of 1924 this opposition had been so weakened that Finland was able to join the Norden Association. Yet even now there was a dispute about the name, for the Finnish-speakers could not agree to the use of the word "*finländsk*" to denote all the inhabitants of Finland in the proposed name "Norden, finländsk föreningen för nordiskt samarbete" (Norden, the Association for Nordic Cooperation of the Inhabitants of Finland). They wanted to replace the offensive term by the word "*finsk*" (Finnish) which in turn was totally unacceptable to the Swedish-speakers. Finally the problem was resolved by using a roundabout expression and the form emerged "Norden, föreningen i Finland för nordiska samarbetet" (Norden, the Association for Nordic Cooperation in Finland).

The former minister Otto Stenroth was elected chairman of the new association and Leo Ehrnrooth became vice-chairman.²⁷

The Finnish Association was for long mainly made up of members of the Swedish-speaking educated classes but among its chairmen there were many eminent Finnish-speakers, such as Oskari Mantere, the head of the National Board of

²⁵ Kalela, op. cit., pp. 230-232; Nielsen, vol. 3, pp. 222-224.

²⁶ Kalela, op. cit., pp. 238-249; Ehrnrooth, op. cit., pp. 327-328.

²⁷ Ehrnrooth, op. cit., pp. 328-329.

Schools. In the beginning the number of members amounted to some 150 rising to 500 in four years. However, numbers then began to decrease considerably and it was not until 1934 they managed to reach 500 again.²⁸

As a gesture of welcome the Swedish Norden Association organized a Finland Week in Stockholm in March 1925 including various lectures and cultural events with speakers and performers from Finland. A similar Swedish Week was arranged in Helsinki the next year.²⁹ Under the auspices of the Norden Associations Swedish lecturing visits were also arranged in Finland while Finns visited Sweden. In this connection it might be worth mentioning that in the autumn of 1924 another society, the "Samfundet Sverige—Finland" (the Sweden—Finland Association) was founded in Stockholm in succession to the former "Finländska Förening" (the Finnish Society) for the promotion of cultural links between both countries and it had approximately five hundred members. Also it is worth bearing in mind that similar types of cultural exchange took place to some extent between Finland and Norway.³⁰

Posing particular problems for Nordic cooperation were—and still are—the uniqueness of the Finnish language and the consequent linguistic isolation of Finnish-speakers at Nordic meetings partly due to the fact that all the other participants are able to use their mother tongue while the Finnish-speakers have to use a foreign language, Swedish, even when communicating with Danes and Norwegians.

There were discussions in Norden Association circles on how to improve a knowledge of languages and the arrangement of language courses, but in practice it resulted in the employment of Norwegian-, Danish- and Swedish-speaking travelling lecturers and the establishment of lecturerships at universities.³¹ This policy, however, did not embrace the promotion of the Finnish language, even if that had been discussed, because it was considered impossible for people in other Nordic countries to study such a language. At most some Finnish-speaking classes might be founded in some *gymnasiums* while summer holidays might be spent in learning to know Finland. The studying of a common language was considered as a matter mainly for Finns to tackle. So for Finns the studying of Swedish became the key to the other Nordic countries.³²

At the same time the command of Swedish, which so far had been taken for granted among the Finnish educated classes, began to decline. Although Swedish continued to hold its position in the curriculum of secondary schools as the second domestic tongue the all too common negative attitude adopted towards it prevented most people from gaining a real command of the language. The question involved difficult matters of principle, some ultra-Finnish scholars for example—who had

²⁸ Member roll of Norden, Association for Nordic cooperation in Finland. Norden Association collection, National Archives, Helsinki.

²⁹ Ehrnrooth, op. cit., pp. 329-330; Nielsen, vol. 3., pp. 379-380.

³⁰ *Nordisk Tidskrift* (1927), pp. 283-287; 336-338, 402; Nielsen, vol. 3, pp. 379-380.

³¹ *Nordisk Tidskrift* (1927), pp. 331-332; Nielsen, vol. 3, p. 379.

³² B. J. Bergqvist "Nordisk samarbete i skolans värld", *Nordisk Tidskrift* (1926), pp. 9-11.

actually mastered the Swedish language—were not willing to use any tongue other than Finnish at Nordic conferences held in Finland as at the Nordic Conference of Economists held in Helsinki in 1930.³³

In spite of these problems the Norden Association became also in Finnish eyes an organization which enabled important cultural cooperation to be carried on and its members to become acquainted with other countries and their inhabitants.

Soon after Finland had joined the Norden Association it launched a journal "Nordisk Tidskrift" (The Nordic Periodical), an organ of high standard.³⁴ So far as general information was concerned a special booklet was also published in 1928. The articles included contributions by well-known personalities from cultural life. One of the Finnish pieces was written by F. E. Sillanpää, the future winner of the Nobel-prize for literature, whose nationalistic sentiments, however, proved somewhat unacceptable to the Scandinavian editors of the booklet. They demanded alterations and the delicate task of procuring these was finally left to the unfortunate Finnish editor.³⁵ The joint Nordic songbook compiled by the Norwegian Norden Association also aimed at promoting a feeling of solidarity. Each country was represented by twenty songs and care had been taken to recognize the linguistic division in Finland for in the Finnish selection ten songs were in Finnish and ten in Swedish.³⁶

Great expectations were focussed especially on youth, and for that reason the arranging of school trips was encouraged and large Nordic school meetings were organized. The first of these was held in Helsinki and among the participants were 100 Norwegian school children.³⁷ In order to make tourism in general easier there was a proposal to end the compulsory carrying of passports between the Nordic countries. In practice this had already been abolished so far as traffic between Sweden and Denmark was concerned. According to Hj. J. Procopé, the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs, similar procedures could be adopted for the traffic between Finland and Sweden in those particular cases where the tourist was staying in the other country only for a short time and had bought a return ticket. All the Nordic countries agreed about the ending of the visa requirement but the use of passports remained normal procedure.³⁸ The visa requirement was, in fact abo-

³³ Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 171 — 180; Finnish Envoy in Oslo Östen Elfving to Foreign Minister Hj. J. Procopé 30 April 1930. Procopés coll., National Archives. Helsinki.

³⁴ *Nordisk Tidskrift för vetenskap, konst och industri. Utgiven av Letterstedtska Föreningen*. That periodical was originally founded already 1878 by bequest of Jacob Letterstedt. It had, however, quite a small group of subscribers until connection to Norden Associations. Nils Herlitz, "Nordisk Tidskrift under femtio år", *Nordisk Tidskrift* (1927), pp. 558-587.

³⁵ F. E. Sillanpää, Ikuinen Pohjola. Manuscript. Secretary of Swedish Norden Association V. Langlet to Stenroth 21 April 1927; Chairman of the Norwegian Norden Association J. M. Lund to Stenroth 5 Jan. 1928; Prof. Y. Him to Stenroth 12 Jan. 1928. Otto Stenroths correspondence 1927-28. Norden Association Collection, F. C. 1. National Archives. Helsinki.

³⁶ *Nordens sangbok*. Utgitt av Foreningerne Norden i Danmark, Island, Norge og Sverige (Oslo, 1928).

³⁷ Norden, Norsk forening for nordisk samarbeide. Årsberetning for 1926. Norden Association Coll., E. a. b. 1. Norway 1927. National Archives. Helsinki.

³⁸ Procope to Stenroth 14 Aug. 1928. Otto Stenroths correspondence 1928. Norden Association Coll. F. C. 1. National Archives. Helsinki.

lished in 1928 and the Nordic tourists card came into use instead. From now on Nordic roundtours also began to be organized.³⁹

Further investments in young people and the future were made by way of a revision of history textbooks. The aim was to eliminate misleading information and ultranationalistic attitudes. Obviously this involved a reexamination of many famous disputes from the past and they were indeed numerous. The Norwegians had begun this process as early as 1919 and on their initiative a committee was established by the Norden Association in the 1920's to carry out such a revision in practice the results being published in 1937.⁴⁰ In this connection it is worth mentioning also the Nordic seminars for teachers of history.⁴¹

For Finland, however, there still remained at least one bone of contention. The language dispute at Helsinki University, which had been in abeyance for some years gained strength once more in the charged atmosphere of the early 1930's. Anticomunist agitation had started at the end of 1929 in the Ostrobothnian municipality of Lapua and before long there had developed a movement which strongly resembled the semi-fascist movements to be found in Central Europe and in the Baltic countries although in the beginning the question of nationality remained in the background. The reason for the flare-up over the language question in 1930 was a remark made to the press by Rolf Lagerborg, an eminent Swedish-speaking scholar, during a visit to Sweden. When he was asked about what was going on in Finland Lagerborg had jokingly asked if it was tactful to remind him of the country he had come from when he had only a few days in which to enjoy the company of better people. This utterance received currency also in Finland and Finnish-speaking students organized a concert of whistles and catcalls in front of Lagerborg's home. Because Lagerborg had recently applied for the chair of philosophy a "street parliament"—that is another student mass meeting—declared him unfit to teach at Helsinki University and Lagerborg indeed was not appointed on the pretext that insufficient funds were available, for it was claimed that the state at that particular moment could not afford the foundation of new professorships.

In mid-February 1931 the Agrarian Party, which had close links with the Lapua movement, proposed complete finnification of Helsinki University and extended that demand to apply also to the Technical University of Helsinki. The position of the Swedish-speakers was strengthened, however, by opposition to this proposal from the National Progress Party as well as by divisions on the issue within the National Coalition Party (Conservative). This involved struggle with all its demonstrations continued for many years. So far as Finnish connections with the other Nordic countries were concerned the struggle over language produced a disturbingly negative reaction there. Being concerned about the rights of the Swedish-

³⁹ Nielsen, vol. 3, p. 328.

⁴⁰ *Nordens Idrobocker i historia. Ömsesidig granskning verkställd av Föreningarna Nordens facknämnder. Föreningarna Nordens historiska publikationer*, vol. 1. (Helsinki, 1937).

⁴¹ Nielsen, vol. 3, p. 380.

speaking population and the status of the Swedish language in Finland, in the autumn of 1934, 758 university teachers from Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Iceland delivered to the Finnish envoys in each country a petition appealing for the preservation of the Swedish language. This was a private petition and it did not have governmental support in the respective countries⁴² but still such a plea from Scandinavia infuriated Finnish nationalists and it was labelled as a shameful interference in Finland's internal affairs. Circles especially concerned with Finnish-Scandinavian relations including Field Marshal C. G. E. Mannerheim, Rafael Erich, the Finnish Envoy to Stockholm and J. K. Paasikivi, the leader of the National Coalition Party, all appealed for moderation.⁴³

At the end of 1935 the struggle over language began to die down. By the time a new law was passed concerning the University of Helsinki. At the end of 1937 the political and security situation in Europe generally as well as in Finland and other Nordic countries had so changed that the debate on the law was carried on with much less acrimony than previously. According to this new law the university would have fifteen Swedish-speaking professorships but the administrative language was to be solely Finnish.⁴⁴

5. Finland's Nordic orientation

The public disputes over the language of Helsinki University concealed deeper undercurrents of common concern to Finland and Sweden, for alarming changes in the international situation soon forced responsible leaders to search means of increasing the security of Finland.

Already in 1928 Hj. J. Procopé, the then Minister for Foreign Affairs advocated Nordic orientated efforts towards economic and political cooperation. In the beginning, however, his statements were not taken seriously enough in the Foreign Office in Stockholm.⁴⁵ Procope repeated his opinions about the necessity for cooperation in a speech delivered in the Finnish parliament on December 9th 1930.⁴⁶

Throughout her independence Finland had been anxious about her defensive capability; even so armaments were still insufficient. In order to strengthen her position a programme for the basic provisioning of the defence forces, known as the

⁴² Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 194-217; Jutikkala, op. cit., pp. 162-175; M. Klinge, *Studenter och idéer. Studentkåren vid Helsingfors universitet 1928-1960*, vol. 4 1917-1960 (Tavastehus, 1979), pp. 156-163; O. Mustelin, *De nordiska universitetsadresserna 1934. Skandinaviska och finlandssvenska opinioner* (Helsingfors, 1981), *passim*.

⁴³ Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 210, 217 — 253; K. Selén, *Genevesta Tukholmaan. Suomen turvallisuuspolitiikan painopisteen siirtyminen Kansainliitosta pohjoismaiseen yhteistyöhön 1931 — 1936 (Historiallisia tutkimuksia, julk. Suomen Historiallinen Seura, 94. Helsinki, 1974)*, pp. 228-230; M. Jakobson, *Paasikivi Tukholmassa. J. K. Paasikiven toiminta Suomen lähettiläänä Tukholmassa 1936—39* (Keuruu, 1978), pp. 20—23, 42 — 46.

⁴⁴ Hämäläinen, op. cit., pp. 257-260.

⁴⁵ Procopé to general Linder in April 1929. Copy in Procope's collection, National Archives, Helsinki. V. M. Carlgren, *Varken—eller. Reflexioner kring Sveriges Ålandspolitik 1938-1939* (Uddevalla, 1977), pp. 30-31. Cf. also Bernt Schiller, "At Gun Point", *Scandinavian Journal of History*, vol. 9:3 (1984).

⁴⁶ Finnish Parliamentary Records, minutes 1930, pp. 570-571.

Emergency Programme, was promulgated in 1931. Sweden was approached and asked to supply armaments, but nothing came of it, for Swedish governments were cautious.⁴⁷ However, among the General Staff of the Swedish army there existed an active group from the beginning of 1930's which considered a Swedish-Finnish military alliance to be the best guarantee of Swedish security. It is significant from the point of view of future developments that this group created a good relationship with officers of the Finnish General Staff.⁴⁸

Meanwhile disarmament negotiations were being held in Geneva. In these Finland had taken a different line from Sweden and other Nordic countries, but during the negotiations attention was paid to possible forms of cooperation, particularly between Finland and Sweden.⁴⁹

The Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Rickard Sandier, had a positive attitude towards such cooperation, positive even to the point where it could be said he was drawing Finland into it. The first actual steps towards the warming of Swedish-Finnish relations were taken in the early spring of 1934 when Sandier invited his Finnish colleague Antti Hackzell to Stockholm and this was soon followed by a return visit by Sandier to Helsinki. The negotiations coincided with changes in certain political attitudes to security in Sweden. A positive atmosphere prevailed in these discussions and according to Sandier Finland undoubtedly was turning towards the rest of the Nordic countries.

Finland had indeed chosen already the line to be taken. The Foreign Minister Hackzell belonged to those mainly conservative politicians who did not want to seek support from Germany because of the possible risks involved. Finland was already about to be drawn into the field of tension between Germany and the Soviet-Union, a position from which she wished to extricate herself by any means possible. The Soviet Press had launched an anti-Finnish campaign making injurious claims concerning the neutrality of its neighbour. The supporters of the Nordic orientation hoped that Finnish endeavours to establish her political neutrality would gain more credibility if Finland were recognized all over the world to be linked with the Scandinavian countries, whose will for peace was beyond doubt in all quarters. Other active supporters for this orientation besides Hackzell were Field Marshal Mannerheim and Väinö Tanner, the leader of the Finnish Social-Democratic Party. However, Mannerheim did not speak of the Nordic but the Swedish orientation. And to a large extent the concept of the Nordic orientation was indeed only a cover for Finland's real aim, closer cooperation with Sweden. Tanner was sent over to Stockholm to make secret soundings as he had excellent relations with the Social Democratic leadership in Sweden and thus also with the Swedish government."

⁴⁷ Selén, op. cit., pp. 132-143, 255-263.

⁴⁸ Carlgren, op. cit., pp. 19—25; *Antingen—eller. Freds- och försvarsproblem i saklig belysning*, edited by Helge Jung (Stockholm, 1930), *passim*.

⁴⁹ Selén, op. cit., pp. 135-140.

⁵⁰ Selen, op. cit., pp. 142—144; Jakobson, op. cit., pp. 14—21; Väinö Tanner, *Kahden maailmansodan välissä. Muistelmia 20-ja 30- luvuilta* (Helsinki, 1966), pp., 167-177.

An official declaration on Nordic orientation was expedited when the Soviet Envoy to Helsinki on behalf of his government informed the then Prime Minister T. M. Kivimäki in the summer of 1935 that the Soviet Union might be obliged to occupy some parts of Finland to secure her own safety should war in Europe break out. The declaration concerning Nordic orientation was made on December 5th 1935. With this in mind it was felt necessary to send a man of the highest prestige as an envoy to Stockholm and for that post was chosen J. K. Paasikivi, bank director and counsellor of state.⁵¹

Although the declaration in question was unilateral and did not bind the other Nordic countries it made it easier for Finland to claim to form part of a joint front at a time when the weakness of the League of Nations was becoming all too obvious. The Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs was invited to a meeting of his Nordic colleagues held in Oslo in August 1935 and participated in such meetings regularly from then onwards. The Norwegian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Halvdan Koht adopted a positive attitude to Finland's wish to operate as part of the Nordic front. Soon after the declaration Finland had to consider—like the Scandinavian countries and other states neutral in the First World War—whether or not to abandon the sanctions of the League of Nations in the political situation following the occupation of the Rhineland and the dissolving of the Locarno Pact. On 1st July 1936 the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and the Nordic countries jointly declared that they did not consider the article on sanctions as binding but would each judge whether to use them in any particular case.⁵² Two years later the attempt to escape from the League of Nations' security system—which had proved inefficient—became even more obvious when the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg totally dissociated themselves from the article on sanctions in the "Declaration of Seven Nations" on July 24th 1938.⁵³

It was important for Finland to emphasize by every means her association with the Nordic countries. Indeed she worked very actively and enterprisingly within the framework of the revived Nordic Delegation for Economic Cooperation. This joint agency was established at the end of 1934 on the initiative of the national Norden Associations; the original idea coming from the Swedish Minister for Foreign Affairs, Sandier. Its aim was on the one hand to stimulate trade between the Nordic countries and on the other hand to run commercial information service directed at other countries. Each particular Nordic country was represented by a very distinguished delegation drawn from its political and commercial elite and joint meetings

⁵¹ Jakobson, op. cit., pp. 14–15; K. Korhonen, *Turvallisuuden pettäessä. Suomi neuvostodiplomatiassa Tartosta talvisotaan 2*. (Helsinki, 1971), pp. 121–128; Selén, op. cit., pp. 226–255. After this article was written the Finnish northern orientation has been dealt with in the dissertation thesis by Timo Soikkanen, "Kansallinen eheytyminen — myytti vai todellisuus? Ulko- ja sisäpolitiikan linjat ja vuorovaikutus Suomessa vuosina 1933–1939", (Juva, 1984). He sees this orientation as the outcome of an interaction between domestic and foreign policy.

⁵² Selén, op. cit., pp. 144–155, 200–225.

⁵³ L. Kaukiainen, *Småstater i världskrisens skugga. Säkerhetsfrågan i den offentliga debatten i Sverige, Finland och Danmark oktober 1937—november 1938* (*Historiallisia tutkimuksia 112*, julk. Suomen Historiallinen Seura, Helsinki, 1980), pp. 111–121.

were held regularly. As part of the work of the information service an important book "The Northern Countries in World Economy: Denmark—Finland—Iceland—Norway—Sweden" was published in October 1937 in English—and later on in Finnish and Swedish—to throw light on the economic life of the Nordic countries. As editor-in-chief it had a Finn, docent Bruno Suviranta. Later the book became a standard textbook for study groups working in different Nordic countries with the aid of radio. In this connection an experimental series of radio talks "Norden och världen" (The Nordic countries and the world) was launched by the Nordic broadcasting companies under the auspices of the League of Nations in 1938.⁵⁴

A recognition of the need for joint actions in relation to the rest of the world was particularly illustrated by the launching of the semi-official Nordic periodical "Le Nord". Its initiator was a Danish journalist and writer Carl Thalbitzer. The venture soon gained support from a number of members of the Nordic Delegation for Economic Cooperation and before long it gained also the approval of the Nordic governments. The journal was aimed specifically at the needs of the outside world and leading decision makers outside the Nordic countries. The articles were published in English, French or German. The first issue came out in July 1938, conveniently on the eve of the Declaration of Seven States.⁵⁵

Soon the time arrived when "War or Peace?" became a constant newspaper headline and Hitler's Germany escalated her policy of aggression. In September 1938, more specifically in the days preceding the Munich Agreement, Sweden and Finland were approaching agreement on a programme of practical cooperation for the safeguarding of the Åland Islands.⁵⁶

The issue of the neutralized and demilitarized Åland Islands, a military vacuum, had been raised publicly from time to time, for example in 1934. The question of defending the archipelago was intimately connected with Swedish defence plans, for in wrong hands the islands could become "a pistol pointing at the heart of Sweden" in the words of a phrase inherited from the 19th century. The fortification of the Åland Islands offered a suitably concrete area of cooperation for strengthening the Nordic orientation of Finland. The matter was discussed for the first time at official level in the early spring of 1937 during negotiations between the Finnish and Swedish Ministers for Foreign Affairs, and as a result of these talks the Swedish Defence Staff began preparations. The issue of fortifications became the subject of public discussion at the beginning of the year 1938 and opinions were divided. At official level the plan made further progress after the occupation of Austria by the

⁵⁴ L. Kaukiainen, *Joint Information Services as a Nordic Answer in Crisis of the 1930s* (Finnish Historical Society. *Studia Historica*, vol. 12, Helsinki, 1983), pp. 22-30. On 22. Nov. 1930 in Oslo a convention was signed by Sweden, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, who bound themselves not to raise custom duties without informing the other parties at least two weeks in advance. This Oslo agreement came into force in February 1932 and Finland joined it in November 1933. The main commercial problems between the Nordic countries were not solved by agreement, however.

⁵⁵ Kaukiainen, op. cit. (1983), pp. 30-42.

⁵⁶ Kaukiainen, op. cit. (1980), pp. 173-188, 216-224; Carlgren, op. cit., 67-134.

Germans at the end of March 1938. In April it was agreed to start secret negotiations about the possible partial dismantling of the demilitarization policy. At the end of the summer some information about these talks started to filter through to the public and the governments in Finland and in Sweden had to make public announcements on the subject at the beginning of September. Final agreement on fortification was reached at negotiations in Stockholm at the beginning of 1939. The military results of this Stockholm Convention were that Finland was given the right to pursue all types of military activities in the southern part of the neutral zone. The size of the territory covered by the 1921 demilitarization pact would thus be permanently altered. In addition Finland was granted in the northern part of the zone a temporary authority for ten years to pursue certain limited military activities, about which she should negotiate separately with Sweden. The Finnish government gave a detailed commitment to protect the privileges of the Åland Islanders, and this was the subject of a separate announcement.⁵⁷

The only thing remaining was to get the consent of the signatory states and the Soviet Union. Nor as yet had the Åland Islanders themselves given their approval. The consent of the first was gained relatively quickly but the stumbling block proved to be the Soviet Union, from whom a positive attitude was hoped for but a negative stand was feared by the negotiators. Indeed a secret Soviet emissary had already in April 1938 approached the Finnish Minister for Foreign Affairs. According to him the Soviet Union could give its consent to the plans only if they were to get in return some concessions of actual territories. This suggestion, however, the government of Finland was unable to entertain. The plan for the fortification of the Åland Islands finally collapsed at the end of May 1939 after Sweden had brought up the issue for discussion at the League of Nations. The Soviet Union presented her objections and Sweden withdrew her proposal. In spite of some attempts to reopen the issue of the Åland Islands it never again appeared on the agenda of the joint negotiations.

In the course of the year 1939 it became obvious that in spite of all efforts Nordic political and military cooperation had little basis in reality. Particularly clearly this could be seen after the outbreak of the Second World War when Finland was invited to talks in Moscow in October 1939. The Nordic sister nations certainly offered genuine sympathy but that did not count for much once Finland found herself at war with the Soviet Union on November 30th 1939. A meeting of the Nordic heads of state was meant to be an impressive demonstration in support of Finland but in fact it turned out to be the funeral of Nordic political cooperation.⁵⁹

When assessing Nordic cooperation as a whole, however, and in particular

⁵⁷ K. Wahlbäck, *Finlandsfrågan i svensk politik* (Stockholm, 1967) *Veljeys veitsen terällä. Suomen kysymys Ruotsinpolitiikassa 1937-1940* (Porvoo, 1968), *passim*; Kaukiainen, op. cit. (1980), pp. 156-172, 217-234.

⁵⁸ Carlgren, op. cit., pp. 131-175; Jakobson, op. cit., 70-85; A. Johansson, *Finlands sak. Svensk politik och opinion under vinterkriget 1939-1940. (Sverige under andra världskriget, Udevalla, 1973)*, pp. 20-31.

⁵⁹ Korhonen, op. cit., pp. 201-204; Johansson, op. cit., pp. 46-86; M. Jakobson, *The Diplomacy of the Winter-War. An Account of the Russo-Finnish Conflict, 1930-1940*. (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1964), *passim*.

Finland's role in the picture, things were not so gloomy. Even if the Nordic countries did not form a fortress in which to seek shelter during difficult times and even if they were incapable of rescuing Finland, Norway and Denmark from the ordeals of the Second World War they still helped in building a spiritual defence with the aid of which their hardships became easier to endure.

Intercourse between the Nordic countries and the attendant cooperation in cultural and economic fields was to prove fruitful later on, and its beneficial results are still felt today.

When considering her spiritual qualities and social structure Finland already belonged clearly among the Nordic countries before gaining her independence.

Because of the delivery pains of the new independent state she was still not very active in her approach towards the Nordic countries in the 1920's. However, when the world had proved to be a less secure place in the 1930's Finland herself actively sought contacts with the other Nordic countries, and especially in less formal, non-governmental areas her contribution was a significant one.